

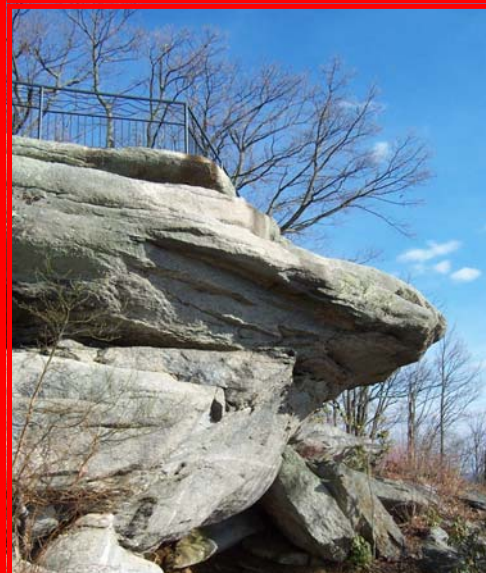
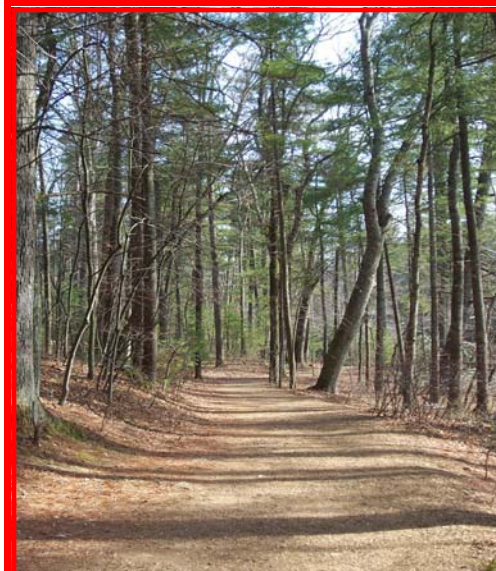
**HENDERSON COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA**

Strategic Plan

Goals & Strategies

Our mission is to lead our community, to promote individual responsibility and equal opportunity, to protect life and property, to provide efficient, innovative, and quality public services; to provide services required by Federal and State mandates; to stimulate economic growth and regional cooperation, and to balance the preservation and utilization of all of our resources.

-Adopted December 17, 2003 by the Henderson County Board of Commissioners



**Adopted
December 17, 2003**

The seal of Henderson County, North Carolina, featuring a central figure and the text "HENDERSON COUNTY" and "FOUNDED 1805".

Henderson County Officials

Board of Commissioners

Grady Hawkins
Chairman

Larry Young
Vice-Chairman

William Moyer
Commissioner

Charlie Messer
Commissioner

Shannon Baldwin
Commissioner

Management Team

David Nicholson
County Manager

Carey McLelland
Finance Director

Rocky Hyder
Emergency Management Director

Karen Smith
Planning Director

Gary Tweed
County Engineer

Selena Coffey
Budget & Management Director

Angela Beeker
County Attorney

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Introduction

Henderson County is a community in transition, with challenges and opportunities presented by our continued growth and diversity. To be successful, we must respond strategically to the needs of our citizens in an ever-changing environment. The Board of Commissioners took another step to meet this challenge in November 2003 with its involvement in a strategic planning process.



This process unfolded during a two day retreat in which the Board of Commissioners, assisted by the County's Management Team, began identifying the key issues and challenges facing the County. The next step was the identification of specific goals that the Board wishes to achieve in the upcoming years. These issues and goals were then refined and county staff was given the direction to determine appropriate strategies and action steps to accomplish the goals identified by the Board.

What is a Strategic Plan?

A strategic plan is an action-oriented set of strategies and action steps developed to accomplish a mission that is responsive to a dynamic, changing environment. Typically, a county strategic plan:

- Identifies the county's mission or purpose;
- Identifies the county's issues, including strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats;
- Develops a vision for the county's future;
- Develops strategies designed to realize the shared vision;
- Formulates an action plan and timeline;
- Identifies persons or groups responsibility for initiating the action(s); and
- Establishes methods to measure progress and success in achieving the desired outcomes.

