



ADVANCING OUR LIVABILITY STRATEGIC PLAN

GUILFORD COUNTY, NC
DECEMBER 2025



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Our Visionary Leadership

Board of County Commissioners



Melvin "Skip" Alston
Chair - District 8



J. Carlvena Foster
Vice-Chair - District 1



Katie "Kay" S. Cashion
At-Large



Alan Perdue
District 2



Pat Tillman
District 3



Mary Beth Murphy
District 4



Carly Cooke
District 5



Brandon Gray-Hill
District 6



Frankie T. Jones Jr.
District 7

Mission Statement

Empowering Successful People to
Thrive in a Strong Community
Supported by Quality Government.

Core Values

Transparency and Communication
Equity and Inclusion
Our People Matter
Accountability
Service and Outcome Excellence



I am pleased to present Guilford County's Advancing Our Livability Strategic Plan. What is livability? Guilford County defines livability as the degree to which people of all ages, abilities, and incomes can experience the opportunity to live, learn, work, and play in a desirable and supportive environment that honors the uniqueness of individuals, a vibrant culture and access to amenities and resources.

Over the last several years, the Board of County Commissioners engaged with the community to help define what makes our People Successful, our Community Strong, and our Government of Excellent Quality, and how to demonstrate this work to the community to remain accountable. This plan builds on that foundation, and the Board's adopted core values.

This plan provides a data informed roadmap for where the organization is headed and how it plans to make our community desirable through clearly defined goals, strategies and activities. This plan will help guide decision-making and resource allocation and represents the first step in a continuous journey. Outcomes will continue to be refined based on new data, strategies will be updated annually through the Board's annual retreat and through the budget process. Success will be celebrated through an annual report and new challenges will be tackled.

Successfully implementing the plan will be a team effort between the Board of County Commissioners, residents, municipal partners, community groups, and county staff. This will be a One Guilford approach to make our community a desirable place for all residents to live, learn, work, and play.



County Manager
Victor Isler

Building on a Foundation

2021



The Guilford County Board of Commissioners held listening sessions and conducted an online survey in late 2021 to help residents reflect on the effects of the pandemic and to gather initial input on ARPA funding priorities. Similarly, the ETC Institute administered a community survey to assess the pandemic's impact and identify the support most needed as the county allocated ARPA recovery funds.

2022



Key Board priorities under Successful People, Strong Community, and Quality Government service areas, included school bonds, reducing community disparities, improving communication, intentional collaboration, improving staff resources, and advancing the school nursing program.

2023



The Guilford County Board of Commissioners began hosting Budget Town Halls under a One Guilford approach to gather resident input on the Board's priorities and vision. Through this process, the Board developed vision statements to define: what it means for County residents to be Successful People; what contributes to a Strong Community; and how the County delivers Quality Government operations, leadership, and services. The Board adopted an operational purpose to *Empower Successful People to thrive in a Strong Community supported by Quality Government*.

2024



The Guilford County Board of Commissioners invited municipalities and subject matter experts to discuss key issues facing the county—such as water and sewer infrastructure, housing, and other emerging challenges—to help inform future planning efforts. The Board also continued to host Budget Town Halls.

2025

The Guilford County Board of Commissioners reviewed key community metrics, data indicators, and supporting data and reviewed a strategic plan framework aligned with the National Association of Counties (NACo) EDGE Excellence in Strategic Planning Award program. The Board continued community discussions with municipal partners on large community opportunities and challenges, including housing and water/sewer.

About Guilford County

Established in 1771, Guilford County is the third-most populous county in North Carolina with a population of 560,000 residents. Two major cities, Greensboro and High Point, are located within County limits. The County is also home to other unique, vibrant municipalities and unincorporated areas.

Guilford County has a rich history as the site of key moments in the Revolutionary War, Underground Railroad, and the Civil Rights movement. Guilford County also claims a number of state firsts, including the first graded school, first state-supported school for people of color, first publicly supported institution of higher learning for women, first co-ed college in the south, first paid paramedic-level ambulance service, and first public health department—only the second in the country.

Guilford County has strong and inclusive local and regional economies, a clean environment with quality recreational outlets, and vibrant arts, culture, and entertainment. Companies at the forefront of new technologies in supersonic flight and electric and hybrid vehicle battery technology selected Guilford County as their preferred place to establish roots and grow.

Municipalities

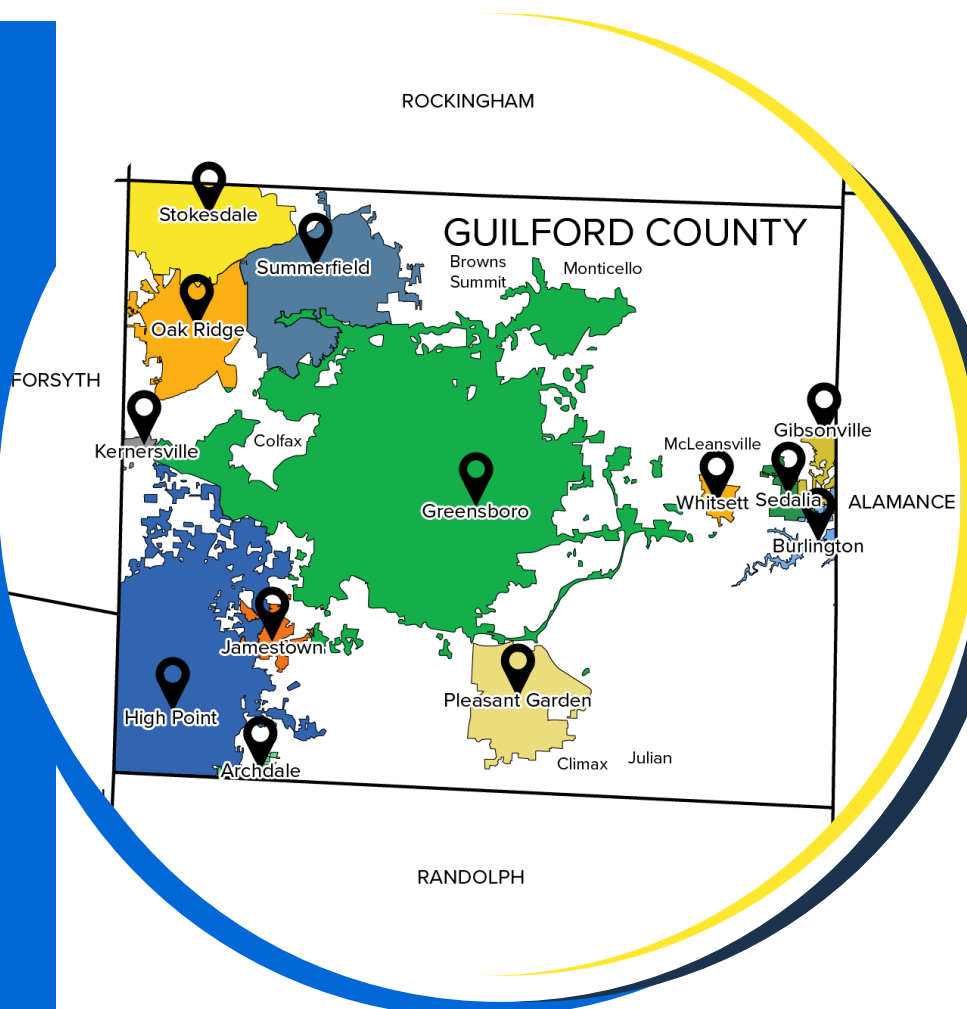
Greensboro
High Point
Stokesdale
Gibsonville
Summerfield
Whitsett
Sedalia
Jamestown
Oak Ridge
Pleasant Garden

