



2018: The State of Chatham County Report



Follow the Compass: Plan Chatham

In November 2017, the Board of Commissioners adopted the Plan Chatham Comprehensive Plan, which focuses on the next 25 years. This adoption launched a flurry of implementation activities and also spawned other long-term planning efforts around specific function areas.

Plan Chatham includes 10 goals, with specific strategies and action items for each. The plan's development required a unique, multidisciplinary approach with innovative stakeholder involvement, an integrated approach to health and natural resources planning, and a final product that combines analytical findings with visualization.

In January 2018, the Chatham County Board of Commissioners opted to use the plan's goals as its goals, with additions to cover areas not sufficiently addressed in the plan, such as customer service, financial stewardship, public safety and human services. County administration organized cross-departmental collective impact teams that will focus on implementing the plan. The entire plan can be found at www.chathamnc.org/comprehensiveplan.



Plan Chatham offers several concept designs for smaller developments across the county. This is an example of a mixed use infill project.

Comp Plan Activities Underway

- The county partnered with the towns of Siler City, Pittsboro & Goldston to begin a **Water & Wastewater Master Plan**.
- Parks & Recreation staff worked with a consultant on development of **Comprehensive Master Plan** for parks, recreation programs and trails.
- The Council on Aging completed a 2018-23 **Chatham County Aging Plan** to better prepare for our aging population.
- The Chatham Health Alliance and Public Health Department has started work on several of the plan's health goals and strategies.
- The **Affordable Housing Task Force** has already addressed specific strategies in the comp plan (see page 4).



Residents helped shape the Council on Aging's 2018-23 Aging Plan at community meetings. View the completed plan at <http://chathamcouncilonaging.org/chatham-aging-plan>

Comp Plan Awards

- **National Award of Excellence** – The American Planning Association and the National Association of County Planners selected Plan Chatham as the only recipient of the Award of Excellence in the Large Jurisdiction category. The award cited the plan's "forward thinking in preparation for managing rapid growth, while supporting its rural character."
- **Healthiest Cities & Counties Challenge Spotlight Award** – We were one of 50 recipients nationwide to win a \$10,000 prize to build on the plan's strategies for community health.
- **NC Marvin Collins Award for Outstanding Planning** – The state chapter of the American Planning Association honored Chatham's Comprehensive Plan with its top state award in the Large Community/ Comprehensive Planning category. The jury especially praised the inclusion of natural resources and citizen health.

Education Highlights

The county made significant progress on several major school facility projects in FY 2017-18 as part of the county's Capital Improvement Plan. The county retained its AAA and AA1 bond ratings, which means that borrowing for these projects and others qualified for a bond premium, a savings for taxpayers.

- 📍 **Seaforth High School** – School officials approved a design for this 1,400-student school expected to open in August 2021. See image top right.
- 📍 **Chatham Grove Elementary** – This K-5 school reflects a commitment to joint use facilities. When finished in August 2020, it will include a recreation center shared with the county. It also will serve as an emergency shelter.
- 📍 **Community College Health Sciences Building** – Construction has begun for this facility, which will help meet the demand for health-related professionals. Opening late 2020, it will serve as an early voting location and the site includes land for a future county library branch.
- 📍 **School System Central Services Building** –The latest Capital Improvement Plan added this facility, which will house all school system administrative staff and provide meeting space. Construction begins in 2020.

The county provided significant funds to offset the impact of a 2017 state mandate to reduce K-3 class sizes. Since the legislature provided some funds for reduced class sizes, county funds will be used to begin the transition of county-funded salary supplements for licensed employees from a flat-rate base to a percentage base.



Chatham County Schools received a grant of \$200,000 from the NC Department of Public Instruction for digital instruction teaching and learning at all schools in the county. Technology has been a top priority of the school system for several years.



Exterior design of Seaforth High School, slated to open August 2021.

📍 Chatham County Schools Achievements

Superintendent Award – Chatham County Schools Superintendent Dr. Derrick D. Jordan was selected the 2018-19 Piedmont-Triad Regional Superintendent of the Year. He will compete for top superintendent in North Carolina.

Focusing on the Whole Child – Chatham County Schools and the Chatham County Health Department created a full-time position to oversee the district's new programming in health, wellness and physical education. The person also will serve as a liaison between the district and the Health Department.

The program is based on the NC Department of Public Instruction's **Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child** model. Chatham County Schools is one of only a few participating school districts. In addition to the health position, the district also could provide additional services for student mental health and implement restorative practices across all schools.

