



Graceful Great Blue,
by Kelly Mieszkalski.



ORANGE COUNTY

NORTH CAROLINA

STRATEGIC PLAN FY2025-2029

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Canopy 2, by Diane Cashion

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Board of Commissioner's Message

After months of engagement, community building and collaboration, we are pleased to present Orange County's five-year Strategic Plan. This plan is an aspirational endeavor for the future of the County – who we are, who we want to be, and how to get there. Its success depends on all of us working together to implement the plan, report and evaluate our progress and make the adjustments necessary to continue moving the County forward.

This strategic plan is an essential tool in laying out ways we can make the County stronger. While we continue with our clear focus on delivering excellent service each day, this document is a public declaration of our commitment to work to achieve the County's vision. Together, we created a vision for the future of the County: We are a diverse, inclusive, and healthy county working together to strengthen our community and enhance the quality of life for all residents.

Key to the formation of this Strategic Plan is the input and feedback we received from each one of you. It is through your discussions, insights, and input, that this Strategic Plan was developed. It was built and informed by your needs, your priorities, and your dreams. These are your visions and priorities, and we look forward to putting them into action.



Sally Greene Vice Chair At Large
Anna Richards District 1
Phyllis Portie-Ascott District 1
Jamezetta Bedford Chair District 1
Amy Fowler At Large
Earl McKee District 2
Jean Hamilton District 1

Plan at a Glance

Mission Statement

Orange County is a visionary leader in providing governmental services valued by our community, beyond those required by law, in an equitable, sustainable, innovative, and efficient way.

Vision Statement

We are a diverse, inclusive, and healthy county working together to strengthen our community and enhance the quality of life for all residents.

Guiding Principles

Communication and Awareness

We provide information and opportunities for engagement in a transparent manner so that all in our community have knowledge, understanding, and a voice.

Inclusivity and Engagement

We foster an environment in which all are welcomed, represented, and empowered to participate in and feel connected to their community.

Dedication and Respect

We commit to our roles in public service and organizational excellence by fostering the skills, talents, and innovation of our residents, employees, volunteers, and boards needed to carry out this work.

Stewardship and Advocacy

We make proactive data supported decisions and advocate to local, state and Federal governments in response to our community's needs in a way that best utilizes our resources.

Partnership and Collaboration

We build meaningful relationships and connections that allow us to create holistic and integrated systems of support for all.

Social Justice

We reject oppression and inequity by ensuring fair and equitable treatment of all people.

Climate Action and Sustainability

We recognize that our environment is critical to our existence and are deliberate in protecting, preserving, and sustaining our natural resources for the continued good of all.

GOAL STATEMENT

Promote sustainability and resiliency across the County and collaborate with our partners to activate our community, protect and preserve our natural resources, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Objectives

1. Identify the priorities and resources necessary to implement the Climate Action Plan.
2. Invest in our infrastructure to reduce the environmental impact of the County fleet/facilities and improve safety.
3. Improve educational opportunities for County staff and community members on climate action and available resources to advance climate action projects.
4. Incentivize and promote sustainable agriculture and local food systems development through supportive policy, funding, farmland protection and educational outreach.
5. Review land use policies to promote and connect Town, County, and private trails and open spaces.
6. Protect water supply/watersheds.
7. Conserve and protect high priority open space, including Natural Heritage sites, nature preserves, watershed riparian buffers, and prime/threatened farmland.
8. Include environmental stewardship objectives in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

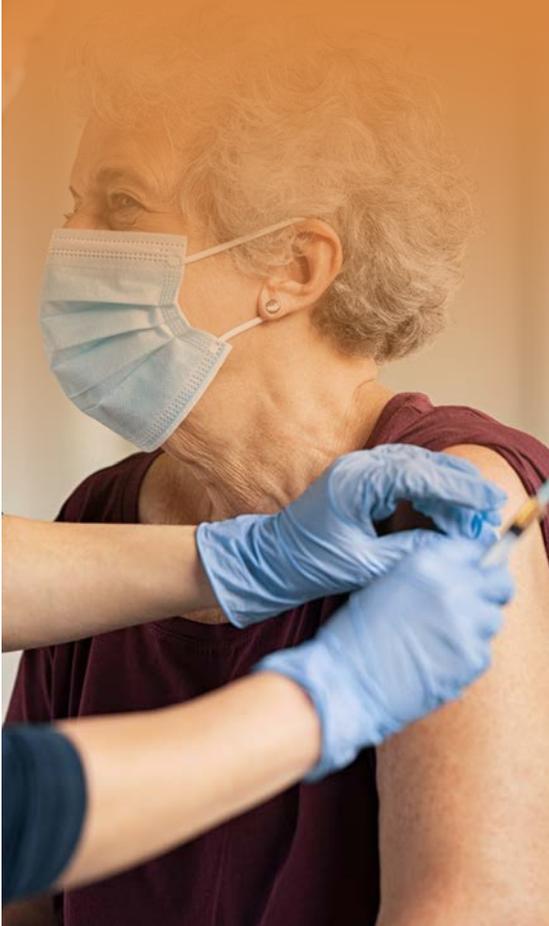


GOAL STATEMENT

Increase equitable access to care and social safety net programming to promote the physical, social, and mental well-being of our community.

