



~~Asheboro~~

2005 2010 2015 20/20

- **Economic Development**
- **Growth, Annexation and Infrastructure**
- **Quality of Life**
- **North Carolina Zoo**



Assistance provided by the Piedmont Triad Council of Governments



ASHEBORO 20/20 STRATEGIC PLANNING REPORT

Steering Committee

Bob Morrison, Chair
Bill Redding
Billie Wilson
Bonnie Renfro
Chip Womick
David Jones
J. B. Davis
Jerry Bowman
Linda Cranford

Michael Lee
Missy Rankin
Phil Kemp
Richard Wells
Tommy Kemp
Robin Johnston
Sherri Hodge
Terry Locke

City Council (also members of Steering Committee)

David Jarrell, Mayor
David Smith
Talmadge Baker
Linda Carter
Nancy Hunter
Mack Priest
Keith Crisco
Walker Moffitt

City Staff

John Ogburn
Jeff Sugg
Reynolds Neely
John Evans
Debbie Juberg
Holly Hartman
Lynn Priest
Trevor Nuttall

□ Economic Development

Cranford Knott, Co-chair
John Ogburn, Co-chair
Sara Araj
Jerry Bowman
Linda Cranford
Keith Crisco
Diane Frost
Lynette Garner
Chris Herndon
Mike Hunter
Robin Johnson
Curt Lorimar
Ed McGrath
Bob McGlohon
Susan Milner
Bonnie Renfro
David Renfro
Richard Tayburn
April Thornton
Dr. William Walker
Allen Winstead
Barbara Wolfe
Nancy Hunter
Ruby Hunter
Patrick O'Hara
Richard Schoenberger
Michael Kim Snyder
Pamela Vuncannon
Joyce Ward
Bertie Neely

□ Growth, Annexation and Infrastructure

Bob Shaffner Co-chair
John Grey Co-chair
Patty Brown
Casey Conover
Steve Elbin
H. R. Gallimore
Edward Hanes
Bob Johnson
Phyllis Johnson
Tommy Kemp
Walker Moffit

Greg Patton
Mack Priest
David Smith
David Townsend
Billie Wilson
Allen Winstead
Robert Wright

□ Quality of Life

Missy Rankin, Co-chair
Reynolds Neely, Co-chair
Laura Belle
Miriam Bivins
Linda Carter
Steve Coffey
Joe Conrad
Rick Davis
Gifford Delgrande
Jimmy Hill
Pam Hill
Ross Holt
Reynolds Lisk
Pauline McGee
Dr. David Gimenez

□ North Carolina Zoo

Duffy Johnson, Co-chair
Don Allred, Co-chair
Nancy Avery
Talmadge Baker
Richard Balog
John Bukowski
Britt Eckerman
Larry Garwood
Sherri Hodge
Annette Jordan
David Jones
Michael Lee
Terry Locke
Jim Neely
Bronna Merritt
Ken Powell
Lorraine Smith
Richard Wells

□ **INTRODUCTION**

Asheboro is blessed with excellent location in terms of geography and climate. These natural assets are enhanced by hard-working residents, sound local government and the presence of the internationally renowned North Carolina Zoo. But in a time of global markets, demographic change, and educational challenge, these strengths, viewed in traditional ways, are not enough.

Eighteen months ago Asheboro began a communitywide strategic planning process, initiated by the City Council and supported by the business and civic community. Leaders acknowledged that Asheboro critically needs an informed, comprehensive and energized approach to the future. The future must be built on access to high wage jobs, quality education and skills to perform the jobs, and a local commercial and leisure economy sufficiently developed to entice residents to do much of their spending within the Asheboro economy. The city needs adequate revenue from a growing tax base and other sources to provide public services consistent with the vision:

- ***Asheboro will be a model community in North Carolina as a place to live, work, and play.***
(Asheboro 20/20 Steering Committee 3/22/06)

These principles are the foundation for the strategic planning process and this Report. The Report is a product of the work of the Asheboro 20/20 Steering Committee and four task forces it created: Economic Development; Growth, Annexation and Infrastructure; Quality of Life; and the North Carolina Zoo. The Report presents an energetic and progressive approach to the future and recommends many initiatives to prepare Asheboro for 2020.

We invite your engagement and active response to the ideas proposed.

*Adopted by the Steering Committee
March 13, 2007*

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

□ ***ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT***

□ **Background**

Asheboro's economy is at risk! The Asheboro 20/20 Economic Development Task Force began its deliberations in September 2006 and has met frequently over the past several months. The Task Force has heard several presentations and has engaged in a lively and constructive dialogue related to the many issues, challenges, and opportunities facing Asheboro. In this same positive spirit, Task Force respectfully submits its recommendations.

□ **Mission**

The task force was charged by the Asheboro 20/20 Steering Committee with a mission as it began its work. The mission statement follows:

“The mission of the Economic Development task force is to recommend goals and strategies to support residents’ access to high wage jobs, sufficient skills to perform the jobs, and a local retail, commercial, and leisure economy that is sufficiently developed to entice residents to do much of their spending within the Asheboro economy. Pay particular attention to:

- Energized and Comprehensive Approach to Economic Development – Recommend ways to energize and increase, if advisable, the City’s economic development role, taking into consideration the role of Randolph County EDC and County government. (Define and communicate “economic development” as including all economic sectors generating appropriate jobs and tax revenue.)
- Excellent Public Education – Research and recommend whether Asheboro should adopt the premise that: excellence in education (K-12 and community college) will produce a work force capable of work for a wide variety of employers; and that this, in turn, will help the community compete for expansion and relocation of employers. If the task force recommends that Asheboro pursue this strategy, identify ways the community should work with the schools to implement the strategy.”

