

TOWN OF WENDELL

2023 STRATEGIC PLAN



VISION

GOALS

INITIATIVES

PURPOSE



The Town of Wendell recognizes that the realization of a community vision is only achieved when the strategic goals of the community are in alignment with available and planned resources.

As such, the purpose of the strategic plan is to provide for a process that aligns resources with commitment from Town organization leaders to bridge the gap between the assessed current conditions and the envisioned community of the future.



To this end, the Strategic Plan is developed and guides the development of the Budget for two (2) successive fiscal years. The plan is reviewed and re-prioritized in the second fiscal year to ensure that Board vision and staff implementation is consistent with resources allocated.

PROCESS



The Strategic Planning process was initiated at the fall 2022 Board policy retreat. Management presented strategic initiatives that are in progress, emerging issues identified by departments, and facilitated the identification of new or changed initiatives with the Board. Staff used the guidance to establish draft initiatives that were presented to appointed citizen committees and boards for additional feedback and revision.

The draft initiatives for each of the five (5) strategic goals were presented to the public at four (4) community charettes held in differing areas of Wendell (Downtown, Edgemont Landing, Pleasant Grove, and Wendell Falls). The community feedback was presented to the Board at the Budget Retreat in March 2023 and initiatives were prioritized in a facilitated process.

Initiatives are divided into two categories: Management in Progress (staff-committed items to complete) and Strategic Initiatives (Board valued items to advance in Budgets). While all components of the Strategic Plan are of value, prioritization of the Strategic Initiatives by the Board provides policy guidance to staff for the direction of limited resources in developing the Budget. Priority initiatives are categorized as Top Priority (priority of 5 or 6 Board Members) and High Priority (priority of 3 or 4 Board Members).

VISION STATEMENT

The Town of Wendell is clean, safe, vibrant, and full service with a diverse population. Our citizen-friendly reputation is assured by the quality of our facilities and professional staff who work efficiently to provide great customer service.

We have a knowledgeable Town Board who works efficiently to incorporate input from Citizen Advisory Boards and staff to be responsible stewards of our tax dollars, through leveraging, by watching return on investments and maintaining our fund balance.



Wendell Board of Commissioners

Left to right, back to front.

Dr. Jon Lutz, Commissioner
Jason Joyner, Mayor Pro-Tem
Joe DeLoach, Commissioner
Deans Eatman, Commissioner
Virginia Gray, Mayor
Phil Tarnaski, Commissioner

In working to achieve this vision for the Town of Wendell, the Board of Commissioners have committed to the following:

- Consider all aspects of a situation and make thorough, deliberate, and well-reasoned decisions.
- Explore all viewpoints. We are open to hearing from others, learning from them, and compromising, when needed.
- Stay cohesive, collaborative, collegial, and connected to the manager and to each other.
- Demonstrate respect for all opinions, especially in public. We support the decisions of the Board. Once decisions are made by the majority, we support that decision.
- Strive for efficiency in the way we handle business. We are hard-working and attend all meetings.
- Keep the best interests of the Town uppermost in our minds.
- Tackle new and novel ideas and processes.

POLICY GOALS

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olicy goal areas are intentionally broad and are used to identify the most critical issues facing the community. Each policy goal has specific action initiatives that are

annually prioritized to assist in the allocation of resources and staff time to ensure efficiency and effectiveness. The policy goal areas are identified to include the following:

GOAL 1:

Downtown Vibrancy, Economic Growth, and Community Character

Promote economic vitality through the development of a vibrant Downtown, economic growth, and unique community character.

GOAL 2:

Public Safety and Neighborhood Improvement

Provide for a safe and secure community that nurtures livable and well-maintained neighborhoods that are family friendly.

GOAL 3:

Infrastructure, Transportation, and the Environment

Develop and maintain infrastructure and policies to support new growth, improve the quality of life for residents, and provide for a clean and green environment.

GOAL 4:

Parks, Recreation, Special Events, and Culture

Establish facilities, events, and programs that connect the community, promote healthy lifestyle opportunities, and culturally engage citizens and visitors.

