



## SAFETY

Evaluate fire station facility needs to provide coverage for potential expansion and/or annexation in or near the southeast portion of the City (Southeastern Annexation Expansion).

Evaluate, expand, and improve upon our recruitment, retention, and training processes and programs to better serve our community, maximize officer safety, promote professional standards, and increase diversity and inclusion.

Promote and advance Intelligence-led Problem-oriented Policing and community-oriented City initiatives to identify and manage public safety issues.

Upgrade the traffic signal system. The current system is over 10 years old and is overdue for an upgrade to an internet-based system. This project also studies an expansion of our operational area in cooperation with NCDOT and other municipalities and is funded by NCDOT.



### GASTONIA CITY COUNCIL

Robert Kellogg – Ward 1

Charles Odom – Ward 4

Mayor Pro-Tem Dave Kirlin – Ward 2

Jennifer Stepp – Ward 5

James Gallagher – Ward 3

Donyel Barber – Ward 6

Mayor Walker Reid III



## COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Expand the use of social media and website communication channels to reach more of the City's constituents. Increase number of news releases, advisories and alerts distributed to media to better promote City's programs, initiatives, and accomplishments. Pursue more opportunities to promote the City's desirable quality of life and economic development prospects.

Continue to investigate methods to effectively incorporate inclusion and diversity strategies in the City of Gastonia.

Build at least ten homes using federal HOME/CDBG funds for new homeowners in the low-to-moderate income areas of Gastonia within the next three years.

Continue revitalizing and stabilizing the Highland area with new construction projects.

Complete the City of Gastonia - Schiele Museum Public/Private Partnership Assessment study.

Work with local non-profit agencies and developers to leverage funding and maximize the development of additional affordable housing units within Gastonia.

Make efforts to strengthen the Sister Cities relationships with Santiago de Surco, Peru by hosting a visit of their mayor and/or Sister Cities coordinator to celebrate our 16-year partnership.

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2022



## VISION

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



## MISSION

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

## CORE VALUES

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

## WHAT WE BELIEVE OUR CORE VALUES



### ACCOUNTABILITY

We take responsibility for our decisions and actions and promote sound fiscal policies to maintain trust while delivering exceptional service.

### HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

We tell the truth and act ethically, leading by example to do the right thing, always.

### INCLUSIVENESS

We work collaboratively, valuing all people and respecting diversity of ideas, backgrounds and experiences.

### PROFESSIONALISM

We are skilled, qualified and committed to providing quality services that strengthen our community.

### SAFETY

We share a professional and personal commitment to protecting the safety and health of our customers and employees.

For more information, please visit our website  
[www.cityofgastonia.com/StrategicPlan](http://www.cityofgastonia.com/StrategicPlan)





## **INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT**

Continue to partner with Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization (GCLMPO), Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization (CRTPO), NCDOT, Gaston County, surrounding municipalities, the City of Charlotte, and private property owners to study the construction of a new southern connection from Gaston County to Mecklenburg County over the South Fork and Catawba Rivers. The feasibility study has been funded and will be completed late 2021.

Work with interested stakeholders (property owners, USDOT, NCDOT, Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization (GCLMPO), Gaston County and the City of Lowell) to receive a federal BUILD Grant for the transportation network necessary to move forward on the new development opportunity of the Lineberger property adjacent to I-85.

Implement plans/Capital Improvement Projects:

- Dixie Village pedestrian/transit upgrades.
- Continue extension of sidewalks and greenways mostly using federal, state and regional funding [(Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ), and NCDOT State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)].
- Improvements to United Way parking lot.
- Continue work on Inflow & Infiltration (I & I) reduction in the Firestone Wastewater Basin.

Continue and/or complete several identified projects in advancement of water and wastewater regionalization.

- Complete land acquisition and begin construction of the Southeast Utility projects (Water/Sewer).
- Dallas Sewer Agreement is executed and design is currently underway. Construction and completion could be during Fiscal Year (FY) 2021.
- Bessemer City Water Project is moving forward.

Complete required next steps with NCDOT, NCDOA and FAA to establish funding for the implementation of the Gastonia Municipal Airport reorientation/lengthening project.

Complete the change-out program from existing high-pressure sodium street lights to more efficient and cost effective LED lights. Actively participate in the Transit Oriented Development Study to explore light rail options into Downtown Gastonia. Explore transit organizational options that provide improved services through commuter rail, high speed rail and multi-modal transportation to the public through potential partnerships with Gaston County, CATS, and/or private providers. Evaluate potential location and timing of the construction of a multi-modal transportation facility.

