



**Town Council Meeting**  
**November 2025 Work Session – Public Safety**  
**November 18, 2025 | 3:30 PM**  
**Apex Town Hall | 73 Hunter Street, Apex, NC**  
**3rd Floor Training Rooms A and B**

## AGENDA

**1. Call to Order | Pledge of Allegiance**

*Mayor, Jacques K. Gilbert*

**2. Apex Fire Department Updates**

*Chief Tim Herman, Apex Fire Department*

- a) Center for Public Safety Excellence Accreditation**
- b) Upcoming Fire Academy**
- c) Capital Improvement Plan Updates**

**3. Apex Police Department Updates**

*Chief Ryan Johansen, Apex Police Department*

- a) Progress Underway**
- b) Review of Top Challenges from May**
- c) Reorganization and Needs**

**4. Public Records Program Review – Discussion and Recommendations**

*JP Parris, Public Records Coordinator, Town Clerk's Office*

**5. Adjournment**

| English                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Spanish                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Chinese (Simplified)                                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>ANNOUNCEMENTS</b><br>Members of the public can access and view the meeting on the Town's YouTube Channel <a href="https://www.youtube.com/c/TownofApexGov">https://www.youtube.com/c/TownofApexGov</a> or attend in-person. The meeting date, start time, and location details are included at the top of this agenda document.                                                               | <b>ANUNCIOS</b><br>Las personas interesadas pueden acceder y ver la reunión a través del canal de YouTube de la Ciudad en <a href="https://www.youtube.com/c/TownofApexGov">https://www.youtube.com/c/TownofApexGov</a> o asistir en persona. En la parte superior de este documento de agenda se indican la fecha, la hora de inicio y la ubicación de la reunión.                                                          | <b>公告</b><br>公众可通过镇政府的YouTube频道 <a href="https://www.youtube.com/c/TownofApexGov">https://www.youtube.com/c/TownofApexGov</a> 在线旁听会议，或选择现场参与。会议日期、开始时间及地点详情见本议程文件顶部。                         |
| <b>Accommodation Statement:</b><br>Anyone needing special accommodations to attend this meeting and/or if this information is needed in an alternative format, please contact the Town Clerk's Office. The Town Clerk is located at 73 Hunter Street in Apex Town Hall on the 2nd Floor, (email) <a href="mailto:allen.coleman@apexnc.org">allen.coleman@apexnc.org</a> or (phone) 919-249-1260. | <b>Aviso sobre adaptaciones:</b> Si necesita adaptaciones especiales para asistir a esta reunión o requiere esta información en un formato alternativo, comuníquese con la Oficina del Secretario Municipal, ubicada en el segundo piso del Ayuntamiento de Apex, en 73 Hunter Street, por correo electrónico a través de <a href="mailto:allen.coleman@apexnc.org">allen.coleman@apexnc.org</a> o llamando al 919-249-1260. | <b>便利服务声明:</b><br>如需特殊便利服务以参加本次会议，或需要将本信息提供为其他格式，请联系镇书记官办公室。<br>办公地址：Apex镇政务厅二楼（Hunter街73号）<br>邮箱： <a href="mailto:allen.coleman@apexnc.org">allen.coleman@apexnc.org</a><br>电话：919-249-1260 |



# Apex Fire Department

November 2025 Updates



# Agenda

- Center for Public Safety Excellence Accreditation
- Upcoming Fire Academy
- Capital Improvement Plan updates
  - Station 1
  - Station 2
  - Station 4
  - Station 7
  - Hunter Street Public Safety Campus





# Center for Public Safety Excellence

## International Fire Service Accreditation Model

- Provides greater community alignment.
- Encourages quality improvement.
- Facilitates input from and builds positive relationships with staff.
- Identifies areas of strengths and weaknesses.
- Allows for the establishment of a plan for improvement.
- Provides for greater data-driven decision-making.
- Communicates management and leadership philosophies.
- Ensures our agency has a defined mission and related objectives.
- Encourages the development of organizational procedural documents.

# Accreditation Timeline



- Finalizing Strategic Plan
- Finalizing Community Risk Assessment
- Created a Standard of Coverage
- Completing the Self-Assessment manual by the end of 2025.
- On-site peer review visit in the spring of 2026
- Commission hearing summer of 2026!

# 2026 Fire Academy

- Partnership with Wake County (17<sup>th</sup> Academy), starts January 12, 2026
- Apex will have 9 new Cadets in this academy!
- Academy takes place at the Wake County Fire Training Center in New Hill.



# Capital Improvement Plans



# Apex Station 1



- Economic Development sent out a feasibility RFQ in July 2025, but did not receive favorable applications.
- The RFQ was revised and re-advertised in November 2025 for 60 days.
- Study is desired to provide the best use of the property and provide guidance towards the goal of a public private partnership.

