Lancaster
County
South Carolina

LANCASTER COUNTY, SC
Strategic Plan

LANCASTER COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

WILLDAN

Lancaster County Strategic Plan & Action Guide Change Log

ACTION	DATE	COUNTY COUNCIL ACTION REFERENCE

THANK YOU

The Lancaster County Strategic Plan & Action Guide was developed with significant assistance from over two thousand members of the community, including:

2023 County Council

Chairman Steve Harper | District 5
Vice Chairman Brian Carnes | District 7
Secretary Billy Mosteller | District 3
Councilmember Terry Graham | District 1
Councilmember Charlene McGriff | District 2
Councilmember Jose Luis | District 4
Councilmember Allen Blackmon | District 6

Executive Staff

Dennis Marstall | County Administrator
Kimberly Belk | Budget Director
Graham Shuford | Budget Analyst

County Elected Officials

Sheriff Barry Faile
Carrie Helms, Treasurer
Jeff Hammond, Clerk of Court
Karla Knight-Deese, Coroner
Suzette Murphy, Auditor
Mary Rathel, Probate Judge

Strategic Plan Process Facilitated by:

Economic & Financial Consulting | Strategic Planning | Economic Development | District Administration

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

Lancaster County is located in the north central area of South Carolina and lies just south of the Charlotte/Mecklenburg metropolitan area and 60 miles north of Columbia, South Carolina. Lancaster County covers 549 square miles and had an estimated population of nearly 105,000[1] people in 2022.

The Catawba and Waxhaw tribes of Native Americans were settled in the area when it was first reached by Anglo-Europeans in the early 1750s. The County was created in 1785 from the northeastern part of the Camden Judicial District.[2] By 1800, the population of the County sat at 6,012[3] and by 1900, the total population quadrupled to 24,311[4]. In the early 20th century, Colonel Leroy Springs established the Springs Cotton Mill, an industrial complex that grew to become the "largest textile plant in the world".[5]

As the area's largest employer, Springs Industries served as a key benefactor for the County and region by providing important community amenities such as parks, recreation services, a credit union, and a hospital to name a few.

Two decades ago, Springs Industries ceased operation at the main textile mill in Lancaster, and the County faced an economic and workforce catastrophe. At the time, the Washington Post published an article titled "Town Struggles To Find a Future After Mill Closes"[6]. By 2008, Forbes Magazine provided the City of Lancaster the dubious distinction of the "Most Vulnerable Town" in the country[7] as the unemployment rate hit 12%.

With perseverance and the spirit to overcome, Lancaster County has now become one of the most sought-after communities in the Carolinas over the past fifteen years. The County has consistently been among the fastest growing counties in the state. Since 2020, the County has seen 8.9% population growth, making it the third fastest growing county in South Carolina.

The County is focused on diversifying its economy, partnering to create jobs, and utilizing the skills of its local workforce to meet the needs of the community. This Strategic Plan will assist the County in building off its mill-town roots to achieving the highest quality of life in the Carolinas.

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[1] US Census Bureau, V2022 Population Estimates, July 1, 2022.

[2] South Carolina Encyclopedia (https://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/lancaster-county/)

[3] US Census Bureau, US Decennial Census

[4] US Census Bureau, US Decennial Census

[5] History of Lancaster, City of Lancaster, SC (https://www.lancastercitysc.com/history-of-lancaster/)

[6] Washington Post, October 5, 2003

[7] Forbes Magazine, October 9, 2008 (https://www.forbes.com/2008/10/09/cities-vulnerable-towns-forbeslife-cx_rr_1009vulnerable.html?sh=2c720d3123ec)

STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE | BACKGROUND

Like all organizations, Lancaster County has limited resources of time, staffing, and money. Like all communities, Lancaster County also faces endless needs, opportunities, unexpected circumstances, and countless distractions vying for the use of resources. Thoughtfully planning for the strategic application of the available resources is critical to the effective and efficient delivery of local government services. The County has utilized strategic planning in the past, as it undertook a community-based comprehensive process in the early 1990's and utilized a more limited plan in 2018. This plan builds on that history with a five-year timeframe to better focus County resources and priorities during a time of unprecedented growth.

The Lancaster County Strategic Plan and Action Guide is an action-oriented road map designed to continually focus and intentionally align the organization's resources toward progressing ever closer to the long-term vision for the County. This plan is a culmination of months of preparation, citizen engagement, creative thinking, and documentation of the structure and methods that the County will use to guide its decisions and to provide context to the complex public policy and resource allocation questions that inevitably arise.

Throughout the process of updating this strategic plan, the Project Team has employed time-tested methods that relentlessly focused us back toward the desired outcome - the vision of the community. From there, the Team engaged thousands of citizens through industry-specific focus groups, a County-wide citizen and stakeholder survey, and numerous public presentations and meetings.

Throughout this research and development phase, the Team continually sought out significant trends that repeatedly surfaced as the most critical areas to focus upon and developed a set of five strategic focus areas. These trends helped us to set the target and outline the strategies that will be used to push towards that target by use of strategic focus areas, strategic objectives, and specific goals that the Team has aligned to address each element. This thoughtful application of a traditional strategic planning methodology results in a useful yet flexible road map for the community to use as it determines the best use of the County's limited resources.
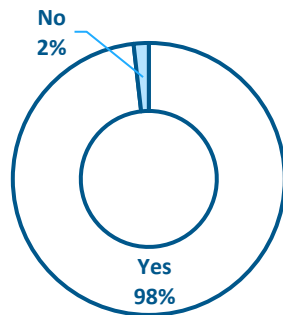
Launch & Learn

