

section 5

Environmental Protection

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The success of cities in the 21st century will, to a significant degree, be decided by their ability to adapt to challenges presented by climate change and to become more sustainable and resilient. This Environmental Protection Section contains policies and actions required for the City of Raleigh to meet these and other challenges. In the process, the city will be improving the long-term health of local residents, regional natural resources, and ecological systems. By taking these actions, Raleigh will serve as a key player in the national reversal of sprawling development patterns and environmentally degrading development practices. Ultimately, the goal is to one day become carbon-neutral while protecting natural resource assets and growing sustainably.

The City of Raleigh has a number of programs and initiatives designed to protect and enhance environmental and natural resources. These include its broad array of recycling services, the greening of its automobile fleet, the integration of green building and infrastructure programs, progress in reusing and conserving water, and work in managing stormwater as an integral asset. Adoption and implementation of this Section presents the city with an opportunity to surpass these efforts and to continue to move toward more comprehensive solutions to environmental challenges.

Raleigh's Climate Protection Commitment

Raleigh has joined forces with more than a thousand cities across the country by signing the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement to strive to meet or exceed Kyoto Protocol targets for reducing global warming pollution. The following actions from the Climate Protection Agreement shape the land use, transportation, and natural resource preservation policies in the Plan:

- *Adopt and enforce land use policies that reduce sprawl, preserve open space, and create compact, walkable urban communities.*
- *Promote transportation options, such as bicycle trails, commute trip reduction programs, incentives for carpooling, and public transit.*
- *Increase the use of clean, alternative energy by, for example, advocating for the development of renewable energy resources, recovering landfill methane for energy production, and supporting the use of waste-to-energy technology.*
- *Maintain healthy urban forests; promote tree planting to increase shading and to absorb carbon dioxide.*
- *Make energy efficiency a priority through building code improvements and retrofitting city facilities with energy efficient lighting to conserve energy.*
- *Practice and promote sustainable building practices using the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED program or similar system.*



Some of the key issues this Section aims to address through its policies include:

- *The localized effects of climate change, including increased risk of droughts and flooding, and a fluctuating supply source of drinking water.*
- *The fight against climate change at the local level will require coordinated responses involving city operations as well as land use and transportation policy.*
- *The Neuse River is a valuable natural water resource that is impaired by excess concentrations of the nutrients nitrogen and phosphorous. As the capital city, located near the headwaters of the Neuse River Basin, Raleigh must help lead and champion measures to protect this state resource.*
- *The ongoing efforts to improve air quality must address the region's high degree of reliance on the automobile, loss of tree coverage, and loss of undeveloped land.*
- *The conservation of urban, suburban, and native forests will be important to Raleigh's environment and quality of life.*
- *There is a need for greater sensitivity for aquatic and wildlife and natural habitat protection. Raleigh has the opportunity to become a national leader in sustainable environmental policy that helps protect and improve quality of life at the local and regional level.*

Further information associated with these topics, and how they relate to Raleigh, can be found in the Environmental Resources section of the City of Raleigh Community Inventory Report.



Assessing City Progress: STAR Communities

Sustainability Tools for Assessing & Rating Communities (STAR) is a national certification system for benchmarking, assessing, and rating community-wide sustainability. Hundreds of communities across the nation are using the STAR rating system to benchmark and assess their communities. STAR evaluates communities based on social, economic and environmental sustainability. This “triple bottom line” approach to sustainability takes into account considerations that go beyond a narrow focus on environmental performance alone. This includes metrics pertaining to the local economy, workforce development, poverty alleviation, and the equitable distribution of community services. In total there are seven goal areas and 44 sustainability objectives used to benchmark the community. The goal areas are:

1. Built Environment.
2. Climate & Energy.
3. Economy & Jobs.
4. Education, Arts & Community.
5. Equity & Empowerment.
6. Health & Safety.
7. Natural Systems.

STAR is currently administered by Raleigh’s Office of Sustainability, which has worked with other departments, local universities, and community partners to collect data required for certification. In 2015, STAR Communities, the non-profit organization that evaluates and certifies municipalities, recognized Raleigh with a 4 star national excellence certification out of a possible five. Raleigh is the first city in North Carolina to receive this designation. The city is using this tool to guide the implementation of the city’s Strategic Plan and Comprehensive Plan and as a factor in developing performance measures and departmental work plans.

The following policies and actions are most directly related to the vision theme of *Greenprint Raleigh*. In fact, for the purposes of this Comprehensive Plan, the word “Greenprint” simply refers to a plan for sustainability. Issues, such as clean air and climate change, water quality and quantity, land conservation and habitat protection, and material resource management all influence urban sustainability.

Achieving sustainability depends upon and plays a critical role in the fulfillment of all of the vision themes, including not only *Greenprint Raleigh*, but also *Economic Prosperity and Equity*; *Expanding Housing Choices*; *Managing Our Growth*; *Coordinating Land Use and Transportation*; and *Growing Successful Neighborhoods and Communities*. A collaborative stakeholder effort that considers people, the environment, and the economy will support the realization of each theme and be critical in transforming Raleigh into a truly sustainable city.

For example, urban sustainability is strongly related to the vision theme of *Economic Prosperity and Equity*. By enforcing policies that promote energy conservation and efficiency, the City of Raleigh is helping to insulate local business and residents from energy price increases by reducing the amount of energy used — and income spent — on heating and cooling, hot water, and lighting.

Furthermore, “Green Collar” jobs are created when large-scale investments are made in developing energy-efficient infrastructure. These jobs include solar panel installation, green roof installation, brownfield restoration, and ecological restoration. These investments, therefore, contribute to overall economic prosperity.

Sustainability and Resilience

The concepts and goals of sustainability and resilience, which are woven throughout this Plan, are closely related and mutually supportive but not identical.

Fundamentally, sustainability refers to the ability to meet the needs of current residents while also protecting the ability of future generations to do the same. The concept includes not only environmental protection, but also economic and social considerations – the “triple bottom line” of sustainability.

Environmental policy also addresses equity (and the vision theme of *Growing Successful Neighborhoods and Communities*) through the promotion of environmental justice. The concept of environmental justice involves addressing inequitable distributions of environmental burdens, such as air pollution, noise pollution, and noxious industrial facilities. It also includes equal access to environmental goods, such as clean air and water, healthy and protected streams, parks, urban forests, recreation, and transportation. As greater equity in the distribution of environmental burdens and goods is achieved, better-positioned cities will be able to accommodate the increases in density that are needed to support transit and curtail sprawling development patterns.

In addition to promoting regional transit and density, this Section also supports transit-oriented development, mixed-use development, infill development, bicycle facilities, and other building blocks of sustainability that advance the vision themes of *Managing Our Growth* and *Coordinating Land Use and Transportation*. These policies will take cars off the road and pollutants out of the air and water. At the same time, they expand housing choices and divert development pressure from the region’s remaining bucolic and natural landscapes.

In recent years, especially after events, such as Hurricane Katrina, Superstorm Sandy, and less-publicized localized flooding and other disasters, the concept of resilience has gained traction. Resilience is an operational philosophy that seeks to identify opportunities and challenges before they arise and to prioritize strategic investments and community capacity-building to better adapt to and recover from shocks and stressors.

Each of these two critical concepts plays an important role in the policies and actions contained in this Plan. In some cases, the concepts will overlap; in others, they involve their own distinct strategies. Ultimately, creating a more sustainable and resilient Raleigh will provide lasting benefits for current and future residents.

Part of Raleigh’s natural landscape includes the Neuse River, a major waterway that has been environmentally degraded due in part to urban stormwater runoff containing excess nitrogen and phosphorus as well as runoff from agricultural operations. Raleigh comprises a small proportion of the Neuse River basin, but as an urbanized area with large amounts of impervious surface, runoff from Raleigh is a significant contributor to contamination of the river. Polluted runoff can lead to algae blooms that block sunlight from reaching underwater vegetation and that consume dissolved oxygen in the water, harming fish and other species.





As a capital city and as a community at the headwaters of the river, Raleigh is uniquely positioned to champion the recovery and protection of this important natural resource. The Water Quality and Conservation sub-section of this Section outlines various strategies to make this goal of recovery a reality. Looking beyond the river, and at the watershed as a whole, both water quality and water quantity will play significant roles in the city’s ability to meet the needs of its growing population. Streams within Raleigh should be valued; should meet their intended uses from a regulatory water quality perspective; and should be safe, stable, and fitting natural corridors for enjoyment and quiet reflection in the midst of urban activity.