□ **Recommendations**

To position Asheboro to participate and compete in the world economy of 20/20, we recommend additional focus on and development in the areas of education, economic diversification and enhancement, human capital and creating and managing change.

A. Education:

Goal 1. Create a community that values education and supports lifelong learning.

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| <u>Strategy 1</u> | Support Asheboro City Schools (ACS) and their strategic plan. |
| <u>Strategy 2</u> | Create a “Mayor’s Committee” for school internship and volunteerism. |

- Strategy 3 Support Randolph Community College and encourage RCC to develop and offer courses that prepare its students for the 21st century economy.
- Strategy 4 Work with the Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) and Economic Development Commission (EDC) to encourage employers to offer GED programs at worksites.
- Strategy 5 Support ACS in marketing and building upon new and innovative efforts such as "high school at the zoo."

B. Economic Diversification and Enhancement:

Goal 2. Diversify and strengthen our local economy and broaden our perspective of economic development beyond industrial recruitment to compete in a global environment

- Strategy 1 Market our economic strengths including water and wastewater capacity, transportation and the NC Zoo.
- Strategy 2 Create a brand image for our community as a destination for business and living.
- Strategy 3 Ensure that the EDC, the Chamber and the Tourism Development Authority (TDA) are working together to market Asheboro regionally and globally ensuring unity of purpose.
- Strategy 4 Work with the EDC, business and civic leaders in a continuing process to pro-actively identify the kind of economic growth Asheboro wants and needs. Agree on actions, and follow through consistently and aggressively to make them happen.
- Strategy 5 Communicate with the EDC and support expansion of its focus beyond industrial recruitment to other sectors consistent with identified and desired economic growth.
- Strategy 6 Work to create an entrepreneurial environment with venture capital and business mentorships readily available.
- Strategy 7 Create a wireless community ready for the 21st century.
- Strategy 8 Create a marketing plan for the Asheboro Regional Airport to be known as a world-class business airport.

C. Human Capital:

Goal 3. Invest in human capital realizing our citizens are our greatest assets

- Strategy 1 Create a culture using our environment, location, and medical resources to recruit and develop a retirement industry.
- Strategy 2 Market our arts—pottery, dance and theater—as community assets
- Strategy 3 Focus on globalization and its impact on Asheboro.
- Strategy 4 Work with Latino community to enhance entrepreneurship.

Strategy 5 Create a “Blue Ribbon” Committee to develop and broaden awareness of the rising “creative class”. Example responsibilities of the Committee would be to:

- Develop strategies to encourage young professionals to locate in Asheboro;
- Advise community leaders on strategic investments in downtown and other quality of life amenities that create pride and attract people to our area;
- Create a magnet annual event that will attract young professionals statewide;
- Create an environment that rewards the entrepreneurial risk-taking mindset/perspective;
- Promote an understanding of entertainment desires and needs that are important to this sector of the population. Develop strategies to create this environment in Asheboro facilitating the attraction to and retention of this community in Asheboro;

Strategy 6 Draw upon successful efforts by other communities to transform themselves into dynamic communities of the future.

D. Managing Change:

Goal 4. Manage change effectively while understanding our community’s heritage

Strategy 1 Work with community agencies and non-profits to incorporate Latino immigrants and other under represented segments of the population into the culture at large.

Strategy 2 Hold a statewide futures conference on issues facing North Carolina’s traditional industries.

Strategy 3 Capitalize on our Indian/Pakistani medical community to reach into south Asia.

Strategy 4 After a series of public forums on the issue, hold a referendum on alcoholic beverage sales in Asheboro.

***GROWTH, ANNEXATION
And
INFRASTRUCTURE***

GROWTH, ANNEXATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

□ Background

Asheboro needs a strategic approach to growth and the extension of municipal services. This need was readily identified by the Asheboro 20/20 Steering Committee as a key focus for its strategic plan.

The Growth, Annexation and Infrastructure Task Force looked at factors both local and statewide in crafting recommendations to move the City forward. We reviewed Asheboro's Future Land Use map which identifies potential growth strategy zones adjacent to the City. We also looked at existing infrastructure, concentrations of development on the outskirts of the City, and environmental constraints. Time was spent reviewing both the City's past fiscally conservative approach to annexation which restricted growth and considering the long-term drawbacks of not annexing in the future. We looked at state law based on the principle that *areas which are urban should become municipal*, and we received information on annexation and assessment policies from nine other North Carolina cities.

This research led the Task Force to conclude that planned annexation with long-term fiscal benefits is an investment. The goals and strategies in this Report support this belief.

The Task Force also examined and made recommendations for proactive planning and protection of its principle highway corridors, roadways, sidewalks and center city area. And finally, the Task Force proposed goals and strategies to reduce litter and to motivate citizens to make Asheboro a litter free community.

