

*the model of  
good governance*

**NEW HANOVER COUNTY**

# **Strategic Plan Report 2012 - 2017**



# New Hanover County: #SafeHealthySecure

*Planning, measuring, and strategically investing in the future of our community is the essence of good governance.*



## Mission

New Hanover County is committed to progressive public policy, superior service, courteous contact, judicious exercise of authority, and sound fiscal management to meet the needs and concerns of our citizens today and tomorrow.

## Vision

A vibrant, prosperous, diverse coastal community, committed to building a sustainable future for generations to come.

## Shared Values

*Professionalism • Innovation • Stewardship • Integrity • Accountability*



# Introduction

New Hanover County's programs and services make our 220,000+ residents the priority every day. By strategically investing in the community, focusing on the customer experience, and enhancing collaborative partnerships, **New Hanover County is a leader in innovation and is a model of good governance.**

The county's strategic plan has guided the work of New Hanover County over the past five years. Safety has improved, investments in education and children have increased, opportunities for our workforce have strengthened, and the quality of life in the county has been enriched. New Hanover County is continually moving forward and making improvements to ensure we are all **safe, healthy and secure.**



## Intelligent Growth & Economic Development

- Promote a strong economy with high-quality jobs
- Encourage a diverse community and private investment
- Support a planned environment that protects natural resources



## Superior Public Health & Public Safety

- Reduce and prevent crime in New Hanover County
- Increase the safety and security of the community
- Reduce health risks and diseases



## Superior Education & Workforce

- Prepare students to be successful
- Enhance self-sufficiency of individuals and families
- Improve literacy and workforce readiness skills

# Intelligent Growth & Economic Development

Over the past five years, New Hanover County has helped to promote a strong, diverse economy by initiating policies and plans that encourage private investment, increase high-quality jobs, create greater access to resources, and focus on environmental stewardship. Some of these initiatives are highlighted below.

## Pathways to Prosperity

Conducted an economic development strategy, “**Pathways to Prosperity**,” and developed actionable plans to increase private investment and create jobs, including:

- Furthering economic development through a \$2.1 million design project to extend water and sewer service along the U.S. Highway 421 corridor by 2019, bringing new development opportunities, more jobs, and economic growth for the region.
- Collaborating as a regional partner on the InnovateNC initiative to help expand the local innovation economy, specifically in Marine and Life Sciences.
- Investing in the “Choose Cape Fear” marketing initiative to raise awareness of the region’s expansive business infrastructure and generate long-term business interest and investment in our area.

## Plan NHC

Adopted the county’s first Comprehensive Development Plan, “**Plan NHC**,” providing a path for economic development and a direct vision for the future of New Hanover County. Plan NHC will help to strategically manage population growth and responsible development in the unincorporated areas of the county.

## Environmental Management

Created an innovative business model for **Environmental Management** that focuses on diverting materials from the landfill to create capacity, improve the environment, and develop public/private partnerships that have increased exports, supported manufacturing, and created more than 30 new private-sector jobs. Among the many advances are:

- Materials Recycling Facility that serves all of New Hanover, Pender, and Brunswick counties, and processes over 25,000 tons of recyclables per year.
- Construction & Demolition Facility that diverts over 6,000 tons per year from landfill disposal.
- Household Hazardous Waste & Electronics Recycling Program, including a mobile HazWagon, that keeps 520 tons of toxic items out of the landfill each year.
- Landfill Gas-to-Energy program is underway and will reduce the site’s emissions by converting landfill gas into clean, renewable energy.

## County Beaches

Protected the **county’s beaches and inlets** through federal, state, and local partnerships. Beach renourishment and projects, such as Carolina Beach Inlet restoration, are critical for the economy, tourism, and protection from coastal storm damage to ensure that our beaches remain healthy.



## 5-year goals

✓ Add 6,000 new jobs  
5-Year Progress: **14,338 new jobs**

✓ \$1 Billion of private investment  
5-Year Progress: **\$1.9 Billion**



### Other notable intelligent growth and economic development initiatives include:

A comprehensive review and update of the county's land development regulations to create a Unified Development Ordinance.

The commissioning of a study of storm-water management utility across the unincorporated county.

Creation of the Foreign Trade Zone to include the Port of Wilmington and the Wilmington International Airport, providing an added benefit to companies expanding or relocating to our area.

Hosting a successful Wells Fargo Championship golf tournament that placed New Hanover County in front of the world.

