



2025

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

 TOWN OF WENDELL
SMALL TOWN. BIG CHARM.

BACKGROUND

The Town of Wendell, North Carolina has experienced moderate growth in recent years. The Town's population growth, combined with an availability of land, access to I-87, and proximity to Raleigh, competitively position Wendell as a location for the next wave of development within the Research Triangle Park region.

With the recent growth, the Town has become more attractive to young professionals, families and retirees looking for a place to call home with proximity to everything the region offers.

With the recent growth, the time is right to develop a new economic development strategic plan. The Economic Development Assessment completed in June of 2019 serves as the basis of the strategic plan.

This economic development plan will serve as a framework for the Town's economic development effort. The goal of the plan is to build a plan that adapts to trends in economic development, resilient to changes in economic conditions and creates a foundation to ensure a sustainable and long-term growth that enriches Wendell's economic and tax base.

An effective economic development program starts with a strong business retention program.

Without understanding the local business climate, it is difficult to identify the needs and assets of a community for future growth. The Town of Wendell Economic Development should partner with the Wendell Chamber of Commerce and Wake County Economic Development to utilize the strengths of the organizations to build relationships with existing businesses.



This Economic Development Plan will be reviewed periodically to ensure its still compatible with local, regional and national trends and market conditions.

The Plan should be reviewed every two years to accommodate successes, identify new goals, as well review existing priorities.

Wendell is part of a dynamically growing metropolitan region. It will be important to continue to build and sustain partnerships with other organizations and institutions to accomplish the identified goals.

STRATEGIC

GOAL 1: SUPPORT EXISTING BUSINESSES & INDUSTRIES



1.1 Build strong relationships with businesses through the business retention and expansion program visits.

- a. Identify and contact Wendell businesses through a formal business retention program including visits to build relationships and collect information on the business climate.
- b. Target major employers, with an emphasis on manufacturers/producers.
- c. Develop and host a peer to peer network for executives of companies in the program.
- d. Partner with the Chamber of Commerce & Economic Development Commission, when appropriate to assist with site visits.
- e. Host roundtable discussions with local business community on issues and needs.
- f. Monitor and document trends and issues that come from visits and look for ways the Town can assist with needs.
- g. Identify workforce needs for existing companies

1.2 Enhance Industry Clusters

- a. Work with local industry to identify supply chain businesses and needs.
- b. Assist regional economic development partners on expanding the growth clusters of Life Sciences, Advanced Manufacturing, IT & Technology, and Clean Tech & Smart Grid.

STRATEGIC

GOAL 1: SUPPORT EXISTING BUSINESSES & INDUSTRIES



1.3 Continue to develop and refine business events for the community.

- a. Seek out speakers and topics that are relevant to the audience and provide economic value to businesses and developers.
- b. Look for creative ways to encourage attendance and promote the events.

1.4 Create a resource for small businesses and entrepreneurs.

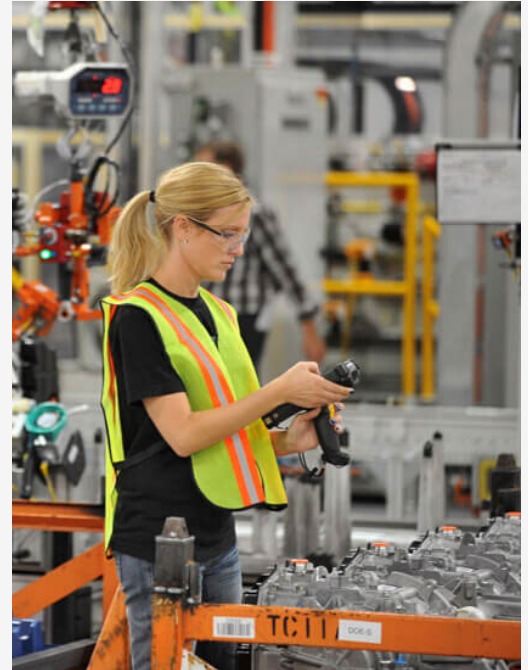
- a. Work with the Wendell Chamber of Commerce and other agencies to create an all-inclusive resource event and/or directory for small businesses and entrepreneurs.
- b. Explore speakers for specific programs that are identified.
- c. Create an online or paper "roadmap" for opening a business including a link to town applications, the permit portal, and zoning documents.
- d. Identify and evaluate physical spaces, infrastructure and business support resources to create a Wendell entrepreneurial ecosystem and promote it widely.