Finally, regional air quality in the Triangle area has shown improvement in recent years, but significant effort will be needed to sustain and expand upon this trend. Regional cooperation will be essential to meaningful progress in the enhancement of air quality. This Section’s policies

on energy security and climate change preparedness will help to ensure that Raleigh is doing its part for this regional and global environmental challenge.

To track the efficiency of the city’s policies, any of the Comprehensive Plan’s vision themes that may be relevant to a particular policy are indicated by one of six icons. The vision themes are:

-  Economic Prosperity and Equity.
-  Expanding Housing Choices.
-  Managing Our Growth.
-  Coordinating Land Use and Transportation.
-  Greenprint Raleigh.
-  Growing Successful Neighborhoods and Communities.

In this Section and throughout the Plan, Key Policies used to evaluate zoning consistency are noted as such with an orange dot (●).

Rating Systems for Sustainability

As the real estate and construction industries move toward more sustainable practices, third-party rating systems have played an important role both in defining what constitutes a sustainable development practice, and also in certifying that such practices have been employed to a degree that the resulting structure or development can be labeled “green” or “sustainable.”

LEED

The most widely-used rating system for sustainable building practice in the U.S. is the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System™ of the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). The LEED system addresses three stages of building—design, construction, and operations—and has separate criteria for commercial, institutional, and residential construction; existing buildings versus new construction; and includes a new pilot program for rating neighborhood development. As stated on the USGBC’s web site, “LEED promotes a whole-building approach to sustainability by recognizing performance in five key areas of human and environmental health: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection, and indoor environmental quality.”

Sustainable Sites Initiative

If the LEED system focuses primarily on sustainable building practices, a relatively new and evolving standard for sustainable site development and landscaping is being developed by the Sustainable Sites Initiative (SSI), an interdisciplinary effort by the American Society of Landscape Architects, the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, and the United States Botanic Garden to create voluntary national guidelines and performance benchmarks for sustainable land design, construction, and maintenance practices.

Other rating systems that measure sustainability include Energy Star, the Better Buildings Challenge, and the Passive House Institute. These federal and nonprofit programs rate appliances and building practices based on energy efficiency.

Energy Star

Energy Star is a voluntary labeling program for energy efficient appliances, electronics, and office equipment administered by the Environmental Protection Agency. Branding with the Energy Star label has influenced technological improvements in electronics, and driven consumer decision making when purchasing appliances.

Better Buildings Challenge

The Better Buildings Challenge is a federal initiative administered by the Department of Energy. Launched in 2011 the goal is to improve energy efficiency by 20 percent in commercial, institutional and multifamily buildings. Participants agree to conduct an energy efficiency assessment, take action to improve energy savings and then report results to share cost effective approaches with other participants.

Passive House

Passive house is a building concept that cuts energy consumption by incorporating using high quality insulation, and windows that prevents loss of conditioned air infiltration of outside air. Energy from the sun is maximized in the winter and minimized in during warmer months. The Passive House Institute U.S. certifies building design based on strict quality assurance and quality control standards aimed at reducing energy consumption.

5.1 Energy Security and Climate Change Preparedness

Globally, cities are taking the lead in preparing for climate change by proactively conserving energy, using renewable energy resources, and improving air quality. Having the foresight to make investments in energy security by preparing residents, businesses, and local infrastructure will be a hallmark of successful cities in the 21st century. With the future potential of rising energy prices stemming from the combined effects of fossil fuel depletion and public policies aimed at minimizing climate change, those cities and regions that can be the most productive with the least amount of energy input will be best positioned to prosper.

The policies and actions of this section are included not only because of the City of Raleigh’s responsibility to the health, safety, and welfare of constituents, but also because they represent a move toward the responsible use of limited resources in a growing world—and a desire to leave a better world for future generations. In practical terms, adoption and enforcement of the following policies could also translate to lower energy bills and cleaner air for local residents.

As with all urban areas, Raleigh’s “carbon footprint” (amount of greenhouse gases produced) depends primarily upon the ways our built environment and our modes of transportation are designed, constructed, and used. Therefore, the following policies and actions concentrate on how best to approach these practices.

Policy EP 1.1 Greenhouse Gas Reduction

Promote best practices for reducing greenhouse gas emissions as documented through the U.S. Mayors’ Climate Protection Agreement. 

See the City of Raleigh Data Book, available at www.RaleighNC.gov, for additional information.

Policy EP 1.2 Alternative Transportation Options

Promote the adoption of alternative fuel vehicles and advanced transportation technologies, both public and private. 

Policy EP 1.3 Total Cost of Ownership Analysis

Use Total Cost of Ownership (TCO), life-cycle analysis, and/or payback analysis on all energy saving proposals. 

Policy EP 1.4 Green Building

Advance green building practices in the public and private sectors by encouraging LEED Gold-level certification and LEED-ND, or their respective equivalents. 

Policy EP 1.5 LEED Certification for Public Buildings

All new or renovations of existing City of Raleigh buildings encompassing 10,000 gross square feet or more of building area should achieve a Silver-level certification of the U.S. Green Building Council’s LEED Green Building Rating System for New Construction (LEED-NC) and Existing Buildings (LEED-EB), or their respective equivalents. A higher equivalent rating (Gold or Platinum) should be sought where practical and as funding is available. 

See text box: LEED Certification for New and Existing Municipal Buildings.

Policy EP 1.6 LEED and Development Agreements

Require any public-private project that includes a development agreement to apply LEED (or the equivalent) certification standards as appropriate to the project and consistent with other Comprehensive Plan policies. 

Policy EP 1.7 Sustainable Development

Promote the adaptive use of existing buildings, infill development, and brownfield development as effective sustainability practices that take development pressure off undeveloped areas.



See also Section 12: 'Historic Preservation' for more on this topic.

Policy EP 1.8 Sustainable Sites

Encourage the use of environmentally-friendly site planning and landscape design approaches and techniques such as those developed by the Sustainable Sites Initiative. Incorporate sustainable green infrastructure and low impact development practices to help control stormwater runoff and reduce pollutant impacts to streams.



Policy EP 1.9 Sustainable Public Realm

Incorporate sustainable technology and materials into public realm projects.



Policy EP 1.10 Alternative Energy Sources

Support the development and application of alternative energy sources, renewable energy technologies, and energy storage. Such technology should be used to reduce the dependence on imported energy, provide opportunities for economic and community development, and benefit environmental quality.



Policy EP 1.11 Renewable Energy

By 2030, increase the use of renewable energy to meet 20 percent of Raleigh's peak electric load, or maximum electric demand that is typically reached during normal business hours. This target will be reevaluated as additional research and information becomes available.



Policy EP 1.12 Air Quality Improvements

Reduce the number of air quality days categorized as 'unhealthy' or 'hazardous,' based on the Air Quality Index readings provided by the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Division of Air Quality.



Policy EP 1.13 Evaluating Development Impacts on Air Quality

Evaluate potential air emissions from new and expanded development, including transportation improvements and municipal facilities, to ensure that measures are taken to mitigate any possible adverse impacts. These measures should include construction controls to reduce airborne dust and requirements for landscaping and tree planting to absorb carbon monoxide and other pollutants.



Action EP 1.1 Completed 2015

Action EP 1.2 Completed 2014

LEED Certification for New and Existing Municipal Buildings

On May 20, 2008 the City Council adopted as policy the Environmental Advisory Board's recommendations on Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) or equivalent certification for municipal buildings, as follows:

New Construction

(1) All new City of Raleigh construction and additions encompassing 10,000 gross square feet or more of building area should achieve a Silver-level certification of the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED Green Building Rating System for New Construction (LEED—NC). A higher equivalent rating (Gold or Platinum) should be sought where practical and as funding is available.

(2) All City of Raleigh construction and additions encompassing less than 10,000 square feet of building area would not seek LEED Silver-level certification but would be designed and built to be eligible for Silver certification, plus meet requirements for energy and water efficiency as follows:

- i. Energy Achieve minimum energy efficiency of 30 percent better than code required by the American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) 90.1-2004 (ASHRAE 90.1 version required in the 2006 N.C. Building Code).
- ii. Water Achieve a 30 percent water use reduction as quantified by LEED water efficiency standards.

Existing Buildings

(3) All existing City of Raleigh buildings and facilities should use the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED Green Building Rating System for Existing Buildings (LEED—EB) as a guide. The application of these standards is intended to maximize sustainability benefits within existing resources and provide a means of benchmarking environmental and financial performance improvements in City practices.

Certification of existing buildings under LEED—EB should be evaluated for technical and economic feasibility and pursued at the highest feasible level of certification on a case by case basis as funding and resources are available.