Partially in the County

Archdale
Burlington
Kernersville

Unincorporated

Colfax
McLeansville
Julian
Climax
Monticello
Browns Summit



Guilford County At A Glance

Highlights from the 2025 NCACC County Map Book and other sources

Demographics

560,760

County Population

+8.40%

Population Change Since 2015



57.7%

of adults aged 25-44 hold a secondary degree or high-quality credential

9.2%

of adults aged 25-44 have less than a high school diploma

Population Facts	County	NC	Rank*
Median Age	37.5	39.6	89
Population Under 18	21.1%	21.1%	41
Population 65+	16.8%	18.4%	88
Veteran Population	4.7%	6.0%	89

\$4,004

in K-12 current expense funding per pupil according to NCDPI Statistical Profile Table 25

73.9%

of eligible children enrolled in the NC Pre-K Program

Economics and Taxation

Economics	County	NC	Rank*
Children in Poverty	20.6%	17.5%	47
Average Weekly Wage	\$1,219	\$1,358	11
Per Capita Income	\$59,170	\$61,839	22
Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	\$43,867.9 million	\$788.1 billion	4

	County	NC	Rank*
Property Tax Rate	0.7305	---	85
Property Tax Levy Per Capita	\$956	\$942	69

15.2%

of residents experience food insecurity

174,628

of residents enrolled in "traditional" Medicaid coverage

16.1%

of residents participate in NC's Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) program



41,678

of residents enrolled in Medicaid Expansion

33.9

Guilford - drug overdose death rate per 100,000 residents

85.1%

of households have at least one device to access the internet

26.3

North Carolina - drug overdose death rate per 100,000 residents

89.3%

of households have a broadband internet subscription



*Additional county-level data, notes, and explanations about how each indicator is ranked are online at www.ncacc.org/mapbook or via the QR code. The digital PDF can be downloaded or you can email communications@ncacc.org to request a free spiral-bound book.

What is Livability?

What makes a place livable depends on who you ask; for example, a young professional, an older adult, a parent, or a newcomer may all value different things. In an effort to blend these different lived experiences, planning organizations have worked to define what livability generally includes. Groups like the American Planning Association and AARP identify core livability ingredients such as safe housing, reliable transportation, access to services, and social connection that form a shared foundation, although every person's experience builds on that foundation in their own way.

The AARP Public Policy Institute defines a livable community as one that is safe and secure, has affordable and appropriate housing and transportation options, and has supportive community features and services. Once in place, those resources enhance personal independence; allow residents to age in place; and foster residents' engagement in the community's civic, economic, and social life.

Source: [AARP.org/livable-communities](https://aarp.org/livable-communities)

According to the **National Association of Counties (NACo)**, through various technical assistance programs, a livable community is one where residents of all ages have access to affordable, appropriate housing and multiple transportation options, live in safe, healthy environments, and are supported by services and infrastructure that foster economic growth and well-being.

Source: naco.org

The American Association of Planners

generally defines livability as the quality of life in a community, measured by factors that enable residents to thrive, including meeting the needs of people of all ages by providing diverse housing options, transportation choices, safe and inclusive neighborhoods, access to services, and opportunities for participation and economic mobility.

