



Agenda Action Form Overview

The Board is requested to approve Capital Project Amendment No.26CPA017 and Budget Ordinance Amendment No.26BCC051 to support Triangle Land Conservancy's (TLC's) purchase and protection of 77 acres. TLC will convey 15 acres located at 391 and 409 Southview Road (portions of REIDs 231184 and 194090) to Durham County to expand the County's existing Southview Preserve. The County's \$510,000 contribution represents 16% of the total \$3.1 million cost of the 77 acres and allows TLC to leverage multiple funding partners and landowner donations needed to make the purchase.

Background/Justification

Since the early 1990s, Durham County's Open Space Program has worked to protect habitats, water resources, farms, forests, and provide land for nature-based recreation. To date, Durham County has protected 4,192 acres: 1,450 acres owned fee simple and 2,742 acres under conservation easements. Of these easements, 89% (2,447 acres) protect farmland.

In 2014, Durham County partnered with the Trust for Public Land and City of Durham to acquire 134 acres along Southview Road for water quality protection, habitat preservation, and a future City park site. Durham County's existing Southview conservation land consists of 103 acres at 7099 Wake Forest Highway (REID 194086), funded by [Raleigh's Watershed Protection Program](#) and the [State Land & Water Fund](#). TLC currently owns 83 acres on the east side of Southview Road, also funded by these programs.

Durham County has a long history of partnering with Triangle Land Conservancy that includes the support of land acquisition at Little River Regional Park and Hollow Rock Nature Park. More recently Durham County's Open Space Program has worked with TLC on permanent protection of land near Camp Butner and along the Little River.

The Southview Preserve Phase 2 property provides exceptional water quality benefits because it contains 3,700 feet of streams and 7,400 feet of riparian buffer flowing into Falls Lake and Lick Creek—sources of Raleigh's drinking water. Conserving this land will prevent about 28 pounds of nitrogen and 12 pounds of phosphorus annually from entering Falls Lake, reducing nutrient pollution.

The property expands the protected land network, connecting TLC's Southview Preserve and Durham County Open Space to form a continuous habitat corridor. This corridor supports wildlife movement and biodiversity in a rapidly developing area, with potential for rare species and unique plant communities.

The property is located within the Upper Neuse Clean Water Initiative conservation strategy area, which prioritizes land protection to safeguard drinking water and ecological integrity. Its tributaries feed into streams critical to water quality, underscoring the importance of permanent conservation.

While the property will initially be managed for conservation, it may allow future public access. Together, TLC's holdings and Durham County's adjacent preserves could offer hiking trails connecting to the Mountains-to-Sea Trail, creating a regional destination for recreation and education.

In fall 2025, Triangle Land Conservancy was awarded funds from Raleigh's Watershed Protection Program and the NC Land & Water Fund to purchase these 77 acres (Southview Preserve Phase 2). The sellers will donate \$308,000 by reducing the price. In September 2025, a [legal settlement](#) added \$270,000 for TLC's 62 acres to protect Lick Creek.



Durham County’s contribution of \$510,000 represents 16% of the \$3.1 million project cost. County funds will cover survey costs and \$480,000 of the purchase price, wired to the closing attorney. No grant funds will flow through the County.

Policy Impact

The acquisition and protection of land for permanent open space aligns with Strategic Plan Goal 4: Environment – Protect natural resources and support and promote community and economic viability for all residents of Durham County, through the Natural Resource Stewardship and Protection Objective to protect and steward natural resources.

The protection of this site supports aligns with the goals of the [Eastern Durham Open Space Plan](#), adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in 2007 for protection of water quality and wildlife habitat, protecting stream buffers, and providing potential space for hiking trails.

Additionally, Durham’s adopted Comprehensive Plan includes policies to conserve significant natural areas, ecosystems, habitats, and wildlife corridors (Policies 78, 79, 83, 98) and safeguard drinking water sources for Durham and nearby communities (Policy 86). The Comprehensive Plan also includes policies that support the use and management of County-owned open space lands, including County parks and preserves, to improve their function and quality as “green infrastructure” (Policies 100 and 108).

This land protection contributes to the Comprehensive Plan’s goal to place 30% of Durham County’s land area in permanent conservation by the year 2050 (Policy 78).

Fiscal Impact

The 77-acre project area is valued at \$3,020,000 (\$39,220 per acre). Including survey, due diligence, and transaction costs, the total land protection cost is \$3,103,698. With four funding sources and Triangle Land Conservancy’s support, Durham County’s share is 16% (\$510,000). County funds will cover surveying and \$480,000 of the purchase price, wired directly to the closing attorney. Durham County’s Open Space and Farmland Preservation Capital Project has funds to cover this amount. No additional County funds are needed, and no grant funds will pass through Durham County.

Funding Partner	Contribution	Percent of Project Value
Raleigh's Waterhed Protection Program	\$1,170,500	38%
NC Land & Water Fund	\$845,198	27%
Durham County	\$510,000	16%
Landowner Donation	\$308,000	10%
Sound Rivers, Settlement	\$270,000	9%
Total Project	\$3,103,698	100%

County Manager’s Recommendation:

The County Manager recommends that the Board approve Capital Project Amendment No.26CPA017 and Budget Ordinance Amendment No.26BCC051 to support Triangle Land Conservancy’s purchase of 77 acres. TLC will convey 15 acres at 391 and 409 Southview Road (portions of REIDs 231184 194090) to Durham County for the County’s ownership and protection. The County’s \$510,000 contribution represents 16% of the total \$3.1 million cost of the 77 acres and allows TLC to leverage multiple funding partners and landowner donations.