As in all strategic planning, this is only a document. The real effort and value is in the process and in the implementation of what is presented in the plan. While Henderson County expects to accomplish many of this plan's strategies and actions within next couple of years, the goals will likely guide our actions for the next several years. Goals, strategies, and action steps will be revisited and revised annually.

Mission Statement

The Board of Commissioners' Mission Statement serves as a foundation for the Strategic Plan. To that end, the Board reexamined its Mission Statement during the Strategic Planning Retreat and added the statement, "to provide services required by Federal and State mandates," to better identify its mission and vision for County government. The Board's Mission Statement, as revised, follows:

Our mission is:

- *to lead our community,*
- *to promote individual responsibility and equal opportunity,*
- *to protect life and property,*
- *to provide efficient, innovative, and quality public services;*
- *to provide services required by Federal and State mandates;*
- *to stimulate economic growth and regional cooperation, and*
- *to balance the preservation and utilization of all of our resources."*

-Adopted December 17, 2003 by the Henderson County Board of Commissioners

Identification of Strategic Issues

During the Strategic Planning Retreat, the Board of Commissioners and Management Team were asked to identify strategic issues, "fundamental policy questions or challenges," affecting the County. During the discussion that followed, several issues were raised. Among them were those issues that the Commissioners felt were their constituents' top concerns – growth and elements such as transportation and animal control, which are impacted by growth; good jobs; cost of living issues, including housing and land costs; water and air quality, a decline in agri-business; and other general land use concerns, such as zoning. A review of citizens' random survey comments for the Comprehensive County Plan (CCP) revealed many of these same issues. Several issues were listed and discussed, but these issues were assimilated into three primary encompassing strategic issues: *Growth Management, Fiscal Priorities, and County Economy*. These strategic issues became the foundation for the Strategic Plan.

Issue 1: Growth Management

Henderson County's population is growing. In 2000, the U.S. Census counted 89,173 persons in the County. This is an additional 19,888 persons or a 28.7% increase since 1990. Interestingly, this equates to an average of 5.4 persons moving into the County each day for that ten-year period. Henderson County's population has more than doubled during the thirty-year period between 1970 and 2000. Growth brings inherent challenges and opportunities impacting all areas of County Government. Growth translates into increasing demands for services, land use concerns, public safety concerns, a need for jobs, housing, educational opportunities, etc. The Board of Commissioners agreed that **Growth Management** is a strategic issue that must be addressed as the County looks to its future.



Henderson County's population in the year 2010 is estimated at 107,000.

The goals, strategies, and action steps for this strategic issue follow:

Goal 1.1: To develop a growth plan.

Strategy 1.1.1: Evaluate the major components of the County's growth.

Action Steps:

1. Determine the major driving forces affecting the County to be studied within the growth plan.
2. Review and reach consensus on major driving forces of growth.
3. Analyze options for developing a growth plan.
4. Develop a Request for Proposals for a growth plan.
5. Completion of growth plan.

Strategy 1.1.2: Evaluate and determine the impact of infrastructure placement on County growth.

Action Steps:

1. Determine the issues to be addressed in regards to infrastructure development.
2. Review related Comprehensive County Plan (CCP) elements concerning infrastructure development.
3. Identify gaps between current infrastructure and needs for future infrastructure development.

Strategy 1.1.3: Address the preservation of the County's natural resources.

Action Steps:

1. Define "natural resources."
2. Perform an inventory of existing natural resources.
3. Identify threats and opportunities related to natural resources.
4. Obtain information from organizations already working within the field of natural resources.
5. Develop a Natural Resources Preservation Policy.