Objectives

1. Improve harm reduction, prevention, and support services for adults and children experiencing behavioral health issues, substance use disorder, and intellectual or developmental disability.
2. Expand access to quality, affordable healthcare services. (e.g., Crisis Diversion facility, Medicaid expansion, crisis response, healthy living campaign).
3. Provide social safety net programming and the resources needed for our most vulnerable community members (e.g., veterans, unhoused people, foster children, older adults, etc.).
4. Reduce impacts and barriers for justice-involved children and adults through deflection, diversion, therapeutic interventions, and re-entry support, including housing.
5. Invest in, support, train, and retain our community safety, health, and emergency services employees and direct care workforce.
6. Provide sustainable, equitable, and high-quality community safety and emergency services to meet the community's evolving needs.
7. Invest in services and programs that improve the health and quality of life of the community (e.g., recreation and public open spaces, arts, etc.)



GOAL STATEMENT

Promote equitable and accessible housing and address housing disparities through policies, partnerships, and collaboration to create a thriving community.

Objectives

1. Allocate predictable funding sources to contribute or support adding to affordable housing stock.
2. Address need and any policy barriers to increase access to emergency shelter beds and other low-barrier housing including eviction diversion.
3. Invest in permanent supportive housing.
4. Prioritize and select County-owned land and/or facilities as part of an overall plan of facilities to create crisis, bridge, low barrier, affordable, and permanent housing.
5. Review County ordinances, policies, agreements, and the regulatory processes to streamline practices, and increase opportunities and reduce barriers to construct housing.
6. Partner with public agencies to increase opportunities for public employees to buy and rent homes where they work.
7. Expand resources and invest in housing designed for our aging and disabled residents.
8. Preserve existing housing stock from disrepair and avoid displacement.
9. Increase representation of people with lived experience on housing related matters.

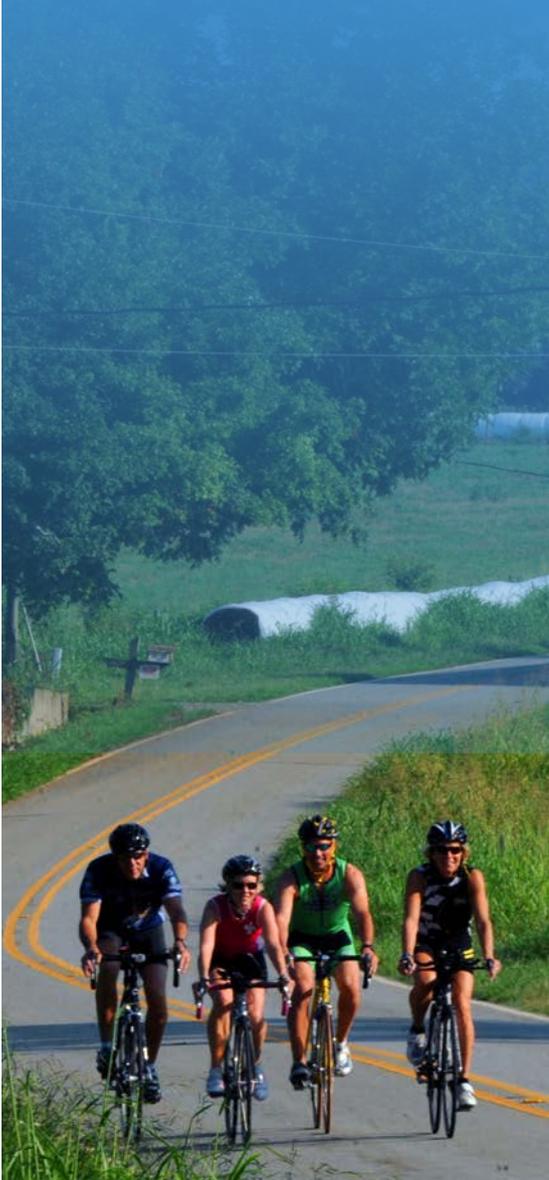


GOAL STATEMENT

Collaborate with our regional partners to expand, integrate/connect, and provide accessible public transportation options.

