

PROFILE OF THE CITY

The City of Wilson was incorporated in 1849, and is located on the eastern seaboard along Interstate 95. It is the largest municipality in Wilson County and serves as the county seat. The City has a population of almost 50,000 and covers a land area of nearly 30 square miles.

The City levies a property tax on the appraised value of real property and certain tangible personal property located within its boundaries as authorized by state statute. The County also levies a property tax on property within the City's corporate limits and is the only other entity empowered to do so. The City is also permitted by state statute to broaden its corporate boundaries by annexation.



The City of Wilson operates under the Council-Manager form of government. The Council is the policy-making and legislative body of City government and consists of a Mayor and seven Council members. The Council members are elected from districts while the Mayor is elected at-large.

The Mayor and Council members serve four-year staggered terms. The Mayor is the presiding officer of the Council and votes only in case of a tie. A Mayor Pro-Tempore is selected by the Council from its members.

The City Manager and the City Attorney are appointed by the Council. The City Manager is the Chief Executive Officer of the City and is accountable for carrying out the policies and ordinances of the Council and for administering the day-to-day operations of the City through appointed department directors and staff members.

The City provides a full range of services to its citizens including police and fire protection; transportation; sanitation; cultural and recreational activities; housing and community development programs; water, wastewater, and storm water utilities; and land use and development services. In addition, the City owns and operates electric and natural gas distribution systems and broadband services.

Excellence in Action

Duke Energy Progress purchased the assets of NC Eastern Municipal Power Association (NCEMPA), the governing body of Wilson Energy in 2015. The \$1.2 billion sale of minority interest in several power plants reduces NCEMPA's debt by more than 70 percent. The remaining debt of \$492 million is scheduled to be paid off in 10 years. The debt reduction resulted in the City Council to passing the largest electric rate decrease in Wilson's history. Residential rates dropped by 17.6 percent, commercial rates by 15.4 percent, industrial rates by an average of 7.2 percent and wholesale rates by 12.3 percent in FY16. In addition to savings our customers realized as a direct result of the asset sale, the NCEMPA board voted to keep the current rate in effect through 2019.

Greenlight is the City's state-of-the-art, fiber-to-the-premise system providing customers with data, voice, and video services. Since its inception in 2008, Greenlight has grown to provide services to nearly 8,500 customers. Greenlight was the first service provider in the state to offer Gigabit Fiber-to-the-Home service making Wilson North Carolina's Gigabit City. Greenlight was recognized by President Obama as one of the nation's fastest broadband networks and Wilson was credited as having "inspired leadership and community mobilization." Greenlight offers services to customers along existing Wilson Energy routes. Following an FCC ruling that overturned State law limiting fee-based municipal broadband service beyond county borders, the town of Pinetops in neighboring Edgecombe County, became the first expansion of Greenlight services. Unfortunately, the FCC ruling was overturned on appeal and Greenlight was forced to discontinue cable service to the area.

In 2015, NC State's Institute of Emerging Issues selected Wilson to participate in InnovateNC, a two-year, cross-city learning collaborative expected to boost innovation and economic development. Other participating cities include Asheville, Greensboro, Pembroke and Wilmington. As part of this program, participating cities receive tools and technical assistance valued at \$250,000 as they partner with leading organizations focused on innovation, entrepreneurial communities and boosting local and state economies. Wilson's current involvement in InnovateNC focuses on developing an inclusive entrepreneurial economy while retaining its rich community character. It involves building on local assets, including its community owned Greenlight gigabit network.

Choosing Wilson

Location

The City is strategically situated with access to all major regional, national, as well as, international markets. It is conveniently located along Interstate 95, halfway between New York and Florida; approximately 475 miles from New York City and 240 miles from Washington, D.C. The City is served by U.S. highways 264 and 301 and North Carolina highways 42 and 58. Interstate 795 connects Wilson to the City of Goldsboro and on to I-40 south, enhancing access to the seaports at Wilmington and Morehead City, North Carolina. U.S. 264 provides the City with an interstate grade highway connecting Greenville and the Research Triangle Park.

Education

Wilson students are served by Wilson County Schools, a public school district that encompasses fourteen elementary schools, six middle schools, three traditional high schools, a learning center and an early college program affiliated with Wilson Community College. Students are enrolled in a five-year program that culminates with both high school diplomas and associate degrees. The district is part of a countywide system that is a shared responsibility between the County and the State; therefore, the City has no financial responsibility for the public education system. There are also several private schools in the area that provide basic education similar to the public school system. The City is also served by two charter schools that are funded by the County and State; the Sallie B. Howard School for the Arts is approved to-serve K-8 and Wilson Preparatory Academy is approved as a K-12 school.

