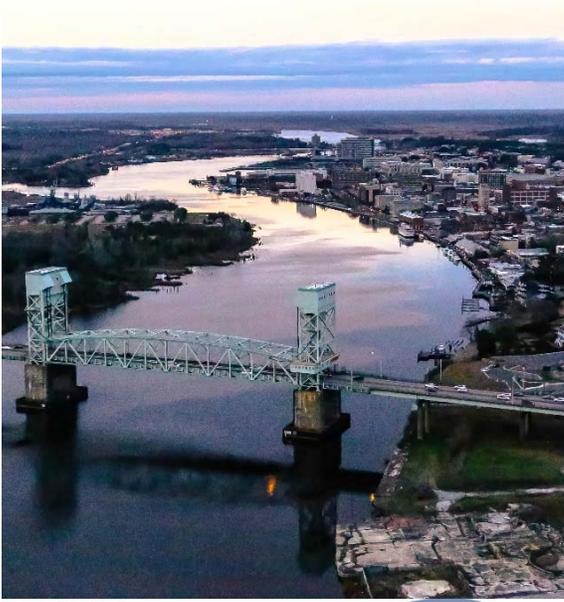


# Strategic Plan FY17-FY20



**W** CITY OF  
**WILMINGTON**  
NORTH CAROLINA





## Introduction

The Strategic Plan (Plan) set forth, like the City itself, is not a static object; rather it is intended to provide a framework for positive change in the city. It sets the stage for the City's priority initiatives as voiced by citizens, vetted by staff and adopted by council. The plan is expected to evolve to ensure the city is moving towards the desired vision.

The strategic plan's philosophy ensures maintenance of the City's core and essential services while at the same time enhancing identified strategic initiatives. This ensures the services succeeding today are not the community's strategic initiatives tomorrow. It also ensures the Plan set forth is focused on a small number of community priorities to make certain that over the next four years the strategies identified will have successes.

The Plan's intent is threefold:

- To provide a strategic focus for the community and city staff,
- To provide stability and opportunities for those who already live, work and build their businesses here, and;
- To provide a common goal for all

On June 21, 2016 City Council adopted the Focus Areas, Community Outcome, and Strategies. The action steps were left flexible to be refined as needed to better serve the community.

## Focus Area: Create a Safe Place

The City will create a safe, inclusive community with neighborhood/area based public safety and support services.

### **Community Outcomes**

1. Reduce city crime rate on a year over year basis
2. Truancy rates decline year over year
3. Participation increases in after school program
4. School drop-out rates decrease 5% annually
5. Increase newly developed "complete streets" by no less than 1,000 linear feet annually
6. The total response time for all calls for emergency service, the Fire Departments first due unit will be within four and a half (4.5) minutes for 90% of all calls for emergency service
7. Reduce the # of enforced (under order) minimum housing code and nuisance violations

### **Strategies**

1. Partner with community and non-profit agencies to enhance youth engagement (Outcome Link: 1, 2, 3, 4)

#### Action steps:

- Proactively recruit additional resources or groups that will promote and enhance youth engagement
- Partner with non-profits that will enable affordable home ownership opportunities to eligible citizens

2. Establish a model citizen code to establish acceptable social norms (Outcome Link: 1, 3, 7)

#### Action steps:

- Proactively target and implement additional neighborhood watch programs
- Proactively identify City code violations and alert the property owner
- Encourage city staff to act as ambassadors and promote social norms by picking up trash as they are walking around the city and calling in areas that need clean up

3. Review and implement city-wide sharing of resources across departments to aid in known public safety service gaps allowing more targeted community policing (Outcome Link: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7)

#### Action steps:

- Identify departments with staffing who have 'down-time' to aid in areas where service gaps exist
- Real time CTR implementation
- Initiate neighborhood sweeps

- Pilot community policing approaches and roll out successful practices to more of the community
4. Implement a public safety staffing plan directed at a safer community (Outcome Link: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7)

Action steps:

- Ensure current staffing levels are resourced in key areas of the city
5. Employ comprehensive plan policies and land development codes to create both defensible spaces and safe streets (Outcome Link: 1, 5, 7)

Action steps:

- Maximize active walls in pedestrian oriented areas and promote the development of more pedestrian oriented areas
  - Incorporate crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) techniques in parks, public spaces, parking decks, and new developments to maximize community safety
  - Create development patterns that reduce reliance on uses divided into “pods”
  - Enhance bike and pedestrian infrastructure that increases bicycle and pedestrian safety and supports public health goals.
  - Coordinate street designs with placemaking and pedestrian priorities to improve traffic flow and enhance bike and pedestrian safety.
  - Relocate freight trains to a more direct route into the port of Wilmington to dramatically reduce the number of at-grade freight train crossings, improve traffic flow and enhance vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian safety.
  - Plan for police and fire services in coordination with development and growth projections to allow for the efficient provision of public safety services.
6. Engage in public outreach to change citizen perception (Outcome Link: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7)

Action steps:

- Continue to use social media to enhance public outreach
- Creative messaging of media statements
- Police will partner with key groups to convey common regional communications

7. Provide state of the art equipment and personnel capabilities in order to best provide for the fire, EMS, and disaster emergency response needs of our citizens, businesses, and visitors.”

Action steps:

- Provide innovative fire suppression operations in order to protect life, property and the environment.
- Maintain external partnerships in order to enhance operational effectiveness.
- Provide emergency medical first response capabilities at the basic life support level in order to treat life-threatening medical emergencies.
- Provide specialized operational capabilities in order to safely mitigate low frequency high risk emergency incidents.

## Focus Area: Support Efficient Transportation Systems

The City will advocate for, develop and maintain diverse modes of transportation needed for an inclusive, connected community. A complete transportation system includes motor vehicles, mass transit, pedestrian, bicycle and other transportation modes operating in a unified and complementary manner that increases mobility and regional connectivity.

### **Community Outcomes**

1. Improve citizen's important-satisfaction rating for '**overall maintenance of city streets and sidewalks**' from .2596
2. Improve Citizen's important-satisfaction rating for '**maintenance of neighborhood streets**' from .1277
3. Improve Citizen's important-satisfaction rating for '**overall management of traffic flow on city streets**' from .2549
4. Increase Bike/Pedestrian paths by at least ½ miles per year
5. Maintain and/or increase State/Federal funding levels in support of transportation improvements
6. Convert WAVE from a 'dependency rider' model to a 'choice rider' model

### **Strategies**

1. Create and follow a strategic transportation financial plan to include multiple partners (Outcome link: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

#### Action steps:

- Begin process to identify partnerships to formulate innovative transportation methods
- Develop a local and regional task force to aid in the development of a transportation plan
- Review and use adopted plans in developing a financial plan (ex. *Greenway Plan, MPO*)
- Acquaint federal and state legislators of our needs by meeting one on one with them and / or their staff monthly during the legislative sessions
- Actively participate in regional MPO
- Routinely evaluate overall street condition using the street conditioning analysis

2. Proactively seek local and regional partners for smart development initiatives (Outcome link: 2, 3, 4)

#### Action steps:

- Work with NHCO towards common understanding of effective mixed use development and implement through respective code changes
- Work through CFPUA to encourage smart growth
- Implement limited street cut programs with partners
- Seek partners to aid in the rail realignment project

3. Develop and market public educational materials to improve traffic perceptions and ultimately behavior while driving around the city (Outcome link: 3)

Action steps:

- Use active enforcement of crosswalks w/temporary crossing guards
- Employ commercials, billboards and print ads promoting safe bike, walk drive rules
- Employ GTV8, the web and social media to convey safe driver behaviors
- Provide funding to support transportation demand management strategies

4. Enable and promote alternative modes of transportation (i.e. WAVE, carpooling, mass transit, bike sharing) (Outcome link: 3, 4, 6)

Action steps:

- Complete a feasibility study for rail realignment and trolley service development during FY17
- Improve the efficiencies of the transit system by continuing to fund WAVE transit and encouraging other local jurisdictions to participate in building capacity and service area
- Fund City share of transportation demand manager
- Create special incentives to employees for participation in ride sharing strategies
- Participate in operations review of the WAVE Transit

5. Increase attention to intergovernmental affairs to include relations, advocacy and education (Outcome Link: 5)

Action Steps:

- Increase attention to state and federal legislative action regarding transportation funding (e.g. Powell Bill Appropriations)
- Seek additional state and federal transportation funding

## Focus Area: Foster a Prosperous, Thriving Economy

The City will promote opportunity and prosperity by fostering sustainable, regionally coordinated economic growth and development strategies for creating jobs, building a strong workforce, facilitating commerce and business vitality.

### **Community Outcomes**

1. Decrease Vacancy Rates (VE)
2. Economic development partners will maintain required benchmarks
3. 2% increase in higher paying job wages in targeted industries (Garner Report/Chambers Scorecard)
4. Strategic increases in the city's tax base
5. Increase in redevelopment as measured in redevelopment projects—target no less than 3 projects per year
6. Reduce single occupancy driven miles to work measured in TDM initiatives—no less than 2 initiatives per year
7. Complete the new Land Development Code—75% complete by the end of 2017-18. 100% by 2018-19.
8. Citizen survey results related to economic development will be the same or better than the prior year's results

### **Strategies**

1. Leverage existing assets to support a diverse economy (i.e. Innovate NC, Garner Report, etc.) (Outcome Link: 2, 3, 4, 8)

#### Action steps:

- Pursue partnering projects in tri-county
- Leverage transportation bond for economic development
- Revise and adopt new business incentive policy
- Find ways to work with federal dollars to increase % used

2. Pursue partnerships for Economic Development (Outcome link: 1, 2, 3, 4, 8)

#### Action steps:

- Leverage non-profits such as WBD, WDI, Film, UNCW and TDA<sup>1</sup>
- Advocate with TDA for tourism strategies that extend beyond summer and attract more tourists
- Keep Federal and State officials advised of development opportunities

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<sup>1</sup> Acronyms equals the following: WBD (Wilmington Business Development), WDI (Wilmington Downtown Inc.), Film (Wilmington Film Commission), UNCW (University of North Carolina at Wilmington), and TDA (Tourist Development Authority)

- Use Wells Fargo Championship as an opportunity to foster regional economic development and communicate the opportunities available in Southeastern North Carolina

3. Encourage smart economic development (Outcome link: 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)

Action steps:

- Develop codes that promote accessory housing
- Market to citizens and developers benefits of placemaking; facilitate development projects that embody placemaking elements.
- Consult with the development community and citizens during the drafting of the new land development code to provide clarity, gather stakeholder input and promote more timely issuance of the permitting process
- As development returns to a normal or an above normal volume of projects, provide adequate staffing to maintain an expedited pace of development review
- Facilitate adaptive reuse and redevelopment projects to put underperforming properties back on the market and added to the tax base of the City and NHC

4. Work with regional partners to create a regional advisory board to enhance economic development (Outcome link: 1, 2, 3, 4, 8)

Action steps:

- Agendas and discussion should include smart development in all counties
- Evaluate regional process as reported annually by the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce – Regional Economic Scorecard, WBD, TDA, WBI
- Participate in regional discussion around “smart” development

## Focus Area: Promote Culture, Arts and Public Spaces

The City will provide unique, creative open space, parks and community facilities integrated with arts and cultural activities for all.