□ Mission

The mission of the Growth, Annexation and Infrastructure task force is to "recommend goals and strategies for Asheboro's orderly growth and extension of municipal services, as well as principles for financing this growth, paying particular attention to:

- Annexation (1) – Review the Growth Area Zones in the Asheboro 20/20 Land use Plan and recommend whether the City should provide municipal services to all growth areas equally, or whether city financial policies should encourage extension of services in primary growth areas.
- Annexation (2) – Recommend preferred methods for the city to finance extension of services into annexation areas consistent with current municipal practice in N.C.
- Controlling Adjacent Areas – Recommend one or more feasible methods for controlling development in strategic areas that lie outside the City (e.g. Highway 64 By-Pass area).
- Orderly and Sustainable Development – Identify key principles for preserving and developing Asheboro as a sustainable community, and recommend actions to support these principles."

□ Recommendations

Goal 1. Initiate a systematic program of studying and annexing qualified urban areas adjacent to the City.

- Strategy 1 Identify key annexation study areas, consistent with Asheboro's 20/20 Land Development Plan, based on contiguity and apparent urban development. *(See Appendix A for list of areas identified by the Task Force.)*
- Strategy 2 Conduct feasibility studies to determine legal eligibility and financial impact (revenues and costs) of annexing these areas
- Strategy 3 Develop engineering studies to identify costs and locations of necessary water and sewer lines, pump stations and other utilities.
- Strategy 4 Consider adopting annual resolutions of consideration by City Council to assure that annexation is incorporated into the City's continuous planning and action.
- Strategy 5 Plan for capital costs associated with annexation and budget accordingly.

Goal 2. Adopt and implement progressive, strategic annexation policies to promote sound urban growth.

- Strategy 1 For city-initiated annexation, extend sewer and water lines along all unserved streets, acknowledging that this is the only way to make service available to all residents and businesses, and that it is the only way for the City to make money. *(The minimum State requirement is that only major trunk lines be extended.)*
- Strategy 2 View annexation as an investment in the long-term health of the City, recognizing that the nature of local topography and soils may necessitate longer payback periods.
- Strategy 3 Identify various cost-share methods, considering multiple financing options, by which the City and benefiting property owners can jointly participate in water / sewer extension costs. *(See Appendix B for summary of assessment policies from 9 towns.)*
- Strategy 4 Provide financial inducements for residents to hook individual residences onto water and sewer sooner rather than later.

Goal 3. Assure the future of the 64-Bypass corridor and adjacent areas as a high-value urban corridor.

- Strategy 1 Continue city-county staff-level conversations on this project and request staffs to make recommendations to city and county governing boards on a corridor protection planning process.

- Strategy 2 Initiate and adopt a corridor plan.
- Strategy 3 Adopt the Bypass as a protected corridor as soon as designation is available from state DOT.
- Strategy 4 Conduct discussions between Asheboro City Council and Randolph County Commissioners and agree on a plan that provides for control of this corridor area by Asheboro as a high-value urban corridor.

Goal 4. Preserve and develop a visually appealing community

- Strategy 1 Enforce existing appearance criteria in the center city overlay district.

Streets and Sidewalks

- Strategy 2 Plant street trees along existing and new commercial corridors
- Strategy 3 Partner with the business community to improve the appearance of major commercial corridors. Develop a program incorporating city participation and/or incentives to support this strategy.
- Strategy 4 Construct and maintain city streets to meet safe and high quality standards.
 - A. Improve maintenance of city streets and pavement.
 - B. Raise the city’s minimum subdivision road construction standards.
 - C. Investigate and determine feasibility of the city’s take-over of specified state roads within the city limits. Implement if feasible.
- Strategy 5 Transform concrete medians along major corridors into landscaped and planted medians and provide for their upkeep.
- Strategy 6 Adopt a citywide sidewalk plan (currently being developed), and budget annually for improvements to existing sidewalks and construction of new sidewalks according to the plan. Seek state grants to supplement local funds.
- Strategy 7 Plan and implement strategic development of the I-73/I-74 Corridor
 - A. Revise the I-73/I-74 Corridor Plan, taking into account:
 - 1) the land use map component of the Plan and potential need to extend the length of the corridor, and
 - 2) the zoning overlay text component, taking into consideration
 - implications of water and sewer on density, land use, etc.
 - need to foster high-value development
 - need to facilitate, not hamper, appropriate development
 - need to protect and enhance the corridor’s appearance
 - B. Work with the Federal Highway Administration to obtain lighting along the corridor.

Parking Lots

- Strategy 8 Place parking lots at side and rear of buildings in designated districts.
- Strategy 9 Require landscaping or tree islands in large parking lots to minimize visual impact and retain runoff

Goal 5. Strive for a Litter-Free Community

- Strategy 1 Energetically enforce existing anti-littering ordinances and penalties.
- Strategy 2 - Develop and implement an ongoing communications strategy urging residents to make Asheboro litter free; encouraging them to observe and report littering incidents; and publicizing penalties for littering.
- Strategy 3 Continue to conduct community service clean-up days and identify a person, office or organization to coordinate and energize the program.
- Strategy 4 Continue the Mayor's anti-litter program in the schools.
- Strategy 5 Review, recommend and adopt needed changes to strengthen ordinances related to trash, debris, large furniture, appliances, junked automobiles, etc. on private property.