The City is home to two colleges serving thousands of students of all ages and stages of their careers. Chartered in 1958, Wilson Community College is part of the North Carolina Community College System and is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The College offers more than 20 Associate Degrees, 8 diploma and 34 certificate curricula, Adult High School Diploma, NC High School Equivalency Diploma Programs and a wide variety of continuing education classes. Enrollment for the 2015-2016 academic year exceeded 9900 full and part-time students. Wilson Community College also operates a state-funded technical assistance program known as the Small Business Center. The Center offers potential small business owners free counseling and seminars. Access to resources, such as the Small Business Center, a good business environment and low business cost were three components that led Wallethub, an internet research company that provides information on and reviews of financial companies, products and services, to name Wilson as one of the top twelve small cities in the U.S. for businesses.

Work has begun on the expansion of the Lee campus, the former site of Lee Motor Company, which donated the land. This campus adds 11 acres of land and 58,000 square feet of existing facilities to Wilson Community College. Lee Campus will eventually house the Advanced Automotive Technology, Applied Engineering Technology, HVAC, and Advanced Manufacturing programs. In addition to the \$2 million renovation budget already set aside by Wilson County and the federal government, the college has also been awarded \$95 thousand from the Cannon Foundation and \$6.5 million from the state as part of the Connect NC bond.



Founded in 1902 as Atlantic Christian College, Barton College is a four-year, private, liberal arts college that is fully accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Barton offers a wide range of professional and liberal arts programs leading to the baccalaureate degree. The college also offers a Master of Education program. Plans are underway to add a Master of Business Administration program. The school is seeking accreditation from the Association to Advance Schools of Business, the top accrediting body for schools of business. The academic community includes more than 1000 students and 200 faculty and staff. Barton continues to be ranked by U.S. News & World Report as one of the Best Baccalaureate Colleges in the South and in the 2016 Edition of the Princeton Review as one of the Best Regional Colleges of the Southeast. Barton also supports 19 athletic teams in NCAA Division II and is part of the Conference Carolinas.

Also located in Wilson is the Eastern North Carolina School for the Deaf (ENCSD), which provides specialized instruction to students ages 5-21 who are deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind. ENCSD was established in 1964 to serve students from North Carolina's 53 eastern counties and now operates on a 54-acre campus. The school is a day/residential facility operated by the Office of Educational Services in the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, and all services provided are free of charge to students and their families. The high school has an

emphasis on independent living skills, career awareness and preparedness training, but many students follow college prep and tech prep tracks. ENCSD is dually accredited by the Conference of Educational Administrators Serving the Deaf and by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

As part of the school's 50th anniversary, students, community members and leaders banded together to revitalize the school's 10-acre low ropes course and biking trails. State budget cuts over the last few years had left the school with no way to maintain the once renowned course. Thanks to a \$16,000 donation from BB&T to renovate the course, it is now the largest of its kind in the state with 22 initiatives and obstacles. The course is designed to be used for team building and personal growth. Ropes courses also help individuals in leadership, group dynamics, bonding, problem solving and self-esteem. Those using the course must be guided by one of the 10 certified and trained course facilitators. There are also two miles of tight and challenging biking trails that encircle the property. The bike trails are open to the public.

Officials within the deaf community have also announced a first-of-its-kind project, The Wilson Village. Wilson Village, a private project to be built on 20 acres of land on Firestone Parkway at an estimated \$12 million cost. It will be a planned living community, custom designed for the needs of the deaf, hard of hearing and those who support them. The goal of the project is to dramatically and permanently improve the quality of life for deaf citizens, their families, service care providers and the community they live in. Current plans call for a gated community of units that would be equipped with telecommunication and technology based amenities, which are vital for the deaf community. Construction is scheduled to begin once plans have been approved.

Health Care

Extensive medical services are available in the City. The City and County are served by several health care providers including DLP Wilson Medical Center, the Wilson County Health Department, the Wilson Community Health Center, the Beacon Center, and the Longleaf Neuro-Medical Treatment Center. In addition, numerous physicians, dentists and other professional practitioners have offices in Wilson.

Established in 1964, DLP Wilson Medical Center, a private, not-for-profit organization, serves a five-county region with over 125,000 people. Driven with organizational values including respect, integrity, great teamwork, honesty, and trust, DLP Wilson Medical Center offers a continuum of services through a 294 licensed-bed hospital, a 90-bed nursing care and rehabilitation center, home care and hospice care company, child care center and healthcare foundation. It also offers a wound healing center designed to assist people with diabetic or other conditions. An \$82-million-dollar renovation project has begun that will reduce the number of beds to 178 to make way for larger patient rooms, larger and more accessible bathrooms and areas near patient rooms for staff to sit and work closer with the patients. These plans include the reinstatement of an inpatient behavioral or mental health unit with at least 24 beds. With an average patient population of 85 to 100, administrators feel the 154 medical /surgical rooms will be more than enough to support the area needs. More than 100 active physicians serve on the hospital's medical staff, over 95 percent of who are board-certified, representing 28 specialties. The medical center employs more than 1,200 full and part-time staff members.



The Wilson County Health Department and Eastpointe provide a full range of health and mental health services. These include, among others, a comprehensive home health nursing program and specialized clinical services offered through the County health department. Eastpointe, a local management entity, works with people needing services and their families, as well as other healthcare professionals to find solutions for the prevention and treatment of behavioral health disorders. They link individuals and families to services and supports helping them to live successfully in their communities through a provider network offering a full range of counseling, education, diagnosis, and treatment services related to mental health, developmental disabilities, and substance abuse.