Source: planning.org

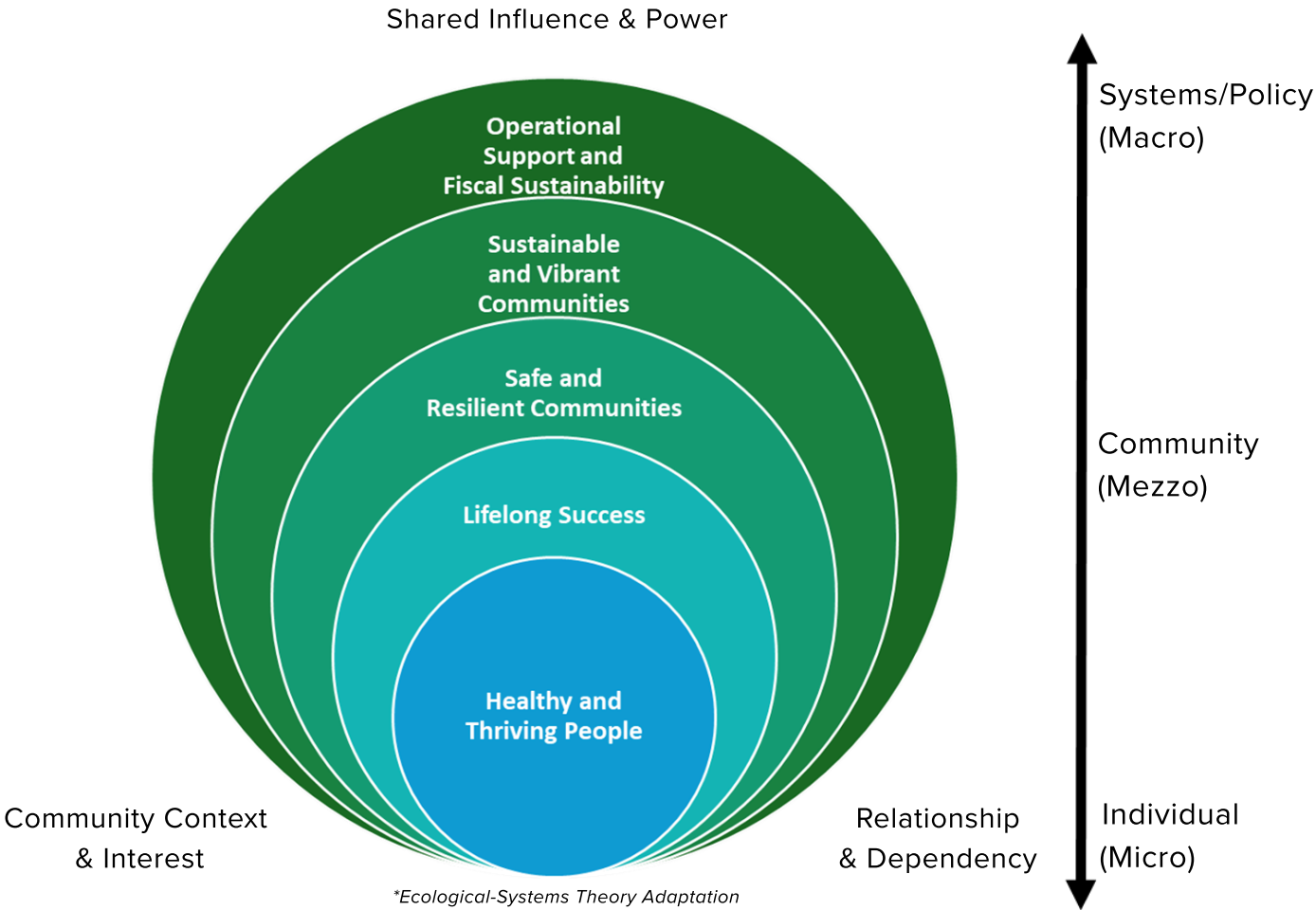
County Health Rankings & Roadmaps

(CHR&R), a program of the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, identifies conditions that shape livability, including safe housing, jobs that pay a living wage and well-resourced schools. These factors, often called the social determinants of health, and how these conditions are created, distributed and maintained determines the opportunity for everyone to thrive.

Source: countyhealthrankings.org

Guilford County defines livability as the degree to which people of all ages, abilities, and incomes can experience the opportunity to live, learn, work, and play in a desirable and supportive environment that honors the uniqueness of individuals, a vibrant culture and access to amenities and resources.

Our Lens of Livability

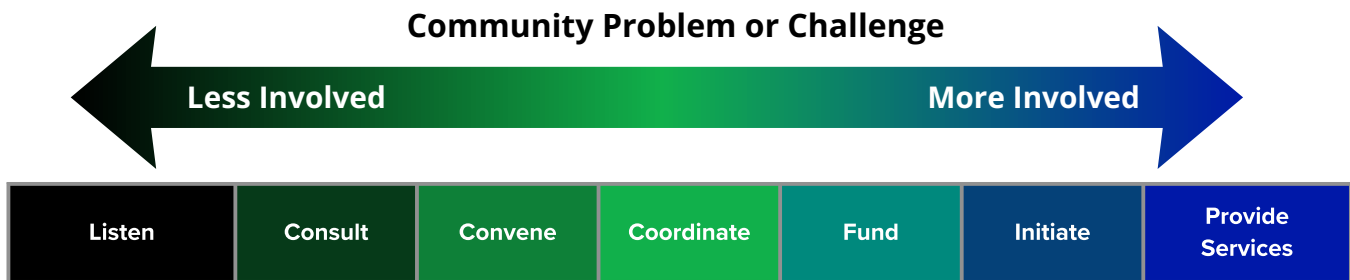


Natural Resources	Economy	Threats	Education	Culture	Engagement	Opportunity /Choice
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The ecological-systems operational framework helps clarify why the goals within the *Advancing Our Livability* plan must be shaped by the interconnected environments in which residents live. Each goal area in the plan, beginning with Healthy and Thriving People and expanding outward to Lifelong Success, Safe and Resilient Communities, Sustainable and Vibrant Communities, and ultimately Operational Support and Fiscal Sustainability, reflects a different layer of influence within the community. Individual wellbeing (micro level) is shaped by relationships, community conditions (mezzo level), and larger systems and policies (macro level). These layers constantly interact, meaning changes in community culture, economic conditions, natural resources, technology, or engagement patterns can either strengthen or strain County efforts. By using this lens, strategies within this plan can be responsive to local context, help to align roles across departments and partners, and reflect the need for solutions that adapt to the County’s evolving opportunities and challenges.

Spectrum of Government Involvement

The Advancing Our Livability Strategic Plan provides a framework to implement, report, and measure progress on the Board of County Commissioners’ goals while helping prioritize resources to address complex community challenges. Drawing on the discussion at the 2025 BoCC retreat, community problems or challenges require the organization to shift across a spectrum of involvement, and this plan uses this spectrum to highlight different levels of engagement. Each strategy is tagged to one of the verbs below to show where it falls on that spectrum and how the County can best coordinate its role in addressing large-scale, interconnected issues.



