

Commissioner Goals

Beginning In 2017 and continuing in the coming fiscal year the Board of Commissioners adopted Plan Chatham goals and added three additional goals. The complete set of goals adopted are as follows:

Plan Chatham Goals:

- Preserve the **rural character** and lifestyle of Chatham County.
- Preserve, protect, and enable **agriculture and forestry**.
- Promote a **compact growth pattern** by developing in and near existing towns, communities and in designated, well-planned, walkable mixed-use centers.
- **Diversify the tax base** and generate more quality, in-county jobs to reduce dependence on residential property taxes, create economic opportunity and reduce out-commuting.
- Conserve **natural resources**.
- Provide **recreational opportunities** and access to open space.
- Provide **infrastructure** to support desired development and support economic and environmental objectives.
- Become more **resilient** by mitigating, responding and adapting to emerging threats.
- Provide **equitable access** to high-quality education, housing, and community options for all.
- Foster a **healthy community**.

Additional Commissioner Goals:

- Demonstrate sound fiscal stewardship to ensure we can meet the important service needs of our residents.
- Provide **effective, efficient government** that is responsive to the different needs of residents and varying circumstances across the county.
 - Mitigate the impacts of poverty among individuals and households in the county through programs and services that promote stabilization and resiliency.
- **Ensure public safety** through adequate resources, plans, and partnerships to keep people and property safe.
- **Strengthen relationships** with other boards, municipalities, and regional entities to address common challenges and opportunities.

County departments with similar missions formed teams to provide better focus on achievement of these goals. To make the numerous goals, objectives, and strategies of Plan Chatham easier to track and address, high-level themes were identified and adopted by each team:

- Safe, Vibrant, Healthy Community
- Demand Driven Public Services
- Growth and Resource Management
- Organizational Excellence and Resiliency
- Data and Technology Gaps.

Administration

The Administration team includes internal service departments that provide support functions for departments that deliver services. Departments on this team include the County Manager department, Elections, Facilities, Finance, Governing Board, and MIS.

Themes: The themes that guide the work of this team are:

- Demand Driven Public Services
- Organizational Excellence & Resiliency
- Data and Technology Gaps

FY 2021-2022 Accomplishments

Manager's Office

- Successfully managed a year-long celebration of Chatham County's 250th anniversary.
- Introduced a redesigned website to improve accessibility and ease of use.
- The Oak View at Siler City was selected for 9% tax credits in August 2021. Seventy-two units of income-restricted housing are planned to come online in 2023.
- Manager staff and Planning staff collaborated to create agreement with Vickers Village to include a "Payment in support of" development agreement and 10 permanently affordable units for a minimum of 99 years.

Human Resources

- Equal Employment Opportunity officer provided technical assistance to start an internal equity workgroup in DSS.
- Implemented EEO plan to use more recruitment platforms that will provide connection to HBCUs and the community college system.
- Revamped Leadership Academy curriculum to offer more electives and equity instruction.
- Received NC Department of Labor Safety Awards: 11 Gold Awards.
- Introduced paid family leave for birth or adoption of a child or for family caregivers.

Governing Board

- Clerk and County Attorney worked with planning staff to create a new set of rules and procedures for zoning public hearings and subdivision first plats, which was approved and implemented by the BOC in November 2021.
- Clerk served as head adult ally for the Chatham 250 Youth Committee (ChaTeens 250) and helped organize the youth event for the final celebration.
- Clerk worked with staff, contract attorney, and all members of the Board of Adjustment to approve a regular meeting schedule to improve the application and hearing process for both residents and staff/BOA.

Elections

- Hosted the first in state in-person/virtual campaign finance training at the CCA&CC for candidates and treasurers throughout the state.
- Made informative videos of Chief Judge supply pick up process– and election night audit processes as a tool to assist judges with additional training and better inform the public of the process for transparency.
- Hosted Chief Judge and Judge training for appointments made in August 2021 to implement new security and audit processes to be effective for elections in 2022.

- With support from the Clerk to the BOC, staff streamed board meetings and avoided paying a third-party vendor.
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Development Services

The Development Services team includes departments that either directly regulate and permit development or support that work. Departments on this team include Central Permitting and Inspections, Environmental Health, GIS, Planning, Register of Deeds, Tax, Water, and Watershed Protection.

Themes: The themes that guide the work of this team are:

- Safe, vibrant, healthy community
- Growth and resource management

FY 2021-2022 Accomplishments

Central Permitting and Inspections

- Processed an unprecedented number of inspections and permits.

Planning

- White & Smith, LLC and Nealon Planning, PLLC were selected to draft the Unified Development Ordinance.
 - Work started in September with a completion date in the fall of 2023.
 - Initial efforts by the consultants included researching existing regulations and policies, meeting with 7 advisory boards and committees, Board of Health, and Board of Commissioners, and launching a project website – www.recodechathamnc.org.
 - The consulting team will provide an audit report in late spring of 2022 followed by drafting the UDO modules through 2023.

