



Graceful Great Blue,
by Kelly Mieszkalski.



ORANGE COUNTY

NORTH CAROLINA

STRATEGIC PLAN FY2025-2029

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Canopy 2, by Diane Cashion

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Board of Commissioner's Message

After months of engagement, community building and collaboration, we are pleased to present Orange County's five-year Strategic Plan. This plan is an aspirational endeavor for the future of the County – who we are, who we want to be, and how to get there. Its success depends on all of us working together to implement the plan, report and evaluate our progress and make the adjustments necessary to continue moving the County forward.

This strategic plan is an essential tool in laying out ways we can make the County stronger. While we continue with our clear focus on delivering excellent service each day, this document is a public declaration of our commitment to work to achieve the County's vision. Together, we created a vision for the future of the County: We are a diverse, inclusive, and healthy county working together to strengthen our community and enhance the quality of life for all residents.

Key to the formation of this Strategic Plan is the input and feedback we received from each one of you. It is through your discussions, insights, and input, that this Strategic Plan was developed. It was built and informed by your needs, your priorities, and your dreams. These are your visions and priorities, and we look forward to putting them into action.



Sally Greene Vice Chair At Large
Anna Richards District 1
Phyllis Portie-Ascott District 1
Jamezetta Bedford Chair District 1
Amy Fowler At Large
Earl McKee District 2
Jean Hamilton District 1

Plan at a Glance

Mission Statement

Orange County is a visionary leader in providing governmental services valued by our community, beyond those required by law, in an equitable, sustainable, innovative, and efficient way.

Vision Statement

We are a diverse, inclusive, and healthy county working together to strengthen our community and enhance the quality of life for all residents.

Guiding Principles

Communication and Awareness

We provide information and opportunities for engagement in a transparent manner so that all in our community have knowledge, understanding, and a voice.

Inclusivity and Engagement

We foster an environment in which all are welcomed, represented, and empowered to participate in and feel connected to their community.

Dedication and Respect

We commit to our roles in public service and organizational excellence by fostering the skills, talents, and innovation of our residents, employees, volunteers, and boards needed to carry out this work.

Stewardship and Advocacy

We make proactive data supported decisions and advocate to local, state and Federal governments in response to our community's needs in a way that best utilizes our resources.

Partnership and Collaboration

We build meaningful relationships and connections that allow us to create holistic and integrated systems of support for all.

Social Justice

We reject oppression and inequity by ensuring fair and equitable treatment of all people.

Climate Action and Sustainability

We recognize that our environment is critical to our existence and are deliberate in protecting, preserving, and sustaining our natural resources for the continued good of all.

GOAL STATEMENT

Promote sustainability and resiliency across the County and collaborate with our partners to activate our community, protect and preserve our natural resources, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



Objectives

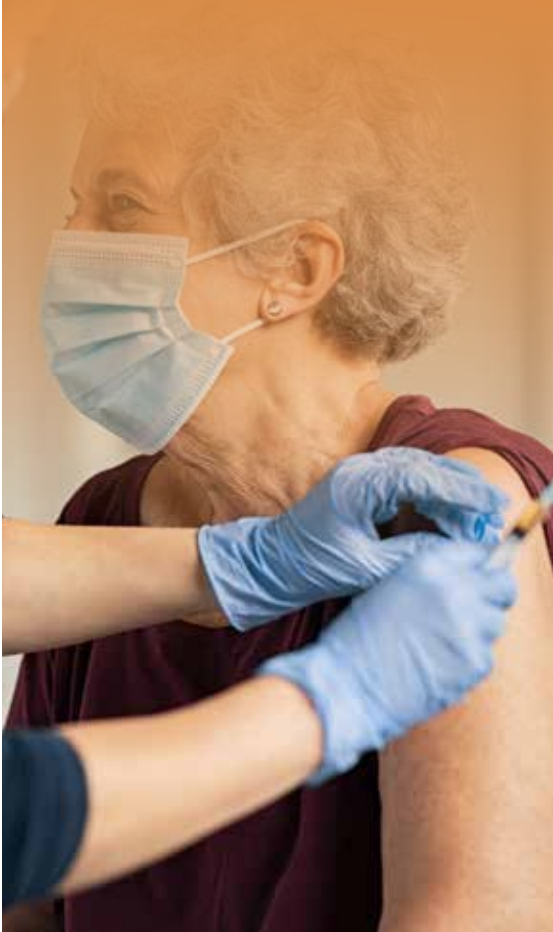
1. Identify the priorities and resources necessary to implement the Climate Action Plan.
2. Invest in our infrastructure to reduce the environmental impact of the County fleet/facilities and improve safety.
3. Improve educational opportunities for County staff and community members on climate action and available resources to advance climate action projects.
4. Incentivize and promote sustainable agriculture and local food systems development through supportive policy, funding, farmland protection and educational outreach.
5. Review land use policies to promote and connect Town, County, and private trails and open spaces.
6. Protect water supply/watersheds.
7. Conserve and protect high priority open space, including Natural Heritage sites, nature preserves, watershed riparian buffers, and prime/threatened farmland.
8. Include environmental stewardship objectives in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

