



Town of Knightdale

2022 STRATEGIC RETREAT REPORT

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Retreat Facilitated By:



OVERVIEW

The Town Council convened a one-day retreat to discuss high-level strategic topics facing the Town. This meeting was held on November 19, 2022, at The Rizzo Center in Chapel Hill.

The retreat was professionally facilitated, in-person, by Fountainworks, Inc. and included ample opportunities for the Town Council to interact. Discussion focused on open conversation around the crucial issues facing the Town, their connection to the Town's existing strategic plan, and best practices to achieve future objectives and goals.

- **Objectives** - identify and build consensus around key strategic issues
- **Approach** - a facilitated open conversation throughout the meeting, utilizing various exercises to stimulate discussion and engage in open dialogue

PURPOSE OF RETREATS

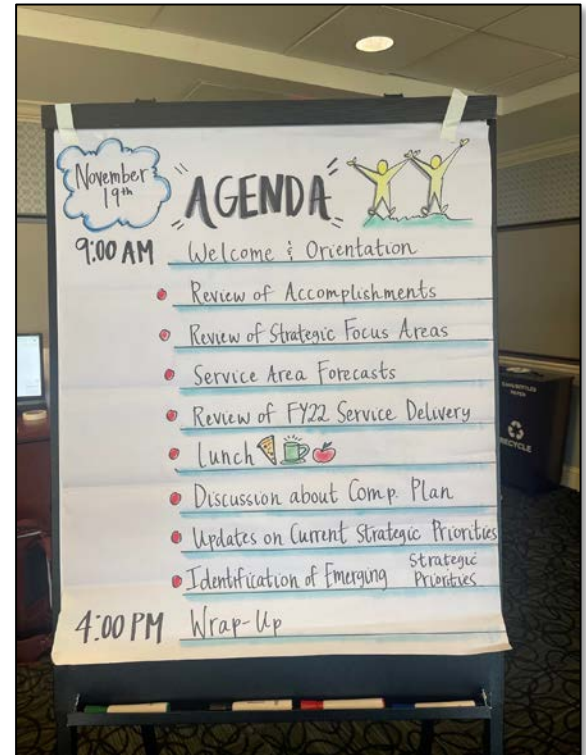
The work of public officials is routinely fast-paced and demanding. This reality is magnified under the high growth pressures and service delivery expectations of Wake County. Therefore, when a particularly important issue(s) demands more lengthy contemplation by a governing body or staff (or both), retreats offer the perfect solution. By setting aside time for a structured discussion away from the normal work environment, decision-makers and administrators can explore issues in depth and exchange ideas with each other in a relaxed environment.

The International City / County Managers Association (ICCMA) recognizes important additional benefits of retreats in addition to being a tool for increasing governmental efficiency and effectiveness:

“Retreats offer solutions for other situations as well. Sometimes conflict dominates a group’s interpersonal dynamics, and a way to improve working relationships is needed. Sometimes a new governing board needs to become well acquainted in order to work effectively as a team. Sometimes a board wants to get to know a new manager or the local government’s staff better.”

The primary purpose of the Knightdale Town Council’s annual retreat is to survey the Town’s landscape identifying key vulnerabilities as well as opportunities for community advancement.

Vulnerabilities and opportunities may be internal to the municipal organization or external environmental factors. The elected officials express their individual goals and work to build consensus as a governing body. The Knightdale Town Council collaborates with the Town Manager to clearly outline goals with associated target dates for completion. In turn, Town Administration absorbs these goals into the work plans for the applicable department(s) to ensure completion. These goals represent the primary direction in which the town staff’s efforts will be focused in addition to their regular, operational responsibilities. The retreat also offers an excellent opportunity to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the elected officials and town staff.



