

# TOWN OF HOPE MILLS

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## STRATEGIC PLAN • 2025



### Introduction

Like much of Cumberland County, Hope Mills is growing and many of its residents have been a part of that recent boom. And yet, it is the hometown nostalgic nature of the Town, the sense of stability and familiarity that motivates people to stay, move to, and come back to Hope Mills.

In North Carolina, plans are policy guides without the force of law. Municipal plans establish a “vision” for the future that is reflective of community expectations.

Plans are implemented through a variety of tools, including ordinances, which do carry the force of law.



## ***PLANNING AHEAD IS IMPORTANT***

Planning is critical for a growing municipality. To develop a plan that accurately reflects the Town's needs, information for this strategic plan was gathered from survey-takers, stakeholders, residents, and the Board.

In Hope Mills, strategic planning will safeguard the things the community values, such as the parks and recreation opportunities, the historic Trade Street District, the people, quality of life – all the reasons why people choose to live in Hope Mills.

The Town recognizes that the realization of a community vision is only achieved when the strategic goals of the community are in alignment with available and planned resources. As such, the purpose of the strategic plan is to provide a framework that aligns resources with commitment from Town organization leaders to bridge the gap between the assessed current conditions and community of the future.

The Town Board and Staff are committed to realistic goal principles to establish actionable outcomes that are linked to long-term financial planning. Through the strategic planning process, the Town Board of Commissioners worked with community stakeholders to provide policy direction for implementation by the Town Manager and staff in partnership with the citizens and organizations that call Hope Mills home.

## ***VISION STATEMENT FOR THE TOWN OF HOPE MILLS***

The mission of the Town of Hope Mills is to provide exceptional public services in a fiscally responsible manner to meet and exceed the needs of our residents, visitors, and business community, while inspiring community spirit and enhancing the unique quality and character that is Hope Mills.



The Board of Commissioners commits to doing the following to help the Town achieve this vision:

- Strive for efficiency in handling Town business. Commissioners will work hard and attend all meetings.
- Keep the best interests of the Town at the forefront of decision-making.
- Consider all aspects of a situation and make thorough, deliberate, and well-reasoned decisions.
- Explore all viewpoints. Commissioners will listen to citizens and partners and collaborate with Town staff, learning from them and compromising, when needed.
- Stay cohesive, collaborative, collegial, and connected to the Town Manager and each other.
- Demonstrate respect for all opinions and support the decisions of the Board. Once decisions are made by the majority, Commissioners will support that decision.
- Tackle new and novel ideas and processes.



# Policy Goals

Policy goals are broad and identify the most critical issues facing the Town of Hope Mills. Each policy goal has specific action initiatives that are prioritized annually to assist in the allocation of resources and staff time to ensure efficiency and effectiveness. The policy goal areas identified include:

## **Goal 1 – Downtown Vibrancy, Economic Growth, and Community Character**

Promote economic vitality through the development of a vibrant downtown, economic growth, and unique character.

## **Goal 2 – Public Safety and Neighborhood Enhancement**

Provide for a safe and secure community that nurtures livable and well-maintained neighborhoods that are family friendly.

## **Goal 3 – Infrastructure, Transportation, and the Environment**

Develop and maintain infrastructure and policies to support new growth, improve the quality of life for residents, and provide for a clean and green environment.

## **Goal 4 – Parks, Recreation, Special Events, and Culture**

Establish facilities, events, and programs that connect the community, promote healthy lifestyle opportunities, and culturally engage citizens and visitors

## **Goal 5 – Organization Culture and Communication**

Build a professional and inclusive Town organization that is fiscally responsible, seeks innovative practices, and values the development of staff.





