

UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE (UDO) TEXT AMENDMENT CASE #25-12-PLBD-00152: AN AMENDMENT TO SUBSECTION 2.8 (FLOODPLAIN ADMINISTRATOR), SUBSECTION 3.5 (PROCEDURES FOR SPECIFIC APPLICATIONS), SUBSECTION 9.3 (FLOOD DAMAGE PREVENTION), SUBSECTION 12 (DEFINITIONS) AND ADOPTION OF UPDATED FLOOD MAPS

Description

This proposed text amendment (attached) to the Guilford County Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) updates the Flood Damage Prevention provisions of the UDO to maintain alignment with National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) standards. The amendment updates Subsections 2.8 (Floodplain Administrator), 3.5.F (Certificate of Floor Elevation / Floodproofing), 3.5.I (Floodplain Development Permit), 3.5.W (Variance), 9.3 (Flood Damage Prevention), and 12 (Definitions). See the summary of updates below. The proposed amendment also formally adopts the updated Flood Insurance Study (FIS a.k.a. Flood Study) and Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs a.k.a. Flood Maps) for Guilford County and aligns the UDO with the 2021 North Carolina Model Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance for Non-Coastal areas (NC Model FDPO).

The current and proposed updated Flood Maps for Guilford County are available to be viewed on the North Carolina Department of Public Safety (NCDPS) Flood Risk Information System (FRIS) website at: <https://fris.nc.gov/>.

On December 10, 2025, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) issued a Letter of Final Determination (attached) to Guilford County (FEMA Community ID # 370111) notifying the County that the new Flood Study and associated Flood Maps for our community will become effective on June 10, 2026. The County must adopt the updated Flood Study and Flood Maps before the June 10, 2026, effective date as required by FEMA and Title 44 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 60.3(d) to maintain its NFIP community status. As a participant in the NFIP, the County is required to keep the Flood Damage Prevention provisions of its ordinance, regulatory Flood Maps, and Flood Study current. Doing so helps to ensure property owners remain eligible for flood insurance through the NFIP and supports regulations that help reduce flood risks.

To support the Flood Study and Flood Maps update, Guilford County staff helped coordinate and implement a public Community Outreach Meeting on July 25, 2023 with City of Greensboro, City of High Point, other local jurisdictions, and NCDPS. This process was conducted in an effort to inform the public and provide an opportunity for property owners to meet community officials and NCDPS to discuss and ask questions about the Flood Map changes, reason for the change, how properties could be affected, and explain the appeals process if owners desired to contest the findings of the updated Flood Maps. The County advertised the public meeting on the Guilford County Electronic Legal Notices website (as allowed per S.L. 2017-210), Guilford County main webpage, Planning & Development Department webpage, and the Floodplain Management webpage. In addition, letters with information regarding Flood Map changes and advertisement of the public meeting were sent to property owners for which GIS analysis indicated a structure on the property was added to the floodplain. The County also created a Flood Mapping and Updates informational website regarding the Flood Study and Flood Map updates, which was advertised in the above public meeting announcements, letters and at the meeting.

FEMA published a notice regarding the proposed flood hazard determinations (preliminary Flood Study and Flood Maps) in the Federal Register on October 7, 2024. FEMA issued a letter on December 4, 2024 to Guilford County and other local jurisdictions to provide notice of the 90-day appeal period for the proposed Flood Study and Flood Maps that began on December 18, 2024 and ended on March 18, 2025. The appeal period offered property owners an opportunity to contest the results of the new Flood Study and Flood Maps if they disagreed with the findings (e.g., whether the property is located in a regulated floodplain). FEMA also published public notifications regarding the appeal period and process in the Greensboro News and Record on December 11, 2024 and December 18, 2024. FEMA did not receive any appeals during the appeal period as noted in the December 10, 2025 Letter of Final Determination.

As a supplemental note, Guilford County participates in FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS) and has a CRS rating of Class 7, which enables property owners in our community to receive a 15% discount on flood insurance premiums for policies purchased through the NFIP. The County must adopt the new Flood Study and Flood Maps to maintain its CRS rating.

The proposed text amendment includes provisions to automatically adopt future FEMA Flood Studies & Flood Maps, helping to ensure continued compliance with federal and state requirements. This approach streamlines the process for incorporating mandated updates while preserving the community's ability to appeal proposed map updates. Additional UDO text revisions improve formatting, language, clarity, and definitions to better align the County's Flood Damage Prevention provisions with the NC Model FDPO and enhance overall clarity and consistency.

The underlined text in the attached amendment is to be added; the ~~striktthrough text~~ is to be removed.

A summary of the proposed amendment is below:

- Amend Subsection 2.8 Floodplain Administrator to include formatting improvements, revised language to align with the NC Model FDPO, and added cross-references to Subsection 9.3 to provide clarity and a more user-friendly reading of the requirements.
- Amend Subsections 3.5.F, 3.5.I, and 3.5.W regarding Procedures for Specific Applications for Floodplain Development Permits, Certificates, and Variances for Flood Damage Prevention to remove duplicate information on Flood Damage Prevention requirements and to direct readers to Subsection 9.3 where the requirements are consolidated to reduce conflict and confusion.
- Amend Subsection 9.3 Flood Damage Prevention to align with the NC Model FDPO. Changes include adoption of the new FEMA FIS and FIRM (i.e., Flood Study and Flood Maps) effective June 10, 2026 in Subsection 9.3.D.2, addition of automatic-adoption language for future FEMA Flood Maps and Flood Studies, updates to cross-references to latest NC General Statutes (e.g., NCGS 160-D), updates to cross-references to other subsections of the ordinance, and technical formatting edits. Outdated language is also removed or modified for clarification.
- Amend Subsection 12 Definitions to add missing terms, definitions, and acronyms, and combine or remove duplicate definitions, and align the definitions with the NC Model FDPO. Notes are added to indicate when specific terms apply only to the Flood Damage Prevention regulations.

The Board of Commissioners is not limited to the proposed language of the text amendment. It may consider substantial changes to the proposed text amendment.

SEE ATTACHED TEXT AMENDMENT

Consistency: Land Use Plan & Comprehensive Plan

Comprehensive Plan: Guiding Guilford Moving Forward Together (adopted September 4, 2025)

Consistency: The proposed text amendment is consistent with the Planning Theme for Protected Natural Environment & Greenspace. Policy 2 of the Protected Natural Environment & Greenspace Planning Theme is to “Safeguard the environmental integrity of Regional Water Sources and Recreational Water Bodies.” Action Item N2.3 under Policy 2 states to “Expand on existing watershed management policies to set goals and priorities for protecting, restoring, and improving the county’s environmental resources.” Action Item N2.5 under Policy 2 further states to “Continue to coordinate and cooperate with other local, regional, and state agencies and organizations, such as the NC Division of Water Quality, on joint watershed planning and management.” Finally, the proposed text amendment is also consistent with Policy 3 of the Protected Natural Environment & Greenspace Planning Theme which states to Protect Natural Features and Sensitive Areas including Riparian Areas, Floodplains, and Vegetation/Tree Cover.

Additionally, the amendment maintains Guilford County’s consistency with State and Federal floodplain regulations and helps ensure county residents maintain access to vital flood insurance.

Staff Recommendation

Staff Recommendation: Approval.