

City of Newton Strategic Growth Plan – 2015

1. Economic Development

Actions 1.1.1: Periodically update an inventory of vacant or underutilized buildings and previously used properties (brownfield sites) in Newton available for adaptive reuse. Coordinate this inventory with other economic development agencies. Develop a program offering incentives for reusing such vacant buildings and properties. Examine local development standards to look for regulations that might unintentionally impede efforts at adaptive reuse.
Actions 1.1.2: Develop one or more small business incubators in vacant buildings.
Actions 1.1.3: Create a new marketing strategy to attract new residents to Newton by targeting commercial and industrial development, Charlotte and surrounding regions for both two-income families with no kids and families with children.
Actions 1.1.4: Aggressively recruit "targeted" businesses based on Newton's most recent retail leakage study
Actions 1.1.5: Acquire a site for a Spec building. Coordinate this activity with the Catawba County Economic Development Corporation.
Actions 1.1.6: Develop a dedicated and comprehensive economic development website
Actions 1.1.7: Encourage new commercial development along US 321 and NC 16, including a hotel.
Actions 1.1.8: Addition of an urgent care facility
Actions 1.1.9: Work with Catawba EDC to create a new industrial park.
Actions 1.1.10: Expand the City's small business retention and expansion program
Actions 1.1.11: Apply for grants to help bring new industries into Newton.
Actions 1.1.12: Encourage businesses that provide services to the Hispanic/Latino population
Actions 1.1.13: Promote Danner Industrial Park through marketing partnership with EDC
Actions 1.1.14: Promote Newton Corporate Center through marketing partnership with EDC
Actions 1.1.15: Ask Newton's citizens to approve a bond referendum to generate funding for economic development and infrastructure projects in the City.
Actions 1.1.16: Develop a program to transform old manufacturing structures into usable space.
Actions 1.1.17: Assist in creating additional retirement communities.

2. Downtown Newton

Actions 2.1.1: Strengthen the DNDA by funding a full-time Downtown Coordinator position and provide funding for marketing/events
Actions 2.1.2: Develop additional parking in the downtown area
Actions 2.1.3: Implement a downtown redevelopment/revitalization investment program
Actions 2.1.4: Add additional amenities including a dog park, outdoor theater space, a mini-park and a splash pad to attract commercial and residential development
Actions 2.1.5: Install street signs downtown designating the historic district
Actions 2.1.6: Continue adding streetscapes in downtown Newton.
Actions 2.1.7: Work with developers to create downtown residential living options.
Actions 2.1.8: Encourage small business development including restaurants and breweries.
Actions 2.1.9: Encourage downtown businesses to be open later during weekdays and weekends.

3. Community Appearance and Image

Actions 3.1.1: Develop a new destination for Newton (eg. Sports complex)
Actions 3.1.2: Review corridor overlay district regulations to align appearance standards with economic development goals and objectives
Actions 3.1.3: Implement Streetscape Project / Phase I Downtown Area
Actions 3.1.4: Implement Streetscape Project / Phase II North Newton Area
Actions 3.1.5: Amend Downtown (B1) zoning regulations to encourage investment(s) and strengthen appearance standards for buildings downtown
Actions 3.1.6: Create a new signature festival or event downtown
Actions 3.1.7: Develop a comprehensive street tree inventory and install trees consistent with recommendations from the Tree Board

Actions 3.1.8: Create a new public art program
Actions 3.1.9: Review and strengthen nuisance, minimum housing and non-residential maintenance codes

4. Growth Management

Actions 4.1.1: Update the City's Comprehensive Plan
Actions 4.1.2: Update residential and commercial plan review process
Actions 4.1.3: Encourage residential growth by recruiting developers and develop appropriate incentives, including but not limited to, the provision of utilities
Actions 4.1.4: Seek to annex unincorporated areas as allowed under state law to encourage growth in the Highway 16 and Highway 10 corridors
Actions 4.1.5: Develop comprehensive strategy to create new residential housing in Newton to attract residents to the City.
Actions 4.1.6: Assist in creating additional retirement communities in Newton.
Actions 4.1.7: Create one-stop permitting process for Newton businesses, developers and residents.
Actions 4.1.8: Improve online permitting and customer service.