Research & Development

Set the Target

Outline the Strategies

Adopt & Communicate

Review & Refresh
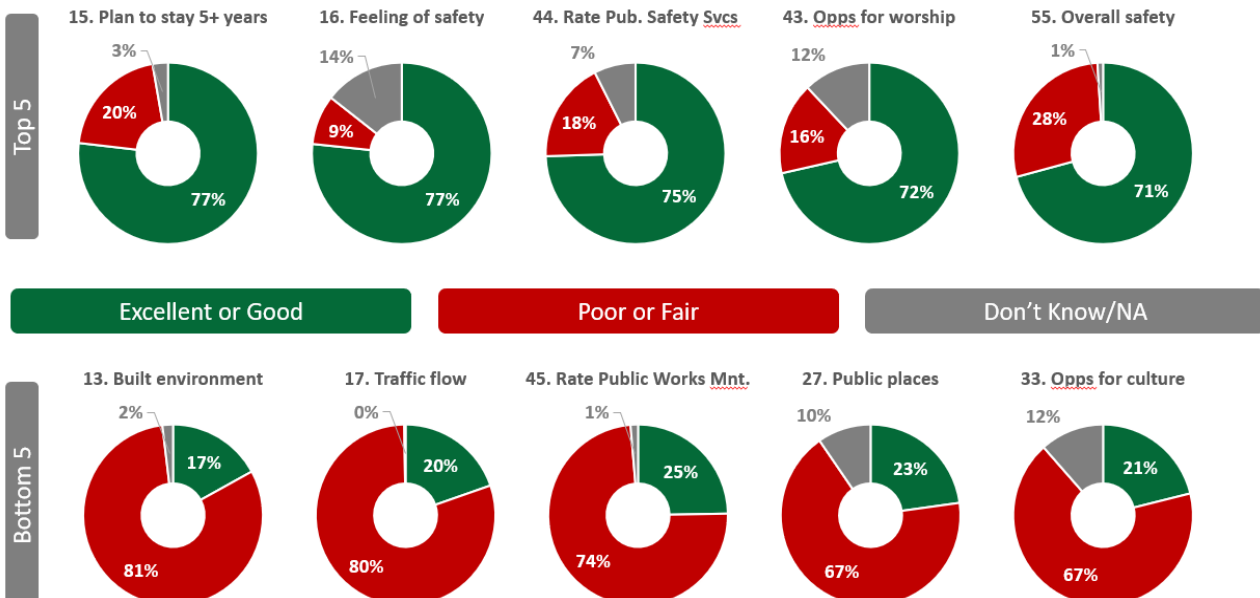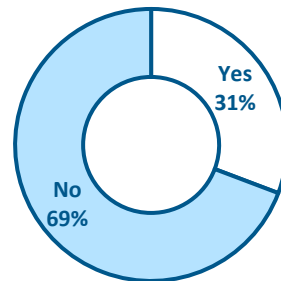
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

At the beginning of this strategic planning process, the County Council expressed an interest in broadly engaging the community in a variety of ways to better understand the needs, desires, and expectations for how the County should be moving toward its vision.

1. **PUBLIC MEETINGS:** The community engagement process used by the County in this plan has included eight separate public meetings with the County Council to discuss each piece and part of the plan as it was being developed. Each of these meetings was open to the public and allowed for community input.

2. **COMMUNITY SURVEY:** A community survey was initiated early in the plan development process to assist the project team in identifying the overall strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats within the County and to explore the pulse of the community's thoughts on a variety of topics regarding County services. The Community Survey was advertised on the County's website, all of the County's social media channels, and by an email invitation to the County's mailing list. Below are some of the outcomes of the community survey.

1. DO YOU LIVE IN LANCASTER COUNTY?

No
2%

Yes
98%

2. DO YOU WORK IN LANCASTER COUNTY?

Yes
31%

No
69%

Top 5

15. Plan to stay 5+ years
3%
20%
77%

16. Feeling of safety
14%
9%
77%

44. Rate Pub. Safety Svcs
7%
18%
75%

43. Opps for worship
12%
16%
72%

55. Overall safety
1%
28%
71%

Excellent or Good	Poor or Fair	Don't Know/NA

Bottom 5

13. Built environment
2%
17%
81%

17. Traffic flow
0%
20%
80%

45. Rate Public Works Mnt.
1%
25%
74%

27. Public places
10%
23%
67%

33. Opps for culture
12%
21%
67%

The Community survey proved invaluable in helping the project team understand the overall feeling of the community on a wide range of topics. In all, the Team received 894 responses to the survey and an additional 116 responses to an invitation to provide open-ended responses into the process. In all, the project received 1,010 direct community responses though these processes.

3. **COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUPS:** The project team also engaged four specific stakeholder focus groups. These four focus groups attended meetings designed specifically to engage each group and gain their unique perspectives on the direction of the County as well as its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The four focus groups were:

BOARDS & COMMISSIONS	BUSINESS & INDUSTRY	NON-PROFIT & FAITH COMMUNITY	INTER-GOVERNMENTAL
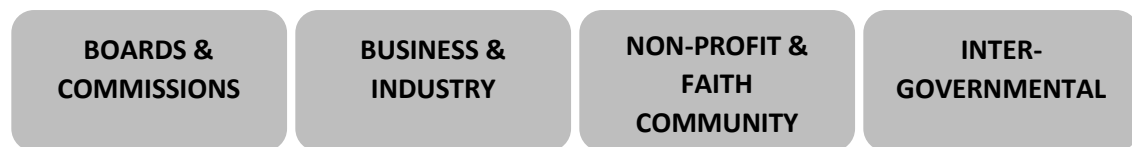
4. **INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS:** To gain the valuable input that is only available in one-on-one conversations, the project team also conducted 30 individual interviews with elected officials and County staff. The information gleaned from these interviews informed the project team on the inner workings of the County as it executes the vision of the County Council.

Overall, the community engagement process of this project involved well over 1,000 individual perspectives over the course of eight months. The culmination of these perspectives provided the shape and contour of this strategic plan, and this plan would not be possible without the countless hours and invested thought provided by the community.

With an understanding of the community history and the benefit of over a thousand voices and perspectives, the Team undertook the process of clarifying the vision and values, distilling the strategic themes, identifying specific objectives, and describing particular activities – all in an effort to help Lancaster County stay aligned with its goals and intentional in its use of always-limited resources. The following pages describe these results and lay out Lancaster County's Strategic Plan.
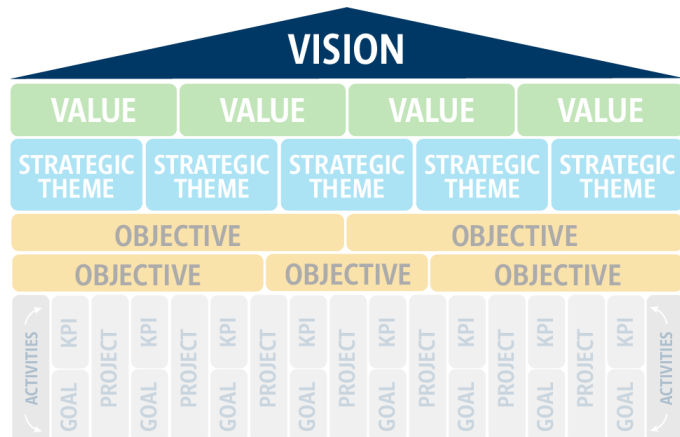
VISION

The Project Team believes that it is always best to start with the end in mind, and as such, the Team focused intently on the vision for the community at the beginning of the project.