The Wilson Community Health Center is operated by Carolina Family Health Centers, Inc. of Wilson. Services are open to all Wilson County residents and include Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Family Practice, Oral Health, and Behavioral Health care and treatment. Wilson Community Health Center also operates a dispensing Pharmacy, available to all registered patients. The Center accepts Medicaid, Medicare and most Commercial Insurance Plans. Charges are income-based for those who are uninsured. Carolina Family Health Centers, Inc. also operates CFHC Dental Center and Harvest Family Health Center in nearby Elm City, both of which serve Wilson residents.

The Longleaf Neuro-Medical Treatment Center (formerly the North Carolina Special Care Center) is a State-owned multi-purpose facility situated on 40 acres within the City. The center is a 233-bed long-term care facility that includes a 40-bed unit for the treatment of individuals with Alzheimer's. The center employs more than 250 staff that provides both intermediate and skilled level of care to patients who are not able to be placed in traditional nursing care facilities due to psychiatric diagnosis and/or atypical physical circumstances.

Transportation

The City, along with other area local governments, is a co-owner of the Rocky Mount-Wilson Airport, a regional airport located a few miles outside the City. The airport has a 7,100-foot-long runway and serves thousands of general aviation aircraft operations each year.

Additionally, the City owns and operates the Wilson Industrial Air Center located within the City's boundaries. Constructed as a World War II training facility, this airport provides all services usually associated with a general aviation airport. It has three 4,500-foot runways and is used extensively by industrial, commercial, governmental, medical, law enforcement, military and recreational aircraft. The airport often serves blimps that are enroute to or from major sporting events on the East Coast. The airport provides a courtesy vehicle to enable those flying into the airport easy access in carrying out their business needs.

The Raleigh-Durham International Airport (RDU), a major commercial airport, sits on 5,000 acres of land in Wake County, approximately 55 miles west of the City. RDU is home to nine air carriers and their regional partners. Combined, they fly customers to 47 nonstop destinations on an average of 400 flights daily, including direct flights to more than 30 cities, including London, Toronto, and Paris. The airport served more than 11 million people in 2016.

The CSX Railroad and Carolina Coastal Railway provide rail freight service for the City and surrounding area. Wilson is located along CSX's main north-south corridor on the East Coast; as many as 40 trains pass through the city on a daily basis. Passenger service for Wilson is provided by Amtrak's Carolinian and Palmetto lines. During the calendar year that ended December 31, 2016 Amtrak reported annual revenue of more than \$3.4 million dollars with more than 57,000 passengers boarding and disembarking at this station.

A comprehensive network of local public transportation is provided by a City-owned and operated bus system, subsidized by the North Carolina Department of Transportation. The City is also served by the Greyhound bus company and two cab companies operating more than 20 taxis.

Economic Evolution

Once widely known as the World's Greatest Tobacco Market, Wilson enjoys a diverse economy today, including a healthy mix of agriculture, manufacturing, commercial, and service businesses.



Wilson is the birthplace of Branch Banking and Trust Corporation (BB&T), which is among the nation's top financial-holding companies with more than \$219 billion in assets as of December 2016. BB& T operates more than 2,100 financial centers in 15 states and Washington D.C. and offers a full range of consumer and commercial banking, security brokerage, asset management, mortgage and insurance products and services. Currently based in Winston-Salem, BB&T remains among Wilson County's top employers with approximately 2,000 people working in various financial services.

Bridgestone Americas operates a plant in Wilson that employs around 1,800 people making more than 32,000 radial tires for cars and light trucks each day. It is the largest passenger tire facility in the Americas. The Wilson plant is a recipient of a 2015 Project of the Year award from the "Environmental Leader," a publication that informs business leaders about environmental and sustainability news. The award was given to the plant for developing a comprehensive program to achieve zero waste to the landfill. It is the first plant in the world to be recognized by Underwriters Laboratories for its Zero Waste to Landfill validation. It is also the first tire plant and the first plant in North Carolina to be awarded an ISO 50001 certification. The site has also received the Rising Star safety award from the NC Department of Labor.



The 2016 announcement of a five-year, \$164 million investment in the Wilson facility has been increased to a 10-year, \$344 million investment. The continued expansion will allow Bridgestone to meet market demands and invest in newer more efficient technology. In addition to the 167,000 square feet of manufacturing space and new tire assembly machines, material handling systems, curing presses and other equipment already announced, this latest expansion will also add an additional 50,000 square-feet and a new rubber mixer to the facility. Total tire production is expected to grow to 35,000 per day and sixteen new jobs will be added once the expansion is completed in the fall of 2018.