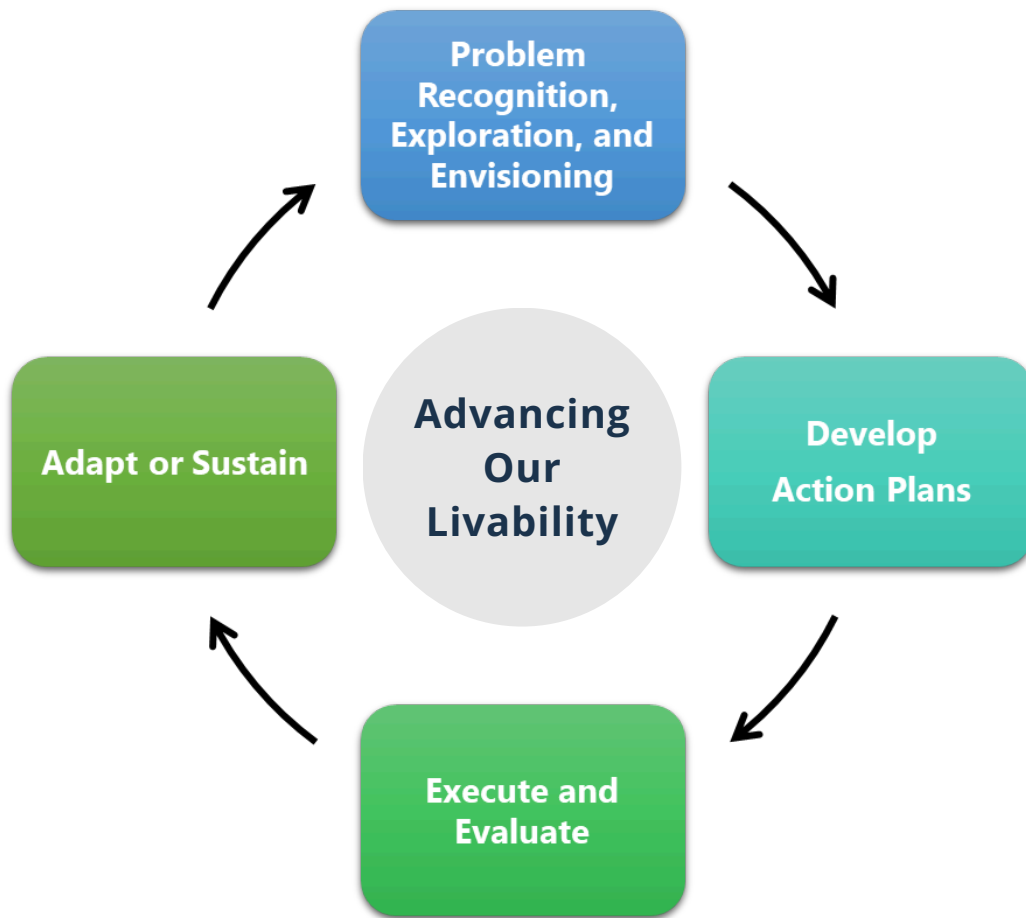
Berner, M. (UNC School of Government), Wicked Problems: What Can Local Governments Do?

- **Promote** – Listen to gain greater understanding and increase awareness of a community priority.
- **Explore** – Consult stakeholders and Convene resources to research an issue and develop potential policy options.
- **Partner** – Coordinate with community organizations and Fund initiatives that achieve shared goals.
- **Enhance** – Initiate policy options to Provide Services that directly address these needs.

Implementation Calendar

Month	Step
Jan 2026	•BoCC feedback on alignment using the lens of livability to shape direction •BoCC feedback on identified goals/strategies
Feb 2026	•Host Livability Forums to collect resident feedback on Activities to inform development of Tactics
Mar 2026	•BoCC Retreat: Adopt the Plan; Align strategies & activities with Fiscal Year 2027 budget process
May 2026	•Form Livability Committee, Goal Area Teams, & develop Action Plans
Jul 2026	•Begin Implementation and monthly Goal Area Team meetings
Oct 2026	•First Quarterly Livability Committee Meeting (each quarter will focus on 2 goal areas)
Jan 2027	•Mid-year Progress Report to BoCC

Governance of the Plan



Successful implementation of the plan will involve a systematic process to review progress, update the status, and communicate progress. This will be accomplished through a **Livability Committee**, including up to four (4) County Commissioners, that will meet quarterly to provide direction and champion progress.

A Strategic Leadership Team will support the implementation of the plan by supporting goal area teams through quarterly meetings to discuss progress, review livability indicators, and resolve roadblocks.

Strategic Leadership Team

- County Manager
- Assistant County Managers
- Strategic Planning Manager
- Budget Director
- Human Resource Director
- Chief Financial Officer
- Employee for Positive Change Representative

Goal Area Teams (5)

- Each workgroup will be co-led by a Department Director
- Staff and community membership/participation based on action plans and tactics

Structure of Plan

This plan, which is an organized process to implement the Board's vision, is broken down by the following classifications:



Livability indicators draw from data across key domains such as housing, health, safety, mobility, economic opportunity, and community belonging.



Together, livability indicators offer a shared frame of reference for understanding community wellbeing and help guide leaders in aligning programs, resources, and partnerships to improve outcomes.



Community Context

Goal 1: Healthy and Thriving People

Guilford County is home to a diverse and growing population—now 560,760 residents, an 8.4% increase since 2015, signaling strong community vitality and continued growth. Guilford County celebrates being the first county in North Carolina, and second in the country, to create a Public Health Department.

The County faces a range of interconnected public health challenges that shape the overall wellbeing of residents. Access to healthcare remains unequally distributed, with many community members experiencing barriers to primary, specialty, and behavioral health services. Over 184,000 (32.8%) of residents are enrolled in Medicaid, of which 43,000 (over 20%) became eligible through Medicaid expansion. Food insecurity remains significant, disproportionately affecting children and communities of color, with over 41,000 households (~90,000 residents) - 15.5% of our residents - receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)/Food and Nutrition (FNS) benefits. The food insecurity rate, which estimates the percentage of the population who did not have access to a reliable source of food during the past year, is 15% in Guilford County, above the state and national rates. Initiatives to expand access to essential health and human services include partnerships between Emergency Services, Social Services, Family Justice Center, and Animal Services.

The County continues to experience a high infant mortality rate, significantly above state and national levels, and stark racial disparities persist, especially affecting Black infants. Behavioral health needs, including mental health concerns and substance use disorders, are prominent, and opioid overdoses have exceeded the state average in recent years, prompting the County to implement a coordinated opioid response strategy supported by opioid settlement funding. Community efforts are also focused on reducing firearm-related injuries and deaths, including suicides and homicides. Data shows differences in criminal charging by race compared to the overall population distribution, particularly in areas such as traffic offenses, misdemeanors, and some drug-related charges. These data points provide an opportunity to better understand what drives those differences within the criminal justice system (UNC School of Government - Measuring Justice).

Together, these factors illustrate the need for a OneGuilford approach to navigating complex health challenges while simultaneously advancing targeted initiatives to strengthen health access, improve outcomes, and address systemic root causes.