It is important to note that the vision statement should be an affirmative description of the County's desired future reality. The best vision statements define what the County wants the community to become over the twenty-year planning horizon. A vision is the "Where" the community wants to end up over time.

The Team started from the existing vision statement, which read:

"The vision for Lancaster County is to be a great place to live, learn, work, worship, play, and raise a family."

Through the public's generous input, several County Council meetings, individual interviews, and many personal conversations, the Team determined that the current vision statement required revision, clarification, and a specific statement of the desired future state of the community to enable action towards it. Through a facilitated process, the County Council arrived at an approved Vision Statement which succinctly captures the essence of the community's desire - to focus intently on providing a quality of life within the County that is simply the best within the Carolinas:

> ## VISION
> # Lancaster County will be a network of thriving communities offering the highest quality of life in the Carolinas.

In addition to setting a specific target, the revised vision statement calls to mind that the County's broad geography, diverse demographics, and varied micro-economies are a collection of subcommunities which assemble into the County-wide community as a whole. The Team consistently heard from the members of the community that not only are these subcommunities varied in their essence today, in many cases, they aspire to maintain their unique character while contributing to the overall community of the County.

MISSION

A mission statement is an expression of the core business that the organization is in and provides necessary clarification as to what the day-to-day operations should be targeting. Where the vision describes the destination of future hope for the overall community, the mission explains the current "What" that the organization is attempting to achieve.

Throughout the process, the Team assessed the existing mission statement, which was: *"Lancaster County government facilitates this vision by providing a safe community with responsible growth and economic opportunity. The mission of Lancaster County government is to continuously strive to provide progressive quality services in a timely fashion and in a cost-effective manner."*

While this existing mission statement generally captured core elements of the organization's mission, the Team believed the mission statement could be better suited by creating a direct tie back to the Vision statement, create an intentional and documented link to the services valued by the community itself, and honor the important elements in the existing vision statement.

To these ends, Lancaster County's new mission statement is:

> **MISSION**
>
> **Our mission is to enhance our community's quality of life by enabling people to live, learn, work, worship, play, and grow - both personally and professionally.**
>
> **To deliver this mission, we listen to our community and leverage strategic partnerships which serve our citizens and visitors in ways that they find to be timely, high-quality, and efficient.**

Measuring Quality of Life

Quality of life is the essential "product" of the County government structure and organization. If not to enhance the quality of life for its citizens, why else would the County structure continue to exist. Appropriately, the County has approved a Vision Statement that provides a clear and compelling call to work towards providing the highest quality of life within the two-state Carolinas region.

That is a commendable vision. To achieve it will require uncommon discipline in strategies, activity selection, and of course, strategy execution. However, whether the County is advancing towards or retreating from the highest quality of life within the Carolinas cannot be accurately assessed without a method of measurement.

Developing a fundamental method of measurement for something as intangible and subjective as quality of life proved to be a difficult and engaging task within the development of this Plan. With the input of the project team and County Council, the Team has developed a Quality-of-Life Index which leverages the work of the National Research Center (NRC) and Polco through their implementation of the National Community Survey.

The National Community Survey (NCS) is generally considered the premier community survey available in the United States. NRC and Polco have partnered with the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) to provide benchmarking surveys to hundreds of communities and surveying more than 30 million citizens across the nation. ICMA's involvement helps to assure that the NCS continues to survey meaningful community information.

Because many communities, including many recognized high-quality of life communities in the Carolinas use the NCS, leveraging some of the standard questions of the NCS allows the County to measure and track the County's progress towards its vision better than any other platform known to the project team. Any measurement of quality of life is certainly imperfect at best as quality of life is experienced only at the individual level – that is, even if the community on average enjoys a phenomenal quality of life, it is certain that not all members of the community will enjoy the same quality of life. Recognizing these imperfections, the Lancaster County Quality of Life Index is comprised of one key performance indicator of each Strategic Theme, each weighted to derive the overall Index:

NATIONAL COMMUNITY SURVEY KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR QUESTIONS

Quality of Life Domain	NCS Key Indicator Questions
PUBLIC SAFETY	Rate: overall feeling of safety
INFRASTRUCTURE	Rate services: street repair
	Rate: Recreational Opportunities
QUALITY DEVELOPMENT	Rate: Overall quality of new development
RESOURCE OPTIMIZATION	Rate: Value of services for the taxes paid to Lancaster County
HIGH PERFORMANCE	Rate: Overall customer service by County employees

Quality of Life Index Weighting
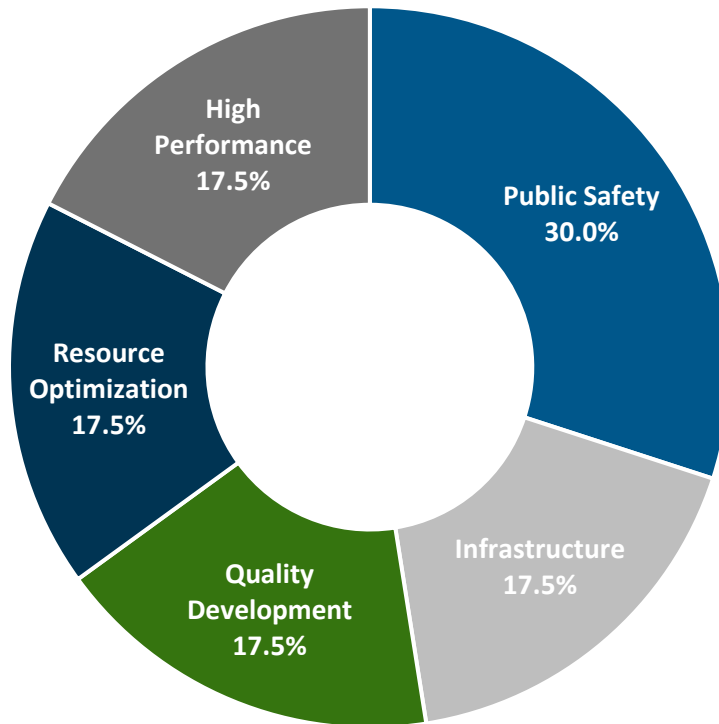
To derive the Index, multiply the Percent Positive outcome (Excellent or Good responses) of each Key Indicator by the Index Weighting. For Quality of Life Domains with more than one Key Indicator Question, take the average of the responses. Sum the responses and multiply by 100 to get the Weighted Quality of Life Index. This Weighted Quality of Life Index can then be used to quantify the overall Quality of Life over time and to compare with other communities in the Carolinas. The weighted Quality of Life Index for these questions based on the 2018 NCS responses follows:

Quality of Life Domain	NCS Key Indicator Questions	2018 Percent Positive	QoL Index Weighting	Weighted Result
PUBLIC SAFETY	Rate: Overall feeling of safety	**55%**	**30%**	**0.165**
INFRASTRUCTURE	Rate services: street repair	**9%**	**17.5%**	**0.036**
	Rate: Recreational Opportunities	**32%**		
QUALITY DEVELOPMENT	Rate: Overall quality of new development	**26%**	**17.5%**	**0.046**
RESOURCE OPTIMIZATION	Rate: Value of services for the taxes paid to Lancaster County	**29%**	**17.5%**	**0.051**
HIGH PERFORMANCE	Rate: Overall customer service by County employees	**51%**	**17.5**	**0.089**
			Total	**0.386**
			2018 QoL Index	**38.6**

VALUES

The set of core beliefs of the organization that provide guidance on the boundaries for action are values statements. The people within the organization (including staff, elected officials, appointed officials, and volunteers) are always expected to carry a mindset of organizational values. Values are not to be ignored or sacrificed for any reason, including expediency or effectiveness. Values set the tone for the desired culture of the organization, serve as a behavioral compass, and add broad context to "How" the people in the organization carry out their tasks.
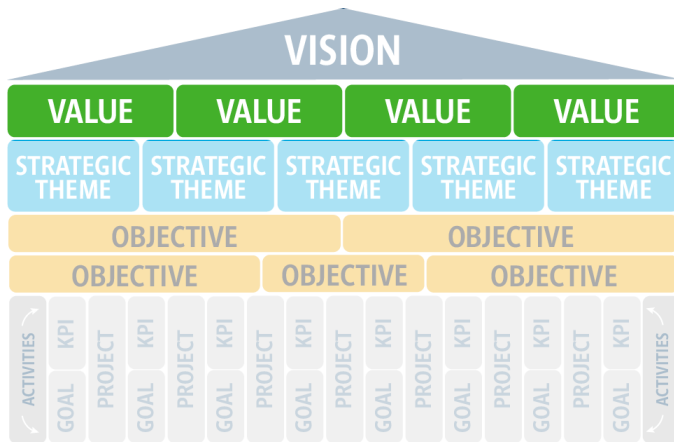
The existing values included five words: Respect, Productivity, Teamwork, Safety, and Security. After reviewing with the organization team members, the existing values do set the tone for the organization, apart from one additional value word that the Team heard trending throughout various conversations and meetings: Service.

With the addition of this term, the values of the organization are:

| SERVICE | RESPECT | TEAMWORK |
| SAFETY & SECURITY | PRODUCTIVITY |

Lancaster County Value Statements

SERVICE

Our value of SERVICE is twofold. First, the County government is a PUBLIC SERVICE organization. We serve the public's interest, promote the common good, and address the needs of our citizens, taxpayers, visitors, and stakeholders to the best of our ability.

Second, we value CUSTOMER SERVICE. We engage directly with people to provide them with the services, programs, policies, and infrastructure they need to advance their quality of life

RESPECT

We treat people with RESPECT. Respect, in its best form, is a mutual value – it is both a giving and a taking between citizens, County officials, employees, and all stakeholders. Respect is being open, honest, and acting with integrity. To show respect, we listen to others and consider how our actions will affect them.

TEAMWORK

TEAMWORK is a sincere collaborative effort to work together towards fulfilling the vision of the County. We work as a team and selflessly offer our knowledge, skills, abilities, and organizational resources to achieve the County's desired outcomes. As members of the team, we honor our various roles and responsibilities and respect each other and work to resolve conflicts constructively.

SAFETY & SECURITY

SAFETY & SECURITY is our commitment to the well-being and protection of our citizens, employees, visitors, stakeholders, resources, facilities, and assets. To promote safety, we actively create environments, systems, and practices that minimize the risk of harm. SAFETY extends beyond physical safety and includes the mental, emotional, and financial well-being of all involved. SECURITY encompasses the measures and practices we use to mitigate risks and ensure the availability of the public's resources. We actively engage in threat assessments and emergency management to enhance the security of people, assets, information, culture, and our community.

PRODUCTIVITY

We value PRODUCTIVITY as stewards of the resources provided to us as a public service organization. We strive for efficient and effective use of the public's resources by maintaining a results-focused mindset while using innovation, diligence, and creativity to optimize our delivery of services, programs, policies, and infrastructure.

STRATEGIC THEMES

Responsibility	County Council, Boards & Staff
Tenure	3-10 Years

A new component to Lancaster's Strategic Plan is a set of clearly identified Strategic Themes. Strategic Themes are broad operational, program, or project areas that the organization chooses to focus its time, money, energy, and effort on to advance the community toward its vision continuously.