Recommended Annexation Study Areas

- Lambert Drive
- South Asheboro
- Legend Park
- Mountain Area
- Pinewood-Ulah interchange area at new Interstate
- Highway 64 East
- Highway 64 West
- Westbury Woods

ASSESSMENT POLICY INFORMATION FROM 9 CITIES
November 2006

1. **GRAHAM** – Information provided by Chris Rollins, city manager

1. What is your assessment policy for water/sewer extensions as a result of annexation? Do you assess? If so, what is the assessment based on (front footage, acreage)? Do you provide assistance to low-income households?

Graham used to have a front-footage policy but scrapped it in favor of just following the state law. The current policy is that assessment methods vary on a project-by-project basis. For the most recent annexation, assessments were declared in August; and the first of 5 annual installments are coming in now. The numbers for this annexation are:

- *Lots 6 acres or less in size are assessed \$6500 per lot. (This means the owner of a 2 acre lot is assessed the same as the owner of a 6 acre lot.)*
- *Lots larger than 6 acres are assessed \$1000 per acre.*

Graham does not have assistance to low-income homeowners. However, assessments on the one or two properties with a Homestead Exemption were abated – that is held in abeyance for up to 10 years without interest until improvements on the assessed property are actually connected to the water or sewer system. (Allowed by NC law)

Graham does not require residents of annexation areas to tap-on. But in this case it provided free tap-ons for any property tapping onto city services by December 31, 2006. Over ½ of the residents have tapped on between August and early November.

2. What payback period do you like to see in an annexation services plan before moving forward?

The recent one was about 10 years.

3. Is the city's general policy to extend only water and sewer mains or does the city also extend secondary lines?

Collector lines extended to all properties.

4. How have you planned for and funded annexation-related expenses?

The recent one took in 161 parcels, all residential and about 190 acres, including one 37 acre undeveloped parcel included as a "land bridge." Cost was about \$3 million, all funded from fund balance

5. Does the city have a cost-sharing policy for extension of water/sewer lines?

In this one, the total of all property assessments amounted to 39% of the total cost of the water/sewer project. The City paid 61%

2. **SALISBURY** – Information provided by Joe Morris, Planning and CD Director

1. What is your assessment policy for water/sewer extensions as a result of annexation? Do you assess? If so, what is the assessment based on (front footage, acreage)? Do you provide assistance to low-income households?

Salisbury does not assess property owners.

2. What payback period do you like to see in annexation services plan before moving forward?

No steadfast rule, but a ten-year payback period is generally seen as desirable.

3. Is the city's general policy to extend only water and sewer mains or does the city also extend secondary lines?

Most often, the City only extends water and sewer mains.

4. How have you planned for and funded annexation-related expenses?

Each year, the City adopts a RESOLUTION OF CONSIDERATION for areas defined by its Long-Range Plan as Secondary Growth areas and contracts with their Council of Governments to determine qualified areas. The city also budgets for surveying/advertising related expenses associated with annexations. The money for construction-related expenses comes from the Engineering Department, but there is no set dollar allocated for construction expenses annually.

For major annexations, the City has issued water and sewer bonds.

5. Does the city have a cost-sharing policy for extension of water/sewer lines?

Yes, but in a limited fashion and on a case-by-case basis. Usually, the City will participate in cost-sharing for extensions serving industrial or large-scale commercial developments. The City does not normally participate in extensions serving residential subdivisions.

3. **ALBEMARLE** – Information provided by Michael Ferris, Assistant City Manager

1. What is your assessment policy for water/sewer extensions as a result of annexation? Do you assess? If so, what is the assessment based on (front footage, acreage)? Do you provide assistance to low-income households?

Albemarle has not undertaken a noteworthy statutory annexation since 1980 when an annexation increased the city's size by approximately 75%. For voluntary annexation where a residential subdivision petitions for annexation and desires city services, the city utilizes assessments based on front footage. There is no general policy for financial assistance.

2. Related to the service plan, do you have a standard payback period that you like to see before moving forward?

Since statutory annexation has not been used, Mr. Ferris could not provide an answer to this. For voluntary annexations, however, the City does a cost-benefit review in order to determine whether the increased revenue from property/sales/Powell bill is sufficient to cover city expenditures required to serve the area.

3. Is the city's general policy to extend only water and sewer mains or does the city also extend secondary lines?

Under voluntary annexation, the City extends mains if necessary to serve an area or subdivision and then assess the property owners.

4. How have you planned for and funded annexation-related expenses?

There is no plan for this.

5. Does the city have a cost-sharing policy for extension of water/sewer lines?

No, but the city would consider cost-sharing for large scale developments. This, however, would be case-specific.

4. STATESVILLE – Information provided by David Currier, Planning Director

1. What is your assessment policy for water/sewer extensions as a result of annexation? Do you assess? If so, what is the assessment based on (front footage, acreage)? Do you provide assistance to low-income households?

The City of Statesville has not employed statutory annexation in recent years. For voluntary annexation where a residential subdivision petitions for annexation and desires city services, the city utilizes assessments based on front footage. There is no general policy for financial assistance.