The Sandoz plant in Wilson has been awarded the Carolina Star, the highest safety award given by the NC Department of Labor. Sandoz, which manufactures generic drugs and employees more than 460 workers, is only one of 103 sites in the state to receive the award and the first site in Wilson County. Carolina Star work-sites are recognized for being self-sufficient in their ability to control hazards on the job. The Star program is an ongoing partnership between a company's managers and employees and the state Occupational Safety and Health division. Sandoz began the program seven years ago. It received the Rising Star award in 2013 for having good safety and health programs. Sandoz will continue to be audited each year to confirm it continues the high safety standard required to maintain the certification needed for the Carolina Star distinction.

Other large employers include Wilson County, City of Wilson, Smithfield Packing Co. (pork products), UTC Aerospace Systems (aircraft fire protection systems), Merck Manufacturing Division (pharmaceutical drugs), and Wilson Community College.

Industrial Growth and Development

The county unemployment rate for 2016 averaged 8.98%. As with seasonal employment, unemployment percentages typically increase during the summer and then fall at the year end.

Area declines in employment came from the closure of the Voith press fabric facility. 70 employees lost their jobs due to a decline in demand for press fabrics. A layoff of about 150 employees at the Ardagh Group, a glassmaking facility that specializes in glass beer bottles, will affect nearly half of the plant's workforce. This is expected to be a temporary layoff and should last until the first quarter of 2018. A reduction in customer orders attributed to the layoff.

These declines were offset by growth in other areas. Ontario-based Linamar Corporation, a leading supplier of engine, transmission, driveline and mobile aerial work programs, purchased the Carolina Forge manufacturing facility. Linamar announced plans to invest \$40 million as it creates 125 new jobs and expands the current facility by 2019. Peak Demand, a manufacturer of transmission and distribution electrical products, has announced plans for a new factory in the downtown district that will make products for distribution throughout the Americas. The 50,000 square foot facility will open in a renovated tobacco process warehouse and is expected to employ 37 people within three years.

Available industrial space in Wilson County continues to decline. Currently only two vacant buildings in the 100,000 square foot range are on the market. Construction of a new 100,000-square-foot shell building in the Wilson Corporate Park, the seventh, is nearly complete and the building is being marketed by the Wilson Economic Development Council. Infrastructure in the Wilson Corporate Park is largely complete. Water, Sewer, Natural

Gas, Electric, Fiber and Storm water Management Systems are available to all remaining sites in the Park. Where practical, all systems have been looped, making it one of the more attractive parks in North Carolina. As a result, ElectriCities of North Carolina has designated the park as a Smart Site for being shovel-ready for new development. ElectriCities will market the location internationally at trade shows and industry events.

The City's investments in infrastructure have made the community very competitive on a national scale. The industrial park was recently chosen by the North Carolina Railroad as one of the best industrial sites in the state in terms of rail access. The Wilson Economic Development Council, with considerable input from the City and County, continues to actively market Wilson throughout North and South America and Europe.

The City and County are participating in the development of the 830-acre Woodard Parkway mega industrial site, which is located around the interchange of U.S. 264 and N.C. 58. This will be a mixture of residential, industrial, commercial and office spaces that will expand development toward the Greenville, N.C., area. While the master plan for the property is completed, the property is leased for farming. The Golden LEAF Foundation has awarded a grant of \$1 million to the park. This will be added to a \$1.38-million-dollar grant awarded by the NC Industrial Development Fund-Utility Account. The two grants will fund about 80 percent of the parks water and sewer cost. Wilson City Council has approved \$250,000 in funding for the project and matching funds have been approved by the County. An additional \$90,000, contingency fund has been provided by Wilson County Properties. The land continues to be leased for farming as the development continues.

There are currently eight solar farms at various stages of construction located throughout the City and County. These farms are part of a growing trend toward renewable energy that will reduce our dependence on petroleum and coal reserves. They will also generate income for landowners from properties that had previously been underdeveloped. Wilson Energy will also benefit from this new technology. GCL New Energy, the builder of the solar sites, paid for \$1.4 million in upgrades to the electric grid. Six of the solar farms are designed to produce up to 10 megawatts of power and the remaining two will produce up to 5 megawatts of power. In addition, the farms are expected to generate an estimated \$400,000 in revenue for Wilson energy.

Wilson County was included in the expansion of Foreign Trade Zone 214. This will provide money saving benefits for companies in the county that import and export goods to and from other countries. Inclusion in a foreign trade zone means that companies are not required to pay customs duties until the product leaves the zone; increasing their cash flow.

Retail/Restaurant Growth and Development

Heritage Crossing Shopping Center, a 100-acre shopping hub is the largest active retail development within the City. It includes major tenants such as Target, Belk, and Marshalls. Expansions have included Bed Bath and Beyond, PetSmart, Best Buy, Five Below, Harris Teeter Grocery, Olive Garden, Sleepy's and Panera Bread.

Other business closures included Rocky's Steak House, 126 Nash Event Center and Radio Shack.

Walmart continues its presence in Wilson with the addition of a Walmart Neighborhood Market. The Market is a 41,000+-square-foot full service grocery store with a pharmacy and gas station. Plans have been submitted for a second location as well. These stores will add about 190 new positions. German grocery chain Lidl has nearly completed construction on a 36,000-square foot store that is expected to open by summer 2017 and employee up to 35. Planet Fitness, a national fitness chain, has also opened a 23,500 square foot facility in Wilson.