GOAL 5:

Organization Culture and Communication

Build a professional and inclusive Town organization that is fiscally responsible, seeks innovative practices, and values the development of staff.

Goal 1: Downtown Vibrancy, Economic Growth & Community Character

Promote economic vitality through the development of a vibrant Downtown, economic growth, and unique community character.

Downtown vibrancy, economic growth, and community character goal attainment occurs when the following opportunities are realized or conditions exist.

A.) Downtown contains a vibrant mix of businesses that are centered on food and beverage retail, and neighborhood services that attract area residents in coordination with sufficient parking, attractive public spaces, and regular special events to foster the "Small Town, Big Charm" motto.

B.) The Town contains an appropriate mix of land uses including the development of commercial, office, and industrial uses to enhance property values, create jobs for residents, and make opportunities available for shopping, services, and products desired by the community and region.

Management in Progress

1. Complete the update of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to reflect the policies established in the Blueprint Wendell 2030 Comprehensive Plan.
2. Complete the Downtown Streetscape Plan to replace dated infrastructure, ensure ADA accessibility is in compliance, and enhance attractive public spaces and parking areas in the downtown area.
3. Implement the Brownfield Program using Assessment Program funds received from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to assess and plan for adaptive reuse of selected properties.
4. Continue working with education and health industry partners for the construction of the Wake Tech East Wake Campus, new and renovated public school sites, and medical office and health infrastructure expansion.



Strategic Initiatives

Top priority

- Seek opportunities around Downtown and encourage infill development and redevelopment for vacant, dilapidated, and under-utilized properties while encouraging the preservation of historic structures and architectural elements.

Top priority

- Evaluate areas near I-87 and the Wake Tech campus for expansion of non-residential development to promote diversification of the tax base and job growth.

High priority

- Seek opportunities to promote and preserve the unique history and environment around Wendell by identifying projects with Capital Area Preservation, Wendell Historical Society, the Conservation Fund, Triangle Land Conservancy, and other like partners.

High priority

- Identify funding opportunities to implement the Downtown Streetscape Plan and fund enhanced services in the Downtown area.

High priority

- Work with the Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Wake County, area non-profits, and neighborhood residents to complete a neighborhood plan to include areas within the Town jurisdiction, rehabilitate the Old Carver School into a community center, and extend services and infrastructure (public and private) into the community.

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Strategic Initiatives (continued)

- Work with Wake County to update the Broadband Access Plan and identify needs and means to implement expanded broadband access including an update of the Downtown public Wi-Fi service area.
- Seek redevelopment of a site identified in the Brownfield Program to encourage infill development in the downtown area.
- Initiate an update of the 2025 Economic Development Strategic Plan to guide economic development initiatives for the following five (5) years.
- Work with Wake County and housing partners to ensure continued opportunities for housing affordability, diversity of housing types, and the services and transportation needed to support the housing.
- Identify opportunities to enhance gateways to Town, update wayfinding signs, and provide aesthetic improvements to public spaces and medians throughout the jurisdiction.



Goal 2: Public Safety & Neighborhood Improvement

Provide for a safe and secure community that nurtures livable and well-maintained neighborhoods that are family friendly.

Public safety and neighborhood improvement goal attainment occurs when the following opportunities are realized or conditions exist.

A.) Develop an environment for community-engaged policing and code enforcement that emphasizes maintaining safe, family-friendly neighborhoods, improving the public environment for accessibility, and encourage community ownership in improving private property.

Management in Progress

1. Complete the CALEA accreditation process and maintain efforts to retain the accreditation once received.
2. Continue department-wide training on implicit bias and community-engaged policing to promote the mission of the Wendell Police Department.
3. Hold a "Neighborhood Clean Up Day" to promote awareness of services available to improve housing, utility savings, social services, and food accessibility in conjunction with service projects by property owners and groups to beautify, improve access, and remove debris from the neighborhood.
4. Maintain Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) for all police officers to properly assist persons in crisis receive appropriate agency referrals and awareness of resources available.