5. Transportation and Mobility

Actions 5.1.1: Complete a comprehensive street condition analysis survey and establish a revised priority list of streets scheduled for paving or reconditioning
Actions 5.1.2: Update existing sidewalk plan including a comprehensive sidewalk condition analysis survey and establish a revised priority list of sidewalks scheduled for construction or reconditioning
Actions 5.1.3: Revisit the Transportation Improvement Program to prioritize projects relevant to the construction of roads that are critical to mitigating traffic congestion and creating links to existing and future arteries in the region
Actions 5.1.4: Complete the City's wayfinding project with welcome signs and landscaping
Actions 5.1.5: Continue to work with State Legislators, Catawba County, and adjacent municipalities to complete construction of Highway 16 between Claremont Road and Tower Road
Actions 5.1.6: Work with the MPO to select the best candidate projects for NCDOT's Project Prioritization Process to be included in the STIP.
Actions 5.1.7: Investigate the feasibility of changing Newton's one-way street system back to two-way traffic in the downtown area.
Actions 5.1.8: Public Transportation - Add new transit stop on Northwest Boulevard near West 20th Street to provide access to the Walmart Neighborhood Market.
Actions 5.1.9: Bicycle - Add bicycle lanes to the following street: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S Cline Avenue (West J Street to West D Street) • S Main Avenue/N Main Avenue (Southwest Blvd. to Conover City Limits) • S College Avenue (Southwest Blvd. to N Main Avenue) • S Brady/North Brady (Southwest Blvd. to E 4th Street to N College Avenue) • E 20th Street/Rankin Avenue (N Main Avenue to E NC 10) NC 10/NC 16 Business (S Brady Avenue to Newton City Limits)
Actions 5.1.10: Greenway - Apply to NCDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Initiative for funding assistance for a Pedestrian Plan.
Actions 5.1.11: Sidewalks - Apply for Surface Transportation Program – Direct Attributable (STP-DA) and Transportation Alternative (TA) funds through the MPO to supplement the construction of prioritized sidewalks needs.
Actions 5.1.12: Continue the Greenway from NC10 to Southside Park and continue the Greenway south of Radio Station Road along west A Street and continue downtown to tie into the existing sidewalk system.

6. City Utilities

Actions 6.1.1: Develop and implement a plan to expand city infrastructure to meet anticipated population growth and to replace outdated systems
Actions 6.1.2: Generate a plan to expand city infrastructure to meet anticipated population growth and to replace outdated systems (e.g. wwtp)
Actions 6.1.3: Build and/or acquire redundant critical infrastructure (facilities & equipment)
Actions 6.1.4: Construct a new electric delivery station
Actions 6.1.5: Construct a new 2 million gallon fresh water tank

Actions 6.1.6: Assess public support for a bond referendum supporting a massive street resurfacing and sidewalk construction project
Actions 6.1.7: Develop engineering plans and financing for construction of water & sewer utilities in Startown
Actions 6.1.8: Develop a plan to replace the public works corporation yard/facility
Actions 6.1.9: Initiate a long range water supply study
Actions 6.1.10: Initiate a long range sanitary sewer capacity study
Actions 6.1.11: Implement a stormwater utility enterprise fund
Actions 6.1.12: Implement a smart metering project
Actions 6.1.13: Construct critical water lines on Highway 16, Balls Creek Road, and Buffalo Shoals Road in cooperation with Catawba County
Actions 6.1.14: Construct critical water lines on Rocky Ford Road in cooperation with Catawba County
Actions 6.1.15: Construct water and sewer lines in unserved portions of the city
<p>Actions 6.1.16: Establish definitive timeline in the CIP for replacing aged iron water lines, based on usage, failure rate, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentration in the downtown area first, with emphasis on streetscape area. • Coordinate with Fire Department about replacing water lines that do not meet fire code for the greatest impact on fire protection
Actions 6.1.17: Include engineering assessments and planning into the CIP for upgrades to water plant to maximize the life of the facility and equipment for next 20 years
Actions 6.1.18: Coordinate water line improvements with street resurfacing projects to get greatest leverage of Powell Bill funds
Actions 6.1.19: Establish public outreach/partnership with a definitive timeline for expanding sewer into the Startown neighborhoods to maximize new sewer users.
Actions 6.1.20: Ensure entire neighborhoods hook onto sewer.
Actions 6.1.21: Coordinate streetscape improvements with sewer line upgrades.
Actions 6.1.22: Place all utilities underground in streetscape areas.
Actions 6.1.23: Coordinate sewer line rehabilitations with street resurfacing projects to get greatest leverage of Powell Bill funds.
Actions 6.1.24: Include engineering assessments and planning into the CIP for upgrades to waste water treatment plant to maximize the life of the facility and equipment for next 20 years.
Actions 6.1.25: Establish definitive timeline in the CIP for replacing aged terra cotta sewer lines, based on usage, failure rate, etc.
Actions 6.1.26: Concentration in the downtown area first, with emphasis on streetscape area when making sewer improvements.
Actions 6.1.27: Offer competitive rates/service for any new electric customers that may have a choice of provider
Actions 6.1.28: Require by ordinance all new or upgraded electric lines in downtown to be placed underground.
Actions 6.1.29: Conduct a pay scale reclassification to provide veteran public works employees' compensation commensurate with experience and tenure. Offer incentive for employees with 4 years or more experience and training to stay with City instead of finding new employment