Other new businesses include DreamDaze Comics Fun & Games, a comic and game shop and a third Wilson location of El Tapatio Mexican Restaurant. Varea Asian Café & Bakery offers both traditional Thai and French cuisine. The locally owned chain also has locations in Rocky Mount and Raleigh. Realo Discount Drug, another regional chain has also opened a location in Wilson. Freedom Family Medicine offers direct primary care to patients without sending claims to insurance providers. Another regional chain of medical clinics, Boice-Willis Family Medicine has added a Wilson location to their chain.

Hardee's Restaurants will open a second Wilson location. The new store will be built along US 301 at the site of the former Griff's Steak Barn. Griff's was demolished and the new construction is currently underway. Plans are also in the works for a new senior living apartment complex; the Ravenswood Reserve is expected to have 60 one- and two-bedroom units. If approved, the 55-and-older complex would open in 2018.



The Wilson Downtown Development Corporation (WDDC), funded by a tax district, works to promote the City's core as a walkable district with scenic and historic buildings, state-of-the-art businesses, and in close proximity to a top-notch educational area. Downtown revitalization now includes an 1888 era Victorian house that will serve as the City's administrative offices. WDDC offers a Downtown Alive concert series, which now attracts thousands of people to hear a variety of bands on Wednesday evenings. WDDC supports a downtown farmers' market, which opened in 2010 and now attracts hundreds of shoppers every Wednesday morning throughout the late spring and summer months. The holiday season continues to draw visitors to the downtown area to see the new LED lighting in the trees that line the streets. Visits to Santa's village, carriage rides, and ice skating have also proven to be popular attractions.

Plans for a \$12 million redevelopment project of the Hi Dollar warehouse into Whirligig Station are underway. Waukeshaw Development of Petersburg, Virginia initiated the year-long transformation of the 64,000-square-foot former tobacco warehouse, the largest redevelopment project in downtown history. The finished site will provide a combination of 90 loft apartments, commercial spaces for a restaurant, retail and offices as well as the Whirligig Park welcome center. The planned renovations include adding an upper level to the interior of the warehouse which will expand the property to 85,000-square feet. The developer cited the City's progressive plans for the Whirligig Park project and the Innovation Zone, which is currently being developed, as a major factor in their decision to redevelop the property. The City will be investing \$1.29 million to complete the park. Plans call for the addition of concrete pavers, a seating wall, lighting, whirligig base work, landscaping, irrigation, signage and park accessories.

Renovations continue at South Street properties, another area adjacent to the Whirligig Park. Wilson Downtown Properties will help market the completed project. Emphasis will be placed on finding tenants to compliment the park and the Hi Dollar development. The first business to open at the property is 217 Brew Works, a craft beer brewery and beer garden.

Wilson is one of several NC cities that received a \$96,107 state grant geared toward downtown revitalization. The city plans to use the grant to support existing projects such as the conversion of the Hi Dollar warehouse and the Vollis Simpson Whirligig Park, as well as supporting other private investments in the area.

Wilson Furniture Company Lofts, which opened in 2014 and joined Nash Street Lofts as a newly redeveloped live/work space in the heart of historic downtown Wilson continue to remain fully leased. The spaces were restored in part by funding from the state's historic preservation tax credit program. The Nash Street Lofts project was the recipient of the Upper Floor Redevelopment award presented by the NC Main Street program of the NC Department of Commerce. The Main Street program works to assist small towns with their efforts to maintain their historic locations.

The Wilson Times returned to its downtown roots when it relocated its office from Downing St. to the former 126 Nash Event Center that closed earlier this year. This site is also home to other Wilson Times Company ventures such as The Wilson County Phone Directory and Mobile Billboards as well as several other specialty publications. Plans are also underway to bring an art gallery to Barnes Street.

Unfortunately, this past year also marked the closing of Wilson Hardware. The store opened in 1869 as Palmer and Green Hardware and has been at the same downtown location for 147 years. It was not only one of the oldest locally owned businesses; it was also one of the oldest in the state. Plans are in progress, by a new lessee, to open the former hardware store later this summer with a business complimentary to all other downtown growth and development.

Planning / Business Development

The City is home to the Upper Coastal Plains Council of Governments (UCPCOG). The UCPCOG is one of seventeen multi-county planning and development regions in the State. The UCPCOG includes a small business incubator, which targets the counties within the UCPCOG, and is housed in the downtown business district.

The City is a major participant in a countywide strategic planning process known as Wilson 20/20 Vision. Wilson 20/20 brought together local leaders in government, business, industry, education, and health care, as well as citizens to assist in projecting where the City and Wilson County will be in the year 2020. The purpose of this process was to develop a plan and set goals with clear approaches to achieving those goals. The key, as with all strategic plans will be in implementing the strategies outlined in the plan.