Performance Measures

1. Implement 20% of Climate Action Plan strategies and document strategy completion in Climate Action Tracker. (16 strategies in five years).
2. Reduce the Energy Intensity (energy used in KBTU per square foot) of County facilities by 10%, to 6.0 KBTUS.
3. 20% of County non- Emergency vehicles are EV.
4. Number of individuals participating in education and outreach events – 1,500 within five years.
5. Percentage of employees trained in sustainable practices. – 100% of new employees and 50% of current employees within five years.
6. Increase the percentage of sustainable agriculture educational workshops offered by 50% (Baseline 10 workshops).
7. Add three connectivity points between Municipal, County and other trail systems in five years. (Three connectivity points currently exist)
8. Reduce nutrient loading in water supply watersheds by investment in stormwater improvements and riparian conservation by spending 100% of allocated capital funds (\$175,000 annually).
9. Place 300 acres of priority natural areas and wildlife habitat in permanent protection over the next 5 years.
10. Board’s approval of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan on or before 12/25.

GOAL STATEMENT

Increase equitable access to care and social safety net programming to promote the physical, social, and mental well-being of our community.



Objectives

1. Improve harm reduction, prevention, and support services for adults and children experiencing behavioral health issues, substance use disorder, and intellectual or developmental disability.
2. Expand access to quality, affordable healthcare services. (e.g., Medicaid expansion, crisis response, healthy living campaign).
3. Provide social safety net programming and the resources needed for our most vulnerable community members (e.g., veterans, unhoused people, foster children, older adults, etc.).
4. Reduce impacts and barriers for justice-involved children and adults through deflection, diversion, therapeutic interventions, and re-entry support, including housing.
5. Invest in, support, train, and retain our community safety, health, and emergency services employees and direct care workforce.
6. Provide sustainable, equitable, and high-quality community safety and emergency services to meet the community's evolving needs.
7. Invest in services and programs that improve the health and quality of life of the community (e.g., recreation and public open spaces, arts, etc.)

Performance Measures

1. Implement Post Overdose Response Team (PORT) and achieve and maintain a repeat overdose rate of under 10% annually.
2. Increase the Medicaid covered population by 20% between the start of Medicaid expansion and the end of FY2024-25 (Baseline of 19,645).
3. Increase by 5% annually the number of individuals diverted from criminal legal system involvement.
4. Maintain a turnover rate of 14% or less in community safety, health, and emergency services employees.
5. Maintain a 60% adherence rate to a 9 minute or less Emergent Response Time for events requiring critical Paramedic level Intervention (Baseline of 47%).
6. Develop a baseline measure for the number of residents engaged in County programs that support the arts, recreation, and well-being including demographics when available.

GOAL STATEMENT

Promote equitable and accessible housing and address housing disparities through policies, partnerships, and collaboration to create a thriving community.



Objectives

1. Allocate permanent funding sources to address new and existing housing needs.
2. Address need and any policy barriers to increase access to emergency shelter beds and other low-barrier housing including eviction diversion.
3. Invest in permanent supportive housing.
4. Prioritize and select County-owned land and/or facilities as part of an overall plan of facilities to create crisis, bridge, low barrier, affordable, and permanent housing.
5. Review County ordinances, policies, agreements, and the regulatory processes to streamline practices, and increase opportunities and reduce barriers to construct housing.
6. Partner with public agencies to increase opportunities for public employees to buy and rent homes where they work.
7. Expand resources and invest in housing designed for our aging and disabled residents.
8. Preserve existing housing stock from disrepair and avoid displacement.
9. Increase representation of people with lived experience on housing related matters.