## Awards

National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Awards:

🏆 Environmental Management's HazWagon Program & Community Battery Recycling Program

🏆 County-led Project to Maintain Carolina Beach Inlet



# Superior Public Health & Public Safety

Over the past five years, New Hanover County has helped to reduce health risks and diseases; increased safety through the Sheriff's Office, Fire Rescue, Emergency Management and 911 Communications; and invested in prevention programs and support services for children, families, and adults. Some of these initiatives are highlighted below.



## School to Prison Pipeline

Initiated an Inter-Agency Governance Agreement on the Handling of School Offenses known as **School to Prison Pipeline** – the first such agreement in North Carolina. This effort brings schools, law enforcement, the justice system, Department of Social Services (DSS), Community Justice Services, and other government and community partners together to change disciplinary practices in New Hanover County Schools and limit school suspension.

## Social Services

Enhanced services to **keep kids safe, healthy, and secure** in the classroom through additional school resource officers, school nurses, and expansion of mental health care services; and in homes through Social Services' partnership with SAS to develop predictive software that identifies and tracks risk factors for children.

## Criminal Justice System

Diverted youth and adults from the criminal justice system through the following initiatives:

- **Jail Diversion Program**, in partnership with Leading Into New Communities (LINC, Inc.), was developed in response to the opioid epidemic. The program reduces the amount of time people spend in jail and ensures they have community-based treatment and support services. As a pilot program, it assisted 11 women and in 2017-2018, it will assist 20 men and 20 women.
- **Healing Transitions Program**, in partnership with Trillium Health Resources, was approved by County Commissioners and will be a long-term residential substance abuse treatment facility for 200 men.
- **Misdemeanor Diversion Program** provides first-time, non-violent 16 and 17-year-old, first-time offenders an opportunity to avoid the criminal justice system by completing the Diversion Program, helping to redirect youth to a more positive, productive path.

## Parent Child Interaction Therapy

Expanded the Health Department's **Parent Child Interaction Therapy** for children 2½-6 years old with emotional and behavioral problems.

## Parks Expansion

Upgraded **New Hanover County Parks** to increase accessibility and encourage healthy lifestyles, including the Northern Region Park expansion, additional walking trails and basketball courts, an inclusive playground and splash pad at Hugh MacRae Park, and the Ogden Skate Park – all to enhance the public's access to outdoor recreation.

## Senior Resource Center

Developed **evidence-based programs that help seniors** eat healthy, exercise more, and obtain the services they need. Initiatives include raised-bed gardens, providing healthy meals to seniors, fall prevention exercise classes, access to transportation for medical appointments and wellness activities, and prescription drug counseling that has helped 669 older adults save \$605,805 on prescription costs in the past year.



## Hospital Services

Partnered with New Hanover Regional Medical Center to **increase hospital services** through hospital expansion; and utilize funds to create a Health and Human Services Building that will bring the Health Department and DSS under one roof to improve efficiencies and enhance the customer experience.



*The award-winning Ogden Skatepark is a top-quality regional attraction, providing a safe and secure place for skating and biking in New Hanover County.*

## Juvenile Recidivism Reduction

Invested in children, youth, and families to **reduce juvenile recidivism** by increasing prevention programs, such as “Double the Impact” to 7th and 8th graders, adding case management services, and expanding Community Justice Services (CJS) evidence-based prevention programs that have served more than 1,466 youth.

## 5-year goals

✓ **Reduce Juvenile Recidivism by 5%**  
5-Year Progress: **16%**



## Fire Rescue

Improved **New Hanover County Fire Rescue services**, offering consistently high fire ratings throughout the county, and began construction on a new state-of-the-art fire station in Ogden which will be in service in 2018.

## Sheriff's Office

Increased resources for the **Sheriff's Office** to keep residents safe, with specific attention on the Gang Task Force, Elements - Youth Violence Intervention Program, and public housing safety.



*New Hanover County has enhanced services that engage youth; keeping them safe, healthy, and secure inside and outside of the classroom.*

## Other notable public health and safety initiatives include:

The county's Community Justice Advisory Group is working to combat the opioid epidemic.

The Health Department's Community Health Assessment helps to identify health risks, priorities, and social determinates.

Reducing and containing healthcare costs for taxpayers through an employee wellness clinic and health risk assessment.