## Apex Station 2



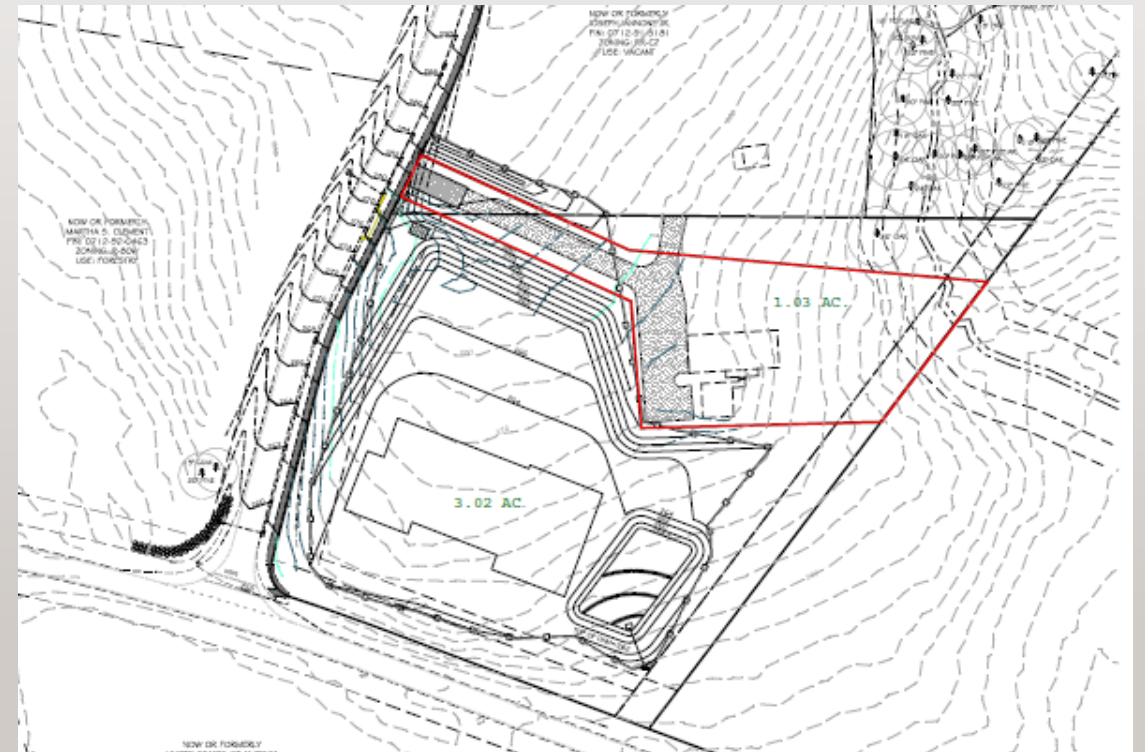
- Presented a plan to co-locate in a new station with Wake County EMS on the current site.
- EMS was proposing this to occur 2028-2030 timeframe.
- EMS, under the direction of a new Director, is changing the deployment model for ambulances and has put this project on hold.
- Apex has pushed this project out on our CIP to 2032.

# Apex Station 4



# "New" Olive Chapel Rd. Fire Station

- Finalizing the details on desired property before purchasing.
- Construction on CIP for FY30.

