

Strategic Plan: Reimagine



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STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Important to the development of a strategic plan is community involvement. The last strategic plan was intended to guide the City through FY19. Efforts to update the plan were paused due to Hurricane Florence recover efforts and the world-wide pandemic. For the FY22 budget, funding was identified to engage a consultant to help facilitate the strategic plan update. The following are milestones that include community engagement efforts.

- February '22 – Solicited RFP for strategic plan facilitation
- April '22 – Council authorized contracted amount via Resolution
- May '22 – TransPro actively working with city
- July '22 - Focus groups were conducted with both staff and key community stakeholders
 - Community Stakeholders Participants
 - Spence Broadhurst, *Board Chair of New Hanover Community Endowment*
 - Erin Carey, *Director of Coastal Programs for NC Sierra Club*
 - Rhonda Bellamy, *Executive Director of the Arts Council of Wilmington/New Hanover County.*
 - Thomas Davis, *Board Vice Chair of WDI*
 - Natalie English, *President & CEO of Wilmington Chamber of Commerce*
 - Velva Jenkins, *Executive Director of YWCA Lower Cape Fear*
 - Debra Maxwell, *State Chair of NAACP*
 - Duncan McCabe, *WMPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee*
 - Dane Scalise, *Former WDI Board Chair*
 - Employees Participants
 - Jennifer Dandron, *Communications Specialist*
 - Shawn Evans, *Assistant City Attorney*
 - Abby Lorenzo, *MPO Deputy Director*
 - Alyce Maurer, *Paralegal*
 - Derek Mickler, *Battalion Chief*
 - Tom Robinson, *Assistant Fire Chief*
 - Kim Sampson, *Comp. & Benefits Mgr*
 - Eric Seidel, *Project Engineer*
 - Brandon Shope, *Communications Specialist*
 - Sabrina Sims, *Administrative Support Specialist*
 - Lakitha Smith, *Sr. HR Analyst*
 - Kathryn Thurston, *Zoning Administrator*
- October '22 - Conducted City Council interviews
- October '22 – Community Survey conducted
 - Call center collected 411 surveys that included an overpopulated sample of low socioeconomic census tracts
- November '22 – Workshop conducted with Executive staff
- November '22 – Council workshop identifying FY24 short term strategic focuses
- January '23 – Council workshop identifying Focus Areas for the multi-year strategic plan
- May -Aug '23 – Staff Strategic Plan Development teams meet to formulate draft objectives & initiatives



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Management Principles

Vision

We aspire to be a culturally vibrant city, leading the region in economic vitality, safety and resilience so that all people can share the greater opportunity, prosperity and quality of life.

Mission

Through forward-thinking policies and responsible stewardship, we are creating a better city every day with excellent core services and quality of life for all.

Values

Inclusion: We believe that our work and our community are made stronger because of our differences and not in spite of them, and we realize our fullest potential when diverse perspectives pursue shared goals.

Accountability: We feel a sense of personal responsibility for our shared work, striving for excellence in what we do and holding ourselves accountable for the results



Collaboration: We understand that success is something we achieve together—not alone—and that working as teams across departments and with the community builds trust in our work and our organization.

Creativity: We recognize that continuous improvement requires curiosity, original problem solving, and a willingness to change the way we've done things to deliver better service.

Financial Principles

Sound financial planning guided by the adopted Financial Management policy that is designed to complement the North Carolina Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act, recommendations of the Local Government Commission (LGC), the Government Finance Officers Association and the National Advisory Council on State and Local Budgeting using best practice procedures.





STRATEGIC PLAN

The City's strategic direction over the next few years connects the community and surrounding region through intentional focus areas carefully crafted from community stakeholders, City Council and staff. The strategic areas below all interconnect supporting the community's vision for the future.



The following sections are the core of the strategic plan. Each Focus Area has 3 initiatives and each initiative has 3 objectives. These elements provide guidance for the City's major community efforts. Each component was carefully crafted to capture all impacting city services to ensure service continuity and thus impactful change toward the success of the Strategic Plan.



Focus Area: Create a thriving, inclusive and affordable community of neighborhoods



Objective 1: Improve the availability and options of quality housing that is affordable to a broad range of income levels.

Initiative 1.1: Create more pathways for housing opportunities.

Initiative 1.2: Evaluate city policies and codes to reduce barriers to the development of affordable housing.

Initiative 1.3: Enhance collaboration with the private sector and non-profits to find sustainable housing solutions for persons at risk or experiencing homelessness.

Objective 2: Foster vibrant neighborhoods that connect existing and future residents to the places where people work, live, and play.

Initiative 2.1: Support programming for healthy homes that are safe and sustainable.

Initiative 2.2: Complete the Greater Downtown Plan.

Initiative 2.3: Connect communities with pathway facilities that promote open space and community activities.

Objective 3: Utilize public engagement strategies to better align city services with community priorities across all neighborhoods throughout the city.

Initiative 3.1: Develop a public engagement program that informs neighborhoods of services the city provides and that gathers opinions on improvements.

Initiative 3.2: Invest in and implement community-based practices that leverage public engagement in managing public safety.