2. What payback period do you like to see in annexation services plan before moving forward?

In the past, the City has looked for a 5-year payback.

3. Is the city's general policy to extend only water and sewer mains or does the City also extend secondary lines?

Under voluntary annexation, the City extends mains if necessary to serve an area or subdivision and then assesses the property owners to cover the expense of running secondary lines.

4. How have you planned for and funded annexation-related expenses?

All expenses are paid from the general fund.

5. Does the city have a cost-sharing policy for extension of water/sewer lines?

The City will pay for oversizing-related expenses when it is deemed necessary. For example, if a new subdivision can be served by a 6" water line but the City determines that an 8" line will better serve future development because the area is rapidly developing, the City will cover the extra expense to provide the 8" line.

5. **FAYETTEVILLE** – Web based information through UNC Environmental Finance Center
Water and Sewer Assessment Assistance Program Case Study

Contact: Barbara C. Crayton, Community Development Administrator

Introduction: Many types of government-owned water and sewer enterprises, including county and municipal ones and water and sewer authorities, are authorized to use special assessments for improvements. Unlike the case with other common water and sewer charges, the law contains many specifics on how these should be calculated and implemented. Under a special assessment, the owner of a property that is improved by the provision of water and sewer infrastructure can be assessed his or her relative portion of the overall project's cost.

Assessments are linked to a particular project and can be paid in a lump sum at the conclusion of the project or spread out over a number of years. Some communities are trying to assist low-income residents with large water and sewer assessment fees. Programs can be created to assist low-income residents with the cost incurred when providing city water and sewer.

Description: Fayetteville, North Carolina's (population 130,000) City Council directed Community Development staff to research the feasibility of using the City's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) entitlement funds to provide water and sewer assessment assistance for low-income homeowners in newly annexed areas. Upon review of the projected cost of providing the assistance and the potential impact on the City's long term community development programs, staff proposed that the City utilize CDBG funds to provide water and sewer assessment assistance of \$1,000 to low income property owners (80% of median income). The city now provides \$1,000 per eligible household for each assessment type - water and sewer.

Since assessment fees are usually \$3,800 - \$4,000, the Fayetteville Public Works Commission (PWC) also provides a payment option plan. Households can pay fees over 1 year, 5 years, or 10 years. Interest is charged and an assessment lien is levied upon the property until the assessment is paid in full. As a part of the Water and Sewer Assessment Assistance Program, the City also began providing plumber fee assistance of \$500 in FY 2003/2004. While residents must be officially assessed before they can apply for assessment assistance, they can get plumber fee assistance before they are assessed if they qualify. The City provides payment to a homeowner's licensed plumber to cover up to \$500 of the costs of hooking up to City water and sewer.

Results: This program has been successful in providing assistance to the most needy in the community and has minimized financial impact on homeowners in projects for which Community Development and the City are already committed. Applications to the Water and Sewer Assessment Assistance Program are received in spurts dependent upon the time when installation of water and sewer lines is completed and homeowners are officially assessed. In the 2001/2002 program year, there was a large annexation and the City spent about \$65,000 in CDBG funds for assessment assistance the following year. The City is currently accepting applications and spending funds for plumber fee assistance for installation of water and sewer lines completed in a final phase of a 2001/02 annexation. We expect an influx of applications for assessment assistance from these same communities during the 2004/2005 program year once they have been officially assessed.

In general, the program has not been difficult to administer and the PWC has assisted with educating the community by including information on the Water and Sewer Assessment Assistance Program in their correspondence to city residents.

6. WINSTON-SALEM – Web based information on Water/Sewer Assessment Process

“After a project is fully constructed and ready for connection, property owners receive a bill for their share of the improvements and will be informed on the bill of the date, time and location of the public hearing for assessment confirmation. This hearing will also include the levying of bills for each property owner and placing a lien on the property on the day of confirmation. Property owners may also appeal the assessment at this hearing if they feel they are not benefiting from the water or sewer line construction.

The costs of requested water and/or sewer improvements are assessed against all affected properties based on the unit price per front foot (the measurement of how wide the property is at the street). The current rate for water improvements is \$17.00 per front foot and \$40.00 per front foot for sewer improvements.

The property owners will be given 51 days to pay for the assessment without interest from the confirmation date. If a balance remains after the 51 days, the customer may elect one of the two financing plans: (a) Option 1, 5 years at 8% interest, (b) Option 2, 3 years at prime rate + 1%. The property owner will receive one bill per year each December. The assessment can be paid off early without penalty.

Is a Water/Sewer Assessment a lien?

*When the Utility Commission approves a water/sewer project, each affected property owner name and the estimated assessment amount is entered into our database. This database has a link to the City's web page for title search purposes. During construction, the amount displayed is **not a lien but a pending lien**. When construction is complete, the assessment becomes a lien on the date the Utility Commission holds a public hearing and confirmation. Letters are sent to each property owner providing these dates.*

Do I have to connect to public sewer if my septic tank is operating properly?

No. However if your property has access to public sewer and your septic tank fails, you are not allowed to make repairs to the tank. You must then connect to public sewer.

I am retired and on a fixed income and own a large tract of land that I still raise cattle on. Is there some form of exemption that would apply to me?