6. Identify County Ordinances that could address natural resources protection or ways in which the County can work with entities in preservation efforts.
7. Evaluate the County's options for protecting historic properties.

Strategy 1.1.4: Evaluate the impact of growth on County programs, service delivery, and corresponding ordinances.

Action Steps:

1. Develop a 5 and 10 year trend analysis of departmental services.
2. Determine programs to be added or expanded based on service level trends.
3. Evaluate and update the County code book as needed.

Strategy 1.1.5: Establish a periodic review schedule for the growth plan.

Action Steps:

1. Review the growth plan on a semi-annual basis.

Goal 1.2: Complete the County Comprehensive Plan (CCP).

Strategy 1.2.1: Complete Phases 3 and 4 (Community Based Process and Element Development, respectively) of the CCP process.

Action Steps:

1. Develop and distribute community survey.
2. Assimilate community input from survey.
3. Structure and organize community meetings.
4. Conduct 15 community meetings.
5. Continue preparation and update of element drafts.
6. Update and obtain input from Commissioners, Advisory Committee, and Planning Board throughout phases.

Strategy 1.2.2: Complete Phase 5 (Development of Implementation Strategy) of the CCP process.

Action Steps:

1. Develop a growth management strategy.
2. Develop an implementation strategy.
3. Prioritize small area planning efforts.
4. Conduct final analysis of element recommendations.
5. Review draft(s) of the CCP with Advisory Committee and Planning Board.
6. Present draft CCP to the Board of Commissioners.

Strategy 1.2.3: Complete Phase 5 (Adoption and Implementation) of the CCP.

Action Steps:

1. Adopt the CCP.

2. Begin small area plans.
3. Review and/or develop relevant ordinances.
4. Complete the zoning ordinance rewrite.
5. Prioritize the timetable for specific areas of industry.
6. Establish a periodic review schedule.

Goal 1.3: To maintain a situational awareness of issues affecting the County.

Strategy 1.3.1: Pursue local consensus.

Action Steps:

1. Monitor other local jurisdictions' planning activities and analyze the effects of these activities on County government.
2. Enlist the support of the LGCCA in managing issues affecting both the County and municipalities.

Strategy 1.3.2: Monitor federal, state and regional activity and assess its effect on the local situation.

Action Steps:

1. Continue review of relevant state legislation and regulatory information.
2. Participate in Federal, State, and Regional organizations.
3. Continue communication with Federal and State legislators regarding issues affecting the County.

Issue 2: Fiscal Priorities

The establishment of *Fiscal Priorities* was another strategic issue that the Board of Commissioners wished to address within the Strategic Plan. Again, the Board's Mission Statement drives this strategic issue by "striving to provide efficient, innovative, and quality public services," as well as by agreement to "balance the preservation and utilization of [the County's] resources." This strategic issue points to the Board's desire to provide mandated and core services, as well as those that improve the quality of life of the County's citizenry. Further, this strategic issue expresses the Board's consensus that all County services should be provided in the most cost-effective manner possible, with an emphasis on minimizing the impact on the property tax rate for service delivery.



Funding for education comprises approximately 35% of Henderson County's annual budget.

The goals, strategies, and action steps for this strategic issue follow:

Goal 2.1: To prioritize the allocation of resources.

Strategy 2.1.1: Provide funding for mandated services.

Action Steps:

1. Analyze the County budget with particular focus on mandated responsibilities and funding requirements.
2. Analyze other mandated and/or contractual obligations within the County budget.

Strategy 2.1.2: Provide full funding for debt service payments.

Action Steps:

1. Budget for full funding of debt service payments for projects approved by the Board of Commissioners.

Strategy 2.1.3: Provide public safety funding.

Action Steps:

1. Analyze public safety trends and challenges as they relate to budget funding.
2. Analyze public safety related prevention programs in regards to budget funding.

Strategy 2.1.4: Provide funding for core services.