Goal 1: Healthy and Thriving People

Guilford County supports individuals and families to thrive by ensuring access to high-quality health and human services and by promoting physical, mental, and social wellbeing.

Strategy G1:S1 - Enhance collaborative solutions with community partners to address longstanding health disparities and disparate health outcomes, including infant mortality, firearm violence and injury, and food insecurity.

Livability Indicators:

- Infant mortality
- Firearm fatalities
- Food insecurity
- People receiving food assistance
- Life expectancy
- Premature mortality

Activity G1:S1:A1

Continue to partner with and enhance the efforts of the Guilford County Infant Mortality Taskforce and Every Baby Guilford’s collective action strategy to reduce infant deaths.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G1:01 - Every child reaches their first birthday.
- G1:02 - Establish a favorable downward trend in the 5-year infant mortality rate.

Activity G1:S1:A2:

Sustain and enhance the public health gun violence coalition in an effort to implement collective action strategies to reduce firearm violence and injury.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G1:03 - Every resident is free from gun violence.
- G1:04 - Reduction in firearm-related Injury Emergency Department Visits.

Activity G1:S1:A3:

Sustain and enhance the ARPA-funded food security collective action plan.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G1:05 - Every resident has reliable access to nutritious, affordable food.

Goal 1: Healthy and Thriving People

Strategy G1:S2 - Enhance services to reduce the harms of substance use through a continuum of care with a focus on families, children, veterans, and other vulnerable populations.

Livability Indicators:

- Overdose mortality
- Overdose-related ER visits

Activity G1.S2.A1

Enhance access to residential recovery centers to provide low-barrier specialized, family-centered treatment, including pregnant and parenting recovery and long term supports for highly vulnerable adults.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G1:06 - Residents can get help to overcome substance-use harms from reliable, coordinated services.
- G1:07 - Residents who are uninsured or underinsured have access to high quality residential recovery services.

Activity G1.S2.A2

Sustain a comprehensive Opioid Action Plan that includes inappropriate prescribing, prevention, harm reduction, residential supports, justice-involved services, equity, lived experience, and performance management.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G1:08 - Residents struggling with substance use can find structured, compassionate comprehensive care and a path to sustained recovery.



Goal 1: Healthy and Thriving People

Strategy G1:S3 - Enhance individual and community wellbeing through the lens of whole person care to address complex challenges faced by vulnerable families and individuals.

Livability Indicators:

- Access to Primary Care Physicians
- Access to Mental Health Professionals
- Medicaid enrollment
- Life expectancy disparities

Activity G1.S3.A1

Establish and sustain a cross-departmental, multi-disciplinary team and service navigation framework to support vulnerable residents.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G1:09 - The cyclical nature of crisis for residents can be reduced through coordinated multidisciplinary teams.

Activity G1.S3.A2

Implement the HHS Practice and Operational Framework supporting consolidation into a Health and Human Services Agency, as defined per statute NCGS 153A-77, and design service delivery and workspaces to promote co-location of health and human services to promote “no wrong door,” high quality service delivery.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G1:O10 - Every resident can access the support they need through any door and receive seamless, coordinated health and human services with high satisfaction.

Activity G1.S3.A3

Reduce barriers to access through mobile and community-based locations.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G1:O11 - Residents have dependable access to safety net and health care services regardless of transportation resources and residential zip code.

Goal 1: Healthy and Thriving People

Strategy G1:S4 - Promote second chance and recovery pathways for justice-involved adults and youth through community collaboration.

Livability Indicators:

- Youth recidivism
- Jail population
- Violent crime
- Property crime

Activity G1.S4.A1

Complete an analysis of justice-involved populations and explore policies, practices, and programs that address disparities in the criminal legal system, including evaluating and implementing the public safety assessment tool for pre-trial services.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G1:O12 - Residents involved in the justice system do not experience hardship due to systemic biases or resource disparities.

Activity G1.S4.A2

Evaluate and enhance existing programming for justice-involved residents in areas of reentry programming, youth detention, and recovery courts with an emphasis on mental illness, addiction, and workforce development.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G1:O13 - Justice-involved individuals reentering the community can build a safe, stable, and hopeful future, and youth have access to early supports, safe communities, and strong partnerships that help them stay on positive paths and out of the adult legal system.



Community Context

Goal 2: Lifelong Success

Guilford County benefits from a solid education foundation that creates pathways for upward mobility and economic prosperity. Strong connections exist between K-12 education, higher education and the booming economic development our county is seeing. Continued efforts to support individuals from early childhood through post-secondary school, in addition to efforts supporting employers, will help ensure that all residents benefit from these opportunities.

Many families with young children are cost-burdened by child care expenses (\$13,284 for one year of infant care at a 5-star facility) and experience barriers to accessing high-quality and affordable child care. Improving affordability and increasing support for the child care workforce can help reduce staffing shortages, expand enrollment capacity, and ensure more children have access to enriching early learning experiences. The County continues to score in the middle of the state compared to other counties, with 73.9% of eligible children enrolled in NC Pre-K.

Guilford County Schools' four-year graduation rate has stayed nearly constant at 92.1%, higher than the state average and most other large districts with record high rates for Black students and Students with Disabilities. Students in GCS continue to gain proficiency following the impact of the pandemic, and the district has been recognized by the White House as a leader in academic recovery post-pandemic.

GCS is the third-largest district in the state and strives to compete with neighboring districts to recruit, retain and reward staff. With the 16th highest teacher supplement statewide, the County is an attractive place for teachers to work, and Guilford County Schools is regularly recognized as a system of excellence.

The County has begun addressing deferred school construction through \$2.0 billion in voter-approved bond investments while continuing to meet statutory funding obligations and sustaining a historically strong local funding effort compared to peer counties for teacher, assistant principal, and principal supplements. In the past year, GCS has opened six schools, with three more currently under construction. In addition, work continues at schools across the county to improve facilities, update technology and strengthen security.

Guilford County's capacity to deliver high-quality services depends on a strong workforce and sound fiscal stewardship. The County maintains a competitive economic profile with a median household income of \$65,890 and an unemployment rate of 4.3%. The majority of adults over the age of 25 (58%) hold a postsecondary degree or high-quality credential, reflecting a highly-skilled workforce and a promising outlook for economic growth.

