

# Louisburg Strategic Economic Development Plan

Prepared by the NC Main Street and Rural Planning Center

High performing organizations are those that learn to anticipate and adapt to change by creating value for those served, and motivation and meaning for those who serve them. The best tool for accomplishing these objectives is strategic planning.

In late fall of 2016, the Town of Louisburg adopted a resolution requesting assistance from the North Carolina Main Street and Rural Planning Center to help develop and prepare an economic development strategic plan for the Town of Louisburg. A strategic planning committee, made up of county and town officials, as well as prominent local business owners was formed to develop the plan. The committee met over the fall and winter of 2016/2017 and discussed the many issues facing the Town of Louisburg. The plan was focused on three main areas of concentration: downtown revitalization, economic growth and improvement of the community as a whole.

The committee articulated a vision for the future of Louisburg and used this vision as a focal point for the development of the goals, objectives and actions that surfaced throughout the process:

**Louisburg is a peaceful, historic, southern small town with a proud past and a positive future fostered by community, faith and family.**

The committee then began the difficult task of identifying major issues, strategies, and actions to be taken in order to implement the plan's vision over the next five years.

This document is the culmination of their efforts.

If the wishes of the Town are to have any meaning, they must be accompanied by deliberate planning efforts to move the organization and the community toward a desired future. This requires clearly defined goals; proactive, measurable objectives; direct action; committed leadership; and effective management. Above all, it requires managing the forces of change. Those forces include community demographics, State and Federal mandates, fiscal constraints, economic conditions, emerging technologies, and many other influences on service delivery efforts.

The Action Plan is composed of the following elements: *Goals, Objectives, Actions, and Tasks*. The Time Horizon of the plan is 5 years. The *goals, objectives, actions* and *tasks* refer to the following definitions:

**GOALS:** are general guidelines that explain what you want to achieve—they are usually long-term and represent broad visions for the future

**OBJECTIVES:** defines strategies or implementation steps to attain identified goals. Objectives are specific and measurable and may have a completion date

**ACTIONS:** a series of steps a community takes to implement a specific objective or strategy.

**TASKS:** list of steps to achieve an action, usually achievable in a one year time frame.

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Louisburg Economic Development Implementation Plan	
<p><b>Economic Positioning/Vision:</b> Louisburg is the gateway to peaceful, historic southern living; a small town by the big city, with a proud past and a positive future fostered by community, faith and family.</p>	
DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION	
GOAL 1: Create a successful, vibrant downtown center	
Objectives	Actions/Tasks
<p><b>Objective #1.1:</b></p> <p><i>Increase visitors and foot traffic to the downtown area.</i></p>	<p><b>Action: Host several downtown centered community festivals throughout the year</b></p> <p>Task: Identify holidays, occasions and seasons that would be feasible for community-wide events. Identify at least one event per month</p>
<p><b>Objective #1.2:</b></p> <p><i>Increase the number of small businesses downtown.</i></p>	<p><b>Action: Assess available downtown properties</b></p> <p>Task: Speak with property owners</p> <p>Task: Research rental cost per square foot.</p> <p>Task: Continue to address parking needs</p> <p>Task: Consider upper level residential units</p> <p><b>Action: Identify types of small businesses that are needed downtown</b></p> <p>Task: Survey existing businesses in downtown to help determine what is needed</p> <p>Task: Recruit businesses to fill the need</p>
<p><b>Objective 1.3:</b></p> <p><i>Improve the aesthetics and appearance of the downtown business district through public and private investment.</i></p>	<p><b>Action: Using public investment to leverage private investment in the downtown</b></p> <p>Task: Obtain and renovate at least one downtown structure</p> <p>Task: Repair sidewalks</p> <p>Task: Continue the facade improvement program</p> <p>Task: Work towards walkability</p> <p>Task: Relocate utilities, underground</p> <p>Task: Consider wayfinding</p>