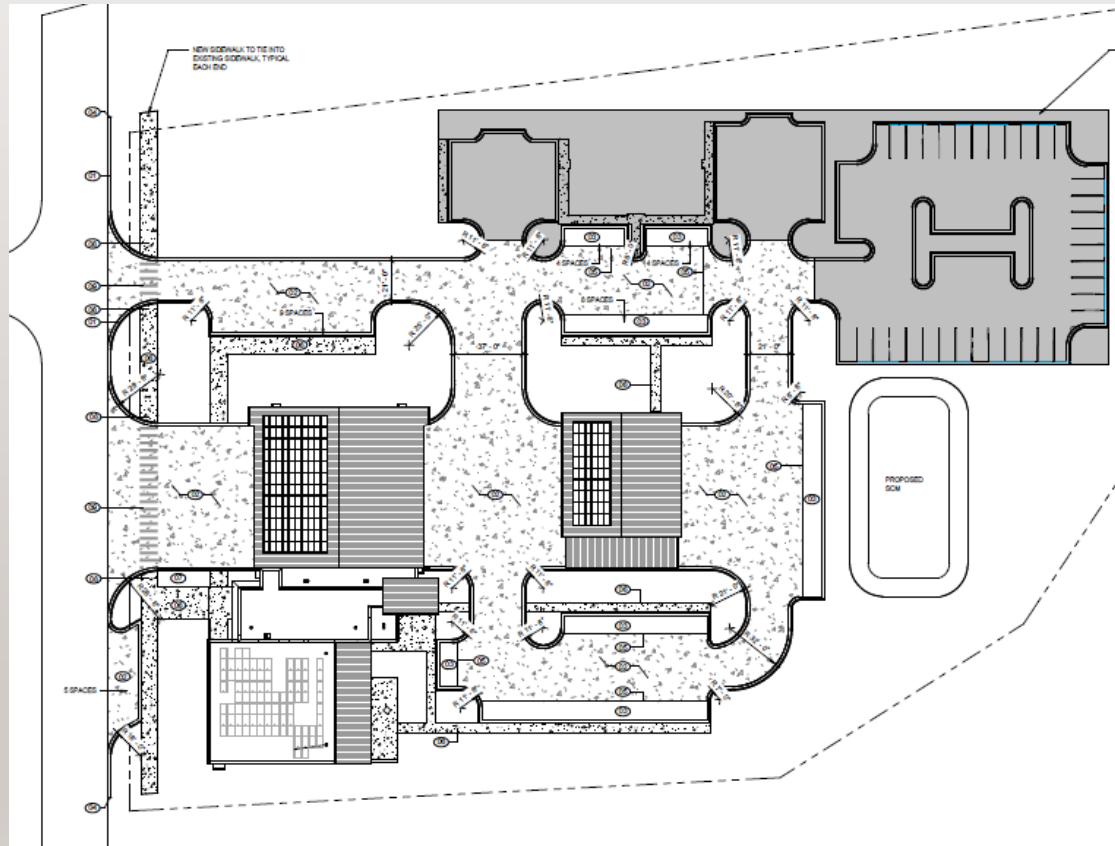


# Hunter Street Public Safety Campus

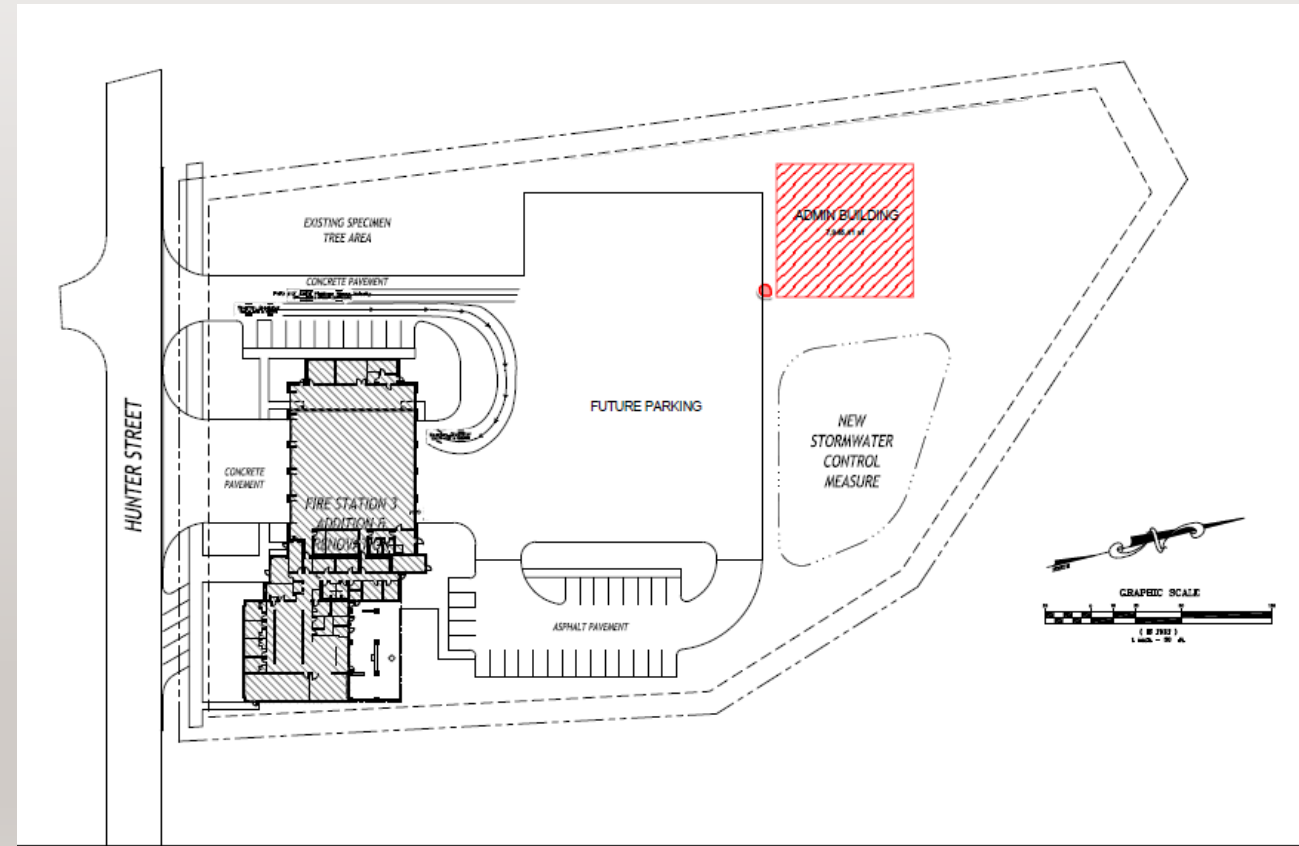


# Update #1 (overall site)

Before



After



## Update #2 (Timeline)

- Phase 1 (Fire Station and Sitework)

- Advanced planning completed
- Design phase now
- Ready to bid in Oct. 2026

- Phase 2 (Office Building)

- Advanced planning started Oct. 2025
- Design phase scheduled May 2026
- Ready to bid in July 2027

\*Fire Admin has to be out of current building by July 2030.

