



Historic Loft Living



Schiele Museum of Natural History & Planetarium



Warlick Family YMCA

CITY OF GASTONIA 2023-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN WITH DEPARTMENTAL GOALS & OBJECTIVES





Infrastructure Investment

1. Continue to partner with the Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization (GCLMPO), Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization (CRTPO), North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), Gaston County, surrounding municipalities, Mecklenburg County, and the City of Charlotte on regional transportation projects to address the congestion problems experienced on the area transportation network.
 - a. Work with partners to further develop the Catawba Crossings Project, a proposed 6.8-mile new location boulevard between NC 279 (S. New Hope Road) in southeastern Gaston County to NC 160 (Steele Creek Road) in western Mecklenburg County, just south of the Charlotte Douglas International Airport (CLT). The proposed Catawba Crossings includes new bridges over the South Fork Catawba River and Catawba River and a new, or expanded, interchange with I-485 south of the existing West Boulevard interchange.
 - b. Coordinate with NCDOT and other county partners on the I-85 widening project, specifically in implementing an aesthetic theme for highway bridges over the interstate.
2. 2022 Transportation General Obligation Bond Projects:
Continue the identification, design, and construction of transportation projects related to the 2022 GO bond. These project types include:
 - a. Street resurfacing.
 - b. Intersection improvements – Priority intersections have been identified and the consultant is beginning to gather traffic data at those interactions. The City has been awarded a \$400,00 Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant from USDOT. Staff will assist in the completion of a Safety Action Plan and development of traffic calming policy guidelines based on Complete Streets concepts.
 - c. Safety improvements around schools and parks – Transportation / safety improvements have been identified for each site.
 - d. Miscellaneous sidewalk and pedestrian projects – Remount Road sidewalk from New Hope Road to Aberdeen Boulevard. Also, Avon Greenway from E. Second Avenue to Franklin Boulevard.



Customer Service

- e. Roadway manhole repairs.
- f. Planning and engineering for future roadway projects:
 - Neal Hawkins Corridor study.
 - Garrison Boulevard Corridor Study – The study has been completed and the City has applied for a USDOT RAISE grant for implementation of the corridor study.
- 3. Implement Transportation Capital Improvement Projects:
 - a. Continue to extend sidewalks and greenways using federal, state, Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ), and NCDOT State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funding.
 - Franklin Boulevard Sidewalk at Franklin Square (EB-5701)
 - South New Hope Road Sidewalk (EB-5743)
 - Hudson Boulevard Sidewalk (EB 5745)
 - Marietta Street and Hilltop Street Sidewalk (EB 5768)
 - New Hope Road Sidewalk (EB 5975)
 - b. Partner with the State of North Carolina on the Sims Legion Park Landfill Mitigation Project. Complete a master plan for the property while the State continues to prepare for the mitigation measures approved by the State.
 - Cox Road Sidewalk (EB 5976)
 - Court Drive, Aberdeen Boulevard, Airline Avenue, and North Morris Street Sidewalks (FTA Funded)
 - Highland Branch Greenway
 - Catawba Creek Southeast Greenway Extension
 - Partner with the Carolina Thread Trail (CTT) and private developers to amend the CTT Master Plan as a component of the Linwood Springs Park and extensions through future private development surrounding the park
 - Continue to seek funding sources and begin design for greenway connectivity/bicycle pedestrian projects at the Bradley Recreation Center/Grover residential development, Martha Rivers Park/Derry residential development, Marietta Street/Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Way corridor



City Hall - Tom Hauer Photography

8. Begin design and construction of Phase I Linwood Springs park improvements. Prepare and submit grant applications for the approved master plan to raise adequate funds for all phases of park construction.
9. Study and recommend solutions to address building space needs in City Hall, Garland Center, Municipal Operations Center, Warehouse, Solid Waste, Equipment Services, Technology Services facility on Second Avenue, Memorial Hall, and the Adult Recreation Center. Prepare a five-year master capital improvement plan.
10. Implement the Public Works Campus Master Plan:
 - a. Complete Phase I that improves conditions for Solid Waste, fuel farm, and vehicle cleaning facility.

- b. Design, plan, and fund next phases of the master plan that include the entire fleet services facility.

11. Complete Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Documentation for the Gastonia Municipal Airport to support the extension of the runway to 5,000 feet.

