

# **DRAFT Plan Framework for Wilson 2030 Comprehensive Plan**

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## **Overview**

This draft Plan Framework provides the structure for the plan and the foundation for future action. It includes several components that are inter-related and build upon each other: the community vision, goals, policies, and strategic actions. These components are included in Chapters 4-12 of the Plan. These framework components are defined as follows:

### **VISION**

The community vision is a statement that describes the kind of City residents, business owners, and leaders want Wilson to be in the future. It describes the hopes and aspirations for the community and provides a concise description of what Wilson will strive to be by the year 2030. The vision statement was developed from community input generated throughout the process.

### **GOALS**

Goals are statements about what the City aims to achieve over the next 20 years. Goals give decision-makers and citizens a clear idea about the City's intended direction. Goal statements were derived from the planning themes articulated in the Planning Themes Report.

### **POLICIES**

Policies provide ongoing guidance for elected and appointed officials, community leaders, staff, and administrators as they make decisions about development, programs, and capital investments in Wilson. Policies describe the specific intent of community goals. Policies were developed from community input generated throughout the process.

### **ACTION STRATEGIES**

Action strategies specify the tasks to be undertaken to employ policies and achieve community goals. Included here are preliminary recommended action strategies.

**Additional strategies will be developed in the future as part of the “best practices” research to be conducted in Task 5: Implementation Strategies.**

## **Review of Document**

Please review the draft Plan Framework and provide comments in the notes section located in the right-hand margin. These comments will be used to refine the Plan Framework. Please provide your comments to Denise Boswell by December 18.

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## **Community Vision Statement: One Wilson ~ Growing Together**

Wilson's history echoes through the reinvented 21<sup>st</sup> century City. New industries and employment generate pride and ambition in Wilson's residents. Developments employ green designs that enhance and preserve the unique character of the City. Sustainable planning initiatives provide for a more livable Wilson where citizens are provided options for living, recreating, and working. The City is linked by ribbons of green – tree-lined sidewalks, bikeways, greenways, and trails. An engaged citizenry embraces being a green Wilson, an attractive Wilson, a healthy Wilson, a connected Wilson. One Wilson ~ Growing Together.

### **Land Use**

The Land Use chapter will address the goals, policies, and actions for City-wide development. It will provide an overall framework for how land will be developed in Wilson through 2030.

#### **GOAL 1: A COMPACT DEVELOPMENT FORM**

New development and redevelopment should reinforce Wilson's historic land use patterns to create a more connected network of neighborhoods, employment centers, and shopping and recreational destinations.

Policy 1.1: New development and redevelopment should be designed to create a compact land use pattern that efficiently uses public services and facilities, reinforces the use of multiple modes of transportation, creates greater mobility within the City, and provides better connections between adjacent developments. (See Policy 7.7.)

Policy 1.2: As indicated on the Future Land Use map, new developments and redevelopment along major thoroughfares, within activity centers, and in the Downtown area should incorporate a mix of land uses (both vertical and horizontal) to efficiently use land, reduce commuting and vehicle trip times, and create better connections between uses.

Policy 1.3: New development, particularly those projects located on undeveloped land, should be designed using a master planning effort that takes a sustainable, holistic, and tailored design approach.

*Action 1.1: Using the Future Land Use map as a guide, update the City's Zoning Ordinance to allow for higher densities and mixed-use development in targeted areas and reduce land zoned for low-density, single use development.*

*Action 1.2: To encourage a more compact development form through mixed-use developments, streamline the development approval process and simplify zoning standards required for mixed-use development within the City's Zoning Ordinance.*

*Action 1.3: Develop a tiered fee system that is based on a true representation of costs associated with the location of new development. The tiered system should promote development within targeted growth areas and infill sites and discourage isolated development outside the primary growth area by adjusting development and infrastructure fees accordingly. (See Action 28.4.)*

**GOAL 2: DIRECT DEVELOPMENT TO PRIMARY GROWTH AREAS**

Direct development to primary growth areas to create a greater balance of development throughout the City and efficiently use existing infrastructure and resources.

Policy 2.1: The Future Land Use map should be used to guide decision-makers as they take action on rezoning decisions and future capital improvement investments.

Policy 2.2: Encourage the development and redevelopment of areas defined on the Future Land Use map as primary growth areas.

Policy 2.3: Discourage development from occurring outside primary growth areas and where the City does not intend to provide future public services by 2030. In addition, the fiscal and economic benefits of employment developments (i.e., business parks, industrial operations, etc.) proposing to locate outside of the primary growth area should be considered along with land use and infrastructure impacts when determining their appropriateness.

Policy 2.4: "Leap frog" development that bypasses primary growth areas and occurs in isolation or in small clusters should be avoided.

Policy 2.5: Development should create a neutral or, preferably, positive fiscal impact on the City. (See Goal 6.)

Policy 2.6: For areas outside the primary growth area that have a high productive potential for crop growth or other agricultural purposes, promote the conservation of land for appropriate agriculture and related low-intensity uses.

Policy 2.7: Areas located within water supply watershed protected or critical areas and within primary growth areas should be developed as clustered developments that protect open spaces and

Comments:

environmentally sensitive lands and provide for a more compact development form. (See Policy 7.6.)

*Action 2.1: Using the Future Land Use map as a guide, revise zoning district designations to encourage development within primary growth areas and encourage the conservation of secondary growth areas for future development beyond 2030.*

*Action 2.2: The City shall set a schedule for regular review of the primary growth areas to ensure that adequate land is available for forecasted development.*

**GOAL 3: INFILL DEVELOPMENT AND REVITALIZATION OF THE CENTER CITY AREA**

Land within Wilson's Center City (i.e., area within the Ward Boulevard Loop), will be developed or redeveloped in a manner that reinforces Downtown as the "heart" of the community and revitalizes the Center City area to provide new opportunities for living, working, and recreating.

Policy 3.1: Foster development within Wilson's Downtown and Center City neighborhoods, including mixed-use developments that provide new residential opportunities in Downtown and a more vibrant pedestrian environment.

Policy 3.2: Encourage the redevelopment of underutilized sites in the Center City area, included but not limited to vacant sites, underutilized and blighted sites, surface parking lots, and Brownfields sites.

Policy 3.3: Foster public-private partnerships to redevelop targeted areas of the community, such as vacant warehouses in the Historic Downtown-Tobacco Warehouse district.

Policy 3.4: Partner with other organizations (public, private, and non-profit) to accomplish development and revitalization goals.

*Action 3.1: Develop a public land bank program to acquire land with dilapidated structures, abandoned properties, and blighted lots for the purpose of selling the land to a developer of new housing or commercial development that meets the City's goals. (See Actions 4.2 and 45.4.)*

*Action 3.2: Develop and implement a neighborhood program to revitalize the City's older neighborhoods by reinvigorating stagnant real estate markets and building stronger connections among residents. The Baltimore Healthy Neighborhoods initiative is a good model of this type of effort. (See Action 20.1.)*

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*Action 3.3: (See Downtown Actions.) [Additional redevelopment actions will be identified and incorporated here during Task 5, Implementation Strategies. You are encouraged to provide initial ideas for redevelopment actions in the comment box to the right.]*

**GOAL 4: REDEVELOPMENT OF AGING COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS**

Wilson will promote and encourage the redevelopment of aging commercial corridors, such as Highway 301 and Ward Boulevard between Highway 301 and Tarboro Street, to improve the character of these corridors and adjacent neighborhoods and to elevate the quality of life in these areas.

Policy 4.1: Redevelopment of properties within aging commercial corridors should be consistent with the intent of the Future Land Use map.

Policy 4.2: Redevelopment areas that encompass identified gateways into Wilson should include special gateway treatments, such as signage, landscaping, or other similar design elements to denote the entrance to the City and provide a visually appealing experience.

Policy 4.3: Corridor redevelopment should incorporate transitions (e.g., vegetated buffers) to adjacent existing developments to ensure compatibility with surrounding areas.

Policy 4.4: Redevelopment within aging commercial corridors should provide adequate access and mobility for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit, and vehicles. Developments should be designed to ensure safe travel ways for all modes of transportation.

Policy 4.5: New development and redevelopment within aging commercial corridors should improve visual character along the corridor through site orientation, tree plantings and landscaping, architectural features, location of parking, and signage.

Policy 4.6: Redevelopment projects should incorporate design solutions to reduce multiple driveways accessing roads within a short distance, such as driveway consolidations, and should create interconnectivity between individual uses and developments.

Policy 4.7: The City of Wilson will consider the use of public investments to improve visual character and streetscapes in aging commercial corridors and promote redevelopment.