Strategic Themes are less broad than the vision statement but are not specific goals. They represent the broad areas that the County will be focusing its time, attention, energy, and resources over the next three to five years. Strategic Themes do not have a particular completion metric, deadline, or specifically assigned responsibility. As the process moves down through the strategic framework into the objectives and goals, these specific details will be filled in.
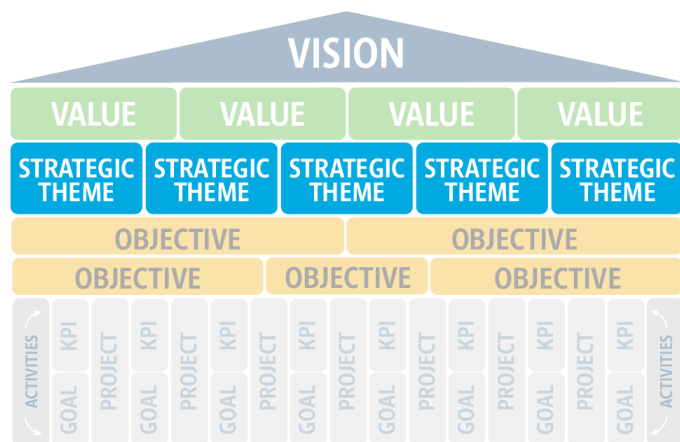
PUBLIC SAFETY

INFRASTRUCTURE

QUALITY DEVELOPMENT

RESOURCE OPTIMIZATION

HIGH PERFORMANCE

Over the course of the development of this plan, the County Council considered whether to include Economic Development as a standalone Strategic Theme or to integrate aspects of economic development into these five overarching themes. The process identified a consensus opinion that economic development impacts each theme and that it is better as an integrated component than as a standalone theme. As such, this Strategic Plan and Action Guide endeavors to integrate economic development through the themes, objectives, and activities of the County.

OBJECTIVES

Strategic Objectives are the specific operations, programs, or projects that intentionally target advancing the Strategic Themes. Objectives begin to form the tactical strategies used by the organization to achieve the vision. Objectives must align with at least one Strategic Theme, have a clear call to action, and be well-defined.

Strategic objectives are more specific and direct than strategic themes but, in most cases, are not necessarily discreet, achievable goals in and of themselves. Objectives are designed so that if the organization makes significant progress toward accomplishing all the strategic objectives, it will have clearly made progress toward achieving the Vision.

The Strategic Framework hinges on a handful of strategic objectives. Everything above the objective level is broadly focused, long-term and is within the direct purview of the County Council. Everything at and below the objective level is intended for specific action to help drive toward the vision and is within the purview of the County staff.

A strategy management system for monitoring progress on the execution of the strategic plan should calculate the completion rate of the plan goals associated with each strategic objective and should be able to report on whether each objective is ahead of plan, on track, or behind. Tracking is an incredibly useful tool for high-level reporting on the overall strategic plan and should be used at the County Council, Administration, and Department level to track progress, critical issues, and where to place additional attention or resources to execute the strategy.

Where the vision, values, and strategic themes are intended to serve the community for decades, the objectives and activities are intended to be reviewed, edited, added to, and subtracted from on an ongoing basis. This is where the Strategic Plan is a living document. The strategic objectives and activities are at a level that should be reviewed at least each year and will very likely change in between full strategic plan updates.
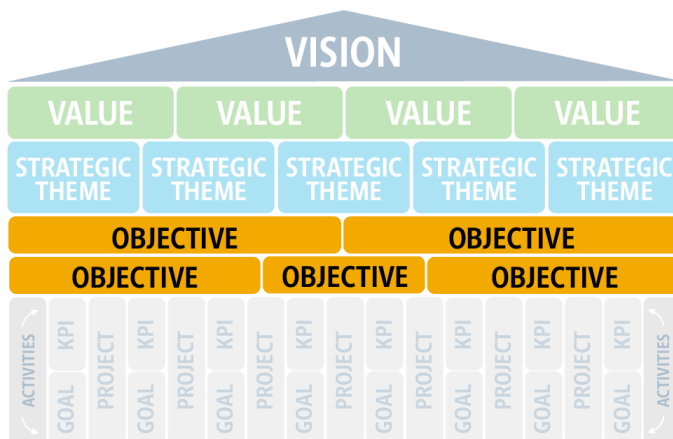
Below are the Strategic Themes identified in the 2023 Strategic Plan and the Strategic Objectives to address each theme. Additional details for each Strategic Theme are available throughout the remainder of this document.

PUBLIC SAFETY

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

1. Meet the demands of the growth of the County without negatively impacting the quality of Public Safety service.
2. Become a national model of actionable information sharing among the community, public safety partners, and within County operations.
3. Identify and implement a consensus-supported fire service growth management plan.

INFRASTRUCTURE

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

1. Identify and implement a long-term infrastructure improvement plan for north-south mobility within the County.
2. Meet the demands of the growth of the County without negatively impacting the quality of service.
3. Establish and facilitate a comprehensive County-wide Infrastructure Partnership Working Group to closely plan, prioritize, and produce positive County-wide results.
4. Assess and address the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space facilities and programming service needs of the growing community.

QUALITY DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

1. Work to understand the comprehensive quality of life and financial implications of growth and development within each sub-community of the County.
2. Consider the adoption of the County's Comprehensive Plan and implement the approved recommendations.
3. Consider the adoption and implementation of a revised Unified Development Ordinance.
4. Inform land use, growth management, and development decisions with sound data and scenario planning techniques.
5. Diversify the local economy through targeted attraction of job producers and support businesses that are well-matched to the local workforce and economic needs.

RESOURCE OPTIMIZATION

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

1. Optimize sources of non-property tax funding to advance the priorities of the County.
2. Actively facilitate a comprehensive County-wide Governance Working Group to plan, prioritize, and produce positive County-wide results.
3. Identify and execute strategic leverage opportunities to drive efficiency and effectiveness.

HIGH PERFORMANCE

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

1. Complete a comprehensive review of the current workforce approach to identify opportunities to enhance recruitment and retention significantly.
2. Develop an organizational structure and systems to foster an intense focus on high-performance service delivery.
3. Intentionally and intensely cultivate a high-performance culture throughout the County workforce.
4. Continually identify and monitor the customer service outcomes across the County operations.