Tax

- Presented 268 reappraisal appeals with the Board of Equalization and Review Board resulting in 142 with no change in property value.
- Began the property tax software conversion.
- The Tax Administrator received Level III Real Property certification through NC Department of Revenue.

Watershed Protection

- Ongoing partnership with the Town of Pittsboro to handle development associated with Chatham Park.
- Working with Planning Staff and consultants on the UDO.
- Review and oversight of Moncure Megasite TIP West initial projects.
- Participation in Haw River Trail Steering Committee.
- Participation in the Dry Creek Watershed Management Plan effort with TJCOG and partners.

Economic and Workforce Development

The Economic and Workforce Development team includes departments that are positioned to encourage business growth, ensure a trained workforce, and attract visitors to Chatham County. Departments include the Economic Development Corporation, Convention and Visitor Bureau, and Chatham County Agriculture and Conference Center. Central Carolina Community College also participates on this team.

Themes:

- The themes that guide the work of this team are:
- Safe, vibrant, healthy community
- Organizational Excellency & Resiliency

FY 2021-2022 Accomplishments

CVB

- Translations to Spanish and French are available on the website.
- Made several media trips and pitches to provide coverage of Chatham County.

CCA&CC

- Reopened CCACC following COVID shutdown.
- Acquired portable bleachers and tractor to facilitate outdoor events.

Human Services

The Human Services team includes departments that provide services that enhance the health and welfare of county residents. Departments on the team include the Council on Aging, Department of Social Services, Public Health Department, Court Services, Library and Parks and Recreation. Chatham Transit Network, Chatham Trades, and Cardinal Innovations also participate on this team.

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FY 2021-2022 Accomplishments

Council on Aging

Given the serious adverse effect of social isolation owing to COVID-19, the Council worked to reach, engage, and comfort seniors sheltering in place through various means:

- Reopened in July for fully vaccinated participants, offering hot meals and programming at the Western Center. Because of ongoing renovation construction at the Eastern Center, participants who normally attended the Eastern Center are being transported via Chatham Transit to the Western Center on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
- Partnered with Chatham County Parks & Recreation and the Chatham County Center of NC Cooperative Extension, to create a model Peaceful Pathways for Caregivers' area within the Northeast District Park. A group of 20 first-year UNC medical students assisted with preliminary work (e.g., clearing of brush, spreading of mulch). Mountaire Farms, Carolina Meadows, Chatham Hospital, UNC Hospital, and Transitions LifeCare served as sponsors for the project.
- The renovation/expansion of the Eastern Center is well underway with an expected date of completion by May 2022. Participants continued to be served in various ways, including through the Western Center. This included holding several large events offsite (e.g., Yee Haw stage performance, Thanksgiving Program, and Holiday Celebration at the Chatham Agriculture and Conference Center).
- Served as a pilot for Emergency Management in developing a Business/Organization Continuity Plan that could then inform other departments and organizations on the process and refine the format to be used. Social Services was the other pilot organization.
- Expanded the Claris Companion IT project, funded by the NCSU Institute for Emerging Issues, to help seniors who are socially isolated. Using a survey based on UCLA's Loneliness Scale (validated as a useful indicator of isolation and loneliness), we have been encouraged to see a decreased sense of loneliness among users.
- Celebrated their 47th anniversary on July 8th, with production of T-shirts for sale and a special virtual concert that included Rissi Palmer and John McCutcheon.

Court Services

- Increased resources offered to clients such as veteran services, residential treatment, sober living facilities, in-home based services, peer support and vocational rehabilitation referrals.

- Worked with Chatham Drug Free to provide Recovery Celebration for Siler City on April 30th, sponsored by Vaya Health.
- Awarded an Office for Violence Against Women grant to continue funding of Family Visitation Services.

DSS

- Collaborated with Division of Health Benefits and Enrollment Broker to transition beneficiaries from a Medicaid fee for service to managed care model.
- Trained 15 regular foster families and 8 kinship families to-date. The foster home licensing team is on track to license 10 new family foster homes this year almost doubling the number from FY21.
- Implemented a DSS Equity Committee with established vision and goals.
- Launched the Low-income Household Water Assistance Provider that provides financial assistance to pay water bills for low-income residents in Chatham County.
- Launched a new coaching support model for child welfare and adult services social workers in collaboration with the UNC School of Social Work.
- Began a new parent partner program to provide assistance to families served by the child welfare program.
- Social workers referred 25 individuals who were screened for Chatham Family Treatment Court. 22 individuals participated in and received services through FTC and 20 people received services through the Chatham Parenting Program.
- Partnered with Youth Villages and Vaya Health to provide weekly behavioral health assessments at DSS for children and youth receiving child welfare services.