2022 Retreat Agenda

REVIEW OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

How do we know that we are doing a good job? This foundational question is important for all elected officials and town administrators to ask themselves. As stewards of the public's resources and trust, local officials are challenged to continually ensure that they are meeting the community's expectations. The Town of Knightdale evaluates organizational success through four primary lenses:

- Service Delivery
- Organizational Culture
- Fiscal Stewardship
- Strategic Direction



The importance of strategic direction cannot be overstated in public administration. When done correctly, it transforms today's visions into tomorrow's realities.

Strategic planning helps empower the elected body to realize its long-term vision for Knightdale by setting up goals and objectives in a systematic manner. Simply put, it makes the Town's decision-makers take a look at what's going on today, where they want to be tomorrow, and which steps they will need to take to get there.

After a welcome and brief introduction, the Council reflected on accomplishments from the previous year. Below is a summary of the key accomplishments in 2021.

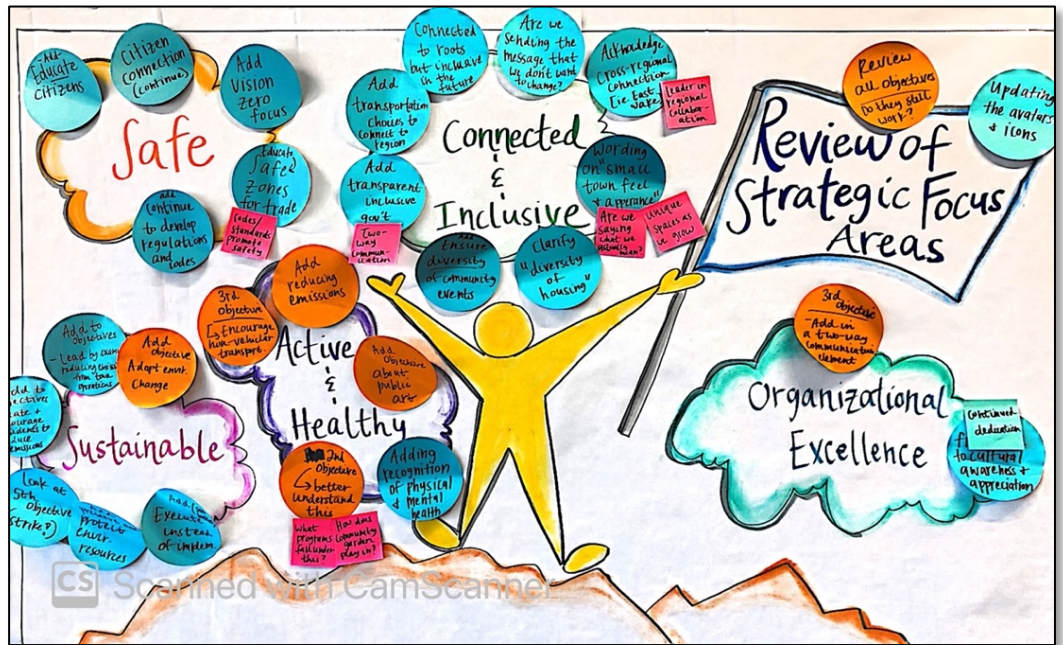


Overall Themes	
Strong Council and Staff Relationships	Forward-Looking and Proactive Governance
Positive Collaboration among all Stakeholders	Responsible Community Investments
Organizational Pride	Responsive to External Stakeholders
Strong Leadership of Elected Body and Town Administration	Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusiveness
Committed and Talented Staff	Thoughtful in Action
Universal Commitment to Safety	Trustworthy
Community Engagement and Involvement	Humility in Public Service

Specific Accomplishments	
Organizational Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic	Employee Orientation Program
Creation of East Wake Local Government Association (EWLGA)	Expanded Pickleball Facilities at Harper Park
Adoption of Shift Knightdale Comprehensive Transportation Plan	Harper Park Adventures Mural
Investment in Town Facilities	Honoring the Legacy of Officer Ryan Hayworth
Expansion of Staff	FY2023 Budget Performance and Awards
Historic Investments in Compensation and Benefits	Creation of Housing Committee
Expanded Workplace Protections for Employees (Joined Wake Non-Discrimination Ordinance)	Creation of Sustainability Committee
Creation of Mayor's Academy	