## Update #2 (Timeline)

- After collaboration with the architect, town staff, and the fire department, it is recommended to construct the whole project at one time and not two phases.
- This option would take the project to bid July 2027
- Project completion in March 2029

# Update # 3 (Funding)

- Phase 1 (Fire Station & Sitework)
  - Current budget - \$5,752,102
  - Need additional funds FY27 - \$8,000,000
    - Increase includes sitework for the whole project
    - Cost per sq. ft. provided after advance planning phase increased.
    - Additional needs discovered during advanced planning for existing structure
  - Additional funds for phase 1 are worked in the current financial model.

## Update # 3 (Funding)

- Phase 2 (Office Building, 24,000 sq. ft.)
  - Fire Administration Offices
  - Police
  - IT
  - Additional office space for other needs
- Current budget - \$1,637,000 (design)
- Need additional funds FY28 - \$14,363,000
  - \* *Not currently in the financial model*

# Questions





Town Council Work Session  
November 18, 2025

# **Apex Police Department Update**

Police Chief Ryan Johansen



# Moment of Silence for Fallen Brother

*Roger Lee Smith*

JUNE 4, 1966 - NOVEMBER 8, 2025



Roger proudly served as a full-time police officer for over 30 years, spending 16 years with the Knightdale Police Department and 14 years with the Wake Med Police Department. His dedication to public safety extended beyond law enforcement – he also volunteered as a firefighter with the Garner Fire Department for 20 years and worked for Knightdale Fire Department. Roger was a charter member of R.E.D.S. (Rescue, Extrication, and Delivery Specialists) where he continued his lifelong commitment to public service helping others in times of need.

A black and white photograph of a group of nine police officers posing in front of a police vehicle and a building. The officers are arranged in two rows, with some standing and some leaning on the vehicle. They are all wearing uniforms and tactical vests. The building in the background has a large open bay door. The police vehicle has the number '320' on its side.

## AGENDA

- Progress underway
- Review of top challenges from May
- Reorganization and Needs

# Progress – The Foundation



- Persistence of problems with policing
- Policy vs. Culture Conundrum
- Cops aren't breaking policing...policing is breaking cops
- Policing is incredibly complex and difficult
- We need cops to be at their best...all the time

Our primary focus is deploying happy, healthy, well-adjusted **HUMAN BEINGS** into the community, as **PART OF THE COMMUNITY**, not some outside force acting upon it

## Progress – The Why

**We exist to create the safety that people need...  
so they are free to pursue the lives they desire!**



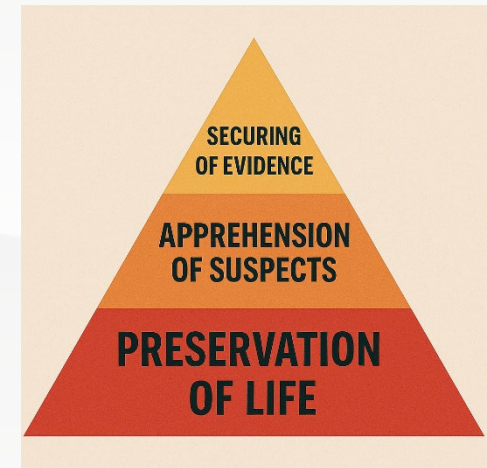
## Progress – The How

**We ensure that safety by helping create an environment in which ALL PEOPLE live in peace, free from violence, safe from harm, secure in their effects, and confident that appropriate help will be there when they need it most**



# Progress – The What

- Respond promptly and appropriately to emergencies (the pyramid)
- Pursue justice for victims of crime with diligence and tenacity
- Work proactively to ferret out criminal activity before it occurs
- Improve safety on our roadways
- Conduct comprehensive investigations
- Create exceptional documentation of incidents
- Competent, informed response to mental health emergencies
- Serve as community leaders
- Solve community problems
- Serve as mediators, counselors, therapists, confidants
- “Other duties as assigned”



# Progress – A Culture of Wellness

- 1-on-1's and all hands meetings
- Physical fitness
  - 10x increase in staff actively engaged in regular fitness programming
  - Team fitness activities
  - Recovery solutions
  - Diet/nutrition awaiting funding
- Mental Health
  - BetterHelp portal
  - Critical Incident Stress Debriefings
  - Re-establishment of Peer Support
- Financial Health
  - Smartdollar
- Organizational Health
  - Support and development vs. “the bag of hammers”



# Progress – Some indicators we're on the right track

- 75% reduction in vacancies
- 3x increase in proactive police contacts
- 35% reduction in motor vehicle B&Es
- 25% reduction in retail larceny cases
- 5x increase in felony drug possession arrests
- 3x increase in illegal firearms possession arrests
- Interception of more than \$2 million in fraud money returned to victims
- Single seizure of over 1,500 pounds of marijuana being distributed in Apex
- Arrest of suspect trafficking cocaine in Apex
- 26 applicants for Sergeant promotional process
- Anecdotally...dramatic shift in energy and enthusiasm at APD



# Review of Top Challenges from May - STAFFING

- Last staffing study was in 2004
  - Population was about 26,000 at that point
  - Identified 5 as the absolute minimum for patrol 24/7
  - We are still using this number today
  - This isn't even enough for 1 officer/zone
  - Requires each to cover over 25 sq. miles





## Review of Top Challenges from May - STAFFING

According to the FBI, the national average ratio of officers to population in municipal cities/towns...