Public Health

- Continued COVID-19 vaccination efforts, including booster shots and pediatric vaccine. More than 8,000 doses have been administered at clinics across the county.
- Coordinated with partners on COVID-19 vaccination clinics and testing sites to ensure access to the Chatham community. This included establishing daily COVID-19 testing sites in Pittsboro and Siler City.
- Continued to share COVID information with the community through press releases, social media, newspaper articles, flyers, PSAs, podcast interviews, Facebook live events, community outreach events and videos.
- Expanded nutrition services such as the Diabetes Prevention Program and medical nutrition therapy.
- CCPHD held its first Equity Committee meeting. The committee will work to integrate equity into the department's internal policies and programs.
- The Child Care Health Consultant received certification in November after completing a 12-week training course. The program provided health and safety technical assistance to child-care facilities related to COVID-19 during 39 different encounters.
- As part of Environmental Health strategic plan around water quality, local water treatment consultants and Southeast Rural Communities Assistance Program were invited to train staff on water treatment options for wells and to share information about funding programs to address well and septic needs in Chatham.

Parks and Recreation

- Made improvements to the South Bynum River Access. Cleared invasive species and installed park benches, trashcans, and handrails on the stairs.
- Expanded the walking trail at Southwest District Park.

- Operated the Chatham Grove Community Center on a limited basis and offered a pickleball program and yoga classes.
- Renewed the Haw River Trail Memorandum of Understanding with ten other agencies.

Library

- The library branches served as distribution sites for residents to obtain N95 masks provided by the Health Department.
- The Chatham County Public Library system enrolled in the Sustainable Shelves program, which gives monetary credit for saleable books and provided other communities in need with materials to boost their collections.
- Youth Services promoted reading for school-aged children by initiating Winter Reading BINGO. This popular program was offered at all branches. The number of participants exceeded the number of participants in the long-established Summer Reading Program. Many caregivers expressed appreciation for children's activities to offset the long periods of time kids spend indoors due to winter weather.

Natural Resource & Agriculture

The Natural Resources & Agriculture team includes departments that provide services that preserve, protect, and enable agriculture and forestry. Departments on the team include Cooperative Extension, Soil & Water Conservation and Environmental Quality.

Themes: The themes that guide the work of this team are:

- Safe, vibrant, healthy community
- Growth and Resource Management

FY 2021-2022 Accomplishments

Cooperative Extension

- Visit NC Farms App launch was successful and is growing.
- 4-H partnered with Mountaire Farms to deliver meal boxes as part of the Thanksgiving for Thousands and Christmas for Thousands campaign.
- County Extension Director Ginger Cunningham was awarded the 2021 Distinguished Service Award from the NCAE4-HYDP Association at the NC Annual Conference in Sept. 2021.
- Horticulture Extension Agent Matt Jones co-led the Carolina Backyard Naturalist Webinar Series.
- Members of the Chatham County 4-H Horsekateers Club comprised the NC 4-H National Team for horse bowl, horse judging, and hippology contests. They won the coveted 2021 National Championship. We are extremely proud to have Chatham County serve as the home of the 2021 national champions!
- Livestock agent Kristina Britt established the inaugural Chatham County Youth Livestock Team.
- FCS agent Tara Gregory partnered with UNC on a grant to focus on blood pressure management and healthy foods.

Environmental Quality

- Received grant award from NC DEQ to make recycling easier for all residents.
- Expanded Don't Waste It program to 20 new trainers across the southeast.
- Shannon Culpepper, Recycling & Education Specialist, received Outstanding Service award from Environmental Educators of North Carolina.
- Started collecting bagged Styrofoam at the main facility.
- Under contract to install a solar panel system on the Environmental Quality building.
- Work has begun on the design of a solar panel system for CCA&CC.
- Work is nearly complete on two electric vehicle charging stations.

Soil & Water Conservation

- Staff taught soil science class at Central Carolina Community College.
- Attended Perry Harrison Fall Fest with our Enviroscape Model.
- Assisted the Town of Siler City and the Piedmont Conservation Council with water quality grant projects for stream restoration, stabilization and preservation in the Loves Creek Watershed. Hosted a volunteer day to clean up a riparian buffer in the watershed.
- Accepted 51 State and Federal cost share and incentive program applications, which will prioritize state or federal funding for contracts for natural resource conserving practices.

- Staff assisted the Agricultural Advisory Board to enroll 78 eligible parcels in the Voluntary Agricultural District Program (total 13,085 acres in the program).
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Public Safety

The Public Safety team includes departments that respond to emergency situations, prevent crime and other public safety hazards, and generally protect the safety of county residents and property. Departments on the team include: Emergency Management, Emergency Communications, Fire Marshall, and Sheriff.