Solid Waste



Gastonia Municipal Airport



Garland Business Center



Healthy Community

12. Continue to evaluate and prioritize projects in the Greenway Master Plan and update plan as needed. Work with private developers of greenfield properties to explore dedicated recreation and park properties in strategic areas of the City. Complete strategic plan for an all-inclusive park site plan. Evaluate opportunity for the addition of a recreation center in the Southeast area of the City.
13. Complete the renovation of the Walker E. Reid, III Park into a quality athletic park facility to include construction of park shelter(s) and playground equipment through use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds.
14. Continue to develop plans and projects in efforts to reduce the potential for flooding in the Duharts Creek watershed. This includes leveraging funds from state and federal partners for demonstration projects and best management practices.
15. Continue to partner with Gaston County Schools on the reconstruction of Grier Middle School to produce the maximum benefit to both Gaston County Schools (GCS), the Schiele Museum, and the City.



Good Government

16. Employee Development and Engagement Manager will work with departments to create opportunities for employee engagement with a focus on professional development, leadership, inclusion, and training. Employee surveys will be used to monitor the progress of employee engagement.
17. Continue to monitor the job market for compensation and hiring trends, making adjustments when and where needed to ensure the City continues to attract and retain qualified City employees in an efficient and timely manner.
18. Create a Popular Annual Financial Reporting (PAFR) and obtain the City's first Triple Crown Award.
19. Develop an anonymous avenue for employees to report fraud, waste, or abuse of City resources.
20. Implement necessary rate adjustments to provide additional funding for repair and replacement of critical capital needs in the water and wastewater conveyance and treatment systems and the electric distribution system.
21. Continue to improve the Alliance for Community Engagement (ACE) program by enrolling additional neighborhoods across the City.
 - a. Develop and implement a Neighborhood Leaders' Forum, inviting leaders from Recognized Communities together to provide a venue for open discussion of current concerns, recent



Farm to Table Education Session

accomplishments, and upcoming goals for their neighborhoods. Participants would receive updates of City initiatives and offer a guest presenter to encourage leadership in our communities.

- b. Create a New Neighbors' Day Event for new citizens and current residents, alike, to introduce City services, resources, and personnel in a drop-in style format. This is great way to allow citizens to see how they can become more engaged and involved in the City's offerings.



22. Expand the current Farm to Table Program which addresses food desert conditions, provides community education, and food items. The project is a collaborative effort of Keep Gastonia Beautiful, Gastonia Farmers Market and Healthy Highland/ RAMS Kitchen. Expansion is to include other population segments and will add a healthy market component for area residents to receive produce.
23. Continue to work on litter control efforts and clean-up through community involvement, education, and program development as part of a collaborative effort of Public Works and Keep Gastonia Beautiful.
24. Continue to seek funding and support solutions to promote community-wide commitment to the goal of reducing homelessness, and to work with all interested stakeholders including, but not limited to, Gaston County, Downtown merchants, non-profit organizations, and faith-based groups that work with those experiencing homelessness to provide assistance to those in need.
25. Increase City employees' understanding and awareness of practices to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) through training and continued learning opportunities. Continue to work across all City Departments to identify strategies to build a more diverse workforce, foster a more equitable and inclusive work environment, and support diversity, equity, and inclusion in City policy making and in the delivery of services.
26. Continue to monitor and assess the City's cyber security position relative to the protection of information technology systems and data. Implement and maintain policies, controls and processes that address mandated security requirements and that follow industry best practices. Implement an inventory control bar-coding system for warehoused supplies to allow for inventory control to improve accuracy, efficiencies, and improve managing of inventory.
27. Partner with Gaston County to implement the One Gaston 2040 Vision Plan.
28. Complete an update of the City of Gastonia's Comprehensive Plan.



Fire Engine 4

Safety

29. Request additional resources from the NC General Assembly for the NC Criminal Justice Standards Division to reduce the length of time for the Division to review and certify new law enforcement officers and lateral transfers. The Gastonia Police Department continues to face challenges with filling vacant officer positions, and the delay in obtaining a certification for a new officer or an officer transferring from another agency increases the time it takes for an officer to be able to protect and assist our community once hired.

30. Meet and exceed personnel levels through improved social media presence and focused recruitment and retention efforts to better serve our community, maximize officer safety, promote professional standards, and increase diversity and inclusion.