2.4 per 1,000

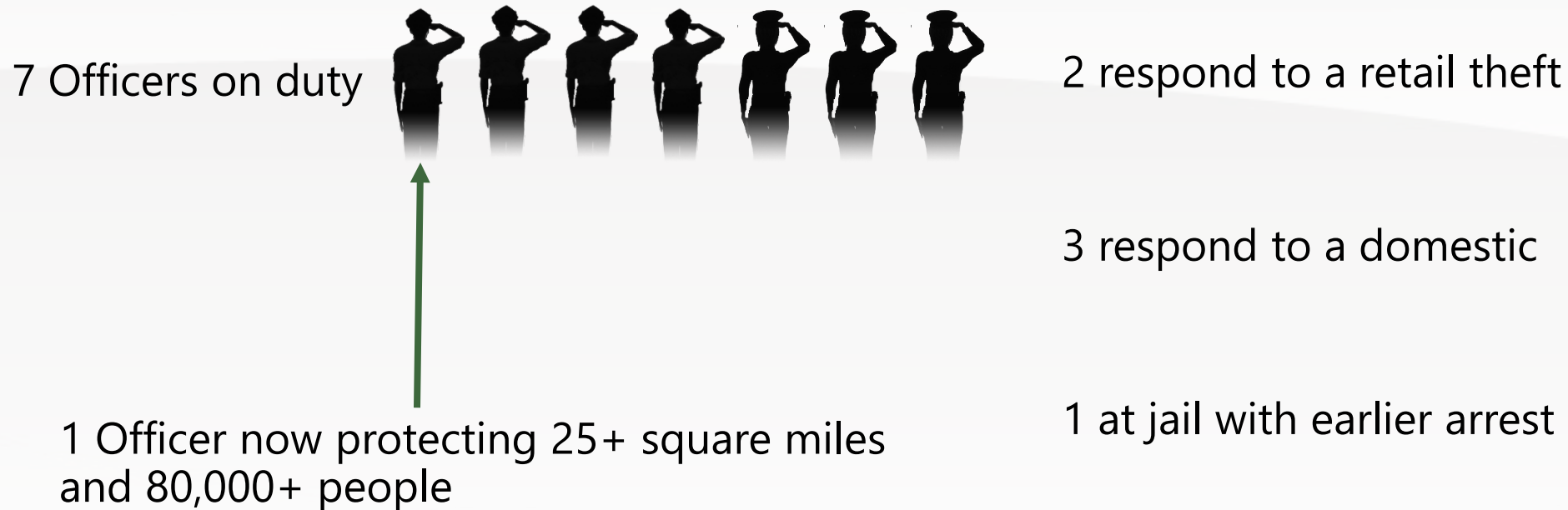
If Apex met this national average we would have about...

190 Sworn Police Officers

Almost 2x our actual number

# Review of Top Challenges from May - STAFFING

- Why is staffing at this minimum such a problem?
  - Not just for the low frequency/high impact event
  - Simple, everyday patrol resource dilemma



# Review of Top Challenges from May - STAFFING

- In the current fiscal year all sworn officer additions were cut from the budget...except two SROs
  - We are contractually obligated to provide the SROs
  - SROs are partially reimbursed by the County
- Staffing needs in FY 26-27 are significant



# Review of Top Challenges from May - STAFFING

- 5 traditional methods of assessing staff needs for police
    - Crime rates/trends
    - Per-capita
    - Minimum viable staffing
    - Authorized/budgeted levels
    - Workload-based
- } *Apex has been a hybrid of these two*

*Modern policing calls for a more integral approach  
that considers multiple factors, such as:*

- ***Population***
- ***Crime Rates/Trends***
- ***Area size and type***
- ***Workloads***
- ***Service expectations***

# Review of Top Challenges from May - STAFFING

- Thorough assessment of workloads and staff allocations ongoing
- A reorganization of the department to optimize efficiency and effectiveness due in March
- High-level
  - 2 Divisions (Field Services and Support Services)
  - Reduction of CID by two Detectives
  - Drop of a Lieutenant position
  - Consolidation of Directed Patrol Unit (DPU) and Drugs/Vice
  - New Patrol Schedule
    - 4x10 with built in training
    - 6 squads (2x dayshift, 2x swing shift, 2x midnights)
    - SGT/CPL replacing 2 SGT structure
  - Expansion of the Training/Recruiting Unit
  - Creation of a Fleet/Equipment Unit
  - Creation of a Special Events Unit

# Review of Top Challenges from May - SPACE

- Beautiful downtown police station
- Outgrew it the day we moved in
- Command has maximized use of space
  - Lieutenant office in a utility closet
  - Multiple staff in single person offices
- Lack of space for new programs
  - Real-Time-Crime-Center
  - Wellness equipment
  - CNT/SRT
- Use of public safety stations has been critical, but has issues
  - Siloes, social disconnection, subcultures, etc.