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ECONOMIC GROWTH	
GOAL 2: Grow the local economy in Louisburg	
Objectives	Actions/Tasks
<p><b>Objective #2.1:</b></p> <p><i>Increase the annual sales revenue of locally owned businesses.</i></p>	<p><b>Action: Work with and promote locally owned small businesses and tourist attractions</b></p> <p>Task: In partnership with the College, develop a marketing directory that allows for the listing and promotion of local businesses, local attractions and local entertainment options</p>
<p><b>Objective #2.2:</b></p> <p>Partner with Louisburg College to develop a unique branding and marketing campaign to give Louisburg a recognizable identity.</p>	<p><b>Action: Hire a branding and marketing professional to facilitate the process and develop the plan</b></p> <p>Task: Develop a scope and projected cost for the project</p> <p>Task: Develop and publish RFQ</p> <p>Task: Set aside Town money to pay for the project</p>
<p><b>Objective #2.3:</b></p> <p>Increase the number of large-scale employment centers.</p>	<p><b>Action: Recruit large-scale employment opportunities</b></p> <p>Task: Partner with the County EDC and TDA</p> <p>Task: Recruit hotel opportunities</p> <p>Task: Recruit medical and healthcare opportunities</p> <p><b>Action: Improve industrial park properties to allow them to be marketable to potential suiters</b></p> <p>Task: Catalog available industrial sites and other potential development sites online</p> <p>Task: Hire a part-time business ambassador to serve as liaison between business owners, potential business owners, the Town and the College</p> <p><b>Action: Improve broadband internet and cellular access throughout Town.</b></p>

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COMMUNITY	
GOAL 3: Encourage growth through residential development	
Objectives	Actions/Tasks
<p><b>Objective #3.1:</b></p> <p><i>Increase tax base from approximately \$249 million to \$262 million by 2025.</i></p>	<p><b>Action: Focus residential development on moderate income, detached single family homes</b></p> <p>Task: Identity areas for targeted residential development or redevelopment</p> <p>Task: Market area to developers and potential buyers</p>
Goal 4: Improve the appearance and aesthetics of Louisburg town-wide	
<p><b>Objective: #4.1:</b></p> <p><i>Invest public funding into beautification efforts garnering community pride.</i></p>	<p><b>Action: Maintain public rights-of-way keeping them free of trash, debris and overgrowth.</b></p> <p><b>Action: Increase floral plantings in public spaces.</b></p> <p><b>Action: Review code to ensure Town has the authority to abate public nuisances on private property.</b></p> <p><b>Action: Proactively fund inspection, condemnation and demolition of dilapidated structures throughout Town.</b></p> <p><b>Action: Host a spring clean-up event originating in the downtown area allowing citizen participation in town-wide clean-up efforts.</b></p> <p><b>Action: Focus on the improvement of the South Main Corridor.</b></p>

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## Goal 5: Emphasize the use of entertainment, recreation and natural resources to improve the quality of life for residents and visitors of all ages and interests

<p><i>Objective: #5.1:</i></p> <p><i>Expand and improve recreation and entertainment opportunities in Town.</i></p>	<p>Action: Attract eco/entertainment related businesses and activities that emphasis family recreation emphasizing local natural resources.</p> <p>Action: Partner with the Tar River Center for Culture and History to develop and promote local historical and cultural attractions.</p> <p>Action: Work closely with Louisburg College on joint endeavors promoting cultural and entertainment activities throughout the year.</p> <p>Action: Recruit entertainment venues such as a movie theater, bowling alley or skating rink to encourage visitors and residents to stay local for their entertainment.</p> <p>Action: Improve safety of existing parks and public spaces through increased lighting and patrols by law enforcement.</p> <p>Action: Consider building an outdoor pool/splash pad.</p>
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## Monitoring and Evaluation

Constant evaluation of the goals, objectives and action steps in this plan, via regular review sessions with the Economic Development Steering Committee and other Town leadership, is critical to ensuring it remains a viable, living document. The Town will continually monitor progress on how well and successful the Town is at managing projects, meeting deadlines, communicating internally and to multiple external audiences, and utilizing the resources available.

The Louisburg Economic Development Strategy is a living document used to prioritize the needs of the community and outline Town objectives. The value of the plan lies with the ability of the Town to set realistic goals — and implement innovative strategies — against which progress can be measured. It also allows the community to gauge the ongoing product of its local government.

Implementation, evaluation and modification will be continuous in order for the plan and the Town of Louisburg to remain relevant, responsive and proactive. This strategic effort will provide greater accountability and represents an organization-wide approach to the preservation and enhancement of the quality of life our very special community enjoys.

The most successful strategic planning efforts approach implementation from a network-based model, versus a more traditional hierarchical model (top-down approach). An Implementation Committee should be appointed to oversee the Town's efforts and to reach out to partners. By working with economic partners such as NC Department of Commerce, Franklin County Economic Developers, Electricities Economic Development team, Louisburg's economic development strategy can leverage resources and capacity. NC Department of Commerce has yearly Actions & Tasks templates to assist the Town in measuring progress, and the Town should reach out to NC Commerce once a year to help evaluate success, report progress and update the action plan as goals are realized.

The Economic Development Steering Committee should revisit the plan twice yearly (at budget time, and in November) to mark progress and amend the plan as necessary.