## Awards

National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Awards:

🏆 Parks & Gardens' Ogden Skatepark, also a NC Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) 2017 Excellence in Innovation Award winner

🏆 Criminal Justice Services' Community Service and Restitution Program & Pretrial Release Services Program

🏆 NHC Fire Rescue's Smoke Alarm and Fire Prevention Program for the deaf and hard of hearing

🏆 Social Services Intensive Reunification Foster Care Program & Family Support Program's Fatherhood Initiative

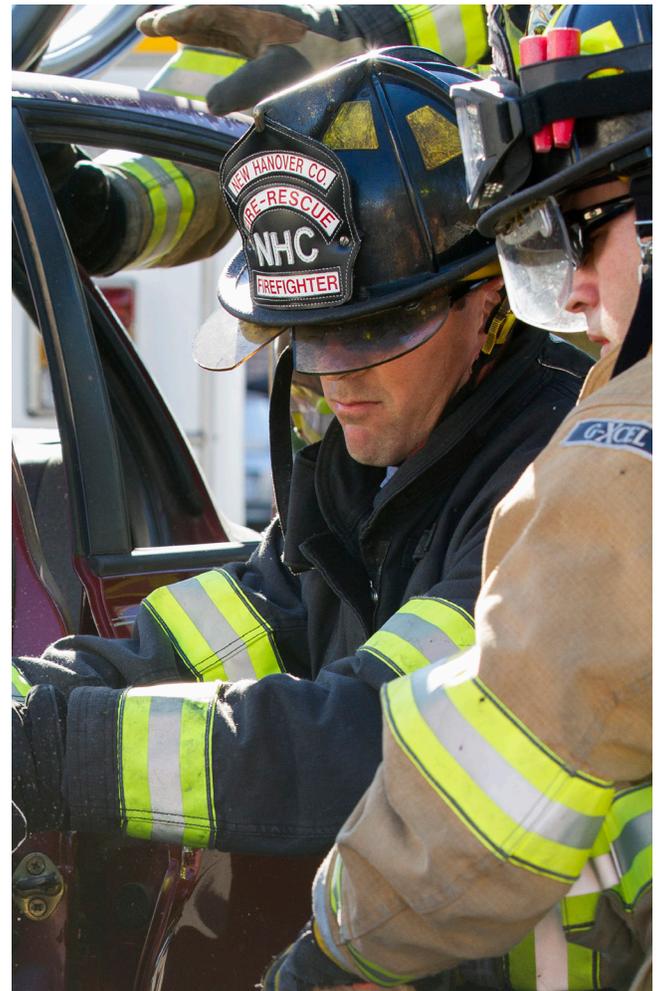
🏆 Jail Diversion Program, in partnership with LINC, Inc.

Accreditations:

🏆 Sheriff's Office received Commission Accreditation for Law Enforcement Activities (CALEA) in July 2015

🏆 Health Department received re-accreditation for the fourth time in 2016

🏆 Senior Resource Center received recertification as a Center of Excellence for the third time in 2017



# Superior Education & Workforce

Over the past five years, New Hanover County has increased investments in the county's schools and community college to make education a priority, to prepare students to be successful, and to help individuals gain greater self-sufficiency. Some of these initiatives are highlighted below.

## New Hanover County Public Schools

Increased county **funding to New Hanover County Public Schools** by \$13.3 million, steadily increasing per-pupil spending five years in a row to achieve the \$2,700 per-pupil goal; and continued funding all public school facilities and new construction, including Porters Neck Elementary.

## Expanded Pre-K

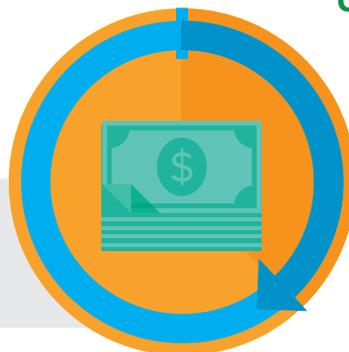
**Expanded Pre-K** for three and four year olds, in partnership with the school system, to add 45 new openings – the equivalent of three classrooms – giving children a structured learning environment and preparing them for kindergarten.

## Every Child Ready to Read Program

Expanded **Every Child Ready to Read Program** to all child care centers and Pre-K classes through New Hanover County Public Library, helping to ensure the county's children begin school ready to read.

## 5-year goals

✓ **Increase average weekly wage 10%**  
5-Year Progress: **13.8%**



## Prescription to Read Program

Developed the **Prescription to Read Program**, a collaboration between the Health Department and Smart Start of New Hanover County, supporting medical providers in their efforts to “prescribe” books and shared reading activities for families during well-child visits.