Performance Measures

1. Increase the number of affordable housing units by an average of 5 annually.
2. Increase the amount of emergency shelter beds available in the community by 25% by 2025 (Baseline 40 currently).
3. Number of successful completions in Bridge Housing i.e. (TBD)% of participants moving into stable/permanent housing solution.
4. Start construction of affordable housing units on Greene Tract by 2029.
5. Identify development nodes through the CLUP to better identify Affordable Housing opportunities.
6. Initiate at least one partnership or collaboration that increases the percentage of employees of Orange County Government that reside in Orange County.
7. Modify 35 units annually to allow for safe usage for senior and disabled individuals (Baseline of 33 per year).
8. Preserve at least 30 units annually through the urgent repair and housing rehabilitation programs. (Baseline of 25 per year).
9. Identify plan to reduce systematic barriers for attendees with lived experiences to participate in county housing related matters by 2026.

GOAL STATEMENT

Collaborate with our regional partners to expand, integrate/connect, and provide accessible public transportation options.

Objectives

1. Identify priorities and resources necessary to implement the Orange County Transit Plan.
2. Increase community awareness of all modes of transportation including transit, bike and pedestrian, vehicle, and all other modes.
3. Support road projects that address congestion and reduce commute time using the County’s Complete Streets policy.
4. Coordinate transit investments with municipal and county land use planning to reduce vehicle miles travelled and to provide more equitable access to shopping, employment, medical centers, college campuses, etc.
5. Invest in implementing the County’s Safe Routes to Schools plan.
6. Update transportation related plans to provide more multi-modal options including rural Orange County.

Performance Measures

1. Install a minimum of three bus stops or rural transit hubs in each year of the County Transit Plan.
2. Participate in at least four outreach events per year, including one targeted to the Spanish speaking community, to educate the public on all available modes of transportation.
3. 3-5% percent annual increase in the residents who are satisfied with biking, walking, and bus travel using annual community survey as a baseline.
4. Present 2024 Orange County Safe Routes to School Action Plan to BOCC by December 2024.
5. Present 2024 Orange County Transportation Multi-Modal Plan to BOCC by December 2024.



GOAL STATEMENT

Enhance and maintain quality school operations and infrastructure and cultivate lifelong learning.

Objectives

1. Foster collaborative relationships with formal and informal educational organizations and agencies to provide opportunities for community members to meet, connect, and learn together.
2. Improve school readiness and educational outcomes by providing access, training, tools, technology, and other resources needed to thrive.
3. Provide support for workforce development through training, tools, technology, and other resources.
4. Improve learning environments by investing in facilities over a 10-year period that address repair, renovation, and educational adequacy needs.
5. Invest in and implement a plan that supports schools operational and facility funding needs.
6. Implement the recommendations of the Schools Safety Task Force.
7. Invest in and expand equitable behavioral health services for children and adolescents.
8. Invest in and expand equitable behavioral health services for teachers and staff.

Performance Measures

1. Develop a communication plan by June 30, 2024 to inform the community of learning opportunities in County operated programs.
2. Number of 3–4-year-olds from low-income households that are newly enrolled in high quality pre-K programs as measured by the star system.
3. Offer quarterly workshops at community touchpoints on digital literacy topics.
4. Prepare a general obligation bond referendum for the November 2024 ballot.
5. % of approved maintenance funding expended.
6. Annual meeting of the School Safety Task Force or other group be convened by the BOCC to review policies that address safety in the school districts and provide education on laws addressing school disruptions.
7. Number of children admitted to the emergency department for behavioral health crises.
8. Partner with Alliance Health to offer behavioral health resource fairs.



GOAL STATEMENT

Foster an environment that attracts and retains sustainable and diverse businesses and visitors, employment opportunities, and diversifies our tax base.



