



2017 State of the County



Chatham County's draft Comprehensive Plan includes a map for future land use and conservation.

Big plans for a big future

Development of the **Chatham County Comprehensive Plan** neared completion at the end of the FY17. The plan covers the next 25 years and provides guidance for county government to be better prepared for growth in residents and jobs, while maintaining "small community" qualities, natural resources and scenic beauty.

By the end of FY17, the planning process had involved extensive public input through hearings, community meetings, stakeholder groups and county/town departments. More than 1,900 people responded to the public surveys and 132 responded to the Agricultural Focus Group Survey. The plan identified **10 goals** and covers these focus areas: economic development, land use, housing, health, agriculture, natural resources,

resiliency, parks & recreation, transportation and utilities/public services. The plan identifies recommended actions and a few "BIG IDEAS" for each focus area. The entire plan can be found at: www.chathamnc.org/comprehensiveplan

The county received special recognition from the Triangle J Council of Governments for integrating the Public Health Department's county health priorities into the comprehensive plan process.

NEXT STEPS – The Board of Commissioners will approve the final Comprehensive Plan in the fall of 2017 and implementation begins in FY18.

Megasites Shovel Ready

Chatham Economic Development Corporation (EDC) led enhancements to the Moncure Megasite and Chatham-Siler City Advanced Manufacturing (CAM) Site. Through Golden LEAF Foundation's Major Site Development Initiative (MSDI), Siler City received \$4 million to extend water service to the CAM Site and the City of Sanford received \$4 million to extend wastewater to the Moncure site.

Agriculture & Conference Center Opens

The Grand Opening of the new Chatham County Agriculture Center and Conference Center was held on March 25, 2017. The center meets a critical need for flexible event space in the county and puts all agriculture-related agencies under one roof, including Cooperative Extension, Soil & Water Conservation and the local NC Forestry Service.

Staff have been hired to manage public events booked at the facility, led by Larilee Isley. The Convention & Visitors Bureau continues to market the facility for public events, including a website: www.ChathamMeetings.com



Home Repairs for Seniors & Disabled – The Council on Aging developed a shared online database of home repair needs so that local partner agencies can more effectively collaborate on meeting these needs while reducing duplication of services. The project led the county and the Town of Siler City to waive fees for the building of ramps for persons with disabilities. The program won a 2017 Local Government Federal Credit Union Excellence in Innovation Award.

Big collaborations

Regional and local collaboration emerged as another key theme for FY17. A few examples are shown below:

Affordable Housing – This issue is an ongoing priority of the Board of Commissioners. The Affordable Housing Task Force worked with the Triangle J Council of Governments to develop an "Affordable Rental Housing Report & Strategy Toolbox for Goldston, Pittsboro, Siler City, and Chatham County." The toolbox recommends policies and strategies to increase affordable rental options.

Chatham Health Alliance – The Chatham Health Alliance, an award-winning community partnership based in the Public Health Department, continues to gain momentum. It formed three active subcommittees focused on identified health priorities: obesity prevention, access to health care, and access to mental health & substance abuse services. A new website premiered at www.chathamhealthalliance.org.

Future Town Hall – County commissioners set aside \$450,000 to help the Town of Pittsboro buy land for a future town hall complex where the county is considering rental office space. Funds would be reimbursed if the county does not rent space there.

Utilities Master Plan – The county initiated a partnership with the towns to develop a utilities master plan.

VIEW FULL STATE OF THE COUNTY REPORT AT
www.chathamnc.org/StateoftheCounty

Other Chatham County highlights of FY17

Online Access

- **New GIS Portal:** The county launched a new Geographic Information Systems (GIS) online mapping portal with several new applications helpful for various businesses and residents. Visit <http://chathamncgis.maps.arcgis.com>
- **Public Website:** Last fall, an updated version of www.chathamnc.org premiered. It is now more compatible with mobile devices.
- **Permits & Inspections:** All the county offices involved in permits & inspections implemented new online features. Inspectors can post results in the field, a big timesaver. Coming soon: public access to apply and track applications..

Domestic Violence Assistance

Chatham County took action to provide additional support for victims of domestic violence. Two bilingual advocates have been hired for the new county program, Family Violence Prevention Services, and two victim services coordinators were hired within the Sheriff's Office. These staff members are closely collaborating and are available daily in Chatham County Judicial Center.



Customer Service Award

In May 2017, Chatham County Manager Renee Paschal established the **Dawn Stumpf Award for Excellence in Customer Service**, which honors former Board of Elections Director Dawn Stumpf, (shown at left). She retired in November 2016 after 16 years of service. Paschal stated, "Dawn embodies what I call the Chatham Way. She did her job expertly, while making friends along the way."

15th Leadership Academy

In August 2017, the county honored the fifteenth class of of its Leadership Academy with 31 new graduates.

Sheriff's Events

STAR Program: Sheriff Mike Roberson initiated the Sheriff's Training Academy for Residents (STAR) Program in March 2017. It is a seven-week, interactive program designed to teach residents more about the daily functions of the Sheriff's Office.

Community Appreciation: In Sept. 2016, the Sheriff's Office hosted its first Community Appreciation Night in Pittsboro (photo at right).



School Facilities

- **New High School:** A site on Seaforth Road will be home to a new high school slated to open in FY21.
- **New Elementary School:** A site on Andrews Store Road near Pollard Middle School was approved for a new elementary school that will open in FY20.
- **CCCC Health Sciences:** The county furthered plans for a new Health Sciences Building for Central Carolina Community College on US 15-501. Work begins in FY19.

Parks & Recreation Grants

The county successfully applied for a grant from the Parks & Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) to make major enhancements to Briar Chapel Park near Margaret Pollard School. The \$150,000 grant will match county funds to add a walking trail, picnic shelter, playground, sidewalk school connection. A second grant of \$100,000 from the NC Recreational Trail Program will complete work on the Haw River Trail.