## Capital Plan

Developed a capital plan to construct the **Pine Valley Library** as a replacement to the Myrtle Grove Library, which will expand learning resources, programs, and services for the residents in southern New Hanover County.



## Cape Fear Community College

Supported the growth of **Cape Fear Community College** (CFCC) through \$164 million voter-approved bonds to construct three Emerging Technology buildings, Union Station, and the Wilson Center; and continued to fund the operations and maintenance for all CFCC facilities.

## Other notable education and workforce-readiness initiatives include:

Soil and Water Conservation District's Outdoor Learning Centers at four county elementary schools to introduce young learners to the benefits of conservation and environmental stewardship.

Cape Fear Museum's increase in programming for ages one through five.

The creation of Cape Fear Museum Park and the Main Library's Story Park to expand educational programming outdoors.



## Awards

National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Awards:



Soil & Water Conservation District's Outdoor Environmental Learning Centers



New Hanover County Public Library Story Stations



*The county's award-winning Outdoor Environmental Learning Centers encourage learning in a safe outdoor environment.*



# Effective County Manage

*New Hanover County has improved public awareness of the county's responsibilities and services, creating a more informed and better-served community.*

## **Strategic Partnerships**

**Developed strategic partnerships** and collaborations with the City of Wilmington and Wrightsville, Carolina and Kure beaches, the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce, InnovateNC, LINC, Inc., Trillium

Health Resources, New Hanover Regional Medical Center, and regional partners through the "Choose Cape Fear" marketing initiative, that have expanded the county's reach and impact.



## **Social Media Presence**

Tripled the county's **social media presence** and usage, reaching new and diverse audiences.

## **Website**

Created a **new website** that is customer-oriented, easy to navigate, and mobile-friendly.

# ment & Good Governance

## Awards

-  Development Activity Webpage, NACo Achievement Award & “100 Brilliant Ideas at Work” Winner
-  State of the County: In Their Own Words, City-County Communications & Marketing Association (3CMA) Communications Award
-  HazWagon: Go Green Promotion, 3CMA Communications Award
-  Board of Elections Official Resource Portal, Election Workers Best Practices Award from U.S. Elections Assistance Commission





*New Hanover County has worked to improve the customer experience and increase citizen satisfaction.*

### Process Improvements

Initiated innovative **process improvements** that create internal efficiencies and reduce customer wait times at the county's Health, Social Services, and Building Safety departments, creating more capacity and allowing more people to be served.

### County Employees

Enhanced recognition, training and leadership programs for **county employees**; and initiated a pay and classification study to attract and retain talented, committed public servants.

### Mental Health First Aid

Developed a **mental health first-aid** training course with Trillium Health Resources to help county employees better serve citizens who are dealing with mental illness or experiencing a crisis.

### Awards

-  S.E.R.V.E. Employee Training & Leadership Program, NACo Achievement Award
-  Building Safety & Planning's task-oriented cross training program, NACo Achievement Award
-  American Heart Association "Fit-Friendly Employer" Award

*New Hanover County Building Safety has increased efficiencies and improved the customer experience.*

*New Hanover County is committed to deliver value for taxpayer dollars through sound policy decisions and services.*

### Triple-A Bond Rating

Secured and maintained a double, **triple-A bond rating** for the past five years, placing the county in the top 2.5% of all counties in the U.S.

### Tax Cut

Approved the first **tax cut** for county residents in 14 years in the fiscal year 2017-18 budget.

### Environmental Management

Enhanced the services provided by the county's **Environmental Management** Department, all while lowering the tip fee at the county's landfill four years in a row and increasing the fund balance.

### 320 Chestnut Street

Renovated the county's building at **320 Chestnut Street** on time and under budget, creating an energy-efficient, well-designed facility to serve citizens.

### Awards

-  Government Finance Officers Association Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting & Distinguished Budget Presentation Award
-  Information Technology's Agile Project Management, NACo Achievement Award & 2016 NCACC Excellence in Innovation Award
-  320 Chestnut building renovation, Lower Cape Fear Stewardship Coalition Award & Historic Wilmington Foundation Award
-  Cape Fear Museum Park, Lower Cape Fear Stewardship Coalition Award





*U.S. Highway 421 Corridor & New Hanover County Landfill*

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