# POLICY GOAL BREAKDOWN

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## GOAL 1: Downtown Vibrancy, Economic Growth, and Community Character

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*Promote economic vitality through the development of a vibrant downtown, economic growth, and unique character*

Downtown vibrancy, economic growth, and community character goals are achieved when the following opportunities are realized, or conditions exist in Hope Mills:

- Downtown contains a vibrant mix of businesses that are centered on food and beverage, retail, and neighborhood services that attract area residents in coordination with sufficient parking, attractive public spaces, and regular special events to foster the “small-town” “home-town” feeling that characterizes Hope Mills.
- The Town as a whole contains an appropriate mix of land uses including commercial, office, and industrial uses to enhance property values, create jobs, and make opportunities available for shopping, services, and products desired by the citizens of Hope Mills and the region.

### Strategic Initiatives

- Create action plans for areas suitable for non-residential development
- Finalize plans for financing of the Golfview Recreation Project
- Establish a redevelopment plan for Historic Trade Street District
- Implement a streetscape project around Hope Mills Lake and Historic Trade Street District to further improvements and updates necessary to encourage private investments and placemaking.
- Collaborate with public art and tourism partners to establish a public art trail (murals, etc.) to encourage awareness and visitation
- Continued expansion of partnerships, by leveraging representation and participation at the Chamber of Commerce and other community non-profits
- Increase Town involvement in business recruitment efforts of County and State
- Improve walkability throughout Town, with a specific focus on connections to Hope Mills Lake and Historic Trade Street District, including enhanced intersections and key gateways, to improve citizen friendliness, public safety, and aesthetic quality.
- Identify development options for vacant and dilapidate parcels in the Historic Trade Street District



- Work with regional health industry partners for the construction of medical offices and health infrastructure expansion, especially mental health related facilities and resources.
- Work with Cumberland County and housing partners to ensure continued opportunities for housing affordability, diversity of housing types, and the services and transportation needed to support housing

## Management in Progress

- Create a vibrant downtown connected to all neighborhoods by identifying a downtown core area (i.e. Historic Trade Street) and identifying site for infill mixed-use development and update Town ordinances and implement recommendations to encourage such redevelopment.
- Pursue and implement the Brownfield Program using Assessment Program funds received from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to assess and plan for adaptive reuse of selected properties.
- Create economic development marketing materials to assist with recruiting companies to locate to Hope Mills (specifically destination retail, boutique shopping, and family oriented sit-down restaurants). New industry will increase tax base and economic opportunities for the Town.

## Next Action Steps

- *Identify and create core downtown area near Hope Mills Lake and Historic Trade Street District.*
- *Seek opportunities to encourage infill development and redevelopment for vacant, dilapidated, and under-utilized properties while encouraging the preservation of historic structures and architectural elements.*
- *Seek opportunities to promote and preserve the unique history and environment around Hope Mills by identifying projects with local partners for preservation and re-use.*
- *Identify funding opportunities to create and implement a streetscape plan and fund enhanced services in the newly created downtown area.*
- *Work with community partners and property owners to complete a neighborhood plan for Historic Trade Street District to rehabilitate the area including the Hope Mills Historic District and extend services and infrastructure (public and private) into the community.*



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## GOAL 2 – Public Safety and Neighborhood Enhancement

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*Provide for a safe and secure community that nurtures livable and well-maintained neighborhoods that are family friendly*

Public safety and neighborhood enhancement goals are achieved when the following opportunities are realized, or conditions exist in Hope Mills:

- Develop an environment for community-engaged policing and code enforcement that emphasizes maintaining safe, family-friendly neighborhoods, improving the public environment for accessibility, and encouraging community ownership in improving private property.