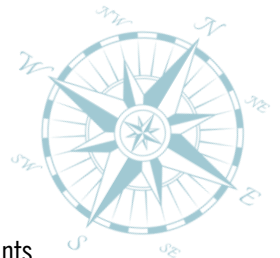
Non-School Facilities

The county moved forward on several other facilities besides education projects:

- **Briar Chapel Park** – In September 2017, PARTF awarded the county \$150,000 to add a playground, picnic shelter, trails and sidewalk connection to a nearby school. Some of this work has been completed, but will continue next year.
- **County Government Campus** – Chatham County started exploration of replacing several aging facilities in downtown Pittsboro with a larger facility. An architect is working on options for consideration. The facility is not currently funded in the capital improvement plan.
- **Future Pittsboro Town Hall** – The county continued to support the Town of Pittsboro in its plans for a new town hall downtown, which could house some county offices.

Economic Development

Update on Both Megasites



As a requirement of \$8 million in infrastructure grants from the Golden LEAF Foundation, the Board of Commissioners approved five-year options to purchase either megasite if an industry is ready to locate. Also, the county assisted with two projects related to the CAM Megasite in Siler City:

- provided \$750,000 to upgrade the town's wastewater treatment plant
- helped secure an additional \$600,000 from Golden LEAF Foundation to upgrade the town's water plant

New Jobs & Business Investment			
	FY 2017	FY 2018*	% Change
New jobs created	60	750*	↑ 1,150%
Value of jobs created by new businesses	\$2.1 million	\$21 million*	↑ 900%
New businesses capital investments	\$10.5 million	\$98 million*	↑ 833%
New capital investment per \$1 county investment	\$61.09	\$275*	↑ 350%
Percentage of non-county funding for EDC	35%	55%*	↑ 57%

*Information from the Chatham Economic Development Corporation (EDC). Results for FY 2018 are estimates pending annual audit and final numbers from state & local partners

County Leadership News

- County Manager** – Renee Paschal, who has served as county manager since November 2015, announced her retirement on Oct. 1, 2018 with 30 years of public service, most of it in the County Manager's Office. Paschal played key roles in initiating many successful programs, including the Leadership Academy, an award-winning budgetary process, the capital improvement program, joint use facilities, and Citizens' College. Assistant County Manager Dan LaMontagne will serve as interim county manager while the Board of Commissioners conducts a manager search.
- Cooperative Extension** – On Feb. 1, 2018, Ginger Cunningham became the new director of the Chatham County Center of NC Cooperative Extension. She previously served as 4-H agent and 4-H program assistant. A native of Chatham County, Cunningham will soon earn her doctorate from NC State University, where she already has a master's in animal science. In May, she announced two new agriculture agents: Matt Jones, horticulture, and Ashley Robbins, livestock & forages. Victoria Brewer is the new administrative assistant.
- Veteran Services** – Chatham County hired its first veteran services officer in October 2017. David Kennedy assumed the role in January 2018. Kennedy once provided these same services to Chatham veterans as part of his 40 years with the NC Division of Veterans Affairs. Kennedy completed all required training to obtain his veteran officer's certification.
- Court Services** – The county manager combined several court-related services into a new Courts Services Department, led by Renita Foxx. She will also continue directing Chatham 360, which offers treatment and supervision of offenders in the pretrial release program. The new



Chatham County Manager Renee Paschal, who is retiring after 30 years on October 1, is shown honoring Kevin Keas in Facilities & Construction, who was named Outstanding Graduate of the 2018 Chatham Leadership Academy. Renee served as a tireless champion of this leadership program, which has had 288 graduates during its 16 years.

department also includes family visitation services, child victim services and a new domestic violence program (see page 4).

- Watershed Protection** – Watershed Protection has been transitioned to a full county department charged with oversight of four key environmental regulations. Rachael Thorn, who leads the department, reports that site inspections for erosion control and buffer determinations are at an all-time high.

Other Big News in FY 2017-18

Major Improvements in Biennial Resident Survey

Measure	2017 Grade	2015 Grade	Change
Overall interactions with staff	A-	B+	↑ 9.3%
Chatham as a good place to work	B-	C-	↑ 40.0%
Water Utilities billing & payment	B	C-	↑ 61.1%
Central Permitting & Inspections courtesy of staff	A-	B	↑ 24.1%
Planning – timely service	B	C+	↑ 26.2%
Planning – application process	B	B-	↑ 22.1%

Customer Ratings – A professional research firm conducted our biennial resident survey in November 2017, with calls to selected cell phones and landlines. Residents were asked to grade the county in specific areas, using grades A to F. The survey found several major improvements since 2015, including several record-level improvements, based on the firm’s experience. Water utilities, planning and central permitting & inspections offices had some of the biggest gains in ratings. Residents also had much better view of the county as a place to work. See chart on the left.