The Wilson 20/20 work helped shape the City's creation of "Wilson Growing Together: The 2030 Comprehensive Plan." City staff worked with hundreds of citizens, business and educational leaders, and others from November 2008 through April 2010 to develop ideas for how the Wilson community should develop over the next 20 years. The comprehensive plan sets out 51 goals for Wilson, including a revitalized downtown; stronger neighborhoods; an enhanced transportation system; and improved partnerships between the City and Wilson County, Barton College, Wilson Community College and Wilson 20/20. The City Council unanimously approved the 2030 Comprehensive Plan in April 2010. Discussions during the 2030 plan's development directly led to the development of the Vollis Simpson Whirligig Park, the City's brownfields program, traffic improvements around Barton College and other initiatives.

Wilson 20/20 has received multiple grants from its corporate sponsors such as: Bridgestone Americas, Merck and DLP Wilson Medical Center. Recent grants include \$200,000 from the Healthcare Foundation of Wilson to address adolescent pregnancy, alcohol and drug abuse, obesity and STDs. The sponsorship, as well as continued leadership and participation of these corporations are important as Wilson 20/20 looks to expand upon their three initiatives: the Youth Master Plan, Beyond 21 and the Impact initiative. The Youth Master Plan is a partnership with Wilson County Schools that seeks to improve the future of our youth as they address safety, wellness, workforce development, K-12 education and out-of-school time. Beyond 21 will address the needs of adults. Groups have been formed to study unemployment and underemployment, talent retention and attraction, community leadership and civic engagement, health and wellness, elderly and aging population and entrepreneurship in the Wilson area. The Impact Initiative is a collaborative effort with the Wilson Chamber of Commerce and Wilson Economic Development Council to offer leadership training and is designed to identify, train and deploy people with an interest in area leadership roles, including political office and service on boards or committees.

The EPA Brownfields Program, which aids in the redevelopment of property that is abandoned, idle, or underused with actual or perceived environmental contamination, awarded Wilson and its coalition partner, Greenville, an additional \$1,000,000 in revolving loan fund grants. \$600,000 will go toward hazardous substances and \$400,000 for petroleum cleanup. The grants will be used to fund loans and sub grants to support cleanup activities, market the revolving loan fund, conduct cleanup planning and oversight, and perform community outreach activities.

City leaders and residents have joined together to formulate a plan to revive the US 301 corridor with new improvements to intersections, landscaping, crosswalks, sidewalks, drainage and walking paths. The improvements will be paid for by a \$10 million Federal Transportation Investment Generation Economic Recovery or TIGER grant that has been awarded to the City. The NC Department of Transportation allocated \$6.5 million, to go along with an additional \$3 million provided by the City, and an agreement for the City to perform some of the work, which will provide for transportation-related needs, environmental, quality-of-life and economic improvements for the area to encourage new investment and development. The planned improvements will stretch along US 301 from Lipscomb Road to Black Creek Road and has an expected completion date of 2022. The bulk of the money will be used on roadway, shoulder and curb and gutter infrastructure improvements.

Recreation and Tourism



The City offers various recreational and cultural opportunities for its citizens. Two large community centers and two smaller neighborhood centers are owned and operated by the City. These centers target recreation for all ages and feature both outdoor and indoor athletic areas as well as areas for social events, fitness programs and instructional and various arts and crafts activities. The two larger centers have swimming facilities including one pool that can be covered and enjoyed year-round.

The City's J. Burt Gillette Athletic Complex includes eight lighted, regulation soccer fields and four lighted Little League fields with a showcase field that features a stadium that seats over 450 people. The complex regularly attracts regional, state and even national sports events. In the past five years, more than 2,000 separate soccer

teams have visited Wilson to participate in tournaments. The Little League facility, opened in spring 2009 and has gained the standing as a superior, well-run facility for hosting various tournaments.

The complex is also home to the BB&T Noah's Arc All Children's Playground, which is one of the few playgrounds in eastern North Carolina that is designed to be used by children of all abilities, including those who use wheelchairs or other aids. Tourism plays a fundamental role in economic growth. Wilson County consistently experiences significant growth in travel and tourism as the City's recreation sports programs, Whirligig Festival and events such as Eyes on Main Street continue to bring people to the area. Wilson not only garners visitors from North Carolina, but also from other states in the US as well as from other countries. Beginning in FY 2017, the Wilson County Tourism Board starting receiving a three percent funding increase, following an increase in hotel occupancy tax. This funding is designed to convey one percent of the revenue generated annually to the City. These revenues will be utilized to construct improvements on several of the J. Burt Gillette complex's fields, including the addition of artificial turf to two of the soccer fields, as well as bricking in the baseball stadium.

The City owns and operates 28 various park and picnic areas. Other facilities include four lakes and reservoirs, a rose garden, tennis courts, an 18-hole golf course, and nine miles of walking/nature trails. A long-time favorite, the miniature train at the Recreation Center now draws riders as the Christmas Train of Lights. Decorations, music, Christmas cookies and hot chocolate promote the holiday spirit. The nonprofit program is funded by donations from the community and area businesses. The City Parks and Recreation Department was recently awarded \$10,000 from the Healthcare Foundation of Wilson to support an outreach exercise program designed for intellectually challenged school-aged children and adults. The City also received a \$50,000 grant from the Merck Foundation which will be used to help complete a 2-mile greenway around Lake Wilson.