ACTIVITIES
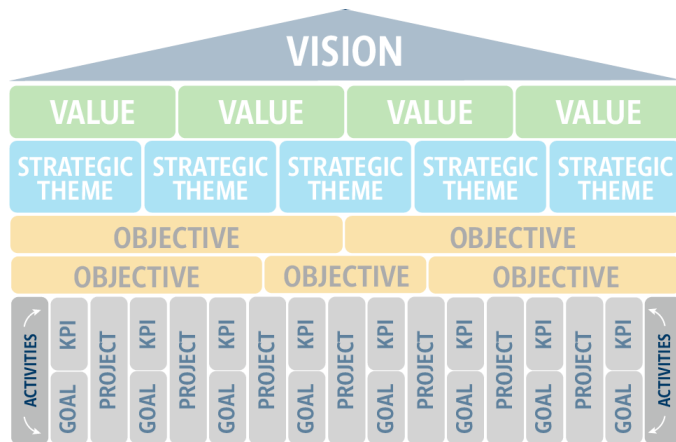
Activities in the Plan are the tactical, achievable, and specific actions, programs, documents, policies, key performance indicators, or operational goals that the organization is engaged in to strategically advance the objectives through completion. To be effective, Activities must be focused on the action to be taken, have enough detail to be clear through all levels of the organization, have a specific metric and unit to be achieved, and have a clear deadline. Activities are where the strategic plan becomes something that can be executed, and all Activities must be monitored and reported on regularly with any exceptions highlighted.

The Activities detailed in this Strategic Plan and Action Guide all adhere to the "ADMUD" format:

ACTION	DETAIL	METRIC	UNIT	DEADLINE
Increase traffic efficiency	by widening	twelve	major intersections	by December 31, 2025.

Activities are intended to be fluid and may be completed, altered, added, re-prioritized, or dropped altogether over the course of any given planning period. Changes to goals are a part of the regular reporting process, and it is the responsibility of the County Administrator and staff to continually keep the County Council up to date on the status of the various Activities.

Like the reporting for Objectives, the County's strategy management system should allow for a wide range of progress reports on the Activities at the organizational, departmental, and individual levels.

Because goals are at the individual level and will frequently change depending on the current priorities, available resources, and most recent information, the Team outlines only what it identified as Level 1 goals in this document. These Level 1 goals are the next immediate steps that the Team recommend being taken on each objective to drive toward its completion. Level 1 goals are still likely to be high-level and can be broken into more distinct Level 2/3/4 goals within the County's own strategy management system.

The ability to continually complete, add, or delete specific goals is crucial to implementing an agile strategic plan that can be continuously shaped as the County progresses toward the vision.

Target Metrics & Responsibilities

Each Strategic Theme page identifies a range of different types of target metrics and states the County department with the primary responsibility for tracking and reporting on each individual Objective and Activity. The target metrics used vary widely and are meant to provide a clear and distinct view of what the organization is attempting to accomplish. The Plan uses varied units like "3 people" or "1 partnership" as target metrics. By identifying the metrics this way, as opposed to the more typical percentage completed, the County can get a quick and accurate look into exactly what progress has been made on that particular Objective or Activity. Where specific metrics like this do not make practical sense, the Plan defaults to the standard of percent complete.

The responsibility column identifies the department that is primarily responsible for tracking and reporting on that particular Objective. Note that some of the Objectives and Activities are partnership-based and cannot be completed without the meaningful participation of external groups. In these cases, it is important to note that the staff's responsibility is to track and report the progress and not necessarily to drive the Objective to completion without the assistance of outside entities.

All strategic plans should include Objectives and Activities that are "stretch objectives". When being implemented, it is sometimes tempting to focus mainly on the goals or objectives that are not being implemented according to the originally planned schedule. Many factors will arise over the course of this planning horizon that make it impossible to accomplish all of the Objectives or Activities as originally planned. It is critically important to never lose sight of the fact that the strategic plan represents the best efforts to conceptualize and foresee the implementation path, but that any plan that has been fully implemented exactly according to the plan was probably not very creative or aggressive. The County should plan on modifying, adding to, and dropping Objectives and Activities altogether over the course of this strategic plan, always focusing on aligning those decisions with the established framework rather than simply following the plan without additional consideration.

Departmental Strategic Plans & Other Operating Plans

Several County operating departments have adopted department-specific or policy-area-specific plans. This Strategic Plan and Action Guide is not intended to replace those plans but rather to establish the broad vision, strategic themes, and objectives that the County will focus its resources on over the next five years. Using the strategic framework outlined in this document, staff can coordinate, align, and incorporate the existing departmental strategic plans with this guide over time. Incorporation of these various plans into the County's strategic framework will allow for consistent reporting among the various plans as well as document the important alignment of the goals and objectives in these plans with the County's overall Strategic Themes.

VISION

Lancaster County will be a network of thriving communities offering the highest quality of life in the Carolinas.

MISSION

Our mission is to enhance our community's quality of life by enabling people to live, learn, work, worship, play, and grow - both personally and professionally.

To deliver this mission, we listen to our community and leverage strategic partnerships which serve our citizens and visitors in ways that they find to be timely, high-quality, and efficient.

VALUES

Service
Respect
Teamwork
Safety & Security
Productivity

STRATEGIC THEMES

Public Safety
Infrastructure
Quality Development
Resource Optimization
High Performance

PUBLIC SAFETY

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. **Meet the demands of the growth of the County without negatively impacting the quality of Public Safety service.**

2. **Become a national model of actionable information sharing among the community, public safety partners, and within County operations.**

3. **Identify and implement a consensus-supported fire service growth management plan.**

Objectives & Activities		Target Metric	Responsibility
1.	**Meet the demands of the growth of the County without negatively impacting the quality of Public Safety service.**		
1.1	Prepare a comprehensive Public Safety Operational Analysis to establish growth planning methods by March 30, 2025.	1 Analysis	County Administrator
1.2	Identify at least 10 safety-specific roadway improvements by March 30, 2025.	10 Improvements	Public Safety Needs Assessment Committee (NAC) & Public Svcs Director
1.3	Fund and construct at least 10 safety-specific roadway improvements by December 30, 2027.	10 Improvements	County Administrator & County Council
1.4	Integrate at least 5 new "safe communities" principles into development standards by December 31, 2024.	5 Principles	Development Services Director
1.5	Prepare a comprehensive public safety facility, staffing, and equipment needs assessment by December 31, 2025.	1 Assessment	Public Safety NAC
2	**Become a national model of actionable information sharing among the community, public safety partners, and within County operations.**		
2.1	Establish a County-wide mental health working group to deliver at least 5 specific County-led programs or policies to implement that are designed to enhance overall public safety by June 30, 2025.	5 Programs/ Policies	Public Safety Needs Assessment Committee
2.2	Facilitate at least 2 design charettes with Lancaster County Schools to focus on designing school campuses for safety by June 30, 2024.	2 charettes	Development Services Director
2.3	Facilitate a year-long data-sharing working group with community partners to identify, prioritize, and present at least 3 public safety data-sharing initiatives by December 31, 2024.	3 Initiatives	IT Director
2.4	Expand Technical Review Committee to include representatives from Sheriff, GIS, Dispatch, and EMS by December 31, 2023.	1 Expansion	Development Services Director
3	**Identify and implement a consensus-supported fire service growth management plan.**		
3.1	Create a fire service growth management working group including career, volunteer, and blended department representatives by March 30, 2024.	1 Working Group	County Council
3.2	Prepare and present at least 2 alternative fire and EMS growth management approaches for consideration, each including a long-term financial impact analysis, by June 30, 2025.	2 Approaches	Emergency Management/Fire Service Director
3.3	Adopt a fire service growth management plan with a specific path forward to meet the dual demands of growth and quality of service by December 31, 2025.	1 Plan	County Council