📍 **Domestic Violence Support** – Chatham County added staff in two departments to offer support victim services previously provided by a local nonprofit. The Sheriff’s Office houses two Victim Services Coordinators. A new county office, Chatham Family Violence Prevention Services (CFVPS), includes two full-time, bilingual Domestic Violence Advocates.

📍 **Child Victims** – The county’s Child Victims Advocate successfully developed and offered the “Think first and Stay Safe” curriculum in all fourth grade public school classes. This comprehensive, evidence-based program has lesson plans for varying age groups and will soon expand to kindergarten classes.

📍 **Affordable Housing** – In fall 2017, the Board of Commissioners appointed an Affordable Housing Advisory Committee, which hit the ground running. They developed guidelines for a new Affordable Housing Trust Fund, partnered with the Town of Siler City to conduct an assessment of housing conditions in target neighborhoods, developed a location policy, and developed a Tenant Rights – Fair Housing & Housing Quality Issues Brochure and created several webpages with a growing array of affordable housing resources. They also hosted a van tour of affordable housing sites (see photo at right).

📍 **Online Permitting & Inspections** – While staff used the CityView online permitting portal for months to improve staff efficiency, the public gained access in December 2017. Users can submit applications, schedule inspections, pay fees, upload building plans and check permit status. In just seven months, CityView had 843 active accounts and 62% of building permit applications were submitted online.

📍 **Opioid Prevention** – Chatham County Sheriff Mike Roberson and Chatham Health Director Layton Long convened more than 75

leaders across the county as part of a Chatham Opioid Prevention Leadership Summit on Dec. 4, 2017. The Sheriff’s Prevention Partnership on Controlled Substances led the planning effort for the summit and has continued to do important follow up work.

📍 **Community Health Assessment** – The Chatham Health Alliance, in partnership with the Public Health Department, Chatham Hospital, and many community groups, initiated the 2018 Community Assessment process. It builds on the 2014 assessment to identify health needs and provide a snapshot of the county and its residents - what they need, what challenges they face, what strengths and opportunities exist in the community, and what we can do together to make life better.



The Affordable Housing Advisory Committee sponsored a tour of affordable housing sites for elected officials and others. They stopped at the Henry Siler School redevelopment site, which will become affordable rental units in Siler City.



*Chatham Emergency Management formed **Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs)** to help communities better prepare for emergencies & disasters. Shown above is a fire safety session at one of two basic trainings held for 58 participants. Classes teach recommended actions before emergency responders arrive. The next step is advanced training on how to assist county operations. Several CERT Team members provided valuable assistance during Hurricane Florence.*

- 📍 **Mental Health Provider** – After more than two years of effort, the county was able to attract a more reliable provider of services for mental health and substance abuse for those with limited ability to pay. Daymark Recovery Services opened its Siler City Clinic on July 3, 2017. Thus far, people report substantially higher levels of satisfaction. The county applied for and won \$11,250 in grant funding from Cardinal Innovations to expand Daymark’s clinic space.
- 📍 **First Senior Education Retreat** – The Council on Aging joined with Cooperative Extension in hosting the first County Senior Education Retreat on April 18, 2018. It featured a full day of programs on a wide array of topics. More than 200 people attended the first event and gave it very high marks.
- 📍 **First Spring Ag Fest** – Chatham’s Cooperative Extension worked with other agencies, including Soil & Water Conservation, to host the county’s first Annual Spring Ag Fest at the Chatham County Agriculture & Conference Center on March 24, 2018. The event celebrated the county’s agriculture, forestry, and natural resources.

Awards & Honors

Extension Partnership Award – In the summer of 2018, the NC Cooperative Service North Central District named Chatham County as the recipient of its County Partnership Award, which recognizes local governments for their outstanding partnership with extension. Counties are selected for various types of support of county Cooperative Extension offices.

National Health Award – Chatham County received \$25,000 as part of the Healthiest Cities & Counties Challenge Spotlight Award. Nationwide, just ten winners were selected for their ability to address the need to improve healthy living opportunities.