Action Steps:

1. Define and analyze core services.
2. Determine the level of funding for core services.

Strategy 2.1.5: Provide funding for quality of life services.

Action Steps:

1. Define and analyze quality of life services
2. Determine the level of funding for quality of life services.

Goal 2.2: To review County programs in context of mission statement.

Strategy 2.2.1: Evaluate new and existing program viability.

Action Steps:

1. Determine program compliance with County mission statement.
2. Determine legal basis for programs.
3. Evaluate program efficiency and effectiveness.
4. Evaluate program conformance with adopted plans and ordinances.

Strategy 2.2.2: Perform capability and resource assessment on new and existing programs.

Action Steps:

1. Determine time constraints/needs on County programs.
2. Determine monetary constraints/needs on County programs.
3. Determine staffing constraints/needs on County programs.
4. Determine equipment constraints/needs on County programs.
5. Determine facility constraints/needs County departments/programs.

Goal 2.3: To pursue alternative revenue sources to support service provision in order to reduce the impact on the property tax rate.

Strategy 2.3.1: Study use and application of impact fees.

Action Steps:

1. Research legal issues associated with the use of impact fees.
2. Study applicable uses for impact fees for County services.
3. Survey other governmental entities' use of impact fees.

Strategy 2.3.2: Analyze and determine most beneficial method of sales tax distribution.

Action Steps:

1. Research of the available sales tax distribution methods.
2. Evaluate the implications of all sales tax distribution methods.
3. Determine the sales tax distribution method to enact.

Strategy 2.3.3: Pursue grants for equipment purchases, operations, program implementation, capacity building, development, etc.

Action Steps:

1. Encourage departments to more aggressively research grant availability to supplement their departmental budgets.
2. Analyze the idea of a grants management position within County government.

Strategy 2.3.4: Analyze County fee structure to determine appropriate levels.

Action Steps:

1. Obtain fee schedules for neighboring counties and counties of similar size.
2. Determine how/whether fees can appropriately offset departmental service delivery expenditures.
3. Research the legal constraints on fees applied for services.

Strategy 2.3.5: Support statewide efforts to diversify revenue sources for county governments.

Action Steps:

1. Participate with the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners in the development of a menu of revenue options.
2. Work with members of the General Assembly to look at various ways to diversify revenues.

Issue 3: County Economy

Henderson County is fortunate to have a relatively strong local economy. Although the area continues to be recognized as a summer community and is prominent for its tourism industry, its diverse and strong economic base made up of manufacturing, retail sale, agriculture, service trades, etc. keep the County prosperous. However, with the ever-increasing growth impacting the County, the Board of Commissioners feels that it must aggressively tackle the economic issues that continue to challenge the County.



Agriculture comprises approximately 22% of Henderson County's total land use.

The goals, strategies, and action steps for this strategic issue follow:

Goal 3.1: To maintain a balance between the segments of the local economy.

Strategy 3.1.1: Evaluate the major components of the current economy.

Action Steps:

1. Define the components of the County's current economy.
2. Analyze the manner in which the various components of the local economy interrelate.

Strategy 3.1.2: Evaluate whether the current components of the local economy are congruent with strategic goals for the future.

Action Steps:

1. Develop "mini-strategies" for influencing each individual economic component.
2. Develop an approach for balancing the various components of the local economy.
3. Review the County's current Economic Development Policy.

Strategy 3.1.3: Determine how County programs and policies impact the local economy.

Action Steps:

1. Review the County's current Economic Development Policy and update if necessary.
2. Analyze the effects of the reappraisal process on the economy.
3. Analyze the effects of the completed Comprehensive County Plan on the economy.

Goal 3.2: To maintain existing industry in the County.

Strategy 3.2.1: Support existing industry within the County.

Action Steps:

1. Review the County's current Economic Development Policy and update if necessary.
2. Review and participate in Partners for Economic Progress dialogue with existing industries to determine their land use needs and maintain open lines of communication.
3. Support Committee of 100's Economic Development Master Plan prepared by Lockwood Greene.