# Review of Top Challenges from May - SPACE

- Space Needs Study
  - Immediate need – 34,209 sq. ft.
  - Estimated 20 year need – 40,268 sq. ft.
  - Current space – 19,785 sq. ft.
- We have less than 58% of the space we need now
- We have less than 50% of the space we need in future
- Current plan is to spend over \$30 million to provide less than 70% of needed space
- Would like to begin assessing an entirely new Police Headquarters location/building



# Review of Top Challenges from May - Vehicles

- Police response model is different
  - We respond from the field individually, not from a station in teams
  - Vehicles are offices, stations, detention facilities, equipment storage, and only means of responding to calls
- Every cop must have a functioning vehicle
  - No vehicle = no police response
- FY 24-25
  - 20+ vehicles due for replacement
  - Less than half provided in budget
- FY 25-26
  - 30+ vehicles due for replacement
  - Again less than half provided in budget
  - 2 SROs added, without budget for vehicles



# Review of Top Challenges from May - Vehicles

- Delaying purchases is having a compounding effect
- Vehicle and equipment prices increase every year
  - Putting off purchases is costing us money
  - Since 2020 cumulative price increases are over 25%
    - This means for every 4 cars we could have gotten then, we now get 3
- We need to get back to zero so we can manage annual vehicle needs





Thank you!

Questions?

MEMORANDUM

**Date:** November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
**To:** Allen Coleman, Town Clerk  
**From:** JP Parris, Public Records Coordinator  
**RE:** Public Records Policy and Practices Evaluation



This memo outlines the reasoning behind considering adoption of a Public Records Policy, a discussion of the Public Records Request process in the Town of Apex, a summary of research conducted on Public Records Policies and practices across North Carolina municipalities and Counties, and recommendations on what should be included in a potential Public Records Policy for the Town.

Public Records Requests

As the Town of Apex has continued growing, so has the amount of Public Records Requests it receives. Since in-depth tracking of requests began in 2023, the total number of requests submitted has gone up year each year.

| Year | Total Requests | Percent Increase from Prior Year |
|------|----------------|----------------------------------|
| 2023 | 171            | N/A                              |
| 2024 | 217            | 26.9                             |
| 2025 | 308*           | 41.9                             |

\*Based on full-year estimate at current pace

The current process for Public Records Requests begins with requestors filling out a Cognito Form. Once that is received by the Clerk’s Office, our goal is to reply to the requestor within 2 business days acknowledging their request has been received, and providing them with a unique tracking number. From there, the request is routed to the appropriate departments via email, and they are instructed to place any responsive records in a OneDrive folder they are given access to. Additional review is sometimes necessary to ensure a complete response and compliance with Public Records Law. While our goal is to complete Public Records Requests within 10 business days, this is sometimes not met due to multiple factors, including large request size or complexity, competing staff priorities, the need for additional review, or the lack of a centralized public records software to track requests from start to finish across the organization.

Summary of Research

Municipalities chosen for inclusion in the research fit at least one of the following criteria: A municipality in Wake County, one of the top-25 most populated Municipalities in North Carolina, one of the top-10 most populated Counties in North Carolina, and/or a municipality that a member of the Clerk’s Office worked with during discussions in a recent Public Records Working Group hosted by the UNC School of Government. This created a research set of 44 North Carolina local governments. Research was conducted through surveying public-facing information hosted on each Government’s website, and in some cases, retrieving additional information or asking clarifying questions through the Government directly.

In total, 10 of the 44 Municipalities included had a Public Records Policy that was officially adopted and used to guide the Public Records Request Process that was published on their website, or that was provided through contact with the School of Government Public Records Working Group. Additionally, some local governments provide relevant information that may be contained in a Policy as information on their Public Records Requests webpages, and that information is included in the findings as applicable.

### Summary of Findings - Workflow

One of the common themes found among most of the Public Records Policies analyzed was a specified outline of the process each local government used to fulfill Requests. This includes instructions for what requestors need to submit for a Request and how to do so, an explanation on how the local government routes, reviews, and completes requests, and expectations for communication from the local government to the requestor regarding the Request's timeline and fulfillment.

While our current process is in line with the standards found in many of the Public Records Policies in these regards, defining and adopting them provides an additional layer of accountability and transparency regarding the process. Comparing current practices to those of other municipalities can help ensure we are staying current with standards and trends across the state.

| Local Government       | Town of Cary                                              | Mecklenburg County                                        | City of Greensboro                                             | City of Fayetteville                          |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>Population</b>      | <b>191,000</b>                                            | <b>1,206,000</b>                                          | <b>307,381</b>                                                 | <b>209,496</b>                                |
| <b>Goal to Intake*</b> | <b>2 business days</b>                                    | <b>5 business days</b>                                    | <b>2 business days</b>                                         | <b>3 business days</b>                        |
| <b>Goal to Close</b>   | <b>2 business days, or provide an estimated timeframe</b> | <b>5 business days, or provide an estimated timeframe</b> | <b>5 business days, or provide estimated timeframe by then</b> | <b>Provide estimate on case-by-case basis</b> |