Objectives

1. Identify priorities and resources necessary to implement the Orange County Transit Plan.
2. Increase community awareness of all modes of transportation including transit, bike and pedestrian, vehicle, and all other modes.
3. Support road projects that address congestion and reduce commute time using the County's Complete Streets policy.
4. Coordinate transit investments with municipal and county land use planning to reduce vehicle miles traveled and to provide more equitable access to shopping, employment, medical centers, college campuses, etc.
5. Invest in implementing the County's Safe Routes to Schools plan.
6. Update transportation related plans to provide more multi-modal options including rural Orange County.



GOAL STATEMENT

Enhance and maintain quality school operations and infrastructure and cultivate lifelong learning.

Objectives

1. Foster collaborative relationships with formal and informal educational organizations and agencies to provide opportunities for community members to meet, connect, and learn together.
2. Improve school readiness and educational outcomes by providing access, training, tools, technology, and other resources needed to thrive.
3. Provide support for workforce development through training, tools, technology, and other resources.
4. Improve learning environments by investing in facilities over a 10-year period that address repair, renovation, and educational adequacy needs.
5. Invest in and implement a plan that supports schools operational and facility funding needs.
6. Implement the recommendations of the Schools Safety Task Force.
7. Invest in and expand equitable behavioral health services for children and adolescents.
8. Invest in and expand equitable behavioral health services for teachers and staff.



GOAL STATEMENT

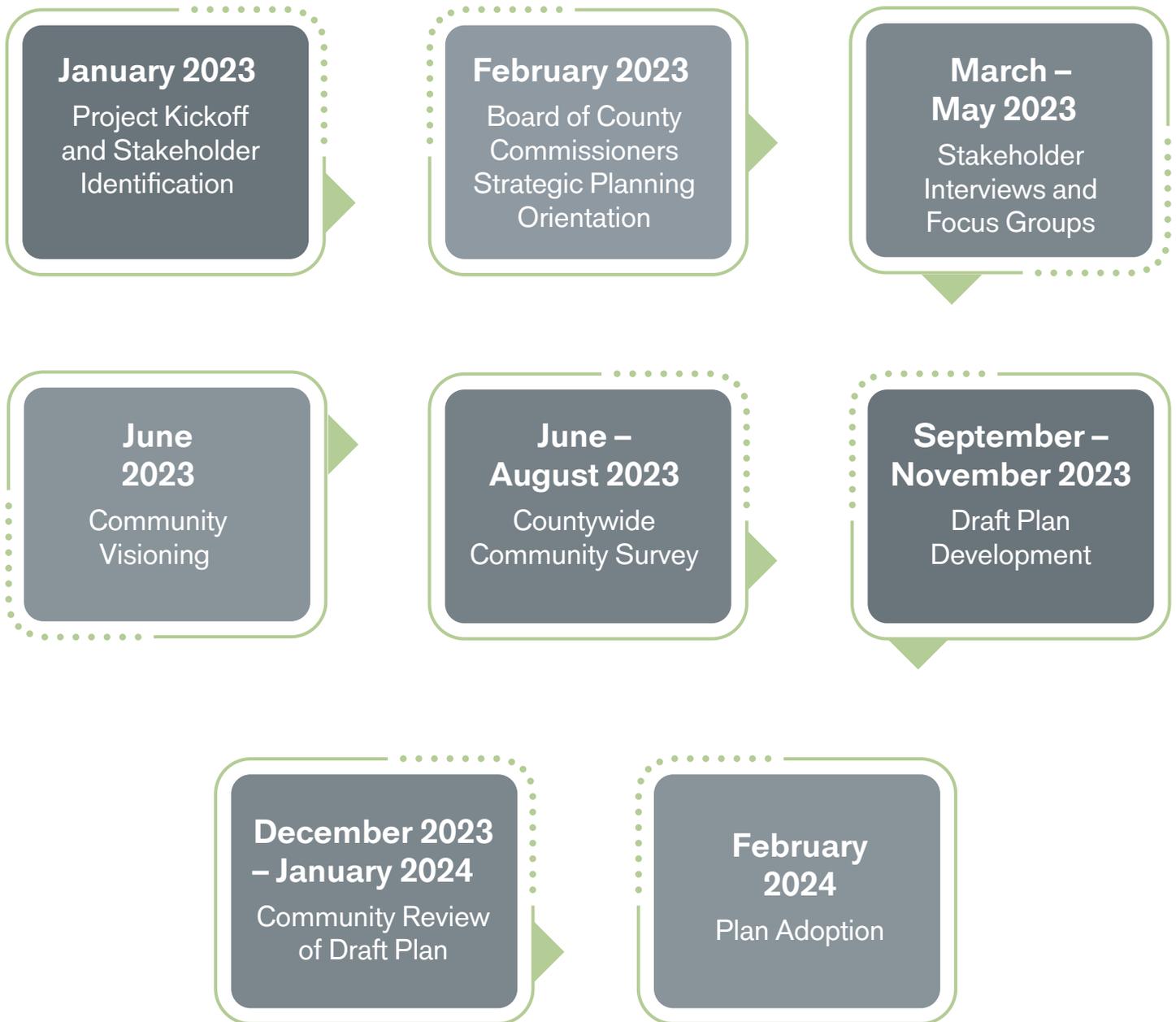
Foster an environment that attracts and retains sustainable and diverse businesses and visitors, employment opportunities, and diversifies our tax base.