Policy 4.8: Public-private partnerships should be undertaken on catalyst projects to trigger the redevelopment process in underutilized

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commercial corridors. Public investments may include the sale or conveyance of lands through a community land bank and public infrastructure improvements.

Action 4.1: *Develop an action plan for aging corridors, such as Highway 301, that incorporates a range of revitalization measures, such as:*

- *Design guidelines for redevelopment*
- *Public investments (streetscape improvements, sidewalks, burying overhead utility lines, landscaped medians, street lighting, etc.)*
- *Public purchase of catalyst sites for joint ventures*
- *Creating a revolving fund for targeted real estate purchases and dispositions*
- *Providing incentives to private investments (e.g., reduced utility connection fees, accelerated development approvals, property tax credits, grants based on new taxes generated)*
- *Establishment of a Community Development Corporation*
- *Consider new funding sources to encourage development within aging corridors (e.g., new markets tax credits, grants and low-interest loans, and others)*
- *Brownfields assessments*
- *Marketing assistance*
- *(See Actions 4.1-7.)*

Action 4.2: *Develop a public land bank program to acquire land with dilapidated structures, abandoned properties, and blighted lots for the purpose of selling the land to a developer of new housing and commercial development that meets the City's goals. [Notes: A set of criteria will be included in this chapter to use to identify priority parcels for public acquisition. This will be developed as part of Task 5: Implementation.] (See Actions 3.1 and 4.5.4.)*

Action 4.3: *Establish a business improvement district for the Highway 301 Corridor. This district would encourage businesses to pay an additional tax in order to fund improvements to the district, such as streetscape improvements, wayfinding signage, better lighting, road improvements, etc.*

Action 4.4: *Explore the potential for using a tax increment financing district for the Highway 301 Corridor. This is a public investment tool to fund public improvements to a designated district using publicly issued bonds with the intent that the improvements will generate an increase in tax revenues to pay off the debt acquired.*

Action 4.5: *Maintain an up-to-date geographic information system dataset of existing land uses and vacant structures in Wilson. Periodically compare this data to data on new development and*

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redevelopment and identify trends in other aging corridors requiring reinvestment focus.

*Action 4.6:* Amend the City's Zoning Ordinance to provide flexibility to promote the reuse of older buildings in commercial corridors and neighborhood business areas, such as Five Points. Parking reductions should be permitted in order to allow infill development within parking areas.

*Action 4.7:* Develop a vacant building initiative to increase private investment in vacant buildings in areas such as Five Points, the Highway 301 Corridor, and Downtown. The "Operation: No Vacancy Initiative" in Hickory, North Carolina is a model program to be considered.

### **GOAL 5: COMPATIBLE DEVELOPMENT**

New development and redevelopment should be compatible with adjacent, existing uses and should improve the quality and character of surrounding areas.

Policy 5.1: New development should take into consideration the existing conditions of surrounding properties and neighborhoods and create a development program that includes land uses, a site plan, and design treatments that accomplish the goals of the Comprehensive Plan and complement adjacent land uses.

Policy 5.2: During the development review process, proposals of new developments or redevelopments should identify any potential impacts to surrounding properties and neighborhoods and identify mitigation strategies to reduce these impacts.

*Action 5.1:* Develop design guidelines for infill and new commercial corridors, mixed-use, and multi-family developments.

*Action 5.2:* Amend the City's Zoning Ordinance to provide for flexibility in achieving compatibility for setbacks, parking, height, lot coverage, and other development standards. Consider adopting context dependent standards for infill developments that set requirements based on adjacent land uses (e.g., height should be no more than 115% of any structure within 500 feet.)

### **GOAL 6: FISCALLY BALANCED LAND USES**

Future development within Wilson will include a variety of land uses that provide a diverse tax base for the City and create a better fiscal balance. (See Policy 2.5.)

Comments:

Policy 6.1: A diversity of development, including a variety of residential unit types and densities, mixed-use developments, and employment centers should occur within the City.

Policy 6.2: Residential development should be balanced with non-residential development in a manner that does not result in Wilson becoming a “bedroom community” to surrounding regional centers, such as Raleigh, and provides needed employment, shopping, and recreational opportunities for Wilson’s residents.

Policy 6.3: Infill developments are encouraged as these types of developments have been shown, through study, to maximize existing services and have a lower impact on public infrastructure and service costs in comparison to new developments.

Policy 6.4: Employment based development, such as office parks, industrial parks, higher educational institutions, and healthcare complexes, are strongly encouraged and promoted in Wilson.

Policy 6.5: Review of development proposals within Wilson should consider potential impacts on the community’s real estate market, particularly the possible impact of trading development in one area of the City to another and potentially leaving a vacant property that impacts adjacent property values.

*Action 6.1: Monitor the balance of tax revenues and public infrastructure costs over time and compare with development approvals to identify trends. Seek strategies to maintain a fiscal balance.*

*Action 6.2: Develop a fiscal model to analyze development proposals and any positive or negative impacts development has on municipal budgets.*

**GOAL 7: PROTECTION OF VALUABLE ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES**

Future development should be designed to protect critical environmental resources, such as floodplain areas and wetlands. Opportunities for public use of these areas, such as greenways, parks, and recreational areas, should be identified. These uses should provide opportunities for residents to experience and learn about the natural environment.

Policy 7.1: Environmentally sensitive areas, including forested lands, riparian buffers and stream corridors, wetlands, floodplains, and areas of steep slope, are recognized as valuable environmental resources and should be set-aside as natural areas within new developments.

Comments:

Policy 7.2: Environmentally sensitive areas should serve as either natural open spaces or passive/active recreational areas where only low-impact development is permitted.

Policy 7.3: Environmentally sensitive areas should be adequately protected during the construction of new developments to ensure the integrity of these resources.

Policy 7.4: New public and private developments are encouraged to use sustainable green building strategies such as purchasing or generating renewable energy, reducing energy use, reducing building footprints and impervious surfaces, reducing water consumption and wastewater generation, protecting natural habitats, and reusing of existing structures and building materials. Developments are encouraged to seek LEED certification or other green building certification awards for incorporating these strategies.

Policy 7.5: To the furthest extent possible, existing mature tree canopies will be protected and maintained throughout the community, with a focus on new developments and along major thoroughfares. (See Goal 46.)

Policy 7.6: Lands located within water supply watersheds shall be developed in a manner that protects water resources through cluster development patterns that set-aside open space as a buffer to water sources. (See Policy 2.7.)

Policy 7.7: Land development patterns will protect air quality in Wilson through a compact development form that reduces the need for vehicular trips resulting in less air emissions from vehicles. (See Policy 1.1.)

Policy 7.8. Grants and other funding sources will be sought to protect valuable environmental resources, such as stream restoration efforts and

Action 7.1: *Adopt new development standards for the protection of environmentally-sensitive lands, including:*

- *Transfer development rights from environmentally-sensitive lands*
- *Revise tree protection and tree replanting standards*
- *Provide more incentives for open space set-asides, such as TDRs*
- *Incorporate LID (low impact development) techniques in the development process*
- *Provide incentives to developments using green building techniques that reduce the development footprint on*

Comments:

*undeveloped lands and protect trees and natural areas during the construction process*

*Action 7.2: Amend the zoning ordinance to further restrict development in flood prone areas, specifically revising the 50% "no build" area standard. Develop a program to allow transfers of development density from these areas to areas that are appropriate for development.*

*Action 7.3: Using a geographic information system, identify trees and tree groves in the City that are critical for maintaining a forested canopy and habitat areas. Provide further protection for these areas.*

## **Economy**

The Economy chapter will address the goals, policies, and actions to promote economic growth in Wilson. It will provide guidance on the types of economic development the City would like to foster through 2030, as well as the actions the City can take, in partnership with local economic development partners, to encourage these efforts.

### **GOAL 8: EXPANDED ECONOMIC BASE**

Maintain a healthy economic base of manufacturing, banking, pharmaceutical, and other clean growth industries in Wilson and expand the City's economic base to include new industries.

Policy 8.1: A variety of employment opportunities and new large and small businesses are encouraged to develop in Wilson.

Policy 8.2: A diversified job market that provides employment opportunities for persons with varying educational levels and skill sets is needed and encouraged. For example traditional manufacturing, warehousing, high tech, and green technology.

Policy 8.3: The City of Wilson supports local partnerships and efforts to capitalize on Wilson's strengths and opportunities to provide new employment opportunities in Wilson.

Policy 8.4: Employment center development is encouraged within the primary growth area and especially as infill development within the Center City and Downtown areas.