The County has seen significant economic development success, particularly in advanced manufacturing, aerospace, healthcare, and life sciences, with announcements of investments and jobs by JetZero, Boom Supersonic, Honda Aircraft Company, Toyota, Publix, Food Lion and many others. To support these economic successes, Guilford Technical Community College is building and preparing world-class facilities to train and prepare the workforce for current and future employers in these growing industries.

The County is also working to support small businesses and historically underserved entrepreneurs through targeted assistance, expanded access to capital, and stronger connections to emerging industry opportunities.

Goal 2: Lifelong Success

Guilford County empowers individuals across their lifespan from early childhood education through lifelong learning, supports upward mobility and long-term prosperity, and promotes sustainable economic development.

Strategy G2:S1 - Explore and address barriers to accessing affordable, quality childcare and the associated workforce development needs to sustain success.

Livability Indicators:

- Child care affordability
- Child care subsidy access
- Child care enrollment
- Licensed child care availability

Activity G2.S1.A1

Through partnership, develop an actionable, cross-sector, and data-informed roadmap to strengthen the early childcare system in Guilford County.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G2:O1 - Increased collaboration among partners to implement strategies to address slot availability and accessibility, subsidy allocation, cost of care, and workforce shortages.
- G2:O2 - Families have access to high quality, affordable, early child care options that meet their needs.



Goal 2: Lifelong Success

Strategy G2:S2 - Partner with Guilford County Schools to fund and sustain safe, modern, and future-ready schools while fulfilling statutory obligations per NCGS 115C-426(f).

Livability Indicators:

- Public school enrollment

Activity G2.S2.A1

In partnership with Guilford County Schools, complete \$2 billion bond program and evaluate the funding and debt service strategy to support the next series of school construction projects based on the GCS Facilities Master Plan informed by updated comparative data.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G2:03 - Students attend school in high quality, modern, public school facilities.
- G2:04 - Future capital needs are addressed in a timely manner.

Did you know?

Under North Carolina General Statutes (NCGS 115C-426(f)), a school district's capital outlay fund can cover far more than just building new schools? It can be used to purchase land, construct, renovate, or replace school facilities, furnish classrooms with equipment and technology, add buses and other vehicles to the fleet, and even support other expenditures assigned through the uniform budget format—making it a comprehensive resource for long-term school investments.



Goal 2: Lifelong Success

Strategy G2:S3 - Explore opportunities to support market competitiveness for the delivery of quality education by investing in a highly skilled workforce while fulfilling statutory requirements of NCGS 115C.

Livability Indicators:

- Chronic absenteeism
- High school graduation
- 3rd grade reading proficiency
- 3rd grade math proficiency

Activity G2.S3.A1

Explore funding strategies based on a multi-year phased approach to maintain salary supplements in the top 10 school districts statewide for teachers, assistant principals, and principals and evaluate market-based pay adjustments for classified employees who support daily school operations.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G2:05 - Public school staff vacancies are within reasonable limits to support teacher continuity within the classroom.

Activity G2.S3.A2

Develop a comprehensive funding plan in response to the Quarter of a Cent Sales Tax Advisory Referendum on the November 2026 ballot.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G2:06 - Voters are informed and educated on the potential impacts of the Advisory Referendum.

Activity G2.S3.A3

Support Guilford County Schools' implementation of School Health Clinics in alignment with the School-Based Health Alliance National Standards.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G2:07 - Students have access to comprehensive healthcare and absenteeism is reduced.

Did you know?

North Carolina General Statutes (NCGS 115C) require public school systems to use local funds for a wide range of essentials—including buildings, furniture, apparatus, garage and bus maintenance equipment, liability insurance, facility maintenance, site acquisition, superintendent's office furnishings, school building supplies, and water and sewage systems. Plus, a portion of this local funding must be shared with charter schools based on the average per-pupil allocation.

Goal 2: Lifelong Success

Strategy G2:S4 - Promote sustainable local prosperity and economic development by creating a seamless educational and credentialing pipeline to prepare the workforce for high-demand careers in advanced manufacturing, aerospace, healthcare, life science, clean energy, and other skilled trades.

Livability Indicators:

- Median household income
- Economic mobility
- Unemployment
- Childhood poverty
- Household poverty
- Educational attainment

Activity G2.S4.A1

In partnership with Guilford County Economic Development Alliance (GCEDA), Greensboro Chamber of Commerce, and High Point Economic Development., NC Works and other stakeholders, implement a regional skills analysis in effort to align economic growth with local talent and skills.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G2:08 - Updated regional skill analysis with measurable metrics and outcomes.
- G2:09 - Establish a favorable trend in the reduction of the unemployment rate.

Activity G2.S4.A2

In addition to funding the operational needs of Guilford Technical Community College, per NCGS 115D-32, evaluate and support capital improvement planning to ensure alignment with future economic growth and specialized job demands.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G2:O10 - Capital Improvement and operational plan with measurable funding levels and schedule.

Activity G2.S4.A3

Promote a clean energy economy in partnership with the Guilford County Economic Development Alliance (GCEDA), Greensboro Chamber of Commerce, and High Point Economic Development.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G2:O11 - Increase in job opportunities in the clean energy economy.

Goal 2: Lifelong Success

Strategy G2:S5 - Partner to strengthen the local business network to support small businesses and startups with a focus on historically underserved entrepreneurs.

Livability Indicators:

- Small business density

Activity G2.S5.A1

Expand partnerships to improve access to local and regional procurement opportunities with a focus on increasing the number of HUB certified small businesses in the county.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G2:O12 - Small businesses have equal access to participate in all aspects of the County's procurement opportunities.

Activity G2.S5.A2

Increase small business capacity by utilizing financial readiness resources and capital access through Carolina Small Business Development.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G2:O13 - Small businesses have pathways to professional support, development, capacity building, and networking.





Community Context

Goal 3: Safe and Resilient Community

Guilford County has a strong foundation to support a safe, prepared, and resilient community. The County's public safety network includes the Guilford County Sheriff's Office, Emergency Services, GM911, municipal police and fire, nineteen rural fire departments, Animal Services, and Juvenile Detention. These agencies collaborate through mutual aid and shared planning to maintain reliable response times and broaden service reach.