Objectives

1. Provide family-oriented and inclusive programming or other cultural events for residents and visitors.
2. Review and revise County policies and regulations to support business investment in Orange County.
3. Streamline and digitize business processes to facilitate efficient interactions between employers and County departments.
4. Provide resources to small, creative, and agro-businesses that add character and quality of life to our community to attract employers, employees, and visitors.
5. Increase access to and awareness of resources and assistance available to residents and businesses.
6. Provide workforce and business development resources to enhance the skills of residents of the County.



Timeline



Public Engagement Summary



4

Focus Group



40

Participants



Community Engagement Site

5,590

Total Visits

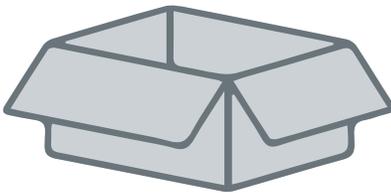
311

Survey Responses

49

Ideas

Meeting-in-a-box



7

Participants



1

Community Pop-up Event

Employee Survey



406

Responses

Community Survey
(statistically valid)



604

Responses

Community Survey
(non-random)

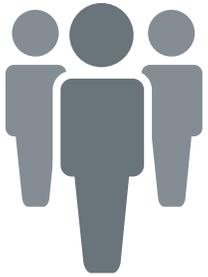


696

Responses

Demographics

Orange County Population



134,010
2010

148,911
2020

161,272
2030



\$79,205

Median Household Income*



\$339,900

Median Household Value



93.7%

High School Graduate
or Higher

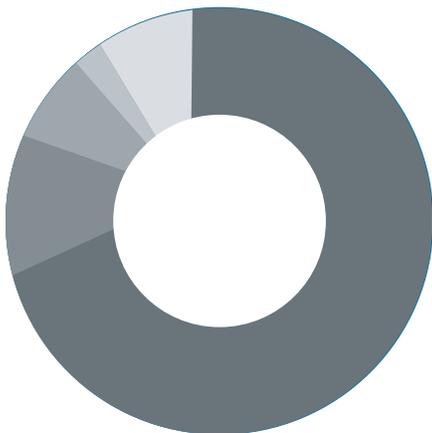


12.2%

Residents Below
Poverty Level

Source: 2022 Population Estimates, US Census Bureau *in 2021 dollars

Race and Ethnicity



68.8%

White or Caucasian
(Non-Hispanic)

12%

Black or African
American

8.8%

Hispanic

8.2%

Asian or
Asian Indian

2.8%

Two or More
Races

Source: North Carolina Office of State Budget & Management, State Demographer

What's Next?

Putting the Plan Into Action

Now that the strategic plan is adopted, the implementation phase commences.

This involves translating the outlined strategies into actionable steps, assigning responsibilities, and establishing timelines.

Regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will be put in place to assess progress and make adjustments as needed.

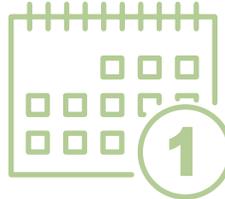
Feedback loops will also be established to help ensure continuous improvement and alignment with the County's overarching goals.

Successful execution of the strategic plan will require adaptability, clear communication, and a commitment to achieving the defined objectives.

Stay involved and curious about the process to learn more about our progress on the plan.

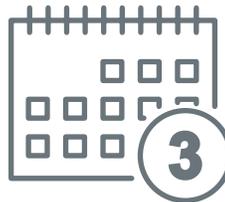
Keeping Track Of Progress

How are we doing? We'll let you know!



MONTHLY

County staff will evaluate and discuss progress on Strategic Plan goals.



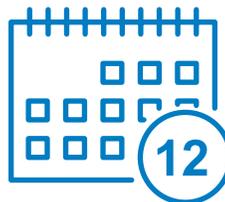
QUARTERLY

County leadership will provide the County Manager's Office with progress updates for each Strategic Plan goal.



TWICE A YEAR

County Manager's Office will prepare an update to the Board for each Strategic Plan goal, including significant wins and challenges.



ANNUALLY

The County Manager's Office will prepare a year end update detailing progress on each Strategic Plan goal. Report to be presented to Board and shared on orangecountync.gov for public access.

Acknowledgments

This strategic plan is the result of the combined efforts of our County's residents, elected officials, employees, and community stakeholders.

Orange County would like to thank everyone who provided their knowledge and insights throughout the process and who dedicated their time to making this Strategic Plan come to life.



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