Themes: The themes that guide the work of this team are:

- Safe, vibrant, healthy community
- Demand-driven public services
- Organizational excellence and resiliency
- Data and technology gaps

FY 2021-2022 Accomplishments

Emergency Management

- Partnered with Emergency Communications and First Health EMS Chatham to participate in the RACE-CARS trial to improve out-of-hospital cardiac arrest survival.
- 23 lives were saved because of a partnership with Chatham County Sheriff's Office to ensure public safety agencies have access to Naloxone/Narcan kits to respond to opioid overdoses.
- Coordinated a successful Harris Nuclear Plant exercise.

Emergency Communications

- Reaccredited with International Academies of Emergency Dispatch for our emergency fire dispatch protocols.
- Trained all public safety personnel in the county on the new radio system.
- Completed new radio installations for all fire departments, EMS and rescue squad
- Completed construction of three (3) new radio towers.
- Collaborated with Chatham County Schools and NC State University on a research project involving broadband.

Fire Marshall

- Hosted fall workshops for the NC Fire Marshals Association (85 attendees) as well as two chapter meetings for the NC Chapter of the International Association of Arson Investigators.
- Successfully coordinated to host the Office of the State Fire Marshal's "Fire Investigation Technician" certification class (80 hours of instruction). This was coordinated through this office, OSFM, CCCC and North Chatham Fire Department.
- Worked closely with Building inspections and Central Permitting with the implementation of the new permitting software (OpenGov). Since the cyber incident, the bulk of our work has been in paper form and staff is continuing to enter the inspections.

Sheriff

- Detention Center received its ninth (9th) consecutive rating of "No Deficiencies".
- Met ALL state guidelines and COVID-19 risk management goals.
- Partnered with Health Department to offer free COVID-19 vaccinations to inmates and staff members during multiple in-house clinics.
- Celebrated the Grand Opening of the expansive new Sheriff's Office Animal Resource Center (ARC) in Pittsboro.

- Resumed the Sheriff's Training Academy for Residents (STAR) Program with new protocols for participants post-COVID.
- The Sheriff's Office hosted its 2nd Annual Sheriff's Sleigh Toy Drive as well as increased the number of children and families served through the Shop with a Sheriff Program in December 2021.
- Received the Humane Law Enforcement Award for 2020 from the Humane Society of the United States.
- Received the Sheriff of the Year Award from Special Olympics North Carolina for their continued support.
- Coordinated the 2021 Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics to help carry the Flame of Hope across Chatham County to its destination.
- Held 4th Annual Charity Golf Tournament at Governors Club to raise money for Special Olympics North Carolina.

Looking Ahead

In FY 2023, there are several common issues that the CITs will need to address to continue to achieve commissioner goals. The issues are not discrete but are interconnected and interdependent. The issues are as follows:

Application Support and Infrastructure: Needs include consistent staff training and education for critical and non-critical mission software capabilities and evaluating new and current software as they pertain to organizational needs. Departments are trying to identify solutions that will streamline processes. Existing software will be evaluated, and improved, and specialized software will be integrated with mission-critical software, such as the financial software. The cyber incident increased departments' awareness of the responsibility to protect, maintain, and restore business systems. Technology that can improve services in high-risk environments are being explored.

Internal Process Management: This issue addresses communication, process implementation and administration, as well as the need to consistently evaluate and coordinate processes. Policies and procedures for data governance and security are needed at a systematic level. Tracking systems that will improve the management of boards and committees are needed. Public records requests are reaching new levels and are more complex and technical. Team needs a more formal collection process of commonly requested information especially as it relates to Development. The importance of collecting and maintaining data is increasing as it relates to project needs or even asset repairs (e.g., fire hydrants).

Access to Technological Resources: This issue speaks to the need for technology that can assist with the provision of services in an improved and adaptable manner. The demand for county-wide high-speed broadband is intensifying for county staff as well as residents. Online programming has been offered consistently but still leaves out some who lack access to the resources needed to participate.

Service Availability and Capacity: Service Availability & Capacity refers to departments facing challenges in areas such as recruitment and retention, availability of resources for those they serve. Demand for services has been increasing for all county departments, and new large-scale development projects will add to the already high workload.

Equity: There are several ongoing efforts related to Equity happening across the County as an organization. The Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) officer will be working with departments on their internal equity initiatives. The EEO working group will conduct a comprehensive policy audit. The need for translation is growing as well as the need to track other non-English languages in addition to Spanish.

Legislative Impacts: State policy decisions around development standards and other related programs are having a direct effect on staff workload and capacity.

Mental Health: Demand for service of substance abuse and other addiction cases is rising. The gap between the need for and the availability of behavioral and mental health services has grown. Internally, departments are looking for new approaches to alleviate staff burnout and stress.

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