Generally speaking, there are no exemptions if an assessment is levied on your property unless you have an extreme hardship or an unbuildable lot. However, there are several ways to have the assessment fees deferred under North Carolina General Statute. In short, these statutes say that anyone over 65 years of age, with a low fixed income, or a permanent disability may apply for deferment. Deferment means the actual delay of payment for assessments. Property owners having Agricultural, Horticultural, and/or Forest Lands can also apply for deferment. The Utility Commission relies on the Forsyth County Tax office to determine deferment eligibility. For more information, contact our Revenue Division.

Will I have to pay an additional property assessment fee if City/County Utilities water and/or sewer already serves my property?

Existing customers of the City/County Utility system have already paid for the service on one side; either through the Utility Commission's policies or as a part of the cost of their lot if the property was part of a development. However, if you own a corner lot and service is provided on the additional frontage, you may be required to pay for frontage exceeding 200 feet."

NOTE: For detailed info go to: www.cityofws.org Find "What's Happening" and click on "Annexation Information." Then click on "annexation maps" and this will link to additional information including costs. NOTE: Planning Director says recent large annexation had less than 5-year payback.

7. **THOMASVILLE**– Information provided by city manager Kelly Craver

1. What is your assessment policy for water/sewer extensions as a result of annexation? Do you assess? If so, what is the assessment based on (front footage, acreage)? Do you provide assistance to low-income households?

Thomasville initiated 3 annexations at 3 different times in 1996, 2 of which went to the NC Supreme Court. The City has had no statutory standards annexations since then. At that time, the city funded all sewer extension costs... (See below re: water)

2. What payback period do you like to see in an annexation services plan before moving forward?

Due to cost over-runs, manager was not sure. Finance director not available. Manager says in today's business and cost climate, "if a city can fund a major annexation in 15 years, they are lucky."

3. Is the city's general policy to extend only water and sewer mains or does the city also extend secondary lines?

1996 annexation involved extension of sewer to every existing home in the area at the annexation effective date. (Later infill residences had only to pay tap fee.) At that time, provision of full sewer to new annexation areas was more prevalent throughout the state. Also, in Thomasville, relations with residents in these areas had become so poor that the City felt it necessary to "go the extra mile" to accommodate them. Finally, if the City had only extended trunk lines, the lines would have not been able to be directly used and would have had no revenue generating capacity. .

Extension of water lines was not necessary. Most of the water in these areas was and is provided by Davidson Water Inc. The City does not duplicate. Davidson Water Inc continues to provide water in the areas even though they are now part of the city.

4. How have you planned for and funded annexation-related expenses?

(Info to be provided.)

5. Does the city have a cost-sharing policy for extension of water/sewer lines?

All costs born by city in 1996.

NOTE: Greatest cost overrun = Acquisition of sewer right-of-way. Annexation plan budgeted appx. \$600,000 for right-of-way acquisition. Actual cost was appx. \$1.6 million. About 500 right-of-ways were purchased. City overpaid to avoid litigation and hostility.

8. SANFORD – Information provided by Bob Bridwell, Planning Director

No annexations since the 1980's at which time about 10,000 people were added to the city. This pre-dates the time of the current planning director.

In March 2002 city adopted a policy requiring any properties requesting utilities to be annexed. This has worked well. Currently, no significant areas have been identified as needing annexation.

#####

9. LEXINGTON – Information provided by Tammy Kepley, Planning Director

Lexington has had no significant annexations in more than 10 years. It is about a year ahead of Asheboro in that it has obtained annexation feasibility studies on a number of areas. But extension and assessment policies have not been developed. Staff is now "costing-out" several extension options to submit to Council. .

2005 Feasibility Study - Last year Lexington contracted with the Piedmont Triad Council of Governments for an annexation feasibility study of approximately 22 areas of interest, 11 of which were found to be legally eligible. Full costs analyses were run on all 11 areas, resulting in estimated payback periods of 5 to 35 years. This assumed full extension of water and sewer with no assessments of property owners.

Current Status – Lexington decided to move forward on 3 of the areas, with some reconfiguration of the areas. City staff is currently running the numbers on:

- Payback will full extension of water and sewer lines paid by the city (no assessments)
- Provision of major trunk lines only
- A scenario involving extension of major trunk lines; then extension of collector lines upon petition of residents. Cost-sharing to be determined.

QUALITY OF LIFE

QUALITY OF LIFE

Background

The Quality of Life Task Force is one of four task forces appointed to recommend goals and strategies for Asheboro's citizen-based strategic planning initiative. Task Force members devoted their energies to identifying practical and creative approaches to enhancing Asheboro's quality of life over the next ten to twenty years. There was unanimous agreement that the strategies recommended in this Task Force report present opportunities for both public and private sector leadership. While the City Council will be the first official recipient of this report, Task Force members believe that every opportunity should be sought to forge community partnerships to achieve the strategies recommended here.

Mission

The mission of the Quality of Life task force is to "recommend goals and strategies for enhancing Asheboro's quality of life, with particular attention to:

- Public Safety – Recommend ways to increase citizen awareness and active support for Asheboro's Police Department and particularly its efforts to reduce distribution of illegal drugs.
- Parks, Recreation & Open Space – Identify needs and opportunities to enhance and develop facilities and services. Recommend funding options, partnerships, and ways to develop community support for a parks, recreation & open space capital plan.
- Civic and Cultural Vitality – Recommend methods to strengthen and focus resources towards availability of appropriate facilities and organizations to present art, music, theater and other cultural events."