### **Community Outcomes**

1. All new developments in the city limits will have average open space of no less than 10% of total project acreage.
2. The Northern Waterfront Park will have no less than 1 major public event per month over the course of any given year
3. Designs for the Northern Waterfront Park will be 100% complete by FY17-18
4. The design of the Northern Waterfront Park will allow for multiple events going on at one time.
5. The Northern Waterfront area of downtown will average no less than 5 acres of enhanced development completed annually over the next 3 years.
6. The City's brownfields program shall facilitate no less than one development project annually.
7. Increase citizen's awareness of role and effectiveness of the Arts Council
8. Increased \$ value of economic impact of film industry
9. Increased youth participation in city sponsored outreach programs (FY16 = 508)
10. Increased athletic events run by the city (FY16 = 12 programs<sup>2</sup>)

### **Strategies**

1. Transform environmental constraints into amenities (Outcome link: 1, 6)

#### Action steps:

- Employ replacement of Land Development Code as opportunity to capitalize on wetlands and low lying areas as passive, natural open space amenities.
- Employ stream corridors and buffer areas for recreation and non-vehicular mobility
- Investigate opportunities to allow for the use old railway beds for public spaces
- Promote the reuse of Brownfield properties through proactive initiatives.

2. Promote Northern Waterfront Park to be a large public gathering place with activities for all (Outcome link: 2, 3, 4, 5)

#### Action steps:

- Adopt a master plan for the northern end of downtown as part of the Heart of Wilmington Plan
- Design the park to accommodate a diversity of events year round.
- Partner with UNCW with regard to the increased # of international students and plan events accordingly

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<sup>2</sup> Twelve programs referenced includes collaborative programs. City runs 7 programs and 6 more collaboratively with city partners.

- Adopt a master plan specifically for the Northern Waterfront Park by the end of FY 16-17.
- Develop funding scheme for improvements including private contributions

3. Engage in civic partnerships to bring arts and cultural events to public spaces (Outcome link: 7)

Action steps:

- Develop a Sister City strategic plan
- Participate and develop a Strategic Plan for the Arts Council and related groups
- Provide 3 years of support to the Arts Council efforts to conduct an Economic Impact study
- Promote the viability of the Arts Council by working in tandem with the Council to develop funding marketing and educational opportunities

4. Promote film industry by continuing to value the necessity of incentives and capitalization (Outcome link: 8)

Action steps:

- Continue support for the film industry on the City's legislative agenda
- Communicate the positive economic impact of the film industry to the public

5. Continue to promote the use of the city's public spaces (Outcome link: 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 10)

Action steps:

- Continue support and growth of athletic events that positively impact the community
- Market city programs to youth
- Use social media as a method to promote activities available in the City's public spaces
- Communicate the positive impact of the quality of life that diverse public spaces generate

6. Increase the creative class base in Wilmington (outcome link: 2, 7)

Action steps:

- Support Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) education curriculums in schools
- Promote assets of area to attract creative talents
- Support the generation of entrepreneurial ideas thru public/private partnerships

## Focus Area: Engage in Civic Partnership

The City will build and improve partnerships, collaborations and relationships with all stakeholders, including our citizens and public and private organizations.

### **Community Outcomes**

1. Increase citizen satisfaction rating with the level of public involvement in decision-making (FY15 = 29%)
2. Increase citizen's satisfaction with the quality of City recreation programs/classes (FY15 = 45%)
3. Increase # of civic presentations about the city's priorities
4. Increase # of social organizations that support and help solve the city's social challenges
5. Reduce city crime rate year over year
6. Increase in Community Youth intervention and prevention activities
7. Reduce the number of citizen's who feel less safe in their residential community

### **Strategies**

1. Leverage the existing process of civic partnerships to maximize the utilization of existing public sector resources (Outcome link: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)

#### Action steps:

- Increase resources going to organizations that address youth violence reduction programs
  - Encourage civic partners to collaborate on affordable housing/workforce housing and other City priorities
  - Review the city's civic partnership's annual performance requirements to ensure relevancy towards city priorities
  - Target partnership with citizens and/or citizen groups who feel less safe in their communities in order to work with them to create a safe place
  - Market and support active lifestyle programs
  - Market and support athletic and recreation programs
2. Promote both City and citizen engagement in the community (Outcome link: 1, 3)

#### Action steps:

- Leverage existing tools and resources that will enable the public to contribute opinions and ideas more readily
- Create opportunities to work jointly with individuals, non-profits, academic and other groups to address the needs of the community
- Use social media to engage citizens' feedback on priority issues
- Encourage employees to volunteer with non-profits to address the needs of the community

## Focus Area: Provide Sustainability and Adaptability

The City will protect and preserve our natural resources with quality design for the built environment. The City will make strategic decisions focused on the long-term financial, physical and social health of the entire City to enhance our ability to respond to changing economic and demographic conditions. Our actions will be based on a shared commitment to inclusiveness, equity and continuous improvement.