Coordinate with NCDOT on the I-85 widening project, specifically in developing aesthetic theme for bridges over the interstate.

Acquire property adjacent to Erwin Center to construct additional parking.

Complete a master plan for Linwood Springs property (future Westside Park) and look for possible grant opportunities for project funding.

## **HEALTHY COMMUNITY**

Complete a citywide comprehensive bicycle plan. A grant from NCDOT has been awarded for \$60,000 with a local match of \$40,000 for a total of \$100,000.

Continue to evaluate and prioritize the Greenway Master Plan and update plan as needed.

- Complete the Avon Catawba Creek Greenway extension northward from Lineberger Park, ultimately creating a trailhead at Franklin Boulevard and Belvedere Avenue. Partner with a home builder to construct and sell trail front homes on the Avon Creek Greenway extension on existing city-owned property. This would use Carolina Thread Trail funding and leverage City owned property along the greenway for new residential construction.
- Complete southern connector of greenway beginning with trail from the North Carolina National Guard Armory to the Armstrong Park Road and Hoffman Road intersection.
- Continue to work on extending the Highland Greenway north to Dallas Park.

Partner with private developers of greenfield properties to explore dedicated recreation and park properties in strategic areas of the City.

Improve Urban Forestry Program within the City of Gastonia. This includes developing policies and guidelines for management of the urban forest within the city.

Continue to develop plans and projects to reduce potential for flooding in the Duharts Creek stormwater basin. This would include leveraging funds from state and federal partners for demonstration projects and best management practices.

Establish funding mechanisms for the adopted ten year Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The City will continue to partner with Gaston County Schools and Gaston County for shared facilities. Implement strategic plan for all-inclusive park (Miracle). Development of unified

standard operating procedures for community centers. Continue to complete renovations and upfitting of all recreation community centers, ballfields, playgrounds and shelters. Land bank for future parks and facilities.

Complete a new master plan for the Nature Trail and outdoor exhibits at the Schiele Museum with budget and timelines.



## **GOOD GOVERNMENT**

Develop and implement employee engagement opportunities with focus on professional development and leadership, inclusion, retention, communication, and productivity.

Continue to monitor the job market for compensation and hiring trends, making adjustments when and where needed to ensure we continue to attract and retain qualified City employees in an efficient and timely manner.

Maximize investments and cash balances to make the most of City revenue in a safe, conservative manner, such as refunding existing bond debt.

Maintain a fund balance goal of at least 20% of General Fund expenditures and use fund balance only for non-recurring capital expenditures.

Connect all City facilities with fiber where ROI (return on investment) is positive. Explore the use of City-owned fiber for a private/public partnership.

Continue to balance various rate components and adjust electric system rates as needed to cover the true costs associated with owning and operating the electric system.

Implement necessary rate increases to provide additional funding for repair and replacement of critical capital needs in the water and wastewater systems.

Complete the Phase I and II project planning for the Municipal Operation Center Facility Master Plan and establish funding for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 in order to update the facility and make the delivery of service to citizens more efficient and effective.

Evaluate ways to expand opportunities for citizen feedback to build good customer relationships, gauge service satisfaction, and provide opportunities for improvement. For example, the 4th

annual Citizens Academy began in January 2020, FUSE District public input meetings, and expanded use of social media.

Develop and implement a Partnership for Stronger Neighborhoods program designed around building relationships and enhancing the quality of life in the City of Gastonia.

Continue to seek funding and support solutions to promote community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness. This includes partnering with stakeholders to update the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness.

Partner with the US Postal Service to evaluate overall postal service and facilities in Gastonia and also the potential purchase of the Post Office located at 305 West Main Avenue for future community use.

Support the City's FY 2019 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant Application.

## **ECONOMIC VITALITY**

Complete the construction of a multi-use sports/entertainment venue in the FUSE District along with the successful recruitment of significant private investment in surrounding properties. Also, complete the successful execution of the management services agreement, all individual economic development agreements/projects, and have a successful ribbon cutting and opening.

Increase multi-family opportunities Downtown and increase Downtown residential and commercial occupancy rates.

Partner with the Akers Center, Eastridge Mall, Parkdale Mill, and Loray Mill site owners and management companies to invest and redevelop the properties to maximize value.

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

Identify and budget for attainable projects specified in the Highway 7 corridor project.

Update the Economic Development Strategic Plan.