7. Public Safety

Actions 7.1.1: Conduct a pay scale reclassification to provide Public Safety veterans compensation commensurate with experience and tenure;
Actions 7.1.2: Offer incentive for employees with 4 years or more experience and training to stay with City instead of finding new employment
<p>Actions 7.1.3: Actively recruit minority, especially Hispanic, BLET participants/graduates for the police force:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsor minority candidates, especially Hispanic candidates, through BLET if there are no minority graduates. • Outreach to local high schools and regional colleges (ASU, UNC-Charlotte, CVCC, WPCC, CCC&TI, etc) to recruit minority applicants for BLET. <p>Use existing programs (DARE, Newton 101, etc) for public outreach about employment potential, requirements and possible sponsorship with police force.</p>
Actions 7.1.4: Expand the police force to include one more officer per shift and one traffic patrol officer.

Actions 7.1.5: As City expands infrastructure with annexation intentions, include budget for officers.
Actions 7.1.6: Coordinate with Public Works Department to upgrade water infrastructure to meet Fire Code & maximize fire protection Prioritize downtown rehabilitations downtown and around industrial areas.
Actions 7.1.7: Improve condition and access of abandoned or vacant industrial buildings and downtown buildings to reduce fire risk. Work with Downtown Newton Development Association and Main Street program to establish a Historic Commission, or work with property owners, DNDA, Main Street Program and Planning Commission, to help regulate appearance, safety, and access of buildings downtown.
Actions 7.1.8: As Abernethy Laurels expands, work with the community to ensure adequate service, especially responding to medical calls.

8. Recreation

Actions 8.1.1: Complete a city-wide Parks and Recreation Master Plan within the next 3 years.
Actions 8.1.2: Identify capital projects utilizing Sue Jones estate funds. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New playground equipment (Southside, Westside/Jaycee, Central and Jacob Fork) • New central recreation facility • Splash pad • Lighting at ballfields at Jacob Fork • Disc golf course • Flow track or exercise trail at Jacob Fork • Regulation size soccer field • Dog park • Outdoor stage
Actions 8.1.3: Determine outcome of Central High School and develop associated implementation strategies
Actions 8.1.4: Complete Jacob Fork Park Phases II and III
Actions 8.1.5: Create a strategy to support tourism with emphasis on the Historic 1924 Courthouse and museum and the Newton Depot
Actions 8.1.6: Set aside matching funds or whole project cost to complete Heritage Trail Greenway including completion of NC 10 to Southside Park, continue the Greenway south of Radio Station Road along West A Street and continue downtown to tie into the existing sidewalk system.
Actions 8.1.7: Locate new operational facilities for the recreation (maintenance) staff
Actions 8.1.8: Develop activities/programs that the senior adult population including, but not limited to, the creation of a senior center
Actions 8.1.9: Construct a dog park
Actions 8.1.10: Construct a columbarium or mausoleum (Could Be Combined With 8.1)
Actions 8.1.11: Construct a splash pad (Could Be Combined With 8.1)
Actions 8.1.12: Develop a community garden (Could Be Combined With 8.1)
Actions 8.1.13: Greenway - Apply to NCDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Initiative for funding assistance for a Pedestrian Plan.
Actions 8.1.14: Resurface Tennis Courts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broyhill Park Jaycee Park.
Actions 8.1.15: Complete a city-wide Parks & Recreation Master Plan