REVIEW OF STRATEGIC PLAN FOCUS AREAS

The Knightdale Strategic Plan is comprised of five Focus Areas. Each area serves as the primary decision-making priorities for Knightdale. Each one is comprised of objectives that define key indicators of success. Fountainworks led the elected officials through a review of the Strategic Plan Focus Areas. The goal of this discussion was two-fold:



- To ensure the focus areas still represent the expectations of the Council
- To identify any recommendation changes, edits, or tweaks

Changes to each Focus Area are outlined below (amended language is identified in **bold** and underlined):

SAFE



Knightdale is a safe community, where residents feel secure throughout the Town, the crime rate is low, and public safety personnel have a positive relationship with the community.

What it means to us...

Safety is the foundation of a great community. The Town is committed to ensuring that safety is our foremost priority now and for future generations.

Objectives

- Ensure resources are aligned with growing, community needs
- Adequately fund and staff public safety resources
- Actively engage and educate citizens in public safety efforts
- Continue legacy of strong citizen connection
- Continue to proactively develop regulations and codes to ensure citizen safety as Knightdale grows
- Maintain and education the public around the available safe zones for trade
- Support the Town's Vision Zero approach to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries

CONNECTED & INCLUSIVE



Knightdale actively pursues balanced growth with exceptional design to maintain its small town feel and appearance. Through the creation of unique community spaces and a welcoming environment for entrepreneurs and small businesses, we are creating a connected and inclusive town.

What it means to us...

A **Connected** Knightdale is a community where we know our neighbors. It is recognizing that our connectivity to one another serves as the foundation of what makes Knightdale a special place. We are connected in the manner in which we embrace technology and through our proximity to the Triangle .

An **Inclusive** Knightdale is a community where our residents feel safe, respected, and comfortable.

Objectives

- Continue legacy of transparent and inclusive government committed to two-way communication with all stakeholders
- Build on our “Start Something” identity
- Augment our small-town feel and appearance through the creation of unique spaces as we grow
- Stay connected to our historical roots with an inclusive outlook for our future
- Serve as a leader in regional collaboration for Eastern Wake County
- Remain committed to “Diverse Neighborhoods are Made of Diverse Housing” to ensure access for all
- Communicate important Town information to residents in a timely and informative manner
- Offer a diversity of quality community events
- Create the infrastructure necessary to cultivate and foster the small business community
- Embrace opportunities for physical connectivity through the transportation network
- Ensure multimodal transportation choices to connect to the region
- Advocate for quality educational opportunities

SUSTAINABLE



Knightdale promotes the stewardship of its environment, the resiliency of its resources, and the maintenance of a financially sustainable government.

What it means to us...

A **Sustainable** Knightdale is a community with a healthy environment and a strong economy that is **focused on the well-being of its citizens**. Our community will endure over time, ensuring prosperity for future generations.

Objectives

- Ensure regulations adapt to environmental change
- Endeavor to preserve and protect our environmental resources
- Promote financial sustainability and balanced growth between residential and commercial development
- Embrace ways to reduce Town government energy consumption
- Lead by example in reducing emissions from town operations
- Encourage quality commercial and residential development that ages well over time
- Execute the Knightdale Next Comprehensive Plan

ACTIVE & HEALTHY



Knightdale brings people together and boasts happy residents by promoting and sustaining a high quality of life and providing recreation and leisure activities to meet diverse interests.

What it means to us...

An **Active and Healthy** Knightdale embraces opportunities to make it easier for citizens to live healthy lives. We provide opportunities for people to be physically active and socially engaged as part of their daily routine, improving physical and mental health. We strive to allow our citizens to age in place and remain all their lives in a Knightdale that reflects their changing lifestyles and changing physical capabilities.