Initiative 3.3: Define ways to support the implementation of goals identified in the P&R Master Plan.





Focus Area: Develop an efficient, accessible, and sustainable multi-modal transportation network and city infrastructure

Objective 1: Improve transportation options and reduce congestion.

Initiative 1.1: Coordinate and leverage transportation investments with regional partners.

Initiative 1.2: Improve access to alternative modes of transportation and diversify mode choices.

Initiative 1.3: Support the transit system and assist in developing long-term sustainable funding options.

Objective 2: Improve roads, sidewalks, and trails to prioritize a safer, walkable, and bikeable community.

Initiative 2.1: Complete the 2014 Transportation bond projects and evaluate and assist in the development of a potential 2026 transportation Bond referendum.

Initiative 2.2: Explore opportunities to improve neighborhood traffic.

Initiative 2.3: Coordinate and plan for future growth through the Walk Wilmington and the Greenway Masterplan.

Objective 3: Maintain and improve the city's infrastructure.

Initiative 3.1: Identify sustainable and long-term funding for asset maintenance and develop associated plans.

Initiative 3.2: Increase the resiliency of public infrastructure through the identification and improvement of network vulnerabilities caused by storm events and other natural disasters.

Initiative 3.3: Improve efficiency in waste collection and recycling efforts.





Focus Area: Create a safe, healthy and engaged community

Objective 1: Provide public safety services that match the unique needs, values, and concerns throughout our diverse community.

Initiative 1.1: Continue efforts to reduce violent crimes in the Wilmington community.

Initiative 1.2: Improve safety along city right of ways for vehicular and pedestrian users.

Initiative 1.3: Enhance the city's comprehensive emergency preparedness and management plans.

Objective 2: Partner with federal, state, and local agencies to ensure the delivery of exceptional public safety and emergency services to people experiencing homelessness or drug addiction.

Initiative 2.1: Continue and expand partnerships and the Getting Home program to coordinate, communicate and engage with persons living or at risk of being unsheltered.

Initiative 2.2: Explore and develop a security program for public facilities ensuring the safety of staff and visitors.

Initiative 2.3: Continue the city's partnership with the Quick Response Team and explore opportunities for enhanced service.

Objective 3: Improve quality of life through minimum housing standards, enforcing city codes, and providing opportunity and access to a healthy home.

Initiative 3.1: Continue to develop, evaluate, and expand the collaborative Community Risk Reduction Program.

Initiative 3.2: Seek new and creative ways to mitigate city code violations.

Initiative 3.3: Partner across city departments, non-profit organizations, and the community at large to provide young people with opportunities for growth and development.





Focus Area: Achieve organizational excellence

Objective 1: Recruit, develop, and retain a diverse, high-performing workforce.

Initiative 1.1: Develop strategies to attract and retain highly qualified, diverse candidates.

Initiative 1.2: Implement a city-wide learning management system.

Initiative 1.3: Create well-defined pathways for advancement, leadership, and knowledge transfer opportunities.

Objective 2: Align facilities, staff, and technology with organizational and community needs, making efficient use of available resources.

Initiative 2.1: Increase accessibility of all documents and records to internal and external customers.

Initiative 2.2: Develop and implement a comprehensive employee safety program.

Initiative 2.3: Establish a structure and formalized process for updating and maintaining organizational policies and procedures.

Objective 3: Expand effective and equitable customer service to both internal and external customers through improved collaboration, communication, and community engagement.

Initiative 3.1: Develop and implement consistent customer service standards, training, and evaluation methods organization-wide.

Initiative 3.2: Develop and implement a city-wide Customer Relationship Management system to facilitate better customer service.

Initiative 3.3: Identify and develop additional opportunities for community accessibility including providing access options to meet the diverse needs of the community.





Focus Area: Cultivate an environment for economic growth, job creation, and cultural vibrance

Objective 1: Create strategies and tools to attract new businesses and retain and grow existing ones.

Initiative 1.1: Review, identify, streamline, and improve existing city policies, programs, and processes to support economic growth.

Initiative 1.2: Assess and develop creative economic development tools and entrepreneurial ecosystems.

Initiative 1.3: Conduct a Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise Disparity Study and develop a comprehensive MWBE plan for the city.

Objective 2: Identify and enhance local and regional economic development partnerships.

Initiative 2.1: Develop partnerships to support programs that expand workforce development opportunities for all skill sets and backgrounds.

Initiative 2.2: Leverage local, state, and federal programs, resources, and relationships to cultivate economic development opportunities.

Initiative 2.3: Evaluate downtown parking strategies to address changing office, retail, and residential needs, including the development of curbside management strategies.

Objective 3: Enhance and grow Wilmington's position as a nationally recognized entertainment, cultural, and tourism destination.

Initiative 3.1: Assess the preliminary recommendations from the Wilmington Convention and Visitor Bureau's commissioned Riverwalk Assessment and develop a multi-year improvement plan.

Initiative 3.2: Develop an economic impact study for Live Oak Bank Pavilion and Greenfield Lake Amphitheater.

Initiative 3.3: Upon completion of the Riverwalk North Feasibility Study, assess preliminary findings and identify options to fund construction of a northern extension to the Riverwalk.