VISION

Lancaster County will be a network of thriving communities offering the highest quality of life in the Carolinas.

MISSION

Our mission is to enhance our community's quality of life by enabling people to live, learn, work, worship, play, and grow - both personally and professionally.

To deliver this mission, we listen to our community and leverage strategic partnerships which serve our citizens and visitors in ways that they find to be timely, high-quality, and efficient.

VALUES

Service
Respect
Teamwork
Safety & Security
Productivity

STRATEGIC THEMES

Public Safety
Infrastructure
Quality Development
Resource Optimization
High Performance

INFRASTRUCTURE

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. **Identify and implement a long-term infrastructure improvement plan for north-south mobility within the County.**

2. **Meet the demands of the growth of the County without negatively impacting the quality of service.**

3. **Establish and facilitate comprehensive County-wide Infrastructure Partnership Working Group to closely plan, prioritize, and produce positive County-wide results.**

4. **Assess and address the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space facilities and programming service needs of the growing community.**

	Objectives & Activities	Target Metric	Responsibility
1	**Identify and implement a long-term infrastructure improvement plan for north-south mobility within the County.**		
1.1	Prepare and present a north-south corridor mobility study with at least 3 alternative solutions by December 31, 2026.	1 Study	Development Services Director
2	**Meet the demands of the growth of the County without negatively impacting the quality of service.**		
2.1	Prepare and present 1 comprehensive roadway improvement funding study to analyze all known funding sources by June 30, 2025.	1 Study	County Administrator
2.2	Enable data-driven infrastructure prioritization by identifying and mapping service levels on all County-maintained roads by December 31, 2025.	100% Complete	IT Director
2.3	Present an additional 1¢ road improvement sales tax for consideration by voters by June 30, 2025.	1 Election	County Administrator
3	**Establish and facilitate a comprehensive County-wide Infrastructure Partnership Working Group to closely plan, prioritize, and produce positive County-wide results.**		
3.1	Facilitate at least 3 mobility improvement workshops with SCDOT and municipal jurisdictions to identify priorities and establish joint funding mechanisms by December 2024.	3 Workshops	Development Services Director
3.2	Develop and present 1 utility infrastructure (water, sewer, etc) gap analysis and needs assessment to identify high-leverage opportunities to drive commercial growth.	1 Analysis	Economic Development Director
4	**Assess and address the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space facilities and programming service needs of the growing community.**		
4.1	Prepare a Park & Recreation Facilities Master Plan with a focus on the differential needs of the County by geographic sub-community by December 31, 2026.	1 Plan	Director of Parks & Recreation
4.2	Identify at least 1 new public/private partnership to deliver a park facility element or recreation program by June 30, 2025.	1 Partnership	Director of Parks & Recreation

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QUALITY DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. Work to understand the comprehensive quality of life and financial implications of growth and development within each sub-community of the County.

2. Consider the adoption of the County's Comprehensive Plan and implement the approved recommendations.

3. Consider the adoption and implementation of a revised Unified Development Ordinance.

4. Inform land use, growth management, and development decisions with sound data and scenario planning techniques.

5. Diversify the local economy through targeted attraction of job producers and support businesses that are well-matched to the local workforce and economic needs.

ALIGNING ACTIVITIES | QUALITY DEVELOPMENT

	Objectives & Activities	Target Metric	Responsibility
1	**Work to understand the comprehensive quality of life and financial implications of growth and development within each sub-community of the County.**		
1.1	Prepare and present 1 comprehensive financial impact model to estimate the net financial impact of growth patterns throughout the County by sub-community area by June 30, 2025.	1 Model	Development Services Director
1.2	Identify and present "ideal" development scenarios for at least 2 strategically situated tracts of vacant land by December 31, 2024.	2 Scenarios	Development Services Director
2	**Consider the adoption of the County's Comprehensive Plan and implement the approved recommendations.**		
2.1	Prepare, prioritize, and present a complete list of recommendations within the County's Comprehensive Plan by March 31, 2024.	1 Presentation	Development Services Director
2.2	Prioritize and implement at least 75% of top-priority recommendations by December 31, 2025.	75% Implementation	County Council
2.3	Implement a variance tracking tool and quarterly report to inform staff of the relative frequency and stated reasoning of all variances from the Comprehensive Plan by June 30, 2024.	1 Recurring Quarterly Report	Development Services Director
3	**Consider the adoption and implementation of a revised Unified Development Ordinance.**		
3.1	Complete and present a draft Unified Development Ordinance addressing quality development standards for open space requirements, lot sizes and patterns, traffic patterns, and other development requirements and amenities for consideration by the County Council by June 30, 2025.	1 UDO	Development Services Director
3.2	Implement a variance tracking tool and quarterly report to inform staff of the relative frequency and stated reasoning of all variances from the UDO by December 31, 2025.	1 Recurring Quarterly Report	Development Services Director
4	**Inform land use, growth management, and development decisions with sound data and scenario planning techniques.**		
4.1	Facilitate at least 1 scenario planning retreat with the Planning Commission and County Council to clarify the most likely outcomes of various development and non-development scenarios by June 30, 2024.	1 Retreat	Development Services Director
5	**Diversify the local economy through targeted attraction of job producers and support businesses that are well-matched to the local workforce and economic needs.**		
5.1	Identify at least 3 target industries and support sectors based on existing workforce skills and abilities by March 31, 2024.	3 Targets	Economic Development Director
5.2	Engage at least 10 specific companies within the target industries in business attraction efforts by December 31, 2024.	8 Engagements	Economic Development Director
5.3	Partner with at least 2 companies within the target industries to open locations within Lancaster County by December 31, 2025.	2 Attractions	Economic Development Director