### **Strategic Initiatives**

- Establish and communicate an engagement plan for the Police Department to expand visibility and engagement of the officers in the community
- Establish a robust community engagement program to encourage community awareness of public safety efforts to maintain a sense of safety in the community
- Evaluate and implement growth in public safety staffing for specialized units necessary for service provision in growing communities (i.e. traffic enforcement unit)
- Seek opportunities to encourage the expansion of medical facilities, pharmacies, and services servicing the Town
- Expand coordinated public safety training for multi-hazard threats and associated specialized units necessary for growing communities in partnership with Fayetteville Technical Community College and Cumberland County (i.e. high-risk response training)
- Update the implementation strategies for the 2022 Hope Mills Pedestrian Plan
- Develop a pedestrian and bicycle safety strategy including public education, communication, and enforcement.
- Initiate a process to evaluate minor collector and local road intersections for traffic calming measures to include all areas of Town through the Fayetteville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (“FAMPO”)
- Establish officers as community engagement specialists to further encourage a positive police presence in neighborhoods, at community events, and through public education
- Continue to enhance the Community Policing Program and related policies to develop an intentional community engagement program to increase awareness of efforts, visibility in the community, and programs to support public safety awareness
- Enhancing presence of public safety officers through the School Resource Officer program in our local schools, including active shooter trainings, educational resources, and strengthening relationships with students, families, educators, and staff.



## Management in Progress

- Maintain and increase ISO ratings for Fire Department
- Complete department policy reviews
- Utilize current funding and explore outside funding opportunities (i.e. CDBG opportunities) to improve infrastructure, accessibility, and housing
- Maintain the community-wide “Neighborhood Clean-up Day” to promote awareness of the services available to improve housing, utility savings, social services, and food accessibility in conjunction with service projects by property owners and groups to beautify, improve access to, and remove debris from the community
- Department wide training on implicit bias and community engaged policing

## Next Action Steps

- *Further traffic calming efforts when warranted through evaluation of speed limits, physical improvements, all-way stops and signalization, public education, and enforcement*
- *Support police department efforts and public safety partnerships to enhance training and equipment for high risk and active shooter response in coordination with area education and community partners, including school resource officers*



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## Goal 3 – Infrastructure, Transportation, and the Environment

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*Develop and maintain infrastructure and policies to support new growth, improve the quality of life for residents, and provide for a clean and green environment*

Infrastructure, transportation, and environmental goals are achieved when the following opportunities are realized, or conditions exist in Hope Mills:

Public utilities, land, services, and open spaces are designed, maintained, and extended to provide for necessary water, sewer, stormwater, roads, sidewalks, bikeways, paths, intersections, facilities, and debris removal for the existing and planned community.



### Strategic Initiatives

- Evaluate opportunities to update plans for consistency with adopted land use plans to promote mobility and accessibility
- Work with regional partners to identify and implement additional bus stops and plan for future transit options
- Design and implement a multi-purpose path connecting Hope Mills Lake and Historic Trade Street District with other parts of Town
- Evaluate transportation options for seniors in Hope Mills in coordination with transit partners, resources for seniors, and Cumberland County
- Complete a tree health study to encourage a healthy tree canopy and improved public safety
- Identify cost-effective measures to improve aesthetics at key Town gateways
- Establish a Sustainability Program to encourage the use of alternative energy sources, composting, natural resource protection, and more efficient practices by the Town organization and encourage the same in the community



- Create and implement Town wide greenway master plan to encourage and promote connectivity and walkability

### **Management in Progress**

- Support the implementation of NCDOT maintenance initiatives in Hope Mills
- Implement and update recommendations of the 2018 Multimodal Congestion Management Plan
- Establish a project funding strategy for transportation, bike, and pedestrian improvements eligible for outside agency funding for projects identified in adopted plans
- Continue staffing of the technical advisory and technical community boards with FAMPO
- Economic development efforts I-295 and I-95 (exit 41)

### **Next Action Steps**

- *Develop a Greenway Master Plan*
- *Conduct a Sidewalk Condition Survey and establish a plan for maintenance, replacement, and extension of sidewalks consistent with the Hope Mills Multimodal Plan*
- *Work with regional partners to promote mobility options*
- *Evaluate opportunities to update Town plans for consistency with adopted land use plans to promote mobility and accessibility throughout Town*



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## Goal 4 – Parks, Recreation, Special Events, and Culture

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*Establish facilities, events, and programs that connect the community, promote healthy lifestyle opportunities, and culturally engage citizens and visitors*

Parks, recreation, special events, and culture goals are achieved when the following opportunities are realized, or conditions exist in Hope Mills:

The Town provides recreation amenities and services to residents and visitors through quality facilities, a diverse program offering, varied parks, and special events guided by a community-driven master plan that provides for accessibility and connectivity for all citizens.