Objectives

- Recognize that regular physical activity directly contributes to improved mental health and better overall health and well-being
- Offer a variety of health, fitness, and cultural opportunities to meet the needs of a diverse population
- Work to eliminate societal stigmas surrounding mental health issues
- Help those with mental health conditions get access to treatment
- Provide access to healthy, fresh foods and connectivity to local farms
- Encourage non-vehicular transportation
- Recognize cultural, social, and economic value of public art

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE



Knightdale's government is operated efficiently and transparently by outstanding employees who focus on excellent customer service and open communication.

What it means to us...

Organizational Excellence means a Knightdale that places the interests of our citizens first. Employees' behaviors and decisions are firmly rooted in our ARC values. The Town is comprised of a highly talented workforce that embraces best-practices in public administration.

Objectives

- Provide friendly and **accessible** customer service
- Recruit and retain a diverse, highly-talented town workforce
- **Continue dedication to cultural awareness and appreciation**
- Embrace technology to improve internal and external service delivery
- Invest in employees' skills and professional development

SERVICE AREA FORECASTS

Suzanne Yeatts, Assistant Town Manager for Administration, led the Councilors through a discussion of service area forecasts. The information provided was prepared in consultation with each Department Director to identify the emerging issues that potentially threaten

future service continuity. Each Director was specifically asked to identify the “top 3” future challenges to be shared with the elected body. In groups of two, Councilors were then asked to brainstorm and share identify emerging issues in each service area from the elected perspective. Afterwards, Fountainworks facilitated a conversation around their small group discussions and professional summary provided by Ms. Yeatts. The goal of this session was two-fold:

- Establish a Mutual Understanding of Challenges
- Create a Foundation for Upcoming Budget Considerations



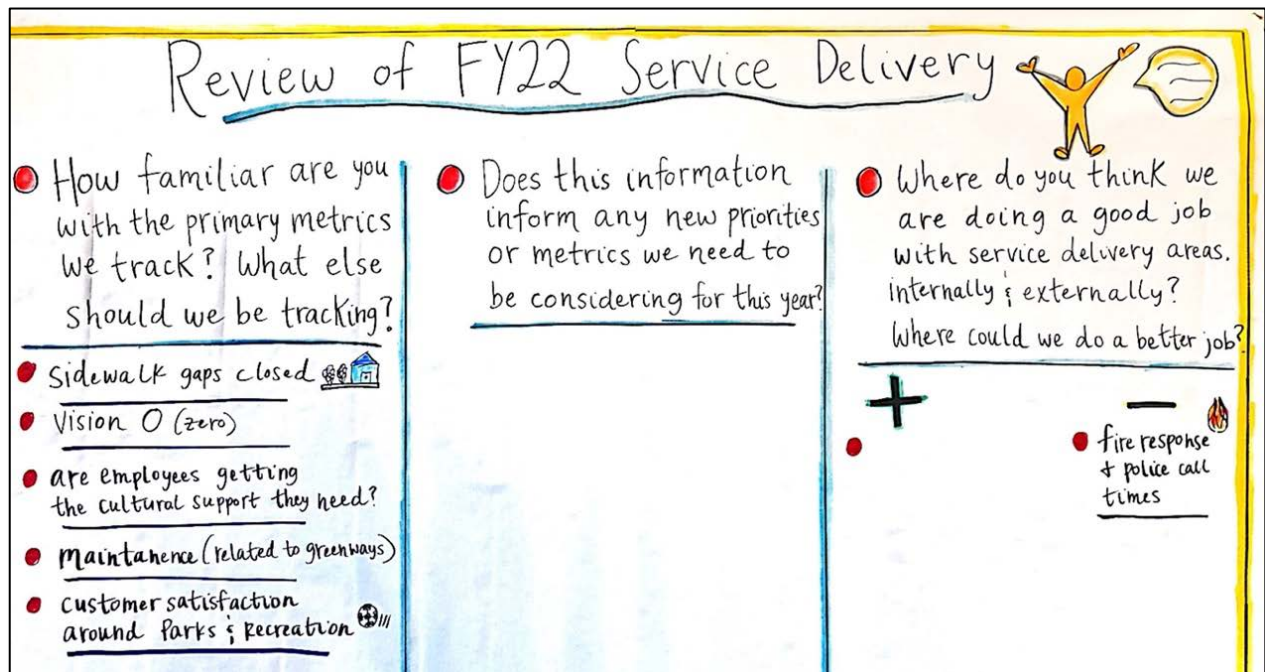
Emerging Issues (Elected Officials' Perspective)	
Further investments in diversity of recreation programming	Need for new service areas
Protect work-life balance for staff	Need for more physical space
Maintain unique town identity through events and other engagements	Need for more cultural resource allocations
Increased speeding in neighborhoods	Reduced trust in policing and other staff services
Better communication with community partners	Need for more commercial growth
Better communication with public safety departments	Increased greenway safety
Need for a community center	