Planning Process

"Quality of Life" is a broad topic to research, discuss and reach consensus on in six meetings. However, the Mission Statement provided by the Strategic Plan Steering Committee narrowed the field of discussion by identifying specific issues and goals for the Task Force to address. In its meetings meetings, the group heard presentations to familiarize them with local details. The topics and presenters were:

Parks, Recreation and Open Space –

Foster Hughes, City of Asheboro Parks and Recreation Director

John Evans, City of Asheboro Planning Department

Public Safety –

Gary Mason, City of Asheboro Chief of Police

Jim Smith, City of Asheboro Fire Chief

Neil Allen, Randolph County Director of Emergency Services

Civic and Cultural Vitality –

Reid Leonard, Executive Director, Piedmont Players Theatre, Inc.

Phillip Shore, Executive Director, Randolph Arts Guild
Ross Holt, Assistant Director, Randolph Public Library

Informational meetings were held at the conclusion of the presentation in January of 2007. These meetings were used to develop strategies and reach a general consensus on the final recommendations of the Quality of Life Task Force.

□ Recommendations

Overall Strategies to Improve Quality of Life in Asheboro

- **City Communication with Residents** - Establish a mechanism by which the City can proactively communicate with neighborhoods and residents inside and adjacent to the City, providing information on topics of interest.
- **College Tuition Program** - Endow a college tuition program for all graduates of the Asheboro City School System that have a “B” or better GPA to improve public education for the residents of Asheboro.
- **Market Defining Characteristics** - Actively market the “defining” characteristics of Asheboro (e.g. Architecture, Location, People, etc.)
- **Support Grant Writing** - Establish a paid position within the City to research, apply for, and coordinate grantwriting opportunities.
- **Consider Bond Financing** - Investigate bond packages as a potential source of revenue to fund Quality of Life Task Force strategies.

A. Public Safety

Goal 1. Increase citizen awareness and active support for Public Safety.

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| <u>Strategy 1</u> | Develop a Neighborhood Coalition Forum that allows Public Safety officials to interact with the public on a quarterly basis. |
| <u>Strategy 2</u> | Encourage City Council, City Staff and citizens to participate in the police “ride-around” program. |
| <u>Strategy 3</u> | Coordinate with the local newspaper to provide regular features on Public Safety officials. |
| <u>Strategy 4</u> | Provide excellent facilities for the police and fire departments to meet the needs of Asheboro’s future growth. |

Strategy 5 Create a Capital Improvement Program for the Police and Fire Department that addressed future concerns regarding: work space, technology and equipment, storage, and additional staffing.

Goal 2. Reduce distribution of illegal drugs.

Strategy 1 Actively enforce all regulations (e.g. parking violations, littering, etc) to change the culture and attitude within Asheboro in particular to ALL illegal activities (e.g. Rudy Giuliani efforts in NYC).

Strategy 2 Establish a program to reduce property damage in Asheboro and aid in the removal of graffiti on private property.

Strategy 3 Fund the additional police officers requested by the Chief of Police: Computer Crimes Specialist, Gang Intelligence Officer, and Crime Science Investigator.

Strategy 4 Develop a Junior Asheboro Police Academy that targets at risk youth from Asheboro.

Strategy 5 Encourage and support the participation of Asheboro's youth in civic and community programs (e.g. Boy Scouts, ROTC, etc.).

Strategy 6 Expand/Create a voluntary first time offenders program for at risk youth in Asheboro (e.g. Scared Straight).

Strategy 7 Continue to support the Drug Task Force.

B. Parks, Recreation and Open Space

Goal 3. Provide parks, recreation, and open space facilities for the entire community.

Strategy 1 Acquire and rehabilitate a downtown building for use as a multi-use recreation center that provides opportunities for citizens of all ages.

Strategy 2 Create a comprehensive greenways system that links recreation and parks sites to each other throughout Asheboro.

Strategy 3 Implement the adopted Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Strategy 4 Link areas in the center of Asheboro through the use of green space, public art, and architecture (e.g. connect Farmers Market to Surrounding Neighborhood).

Goal 4. Develop funding options, partnerships, and ways to garner community support for parks, recreation, and open space issues.

- Strategy 1 Identify private and non-profit partners that can work with the City and benefit from expanded parks, recreation, and open space facilities.
- Strategy 2 Improve the walkability of Asheboro.
- Strategy 3 Promote partnerships among the Hospital, Recreation and Parks Department and other agencies in offering accessible and affordable wellness programs.
- Strategy 4 Support the provision of parks, recreational opportunities, and open space through the City's development review process of private sector development.
- Strategy 5 Partner with the Piedmont Land Conservancy to preserve open space throughout Asheboro through the use of permanent easements.

C. Civic and Cultural Vitality

Goal 5. Enrich the civic and cultural life of Asheboro's residents.