### **Community Outcomes**

1. City's utility consumption will reduce by 2% annually (per heated sq foot of city-owned buildings)
2. Maintain current bond rating annually
3. Maintain or increase citizen satisfaction ratings for City taxes and fees (FY15 = 32%); quality of services provided by the City (FY15 = 64%) and availability of affordable housing (FY15 = 31%)
4. Maintain an undesignated fund balance of each year at targeted levels
5. 90% of CIPs will follow draft environmental performance standards including the potential to integrate renewable energy
6. Revenues at least equal to budgets
7. Increase # of new revenue sources made available
8. The Comprehensive Plan will be used in 100% of all land use decisions brought before the Planning Commission and City Council
9. Upon adoption of the new land development code, sustainable, form based development shall represent no less than 1/4 of all development projects in the 1945 corporate limits annually

### **Strategies**

1. Invest in the development of human capital to meet organizational goals (Outcome link: 3)

#### Action steps:

- Develop operational staffing plans to reflect services and infrastructure growth
- Develop internal service staffing plan to respond to the increased capital and resource growth and demand for service
- Promote a culture of life-long learning through avenues such as career development, succession planning or the City's performance process
- Develop leaders who promote a culture of camaraderie
- Promote employee and community engagement in improving our service delivery

2. Promote uses of alternative energy and reduction in resource consumption (Outcome link: 1, 2, 5)

Action steps:

- Develop policy on new construction following the draft environmental performance standards
- Require capital projects to include total cost of ownership projections
- Develop policy on personal appliances in city owned buildings/offices
- Assess new and existing buildings for potential energy innovations
- Evaluate electric and natural gas for the City's fleet

3. Diversify the city's sources of funding (Outcome link: 2, 3, 6, 7)

Action steps:

- Pursue legislative strategies to charge new fees thus augmenting fees in lieu of taxes
- Maximize dollars by leveraging grant opportunities
- Align revenue with the cost of doing business for certain services

4. Implement the Comprehensive Plan and create a new development code (Outcome link: 8, 9)

Action steps:

- Conduct the rail feasibility study with a focus on the benefits of a rail realignment and potential trolley system
- Develop local and regional partnerships, as well as private sector participation, to aid in the rail initiative
- Develop new LDC employing form-based development principles where appropriate
- Prepare and employ alternative transportation map for in land use decisions
- Continue to link higher density development with higher density facilities
- Promote walkability to public facilities (especially parks and schools)

5. Cultivate stewardship of the taxpayer's money at all levels (Outcome link: 2, 3, 4, 6, 7)

Action steps:

- Develop life cycle costing policies and steps for users to take
- Continue to secure low interest bonds
- Deliver value for money through innovation and continuous improvement of processes
- Review both service standards and levels to ensure they are meeting citizen expectations

6. Partner with developers and non-profits on ways to tackle the challenges to create more affordable housing (Outcome Link: 3)

Action steps:

- Facilitate the effective policy and recommendation setting capacity of the Mayor's Taskforce on affordable housing
- Seek incentives and greater flexibility in the Land Development Code to promote affordable housing
- Consider providing infrastructure improvements as the city's contribution to creating affordable housing

7. Foster a culture of transparent government (Outcome link: 3)

Action steps:

- Adopt policies, practices and procedures that allow citizens to have access to understandable, accurate data and information about the city's operations and decision making
- Review current methods or establish new methods to enable citizens to find information, complete transactions and provide input via the city's web-site
- Disclose information rapidly in forms that the public can easily find and use