

The Town of Carthage's Strategic Plan outlines the organization's strategy for the next three years and provides actionable, Board-supported goals to guide staff in their work.

The 2026-2028 Strategic Plan has been crafted over several months by the combined efforts of the town's staff and Board of Commissioners, with facilitation support from Central Pines Regional Council. This document serves to clarify the organization's purpose and goals and be used for prioritization of Town funding and resources and accountability of the Board and staff.

The information included in this plan is built on data acquired through in-depth staff observation and the analysis of crucial town documents and plans and was designed and enhanced during two Board Retreats, a Staff Retreat, and collaboration with the Town Manager. It includes:

- A Mission Statement
- A Vision Statement
- Goals & Strategies

The plan is intended to be a dynamic document, indicating that strategies should be monitored for completion, evaluated annually, and adjusted to enable staff to advance the Board's goals.

## **Mission**

The Town delivers exceptional services to our citizens by prioritizing public safety, quality of life, and community well-being—guided by high standards of efficiency, excellence, and organizational effectiveness.

## **Vision**

The Town is a model of financial excellence and community resilience, an incubator for business and industry, and a community that attracts new residents and fosters homegrown talent.

## **Goals**

### **Organizational Excellence**

*Consistently deliver high-quality results, achieve its mission, and adapt to changing conditions in the community.*

- Develop and deliver annual training for Board and staff on new and existing state and local regulations to ensure consistent and compliant decision-making and operational alignment.
- Inventory organizational policies and identify policies that cause the most significant day-to-day confusion due to outdated language or gaps for modification and improvement.
- Implement creative solutions to address departmental staffing needs –workforce pipelines, shared roles across municipalities - while ensuring staffing levels are consistent with community growth year-over-year and in-line with peer communities.
- Invest in employee skills and professional development, prioritizing leadership development and technology proficiency to support organizational adaptability.

- Increase structured processes for interdepartmental communication and coordination (such as content-heavy, routine leadership team meetings) to respond to the organization functioning across multiple locations.
- Leverage emerging technology systems (e.g., work order systems, digital permitting, GIS dashboards) to increase transparency, efficiency, and service delivery.

## **Connectivity & Safety**

*Residents can move, interact, and live securely while fostering strong social and physical connections*

- Update the 2018 Bicycle and Pedestrian Connectivity Plan to identify most critical investments and prepare projects for state and federal funding.
- Conduct a lighting audit in areas immediately surrounding downtown and identify areas to focus on improvements.
- Develop a suite of simple, accessible communication methods used by the Town to reach residents across language, age, and disabilities for emergencies (Code Red) and non-urgent communications.
- Establish a clear process to track and respond to resident-reported safety issues (e.g., sidewalk gaps, lighting outages, dangerous intersections).

## **Infrastructure for Growth**

*The Town has foundational systems and assets needed to support current and future development.*

- Evaluate local and regional options for water service delivery and develop a plan that addresses long-term water supply needs.
- Creativity around land use planning to ensure development aligns with community needs and investments, such as treating ordinance as a living document, approving conditional rezonings, development forms to assess development to plans, etc.
- Prioritize high-quality development that aligns with the Land Use Plan and reflects the Town's desired character by putting in place clear processes to evaluate projects against the community vision and strengthening coordination between the Board and the Planning Board.
- Formalize communication with Moore County leadership, such as through the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem setting up a quarterly meeting with Moore County Chair/Vice-Chair and managers to strengthen coordination on investments.
- Develop a multi-year pavement maintenance and funding strategy that targets high-need, high-traffic areas and consistently allocate to future maintenance needs.
- Prepare to establish a voluntary property partnership/acquisition program to engage property owners interested in town-led projects, land banking, or public-private development opportunities.

## **Financial Sustainability**

*Strategic and responsible management of and planning for operational needs.*

- Streamline and strengthen processes to enhance long-term financial performance. Assess and update outdated financial and budgetary policies to align with best practices.
- Conduct water and sewer rate and system development fee studies to ensure long-term sustainability and cost recovery for enterprise funds.
- Develop and follow a multi-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) governed by formal policies tied to strategic priority areas.
- Develop a formal annexation policy that aligns with infrastructure capacity and cost recovery, shepherding development in locations that ensure the town can provide adequate and reliable services.
- Establish a Capital Reserve Fund with clear policies for use, tied to strategic priorities and approved by ordinance.
- Identify and pilot at least three non-development revenue options (example: vendor fees at events) to design.
- Proactively pursue state and federal grants aligned with infrastructure and financial sustainability priorities.

## **Vibrant Downtown and Places**

*Downtown Carthage offers a unique sense of place for businesses, visitors, government and community members to live and convene*

- Advance the next phases of the Downtown Plan with an emphasis on walkability and pedestrian safety, storefront activation, and public space improvements.
- Reevaluate the “boundaries” of Downtown and conduct an inventory of potential infill and expansion opportunities or “opportunity sites” for town-led, private-sector, or public-private projects.
- Ensure development standards of the Unified Development Ordinance, such as setbacks, building height, parking, and building design, align with the vision for downtown Carthage.
- Complete renovation of the new Town Hall and relocate administration staff from current offices, positioning the building as a civic anchor that increases daily downtown activity.
- Develop Board and staff relationships with local and regional economic development organizations, such as Chamber of Commerce and Moore County Economic Development Partnership, to recruit businesses that are uniquely local.