Goal 3.3: To provide proactive planning for infrastructure development.

Strategy 3.3.1: To enhance the local economy by providing proactive planning for infrastructure development.

Action Steps:

1. Support the recommendations of the Joint Water & Sewer Advisory Boards.
2. Monitor the efforts of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in regards to transportation infrastructure development.

Strategy 3.3.2: Evaluate the linkage between the major components of the local economy and infrastructure development.

Action Steps:

1. Analyze the impact of the CCP on infrastructure development and the local economy.
2. Analyze the relationship between school facility planning and infrastructure development.

Strategy 3.3.3: Address the protection of the water quality as a regional issue.

Action Steps:

1. Analyze the effect(s) of infrastructure development on water quality.
2. Determine ways to balance the relationship between local water quality and utility development.
3. Determine ways to enhance water quality protection via utility development.

Goal 3.4: To pursue joint efforts for intergovernmental, public-private, and regional partnerships in economic development.

Strategy 3.4.1: Strengthen mutual, collaborative relationships between the County, its municipalities, neighboring governmental entities, and within the region.

Action Steps:

1. Continue proactive involvement and communication with the LGCCA.
2. Continue open and collaborative dialogue with regional governmental entities.
3. Budget funds annually for economic development initiatives.

Strategy 3.4.2: Encourage innovative approaches to regional economic initiatives.

Action Steps:

1. Pursue legislation and solicit regional and statewide support to further economic development initiatives.
2. Explore the options associated with the development of a regional excursion train.
3. Research mechanisms to incorporate regionalism in various services (solid waste, transportation, etc.).
4. Explore relationships with governmental entities from neighboring states to support economic development.

Implementation of the Strategic Plan

The Henderson County Strategic Plan will be used by the Board of Commissioners, County Management Team, and County staff to provide direction for the County's leadership role in our community and as a guide for allocation of resources and prioritization of services provided. By planning for the future, Henderson County will be better prepared to respond to challenges and opportunities as they arise.

As was noted earlier, the Strategic Plan is only a document and its real value is centered in the planning process and, more importantly, its implementation. While Henderson County expects to accomplish many of this plan's strategies and actions within next couple of years, the goals will likely guide our actions for the next several years. Goals, strategies, and action steps will be revisited and revised annually through the development of an *Annual Performance Review*. This Annual Performance Review will examine the extent to which the strategic issues have been addressed and the goals have been achieved. It will also recommend revisions, if necessary, to strategies and action steps in order to better carry out the Board of Commissioners' mission.



Additional copies of the Henderson County Strategic Plan can be downloaded at www.hendersoncountync.org.

To request paper copies, send e-mail with delivery information to selenac@hendersoncountync.org.

Henderson County Strategic Plan At-A-Glance Adopted December 2003

MISSION STATEMENT

Our Mission is:

- to lead our community;
- to promote individual responsibility and equal opportunity;
- to protect life and property;
- to provide efficient, innovative, and quality public services;
- to provide services required by Federal and State mandates;
- to stimulate economic growth and regional cooperation, and
- to balance the preservation and utilization of all of our resources.

--Adopted December 17, 2003

GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Goals

To develop a growth plan.

To complete the
Comprehensive County Plan.

To maintain a Situational
Awareness of issues affecting
the County.

FISCAL PRIORITIES

Goals

To prioritize allocation of
resources.

To review County programs in
context of mission statement.

To pursue alternative revenue
sources to support service
provision to reduce impact on the
property tax rate.

COUNTY ECONOMY

Goals

To maintain a balance between
the segments of the local
economy.

To maintain existing industry in
the County.

To provide proactive planning for
infrastructure development.

To pursue joint efforts for
intergovernmental, public-private,
and regional partnerships in
economic development.



More information regarding the Henderson County Strategic Plan can be downloaded at www.hendersoncountync.org