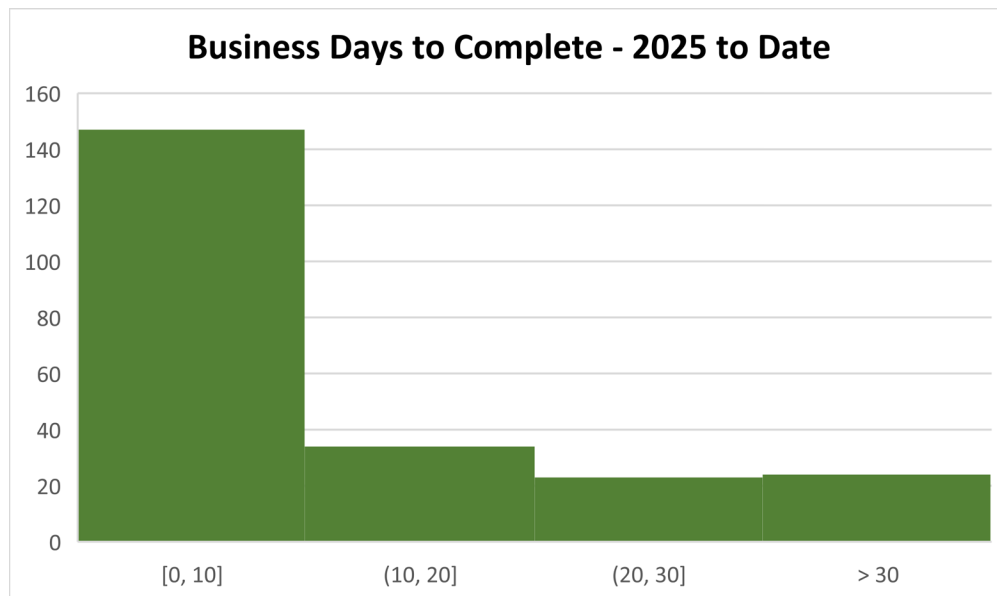
| Town of Huntersville                                                               | Town of Mooresville                                                                                                 | City of Wilmington   | Lincoln County                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>67,087</b>                                                                      | <b>52,884</b>                                                                                                       | <b>125,284</b>       | <b>97,611</b>                                                      |
| <b>Not Specified</b>                                                               | <b>Not Specified</b>                                                                                                | <b>24 Hours</b>      | <b>2 Business Days</b>                                             |
| <b>"As Promptly as Possible based on the scope and specificity of the request"</b> | <b>Response time estimated based on the size and scope of the request, and workload of responsive department(s)</b> | <b>Not Specified</b> | <b>10 Business Days, or provide an estimated timeframe by then</b> |

\*Intake refers to receiving a request, providing the requestor with acknowledgment/tracking information, and routing request to appropriate staff.

NOTE: Wording in quotations taken directly from local government's policy/webpage

As shown by the excerpt of data points above, most local governments provide intake of a Records Request within 2 business days, and provide records or an estimate of completion time within 5-10 business days. One takeaway from most of these policies is that in addition to having a set goal for responding to most requests, many local governments also provide estimated timeframes for completion if the standard goal cannot be met, which is not currently part of our standard practice.

Our current year-to-date statistics show that 91% of requests have been acknowledged, logged, and routed to departments within our intake goal of 2 days. The current median number of business days for a request to be completed is 8. 64.5% of requests have been completed within our goal of 10 business days, and 89.5% of requests have been completed within 30 business days. The below histogram shows the number of requests completed within a specified range of business days.



### Summary of Findings – Fees

As prescribed in NC General Statute 132-6.2, local governments are able to charge fees for fulfilling Public Records Requests based on the “actual cost” incurred by doing so. In our current fee schedule, this includes things like charging for paper copies of records. Additionally, the statute provides that for requests that require “extensive use of IT resources or extensive clerical or supervisory assistance”, local governments may incur a “special service charge, which shall be reasonable and shall be based on the actual cost incurred.”

In analyzing the group of Public Records Policies, it was found that many of them provided definitions of what would be considered “extensive”, as well as specifying the cost of the special service charge. While doing so is not required according to the statute, it was recommended by UNC School of Government Professor Kristina Wilson to have these fees and thresholds specified.

| Local Government                                                  | City of Greensboro                                            | City of Fayetteville                                        | City of Asheville                                                | Town of Huntersville                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Population</b>                                                 | <b>307,381</b>                                                | <b>209,496</b>                                              | <b>94,992</b>                                                    | <b>67,087</b>                                    |
| <b>Definition of Extensive Request for Special Service Charge</b> | <b>More than 4 Hours</b>                                      | <b>More than 4 Hours</b>                                    | <b>More than 4 Hours</b>                                         | <b>More than 4 Hours</b>                         |
| <b>Special Service Charge Fee</b>                                 | <b>Hourly Rate of Lowest-Paid Employee Working on Request</b> | <b>Pay plus Benefits of a Full-Time Office Assistant II</b> | <b>\$18.00/hour</b>                                              | <b>\$18.00/hour</b>                              |
| <b>Deposit Required</b>                                           | <b>Yes, if time exceeds initial estimate</b>                  | <b>No</b>                                                   | <b>Yes, prior to the duplication of records in physical copy</b> | <b>Yes, 50% if estimated charge exceeds \$50</b> |