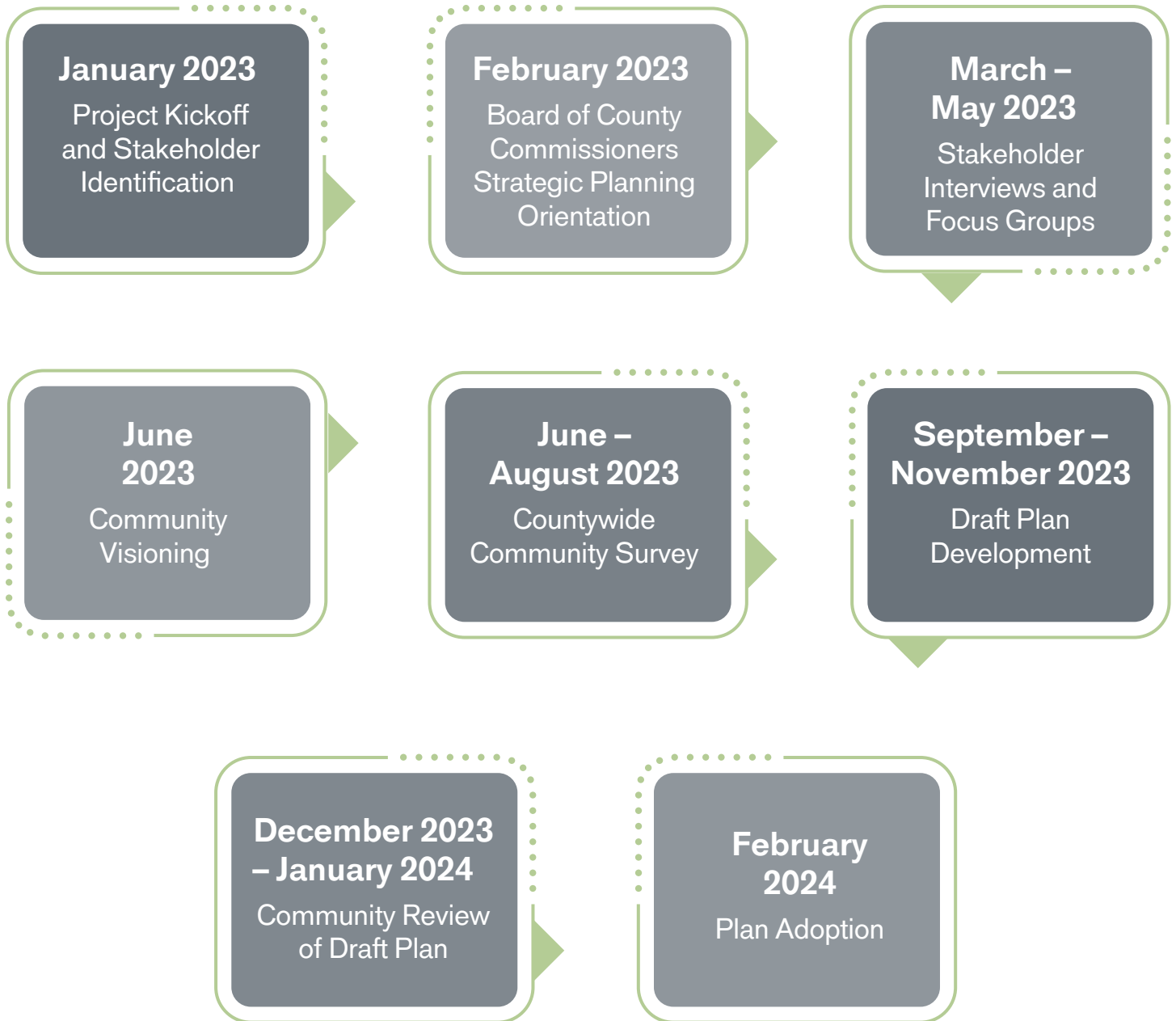
Objectives

1. Provide family-oriented and inclusive programming or other cultural events for residents and visitors.
2. Review and revise County policies and regulations to support business investment in Orange County.
3. Streamline and digitize business processes to facilitate efficient interactions between employers and County departments.
4. Provide resources to small, creative, and agro-businesses that add character and quality of life to our community to attract employers, employees, and visitors.
5. Increase access to and awareness of resources and assistance available to residents and businesses.
6. Enhance the recruitment process to broaden applicant pools for County positions so the workforce becomes more diverse.
7. Provide workforce and business development resources to enhance the skills of our workforce.

