

The Town of Pittsboro strives to serve residents, businesses, and stakeholders as effectively as possible. To continue to best serve our community, we urge the North Carolina General Assembly to support the following legislative priorities:

1. PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITY REVOLVING LOAN FUND

THE CHALLENGE: North Carolina's smaller and fast-growing communities face increasing demands on police, fire, and emergency services. However, municipalities often lack access to affordable financing options to construct or modernize public safety facilities, forcing reliance on local taxes or costly debt financing.



THE SOLUTION: Establish a **Public Safety Facilities Revolving Loan Fund** that provides zero or low-interest loans to municipalities for the construction, expansion, and modernization of police, fire, and EMS facilities. The program would function similarly to existing water and wastewater revolving loan funds and would be replenished through loan repayments.

THE BENEFITS: A revolving fund approach reduces financial barriers for growing communities, strengthens emergency response capabilities, and ensures long-term statewide investment in public safety infrastructure while minimizing the burden on local taxpayers.



Timely Investments in Modern Public Safety Facilities Can:

- Reduce response times.
- Lower insurance costs.
- Deliver crucial services that sustain public confidence and protect life and property.
- Keep pace with growth while ensuring the safety and well-being of all residents.

2. CLARIFICATION OF DOWNZONING AUTHORITY



THE CHALLENGE: Session Law 2024-57 requires written consent from every affected property owner before a municipality can downzone property. In practice, this requirement makes it extremely difficult for communities to manage growth, protect established neighborhoods, preserve open space, and prevent incompatible land uses.

THE SOLUTION: Adopt legislation clarifying that municipalities retain the ability to downzone property through the standard legislative zoning process without requiring unanimous consent from affected property owners, while maintaining existing public hearing and due-process protections.

THE BENEFITS: Restoring practical downzoning authority allows communities to responsibly plan for growth, maintain compatibility between land uses, and align development with infrastructure capacity while preserving property rights and transparent public decision-making.

Highlights of Restoring Authority:

- Local Autonomy - Ability to respond proactively to growth, property use conflicts, and infrastructure constraints.
- Efficient Land Use Management - Prevent and mitigate sprawl.
- Greater certainty for comprehensive planning.
- Preservation of community character.



3. STATE SUPPORT FOR LEGACY STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE

THE CHALLENGE: Many North Carolina communities rely on **aging stormwater systems built decades ago**, which were not designed for today's development patterns or increasingly severe storms. Recent events such as **Tropical Storm Chantal, Matthew, Florence, and Helene** have highlighted the vulnerability of legacy infrastructure to flooding, property damage, expanding floodplains, and environmental impacts. Small and mid-sized municipalities often lack the financial capacity to upgrade these systems.

THE SOLUTION: Establish a **state funding program dedicated to legacy stormwater infrastructure improvements** administered through the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) Division of Water Infrastructure (DWI). **The Stormwater Infrastructure Fund** would provide grants and low-interest financing for:

- Replacement of aging stormwater pipes and culverts.
- Infrastructure upgrades to accommodate higher storm passage and detention.
- Retrofitting existing stormwater controls and integrating green infrastructure.
- Flood mitigation and watershed-scale stormwater improvements.
- Stream repair and stabilization.
- Debris removal near bridges and culverts through the Stormwater Resiliency and Asset Protection (StRAP) program.

The program could also support **dual-purpose resilience grants** to prevent cascade failures when stormwater infrastructure fails, protecting transportation routes, critical facility operations, emergency services access, and utilities. Additional support should be provided to the North Carolina Flood Resiliency Blueprint to advance watershed-scale solutions.

Importance of Stormwater Infrastructure:

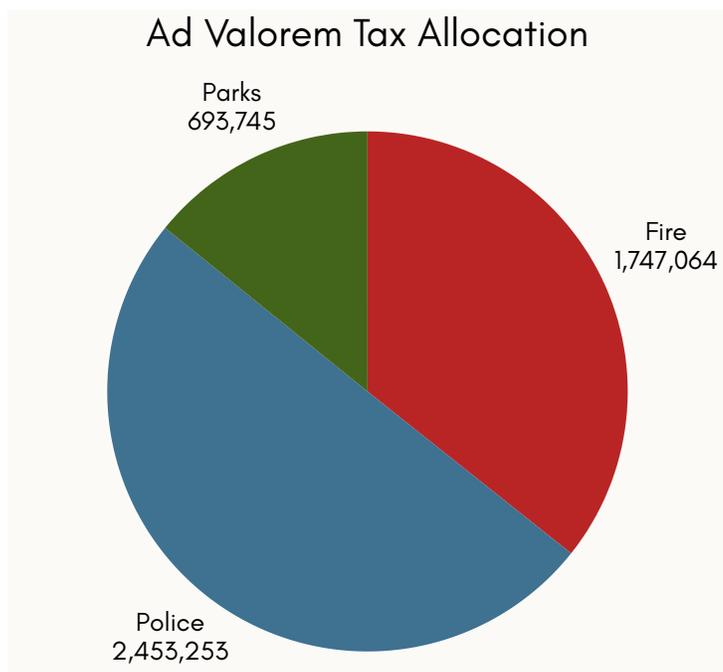
- Enhanced Flood Protection
- Reduced Long-Term Costs
- Improved Water Quality
- Support for Sustainable Growth
- Community Resilience

THE BENEFITS: Strategic investment in stormwater infrastructure reduces flood risk, protects public/private property, critical infrastructure, improves water quality, and strengthens community resilience to increasingly intense storm events across North Carolina.



4. PROTECTING LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVENUE IN PROPERTY TAX REFORM

THE CHALLENGE: The North Carolina House is currently examining potential property tax reform measures that could significantly impact the fiscal stability of municipalities. Property tax revenue is the primary funding source for essential local services such as police, fire protection, parks, and infrastructure maintenance. The pie chart below shows the expense and percentage of ad valorem taxes that was allocated to Fire, Police, and Parks for FY 24-25.



FY 24-25 Ad Valorem Taxes (Revenue): \$4,894,062

- Fire: \$1,747,064 (100% covered by ad valorem taxes)
- Police: \$2,460,689 (99% covered by ad valorem taxes)
- Parks: \$977,106 (71% covered by ad valorem taxes)

Key Positions on Property Tax:

- Close the *Blue Ridge* loophole.
- No tampering with reassessment timelines or methodology.
- Tax Relief - Support measures to broaden eligibility for existing property tax relief programs that are balanced with the impact on revenues.
- Maintain local control.

THE SOLUTION: Ensure that any property tax reform legislation adopted by the General Assembly **protects the fiscal stability of municipalities** by preserving local revenue authority, maintaining predictable revenue streams, and avoiding unfunded mandates that shift costs to local governments.

THE BENEFITS: Protecting local government revenue ensures communities can continue providing essential services, maintain infrastructure, and responsibly plan for growth without placing additional financial burdens on residents.