Policy 8.5: Local and regional tourism efforts are encouraged and supported, with a focus on sports tourism and use of the Gillette Athletic Complex.

*Action 8.1: Work with local economic development partners, such as the Wilson Economic Development Council, Chamber of Commerce, Wilson Downtown Development Corporation, and Wilson Downtown*

Comments:

*Properties to identify future development opportunities and assist with development approvals by providing zoning and infrastructure to foster development of new employment centers, as guided by the Future Land Use map.*

*Action 8.2: Analyze development approvals, recruitment efforts, locations of newly established businesses and locations where businesses are not succeeding to identify trends. Trends that show that recruitment efforts are inconsistent with Downtown business development initiatives should be addressed.*

*Action 8.3: Periodically develop a community leakage analysis to identify areas where a business recruitment initiative might be successful in attracting new business.*

*Action 8.4: Work with the Economic Development Council to identify long-term needs for a new industrial park. Determine potential sites appropriate for this type of development.*

*Action 8.5: Work with the Economic Development Council to develop a strategy for protecting industrial parks from encroachment by residential subdivisions. Locations proximate to residential areas are often not preferred by prospective businesses due to potential impacts from industries.*

### **GOAL 9: ENHANCED JOB READINESS OF THE WORKFORCE**

Educate and improve the job skills of the local workforce to both decrease unemployment rates and demand for outsourcing jobs to workers living outside of Wilson.

Policy 9.1: The City of Wilson supports local educational institutions, such as Wilson Community College, Barton College, and the Wilson County School System, in their efforts to train and educate Wilson's existing and future workforce and will provide support and needed assistance to these efforts by working to improve accessibility to educational facilities and improve the quality of life in the City.

Policy 9.2: The City supports the workforce development efforts of the Wilson Economic Development Council, the Wilson Chamber of Commerce, and service organizations (i.e., OIC) to create partnerships between businesses and schools, to develop and implement parental education programs, to develop career exploration programs for students, and to secure commitments from local businesses to recruit employees from the local workforce pool.

*Action 9: Work with local partner organizations to identify ways that the City can assist with reaching the goal of enhancing job readiness of the local workforce.*

Comments:

**GOAL 10: GREEN AND TECHNOLOGY-ORIENTED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**EFFORTS**

Promote and recruit high-tech businesses needing advanced fiber-optic services.

Policy 10.1: Leverage community investments in fiber-optic networks into more economic development opportunities.

Policy 10.2: Actively recruit and promote the new generation of sustainable energy and related businesses.

Policy 10.3: Market the green technology educational programs provided by Wilson Community College to attract green development industries and workers to Wilson.

Policy 10.4: Encourage the development of bio-technology and bio-medical related businesses in Wilson.

*Action 10: Work with local partner organizations to market Wilson as having the most advanced fiber-optic network in the State and one of the best in the nation.*

**GOAL 11: EXPANSION OF HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

Support the expansion of Barton College and Wilson Community College and their positive financial, social, cultural, and educational impacts on the City.

Policy 11.1: The City supports Barton College in the development and implementation of the College's Master Plan and will assist with efforts to improve the quality of life in neighborhoods surrounding the College.

Policy 11.2: The City supports Wilson Community College in the implementation of its Master Plan and will assist with efforts to improve the quality of life in neighborhoods surrounding the campus.

Policy 11.3: The City supports facility and programmatic expansion of Wilson Community College to provide needed workforce training and cultural event opportunities to the community.

*Action 11.1: Work with Barton College to develop a plan for identifying, prioritizing, and initiating mutually beneficial projects. (See Action 26.)*

*Action 11.2: Work with Wilson Community College to develop a plan for identifying, prioritizing, and initiating mutually beneficial projects. (See Action 26.)*

**GOAL 12: DEVELOPMENT OF LOCALLY OWNED BUSINESSES**

Retain Wilson's unique community character and encourage entrepreneurship in the community through the establishment of locally owned businesses.

Policy 12.1: The City will consider providing economic development incentives to local residents in the promotion of locally-owned businesses.

Policy 12.2: The City will support local business development by working with local economic development agencies to identify funding sources for emerging local businesses. (See Policy 38.5.)

Policy 12.3: The City promotes the development of art-related businesses in the community to increase tourism, cultural arts events, and promote small business development.

Policy 12.4: The City will assist small businesses in utilizing new and sustainable technologies to expand their market base.

*Action 12.1: In coordination with local economic development partners, identify barriers to local business development that the City can take action to amend.*

*Action 12.2: The City will review all procurement requests and whenever possible use locally-owned vendors.*

*Action 12.3: Identify the appropriate agency/organization and position to coordinate the local small business development efforts occurring in Wilson.*

*Action 12.4: Provide a clearing house for information on locating a business in Wilson and the available State and local resources available to small businesses, including funding, training, grants, and location assistance.*

**GOAL 13: REDEVELOPMENT OF BROWNFIELDS SITES**

Reclaim and redevelop Brownfields<sup>1</sup> sites to reduce the harmful release of waste in the environment, clean up existing sites that are contaminated, revitalize underutilized properties, and expand economic development opportunities in Wilson.

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<sup>1</sup> The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency defines Brownfields sites as "real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant."

Policy 13.1: Brownfields sites should be high priority targets for future redevelopment, including future community reinvestment efforts.

Policy 13.2: Seek public-private partnerships to redevelop targeted Brownfields sites in Wilson.

*Action 13: Seek funding assistance from the Federal EPA and other organizations to identify and assess Brownfields in Wilson and develop strategies for remediating and redeveloping these properties.*

## Transportation

The Transportation chapter will address the goals, policies, and actions to promote an efficient, multi-modal transportation system in Wilson.

### **GOAL 14: A MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM**

Provide an efficient, safe, and accessible multi-modal transportation system that protects the natural environment and community character.

Policy 14.1: New roads and road improvements should be designed using the “complete streets” approach that provides access to all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit users, and automobiles drivers.

Policy 14.2: Improve visual quality and provide multi-modal capacity by applying the “Road Diet” approach to certain roads. This approach takes traditional four lane undivided roads and changes the configuration to three lanes (two travel and one turning lane) and two bike lanes.

Policy 14.3: To ensure that roads promote community character and are appropriately designed for their environment, context-sensitive road design principles and traffic calming measures should be considered for all roadway projects, including updates to existing roads such as Highway 301.

Policy 14.4: The transportation system should promote vehicles that are more fuel-efficient, reduce carbon emissions and the use of fossil fuels, while promoting the use of local renewable and sustainable fuels. Needed improvements include charging stations for electric vehicles and upgrading of City vehicle fleets to more energy efficient vehicles.

Policy 14.5: New transportation facilities shall be developed in a manner that avoids negative impacts on the natural environment, including air quality, water resources, biological resources, and wildlife habitat.

Comments:

Policy 14.6: Sufficient right-of-way along new roadways and at major intersections shall be reserved to allow for future facility expansion per the future Wilson Comprehensive Transportation Plan.

*Action 14:* In collaboration with the North Carolina Department of Transportation and Wilson County, adopt and implement a new Wilson Comprehensive Transportation Plan. (See Policy 39.4.)

**GOAL 15: MAINTAINED ROAD CAPACITY**

To ensure that Wilson maintains reasonable commute times to regional destinations and locations within the City, road capacity along key corridors shall be maximized.

Policy 15.1: Future development occurring along key transportation corridors, such as US-264, NC-42, and NC-58, should be designed in a manner to efficiently use existing road capacity and should mitigate potential traffic impacts.

Policy 15.2: Increase the efficiency of the existing roadway network through operational measures and targeted capacity improvements, such as signal timing upgrades, access management, and alternative methods of intersection control.

Policy 15.3: Work with private developers to minimize the impact on key corridors and require new developments to pay for needed roadway improvements generated by the developments.

Policy 15.4: Street access provisions, such as driveway/curb cuts and street access points along major and minor thoroughfares and collector streets should be limited to allow these roads to primarily serve as traffic movement corridors. Access management best practices are encouraged. (See Policy 49.5 and Action 15.2.)

Policy 15.5: Residential neighborhood street design patterns are encouraged to promote inter-connectivity and minimize cul-de-sacs, accommodate sidewalks and on-street parking, and foster safe environments for pedestrians and cyclists. (See Policy 49.6.)