| <b>Town of Mooresville</b>                                                                  | <b>Davidson County</b>                                              | <b>Town of Holly Springs*</b>                                                                                                                    | <b>Union County*</b>     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>52,884</b>                                                                               | <b>177,809</b>                                                      | <b>48,674</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>263,386</b>           |
| <b>More than 4 Hours</b>                                                                    | <b>More than 1 Hour</b>                                             | <b>"Requests that require extensive use of technology resources, clerical and/or supervisory assistance", Determined on a case-by-case basis</b> | <b>More than 4 hours</b> |
| <b>Hourly Rate of Administrative Assistant, or of TI Professional if IT support is used</b> | <b>\$28.00/hr</b>                                                   | <b>"Charged according to the fee schedule in place at the time of the request."</b>                                                              | <b>\$40/hr</b>           |
| <b>Yes, 50% if estimated charge exceeds \$25</b>                                            | <b>Yes, but does not specify when deposit is required or amount</b> | <b>No</b>                                                                                                                                        | <b>No</b>                |

\*Information not from a Public Records Policy

NOTE: Wording in quotations taken directly from local government's policy/webpage

State law is clear in requiring that any special service charges be based on actual costs, meaning it is important to specify in a policy and to staff the importance of tracking how much time is being spent on researching and gathering records for large requests. In most cases, it will be clear when a request may be large enough to trigger the special service charge, and an estimate can be provided, which can be a "not to exceed amount". However, actual staff time may be lower than the estimate provided, which is what the charge must ultimately be based on. Certain local governments require various deposits to be paid, but doing so may create additional challenges to a request's timely completion, along with the possibility of actual retrieval time being less than the deposit paid or a requestor altering or cancelling their request, leading to the need for a deposit refund. In general, local governments require any applicable fees to be paid prior to records being turned over to the requestor.

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Requests That May Trigger Special Service Charge of 4+ Hours</b> |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>2023</b> | <b>2</b>                                                            |
| <b>2024</b> | <b>3</b>                                                            |
| <b>2025</b> | <b>16</b>                                                           |

NOTE: Based on estimations made by Town Clerk's Office

### **Policy Benefits and Records Software**

A Public Records Policy could offer several benefits to the Town, including increased transparency and accountability, defined expectations for all departments to follow, and a better understanding of the Town's process and commitment to quality service for requestors. A Policy would also better define fee schedule items related to Public Records Requests as allowed by state law, and provide requestors with expectations of what they should expect from the Town in working to fulfill their request.

Appropriating funds for the use of a Public Records Request software is another step that could increase staff efficiency, improve response times, and allow for requestors to more easily check in on their requests and communicate with the

Town. In our research, we found that the use of a software to manage Public Records Requests is a common tool for local governments in the state.

| Method of Records Request Management | Records Software | Online Form | Contact Staff/Email | Information Unavailable |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Number of Local Governments          | 22               | 13          | 4                   | 5                       |

### Recommendations

Given the possible benefits of adopting a Public Records Policy, I recommend that we work to draft one for the elected body's consideration. A Public Records Policy would benefit the public, the Town, and staff that work to provide responsive records for requests. Having the backing of the elected body in regards to these protocols provide them with more authority and would enhance buy-in across the organization regarding the importance of timely responses to Public Records Requests.

Specifically, I recommend maintaining our current practice of intaking requests and routing them to staff within 2 business days, and maintaining our goal of responding to all requests within 10 business days. As an addition to current practices, I recommend adding a goal of staff providing responsive records or an estimated completion date to the Town Clerk's Office within 7 business days of receiving a request. Furthermore, I recommend adding a provision in the Policy to provide an estimated completion date to the requestor if it cannot be completed within 10 days, or to provide regular follow-ups if a specific date is not able to be provided.

Additionally, I recommend that we develop options for elected body's consideration regarding a possible Special Service Fee for extensive Public Records Requests. To be consistent with many policies surveyed, I would recommend the fee being able to charge starting at 4 hours of applicable staff time per request. Additionally, I would recommend setting the fee at no more than \$30 per hour. A Special Service Charge may help Town Resources be used more efficiently, as well as encourage requestors to be more specific and concise in their requests. I do not recommend requiring a deposit to be made, as it adds unnecessary time and complication to requests. I believe it would be more beneficial to simply require any applicable fees be paid prior to records being released.

Finally, I recommend contracting with a Public Records Software Service to centralize our Request process. I believe this would help us keep up with growing Records Request demand, enhance staff efficiency, reduce instances of miscommunication, and provide residents an easier "self-service" way to check in on the progress of their requests and access their records. A software like this can also have benefits in regards to publishing frequently requested records, informing requestors of what records the Town may not maintain and where to find them, and increasing pace of request completion.

These recommendations are in line with the research done on Public Records Policies and Processes in many municipalities in the State, and I hope you find this information helpful as we work to continue improving our services to Apex's residents.

### Decision Points for Elected Body

It would be helpful to have guidance in the following areas as we continue through this policy development:

1. Direction on a Public Records Policy
2. Direction on the utilization of a Special Service Charge for Extensive Requests
3. Allocation of Funds (Budget Amendment) to support a Public Records Software Program