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RESOURCE OPTIMIZATION

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. **Optimize sources of non-property tax funding to advance the priorities of the County.**

2. **Actively facilitate a comprehensive County-wide Public Service Working Group to plan, prioritize, and produce positive County-wide results.**

3. **Identify and execute strategic leverage opportunities to drive efficiency and effectiveness.**

ALIGNING ACTIVITIES | RESOURCE OPTIMIZATION

	Objectives & Activities	Target Metric	Responsibility
1	**Optimize sources of non-property tax funding to advance the priorities of the County.**		
1.1	Create a formal grant management function and process by June 30, 2024.	1 Function	County Administrator
1.2	Prepare and present 1 comprehensive roadway improvement funding study to analyze all known funding sources by June 30, 2025.	1 Study	County Administrator
1.3	Explore the feasibility and projected outcomes of an additional 1¢ road improvement sales tax and report the findings to County Council by June 30, 2025.	1 Report	County Administrator
2	**Actively facilitate a comprehensive County-wide Public Service Working Group to plan, prioritize, and produce positive County-wide results.**		
2.1	Facilitate at least 4 County-wide executive staff-level Public Service Working Group meetings including the government agencies, utility providers, educational institutions, and non-governmental public service providers by December 31, 2024.	4 Meetings	County Administrator
2.2	Decide and establish need for continued GWG meetings by December 31, 2024.	1 Decision	County Administrator
3	**Identify and execute strategic leverage opportunities to drive efficiency and effectiveness.**		
3.1	Develop and deliver a communications campaign highlighting at least 3 outstanding resource optimization techniques used by County staff by September 30, 2024.	3 Campaigns	Communications Director
3.2	Prepare a comprehensive software and IT equipment inventory with a target of identifying at least 3% of IT expenditures to reduce or redeploy more efficiently by March 30, 2025.	3% of IT Expenditures	IT Director
3.3	Identify, prioritize, and present at least 3 new or enhanced online service delivery strategies by December 31, 2024.	3 Strategies	County Administrator

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HIGH PERFORMANCE

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. **Complete a comprehensive review of the current workforce approach to identify opportunities significantly enhance recruitment and retention.**

2. **Develop an organizational structure and systems to foster an intense focus on high-performance service delivery.**

3. **Intentionally and intensely cultivate a culture of high performance throughout the County workforce.**

4. **Continually identify and monitor the customer service outcomes across the County operations.**

Objectives & Activities		Target Metric	Responsibility
1	**Complete a comprehensive review of the current workforce approach to identify opportunities significantly enhance recruitment and retention.**		
1.1	Establish an ongoing method of monitoring County-wide employee engagement by June 30, 2024.	1 Method	Human Resources Director
1.2	Develop a market-based total compensation structure that provides for a County-wide average of 100% of the market total compensation for all position classes by December 31, 2026.	100% of Market Average	County Administrator
1.3	Identify and implement at least 5 new recruitment strategies by December 31, 2024.	5 Strategies	Human Resources Director
2	**Develop an organizational structure and systems to foster an intense focus on high-performance service delivery.**		
2.1	Review current organizational structure and service delivery systems and report on at least 3 strategies for performance enhancement to the County Council by June 30, 2024	3 Strategies	County Administrator
2.2	Develop a suite of performance assessment tools to enable a systematic and methodical assessment and reporting of personal and organizational performance by March 31, 2025.	1 Assessment Suite	County Administrator
2.3	Develop and implement a performance-based pay system by December 31, 2024.	1 Pay System	County Administrator
3	**Intentionally and intensely cultivate a culture of high performance throughout the County workforce.**		
3.1	Prepare and implement a formal county-wide training and cross-training program by December 31, 2024.	1 Program	Human Resources Director
3.2	Prepare and implement a high-performance culture recognition program by June 30, 2024.	1 Program	Human Resources Director
4	**Continually identify and monitor the customer service outcomes across the County operations.**		
4.1	Establish and implement at least 2 ongoing methods of assessing and tracking County-wide customer service performance by June 30, 2024.	2 Methods	County Administrator
4.2	Identify and implement at least 5 pilot programs to address high-priority customer service needs by June 30, 2025.	5 Programs	County Administrator
4.3	Assess and prioritize full implementation of at least 3 successful pilot programs by December 31, 2025.	3 Programs	County Administrator

Living Plan Document| Plan Updates and Governance

This Strategic Plan and Action Guide should be viewed and used as a living document. Minor Updates to the Plan should be ongoing, particularly at the Activities level. One of the Activities of this plan is to establish a "Discipline of Accountability" by reporting on the progress made, risks to Activity, and reprioritization of the plan elements once per quarter. The Project Team suggests that this reporting be done in a focused Strategic Planning work session to fully engage the governing body in its role in this plan. Each quarterly update should be able to be accomplished in a single two-hour session.

Updates to the plan will be governed by the following:

1. The **Vision** is the purview of the community at large and will not be updated without direct citizen engagement and approval by the County Council.

2. The **Values and Mission** of the organization are the purview of the County Council and will not be updated without their direct involvement and approval.

3. The **Strategic Themes** of the plan are the purview of the County Council and will not be changed without their direct involvement and approval.

4. The **Objectives** of the plan are the purview of the County Council and County Administrator and will not be changed without direct involvement by each and final approval by the County Council.

5. The **Activities** of the plan are the purview of the County Administrator, who may complete, prioritize, assign, edit, or otherwise modify the Activities. The following changes to the Activities should always be included and highlighted in the quarterly reports:
    a. Deleting, archiving, and otherwise removing an Activity from the plan
    b. All changes to deadlines
    c. All substantive changes to target metrics

6. The following changes to the Activities of the plan may be completed regularly and do not require specific reporting to the County Council
    a. Adding new Activities to the plan that are aligned with the Objectives
    b. Progress updates, risk updates, or other minor updates
    c. Reprioritization of Activities
    d. Reassignment of Activities

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