*Action 15.1:* During the update to the City's zoning ordinance, ensure that zoning designations and development standards applicable to lands along major and minor thoroughfares and collector streets meet the following objectives:

- *Require internal circulation of commercial and employment centers and limit the number of street access points to maintain road capacity*
- *Stacking of vehicles entering land uses located along these roads will be addressed on site*

Comments:

- Land uses permitted along the roads will provide accessibility and facilities for multiple modes of transportation
- Transportation Impact Analyses should include all modes of transportation (i.e., vehicular, transit, bicycle, pedestrian)

*Action 15.2:* Adopt new access management standards to apply to all developments along major and minor thoroughfares. (See Policies 15.4 and 49.5.)

*Action 15.3:* Work with the North Carolina Department of Transportation on a partnership to utilize the City's fiber optic network to coordinate intersection signal timing.

*Action 15.4:* Develop a collector street alignment to protect major corridors, such as between Airport and Merck Roads. A model alignment to consider is Westwood Boulevard.

*Action 15.5:* Examine the applicability of a super-street concept and other road designs that enhance travel times and public safety on major thoroughfares.

*Action 15.6:* The congested intersection at Raleigh Road Parkway and Forest Hills Road should be addressed in the Comprehensive Transportation Plan by identifying solutions to the high volume of left turns and other traffic flow issues.

**GOAL 16: REDESIGN HIGHWAY 301**

Highway 301 will be redesigned from its former purpose of providing the main north-south route along the eastern seaboard to serving neighborhood and pedestrian traffic.

Policy 16.1: Roadway and streetscape improvements to the Highway 301 Corridor should be redesigned and reconfigured to reflect the current needs and demands for the road. It should include bike lanes, sidewalks, and a landscaped median.

*Action 16:* Through the Wilson Comprehensive Transportation Plan, develop new road cross-sections for the Highway 301 Corridor. Work with the North Carolina Department of Transportation, through a Transportation Improvement Program request or an enhancement project, to redesign the Highway 301 Corridor.

**GOAL 17: CONVERSION OF ONE-WAY PAIRS TO TWO-WAY STREETS**

Convert or improve one-way pair streets to reduce vehicular speeds, provide for a safer pedestrian environment, and provide better wayfinding for visitors.

Comments:

Policy 17.1: As funding permits, conversion of one-way pairs in the Downtown and surrounding areas should be converted to two-way streets, with pedestrian and bicycle facilities, or improved to create a safer environment for all modes of transportation and better clarity for navigating the road network.

*Action 17: As part of the Comprehensive Transportation Plan, identify one-way pairs in Wilson and set priorities for conversion/improvement of these pairs. (See Action 42.4.)*

### **GOAL 18: IMPROVED TRANSIT SERVICE**

Provide transit service to all members of the community in a manner that creates better access and a viable alternative to automobile travel by linking neighborhoods, employment centers, activity centers, Downtown, and educational institutions.

Policy 18.1: Transit services will be promoted as a viable alternative to driving for all people.

Policy 18.2: Improve access to transit service by providing bus stops and transit service to key locations (i.e., neighborhoods, educational institutions, places of employment, activity centers, and Downtown).

Policy 18.3: Provide functional bicycle racks for the transport of bicycles on buses.

Policy 18.4: The infrastructure, visibility, and accessibility of Wilson Transit System stops shall be improved, including providing access to bus stops from destinations via sidewalks and paths and covered bus stops at major destinations.

Policy 18.5: Coordinate bus routes and schedules with peak commute times and Amtrak commuter rail service.

Policy 18.6: Accommodate Wilson's ability to develop a future commuter rail to the Raleigh metropolitan area in the future by preserving public right-of-way along the designated rail corridor.

*Action 18.1: Assess the need for new transit stops and service routes to key destinations.*

*Action 18.2: To ensure future land is available for development of the commuter rail corridor, amend the Zoning Ordinance to require right-of-way dedication or conveyance for land, as designated per the Comprehensive Transportation Plan alignment for the rail corridor.*

### **GOAL 19: AN INTERCONNECTED SYSTEM FOR PEDESTRIANS AND BICYCLISTS**

Comments:

Develop a safe City-wide bicycle and pedestrian network that provides opportunities for recreation, commuting and other daily trips throughout Wilson.

Policy 19.1: In accordance with the Comprehensive Bicycle Plan and the Pedestrian Plan, the provision of bikeways and walkways and supportive facilities, such as bicycle storage, should be provided throughout Wilson.

Policy 19.2: Pedestrian and bicycle facilities should be considerations for all road construction and maintenance projects.

Policy 19.3: New developments should incorporate pedestrian and bicycle facilities and amenities, such as sidewalks and multi-use paths, as designated on the Pedestrian Plan or the Comprehensive Bicycle Plan, or as deemed necessary to serve the new development. Bicycle and pedestrian impacts should be included within Traffic Impact Analyses for new developments.

Policy 19.4: Provide new sidewalks and sidewalk improvements in accordance with the prioritized, tiered system identified in the Pedestrian Plan.

Policy 19.5: Continue to implement the Safe Routes to School program to identify priority sidewalk improvements and educate students and parents about the benefits of walking to school.

Policy 19.6: As new sidewalks, trails, paths, and greenways are developed, they should connect to existing and adjacent pedestrian facilities.

*Action 19.1: Implement the recommendations of the Wilson Comprehensive Bicycle Plan and the Wilson Pedestrian Plan.*

*Action 19.2: Consider providing a dedicated, annual funding source to pay for public pedestrian and bicycle improvements. A potential source of income is an increase in the vehicle licensing fee for vehicle registrations.*

## **Neighborhoods and Housing**

The Neighborhoods and Housing chapter will address the goals, policies, and actions to improve the quality of life in existing neighborhoods and facilitate the development of new neighborhoods and housing opportunities in strategic locations in Wilson.

### **GOAL 20: IMPROVED NEIGHBORHOODS**

Comments:

Improve the visual appearance, economic vitality, and general quality of life in aging and historic neighborhoods.

Policy 20.1: The City will support and assist neighborhood associations and housing organizations that promote community values, policies, and actions that are consistent with this Plan.

Policy 20.2: Community improvements should be designed to attract a mix of socio-economic backgrounds to locate in aging and historic neighborhoods.

Policy 20.2: Renovations within existing neighborhoods should provide quality, sustainable housing in a manner that enhances and upholds the character of the neighborhood.

Policy 20.3: Non-residential development within existing neighborhoods should provide neighborhood services and should not negatively impact the neighborhood with noise, traffic, or other impacts. Examples could include small corner bakeries or coffee shops with limited parking, architectural designs that are patterned after area housing, discreet signage, and limited hours of operation.

Policy 20.4: After exhausting all renovation options, blighted, uninhabitable buildings should be replaced with new infill structures that are compatible with the neighborhood context and enhance the visual appearance of the area. (See Policy 21.3.)

Policy 20.5: Public infrastructure, such as sidewalks, street lamps, wayfinding signage, and other facilities shall be provided in neighborhoods in accordance with applicable plans, such as the Pedestrian Plan and the Comprehensive Bicycle Plan.

Policy 20.6: Market-based approaches to neighborhood planning are encouraged and preferred.

Policy 20.7: Conversion of single-family homes to multi-family developments or boarding houses incorporating exterior renovations that are incompatible with the neighborhood is discouraged.

*Action 20.1: Develop a Healthy Neighborhood initiative to revitalize the City's older neighborhoods by reinvigorating stagnant real estate markets and building stronger connections among residents. This initiative could use tax credits, loan pools, marketing, neighborhood events, code enforcement, and infrastructure improvements to improve participating neighborhoods. The Baltimore Healthy Neighborhoods initiative is a good model for this effort. (See Action 3.2.)*

Comments:

*Action 20.2: Establish a neighborhood planning process that develops strategic plans for individual neighborhoods. [Note: The Implementation Plan will include more details on this neighborhood planning process. Neighborhood planning priorities will be based on the City's ability to form public-private partnerships with neighborhood organizations and the prospects for successful implementation of plans. ]*

*Action 20.3: Through the neighborhood planning process, work with Barton College to identify areas of joint interest in neighborhoods surrounding the College. Identify opportunities for neighborhood improvements that can be undertaken jointly between the City and the College. (See Action 11.)*

**GOAL 21: WELL-MAINTAINED EXISTING STRUCTURES AND LOTS**

Residential properties should be adequately maintained and should be utilized to their fullest potential to ensure long-term sustainability of residential neighborhoods and their unique character.

Policy 21.1: The conditions of housing in transitional areas should be monitored, by neighborhood, on an ongoing and regular basis. [Note: Transitional areas will be defined in the key issues section of the Neighborhoods and Housing chapter. These areas represent neighborhoods in decline or in need of assistance to elevate character and quality of development.]

