



Chatham County, NC

Legislation Text

File #: 22-4510, **Version:** 1

Vote on the establishment and funding of the Chatham Agricultural Preservation & Development Trust Fund with Article 46 tax revenue.

Introduction & Background: Agriculture and agribusiness industries account for a significant portion of the County's total annual income. Chatham County ranks in the top ten across numerous areas of agriculture in North Carolina.

The benefits and importance of agriculture are obvious to many residents and stakeholders who provided input to the existing Chatham Farmland Preservation Plan and Plan Chatham.

Establishing the Chatham Agricultural Preservation & Development Trust Fund aligns with recommendations and framework set forth by the Farmland Preservation Plan of 2009. (New Farmland Preservation Plan is currently being developed and expected to be finalized by end of year 2023.) It also relates to the county's Comprehensive Plan.

Discussion & Analysis: Developmental pressure has increased significantly and threat agricultural lands.

- NC is projected to lose 1.1 million acres of farmland over the next 20 years.
 - Equates to 9,100 farms, nearly 19,600 jobs, and \$1.25B in farm output (American Farmland Trust, 2020)
- In Chatham, under the "Business as Usual" model, we stand to lose 14,700 acres (American Farmland Trust, 2020).
 - This model does not reflect changes from 2017 to current, nor does it include recent mega site development implications.
- North Carolina ranks 2nd in the nation in potential agricultural land lost by 2040.

How does this relate to the Comprehensive Plan: Goal #1: Preserve the rural character and lifestyle of Chatham County, Goal #2: Preserve, protect, and enable agriculture and forestry, and Goal #5: Conserve natural resources.

Budgetary Impact: Dire need to set aside source of permanent funding to make progress towards implementing goals and reducing inevitable and irreversible loss of agricultural working lands within Chatham (Plan Chatham, 2017, p. 93; Chatham Farmland Preservation Plan, 2009, p. 25)

Recommendation/Motion: Approve establishment and funding of the Chatham Agricultural Preservation & Development Trust Fund with Article 46 tax revenue.