When emergencies occur, residents expect continuity of essential services. The community's capacity to withstand and recover from fires, medical crises, severe weather, and economic pressures reflects its overall resilience. Core components under the County's span of responsibility include strong local networks, sound resource stewardship, coordinated planning, and public preparedness. Based on FEMA's National Risk Index, Guilford County's community resilience score is 56.6, indicating a moderate ability to prepare for natural hazards, adapt to changing conditions, and recover from disruptions when compared to the rest of the country.

Emergency medical services (EMS) are delivered countywide by Guilford County EMS, which provides 24-hour pre-hospital care and targeted community paramedicine for vulnerable residents. Guilford County was the first paid paramedic service in North Carolina. Future readiness is further strengthened through coordinated Emergency Management, including partnerships with more than 120 agencies and organizations.

Resiliency efforts also extend to animal well-being, with prevention strategies and targeted services that address vaccination needs and responsible pet care to avoid unnecessary pet surrenders.

In addition to public safety, as the Continuum of Care (CoC) lead agency, Guilford County staff support the use of resources and supportive services to promote housing stability and accessibility across our community. With monthly rental costs rising to an average of \$1,150 for a two-bed room apartment coupled with the percentage of residents spending more than 50% of income on housing rising to 14% of the population, the risk of eviction and those seeking affordable housing continues to rise. Whether a resident is unsheltered, at risk of eviction, or seeking attainable housing, emergency shelter and supportive services are foundational in preventing and addressing homelessness, ensuring a strong social safety net, and supporting emergency response.

Across fire protection, emergency services, animal services, and housing supports, the County's coordinated service delivery is poised to meet residents in moments of crisis, anticipate future challenges, and protect the health, safety, and well-being of Guilford County's people and their four-legged family members.

Goal 3: Safe and Resilient Communities

Guilford County creates a safe, prepared, and resilient community by investing in public safety, emergency response, disaster readiness, and community resilience.

Strategy G3:S1 - Enhance the public safety system by aligning staffing and resources with service demand to ensure timely response to emergencies and calls for service.

Livability Indicators:

- Public Safety response times
- Rural fire response times

Activity G3.S1.A1

Evaluate public safety service rate prediction models (emergency services, law enforcement, animal services, and juvenile detention) to identify resource needs to respond to population growth and service demands.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G3:01 - Residents receive urgent care when they need it.

Activity G3.S1.A2

Through partnership, explore implementing a standard of coverage for rural fire protection along with a fiscally responsible reserve policy that sustains reliable fire response.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G3:02 - Residents feel safe and secure through strategically coordinated and professional public safety personnel.

Goal 3: Safe and Resilient Communities

Strategy G3:S2 - Explore community partnerships and processes to increase the live release rate by reducing intake and preventing crises before animals reach the shelter.

Livability Indicators:

- Animal control calls
- Animal intake
- Live release rate

Activity G3.S2.A1

Implement targeted service delivery response and identify innovative strategies to keep people with their pets.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G3:03 - All animals have a loving and supportive home.



Goal 3: Safe and Resilient Communities

Strategy G3:S3 - Be a well-planned community by promoting housing stability through enhancing emergency supports, pathways to attainable housing, and housing choice in partnership with the NC-504 CoC and municipalities.

Livability Indicators:

- Home ownership
- Housing conditions
- Rental costs
- Housing type
- Housing affordability

Activity G3.S3.A1

Promote the development and retention of a variety of housing types that accommodate all residents while emphasizing safe and high-quality, sustainable designs throughout Guilford County, specifically in activity centers designated by the adopted 2025 Guiding Guilford Comprehensive Plan.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G3:04 - Communities have a variety of housing options to promote inclusivity and access to resources and amenities.

Activity G3.S3.A2

Partner with local organizations, housing authorities, and municipalities to address service delivery needs across the continuum of care, including emergency shelters, housing that is affordable, and supports for the unhoused population.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G3:05 - Residents have access to a continuum of safe and affordable housing and a strong safety net for those who are experiencing housing insecurity.

Activity G3.S3.A3

Promote housing stability through the Eviction Mediation and Landlord Engagement Program to collaboratively reduce the community eviction rate.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G3:06 - Residents are stably housed and evictions are prevented through coordinated mediation and landlord engagement.

Activity G3.S3.A4

In partnership with municipalities, explore the repurposing of County parcels/properties to support opportunities for attainable housing.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G3:07 - Residents do not experience severe housing cost burden.



Community Context

Goal 4: Sustainable and Vibrant Communities

Strong and accessible infrastructure is essential to ensure that Guilford County residents can thrive in place. The County seeks even more ways to create clean, safe, green built environments, continuing to strengthen the social fabric and enhance overall community wellbeing.

Guilford County's growing and diverse population benefits from an increasingly vibrant community supported by public spaces, parks, cultural amenities, and recreational opportunities. Guilford County Parks operates its own comprehensive park system while also partnering with local municipalities and townships that help manage select parks and amenities within the broader network. Together, these collaborative efforts contribute to an accessible and connected community supported by an extensive trail and greenway system where 61% of residents live within a half mile of a park.

Due to ongoing growth, economic development, and regulatory requirements, the region's current water capacity, interlocal agreements, and infrastructure are not sufficient to meet projected needs by 2050. Ongoing challenges related to housing affordability place pressure on households' disposable income for other necessities like food, transportation, and healthcare. Continued investments in transportation systems, water and sewer capacity, waste management, and housing access will be critical to meeting the needs of a growing population. Through coordinated regional planning and equitable infrastructure development, Guilford County is working to ensure that residents of all ages and abilities can access essential services and remain connected to opportunity.

With high levels of broadband adoption (89.3% of households), the County benefits from strong digital connectivity that supports education, employment, public safety, and telehealth access. However, some areas in the County remain without access to broadband or without access to affordable broadband, signaling that more work remains.

Transportation in the community is predominantly car-centric, with 83% of residents commuting alone to work and only 18% commuting more than 30 minutes each way. While this suggests that many residents can move around with relative ease, others face barriers due to limited access to affordable and connected transit options. The development and implementation of a countywide mobility plan will enable improved economic opportunities for those without reliable transportation and facilitate inclusive transit solutions that serve all areas of the county.

Goal 4: Sustainable & Vibrant Communities

Guilford County promotes intentionally designed, vibrant, and thriving communities by advancing infrastructure to meet growth demands, engaging in planning and development practices that balance environmental, social and economic factors for all residents, and establishing high quality recreational and green space amenities.