- Strategy 1 Partner with the NC Zoo and associated organization/industries to develop a research center in Asheboro that would focus on investigating environmental issues and interactions between humans and animals.
- Strategy 2 Create a Historic Preservation Commission and develop historic preservation ordinances to protect historic buildings and landmarks throughout Asheboro.
- Strategy 3 Develop a downtown plan to build upon recent success that will continue to bring people and business into the area.
- Strategy 4 Eliminate visual clutter within downtown through the removal of power poles and lines.
- Strategy 5 Establish a nationally recognized music festival – “The Zoo City Music Festival”.
- Strategy 6 Implement Asheboro's existing planning documents that provide a blueprint for growth (e.g. Land Use Plan, Greenway Plan, etc.).
- Strategy 7 Educate the public on the benefits of sustainable development.

Strategy 8 Amend Asheboro's existing development ordinances to integrate "better" design and public art into future projects (e.g. screening around dumpsters, public art in front of buildings, etc.).

Goal 6. Strengthen facilities and organizations that present art, music, theater and other cultural events within the City.

Strategy 1 Provide support and funding for existing arts/cultural events and organizations within the City.

Strategy 2 Provide excellent facilities for the library and partner with the Randolph Arts Guild to meet the needs of Asheboro's future growth.

Strategy 3 Support the efforts of the Redevelopment Commission.

Strategy 4 Actively market civic and cultural opportunities that exist within the community.

Strategy 5 Continue upgrades to the Sunset Theatre that will solidify its standing as a main attraction in downtown.

Strategy 6 Support the efforts of the Community Appearance Committee.

NORTH CAROLINA ZOO

NORTH CAROLINA ZOO

Background

The North Carolina Zoo Task Force is one of four task forces appointed to recommend goals and strategies for the city of Asheboro's strategic planning process. The task force was given the following mission statement under which to work:

"To explore the relationship between the Zoo and the community and to recommend goals and strategies to allow the community to increase its benefit from the presence to the zoo and the zoo to increase its benefit from the presence of the community."

The members of the task force were active in the process and contributed many good suggestions. The task force expressed concern that there was a "disconnect" between the Zoo and the community and wanted their work to result in the creation of a community pride about the Zoo. The task force was unanimous in their recommendation of the goals and strategies outlined in this report.

Planning Process

The North Carolina Zoo Task Force organized and focused itself early in the process and was able to remain productive throughout the planning period. Ten to twelve dedicated members comprised the core group that offered suggestions, expressed community sentiment and formulated the following goals and strategies.

The work of the task force was completed in six meetings. In two of the sessions the task force heard presentations from Dr. David Jones, director of the North Carolina Zoo, and Mrs. Chris Bulla, marketing officer for the Zoo. Both of these individuals presented the details of the history and planned future for the Zoo. In other sessions the task force members offered suggestions and responded to proposed goals and strategies.

Goals and Strategies

Goal 1. Create a "Pride in the Zoo" community spirit.

Strategy 1 Pass a resolution by the city council to proclaim the City of Asheboro as "The Proud Home of the North Carolina Zoo".

Strategy 2 Explore branding opportunities such as city seal and logo that emphasize the relationship with the Zoo.

Strategy 3 Add Zoo-related artwork to city employees' uniforms and equipment.

- Strategy 4 Identify opportunities to improve pride through surveys, direct mailings, focus groups, neighborhood meetings, town meetings, etc.
- Strategy 5 Identify a few high profile projects to start improving our community appearance and pride.
- Strategy 6 Seek a US Postal Service cancellation stamp that says “Asheboro - Home of the North Carolina Zoo”.
- Strategy 7 Include zoo promotional information periodically through city mailings.
- Strategy 8 Convene an annual “State of the Zoo” briefing, hosted by the City of Asheboro and held at the Zoo, to inform public officials and community leaders about Zoo projects and activities.

Goal 2. Create an aesthetic quality in and around the City of Asheboro that reflects the connection to the Zoo.

- Strategy 1 Develop and implement a public art program that places Zoo related artwork throughout the city.
- Strategy 2 Link with Randolph Community College and the Randolph Arts Guild to identify opportunities for students and other artists to provide public art.
- Strategy 3 Develop and implement a landscape plan such as planting and topiary at entrance points to the city.
- Strategy 4 Create a physical link to the Zoo through the development of a greenway for pedestrian and cycling opportunities.

Goal 3. Develop a marketing strategy that is consistent with and supports similar efforts undertaken by the Zoo and the Tourism Development Authority.

- Strategy 1 Install signs and other markings that assist visitors in getting to the zoo.
- Strategy 2 Encourage non-visitors to visit through promotional signage.
- Strategy 3 Create a hospitality training program for area businesses and government.
- Strategy 4 Build a knowledge base about the value of the Zoo to the community.
- Strategy 5 Encourage local businesses to participate in Zoo promotions.
- Strategy 6 Use current and future technology to provide information and promote the Zoo.

Strategy 7 Create a position in city government to promote the City and coordinate activities with the Zoo.

Strategy 8 Invite representatives of the Zoo to make a “State of the Zoo” annual report to the city council.

Goal 4. Advocate for higher level of state support for the Zoo.

Strategy 1 Include Zoo-related projects in the City’s legislative goals.

Strategy 2 Work with regional leaders to include Zoo-related projects in the priorities of the Piedmont Triad Legislative Caucus.

Strategy 3 Work with NCDOT officials to advocate for road improvement projects that will improve access to the Zoo, specifically the Southern Loop.