Performance Measures

1. Establish a baseline of tourism resources allocated toward community partners producing diverse, family friendly cultural events, and evaluate the success of this investment using the Visitors Bureau economic impact calculator.
2. Create a workgroup to collect data from, identify and evaluate policies and regulations to support business investment by December 31, 2024.
3. Create an inventory of business resources available to existing and emerging businesses across County government to identify gaps and redundancies by the end of 2024.
4. Increase retail sales tax remittance by a minimum of 4% annually.
5. Increase the non-residential portion of the tax base by 2% over the next five years.
6. 5% increase of Orange County Agricultural and Business Economic Development Grant awards (\$15,750 in FY2024-25).
7. 5% increase of Orange County Agricultural and Business Economic Development Grant awards (local funds) and/or recipients in support of business creation, innovation, and expansion over the next five years.
8. Increase the diversity of the candidate pool for all recruitments to, at a minimum, reflect the demographics of the County.
9. Create an inventory of workforce development resources available across County government to identify gaps and redundancies by the end of 2024.

Timeline



Public Engagement Summary



4

Focus Group



40

Participants



Community
Engagement Site

5,590

Total Visits

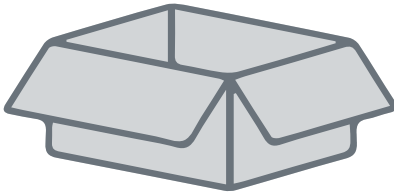
311

Survey Responses

49

Ideas

Meeting-in-a-box



7

Participants



1

Community Pop-up Event

Employee Survey



406

Responses

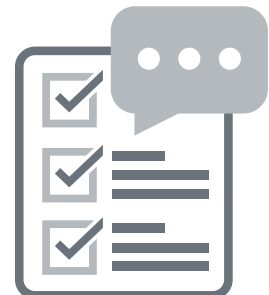
Community Survey
(statistically valid)



604

Responses

Community Survey
(non-random)



696

Responses

Demographics

Orange County Population



134,010
2010

148,911
2020

161,272
2030



\$79,205

Median Household Income*



\$339,900

Median Household Value



93.7%

High School Graduate
or Higher

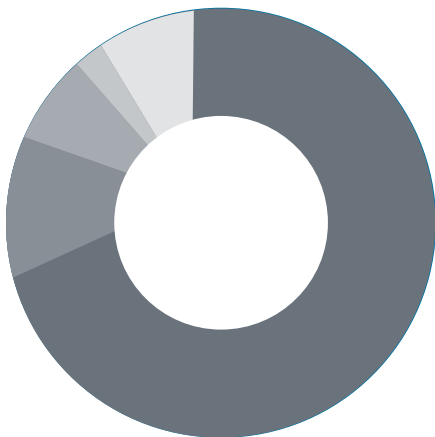


12.2%

Residents Below
Poverty Level

Source: 2022 Population Estimates, US Census Bureau *in 2021 dollars

Race and Ethnicity



68.8%

White or Caucasian
(Non-Hispanic)

12%

Black or African
American

8.8%

Hispanic

8.2%

Asian or
Asian Indian

2.8%

Two or More
Races

Source: North Carolina Office of State Budget & Management, State Demographer

What's Next?

Putting the Plan Into Action

Now that the strategic plan is adopted, the implementation phase commences.

This involves translating the outlined strategies into actional steps, assigning responsibilities, and establishing timelines.

Regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will be put in place to assess progress and make adjustments as needed.

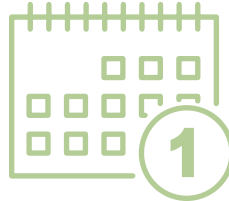
Feedback loops will also be established to help ensure continuous improvement and alignment with the County's overarching goals.

Successful execution of the strategic plan will require adaptability, clear communication, and a commitment to achieving the defined objectives.

Stay involved and curious about the process to learn more about our progress on the plan.

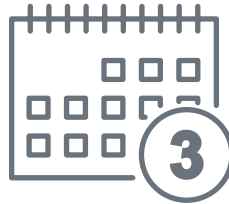
Keeping Track Of Progress

How are we doing? We'll let you know!



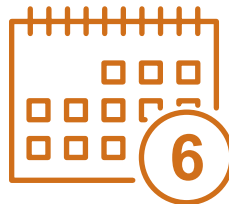
MONTHLY

County staff will evaluate and discuss progress on Strategic Plan goals.



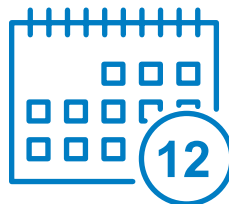
QUARTERLY

County leadership will provide the County Manager's Office with progress updates for each Strategic Plan goal.



TWICE A YEAR

County Manager's Office will prepare an update to the Board for each Strategic Plan goal, including significant wins and challenges.