Strategy G4:S1 - Explore opportunities to promote clean and green spaces, to ensure a safe natural and built environment, and to adopt green practices.

Livability Indicators:

- Air quality
- Access to parks
- Greenway miles
- Blighted structures

Activity G4.S1.A1

Explore options, identify opportunities, and build a shared understanding around long-term clean energy planning for County operations.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G4:01 - Increase in clean and renewal energy in county operations.

Activity G4.S1.A2

Develop environmentally sustainable design standards as identified in the Comprehensive Plan.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G4:02 - The built environment is safe and incorporates green practices.

Activity G4.S1.A3

Support partnerships with the Piedmont Triad Regional Council to establish an interlocal agreement and sustainability plan for the Bicentennial Greenway.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G4:03 - The Greenway system is widely used, maintained, and suitably connected.

Goal 4: Sustainable & Vibrant Communities

Strategy G4:S2 - Partner with municipalities and the Piedmont Triad Regional Water Authority to explore opportunities to increase coordinated regional water and sewer infrastructure to expand capacity and meet sustainable future growth needs.

Livability Indicators:

- Water and sewer infrastructure miles

Activity G4.S2.A1

Explore opportunities to support targeted water/sewer infrastructure extensions and connectivity to promote economic development and address demand for additional housing units, specifically in unincorporated Guilford County.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G4:04 - Everyone in the community has access to clean and sustainable water sources.

Strategy G4:S3 - Promote addressing the digital divide to close connectivity gaps and link underserved neighborhoods to essential services.

Livability Indicators:

- Broadband access

Activity G4.S3.A1

Partner with key influencers, community members, and the local business community to develop a multi-year plan to eliminate digital inequities and access based on the 2022 Broadband study.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G4:05 - Residents are connected to affordable, reliable high-speed internet.

Goal 4: Sustainable & Vibrant Communities

Strategy G4:S4 - Explore opportunities to increase transportation access and system integration to connect residents to jobs, education, and other services.

Livability Indicators:

- Commuter transportation
- Commute time

Activity G4.S4.A1

Develop and implement a countywide mobility plan.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G4:06 - Access to affordable transportation is readily available within the community, including outside normal business hours.



Community Context

Goal 5: Operational Support and Fiscal Sustainability

Professional County administration is instrumental in fulfilling the mandated services provided by county government. Coordination of services across critical operational support functions and good fiscal stewardship by elected officials and County administration translates to public assurance that resources are used intentionally, accountably, and as a result of ethical decision-making that is informed by data-backed financial practices, community values, and long-term goals.

When these functions are finely tuned, they may be invisible to most. For example, because the County has received a AAA/Aaa credit rating, it has been evaluated as being operated with strong financial management principles. That management is possible as a result of the County's workforce of over 3,000 highly qualified professional staff, from providing public health, delivering critical social services, supporting veterans, providing public safety, administering elections, maintaining facilities, human resources, tax administration, and financial management.

A strong fund balance also contributes to this foundation. It provides financial resiliency, supports the County's strategic priorities, and ensures flexibility to respond to unexpected changes in federal funding or regulatory changes. Guilford County's fund balance remains aligned with guidance from the Local Government Commission, with available fund balance above 16% of annual expenditures.

Execution of workforce, communications, and asset management strategies is important to attracting and retaining the professional staff vital to providing responsible, financially smart services, to communicating transparently with the public, and to taking care of the facilities that staff work in and the community enjoys each day. With careful, data-informed planning, the County can better locate services for ease of access, can maintain a highly skilled workforce, and can preserve and enhance the beautiful parks, trails, and greenways for the people that call Guilford County home.

Goal 5: Operational Support and Fiscal Sustainability

Guilford County is committed to attracting and retaining a talented County workforce, thereby ensuring operational excellence and responsible fiscal stewardship for the delivery of sustainable, high-quality public services in partnership with the community.

Strategy G5:S1 - Enhance public communication tools and broaden community engagement to deliver clear, accessible, and transparent information for all residents.

Activity G5.S1.A1

Expand and diversify community engagement methods to create more opportunities for two-way communication, education, awareness, and advocacy.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G5:01 - Residents are supported by a government that is transparent, genuinely engaged, and is reflective of the community.

Strategy G5:S2 - Enhance the use of data and analytics to address community challenges, to better understand community needs, and to prevent recurring crises.

Activity G5.S2.A1

Strengthen the County's data culture by expanding tools, training, and shared practices that help staff, partners, and residents use data effectively.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G5:02 - Residents are supported by data-informed services and supports that are meaningful, effective, and efficient.

Activity G5.S2.A2

Develop a data integration framework and system to connect information, improve coordination, and deliver more effective support to residents to mitigate cyclical crises.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G5:03 - County services are optimized, and residents' quality of life is enhanced.

Goal 5: Operational Support and Fiscal Sustainability

Strategy G5:S3 - Enhance capital planning through lifecycle cost analysis to ensure reliable, high-quality services that prioritize life/safety and accessibility.

Activity G5.S3.A1

Develop and implement a capital and space use plan that promotes co-located services, centralization of administrative functions, and highest and best use of existing assets.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G5:O4 - Team members and residents enjoy safe public facilities that meet the service, access, and technological needs of the community.

Activity G5.S3.A2

Develop a capital improvement plan to address deferred capital repairs and expansion opportunities based on the 2025 Guilford County Parks, Open Space & Trails Master Plan.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G5:O5 - High quality passive and active recreational outlets are available to residents of all ages and abilities.

Goal 5: Operational Support and Fiscal Sustainability

Strategy G5:S4 - Enhance the County workforce by offering competitive pay and benefits and growth opportunities and by promoting a positive workplace culture.

Activity G5.S4.A1

Maintain competitive compensation and benefits philosophy to attract and retain qualified employees.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G5:O5 - The County maintains market competitiveness at the 50th percentile.

Activity G5.S4.A2

Develop and implement a countywide workplace climate action plan.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G5:O6 - The organization is highly sought-after, and team members are excited to work.

Activity G5.S4.A3

Institute a recurring employee appreciation and recognition program.

Desired Result/Outcome:

- G5:O7 - The organization values and supports a high-performing, professional, thoughtful, and innovative workforce.



Guilford County

STATE *of* NORTH CAROLINA



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www.GuilfordCountyNC.gov/StrategicPlan