Emerging Issues (Staff Perspective)	Service Area
Land for future fire stations	Public Safety
Temporary relocation of Police Department during renovations	Public Safety
Need to identify and embrace emerging technology for policing	Public Safety
Need for additional storage facility at Public Works Center	Public Works
Adapting service delivery model to ensure equitable service delivery	Public Works
Comprehensive transportation plan (Shift Knightdale) implementation	Development Services
Comprehensive plan updates	Development Services
Zoning reform and preemptions	Development Services
Need for community center	Parks & Recreation
Need for lighting at KSP fields	Parks & Recreation
Concerns over continued operations of community pool	Parks & Recreation
Comprehensive staffing needs to ensure future service continuity	Human Resources
Long-term COVID-19 impacts/issues	Human Resources
Funding solutions for future capital needs	Finance

REVIEW OF FY22 SERVICE DELIVERY

Dustin Tripp, Assistant Town Manager for Operations, began the service delivery segment with a team “competition.” In two groups, Councilors raced to list as many services the Town of Knightdale provides as they could in 10 minutes. The goal was to create a greater appreciation and awareness of the depth of services that Knightdale offers its citizens. Afterwards, Mr. Tripp reviewed the FY22 Annual Performance Management plan and shared its metrics. The plan demonstrates what the Town is doing to achieve the Focus Areas' objectives as viewed through a service delivery lens. This report provides insight into service delivery efficiency and effectiveness. It is divided into 36 key metrics across all service areas to provide a holistic view service delivery performance. Performance management provides the Town Manager the necessary data to routinely monitor service performance. The data also provides insight into areas of needed improvement and/or additional investment(s) to ensure citizen satisfaction.

Next, Fountainworks facilitated a brief roundtable discussion which explored the following areas:



How familiar are you with the primary metrics we track? What else should we consider tracking in the future?

- Closure of gaps in sidewalk network?
- Need for Vision Zero measures?
- Employees getting the cultural support they need?
- Maintenance of greenways?
- Customer satisfaction around Parks & Recreation programming and events?

Does this information inform any new priorities or metrics we need to be considering for this year?

- No new priorities or metrics were identified for the upcoming year.

Where do you think we are doing a good job with service delivery areas? Where could we do better?

- Overall, the elected body was pleased with organizational performance.
- The elected body and Administration recognized that current investments in public safety were critical to reducing response times.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DISCUSSION

Town Manager Bill Summers led the elected officials through a brief discussion about the 2035 KnightdaleNext Comprehensive Plan. North Carolina state law requires all local governments using zoning as a regulatory tool to adopt a comprehensive plan:

§ 160D-501. Plans.

(a) Requirements for Zoning. – As a condition of adopting and applying zoning regulations under this Chapter, a local government shall adopt and reasonably maintain a comprehensive plan or land-use plan.