Action EP 1.3 Energy Retrofits

Implement a retrofit program for public buildings based on the “Public Facility Energy Audit” to maximize sustainability benefits within existing resources.

Action EP 1.4 Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design-Existing Buildings (LEED-EB)

Evaluate the certification of existing public buildings under LEED-Existing Buildings (EB) (or the equivalent) for technical and economic feasibility and pursue the highest feasible level of certification on a case-by-case basis as funding and resources are available.

Action EP 1.5 Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design-Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND)

Explore adopting the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND), or the equivalent, as a city standard.

Action EP 1.6 Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Incentives

Encourage and provide incentives for buildings that would qualify for Gold or Platinum LEED certification, or the equivalent.

Action EP 1.7 Completed 2014**Action EP 1.8 Solar and Distributed Energy Resource Incentives**

Study and consider incentives to encourage home builders and residents to install solar and other distributed energy resource technologies, such as solar photovoltaics, solar thermal, geothermal heating and cooling and energy storage facilities.

Action EP 1.9 Energy Efficient Construction

Study and adopt LEED-like energy efficient construction standards that can be used when older buildings are renovated or adapted for new uses, since it may be difficult for older buildings to meet LEED standards.

Action EP 1.10 Removed 2018**Action EP 1.11 Removed 2018****Action EP 1.12 Charging Stations**

When viable, install charging stations for electric automobiles in public parking lots and garages.

Action EP 1.13 Renewable Energy Economic Development

Provide outreach and education to non-profits and affordable and multi-family housing developments to develop partnerships with local installers, banks and other service providers to encourage financing options and cost-effective renewable energy investments.



Action EP 1.14 Renewable Energy Deployment

Evaluate siting renewable energy facilities on city-owned property, including rooftops. Consider pairing renewable energy generation with on-site energy storage to improve reliability. Where feasible, emphasize exposure to the public through signage and other information to promote awareness of the benefits of renewable energy.

Action EP 1.15 Fleet Transformation

Implement the city’s Fuel and Fleet Transformation Plan.

Action EP 1.16 Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Education

Create and promote online and print educational material to help Raleigh residents and businesses understand, evaluate, and compare renewable energy and energy efficiency options for both new construction and retrofitting existing buildings.

Action EP 1.17 Home Efficiency Rating

Study and consider a “Home Efficiency Score” for use by developers and real estate agents to inform prospective buyers of the energy efficiency of homes.

Action EP 1.18 Energy Efficiency First Policy

Evaluate the adoption of an “Energy Efficiency First” policy for construction of new city facilities. Such a policy would make energy efficiency a higher priority than energy generation. Where practicable, energy efficiency and energy generation should both be evaluated in order to facilitate prioritization.

5.2 Design with Nature

The State of North Carolina is known for its natural beauty and biodiversity. As the capital city of North Carolina, Raleigh should aspire to conserve, preserve, and restore the natural resources that define the city’s “sense of place.” The design of the city should reflect Raleigh’s commitment to protect and enhance its natural resources and environment. Designing with nature is a commitment to understanding the ecological significance of place and to grow the community in a manner that both respects and leverages the benefits of natural resources. An “ecosystem” approach to sustainable growth should become the hallmark of how the city grows and flourishes. The focus of such an approach is not growth versus no growth, but rather on the type of growth and development that occurs and where it occurs. The following policies and actions help to guide growth and development, thereby conserving, protecting, and enhancing Raleigh’s natural resources.

See also Section 8: ‘Parks, Recreation, and Open Space’ for more on this topic.

Policy EP 2.1 Natural Resource Protection

Ensure protection of Raleigh’s unique and significant natural resources – its natural areas, landscapes, and ecological systems – through best practices management, stewardship, conservation, restoration, and land use regulations.



Policy EP 2.2 Environmentally Sensitive Development

Ensure Raleigh’s growth and land development practices are compatible with the city’s natural form, vegetation, topography, water bodies and streams, floodplains, wetlands, and other natural riparian assets. This will decrease erosion, reduce stormwater run-off and flooding, improve water quality, protect wildlife habitat, and provide buffers and transitions between land uses.



Policy EP 2.3 Open Space Preservation

Identify opportunities to conserve open space networks, mature existing tree stands, steep slopes, floodplains, wetlands, and other sensitive riparian areas, priority aquatic and wildlife habitats, and significant natural features as part of public and private development plans and targeted acquisition.



Policy EP 2.4 Scenic Vistas and Views

Protect and create scenic vistas and views of natural landscapes and features that are important in establishing, enhancing, and protecting the visual character of the city, mindful of other goals such as preserving and enhancing the city’s tree canopy.



Policy EP 2.5 Protection of Natural Water Features

Protect, restore, and preserve rivers, streams, floodplains, and wetlands. These water bodies provide valuable stormwater and surface water management and ecological, visual, and recreational benefits.



Policy EP 2.6 Greenway System

Continue to build a park and greenway system that is: interconnected; protects native landscapes, water quality, and areas of ecological significance, such as priority wildlife habitats; and serves the broad and diverse outdoor recreation needs of community residents.

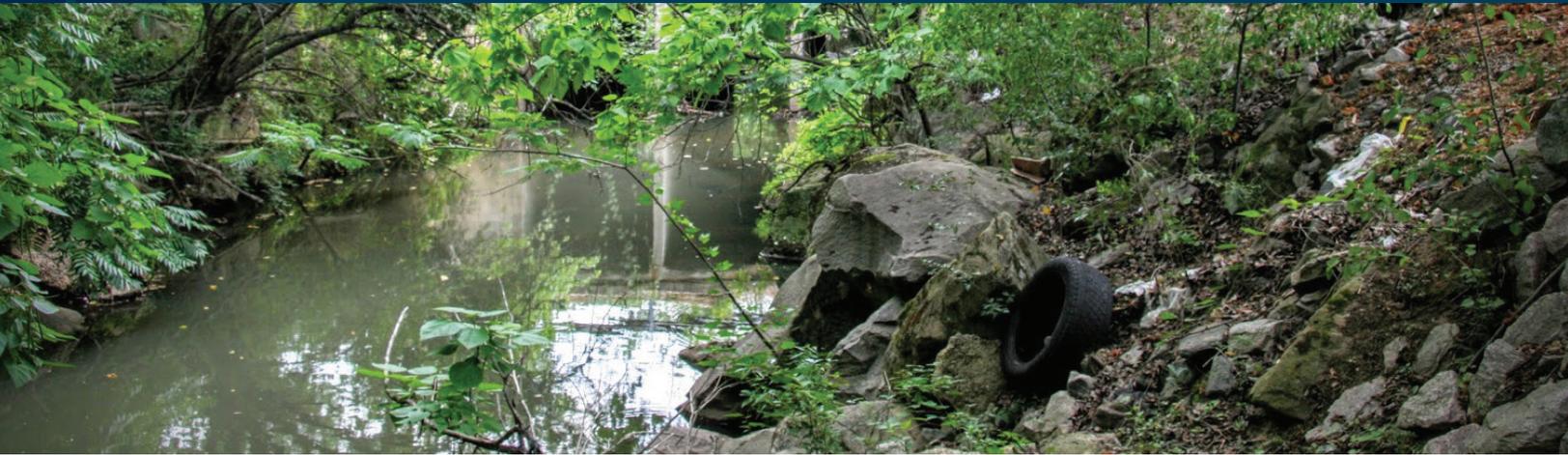


Policy EP 2.7 Road Design and Landscape Preservation

Encourage the preservation and restoration of natural features and systems when designing new roadways by separating in-bound and out-bound lanes as they pass through natural features, such as large clusters of trees, rocky outcrops or water courses.



See also Section 4: ‘Transportation.’



Action EP 2.1 Natural Resources Inventory

Develop a Natural Resources Inventory to define a program for protecting, conserving and stewarding Raleigh’s natural areas, wetlands, water bodies, urban forests, landscapes, priority wildlife habitats, and important natural features, emphasizing their value in terms of carbon sequestration. Work with the Environmental Advisory Board and similar citizen committees as appropriate. Incorporate the spatial principles of landscape ecology in planning.

Action EP 2.2 Park Acquisition

Annually acquire a minimum of 250 acres of land for parks, greenway corridors, or open space to meet the Raleigh Parks Plan’s goal.