### Management in Progress

- Work with community partners and organizations to create a year-round special event schedule.
- Continue to evaluate opportunities for usable open space to better align the outcomes with implementing the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan
- Complete the Golfview Greenway property enhancement project
- Update the greenway plan and establish an implementation schedule
- Identify a plan to connect Hope Mills Lake with Historic Trade Street District
- Establish a public art policy and program in conjunction with the Cultural Arts Committee
- Update the Parks and Recreation Master Plan to reflect the next 10-year period



- Establish a natural resource and open space program for the acquisition and stewardship of public and private open space in coordination with Federal, State, non-profit, and private efforts within and adjoining the Town
- Identify and plan for the acquisition of neighborhood parks and open space in areas of Town that need additional access
- Evaluate opportunities for the expansion of programming for diverse and special populations and to improve inclusion and access to existing programs

### **Next Action Steps**

- *Implement plans to update the recreation center and senior center to provide accessible program space and increase the number of indoor recreation and gym facilities to accommodate growing programs for seniors and youth*
- *Initiate construction of the Golfview recreational facility to accommodate growing programs for seniors and youth*
- *Design an athletic field complex to increase local and regional options for field sports such as baseball and soccer in Hope Mills*



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## Goal 5 – Organization Culture and Communication

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*Build a professional and inclusive Town organization that is fiscally responsible, seeks innovative practices, and values the development and diversity of staff*

Goal attainment occurs when:

- The Town builds an organization committed to working towards a goal of excellence in service to its citizens, businesses, visitors, and employees through responsible fiscal management, inclusive communication, innovative technologies, and professional development.

### Strategic Initiatives

- Evaluate current policies and practices to enhance efforts to improve customer service and community engagement
- Evaluate the existing financial software and asset management systems to ensure fiscal records are maintained in an efficient and effective manner
- Plan for new and expanded WiFi services throughout Town and at park properties
- Establish a timeline and financial plan for the future design and construction and expansion of a new Town Hall
- Establish a timeline and financial plans for the future design and construction of police and fire stations
- Implement efforts to establish secure, resilient operations that enhance Town services in digital and mobile environments
- Implement enhancements to employee professional development and continuing education opportunities to establish succession planning and to meet ever increasing skills needed for public service delivery to build a “training mindset” in the organization
- Organize wellness efforts for employees and promote public health awareness materials of partners to provide a positive environment for physical and mental health in the community
- Enhance opportunities for cross-department interface through organization-wide programs and efforts

### Management in Progress

- Update and implement the employee evaluation and development program.
- Evaluate health plan options for competitive costs and comparative services for spouse and dependent care coverages
- Analyze current Town Hall space needs and plan for necessary expansion
- Review and amend the bylaws, policies, and procedures for appointed boards consistent with best practices and legal compliance



## **Next Action Steps**

- *Work with a financial advisor to establish a fiscally sustainable plan to fund needed capital improvements to ensure adequate public facilities, parks, greenways, roads, and infrastructure is available to the community as it grows.*
- *Establish an organization-wide customer relations management system to receive, track, respond, and report to inquiries from citizens and customers of the Town to maintain responsive service delivery as the community grows.*
- *Enhance organization communication to support clear and consistent messaging to the public for the municipal services provided and achievements obtained through the implementation of established communication plans.*
- *Complete a facility needs analysis to plan for necessary property and structural needs to maintain services for the growing community*