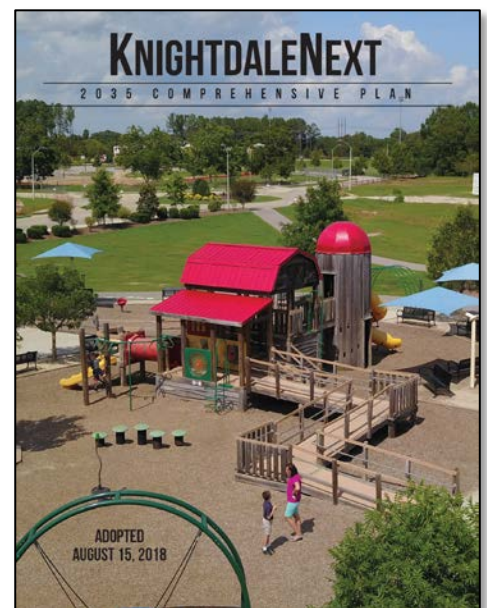
(a1) Plans. – A comprehensive plan sets forth goals, policies, and programs intended to guide the present and future physical, social, and economic development of the jurisdiction. A land-use plan uses text and maps to designate the future use or reuse of land. A comprehensive or land-use plan is intended to guide coordinated, efficient, and orderly development within the planning and development regulation jurisdiction based on an analysis of present and future needs.

Planning analysis may address inventories of existing conditions and assess future trends regarding demographics and economic, environmental, and cultural factors. The planning process shall include opportunities for citizen engagement in plan preparation and adoption.

A local government may prepare and adopt other plans as deemed appropriate. This may include, but is not limited to, small area plans, neighborhood plans, hazard mitigation plans, transportation plans, housing plans, and recreation and open space plans.

The Comprehensive Plan is Knightdale's statement of how we want to grow and develop. The plan guides where and how private development should occur. A comprehensive plan is a long-range plan for a municipality, which captures the vision of where the community wants to be at some point in the future. It is an all-inclusive approach to analyzing and evaluating the future growth of a community.

The goal of the discussion was to determine if the plan was still consistent with expectations of the Town Council. Given Knightdale's tremendous growth over the previous decade, it is crucial for the elected body to determine if the vision is still true or needs amendment. The group had an in-depth conversation over the performance of the current comprehensive plan. The consensus was that the plan has performed very well with specific appreciation given the playbook approach philosophy. Knightdale currently has approximately 7,000 lots entitled. The Council recognized that this level of entitlement necessitates a comprehensive reevaluation of the Town's comprehensive plan. Significant discussion/concern around open space preservation, housing accessibility, and future density needs were held. The Town Council agreed to make a revised comprehensive plan a strategic priority for FY24.