Action EP 2.3 Natural Resources Sustainability Team

Continue the work of the Natural Resources Sustainability Team within city government comprising the city’s Sustainability Coordinator and members from the City Manager’s office, Planning, Parks and Recreation, Public Utilities, Transportation, and Engineering Services departments. The purpose is to develop a program of action, built upon the recommendations of the natural resources inventory plan, for implementation of these recommendations. This multi-disciplinary team will also help support the ongoing implementation of the city’s green stormwater infrastructure and low-impact development practices.

Action EP 2.4 Environmentally Sensitive Development Controls

Reduce excessive cut and fill grading and the loss of significant trees, vegetation, and Priority Wildlife Habitats (as identified by programs and agencies, such as the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program and North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission).

Action EP 2.5 Completed 2013

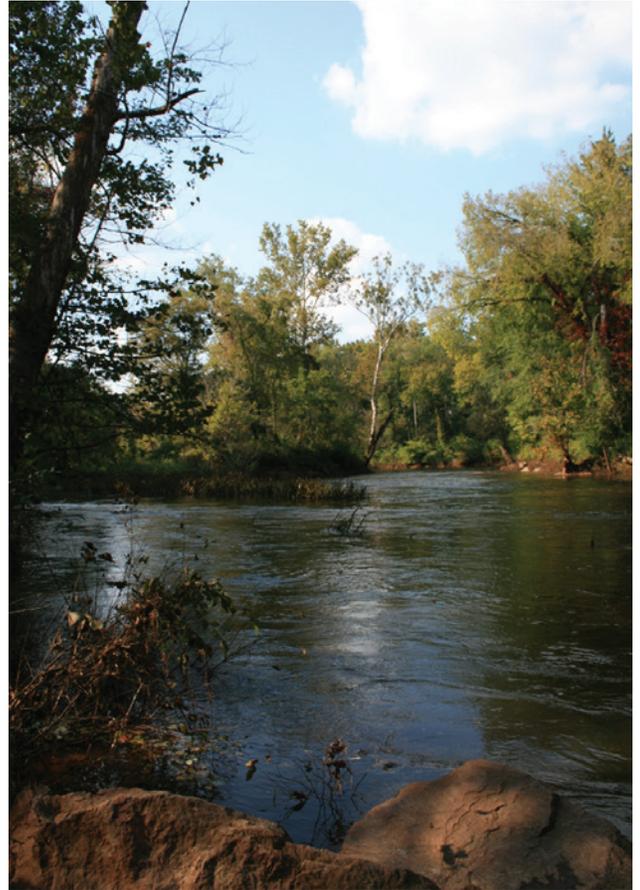
5.3 Water Quality and Conservation

The City of Raleigh has a responsibility to current residents, future generations, and those living downstream to systematically improve the health of local rivers, creeks, floodplains, and wetlands — and to continue to protect these resources over the long term. Water quality and conservation strategies should recognize that the meaning of “water” depends on context. In its most common context, it is the potable water provided by the city in pipes to homes and businesses. In the context of nature, it is what sustains our streams, lakes, wetlands, and the Neuse River and their habitats for wildlife, provides the needed supply source for “making” our potable water, and flows through other cities and towns to Pamlico Sound and the Atlantic Ocean.

Local streams also are important to the history and heritage of Raleigh. Early explorers used local waterways as landmarks and travel routes, and settlers established villages and industries along their banks. These important natural resources aided in the establishment of Raleigh and should not be compromised, as they represent a direct lifeline to the vitality of the city as a whole. Without ample, clean water, Raleigh cannot be prepared to manage long-term droughts, much less thrive with current and projected populations.

The core goals to be fulfilled by these water quality and conservation policies include: keeping and treating rainfall on-site or as close to site as much as possible, thereby mimicking the flow of water in a natural setting and reducing non-point source pollution from stormwater run-off; increasing water conservation measures and reducing overall demand for water; minimizing soil erosion and sedimentation; reducing hazardous and damaging flooding; and reducing nutrient loads.

See also Section 9: ‘Public Utilities’ for additional policies and actions.



Policy EP 3.1 Water Quality Stormwater Control Measures

To complement structural controls, use non-structural Stormwater Control Measures (SCMs) to improve water quality, such as public education programs, monitoring and control of illicit discharges, expansion of the greenway concept to include safe floodplain connection and activation, and ongoing implementation of the city’s sediment control program.



Policy EP 3.2 Protection of Local Streams and the Neuse River

Protect and preserve local streams and the Neuse River, primary channel, major tributaries, intermittent headwaters streams, floodplains, and topography to improve overall water quality for drinking, fish and wildlife habitat, and fishing, boating, and other recreational uses.



Policy EP 3.3 Drinking Water Supply Protection

Protect major drinking water supply overlay districts through preservation of open space, community programs that promote tree coverage, floodplain protection and restoration, and sustainable limits to impervious surface cover.



Policy EP 3.8 Low Impact Development

Promote the use of low impact development (LID) techniques to help mitigate the impact of stormwater runoff. This includes the use of green roofs, rain gardens, cisterns, rain barrels, and other measures in urban and suburban landscapes.



Policy EP 3.4 Low Impact Systems for Parking

Well maintained permeable pavement and other low impact systems for parking areas should be encouraged throughout the city, especially in environmentally sensitive areas and floodplains.



Policy EP 3.9 Drinking Water Conservation

Promote conservation of potable water supply, even during periods of adequate supply, not just during drought. Potable water conservation saves energy and normalizes practices, which will help the city cope with the ups and downs of rainfall patterns.



Policy EP 3.5 Watershed-focused Planning

Water quality and flooding should be managed using a watershed-focused approach. Such an approach uses performance-based strategies to enhance water quality and prevent or decrease flooding concerns in each watershed rather than applying citywide standards.



Policy EP 3.10 Groundwater Protection

Protect groundwater from the adverse effects of development. Land development and use should be managed to reduce the likelihood of groundwater contamination.



Policy EP 3.6 Maintaining Drinking Water Quality

Improve the ecological integrity of the city's primary drinking water sources by further protecting streams from encroaching development and expanding the protection of stream buffers.



Policy EP 3.11 Water Supply Watershed Protection and Open Space

Continue to support and develop programs that protect open space lands in Raleigh's water supply watershed protection areas, such as the Upper Neuse Water Supply Watershed and the Little River Water Supply Watershed.



Policy EP 3.7 Protecting and Restoring Streams

Preserve and restore the natural character of local and area streams and waterways through greenway acquisition, flood prone area regulation, purchase of properties in Neuse River Buffer and flood prone areas, drainage corridor and buffer protection, and improved public and private design and construction practices, including but not limited to stream stabilization and restoration.



Policy EP 3.12 Mitigating Stormwater Impacts

- Potential stormwater impacts from new development on adjoining properties should mimic pre-development conditions and control the peak rate of runoff and/or volume of runoff so as to avoid flooding of adjoining and downstream properties, erosion of stream banks, and to allow the recharging of groundwater. The intent is to avoid environmental and economic damage to the adjacent properties, city infrastructure, and receiving surface waters.



Policy EP 3.13 Erosion Control Measures

Erosion control measures should continue to be used on all construction sites to control soil erosion and minimize sediment run-off.



Policy EP 3.14 Wastewater Reuse

Expand wastewater recycling/reuse systems at wastewater treatment facilities to further reduce the nitrogen and phosphorus load to the Neuse River system and to reduce potable water consumption for non-essential purposes.



Policy EP 3.15 Grading Controls

Pursue a risk-based analysis approach to prevent soil erosion by limiting the amount of disturbed areas allowed and restricting mass grading as much as practicable.



Policy EP 3.16 Collaboration for Managing Stormwater

Pursue stormwater management initiatives that benefit and support the city and region by participating in countywide, regional, and statewide partnerships to develop innovative, consistent, and sustainable practices.



Policy EP 3.17 Graduated Water Rates

Use rate structures to encourage water conservation by providing incentives to customers for reduced water usage.



Policy EP 3.18 Green Infrastructure

Continue to improve surface water quality and protect water resources through the design, construction, and installation of green infrastructure (GI) for city projects and facilities. Green infrastructure uses vegetation, soils; and non-natural materials to absorb and filter polluted water that would normally runoff impervious surfaces directly into a waterway. Low impact development (LID) incorporates many of the principles related to green infrastructure. Widespread use of green infrastructure will also better prepare Raleigh for the effects of climate change along with managing the quality and quantity of stormwater runoff.

Action EP 3.1 Demonstration Projects

Work with other city departments, regional partners, and the local development community to promote demonstration projects within the City of Raleigh that use multiple water conservation measures on single sites. Incorporate Best Management Practices (BMPs), such as green roofs, bioretention cells, permeable pavers, large-and small-scale rainwater harvesting, and similar innovative projects. Offer incentives, such as grants, fee waivers, expedited review, tax breaks, and/or density bonus or transfer provisions for participating in demonstration programs.