Emerging Health Leaders – The Kresge Foundation selected Health Director Layton Long and Director of Health Promotion & Policy Mike Zelek as two of 40 public health leaders nationwide who work to transform the role of local health departments in their communities. This is part of the foundation’s Emerging Leaders in Public Health initiative, which helps local health officials develop knowledge and skills to tackle community health challenges.

Social Services Leadership – Jennie Kristiansen, director of Social Services, was appointed by the Governor to serve on the NC Child Fatality Task Force. She also was one of 50 government leaders statewide selected for the Local Government Federal Credit Union Fellows Program at the UNC School of Government.

Digital Government Award – For the first time, Chatham was awarded a top 10 digital county government designation for best practices nationwide in its population group (less than 150,000). The Center for Digital Government joined with the National Association of Counties in picking national winners of the 2018 Digital Counties Survey, which measures such factors as open data, cybersecurity, efficiency, innovation and resilience.

NC Code Officials – The Governor appointed Fire Marshal Thomas Bender to the NC Code Officials Qualification Board, which certifies all Code Enforcement Officials in North Carolina.

Safety – For the fifth year, Chatham County received top awards from the NC Department of Labor for outstanding safety practices. For 2017, we received a total of 11 gold and silver awards.

Council on Aging – Susan Hardy with the Council on Aging received the annual statewide Service Excellence Award from the NC Association on Aging.

Global Tourism Conference – Neha Shan, director of the Convention & Visitors Bureau, spoke at an invitation-only conference on global tourism, the 2018 Tourism Intelligence Forum (t-Forum). The forum promotes collaboration among tourism businesses, academic institutions, and public agencies.

Additional Highlights

- 📍 **Election Processes** – The Chatham Board of Elections has implemented an election night audit to streamline the process of ensuring that all vote totals match. Staff also implemented a daily vote count audit at one-stop early voting sites and sent runners to each site daily to monitor processes and supplies.
- 📍 **Water System Maintenance** – Water Utilities staff completed a comprehensive assessment of all fire hydrants and valves in the system. The next step will be addressing those in need of repair or replacement.
- 📍 **Watershed Protection Department** – This office stepped up its focus on outreach and education, including hosting a successful Contractor Training Workshop in May. Coming up are stormwater trainings with Homeowners Associations.
- 📍 **Solid Waste & Recycling** – In FY 2017-18, Solid Waste & Recycling began giving free recycling bins to residents that use the Collection Centers, with the goal of increasing the volume of recycling. Thus far, 1,000+ bins were distributed. Staff also has started a compost demonstration site, using food waste from the nearby Detention Center. It will be used for composting instruction.
- 📍 **Youth Court Services** – Chatham 360 expanded its services for 16 to 17 year olds charged with misdemeanors. If the youth successfully complete a comprehensive program, they may be able to avoid jail time and an arrest record.
- 📍 **Job Training** – In March 2018, Social Services joined with the community college in offering an employment and training program for those receiving food and nutrition services at DSS. The program connects recipients with an “education navigator” to assess training needs and develop an education plan for higher wages.



Chatham County Emergency Management Director Steve Newton was deployed to help with recovery in Puerto Rico. Such experience helps county personnel practice and hone skills in emergency response and recovery situations. He is third from the right above. Staff also deployed to Scotland County to help locate a missing child and to Hawaii to help with the volcano eruption disaster. The state's mutual aid system and FEMA make such efforts possible.

Grants

- **Senior Centers** – The Council on Aging received \$30,000 from the Cannon Foundation to build covered front porches at the Western Chatham Senior Center. Other grants allowed the installation of presentation projectors and large screens at both senior centers.
- **Water Quality** – Chatham Soil & Water Conservation's membership in the Piedmont Conservation Council helped Siler City obtain \$521,000 in grants for enhanced water quality and community improvements.



JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION: Chatham Community Library in Pittsboro collaborated with Chatham Organizing for Racial Equity (CORE), to host the county's first Juneteenth celebration on June 23, 2018 with 150 attendees. The event sought to foster a sense of unity among residents concerning slavery and the efforts required to abolish it.

At the podium is Charles D. Johnson, PhD, associate professor and director of Public History at NC Central University, who addressed why the institution of slavery did not end with the Emancipation Proclamation.



Wren Memorial Library in Siler City assisted CORA Food Pantry's SNACK! Program, which provides food during the summer for families and children in need. The library helped obtain volunteers and other needs for four programs, each serving 200 children in the community.