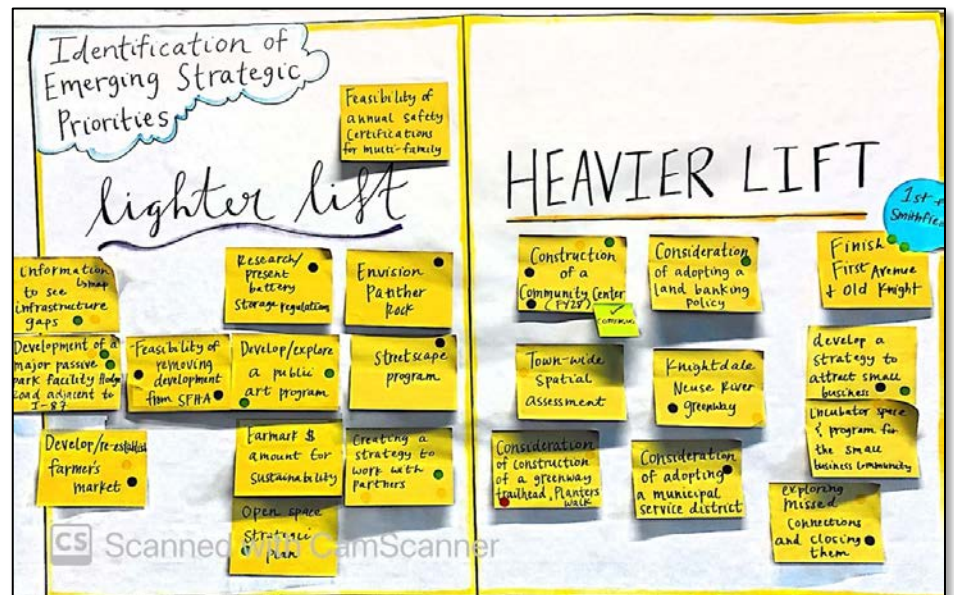
KnightdaleNext Comprehensive Plan

EMERGING STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

For the last segment of the retreat, Councilors identified emerging strategic priorities. Individually, Councilors brainstormed a list of strategic priorities they thought Knightdale should consider. Next, the Councilors shared their priorities as a group and created a total list. Then, together, the Councilors sorted the priorities into two categories: “lighter” and “heavier” lifts.

After sorting the priorities into “lighter” and “heavier” lifts, the Councilors participated in dot voting. Each Councilor received the following votes:

- Two higher priority votes (green)
- Two priority votes (yellow)
- Two future priority votes (purple)
- Two veto votes (red)



The following table captures the emerging strategic priorities, sorted into “lighter” and “heavier” lifts, with associated Councilor votes:

Lighter Lift	Heavier Lift
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore feasibility of annual safety certifications for multi-family <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Already started (no votes)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construct a Knightdale Community Center (FY28) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Consensus was reached to commit to this priority!</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a major, passive park facility- Hodge Road adjacent to I-87 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>2 higher priority votes</i> ○ <i>1 priority votes</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finish sidewalks: First Avenue, Old Knight Rd. First Ave., and Smithfield Rd. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>2 higher priority votes</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop/re-establish Farmer’s Market Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>2 higher priority votes</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore feasibility of a land banking policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>1 higher priority vote</i> ○ <i>1 priority vote</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop/explore a public art program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>2 higher priority votes</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a strategy to attract small businesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>1 higher priority vote</i> ○ <i>1 future priority vote</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a strategy to work with governmental partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>1 higher priority vote</i> ○ <i>2 priority votes</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an incubator space and program for the small business community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>1 priority votes</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create map outlining infrastructure gaps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>1 higher priority vote</i> ○ <i>1 priority vote</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore missed transportation connections and develop plan for closing them <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>1 priority vote</i> ○ <i>1 future priority vote</i>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create open space strategic plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1 higher priority vote 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construct Knightdale Neuse River Greenway <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1 priority vote ○ 1 future priority vote
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Streetscape program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1 future priority vote 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct town-wide spatial needs assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1 priority vote
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Panther Rock Park <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1 future priority vote 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore feasibility of constructing a greenway trailhead in Planters Walk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1 priority vote ○ 1 veto vote
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine feasibility of removing development from SFHA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1 future priority vote 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore feasibility of adopting a municipal services district <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1 future priority vote
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research/present battery storage regulations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1 future priority vote 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earmark financial/dollar amount for sustainability commitments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No votes

IMPLEMENTATION

The ultimate goal of the retreat is to successfully implement all goals into action. The Town Council assumes the responsibility of setting goals that holistically seek to improve Town's services and quality of life. In turn, town staff is charged with implementing these strategic goals according to the timelines mutually agreed upon by the elected officials and Town Manager. Town Administration will ensure that each goal is incorporated into the appropriate departmental work plans. The Department Directors, under the guidance of the Town's Administration, will complete each strategic goal accordingly. All relevant information will be presented to Town Council for review, deliberation, and consideration for further action at future work sessions. The overall process is designed to ensure that the strategic ambitions of the elected body are met.

FINAL REFLECTIONS & WRAP-UP

To conclude the retreat, the Councilors shared their final reflections:

"It is good to see how we can lean into something different/unique."

"We are being proactive to look ahead."

"It is great to see everything build and come together."

"We have lots of appreciation for town staff."

"It is good to see the evolution and to see plans in place."

"It is helpful to see the vision visually."

"There are so many good ideas."

"It is comforting to see how comprehensive our strategy is for our community."

"We will continue to challenge staff."