Action EP 3.2 Incorporation of Green Infrastructure/Low Impact Development into City Code

Develop and adopt low impact development (LID) and green infrastructure (GI) code and provisions so that rainwater is retained and absorbed on-site as an alternative to traditional approaches that include piping, channelization, and regional detention. Create templates, facts sheets, and cost estimating tools to help administer the GI/LID ordinance at development sites and within the public right-of-way. Develop incentives for GI/LID, such as stormwater utility fee credits, stormwater quality cost share, public-private partnerships, permitting incentives, and others.

The Lower Little Rock Creek Walkable Watershed Concept Plan

The Lower Little Rock Creek Walkable Watershed Concept Plan is a cohesive strategy and framework to improve the overall health of the community and the surrounding watershed. This watershed contains a portion of downtown, John Chavis Memorial Park, and surrounding neighborhoods to the east and southeast of downtown. The study area focuses on the lower portion of the Little Rock Creek Watershed, specifically the South Park Neighborhood located southeast of the downtown area. This area was selected based on specific criteria, including a community bisected by a creek, proximity to schools and parks, surface water quality impairment, and a lack of infrastructure, such as sidewalks, and stormwater management controls. Streets, intersections, and potential sites where infrastructure improvements can be implemented, subject to available funding and citywide priorities, are identified in the plan.

The plan recommends:

- *Street opportunities include those streets where sidewalks and natural drainage strategies can be integrated to improve walkability and stormwater management.*
- *Safe crossings at intersections can be integrated with stormwater treatment to provide safe pedestrian crossings. Intersections lacking crosswalks, greenway access points and intersections where narrow street right of way might limit full block sidewalks are highlighted.*
- *Stormwater flows include off-street natural drainage opportunities, such as swales and rain gardens that can be aligned with the greenway and sidewalks.*
- *Greenway access provides additional access points to increase use and activity along the greenway.*
- *Education opportunities include environmental education signage to improve creek awareness and stewardship. Additional “cues to care” can be incorporated to communicate that natural drainage areas are important.*

Action EP 3.3 Drinking Water Conservation

Monitor drinking water conservation efforts to measure reduction by residents, businesses, government and institutions. Continue to promote efficiency and the value of water through public education. Prepare and publish an annual report on the per capita water use of all customer classes.

Action EP 3.4 Stormwater Management Projects for Water Quality

Identify, prioritize, and retrofit specific sites in the City of Raleigh where water quality management projects can be installed in existing developments.

Action EP 3.5 Illegal Discharges

As required by the city’s EPA NPDES MS4 Stormwater Discharge Permit and city code, continue to identify and eliminate illegal discharges into the city’s sewer and stormwater systems and its waterways through public education and awareness, inspections, and enforcement.

Action EP 3.6 Removed 2018

Action EP 3.7 Stormwater Plan Review

Review all stormwater management plans for new development and redevelopment with a critical evaluation of approaches to nitrogen reduction as well as downstream flooding and erosion reductions.

Action EP 3.8 Completed 2015

Action EP 3.9 Upper Neuse Initiative

Continue to provide both financial and political support for the conservation of land in key areas identified by the Upper Neuse Clean Water Initiative.

Action EP 3.10 Completed 2015**Action EP 3.11 Protections for Steep Slopes**

Study whether the development code should be amended to regulate the regrading and development of steep slopes of 15 percent or greater to conserve the natural contours of the city and prevent soil erosion.

Action EP 3.12 Stream/Watercourse Restoration

Create a program for identifying and prioritizing degraded or channelized watercourses and streams for future daylighting and restoration, including incentives for undertaking such projects on private property where public benefits, such as water quality improvement and flood hazard reduction, can be realized.

Action EP 3.13 Maintenance of Private Stormwater Facilities

Maintain easements and facilities acquired and constructed as part of the city's Drainage Assistance Program.

Action EP 3.14 The Lower Little Rock Creek Walkable Watershed Concept Plan

Implement the recommendations identified in the plan to enhance pedestrian and bicycle connections, installing green infrastructure along identified corridors to help improve water quality within the watershed.

5.4 Flood Reduction and Preparedness

Throughout its history, Raleigh has experienced damaging flash floods from a variety of rainfall events, including occasional tropical storms and hurricanes. These events are predicted to grow in severity as climate change impacts are realized. The city's greenway system has acted as an effective buffer for floodwaters, limiting to some degree even more damaging losses. The city needs to further its watershed approach to stormwater management, flood hazard reduction, and flood preparedness. This watershed approach needs to target drainage basins and areas most susceptible to frequent flooding and should define facilities, programs, and policies necessary to improve preparedness and reduce the risks associated with flooding while at the same time protecting and improving water quality.

Floodplain areas and drainage basins within Raleigh's jurisdiction are illustrated on Map EP-2. The map shows that the largest floodplain areas are found along the Upper Neuse River and Crabtree and Walnut Creeks.

Policy EP 4.1 Daylighting Streams

Discourage further channelization and piping of streams and focus instead on projects that "daylight" or uncover buried streams. Pursue partnerships with the private sector to daylight streams that are currently buried.

**Policy EP 4.2 Floodplain Conservation**

● Development should be directed away from the 100-year floodplain.



Policy EP 4.3 Development in the Floodplain

Pursue regulatory approaches that avoid the future expansion of the floodplain. Floodplain development should not abridge the natural role of floodplains to absorb water, recharge the groundwater, improve water quality, and avoid flooding downstream.



Policy EP 4.4 Acquisition of Flood-prone Land

Pursue city acquisition of properties, easements and/or development rights located within the 100-year floodplain to protect public safety, reduce economic damages from floods, and preserve sensitive natural areas.



Policy EP 4.5 Watercourse Protection

Minimize encroachment into natural watercourse areas and preserve the natural character of watercourses to protect water quality and reduce the potential for flooding and erosion damage.



See also '5.3 Water Quality and Conservation.'

Policy EP 4.6 Community Rating System

Continue to participate in the Community Rating System (CRS) to help monitor hazard mitigation efforts and to improve the affordability of flood insurance for residents. The CRS is part of the National Flood Insurance Program that provides flood insurance discounts for communities that go beyond the minimum standards for floodplain management.



Policy EP 4.7 No Adverse Impact

The city shall adopt the principles of No Adverse Impact (NAI) as outlined by the Association of State Floodplain Managers. NAI floodplain management takes place when the actions of one property owner are not allowed to adversely affect the rights of other property owners. Adverse effects or impacts can be measured in terms of increased flood peaks, increased flood stages, higher flood velocities, increased erosion and sedimentation, or other impacts the community considers important.



Policy EP 4.8 Stream Crossing Infrastructure

Install bridge systems instead of culverts for stream crossings where feasible in order to maintain the natural ecosystem associated with the stream.



Action EP 4.1 Completed 2015

Action EP 4.2 Completed 2015

Action EP 4.3 Floodplain Management Best Practices

Study the floodplain management programs in other cities, including Tulsa, OK; Louisville, KY; and Charlotte, NC, and model a flood management program similar to what these communities have accomplished. This includes adopting an enhanced ordinance to both protect floodplains and also reward preservation efforts; and implementing programs that reduce impacts from flooding and further improve the city's CRS class rating.