Policy 21.2: The City will work with landowners, neighborhood associations, Preservation of Wilson, and other relevant organizations to seek strategies to address blighted, uninhabitable, and hazardous housing, ancillary structures, and lots.

Policy 21.3: The City will continue to enforce the nuisance ordinance and remove unsafe and uninhabitable structures, per the City's demolition program. (See Policy 20.4.)

Policy 21.4: The City will work with neighborhoods to achieve the "10 Characteristics of a Great Neighborhood" developed by Wilson residents. [Note: The Plan will include a sidebar with the complete 10 Characteristics of a Great Neighborhood and their descriptions.]

*Action 21.1: To adequately address nuisance abatement in Wilson, seek new funding sources to fully fund the City's demolition program.*

*Action 21.2: Adopt development standards to limit parking in front yard areas.*

*Action 21.3: Maintain an updated inventory of properties and lots in disrepair. Identify those properties with historic values and those that*

Comments:

have a greater impact on the community and set priorities to identify properties most in need of addressing.

*Action 21.4: Work with landowners and local partners, such as Preservation of Wilson, to address historic structures in disrepair before demolition is necessary and market properties to new owners.*

**GOAL 22: INCREASED HOMEOWNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

Increase homeownership opportunities in Wilson to help families achieve the American dream and improve the quality of neighborhoods by creating a sense of ownership and pride that comes with owning a home.

Policy 22.1: Through land development standards and zoning, facilitate the development of a mix of housing types at different price points to meet the needs of households with different incomes.

Policy 22.2: Continue to coordinate efforts with other government entities, such as the Wilson Housing Authority and local affordable housing developers, to seek efforts to develop affordable housing units. An example of this type of partnership is the Freeman Place project.

Policy 22.3: Maintain existing single-family homes to provide an appropriate inventory of affordable owner-occupied housing in the City.

*Action 22.1: Implement the Housing Improvement Action Strategy Plan for Wilson. [Note: In 2005, this plan was developed by an 80-member citizen-based committee. The Plan includes strategies for tenant and landlord accountability, improving the housing complaint and enforcement process, providing educational opportunities to tenants and landlords, improving affordable housing ownership, improving safety in neighborhoods, code improvements, and other strategies.]*

*Action 22.2: Consider adopting new development standards to limit the conversion of single-family, owner-occupied homes in established neighborhoods to multi-family rental uses.*

**GOAL 23: HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR A DIVERSITY OF HOUSEHOLDS**

A diversity of housing products shall be provided in Wilson to meet the needs of non-traditional households, such as empty nesters, seniors, and young professionals without children.

Policy 23.1: New housing developments should provide a mix of housing types to meet differing lifestyle needs, such as town homes, condominium units, and two-bedroom single-family dwellings.

Comments:

Policy 23.2: Senior housing developments that allow Wilson's population to "age in place" are encouraged. These developments should be located to provide and incorporate infrastructure to provide access to transit and sidewalks and allow seniors multi-modal opportunities.

*Action 23: Update the zoning ordinance to allow for a mix of housing types within new residential developments, within mixed-use areas, and within Downtown. Provide incentives to developers that include a mix of housing types within a single development.*

## **Public Infrastructure and Services**

The Public Infrastructure and Services chapter will address the goals, policies, and actions to coordinate land development with the efficient and adequate provision of public infrastructure and services. This chapter will be broken down into several sub-sections:

- Education (Wilson Public Schools, Barton College, Wilson Community College)
- Public Utilities and Services (Water, Sanitary Sewer, Energy, Greenlight, Solid Waste Collection)
- Public Safety (Police, Fire and Rescue, EMS)

### **Education**

#### **GOAL 24: INCREASED EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IN COLLABORATION WITH BARTON COLLEGE AND WILSON COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

Decrease the number of high school dropouts in Wilson, increase overall achievement levels of underperforming schools, and increase the skill level and educational attainment of the City's workforce.

Policy 24.1: Improve the quality of neighborhoods surrounding underperforming schools to increase the quality of life and educational attainment in these areas.

Policy 24.2: Recognize and support educational partnerships, such as those established between Wilson Community College, Barton College, and Wilson County Public Schools, that provide cooperative arrangements to ensure seamless transitions from high school to college and help improve the success rates of public school students in Wilson. Examples include the Early College program that provides an accelerated opportunity for high school students to complete their two-year degree.

Policy 24.3: Support joint efforts of Barton College and the Wilson Public School system to develop student teaching and mentoring

Comments:

programs to increase educational performance of public school students.

Policy 24.5: Continue to support the Wilson Education Partnership to create new programs for students, address high school reform needs, increase achievement levels and graduation rates, and improve job-readiness of the City's future workforce.

Policy 24.6: Promote private sector, non-profit, and religious organizations in their efforts to provide programs for students and youth in the community.

Policy 24.7: Work with Wilson County Public Schools to enhance schools in older neighborhoods.

*Action 24.1: Through the neighborhood planning process, identify public infrastructure, public safety, and other improvements needed to raise the quality of life in neighborhoods surrounding underperforming schools. Implement necessary actions.*

*Action 24.2: Coordinate Parks and Recreational facility development and programming with the efforts of other religious and non-profit groups to provide after school programming that is accessible and affordable to all students in the City.*

### **GOAL 25: COORDINATED SCHOOL FACILITIES**

Coordinate with the Wilson County School system to ensure that locations of new school sites align with community land use planning goals and reinforce the Future Land Use map and classifications.

Policy 25.1: New schools should be developed in locations within the primary growth area to reinforce the land use goals of this Plan and the Future Land Use map and classifications.

Policy 25.2: New schools should be designed in a manner that creates linkages to adjacent areas (i.e., Safe Routes to School Program) and reduces negative impacts on existing neighborhoods.

*Action 25: Develop a formal mechanism with the Wilson County School system to:*

- *Share information about potential schools and expansions of existing schools and any potential impacts*
- *Explore development of school design standards to reinforce pedestrian and bicycle accessibility between schools and adjoining areas and to reduce transportation and environmental impacts*
- *Share information with Wilson Schools regarding proposed subdivisions and residential developments that will impact school attendance levels*

Comments:

- Explore the joint-use of parks and recreational facilities on school grounds for use by the general public in off-hours
- (See Action 40.)

**GOAL 26: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR ALL SECTORS OF THE POPULATION PROVIDED BY WILSON COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

Encourage the Wilson Community College to continue to provide high quality educational services to the community.

Policy 26.1: Provide adequate access to Wilson Community College for all members of the community seeking educational enrichment.

*Action 26:* As part of the Wilson Comprehensive Transportation Planning process, work with Wilson Community College to identify needed multi-modal transportation enhancements to improve accessibility to Wilson Community College, including pedestrian and bicycle access and transit service.

**Public Utilities and Services**

**GOAL 27: MAINTAINED LEVELS OF SERVICE FOR PUBLIC UTILITIES**

Continue to provide adequate water, sanitary sewer, electric and natural gas service, and broadband service as new growth occurs.

Policy 27.1: Encourage the development of land to its highest and best use where public infrastructure currently exists.

Policy 27.2: Coordinate the extension of utility services and roads with the Future Land Use map by directing expansion to areas within the primary growth area.

*Action 27.1:* Ensure that City departments share information and coordinate planning for proposed developments that will require expansion of public infrastructure.

*Action 27.2:* Assess the potential for proposed developments to meet Comprehensive Plan goals and policies to maximize existing infrastructure and compare proposed plans against the Future Land Use map.

*Action 27.3:* Ensure that public right-of-way for roadways have adequate space for locating all underground public utilities.

*Action 27.4:* Adjust utility fee structures to promote development within infill and targeted growth areas through lower fees and discourage development outside of targeted growth areas by applying higher fees. (See Action 1.3.)

Comments:

**GOAL 28: REDUCED ENERGY USE AND COSTS**

Reduce energy costs through energy conservation.

Policy 28.1: Reduce energy usage in public buildings by incorporating energy saving practices, such as commissioned building systems, solar and geothermal technologies, weatherization, and high efficiency building materials, to reduce the energy consumption of new public development.

Policy 28.2: Replaced City-owned vehicles, such as utility trucks, police cars, and other vehicles, should be energy efficient. An example index for determining energy efficiency of vehicles is the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy's minimum vehicle score.

Policy 28.3: Create programs and incentives for energy reduction in private buildings, such as providing a streamlined development review process for projects seeking LEED or similar standards certification.