Additional Highlights

- 📍 In June 2018 the Board of Commissioners extended the **Oil & Gas Development Moratorium** until Jan. 31, 2019 to allow more time to develop amendments to the Zoning Ordinance. The proposed amendments will address a wide range of high impact land use activities, including oil and gas exploration.
- 📍 **Chatham Water Utilities** came to the aid of Nature Trail Mobile Home Park, which had urgent private water system issues. The county hired a contractor to replace all the water mains, add more hydrants and install a new booster pump station to improve water flow for fire protection. Work will be completed in the new fiscal year.
- 📍 **4-H Club Expansion** – The 4-H Youth Development program in Cooperative Extension expanded to eight clubs with varied focus areas, including livestock, equine, shooting sports, STEM, sewing, and home-school education.
- 📍 The **Chatham Youth 4-H Program** implemented a butterfly life-cycle program in 35 local schools reaching 950 students. The goal is to boost students' lagging performance in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and math. Evaluations showed that 85% of students improved their science grades by at least one letter grade.
- 📍 Cooperative Extension's **Family & Consumer Science Program** collaborated with the **Chatham County Council on Aging** to offer the "Powerful Tools for Caregivers" program which empowers

For Vulnerable Children

The Department of Social Services hosted several events and programs to improve the lives of vulnerable children:

- 📍 **Adoption Day Celebration** in November 2017 helped raise awareness about the rewards of adoption. The Assistant Clerk of Court finalized adopting two children as a part of the event.
- 📍 **Chatham County Links**, a special program for youth in foster care, provided a huge array of enrichment activities, including Career and College Night, tour of UNC Asheville, and volunteering at a senior care facilities.
- 📍 A former foster child in Chatham was appointed to serve on the SaySo Board of Director, which advocates for better care for foster children across North Carolina.
- 📍 **Pinwheel Garden** (see photo below).



Social Services staff recognized the Pinwheels for Prevention campaign for Child Abuse Prevention Month in April. They planted colorful pinwheels around Chatham, each representing a child in foster care or involved in abuse & neglect assessment. The goal is to bring attention to the tragic occurrence of abuse and neglect.

- individuals taking care of disabled or shut-in family members by providing different strategies on caregiving. They also worked with the Council on Aging on an array of other programs, such as Eat Smart/Move More/Take Control and knife use skills.
 - 📍 **Chatham 360's** First Offender Program, designed for individuals at least 18 years old or those with serious felonies, had 87 enrolled last year. Of these, 51 successfully graduated and had their charges dismissed.
- The Pretrial Release Program offers more than just a chance for release from detention. It focuses on the needs of individuals and offers treatment and resources, with the goal of reducing future offenses. During 2017-18, the program had a 40% success rate and another 34% carried into the next program year.

For Older Residents

The Chatham County Council on Aging reported on several major highlights besides those noted earlier:

- 📍 The Triangle Community Foundation selected the Council for a **Capacity Building Partnership for Community Development grant**, which supported a professional organizational assessment, board development training and enhancement of information technology functions.
- 📍 The UNC-CH Gillings School of Global Public Health Council selected the Council on Aging to receive the help of a **Capstone Team** of five graduate students. The team played a key role in developing the 2018-23 Chatham Aging Plan noted on page 1.
- 📍 The Council piloted a new teaching model for the **UNC-CH Nursing School** by hosting a team of student nurses and their faculty during the spring 2018 semester. They focused on four distinct Council on Aging projects.
- 📍 The Council reported more than 200 registrants for **Chatham's Senior Games and Silver Arts**, far exceeding participation in the prior year.



A Steering Committee helped the Council on Aging with development of its 2018-23 Chatham Aging Plan. The plan identified goals and strategies in six areas: transportation, housing, health care coverage & services, care services & caregivers, social connectedness and overarching goals.



The groundbreaking for the new Health Sciences Building for Central Carolina Community College brought together county commissioners and community college leaders. Located on US 15-501 at Briar Chapel, the facility will also include an early voting site and a future space for a separate library branch.

Hurricane Florence Recovery
 If you had damage from Hurricane Florence, please complete our survey found at:
www.chathamnc.org/FloDamage

Chatham Soil & Water Conservation provides funding and technical assistance on best practices to protect water and soil. At right is the installation of plantings in a riparian buffer at Boling Lane Park.

In FY 2017-18, Soil & Water Conservation's practices prevented 125,142 pounds of carbon dioxide, 2.7 pounds of nitrous oxide, 7.4 pounds of methane from entering the atmosphere. They also prevented 283 pounds of sulfur dioxide and 111 pounds of mono nitrogen oxides (hydrocarbons) pollutants from being released into the atmosphere.