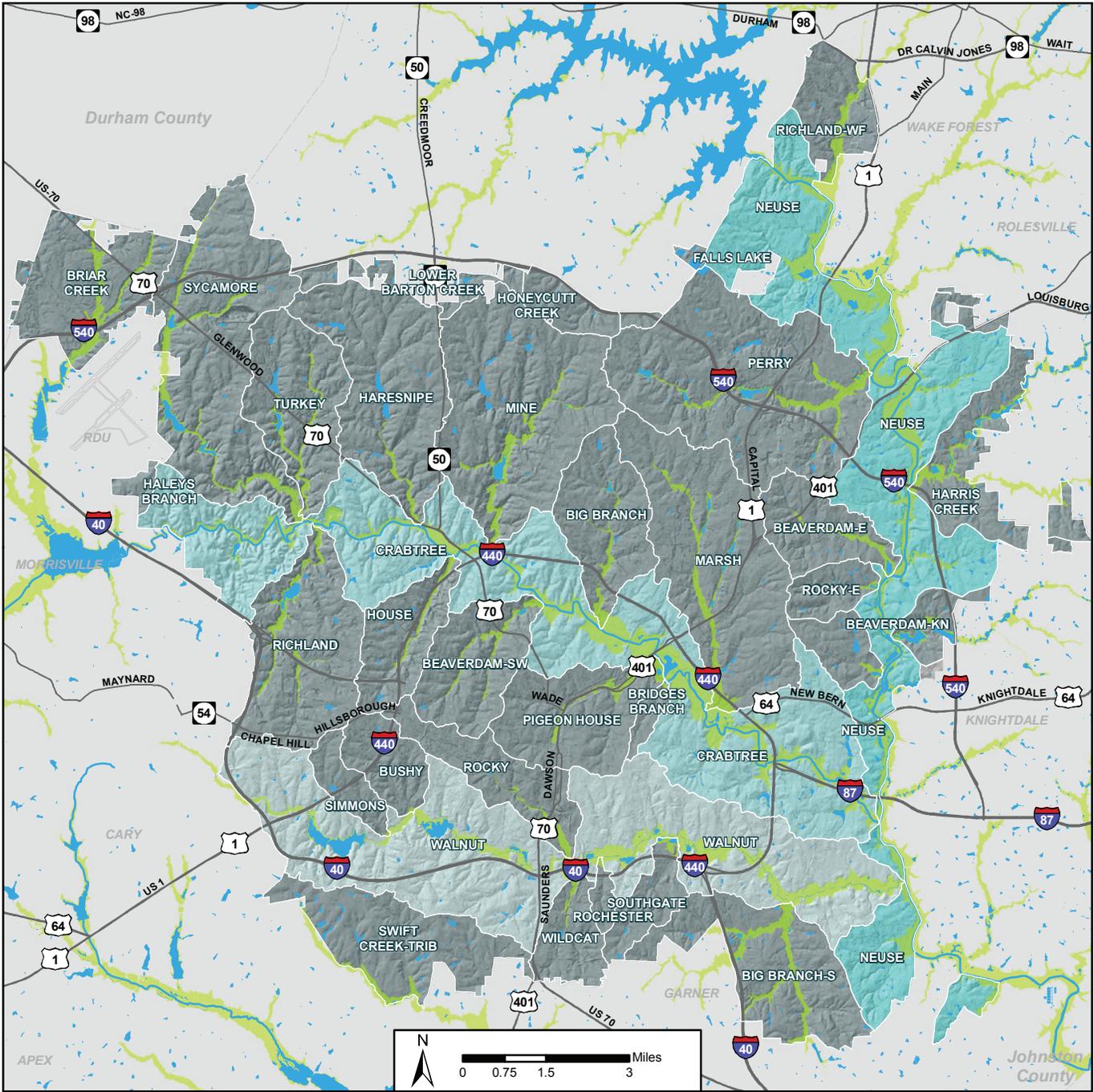
Action EP 4.4 Floodplain Regulations

Update city development regulations to ensure that any development and redevelopment in floodplain and flood fringe does not adversely affect the flood risks for other properties or communities as measured by increased flood stages, increased flood velocity, increased flows, or the increased potential for erosion and sedimentation, unless such impacts are mitigated in an equal or greater amount. Such regulations should provide exceptions for existing single-family lots and developments with minor impacts. Such update shall include a stakeholder process, including but not limited to representatives from the environmental community, civil engineering, residential and commercial property owners and real estate development community.

Action EP 4.5 Watershed Studies

Complete watershed studies to identify existing and future flooding hazards along with water quality needs and erosion concerns along with prioritized actions, measures, and capital improvement projects to improve conditions.

Map EP-1: Floodplain and Drainage Basins



- Neuse River Drainage Basin
- Crabtree Creek Drainage Basin
- Walnut Creek Drainage Basin
- Other Drainage Basins
- Water
- Floodplain

Map created 8/8/2018 by the Raleigh Department of City Planning

5.5 Tree Canopy Conservation and Growth

Raleigh has historically been known as the “City of Oaks” and prides itself on its green image. Trees and forests are integral to Raleigh’s identity and also contribute to quality of life and environmental health. Raleigh’s trees and forests increase shading, absorb carbon dioxide, mitigate the effects of stormwater runoff and pollution, prevent soil erosion, and facilitate water infiltration into soil.

Raleigh has adopted a tree conservation ordinance as part of the zoning code. The ordinance requires the conservation of existing trees during the development of properties more than two acres in area. In low-density residential districts (R-6 and below), trees on 15 percent of the land area must be preserved. For all other zone districts, tree preservation requirements impact 10 percent of the land area.

As Raleigh grows, it will need to do more to protect its existing urban, suburban, and native trees and forests, and should implement an aggressive program for replanting the city with native trees, when appropriate, to restore the canopy that has been lost to land development.

Policy EP 5.1 Urban Forestry

Expand and strengthen urban forestry and tree preservation programs to protect the existing tree cover and add to it.



Policy EP 5.2 Tree Canopy Standards

Maintain appropriate tree canopy coverage along 50 percent or more of all available sidewalk planting/landscape strips between the sidewalk and the curb.



Policy EP 5.3 Canopy Restoration

Promote the reforestation of tree coverage that is typically lost during urban and suburban development through tree conservation, targeted tree plantings, urban forestry, and street tree plantings.



Policy EP 5.4 Tree Selection

Tree species should be selected for site suitability, superior form, disease resistance, regional performance, drought tolerance, urban tolerance, diversity, and mature size by an ISA Certified Arborist or a professional approved by the Parks and Recreation Department’s Urban Forestry staff.



Policy EP 5.5 Forested Buffers

Conserve forested buffers along Raleigh’s freeways and expressways through the use of Special Highway Overlay Districts and conditional use zoning.



Action EP 5.1 Completed 2013

Action EP 5.2 Urban Forestry Plan

Work with local arboricultural institutions and agencies to prepare a detailed Urban Forest Plan that outlines how to implement treescape improvements and enhancements throughout the community. The Plan should divide the city into zones in order to accomplish implementation. The city should examine what other North Carolina communities have accomplished with their urban forestry plans.

Action EP 5.3 Removed 2014

Action EP 5.4 Utility Coordination

Coordinate with utility companies to plant, manage, and maintain healthy street trees that can establish mature and natural canopies without interfering with infrastructure operation.

Action EP 5.5 Completed 2015

Action EP 5.6 NeighborWoods

Implement an alternating planting/ maintenance cycle to foster the long-term tree survival and financial sustainability of the NeighborWoods program.

Action EP 5.7 Tree Canopy Assessment

Assess tree inventory to quantify carbon absorbed; monitor over time.

Action EP 5.8 Tree Conservation Ordinance

Review the Tree Conservation provisions in the Unified Development Ordinance. Identify areas of the existing code where additional conservation measures may be appropriate. Use Urban Forestry best practices to identify the most effective tree conservation measures in terms of desired benefits.

5.6 Wildlife and Habitat Protection and Preservation

Protecting the diversity of plant and animal species is important. Rapidly urbanizing communities such as Raleigh are in danger of losing their areas of wildlife habitat.

Raleigh still has the opportunity to protect and enhance its wildlife habitat and a wide range of “priority species,” including songbirds that are indigenous to North Carolina. “Priority species” of fish and wildlife are identified in the North Carolina Wildlife Action Plan and provide a useful resource for Raleigh’s wildlife conservation efforts. For example, the North Carolina Wildlife Action Plan identifies priority species that inhabit some city water bodies, such as Walnut Creek and the Neuse River corridor.

Policy EP 6.1 Aquatic Habitat

Seek to prevent further and/or potential aquatic degradation and impairment of biological communities by strengthening urban stream water quality measures.



See also ‘5.3 Water Quality and Conservation.’

Policy EP 6.2 Seasonal Pools and Streams

Protect and restore seasonal pools and intermittent streams, and their buffers that are home range/ breeding habitat for water dependent species.



Policy EP 6.3 Special Status Species

Place a high priority on protecting rare, threatened, and endangered species habitats and migratory corridors, as defined by Federal and State agencies, from development and its impacts through methods, such as land acquisition, park and greenway stewardship, improved development regulations, intergovernmental coordination, and mitigation.



Policy EP 6.4 Biodiversity and City Park Lands

Strive to maintain and improve species diversity and populations in the parks inventory through enhanced plantings and habitat management.





Action EP 6.1 **Habitat Plan**

Formulate a wildlife habitat plan to define, map, protect, and restore Raleigh’s native and priority habitats, particularly those identified in the North Carolina Wildlife Action Plan. The plan should establish a program of action for protecting and enhancing wildlife habitats and preserving biodiversity through a range of strategies, including land acquisition, park and greenway conservation and interpretation, augmented development regulations, and intergovernmental coordination. If priority habitats occur outside current city control, seek methods and partnership to conserve the ecological areas.