*Action 28.1: Adopt formal energy efficiency performance standards for new public facilities and expansions of existing public facilities.*

*Action 28.2: Develop public outreach programs to educate the public about the public and private benefits of energy conservation, including costs savings to the individual household, reducing the carbon footprint for the community, and promoting a more sustainable lifestyle.*

*Action 28.3: Adopt measures to reduce energy consumption in City-owned and maintained properties.*

*Action 28.4: Actively promote and seek funding for weatherization programs.*

*Action 28.5: Develop development incentives for projects that incorporate technology that reduces energy consumption.*

**GOAL 29: CONSERVED AND PROTECTED WATER RESOURCES**

Reduce water consumption, increase water quality, and preserve long-term water supplies.

Policy 29.1: Maintain a sustainable and high quality supply of ground and surface water so that available resources meet existing and projected needs.

Policy 29.2: New development requiring public sanitary sewer services is encouraged to use technologies to reduce wastewater discharges.

Comments:

Policy 29.3: Public water and sewer lines should be located in areas outside of Watershed Critical Areas, except as necessary to address emergency public health situations.

*Action 29.1: Develop public outreach programs to educate the public about the need to reduce water demand and wastewater discharge to maintain a healthy water supply. Provide information about ways to reduce wastewater discharges, such as low-flow or no-flow toilets, efficient faucets, and use of non-potable water sources.*

*Action 29.2: Adopt measures to reduce water consumption in City-owned facilities, such as purchasing new bathroom facilities that do not use potable water or use less water than traditional facilities. Reduce the need to use potable water for landscaping irrigation.*

### **GOAL 30: REDUCED SOLID WASTE**

Reduce the amount of municipal solid waste sent to the Wilson County Landfill.

Policy 30.1: Recycling of solid waste, such as glass, plastic, paper, and cardboard is encouraged throughout the community.

Policy 30.2: New multi-family, commercial, industrial, and institutional developments should include on-site recycling facilities for use by employees and residents.

Policy 30.3: The reuse or recycling of building materials and construction waste is encouraged.

*Action 30.1: Expand the municipal recycling program to include recycling receptacles in public spaces, such as Downtown.*

*Action 30.2: Adopt measures to reduce solid waste and to recycle in all City-owned and maintained properties.*

## **Public Safety**

### **GOAL 31: ADEQUATE PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES**

As new development occurs, adequate public safety services, such as fire and rescue, EMS, and police protection, will be provided to all areas of the City.

Policy 31.1: New development should be located within the primary growth area to ensure adequate provision of public safety services. Service to newly developing areas should not result in the reduction of service to existing developed areas.

Comments:

Policy 31.2: Within new major developments of a significant scale, work with landowners to identify opportunities for potential police sub-stations.

Policy 31.3: Maintain adequate training facilities and continue partnership with Wilson Community College and their training programs.

*Action 31: Ensure that City departments share information regarding proposed developments that will require expansion of public safety services. Assess the ability of proposed developments to meet Comprehensive Plan goals and policies and compare it against the Future Land Use map. Ensure that existing facilities and service capacity can adequately serve new and existing demands for service. Mitigate any potential impacts that might decrease levels of service.*

## Quality of Life

The Quality of Life chapter will address the goals, policies, and actions aimed at reinforcing the sense of community and enhanced quality of life in Wilson through historic and cultural attractions, expanded parks and recreational facilities, and a more engaged and informed citizenry. [Note: Future drafts of the full Comprehensive Plan will have a separate dedicated chapter for Parks and Recreation. Much work is currently being undertaken to survey community residents on their aspirations for future park and recreational facilities in Wilson. As this information becomes available, it will be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan documents.]

### **GOAL 32: FOCUS ON “ONE WILSON”**

Perceptions of the Wilson community should emphasize the overall community and how the inter-relationships of each household, neighborhood, and district are a component of the larger picture – the City of Wilson.

Policy 32.1: Foster meaningful community engagement among all demographic sectors of the City at all community events and government forums.

*Action 32.1: Offer civic events that bring diverse groups of people together to further forge the “One Wilson” goal. An example could be a “Town Hall” style event that focuses on key issues of common concern in the community.*

*Action 32.2: Organize cultural events that display the unique character of the City and its residents. Such events could include a public market, art show, and concert with local musicians.*

Comments:

**GOAL 33: CULTURAL AND ENTERTAINMENT EXPERIENCES FOR ALL AGES**

Wilson will offer enriching cultural experiences for all ages of the community.

Policy 33.1: As demographics change in Wilson, the City will encourage local partners to provide cultural and entertainment opportunities reflecting the diversity of Wilson's residents (singles, young professionals, and seniors).

Policy 33.2: The City supports the development of new activities and entertainment options to provide affordable, healthy, and constructive options for the City's youth.

Policy 33.3: The role of community facilities as centers of community activity should be enhanced to provide further recreational, educational, and entertainment options to citizens of Wilson.

Policy 33.4: The City should consider engaging in a public-private partnership to bring affordable festivals, races, outdoor movies, and concerts to public spaces.

Policy 33.5: The City of Wilson will work collaboratively with partners, such as the Wilson Arts Council, Barton College, and Wilson Community College, to support the performing arts and expansion of other cultural, entertainment, and educational events offered by these higher learning institutions.

*Action 33: Working with local partners, identify ways the City can assist in attracting and recruiting new cultural and entertainment establishments and activities to the City.*

**GOAL 34: AN IMPROVED PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM**

Parks and recreational programs in Wilson will be accessible to all and provide healthy recreational opportunities for all members of the community.

Policy 34.1: Future parks will be sited in locations that provide better accessibility to these facilities throughout the community.

Policy 34.2: The City will focus future parks and recreational efforts on larger, neighborhood- and community-serving facilities.

Policy 34.3: The City will work with the Wilson Public School system to identify future opportunities to share the use of public parks and ballfields. (See Policy 40.4.)

*Action 34: Identify future parks needs and reserve land in Wilson's growth area for future facilities.*

Comments:

**GOAL 35: A NEW CIVIC CENTER**

Develop a new multi-use civic center to hold community meetings, conventions, concerts, and other public events.

Policy 35.1: The City will work with local non-profit, public, and private organizations to facilitate development of a civic center.

*Action 35: Working through the Downtown Development Corporation, assess the market for a new civic center and related hospitality, tourism, and travel uses.*

**GOAL 36: IMPROVED COMMUNICATIONS FOR LOCAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

Enhance public communication to make residents aware of events and activities of community interest.

Policy 36.1: Explore ways to better publicize events and activities that reach and resonate with all segments of Wilson's population.

Policy 36.2: Work with community and neighborhood representatives to identify ways to better engage and provide outreach to segments of the community, such as the growing Latino and Hispanic population.

*Action 36.1: Continue to conduct the Citizens Academy and expand outreach to Spanish-speaking citizens.*

*Action 36.2: Working through the Citizens Academy, poll citizens on the best ways to provide information about public events and activities.*

*Action 36.3: Publicize the City's community calendar on the Wilson Times website.*

*Action 36.4: Advertise community events in the Wilson Parks and Recreation newsletter.*

*Action 36.5: Explore opportunities for developing a comprehensive community calendar that includes civic, cultural, recreational, educational, and other events.*

**GOAL 37: PROGRAMS TO PROMOTE SELF-SUFFICIENCY FOR CITIZENS IN NEED**

Public programs to help citizens in need will focus on fostering self-sufficiency and a community spirit of service.

Policy 37.1: Provide for the housing needs of the City's homeless and special needs populations.

Policy 37.2: Provide adequate public transportation between housing for citizens in need and local employment and activity centers.

Policy 37.3: Support public and non-profit organizations to create programs that allow those in need to care for themselves.

Policy 37.4: Support and assist the efforts of organizations, such as the Opportunities Industrialization Center of Wilson, Incorporated (OIC), Hope Station, and Diversified Opportunities Incorporated (DOI) to provide vital services to segments of the community needing assistance.

Policy 37.5: Support efforts of public and nonprofit organizations to create and operate programs that equip citizens to own their own businesses as a path to self-sufficiency. (See Policy 12.2.)

*Action 37: Assess the local transit system and its ability to provide adequate transportation service to citizens in need.*

## **Intergovernmental Collaboration**

The Intergovernmental Collaboration chapter will address the goals, policies, and actions aimed at coordinating land use, economic development, public infrastructure, and school planning efforts with other jurisdictions: Wilson County and the Wilson County Public School system.

### **GOAL 38: JOINT CITY AND COUNTY PLANNING**

The City will pursue joint City-County planning efforts to coordinate land use decisions and management strategies along the edges of the two jurisdictions and to support economic and community development efforts of mutual gain.