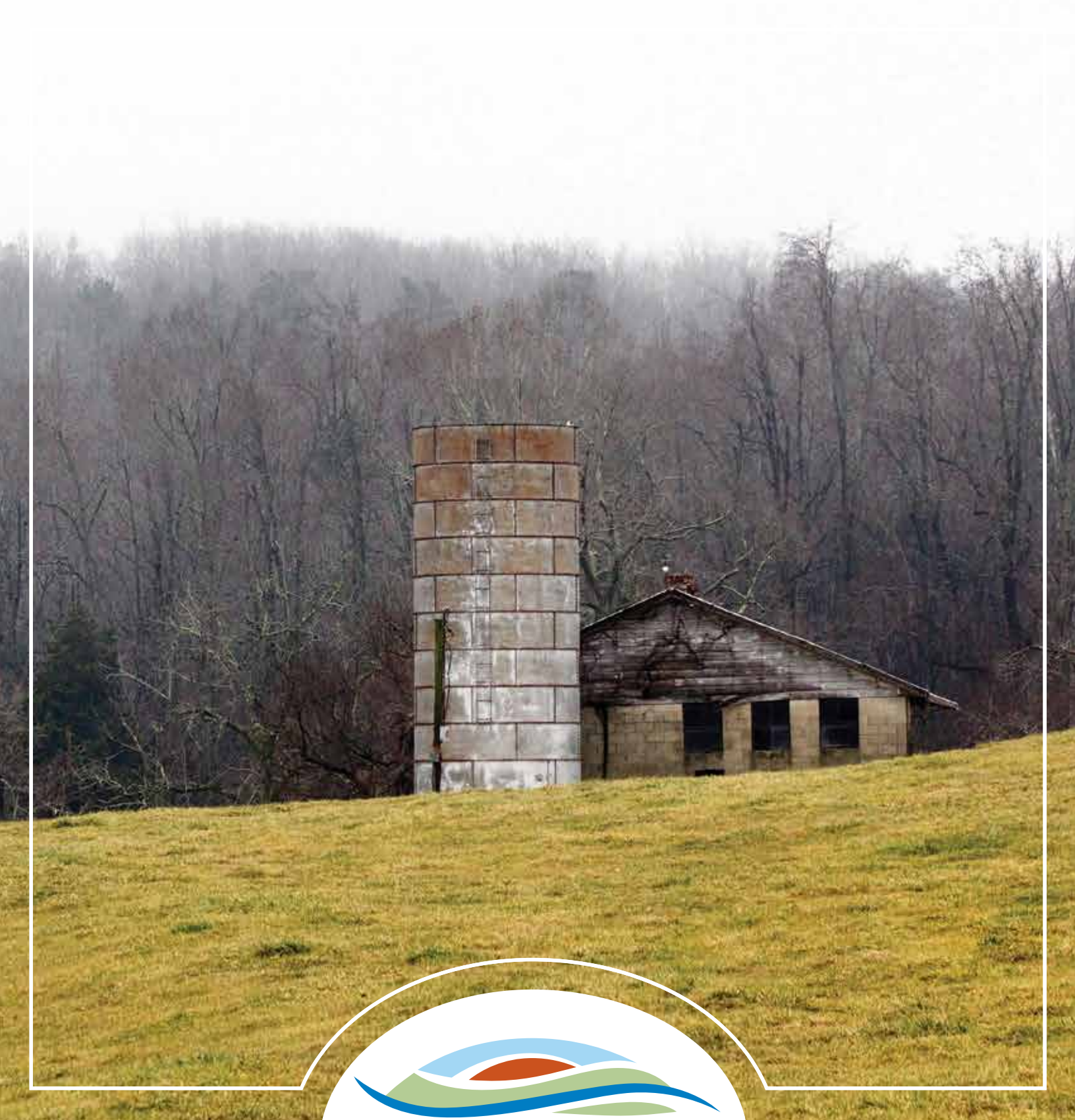
ANNUALLY

The County Manager's Office will prepare a year end update detailing progress on each Strategic Plan goal. Report to be presented to Board and shared for public access.

Acknowledgements

This strategic plan is the result of the combined efforts of our County's residents, elected officials, employees, and community stakeholders.

Orange County would like to thank everyone who provided their knowledge and insights throughout the process and who dedicated their time to making this Strategic Plan come to life.



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NORTH CAROLINA
STRATEGIC PLAN FY2025-2029