Action EP 6.2 **Habitat Protection Regulations**

Determine how to best address conservation, protection, and preservation of wildlife and habitats. Use the body of knowledge, designations and tools available through the N.C. Natural Heritage Program, N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, and other conservation-oriented organizations and agencies. Explore the creation of a wildlife habitat overlay district modeled after that used by the City of Tampa, Florida.

Action EP 6.3 **Invasive Species Control**

Develop a program to increase awareness of, contain, and possibly eradicate the problem of invasive plants and insects.

5.7 Material Resource Management

Comprehensive material resource management does not just include waste management, but also the management of inputs and consumption patterns. While recycling is a big step in the right direction, it is insufficient by itself as a means of achieving sustainability, as it merely deals with a fraction of the resources involved in the current linear system of extraction, production, distribution, consumption, and disposal. In order to be truly sustainable, Raleigh must take more steps toward a closed loop or “zero waste” system of production. Such a system requires that Raleigh maximize its existing recycling and reuse efforts, while ensuring that products used by both city staff and city residents are designed for the environment and have the potential to be repaired, reused, or recycled.



The city is examining replacing the traditional approach to waste disposal with a new paradigm, exemplified by the “Cradle-to-Cradle” design credo “waste = food,” that repositions waste streams as resources. Examples include the commonplace, such as recycling programs and reuse of water; to emerging practices, such as mining of FOG (fats, oils, grease) for biofuels, and producing usable methane from landfills and anaerobic digestion of sanitary wastes.

See also ‘10.2 Solid Waste’ in Section 10: ‘Community Facilities and Services’ for related policies and actions.

Policy EP 7.1 Waste Best Management Practices

Promote waste Best Management Practices (BMPs) in all current and future development projects in an effort to reduce the amount of waste produced by development. Explore opportunities to develop standards to address the waste management hierarchy (avoidance, minimization, reuse, recycling, recovery, treatment, and disposal) in design, construction, and demolition stages.



Policy EP 7.2 Waste Minimization

Move away from high energy/high technology methods of waste disposal and more toward waste minimization. A system of incentives and penalties for both the public and private sectors should be created to increase community-level involvement and facilitate public/private partnerships. Zero waste will be the long-term goal of the city.



Policy EP 7.3 Incentives to Waste Reduction

Motivate residents, businesses, and institutions to reduce and recycle waste, including construction and demolition debris, through appropriate incentives and disincentives.



Policy EP 7.4 Public Awareness of Waste Impacts

Promote public awareness regarding the implications of solid-waste generation on the environment, and the consumption and disposal practices that result in less waste generation as well as more efficient, environmentally sound use of resources.





Policy EP 7.5 Source Reduction

Reduce the sources of solid waste through increased education and outreach programs and through increased recycling and composting.



Policy EP 7.6 Municipal Waste Reduction

Further increase waste reduction and conservation by city employees; increase product-substitution, recycling and the purchase and use of recycled goods, and ensure that less toxic and sustainable alternative products, such as chlorine-free paper and PVC-free plastics are actively supported and used.



Policy EP 7.7 Community Participation in Recycling

Increase community (resident and business) participation in recycling programs through the use of communications, quantification, and competition.



See also '5.9 Environmental Education, Awareness and Coordination' for more on this topic.

Policy EP 7.8 Food Waste Composting

Investigate and pursue appropriate opportunities for food waste composting, ranging from individual household composting to regional organic waste composting.



Policy EP 7.9 Construction and Demolition Recycling

Promote the reuse of waste from building demolition and construction, including the recycling of lumber and brick, and salvage of usable fittings and hardware.



Policy EP 7.10 Businesses Using Recycled Output

Support economic development efforts aimed at enhancing existing and developing businesses that can utilize local secondary materials as feedstocks.



Policy EP 7.11 Waste-to-energy

Continue to operate a methane gas recovery system, and promote further research into new and clean technologies for the conversion of organic waste into energy.



See also '10.2 Solid Waste' in Section 10: 'Community Facilities and Services' for an additional Waste-to-Energy policy.

Action EP 7.1 Pay-as-you-throw

Create a “pay-as-you-throw” program that utilizes a volume-based disposal fee system to encourage residents and contractors to reduce waste. Such action will require increased vigilance against illegal dumping.

Action EP 7.2 Completed 2011**Action EP 7.3 Waste-to-energy Demonstration**

Partner with the North Carolina Cooperative Extension and related institutions, agencies, and organizations to explore and develop a demonstration waste-to-energy project.

Action EP 7.4 Environmentally-friendly Product Use

Work with regional agencies to explore options for assuring the use of compostable plastic, recyclable paper, and/or re-usable checkout bags by stores throughout the region, as well as a reduction in the use of polystyrene foam (Styrofoam) food service containers, including those in the City of Raleigh. Similar ordinances in other cities apply to grocery stores with gross annual sales exceeding two million dollars, and pharmacies with five or more locations; penalties apply for organizations in violation.

Action EP 7.5 Completed 2015**Action EP 7.6 Demolition Debris**

Require a waste diversion statement to be submitted at the time of application for a demolition permit; the statement should include a list of material types and volumes anticipated from the demolition and the market or destination for those materials. Consider requiring the same for construction permits.

Action EP 7.7 Environmentally Preferable Purchasing

Expand on current policy by including specific goals for toxic pollution reduction, recycled content products, energy and water savings, green building construction and renovation, landscaping, forest conservation, and agricultural bio-based products.

5.8 Light and Noise Pollution Controls

Excessive, poorly designed outdoor lighting wastes electricity, disturbs natural habitats, and increasingly deprives many of us of a direct relationship with the night sky. The City of Raleigh seeks to minimize light pollution, glare, and light trespass; conserve energy and resources while maintaining night time safety, utility, security, and productivity; and curtail the degradation of the nighttime visual environment. Similarly, noise pollution from highway and airport traffic disturbs quality of life, and should be mitigated appropriately.

Policy EP 8.1 Light Pollution

Reduce light pollution and promote dark skies by limiting the brightness of exterior fixtures and shielding adjacent uses from light sources, provided safety is not compromised. Minimize flood lighting and maximize low level illumination. Promote the use of efficient, full cut-off lighting fixtures wherever practical. Full cut-off fixtures emit no light above the horizontal plane.



Policy EP 8.2 Light Screening

Prohibit unshielded exterior lamps and limit the lighting of trees and other vegetation through the use of shielded fixtures and footcandle limits.



Policy EP 8.3 Night-time Light Impacts

Uses that can turn off outdoor lighting during night hours are to be encouraged in areas with uses sensitive to night-time light impacts. Uses which require all-night illumination are to be discouraged in these areas, while ensuring that actual and perceived night-time safety is maintained.



Policy EP 8.4 Noise and Light Impacts

Mitigate potential noise and light pollution impacts from new development on adjoining residential properties.



Policy EP 8.5 Airport Overlay Zone

Keep the boundaries of the Airport Overlay District zone consistent with the recommendations of the Raleigh-Durham Airport Authority to protect residents from impacts of increased flight patterns and activity.



Policy EP 8.6 Expressway Noise

Protect residents from excessive roadway noise by requiring appropriate mitigation measures, such as landscaped buffers or noise walls, for all new expressways that generate excessive levels of noise.