Policy 38.1: The City will maintain and improve the established framework for dialogue with the County on matters of mutual interest, particularly economic and land planning issues, to reach consensus and coordinate efforts.

Policy 38.2: The City will explore additional opportunities to share information between the City and County on development proposals in areas of mutual interest.

Policy 38.3: Form partnerships with the County to address neighborhood revitalization, Downtown and business corridor revitalization, economic development, capital improvements, and other areas of joint interest.

Policy 38.4: The City will coordinate transportation planning efforts with Wilson County and the North Carolina Department of Transportation to develop a coordinated Comprehensive Transportation Plan for Wilson. (See Action 14.)

*Action 38: Work with Wilson County to develop a formal agreement for coordinating information on development proposals in areas of mutual interest. Consider agreements to amend County zoning in areas of mutual interest.*

### **GOAL 39: COORDINATED SCHOOL PLANNING**

New public schools and expansions of existing schools in Wilson will be informed by a joint planning process of the City and the Wilson Public School system.

Policy 39.1: The City will work with the Wilson County Public School system to develop common criteria for siting and designing new schools to ensure that school development and future growth plans for the City are aligned.

Policy 39.2: The City will provide the Wilson County Public School system with information on new residential subdivisions and other developments that impact school attendance and capacity.

Policy 39.3: The City will encourage the use of green development and low-impact design technologies in the construction of new schools.

Policy 39.4: The City will work with the Wilson County Public School system to identify joint-use park and recreation opportunities that efficiently use public revenues. (See Policy 35.3.)

*Action 39: Work with the Wilson County Public School system to develop a formal agreement for coordinating information on development proposals for new schools and school impacting development (i.e., subdivision proposals). Explore opportunities to share use of parks and recreational facilities. (See Action 25.)*

## **Downtown**

The Downtown chapter will address the goals, policies, and actions to revitalize and enhance the quality of development and create a more vibrant Downtown. Design concepts, principles, and future land uses developed during the second community charrette will be included in this chapter.

### **GOAL 40: A REVITALIZED DOWNTOWN**

Downtown will continue to serve as the "heart" of Wilson and the main activity center for the community.

Comments:

Policy 40.1: Redevelopment within Downtown should be in accordance with the Future Land Use map and classifications for the Downtown area. General uses in the Downtown area should include civic, office, personal and professional services, a mix of residential types, retail, hospitality uses, and restaurants.

Policy 40.2: Downtown uses should create an 18-hour (day and night) destination for local residents and tourists. Such uses could include community events, restaurants, unique shopping, art galleries, a boutique public market, a civic center, and other destination uses.

Policy 40.3: Historic properties in Downtown should be rehabilitated to serve new uses. State and federal tax credits are available for qualified rehabilitations that follow federal standards.

Policy 40.4: Development within Downtown should include a mix of uses within individual buildings: commercial or retail on the ground floor and housing or office on upper floors.

Policy 40.5: Live-work units, such as art studios with dwelling space, should be provided in Downtown.

Policy 40.6: Surface parking lots on prime real estate, such as the corner of Nash and Tarrboro Streets, should be redeveloped to maximize the use of available land. Zoning in these areas should not permit surface lots.

*Action 40.1: Amend zoning district standards in the B-1 (Central Business District) and B-2 (Peripheral Central Business District) to provide more flexible development standards and allow only appropriate Downtown uses.*

*Action 40.2: Consider expanding the municipal services district to include targeted redevelopment areas, such as the Historic Tobacco-Warehouse Historic District.*

*Action 40.3: Consider public-private initiatives to redevelop publicly-owned priority infill sites.*

*Action 40.4: Consider a capital improvement program to underground all utilities in Wilson's Downtown.*

*Action 40.5: Work with landowners to make them more aware of the Commercial Maintenance Building Code and work with the Wilson Downtown Development Corporation to actively enforce it.*

*Action 40.6: Consider establishing the role of a "staff advocate" that can work with landowners interested in redeveloping properties and*

assist them through the development review process and with interpreting the 2006 North Carolina Rehabilitation Code.

*Action 40.7:* Consider development of a "One Wilson" Park at the location of Downtown Alive events.

**GOAL 41: HUMAN-SCALE DESIGN IN DOWNTOWN**

Redevelopment and infill development will maintain the human-scale of Downtown's blocks, buildings, and streetscapes.

Policy 41.1: The historic block pattern designed for pedestrian accessibility and scale should be incorporated into new Downtown developments.

Policy 41.2: Ground floor building facades should feature storefronts and human-scale glazing in the form of doors and windows to create visual interest from the street.

Policy 41.3: New buildings should be oriented to front streets and provide adequate pedestrian access between the building frontages and curb.

Policy 41.4: Off-street parking lots should be discouraged and on-street parking encouraged. Any off-street parking lots should be located behind buildings and not along the street frontage.

Policy 41.5: On-street parking should be managed to allow for short-term parking (2 to 3 hours).

Policy 41.6: Parking garages in Downtown are encouraged and should be located on secondary streets and designed to blend in with adjacent developments.

Policy 41.7: Employee on-street parking should be discouraged or prohibited to provide priority parking to customers and visitors.

Policy 41.8: Streetscape amenities, such as benches, trash and recycling receptacles, newspaper vending machines, bicycle storage racks, awnings, outdoor seating of restaurants, and other features that increase the activity at the street level are strongly encouraged.

Policy 41.9: Wayfinding signage, that orients Downtown travelers to points of interest, should be provided.

*Action 41.1:* Develop Downtown design guidelines, specific to each Downtown land use district, to guide redevelopment and infill development efforts.

Comments:

*Action 41.2: Develop a plan to provide public wayfinding signage in Downtown. Consider making the signage easily amendable to incorporate new signage as new businesses locate in Downtown.*

*Action 41.3: Continue utilizing the North Carolina Rehabilitation Code for use in the Downtown area and further educate the development community of this alternative to the State Building Code. This code can provide flexibility for rehabilitating existing structures that are too costly to rehabilitate under standard building codes.*

*Action 41.4: Investigate the feasibility of converting one-way streets to two-way. (See Action 17.)*

**GOAL 43: A GREEN DOWNTOWN**

Revitalization efforts will focus on creating sustainable, energy-efficient, mixed-use development within Downtown.

Policy 42.1: Sustainable development practices should be considered and, as feasible, incorporated into every Downtown development and improvement project.

Policy 42.2: The City will work with the Wilson Downtown Development Corporation and the County to create incentives to encourage green building and energy efficiency in new and existing developments.

Policy 42.3: The City and the Wilson Downtown Development Corporation will invest in greening the Downtown through public improvements, such as streetscapes, parks, landscaping, rain gardens, and other similar efforts.

Policy 42.4: Renewable energy sources in Downtown, such as the use of solar panels and geothermal energy sources, are encouraged.

Policy 42.5: New developments should be designed to provide and promote access to the Wilson Transit Station and the Amtrak Train Station to reinforce multi-modal transit use.

Policy 42.6: The City will support development efforts that meet or exceed the U.S. Green Building Council's Green Building Design and Construction certification standards.

Policy 42.7: Bicycle and pedestrian routes and facilities should be provided in Downtown, per the Comprehensive Bicycle Plan and the Pedestrian Plan.

Policy 42.8: Where possible, existing trees should be maintained and new trees should be replanted within streetscape areas.

Comments:

Action 42.1: Extend sidewalk improvements from Nash Street to side streets within the Main Street District. Consider burying overhead lines in this area.

Action 42.2: As opportunities arise, replace holly trees with a more appropriate species in the Main Street District.

**GOAL 43: COORDINATED REVITALIZATION EFFORTS**

The Wilson Downtown Development Corporation will coordinate Downtown redevelopment and business recruitment efforts with other local partners, such as Preservation of Wilson and individual landowners.

Policy 43.1: Downtown efforts will be coordinated through the Wilson Downtown Development Corporation.

Action 43.1: Maintain existing incentive programs to encourage Downtown redevelopment. Improve these programs by simplifying the existing Façade Grant Program, tying the existing Rent Incentive Program to a market analysis of properties to ensure the optimal tenant mix, and consider lower interest rates for the Downtown Loan Pool program.

Action 43.2: Create a revolving loan pool to provide low-interest loans to small business owners wishing to develop in Downtown Wilson.

Action 43.3: Explore the viability of offering property tax credits to encourage renovation and development in Downtown.

Action 43.4: Investigate the possibility of getting funding from other public entities, including the Small Business Administration, New Markets Tax Credits, Housing and Urban Development loans and grants, and state incentive programs.

