

Wake County Strategic Plan Potential Goal Revisions for Discussion

Purpose: This document outlines potential updates to the strategic plan goals informed by known shifts in program requirements (i.e., benefits eligibility), and lessons learned throughout department implementation. It is also informed by feedback received from elected officials and staff focus teams.

At this stage, these updates are shared to support preliminary options on potential edits. Staff will return to the Board of Commissioners with formal recommendations for their consideration after further analysis and data gathering.

Community Health and Wellbeing

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

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.

Context for potential change: Aligns the goal with the community-wide efforts to end homelessness in Wake County, including unsheltered and those in temporary housing.

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~~ **increase resident satisfaction by 5% regarding access to healthcare and behavioral health services in Wake County.**

Context for potential change: The staff focus team has discussed revising this goal to better reflect the County's role in advocating for services and providing some, but not all, healthcare and behavioral healthcare services to residents in Wake County.

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

Context for potential change: The inclusion of 'eligible' is based on feedback from the Board of Commissioners. Changes in benefit eligibility and requirements may impact perceived barriers to accessing benefits and assistance resources. Focus teams are in the early stages of developing recommendations for future consideration by the Board of Commissioners.

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.

Context for potential change: Based on the leadership of the Veterans' Service Office (Housing Affordability and Revitalization) and recent performance reporting, Wake County is exceeding this stretch target. Staff from the department and focus team may discuss options to revisit the stretch target through 2029, ensuring an attainable, yet challenging goal.

Growth, Land Use and Environment

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.

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

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

Context for potential change: Based on the leadership of the Soil and Water Conservation District farmland preservation efforts and the Open Space program in Parks, Recreation and Open Space (Community Services), Wake County is nearing the stretch target goal. Staff from both departments and the focus team may discuss options to revisit this stretch target through 2029 based on program implementation and funding sources.

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

Context for potential change: Current initiatives focus on drinking water. Staff focus teams have discussed expanding the language of this goal to be inclusive of surface water (i.e., lakes and streams) and stormwater.

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

Inclusive Prosperity

Goal 1: ~~By 2029, 5% more residents asked will indicate low barriers to employment, such as access to broadband, childcare, and transportation.~~ **By 2029, maintain an unemployment rate ___% below state and national averages by reducing barriers to employment and ensuring that residents have job opportunities that meet their needs.**

Context for potential change: The staff focus team has discussed combining Inclusive Prosperity Goals 1 and 2 and reframing the goal to maintain an unemployment rate below state and national averages. This recognizes Wake County's strength and strives to maintain this competitive advantage.

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

Context for potential change: See prior goal (Inclusive Prosperity Goal 1).

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.

Lifelong Learning

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

Context for potential change: The staff focus team discussed benefits of expanding this goal to include other programs and initiatives that support early education, such as children's programs at Wake County Public Libraries, county parks, and Marbles Kids Museum. These are in addition to the funding of Wake County Smart Start preschool and ThreeSchool programs.

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

Context for potential change: Improve and clarify the goal language.

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

Context for potential change: Examples of programs that advance this goal include school nursing, social services, and food resources, all available in public school settings. Staff focus teams have explored recommending to the Board of Commissioners that this goal be discontinued, as most programs are in sustaining status.

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.

Safer Community Together

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

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

Context for potential change: Staff focus teams have discussed whether to continue this goal as most recovery support is provided by many non-profit community partners.

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

Maintain a violent crime rate per 100,000 people that is X% below the state average through 2029.

Context for potential change: Reframe the goal to emphasize that Wake County is a safe place and that its violent crime rate is lower than the statewide average.

Foundations for Service

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

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

Context for potential change: The current stretch target was based on the prior organizational assessment, which did not directly measure employee satisfaction. Wake County will conduct the next organizational assessment in FY 2027. The staff focus team may prepare recommendations for the Board of Commissioners to reestablish the stretch target using findings from the new organizational assessment.

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

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.