Strategic Initiatives

Top priority

- Further traffic calming efforts when warranted through evaluation of speed limits, physical improvements, all-way stops and signalization, public education, and enforcement.

Top priority

- Support police department efforts and public safety partnerships to enhance training and equipment for high risk and active shooter response in coordination with area education and community partners.

High priority

- Continue Neighborhood Improvement Program project efforts in Zone 2 to improve sidewalk connectivity between existing housing, schools, and downtown.

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Strategic Initiatives (continued)

- Implement the Police Department Communication Plan and related policies to develop an intentional community engagement program to increase awareness of efforts, visibility in the community, and programs to support public safety awareness.
- Develop a pedestrian and bicycle safety strategy to include public education, communication, and enforcement.
- Identify opportunities to encourage safe housing options for both rental and home ownership programs through communications, partnerships, and code enforcement.
- Implement speed limit reductions on local roads in residential neighborhoods to 25 mph unless otherwise posted to encourage safer driving practices.
- Continue efforts to partner with Wendell Fire Department and Wake County EMS to promote fire prevention and health awareness as well as implement traffic signal enhancements and neighborhood connectivity to maintain response times to calls for service.



Goal 3: Infrastructure, Transportation, and the Environment

Develop and maintain infrastructure and policies to support new growth, improve the quality of life for residents, and provide for a clean and green environment.

Infrastructure, transportation, and the environment goal attainment occurs when the following opportunities are realized or conditions exist.

A.) Public utilities, land services, and open spaces are designed, maintained, and extended to provide for necessary water, sewer, stormwater, roads, sidewalks, bikeways, paths, intersections, facilities, and debris removal for the existing and planned community.



Management in Progress

1. Implement the updated 5-year 2020 Pavement Condition Study for the maintenance and resurfacing of Town streets and establish plans for the next 5-year cycle.
2. Continue efforts to implement the Stormwater Management Plan and maintain a compliant program to maintain, replace, and inspect systems that drain and treat stormwater.
3. Complete construction of the Wendell Boulevard Pedestrian and Intersection improvements to install sidewalks from Hanor Lane to Wendell Falls Parkway and a traffic signal at Wendell Falls Parkway.
4. Implement the Utility Merger Close-out and update the Utility Allocation Policy to convey properties to the City of Raleigh and align available resources to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.



Strategic Initiatives

Top priority

- Conduct a Sidewalk Condition Survey and establish a 5-year plan for maintenance, replacement, and extension of sidewalks consistent with the Wendell Pedestrian Plan.

Top priority

- Work with regional partners to promote mobility options such as the continuation of the Go Wake micro-transit service and implementing the regional bus plan.

High priority

- Evaluate opportunities to update the Transportation Plan and Pedestrian Plan for consistency with adopted land use plans to promote mobility and accessibility.

High priority

- Establish an infrastructure plan for the extension and connection of water and sewer in coordination with the City of Raleigh to promote appropriate development, annexation, and close service gaps.

High priority

- Implement projects to improve stormwater drainage by repairing existing systems that cross Third Street Downtown and restoring the Blakeford Dam on Todd Lane.

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Strategic Initiatives (continued)

- Establish a Sustainability Program to encourage the use of alternative energy sources, composting, natural resource protection, and more efficient practices by the Town organization and encourage the same in the community.
- Conduct an analysis of the pre-regulatory landfill owned by the Town to establish a plan to address any needed concerns and evaluate opportunities to return the property to a useful condition through the Brownfield Program.
- Evaluate the condition of the Town cemetery and establish a Cemetery Improvement Plan to guide future improvements and maintenance of the property.
- Complete the design for intersection improvements for Eagle Rock Road at both Wendell Falls Parkway and Wendell Boulevard and seek funding opportunities and partnerships to implement.
- Complete a tree health study to encourage a healthy tree canopy and improved public safety in conjunction with programs recognizing Wendell reaching 40 years as a Tree City.



Goal 4: Parks, Recreation, Special Events, and Culture

Establish facilities, events, and programs that connect the community, promote healthy lifestyle opportunities, and culturally engage citizens and visitors.

Parks, recreation, special events, and culture goal attainment occurs when the following opportunities are realized or conditions exist.

A.) Provide recreation amenities and services to residents and visitors through quality facilities, a diverse program offering, varied parks, and special events guided by a community-driven master plan that provides for accessibility, connectivity and healthy fun for all.

Management in Progress

1. Complete the construction of the neighborhood park at the Hollybrook Road site.
2. Complete the design and construction of the Main Street Greenway Project.
3. Encourage Wake County to complete the design and begin construction on Lake Myra Park.
4. Coordinate and plan with Wake County for the future of the next library site in Wendell.



Strategic Initiatives

Top priority

- Initiate design on a recreation facility to provide accessible program space and increase the number of indoor recreation and gym facilities to accommodate growing programs for basketball, volleyball, and other court sports.

Top priority

- Complete the concept design and construction of the first phase of the Buffalo Creek Greenway and schedule the construction of future phases.

Top priority

- Establish a project schedule to implement greenway projects identified in the updated Wendell Greenway Plan.

High priority

- Identify and plan for the acquisition of neighborhood parks and open space in areas of Town that need additional access consistent with the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

High priority

- Design an athletic field complex to increase the local options for field sports such as soccer, lacrosse, and football in Wendell.

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Strategic Initiatives (continued)

- Develop a capital funding plan and schedule to implement the Parks & Recreation Master Plan.
- Establish a natural resource and open space program for the acquisition and stewardship of public and private open space in coordination with Federal, State, non-profit and private efforts within and adjoining the Town.
- Develop the concept plan and construction schedule for the Northside Park neighborhood park to include the Todd Road extension to provide access.
- Evaluate opportunities for the expansion of programming for diverse and special populations and to improve inclusion and access to existing programs.
- Implement the splash pad recommendation consistent with the Parks & Recreation Master Plan.



Goal 5: Organization Culture & Communication

Build a professional and inclusive Town organization that is fiscally responsible, seeks innovative practices, and values the development of staff.

Organization culture and communication goal attainment occurs when the following opportunities are realized or conditions exist.

A.) Build an organization committed to improving daily towards a goal of excellence in service to its citizens, businesses, visitors, and employees through responsible fiscal management, inclusive communication, innovative technologies, and professional development.



Management in Progress

1. Continue implementation of the ADA Transition Plan to improve accessibility to Town facilities, programs, infrastructure, meetings, and communications for all persons.
2. Evaluate benefits and health plan options for competitive costs and comparative services for employees, partners, and dependents.
3. Complete the design and construction of the Public Works Yard facility to provide adequate space and functionality to maintain core services.
4. Establish a timeline and financial plan for the future design and construction of a new police station.



Strategic Initiatives

Top priority

- Work with the financial advisor to establish a fiscally sustainable plan to fund needed capital improvements to ensure adequate public facilities, parks, greenways, roads, and infrastructure is available to the community as it grows.

Top priority

- Establish an organization-wide customer relations management (CRM) system to receive, track, respond, and report to inquiries from citizens and customers of the Town to maintain responsive service delivery as the community grows.

Top priority

- Continue enhancements to employee professional development and continuing education opportunities to establish succession planning and meet ever increasing skills needed for public service delivery.

High priority

- Enhance organization communication to support clear and consistent messaging to the public for the municipal services provided and achievements obtained through the implementation of established communication plans.

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Strategic Initiatives (continued)

- Organize wellness efforts for employees and promote public health awareness materials of partners to provide a positive environment for physical and mental health in the community.
- Develop resilient technology resources for the Town organization to ensure that services are maintained through crisis and technology that is updated to achieve efficiencies and accessibility in program delivery.
- Evaluate the existing financial enterprise and asset management systems to ensure that fiscal records are maintained in an efficient and effective manner.
- Plan for new and expanded WiFi services in Downtown and park properties.