STRATEGIC

GOAL 2: ENHANCE RECRUITMENT OF IDENTIFIED INDUSTRIES

2.1 Work to grow and locate companies in Wendell to create jobs.

- a. Respond to leads and directly targeting businesses within the identified industries of advanced manufacturing, life sciences, IT & technology, clean tech & smart grid and destination retail.
- b. Work with Wake County Economic Development & the State of North Carolina Commerce Department on site visits.
- c. Identify future mixed use/business park locations suitable for attracting companies.
- d. Create a program of site/building identification and development to be "prospect ready."
- e. Create a site readiness matrix to help prepare sites for development.



2.2 Continue developing and maintaining relationships with businesses, site selectors, brokers, developers and land owners.

- a. Continuously work to identify ways to maintain relationships and "tell our story" to people that have roles in the development and recruitment process, such as businesses, site selectors, brokers, developers and land owners.
- b. Look for new and innovative ways to display information and showcase the Town of Wendell.

STRATEGIC

GOAL 2: ENHANCE RECRUITMENT OF IDENTIFIED INDUSTRIES



2.3 Enhance our online presence.

- Work to regularly refresh the Town's Economic Development online materials to maintain up-to-date information in a clear, concise, and readily-available manner.
- Create two short videos that can be used to pitch Wendell to companies and site selectors.
- Develop a slide-deck and one-page marketing material that gives an overview of Wendell.
- Identify places where visitors and residents are likely to take pictures and install marketing information that will be visible (#hashtag, logo, website address.)
- Start a video promotion series on the proper pronunciation of Wendell and key activities and events in Town.



STRATEGIC

GOAL 3: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES



3.1 Develop stronger relationships with educational institutions that serve Wendell's workforce.

- a. Collaborate with local universities, community colleges and high schools to prepare future workforce.
- b. Explore workforce training, internship, and project opportunities through educational institution partnerships.
- c. Utilize partnerships to aid in the creation of an apprenticeship program.

3.2 Partner with NC Works and Capital Area Workforce Development to encourage utilization of programs & incentives.

- a. Schedule program speakers on statewide and national workforce programs for the business community.
- b. Explore job placement programs, job fairs, and incentives.
- c. Identify funding programs for companies to utilize.

STRATEGIC GOAL 3: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES



3.3 Work to make Wendell more desirable and well-known to the greater community and state.

- a. Create a networking group that can assist work from home, entrepreneurs, new residents about the opportunities in Wendell.
- b. Create a relocation portal that is designed to assist local companies to attract employees.



STRATEGIC

GOAL 4: CREATE A VIBRANT DOWNTOWN CONNECTED TO ALL NEIGHBORHOODS



4.1 Develop a framework for a sustainable, non-profit, tax exempt downtown development organization.

- a. Research mission/purpose statements and bylaws from similar size towns (Edenton, Aberdeen, Mt. Airy, Elon & Morehead City).
- b. Develop draft organizational bylaws and mission/purpose statement based on research.

4.2 Create visual and physical connections between downtown and all neighborhoods.

- a. Research other communities with multiple areas of jurisdiction to develop best practices for future actions.
- b. Use public art and best practices to create visual connections throughout Town.
- c. Develop greenways, sidewalks, side paths and transit connections between Wendell Falls and Downtown.
- d. Facilitate development opportunities along the Wendell Falls Parkway Strategic Corridor.

STRATEGIC

GOAL 4: CREATE A VIBRANT DOWNTOWN CONNECTED TO ALL NEIGHBORHOODS

4.3 Develop gathering spaces/activities/events throughout town where all people from all neighborhoods feel welcome.

- a. Evaluate the Parks & Recreation Master Plan to identify property and progress plans, to serve as gathering places in under-served areas, geared towards the community's various recreational needs.
- b. Produce a live music concert series alternating between Wendell Falls and Downtown within or adjacent to the commercial areas.
- c. Renovate and upgrade existing public gathering space, as needed.



4.4 Increase Downtown retail and dining options.

- a. Complete and maintain a vacant building & business inventory with property condition notes.
- b. Speak with downtown property owners about potential building uses and improvements.
- c. Promote the Town's façade grant program.
- d. Facilitate the development of additional downtown gathering spaces and parking areas for special events.



STRATEGIC GOAL 4: CREATE A VIBRANT DOWNTOWN CONNECTED TO ALL NEIGHBORHOODS



4.5 Infill Downtown Development

- a. Identify sites for projects capable of generating mixed-use investment.
- b. Work with property owners interested in selling and marketing sites for mixed-use development.
- c. Market mixed-use sites to developers.