31. Manage public safety issues, increase public confidence, and promote accountability through community policing tactics that focus on statistics, problem solving, and evidence-based solutions.

32. Work to create a safer, more accessible environment for all users of our highways, streets, and roadways, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation users, motorists, personal conveyance and micromobility users, and commercial vehicle operators:

- a. Complete the citywide traffic signal system upgrade project with NCDOT.
- b. Complete a Safety Action Plan.

33. Utilize the City's fire station location study to identify and secure property for future stations and begin design and funding for future expansion including increased personnel, apparatus, and facilities.

34. Improve the coordination, support and management of a comprehensive security camera system to improve safety for citizens, employees, and property.

Community Identity

35. Engage and convene community partners to work towards developing a coordinated and innovative approach to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within our community. Pursue additional opportunities to connect marketing and communications strategies that support diversity, equity and inclusion efforts.
36. Develop, fund, and install a new 3,800 square foot Earth Science gallery with a major dinosaur theme in the existing Robinson Hall. An important goal of this Paleo Project is to create an exciting exhibit that will increase the Schiele Museum's role as a major visitor attraction in the region and broader southeastern United States.
37. Position news stories that highlight the City's services, news, and destination travel options with reporters and respond in a timely manner to media requests for release of information.
38. Implement the HOME American Rescue Plan (ARP) allocation plan which authorizes the use of federal funds needed to partner with local non-profits, businesses, entities, and other units of local government to create housing opportunities for the most vulnerable populations. Continue with revitalization and stabilization efforts within the neighborhoods of Gastonia through the use of various funding sources and through partnerships with non-profit agencies and developers for safe and affordable housing.
39. Parks and Recreation, Keep Gastonia Beautiful, and other staff and stakeholders will continue to provide guidance to the City Council Arts Committee in developing a Master Art Plan, partnerships for public art installations, art-related activities, and art education.
40. Continue to improve citizens' experience with city government by focusing on customer service. This includes the implementation of interactive digital applications for citizens, improved customer payment options, and continued improvement of the Customer Care Center.

Gastonia City Council (Left to right)

Front row: Mayor Pro-Tem Dave Kirlin, Donyel Barber, Mayor Richard Franks (center), Jennifer Stepp, Robert Kellogg

Back row: Jim Gallagher, Charles Odom



Economic Vitality

41. Work with private development partners in the Franklin Urban Sports & Entertainment (FUSE) District to complete construction at Dirty Bull Brewery, Dillinger Building, Franklin Yards, and The Foundry projects. Continue to work with developers on the private development pads at the FUSE District.

42. Work to increase Downtown and FUSE residential and commercial occupancy rates. Work with owners of vacant Downtown properties to market and recruit retail tenants. The goal is to recruit destination retail.

43. Recruit satellite higher education facilities to Gastonia to create additional educational opportunities, create jobs, and spur additional foot traffic.

44. Implement strategic planning and recruitment efforts to improve key commercial corridors in Gastonia:

- a. Highway 7 Corridor
- b. Garrison LEARNS District
- c. New Hope Road Business Corridor

d. Eastridge Mall redevelopment

e. South 321 Corridor

45. Implement ways to increase Downtown property owners / business through coordination with the Gaston Business Association and engagement with the Downtown Gastonia business group.

46. Work with the Zawayer Sports and Entertainment, Gaston College, Gaston County Tourism Development, the Gaston Business Association, and the Montcross Area Chamber of Commerce to promote tourism, sporting events, festivals, and visitation to Gastonia.



Eastridge Mall

CaroMont Health Park in the FUSE District - Tom Hauer Photography





Downtown Gastonia

VISION

The City of Gastonia serves as a model for civic leadership as we engage our community of dedicated neighbors (**Great People**). We share a collective passion for personal safety, economic vitality, inclusiveness, cultural richness and overall sustainability (**Great Place**). Our distinct character is built upon a rich and unique heritage and fueled by enthusiasm for the promise of a bright tomorrow (**Great Promise**).

MISSION

To provide fair, competent, responsive, cost-effective services at the highest level.

CORE VALUES

We, the Mayor, City Council, Managers, Supervisors and Employees practice Accountability, Inclusiveness, Safety, Professionalism, Honesty and Integrity to safeguard and enhance the public trust in City Government.

www.gastoniansc.gov