The City of Wilson's Human Relations department hosts 1st Fridays on the Lawn through the months July-October. The first Friday of each month consists of a free community concert, family entertainment, and educational opportunities using music and festivities to bring a diverse community together on the beautiful library lawn.



Fleming Stadium, a historic baseball stadium, underwent renovations in 2013. The stadium, which once hosted baseball greats such as Ted Williams, Richie Ashburn, and Karl Yastremski, now serves as the home of the Wilson Tobs, a member of a summer college baseball league. The North Carolina Baseball Museum operates year-round at Fleming Stadium. The museum includes memorabilia from many of North Carolina's minor league baseball teams, both past and present, plus items from native North Carolinians who have been inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame.

The City leases two buildings in its downtown area to the Wilson Arts Council, a private non-profit agency. Both buildings are of historical significance and have been renovated with a combination of public and private funds. One building, administrative offices of the Wilson Arts Council and is used for various art exhibits and special events. BB&T continues to support the Arts Council and has committed \$500,000 for renovations and restoration of the site. The other building is the Boykin Center for Performing Arts, a restored Vaudeville theater, which seats 650 and is the site of numerous plays and concerts each year.



International photographer, Jerome Perlinghi of Wilson, annually presents Eyes on Main Street, a photo festival that reflects "main streets" from around the world. It features 100 large-scale photographs displayed along Nash Street from BB&T to Pender Street. Several of the exhibiting photographers attend the festival and offer workshops. There is live music and free workshops for children. The festival runs from early May to Labor Day. For their work, Jerome and Rosa De Perlinghi received a Gertrud S. Caraway Award of Merit from Preservation of North Carolina. The award is given in recognition to individuals or organizations that have demonstrated a commitment to historic preservation.

Imagination Station is a non-profit children's interactive science museum located in the downtown area. The mission of the museum is to create, develop, and operate an exciting and fun science learning center for eastern North Carolina. The museum is housed in the historic Wilson Federal Courthouse and U.S. Post Office building that was constructed in 1928. It provides visitors with a quality science experience and offers over 200 hands-on exhibits. One floor of the museum houses the fledgling N.C. Museum of the Coastal Plain.

The Oliver Nestus Freeman Round House Museum features artifacts that depict the culture and contributions of African-Americans in the Wilson community. The house was built by Freeman, a stone mason, in 1946. The house was restored and relocated to its current location in 2001. AT&T has contributed \$10,000 to the museum which will be used to support educational programming activities.



The North Carolina Whirligig Festival is Wilson's award winning tribute to the work of local folk artist Vollis Simpson and his whirligigs, the State's official folk art. The festival which began in 2004 is held in the downtown area adjacent to the Vollis Simpson Whirligig Park which will eventually display 31 of the artist's colossal, wind-powered, kinetic creations. The Whirligig Festival is a two-day event that attracts an average of 35,000 people to the downtown area. It features music, dance, contests, a Whirli-Kidz Zone, the 5K Whirli-Run, and vendor spaces for local artists, food vendors and non-profit organizations. It also supports arts and culture in the Wilson area and provides scholarships for children to attend the Wilson Whirligig Festival Summer Camp.

The whirligigs were already considered the region's top tourist attraction when they were on display in a farm field outside the city limits; now the park is expected to become an important cultural attraction for visitors on a both a statewide and national level. Whirligigs have been placed at the Welcome Centers of both the north and south bound entrances of North Carolina along Interstate 95. Signage at the structures advises travelers of the Wilson connection.

The Vollis Simpson Whirligig Park and Museum has been approved as a 501(c) (3) tax-exempt non-profit organization. Sponsorship funding has also been provided for specific whirligig structures. First Citizens is providing \$50,000 for Dive Bomber Duck, currently on loan to the State and displayed at the NC Welcome Center on I-95 near the South Carolina line. Southern Bank is providing \$25,000 to sponsor Blue Wind, a structure in the park. Bridgestone Americas is providing \$50,000 to sponsor Milkshake America. The City of Wilson is providing staff support to this project, which has already attracted more than \$4 million in support, including grants from some of the country's most prestigious foundations, such as the Kresge Foundation and ArtPlace America, grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the North Carolina Arts Council, as well as donations from private corporations and individuals both locally and nationally. A new partnership with the Kohler Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the plumbing products company, has also been announced. The foundation does not release specific monetary information about their partnerships but did confirm it is a "significant amount." A 4,000 square foot multipurpose shelter is to be added along South Street. The open-air shelter which will be used for a farmer's market can also be used for numerous activities. The shelter will be paid for with \$12,000 in local donations as well as \$100,000 from the US Department of Agriculture and \$160,000 from the NC Tobacco Trust Fund. The revitalization of the downtown area and the restoration of the whirligigs and the 25 jobs created by the work, have been included as a case study in a book by the National Endowment for the Arts, "How To Do Creative Placemaking."

The City of Wilson has a dynamic group of future leaders that are a part of the Wilson Youth Council (WYC), one of 30 youth councils in the state that focuses on leadership development through community service. This group of more than 150 teens learns decision-making skills and teamwork as they volunteer in their communities. Teen members represent almost every high school in Wilson including public, private and home schooled. Over the past nine years, WYC has received a state level award every year, including the "NC Most Outstanding Youth Council of the Year" for 2015, 2014, 2012 and 2008, the "NC Member of the Year" for 2015 and 2012 and the "Most Diverse Council" for 2012. In 2015, they were also recognized with the "Service Project of the Year" for their work with the Young Athletes program at Special Olympics.

COMMUNITY FACTS AND STATISTICS

Miscellaneous Statistical Information *(Information as of June 30, 2016, unless otherwise indicated)*

Year Established

Wilson	1849
Wilson County	1855

Size (square miles)

Wilson	29.0
Wilson County	373.0

Climate

Average Yearly Temperature	60.0F
Average Yearly Rainfall (inches)	45

Police Protection

Number of Stations	1
Number of Substations	5
Number of Police Personnel (Sworn)	121

Fire Protection

Number of Stations	5
Number of Fire Personnel (Sworn)	93
ISO Rating	2

Culture & Recreation

Parks	28
Park Acreage	392
Libraries	1

Other Recreational Facilities

Wedgewood Public Golf Course	187 acres
Recreational reservoirs (number)	4
Recreational reservoirs (water acreage)	3,000

Street

Miles of Streets	232
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Electric

Number of Consumers	35,718
Average Daily Usage	3,573,838 KWH
Miles of Distribution Lines	1,317

Gas

Number of Consumers	13,753
Average Daily Usage	3,420,070 cu. ft.
Miles of Distribution Lines	398

Water

Number of Consumers	22,339
Average Daily Usage	8.69 MGD
Miles of Distribution Lines	435

Sewer

Average Daily Flow	9.46 MGD
Miles of Distribution Lines	360

Sanitation

Annual Refuse Collected	22,613 tons
Annual Recyclables Collected	1,586 tons
Yard waste/leaf collection	8,426 tons

Public Transportation

Fixed route bus service provided Monday through Saturday with the following vehicles:	
30' Passenger Buses	5
24' Passenger Buses	2

Mass Transit

Annual ridership	99,444
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Stormwater Management

Miles of drainage cleaned	7.45
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COMMUNITY FACTS AND STATISTICS

Demographic Information

(Information is based on U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Commerce; City of Wilson, Wilson Economic Development Council (unless otherwise indicated))

Population (2015 US Census Estimates)

City of Wilson	49,643
Wilson County	81,714

Age (2014 projection by NC Dept. of Commerce)

	<u>Percent</u>
Under 20	26.2
20-29	12.5
30-39	12.0
40-49	12.9
50-59	14.1
Over 60 years	22.2

Race (2015 US Census Estimates)

	<u>Percent</u>
Black/African-American	47.9
White/Caucasian	42.9
Hispanic	9.4
Asian	1.2

Sex (2010 US Census)

	<u>Percent</u>
Male	46.6
Female	53.4

Median Household Income (2015 projection by US Census)

\$38,497

Housing Occupancy (2014 projection by NC Dept. of Commerce)

Number

Total Housing Units	36,366
Homeownership Rate	60%

Education Attainment (2015 US Census Estimates)

Percent

High School Graduate or Equivalency	80.1
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	22.5



COMMUNITY FACTS AND STATISTICS

Economic Information

Tax Rates

Tax Valuation – 17-18 (est.) - City \$ 4,073,644,630

2017-18 Tax Rate/\$100 Valuation

City .555
County .730

Wilson County Employment by Industry (2016 2nd Qtr.)

Sector

Agriculture, Forestry	808
Mining	27
Construction	2,682
Manufacturing	7,327
Wholesale Trade	1,595
Retail Trade	3,766
Transportation and Warehousing	98
Information	803
Finance and Insurance	1,241
Real Estate, Rental, Leasing	318
Professional and Technical Services	771
Management of Companies	1,198
Administrative and Waste Services	1,793
Educational Services	2,192
Health Care and Social Assistance	4,807
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	244
Accommodation and Food Services	3142
Other Services (Ex. Public Administration)	696
Public Administration	2,313

Source: Department of Commerce - Website

Major Employers in Wilson City

Name of Business	Employment Range	Business Type
BB&T	2,000	Financial Activities
Wilson County Schools	1,600	Education
Wilson Medical Center	1200	Health Care
County of Wilson	750	Public Administration
City of Wilson	747	Public Administration
UTC Aerospace Systems	735	Manufacturing
Smithfield Packing Company	700	Manufacturing
Sandoz	460	Manufacturing
NC Dept. of Health & Human Resources	250	Public Administration
Wilson Community College	250	Education

Source: Wilson Economic Development Council and Employer Reporting