Action 43.5: Continue to work with public and private entities to identify needs for Downtown and consider creating a non-profit entity such as a Community Development Corporation to assist in this work. (See Action 4.1.)

Action 43.6: Develop a work plan to prioritize targeted rehabilitation and infill opportunities and engage with landowners. An example catalyst site is the High-Dollar Warehouse.

Action 43.7: Conduct a feasibility study for a Downtown Civic Center. The study should investigate demand for specialty lodging, potentially located in an existing historic building, in close proximity to the civic center.

Comments:

## Community Design

The Community Design chapter will address the goals, policies, and actions to improve the quality of development and visual appearance of Wilson. Community-wide design concepts and principles developed during the first community charrette will be included in this chapter.

### **GOAL 44: ENHANCED CITY BEAUTIFICATION EFFORTS**

Wilson will be experienced and remembered as an attractive City by both its residents and visitors and will provide clean and inviting public spaces, tree-lined streets, and attractive neighborhoods and non-residential centers.

Policy 44.1: New developments and redeveloped lands should incorporate vegetated landscaping for aesthetic purposes and provide natural buffers between adjacent uses.

Policy 44.2: Vacant lots should be well maintained. Overgrown lots and blighted areas are strongly discouraged.

Policy 44.3: Vacant structures are to be maintained to ensure the long-term viability of existing structures. Boarded up and uninhabitable vacant structures should be renovated to meet building codes. To better utilize lands, demolition is a secondary solution for structures that can not be returned to a habitable state.

Policy 44.4: Existing public spaces should be improved by providing landscaping and tree plantings.

Policy 44.5: New public infrastructure projects, such as development of new roads, should incorporate trees and landscaping as part of the streetscape. Tree-lined medians are also encouraged.

Policy 44.6: Use of xeriscaping and native or adapted plant species in landscaping that are drought tolerant will be undertaken by the City and encouraged on private land.

Policy 44.7: All new developments should locate utilities underground.

Policy 44.8: As funding sources are available to implement and as utility improvements are made, relocate existing overhead utilities underground.

Policy 44.9: Adopt and enforce a new City graffiti ordinance.

*Action 44.1: Amend the City's development standards to require enhanced landscaping for all new developments.*

Comments:

Action 44.2: Seek additional funds for the City's demolition program.

Action 44.3: Work with landowners of blighted and vacant properties and structures to identify a strategy for improving the aesthetic quality and value of underutilized lands.

Action 44.4: Develop a new City land bank program to acquire blighted and underutilized properties and market these structures as rehab and adaptive reuse opportunities. (See Actions 3.1 and 4.2.)

**GOAL 45: ENHANCED TREE PRESERVATION MEASURES**

Continue to achieve the community's vision of being a "Tree City USA" by increasing the City's tree canopy and improving tree preservation regulations. (See Policy 7.5.)

Policy 45.1: Preserve tree stands that serve as buffers along roadways.

Policy 45.2: Preserve heritage/specimen trees on all lands, unless preservation could result in unsafe conditions.

Policy 45.3: Preserve tree groves of a significant size to maintain the City's natural tree canopy and natural air quality filtration systems.

Policy 45.4: Adequately protect the root zones of preserved trees during construction.

Policy 45.5: Work with landowners of existing developments to retroactively replant trees, especially in existing parking lots and along roadway buffers that do not meet current tree standards.

Policy 45.6: Street trees should be of an indigenous variety that will provide adequate shade and canopy to the street and sidewalk. They should be planted away from utility lines to prevent the need to prune trees.

Policy 45.7: Continue to provide annual tree-planting programs of indigenous species to interested landowners.

Action 45.1: Amend the City's tree protection ordinance to require tree protection and tree preservation during construction for all new developments.

Action 45.2: Explore the possibility of undergrounding utilities in targeted areas, such as in the Main Street District in Downtown, to promote tree growth.

Comments:

*Action 45.3: Prepare a tree-planting and pruning manual for the City. The manual should include information on appropriate types of trees for specific conditions, pruning techniques, maintenance of trees, etc.*

*Action 45.4: Develop a long-term strategy for maintaining City-owned trees and landscaped areas.*

**GOAL 46: HIGH QUALITY DESIGN OF NEW DEVELOPMENT**

New developments and redeveloped areas should convey the look and character that emphasizes that Wilson is a "Tree City USA."

Policy 46.1: New developments should incorporate low-impact design features, such as preserving open space areas that include environmentally sensitive lands and tree groves. Natural stormwater management systems, such as rain gardens, bioswales, retention ponds, cluster development, and use of pervious paving materials is encouraged.

Policy 46.2: Developments should be designed to minimize the removal of existing mature trees in streetscape areas and areas accessed and viewed by the public.

Policy 46.3: Landscaping and trees should be used to soften and unify the appearance of developments from the street and to define entryways, including reverse frontage residential lots.

Policy 46.4: The quality of neighborhoods should be enhanced by planting street trees on new residential lots.

Policy 46.5: For commercial and industrial developments, parking lots and hardscape areas should provide safe pedestrian circulation through clearly defined walkways and plantings. Trees and landscaping should be used to improve the appearance of impervious surfaces and provide natural areas for on-site drainage.

Policy 46.6: Parking lots should be located to the side or rear of non-residential developments and buffered by trees and landscaping to improve the visual appearance from road corridors.

Policy 46.7: The City shall use the Wilson Architectural Design Guidelines as a tool to encourage new developments to be designed in a more visually appealing fashion.

*Action 46.2: Amend development standards for new residential subdivisions to allow for developments that have similar standards (i.e., setbacks, lot size, sidewalks, street trees, street configurations, block size, etc.) as traditional neighborhoods found in Downtown.*

Comments:

*Action 46.3: Develop and adopt low-impact development standards to be used in new developments.*

*Action 46.4: Consider amending the City's development standards to require:*

- *Street tree plantings on lot frontages in residential subdivisions*
- *Enhanced landscaping and tree preservation/plantings along roadways to screen developments from the road*
- *Use of trees and landscaping within parking lots to define pedestrian walkways and provide natural drainage*
- *Appropriate siting of parking lots to reduce the amount of impervious surface visible from road corridors*
- *Amend setbacks and dimensional standards in commercial corridors to create more opportunities for mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly commercial developments that efficiently use land along major road corridors*

**GOAL 47: ENHANCED COMMUNITY GATEWAYS**

Improve the visual appearance of gateways into the City.

Policy 47.1: The visual appearance of City gateways should be improved through public and private efforts, such as community signage, public art installations, architectural features and plantings.

Policy 47.2: Public infrastructure provided at gateways should include styled mast arms for intersection signals and street lights, underground utilities, and other visually appealing amenities.

Policy 47.3: Special consideration should be given when approving development within gateway areas to ensure a high quality of development at City entrances.

*Action 47.1: Assess the standards in the Highway Development District and determine if these standards are appropriate for gateway areas or if additional standards are needed to address landscaping, signage, and setbacks from the road.*

*Action 47.2: Explore corporate partnerships in return for discreet advertising signage in gateway areas and other gateway design features.*

**GOAL 48: A MORE CONNECTED COMMUNITY**

Neighborhoods, schools, shopping and employment centers, and places of interest will be connected through pedestrian and bicycle facilities, streetscape improvements, and greenways.

Policy 48.1: New residential developments will provide sidewalks on both sides of the streets.

Comments:

Policy 48.2: All new and/or redeveloped non-residential development should provide sidewalks between uses, in parking areas, and to provide linkages to adjacent developments and to public sidewalks and multi-use paths already in place.

Policy 48.3: Development of bicycle lanes, signed routes, and greenways, as denoted on the Comprehensive Bicycle Plan, are encouraged within new developments and redeveloped areas.

Policy 48.4: Safety concerns should be addressed by providing better lighting, clearly-marked passage along pedestrian and bicycle routes, signage, and other design solutions.

Policy 48.5: Commercial and employment centers should provide internal access between businesses to reduce the number of driveways and curb cuts along thoroughfares and maintain roadway capacity. (See Policy 15.4 and Action 15.2.)

Policy 48.6: Residential subdivisions should be designed using a grid or modified grid pattern and should limit the use of cul-de-sacs that reduce connectivity within developments. (See Policy 15.5.)

*Action 48.1: Implement the Comprehensive Bicycle Plan and Pedestrian Plan actions.*

*Action 48.2: Amend the City's development standards to require internal access within larger multi-tenant developments and implement access management standards. (See Action 15.2.)*

*Action 48.3: Consider requiring residential subdivisions to meet connectivity index requirements.*

Comments: