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Goal 1: Create and preserve 2,500 **affordable housing** units by 2029.

- Convene community partners and stakeholders to refine and update the Wake County Affordable Housing Plan, addressing emerging needs and best practices while developing strategies to promote awareness and use of housing subsidies and incentives.
- Increase the supply of affordable housing by partnering with community organizations that are repurposing underutilized buildings and optimizing the use of existing structures.
  - *Note: Examples of underutilized buildings include vacated hotels, motels, schools, office spaces and other types of buildings.*
- Establish an affordable housing acquisition fund to identify, acquire and utilize properties for future development.
- Collaborate with municipalities to promote best practices in affordable housing policies, including zoning and incentive structures, that expand housing supply.
- Evaluate and revise current economic development policies and incentives to incorporate housing-specific measures that address the growing need for affordable housing.
- Explore and implement new, innovative funding strategies that support affordable housing development.
  - *Note: Potential funding approaches may include grants, public-private partnerships, tax incentives, and housing bonds.*

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Goal 2: By 2029, make **homelessness** rare, brief, and non-recurring by reducing the number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness by 10% from 2024 levels.

- Strengthen partnerships between healthcare providers, homelessness agencies, and community stakeholders to formalize coordinated care models and streamline referral pathways for individuals experiencing homelessness.
- Expand and enhance the homelessness prevention program to serve as an emergency resource for residents experiencing a housing crisis and at risk of literal homelessness.
- Establish a dedicated lead agency (continuum of care) that will coordinate efforts to reduce homelessness, foster partnerships, improve service navigation, and provide oversight and accountability for resource allocation.
- Strengthen collaboration between the justice system and temporary housing providers to support justice-involved individuals who are housing insecure transition from detention or court-ordered release.
- Evaluate and define the future direction of innovative, affordable housing pilot programs supported by one-time funding sources, such as the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), to ensure sustainability and long-term impact.
- Collaborate with community organizations, stakeholders, and partners to implement the Wake County Unsheltered Facility Study's recommendations (e.g., day centers, drop-in shelters, transitional housing) to enhance accessibility, service effectiveness, and pathways to stable housing and supportive services.

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Goal 3: By 2029, 5% more residents asked will indicate **low barriers to healthcare and behavioral health services**, such as access to providers, insurance coverage, affordability and appointment wait times.

- Complete a comprehensive review of available behavioral health services for youth in Wake County to identify service gaps, enhance accessibility through collaboration with community partners, and improve outcomes.
- Expand the accessibility of healthcare and behavioral health services through facility co-locations (e.g., regional centers, hospitals, safety net providers, Wake County public schools) and by implementing mobile service models to provide comprehensive care, including dental, vision, immunizations, and behavioral health services.
  - *Note: This initiative seeks to address health disparities, improve preventive care access, and foster collaborative partnerships among health providers, community organizations, and public agencies.*
- Enhance early identification and intervention for mental health and substance use issues by conducting assessments and connecting individuals to appropriate services and resources.
- Update and implement a comprehensive maternal and infant health services plan to enhance health outcomes for mothers and babies, reduce maternal and infant mortality, and address disparities.
- Facilitate a collaborative, community-centered conversation among healthcare and safety net providers, behavioral health providers, nonprofits, and other key stakeholders to identify and address capacity challenges.
  - *Note: Community partners include Wake County Health and Human Services, hospitals, safety net providers, the private sector, and others. This initiative should include improving information-sharing platforms, developing standardized data-sharing protocols, and implementing strategies that enhance the continuum of care for individuals in need.*

- Evaluate healthcare and behavioral health pilot programs, such as telehealth, after-hours care, maternal health, and community outreach funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), to recommend strategies for sustainability and scalability.
- Create service navigation resources to improve public access to the community's healthcare and behavioral health services.
  - *Note: Service navigation resources may include user-friendly guides, online portals, and mobile applications that provide clear information on available services, eligibility criteria, and step-by-step navigation assistance.*

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Goal 4: By 2029, three out of four residents asked will indicate **low barriers to accessing benefits and assistance** programs and resources, such as food and utilities, childcare, employment services, housing, etc.

- Increase participation and fully develop community resources that link residents to an integrated network of healthcare providers, community organizations, and social service agencies.
  - *Note: Example networks include NCCare360, NC 211, Wake Network of Care, and the Wake County Public School System's community mapping initiative. Full development refers to the currency and maintenance of agency service capacity, hours, location, etc.*
- Convene an interdisciplinary team of Wake County departments, partners, and stakeholders to inventory benefit and assistance programs, share resource information, and integrate services for improved efficiency, accessibility, and seamless referrals across support networks.
- Expand and integrate the use of community health workers, including members of the faith community, as benefit and assistance service navigators to enhance residents' access to health, social, and economic support services.
- Create and launch technology resources to streamline benefit and assistance program data sharing, connect benefit-eligible residents to other programs, improve access to assistance, and simplify service navigation.
- Develop a coordinated approach to enhance post-release support for justice-involved individuals by connecting them to essential services, including healthcare, behavioral healthcare, and benefits assistance programs.
- Evaluate and sustain successful food security pilot programs initially funded by one-time sources, such as the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), to ensure their long-term impact and viability.
  - *Note: This initiative should explore the feasibility of recovering food security program costs through Medicaid funding.*

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Goal 5: By 2029, increase by 4% the number of Wake County **veterans and veterans' families** who are accessing the benefits they earned through military service.

- Explore opportunities to establish a secure and reliable method of identifying, connecting with, and recognizing veterans in the community through partnerships with government agencies.
- In partnership with community-based organizations and government agencies, assess the needs of veterans who may be eligible for federal or state benefits to identify gaps in service delivery and outreach.
- Expand the reach and capacity of the Wake County Veteran Services Office to better serve and connect veterans with resources through outreach, mobile services, and leveraging resources (e.g., municipal partnerships).

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Goal 1: Between 2024 and 2029, 97% of **growth and development** will be directed toward cities and towns that provide municipal services, transportation, and utilities.

- Review and update small area land use plans as part of implementing PLANWake, the county's comprehensive land use plan.
  - *Note: Planning, Development and Inspections (PDI) has completed three of seven small area plans. A fourth is underway. The fifth and sixth will be developed in 2025, and the seventh will be in 2026.*
- Advocate and promote high-density development in municipalities to foster efficient land use, sustainable growth, and increase affordable housing.
- Revise and update the Wake County Transportation Plan to enhance the network of highways, roads, sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike lanes, creating a more connected, accessible, and user-friendly transportation system.
- Collaborate with municipalities, Wake County Economic Development, and other stakeholders to identify strategic areas and develop integrated utility infrastructure plans—encompassing power, natural gas, water, sewer, and broadband—that meet current and future needs.
  - *Note: The plan should include efforts to communicate the benefits of municipal utilities to residents and developers.*

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Goal 2: By 2029, increase **public transit** ridership by 10%.

- Collaborate with transit agencies, community organizations, and local governments to evaluate and implement bus stop improvements, focusing on enhancing lighting, seating, safety, cleanliness, locations, signage, etc.
- Partner with the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO), GoTriangle, and the Transit Planning Advisory Committee (TPAC) to develop and implement transit projects that enhance multimodal connections, seamlessly integrating buses, rail, micro-transit, sidewalks, greenways, and bikeways.
- Promote transit use among choice riders by collaborating with employers to provide bus passes (GoPass), marketing recreational trips, offering incentives, and prioritizing public facilities along current and planned transit routes.
- Collaborate with transit agencies, community organizations, and local governments to enhance transit system navigation with user-friendly updates, including real-time information, appropriate technology integration, and improved maps and schedules.
  - *Note: Transit users who do not have access to smartphones for service navigation must be considered.*



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Goal 3: Protect 1,000 acres of **green space**, including open space, parks, greenways, farmland, and forests by 2029.

- Develop a countywide database of agriculture, conservation, and recreation easements to aid the preservation and protection of green spaces, sensitive areas, and outdoor recreation access.
- Develop and launch an outreach campaign to raise awareness among landowners, stakeholders, and the public about the benefits of conservation easements that protect farmland (including voluntary agricultural districts), wildlife habitats, aquatic resources, and natural landscapes.
  - *Note: This initiative includes the development of the Farmland Protection Plan by the Wake County Soil and Water Conservation District.*
- Collaborate with partners to identify resources and opportunities to support tree canopies based on results and priorities identified in the Wake County Land Cover Analysis/Tree Canopy Assessment.
- Develop the Wake County Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Master Plan, which integrates existing plans, assesses needs and financial options, such as a future open space bond referendum and updates the open space prioritization model that guides public investments.

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Goal 4: By 2029, 95% of residents asked will have easy access to **clean water**.

- Identify and leverage resources to support collaborative water quality improvement projects that reduce stormwater runoff and enhance resilience through nature-based solutions.
- Equitably improve water conditions in vulnerable communities by implementing focused interventions, providing technical assistance, and connecting residents to resources.
- Implement a community-focused Clean Drinking Water Campaign to raise awareness of safe water practices and testing, build trust in water quality, and empower residents to protect their water through informed actions.
- Partner with the Water Partnership to create and implement a 50-year One Water Plan that equitably supports population growth and preserves vital natural resources.

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Goal 5: Wake County Government will progress toward achieving 80% **clean energy** by 2035.

- Execute projects to enhance energy efficiency and integrate renewable energy in existing County facilities.
- Develop and secure contracts for clean energy procurement (e.g., offsets) for existing County facilities.
- Implement electrification technologies to achieve long-term clean energy goals, such as building heat pumps, procuring electric vehicles (EVs), and developing regional EV charging stations.
- Revise the Facilities Design and Construction Guidelines, including Energy Design and Management Standards, to enhance energy efficiency, integrate renewable energy, and ensure climate-resilient infrastructure when constructing new County facilities.

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Goal 1: By 2029, 5% more residents asked will indicate **low barriers to employment**, such as access to broadband, childcare, and transportation.

- Assess and develop strategies to strengthen the community's capacity to increase childcare services, such as second and third-shift childcare, workforce development for childcare service providers, and service navigation for families seeking childcare assistance and resources.
- Strengthen and expand community support networks for job seekers and streamline the navigation of workforce development services offered by multiple agencies and entry points to enhance job seekers' access and placement.
  - *Note: Target populations may include veterans, young adults, reentry, neurodivergent individuals, and individuals without reliable transportation.*
- Increase digital fluency skill offerings (assessments, training, and certifications) at community anchor institutions by developing new partnerships and supporting existing ones.
  - *Note: The draft initiative directly relates to the Wake County Digital Inclusion Plan (Goal 3, Strategy 1).*
- Create a broadband affordability resource page on Wake County's Digital Inclusion Project website.
  - *Note: The draft initiative is directly connected to the Wake County Digital Inclusion Plan (Goal 1, Strategy 2).*
- Collaborate with partners to promote skills-based workforce training programs and increase community awareness of available opportunities.
  - *Note: Include a broad range of offerings not specific to target industries. Advance NC is an example of a collaborative group of community colleges, universities, and workforce boards working with advanced manufacturing employers to support the development of a robust talent pipeline. These partners are committed to common practices and skills training that will benefit residents of central North Carolina for advanced manufacturing careers and job placement.*

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Goal 2: By 2029, four out of five residents asked will say they have **employment opportunities** that are available and right for their needs.

- Improve service navigation for entrepreneurs and small business owners by streamlining access to local resources and fostering connections to expand business opportunities.
  - *Note: Programs were supported in recent years by time-limited funding. The initiative aims to expand staff and overall capacity.*
- Empower BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) community organizations by easing access to local markets and funding opportunities that enable growth and scalability.
  - *Note: This initiative evolves work that began with the Food Justice Cohort, implemented by Cooperative Extension and the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.*
- Encourage local businesses to provide living wages and employee benefits.
  - *Note: The initiative may have a two-pronged approach, including the living wage project managed by the DEI office and promoting responsible business practices in HHS's Live Well Wake program.*
- Assess and determine the future direction of a pilot program funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) that supports community small businesses' growth, development, and resilience through targeted assistance, partnerships, and resources.

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Goal 3: By 2029, nine out of ten residents asked will share that they can find and enjoy enriching experiences that support our community's high **quality of life**.

- Leverage hospitality tax revenues to develop, expand or reimagine facilities that establish the County as a premier destination for tourism, culture, and recreation.
- In partnership with the community, create and implement a "Everyone is Welcome" campaign that celebrates diversity and bolsters our reputation as a welcoming, inclusive, and vibrant destination.
  - *Note: Local partners may include municipalities, the local business community, and other organizations.*
- In partnership with the United Arts Wake County, complete a countywide arts plan that fosters and supports the arts community and establishes Wake County as an arts destination.
- Increase public awareness and appreciation of county amenities, including libraries, cultural attractions, parks and nature preserves, greenways, recreational facilities, and destination facilities.
- Strengthen partnerships with community organizations to increase librarian referrals and connect patrons to health, education, and community well-being resources beyond traditional library offerings.
  - *Note: Example programs and partnerships include Books and Smiles, Lawyers in Your Library, and Libraries with Heart.*

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Goal 1: By 2029, increase the number of income-eligible preschool slots by 33% to ensure all kindergartners enter school **ready to learn**.

- Support strategies to maintain and grow the capacity of preschool providers, prioritizing underserved and high-need communities.
- Advocate for federal and state appropriations that ensure continued preschool education access for all families, especially those in underserved communities.
- Add funded slots annually to Wake County Smart Start preschool programs to expand early learning programming access for qualifying children.

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Goal 2: By 2029, increase by 5% the percentage of residents asked who share that they have access to **quality educational opportunities**.

- Increase work-based learning opportunities by expanding the number of apprenticeships, internships, and employer partnerships.
- Provide, grow, and increase awareness of educational programs offered by Wake County to the community.
  - *Note: This includes strengthening coordination between programs offered at Cooperative Extension, Health and Human Services, the Soil and Water Conservation District, Solid Waste, Wake County Parks Recreation and Open Space, and Wake County Public Libraries.*
- Increase digital fluency skill offerings (assessments, training, and certifications) at community anchor institutions.



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Goal 3: Develop baseline metrics for **education-based support services** in Wake County Public Schools by 2025.

- Support a trauma-informed response approach to better prepare staff and community partners assisting students and families affected by trauma.
- Assess and determine the future direction of pilot programs funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), including Neighborhood Networks and Student Engagement Teams (SET), which aim to connect at-risk students and their families with essential community resources.
- Convene community partners providing youth services to improve coordination, ensure access across all partners, address service gaps, and increase community awareness.
  - *Note: Potential community partners include YouthThrive (John Rex), Cooperative Extension, Wake County Public Libraries, Wake County Parks, and after-school, track-out, and summer programs. This initiative is an extension and next step following the out-of-school time study.*
- Support school-based nutrition programs to ensure all students can access nutritious food.

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Goal 4: By 2029, three out of four residents asked will share that Wake County has **high-quality education-based facilities**, including schools, libraries, and other educational resources.

- Develop and execute a plan to utilize the 2024 Library Bond to expand, renovate and modernize Wake County library facilities and services.
- Develop a plan for future bond referenda supporting eligible facilities needs for Wake County Public School System and Wake Technical Community College.

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Goal 1: By 2029, 80% of all County public safety calls will receive an **appropriate and timely emergency response**.

- Explore alternative response models to address non-emergency situations, such as mental health crises, homelessness, and community disputes, and assess future public safety staffing needs.
- Develop and implement a public education campaign to define appropriate responses and guide residents on when to call 911 versus utilizing other non-emergency resources.
- Complete the implementation and evaluate the Multidisciplinary Operation Center's (MDOC) effectiveness to enhance resource integration, improve communication, and support a coordinated response to public safety emergencies.
- Assess and implement strategies to address the challenges associated with a fragmented 911 system.

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Goal 2: Develop baseline metrics for referrals to **recovery support networks and services** by 2025.

- Identify, define, and prioritize crises impacting the community that require a public safety response.
  - *Note: The focus team has tentatively defined crises for this goal as alcohol, drug addiction, and mental health. The definition may be expanded or changed as the goal evolves in 2025.*
  
- Identify and assess the current public safety referral requirements.
  
- Complete a comprehensive assessment of community-based organizations to evaluate their service capacity and enhance County participation in existing referral networks that connect County residents with community-based support and recovery resources.
  - *Note: Examples include NCCARES 360, WakeMed's Network for Advancing Behavioral Health, and the City of Raleigh's ACORNS (Addressing Crises through Outreach, Referrals, Networks, and Service).*

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Goal 3: By 2029, reduce the Wake County **violent crime** rate per 100,000 people by 5%.

- Improve information data sharing among public safety agencies and community organizations to enhance communication and coordination of violence prevention and response efforts.
- Support the establishment of SafeWake by collaborating with community leaders and stakeholders to prioritize the forms of violence to be addressed.
- Collaborate with community organizations, justice partners, and other public safety agencies to enhance diversion programs and implement collaborative, evidence-based reentry programs and services that reduce recidivism.
- Evaluate and implement forensic services improvements to expedite evidence processing, support criminal investigations, and strengthen prosecution efforts.
- Improve behavioral health service navigation with a focus on individuals at risk of contributing to violent crime.
- Strengthen services for transition-aged youth (14-26) at risk of contributing to violent crime by improving service coordination among community nonprofits and supporting collaborative partnerships.

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Goal 1: Maintain the County's **AAA bond ratings** through 2029.

- Develop a comprehensive long-range operating financial model and integrate the model into decision-making processes to ensure long-term financial sustainability.

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Goal 2: Increase overall **employee satisfaction** to 90% by 2029.

- Develop and implement strategies to equip staff with practical and equitable artificial intelligence (AI) tools to enhance job performance, service delivery, and operational efficiency.
- Enhance the workplace culture-building program to equip supervisors with the leadership skills and tools to foster positive, inclusive, and high-performing work environments across all County departments.
  - *Note: The program should consider and include supervisor accountability.*
- Improve internal communication across all levels of the organization to ensure consistent messaging and improve operational effectiveness.
  - *Note: Potential actions include: 1) communicating Extended Leadership Team meeting materials and summary to all County staff, and 2) each department will have or create a monthly method of communicating department decisions to employees.*
- Implement and expand a structured career laddering program and certification pay incentives to support employee growth, improve retention, and strengthen workforce skills.
  - *Note: This initiative supports professional development, a priority resulting from the organizational assessment.*

- Evaluate and refine remote work policies (Wake 2.0) to ensure equity, efficient service delivery, and workforce engagement, guiding the design of modern, flexible workspaces.
  - *Note: Workspaces include collaborative areas, drop-in workstations, and private, confidential spaces (unassigned) to enhance productivity and employee well-being.*
  
- Create and execute a comprehensive succession planning program to ensure leadership continuity, build organizational resilience, and support professional development.
  - *Note: This initiative supports professional development, a priority resulting from the organizational assessment.*
  
- Develop and implement processes to regularly evaluate staff workload and capacity to ensure effective service delivery, efficiency, and morale.

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Goal 3: By 2029, 10% more residents will agree that Wake County provides **high-quality, fair, and equitable services**.

- Evaluate and address the resource needs required to sustain desired service levels to ensure consistent service delivery.
- Enhance and optimize data analytics and performance measurement functions to drive data-informed decision-making and improve County operations and service delivery.
- Enhance language access to ensure that non-English speakers and individuals with communication barriers can fully engage with and benefit from Wake County programs and resources.
- Develop and implement a framework to evaluate and prioritize budget and resource requests, focusing on equitable allocation.
- Review, update, and standardize all county digital content (e.g., web and mobile) to meet accessibility standards and ensure equitable access for individuals with disabilities.
  - *Note: Initiative relates to rule revisions for Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), including specific digital content requirements.*



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Goal 4: By 2029, increase by 10% the percentage of residents who agree that Wake County does a good job **engaging residents and gathering public input.**

- Develop and implement a comprehensive campaign to increase community awareness of local government services, focusing on Wake County's roles and responsibilities.
  - *Note: Initiative includes participating in municipal academies that educate community members and enhance their understanding of local government operations, including Wake County and the host municipality.*
- Expand the collection, analysis, and utilization of customer satisfaction surveys to inform and improve service delivery across all county departments.
- Develop guidelines on public input methods and engagement approaches for County departments, specifying appropriate times and techniques for meaningful community input.
- Expand volunteer opportunities that address identified service gaps and needs to enhance community involvement, strengthen service capacity, and create meaningful resident experiences.