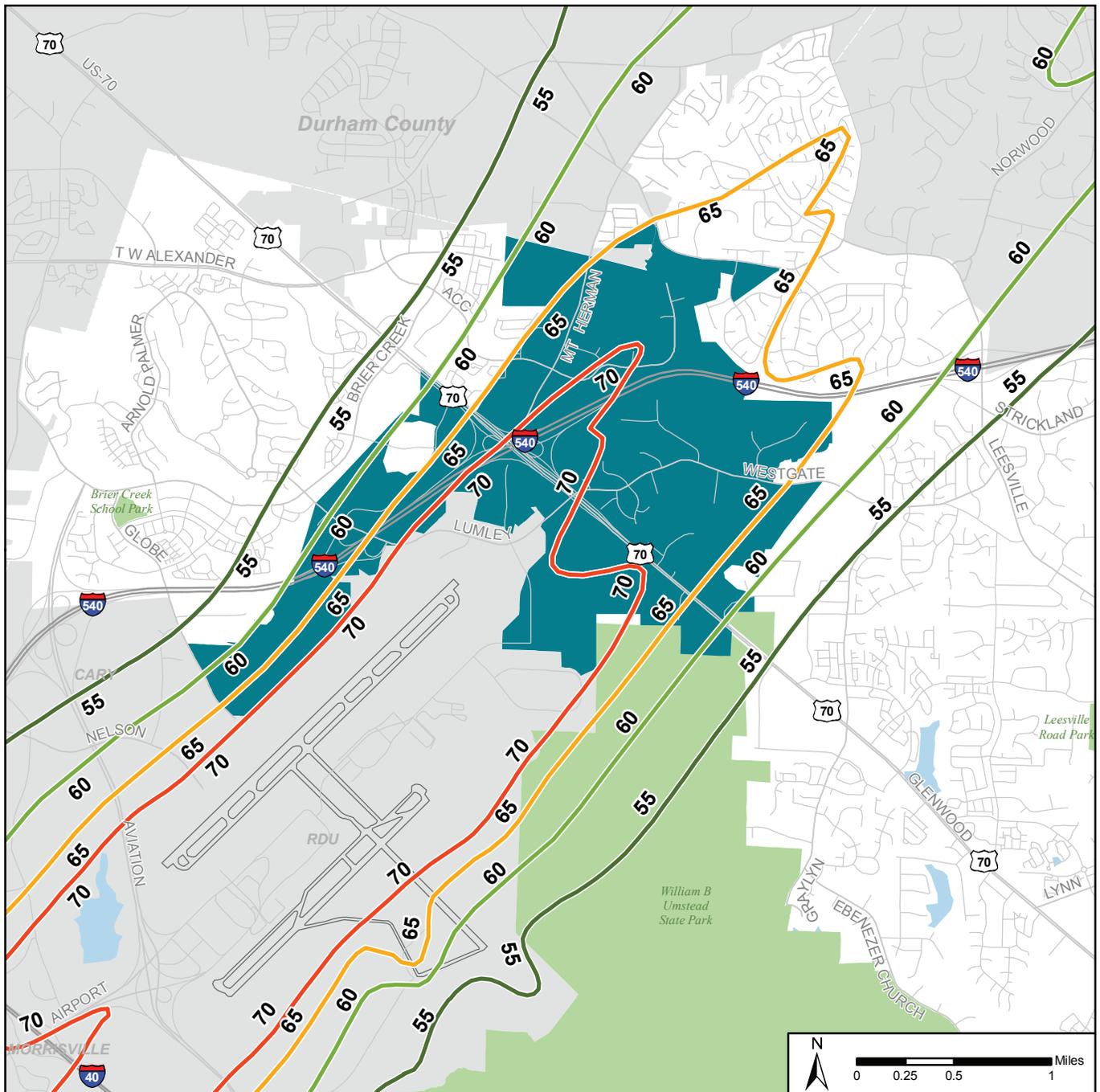


Policy EP 8.7 Noise Codes and Regulations

Maintain and enforce the building codes, regulations, and other applicable standards that mitigate noise impacts.



Map EP-2: Airport Overlay District and Noise Contours



Airport Overlay District

Airport Noise Contours

55 Average Daily Decibels

60 Average Daily Decibels

65 Average Daily Decibels

70 Average Daily Decibels

Policy EP 8.8 Noise and Environmental Justice

Ensure that residents of all income levels throughout the City of Raleigh are equally protected from excessive roadway noise.



Policy EP 8.9 LED Lighting

Use high-efficiency Light-Emitting Diode (LED) lighting for outdoor illumination where feasible; newer technologies should be considered as they become available.



Policy EP 8.10 Airport Noise Protection for Residential Uses

● Rezoning of properties within the defined 65 decibel level of Raleigh Durham Airport Authority composite noise contour line and outside the Airport Overlay District, that propose to increase residential density or create new residential zoning is strongly discouraged. Exceptions to such rezoning may occur through a conditional use rezoning that adopts Raleigh Durham Airport Authority recommended noise mitigation measures.



Action EP 8.1 Completed 2013

Action EP 8.2 Dark Sky Incentives

Develop a package of incentives and/or credits to promote the utilization of energy-efficient, full cut-off lighting fixtures that minimize glare and light pollution.

Action EP 8.3 Non-essential Lighting

Explore programs to dim non-essential parking lot or building lights overnight, which can be reactivated by a motion sensor.

5.9 Environmental Education, Awareness, and Coordination

One of the most important efforts that the City of Raleigh should undertake to protect, conserve, and steward the environment is to offer residents access to comprehensive environmental education programs and activities. According to the North American Association for Environmental Education, “The goal of environmental education is to develop a world population that is aware of and concerned about the environment and its associated problems and which has the knowledge, skills, attitudes, motivations, and commitment to work individually and collectively toward solutions of current problems and the prevention of new ones.”

Policy EP 9.1 Environmental Education

Develop and promote permanent environmental education and interpretive facilities and programs to foster broad public awareness of environmental issues and consequences and to promote greater appreciation and stewardship of our natural resources both locally and globally.



Policy EP 9.2 Environmental Justice Education

Educate local decision-makers on the principles of environmental justice to promote equitable distributions of environmental burdens (pollution, industrial facilities, waste disposal, truck traffic, noise, etc.) and access to environmental goods (nutritious food, clean air and water, parks, recreation, health care, education, transportation, safe jobs, etc.).



Policy EP 9.3 Environmental Stewardship

Optimize the appreciation, use, and stewardship of Raleigh’s natural resources, including its wildlife and habitats, flora and fauna, and waterways and floodplains to foster broad public awareness of the connection between humans and nature. Enlist the support of local colleges and universities in targeted research and other projects to meet regional environmental goals.



Policy EP 9.4 Environmental Oversight

Provide adequate oversight during the construction phase for all city capital projects to ensure applicable federal, state and local ordinances and environmental standards are met.



Policy EP 9.5 Promoting Local Products

Promote the public health and environmental benefits of supporting locally-produced foods, goods, and services.



Policy EP 9.6 Local Produce and Farmers Markets

Encourage the creation and maintenance of produce markets throughout Raleigh to provide outlets for healthful and locally-grown produce for residents. Support growing, harvesting, selling and delivery of locally-grown produce. Target areas within limited access to traditional food markets.



Policy EP 9.7 Cooperation with Conservation Groups

Promote cooperation with conservation and land trust groups through the city’s Upper Neuse Clean Water Initiative so city resources can be carefully coordinated with other land acquisition programs.





Policy EP 9.8 Landscaping and Gardening

Encourage environmentally responsible landscaping and gardening practices to reduce water use and water pollution, including increased use of drought-resistant and native plants and reduced use of pesticides, and increase pollinator supportive habitat including native and pollinator-friendly species to proliferate healthy pollinator populations. Strive to maintain best practices by promoted pollinator programs such as Bee City USA and support interactions among community advocates and public programs



Policy EP 9.9 Food Systems Education

Facilitate partnerships between community gardens and community organizations to develop programs that educate the public about food systems (including environmental impacts), healthy eating, and food security.



Action EP 9.1 Environmental Education Programs

Expand environmental education offerings, (including master gardener programs) at city parks, including, but not limited to, Annie Louise Wilkerson Nature Preserve, Horseshoe Farm Park, Lake Johnson Park, Anderson Point Park, Durant Nature Park, and the future Raleigh and Walnut Creek parks. Promote these offerings through web sites and other correspondence with residents.

Action EP 9.2 Public School Environmental Component

Encourage Wake County public schools to incorporate an environmental education component in the school curricula.

Action EP 9.3 Renewable Energy Education

In conjunction with community partners, conduct a public education and outreach effort to encourage the purchase of renewable energy options from local providers.

Action EP 9.4 Local Food Systems

Explore opportunities to develop and expand local food systems (including community gardens and urban farms) that provide opportunities for residents to grow their own produce as well as learn and use organic gardening techniques. The city should identify publicly-owned sites that may be suitable for community gardens and urban farms, work with advocacy groups to make these sites available, and manage them. Coordinate with yard waste collection and community composting.

Action EP 9.5 Environmental Indicators

Create and maintain an Environmental Indicators Report documenting environmental trends.



Action EP 9.6 Completed 2013

Action EP 9.7 Urban Agriculture Plan

Develop an Urban Agriculture Plan to identify opportunities for urban agriculture and community gardens on city-owned property. The plan should include the following items: analysis of site suitability for agriculture; analysis of need using, but not limited to, income, food access, health indicators, history of environmental justice issues; and resources required from the city and private sector/nonprofit partners.

Action EP 9.8 Food System Plan

Develop a Food System Plan for Raleigh. Coordinate with Wake County to ensure consistency with the Wake County Food Security Plan.
