



FY 23-24 Town Priorities & Action Strategies

Macro Outlook & Context

The Stallings Town Council is deeply focused on the long-term importance of our community's quality of life. While this document primarily focuses on annual priorities, the Town Council recognizes that great things often take longer than one year to accomplish. Indeed, there is a symbiotic relationship between the short and long terms: the annual priorities are aligned with and pragmatically advance the Council's big picture vision.

And so with an eye towards that big picture, the Council believes the Town of Stallings possesses a window of opportunity to maintain and enhance quality of life both today and into the future. Specifically, decision points now will likely help determine:

- Whether the Town ever has a downtown area that can serve as both an economic catalyst and the vibrant cultural heart/destination of our community;
- Whether the Town can make the area around the hospital and planned light rail truly special;
- Whether the Town is able to maintain a great parks/greenway system through the preservation of ever decreasing green space; and
- Whether the future residential tax burden will be lessened through an increased commercial ratio.

The Council believes all of these are essential in helping to maintain and enhance the quality of life for our residents. At the same time, the Town Council recognizes that it has a solemn responsibility to maintain core essential community services and to effectively run the organization in a fiscally prudent manner.

Below are the annual priorities and action strategies stemming from the 2023 Town Council Annual Retreat.

Priority – Downtown Creation

Strategy – Pursue downtown creation through an incremental approach including evaluating sewer capacity, exploring more immediate downtown retail uses on site controlled properties (due to sewer capacity challenges), attracting desired retail (in the long-term) by encouraging/supporting higher

density residential in the downtown area, integrating critical streetscape into the downtown area, and determining streetscape phasing.

Action Items:

- Adopt and incorporate streetscape requirements into the development ordinance. (12/31/23 – P/Z)
 - o *Rationale: DFI study advised streetscape improvements will be critical for main street retail to succeed. Also, DFI advised that retail should face Stallings Road.*
- Determine if Council wants to consider investing in streetscape improvements in front of certain Town properties and, if so, the phasing of such investments. (8/31/23 – Admin.)
 - o *Rationale: DFI recommended considering investing in streetscape improvements in front of Town Hall and the Municipal Park, with the goal of making these investments alongside the private sector.*
- Explore converting properties under Town site control into specialty retail shops.
 - o *Rationale: Due to sewer capacity and economics, a complete overhaul of Town owned sites is unlikely for the next several years. However, the Town has site control over several properties that could possibly be converted to specialty retail shops to support downtown synergy. This could be a tough mission as DFI has advised the low density residential will make desired retail more challenging. As a result, further evaluation is necessary to determine if even those transitional uses are viable.*
 - o Evaluate and present a broad cost estimate for converting 325 Stallings Road property into a boutique retail shop and determine if cost is acceptable. (6/30/23 – Eng.)
 - o Pursue a brewery or similar type business at the old tractor dealership property.
 - NOTE: Further evaluation is important as potential high upfront investment costs to make the building into a brewery could possibly prohibit future redevelopment of the site, which could pose long-term financial impacts to the Town as well as impacts to the Town’s overall downtown vision.
 - Hire a brewery business consultant specialist to advise on whether the property is feasible to attract a brewery on a macro level. (8/31/23 – Admin.)
 - If feasible, develop marketing plan to attract a brewery. (TBD – Admin.)
- To attract and support desired downtown retail, encourage and support higher density residential in the Town Center area during land use planning and zoning decisions. (TBD – As needed. TC; P/Z)
 - o *Rationale: DFI study advised current low residential density is a challenge for attracting specialty (non-chain/boutique) retail. DFI recommended encouraging higher density residential to support retail.*
 - o *When asked to clarify what is meant by “higher density”, DFI advised:*
 - *“We studied both the multifamily and townhouse scenario (you have financial impacts for both), and we believe the multifamily scenario will do more to support the downtown-oriented retail that is desired by the Town. Additionally, this type of product is attractive to developers in the Stallings market, evidenced by recent developments in Indian Trail and the proposed development for the 13-acre site across from Pad A. Therefore, ‘higher density’ would mean projects that align with the 200+ unit developments occurring in the market.”*

- If the Town receives a significant development plan within the downtown area from a private developer that requests public participation, consider contracting with DFI for a 3rd Party review of the development plan. (TBD - As needed – P/Z)
 - o *Rationale: The Town has received interest from at least one developer on potentially developing parts of the Town Center area. DFI has advised that higher density residential and retail facing Stallings Road can help meet downtown goals and help serve as a catalyst to support desired retail on Town controlled properties.*
- Hold at least 18 events (reach goal) at Stallings Park during 2023 including the BBQ festival and trivia night. (12/31/23 – P/R)
 - o *Rationale: Continue to encourage downtown as a destination by leveraging existing park assets.*
- Sewer Capacity Study – see sewer priority below.
 - o *Rationale: DFI study advised desired downtown development likely will not occur without adequate sewer capacity.*

Priority Pursue Sewer Capacity Alternatives

Strategy – In support of the Town’s future, evaluate future sewer capacity needs and any anticipated shortfalls, and then identify any appropriate actions to close the capacity shortfall.

Action Items:

- Engage an engineering firm to determine potential sewer needs and costs. Area to be studied is the Town Center area east to the HWY 74 area and also include Union West Business Park. Go under contract for study ASAP. Determine next steps based on study results. (ASAP – Eng.)

Maximize Positive Development Around the Hospital/Light Rail

Strategy – Recognize the area’s importance, invest in beautification/placemaking, and plan to maximize positive development with the twin-anchors of the Atrium Hospital and the planned Light Rail.

(Continued) Action Items:

- Complete interlocal agreement with NCDOT for bypass landscaping.
- Complete basic in-house light rail preservation techniques.
- If awarded CRTPO grant, complete transit overlay district (TOD/UDO) work, CLUP update, and US 74 Small Area Plan Update.

<p><u>SAP/Station Area Plan/DO Action Plan</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a limited Transit Overlay District in-house (“TOD”) (Complete by 07/31/23 – P/Z) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Incorporate limited TOD into SDO o Show limited TOD on Zoning Map o The next step will be a CRTPO grant to fund a complete overhaul with a consultant. • Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update (“CLUP”) (Complete by 12/31/23 – P/Z)

- Updates to the future land use categories to better fit with SDO.
- Alter based on Atrium and planned light rail corridor/station.
- Notes: CRTPO grant required. Otherwise would need to do work in-house (would extend timeline and make end product less robust).
- US-74 Station Area Plan/SAP/SDO Update (9/30/24 – P/Z)
 - In 2022, staff submitted for Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization (“CRTPO”) 80% planning grant. (Anticipate grant decision in mid-2023.)
 - Once/if the grant is awarded in mid-2023, select consultant(s) and start executing the plan with the goal of finishing by 9/30/24.

Long-Term Notes (from FY 22-23 Priorities & Action Strategies):

- Work should consider the long-term development strategy for the area, considering:
 - Pedestrian connectivity across the bypass/HWY 74.
 - High profile projects, such as hotels and medical offices.
 - Prospects of recruiting manufacturing related to the medical anchor tenant.
 - High density, high quality residential.
 - Anticipating and accommodating potential for light rail.
 - Ensuring zoning is in place to support the strategy.
 - Make policy decisions in keeping with zoning and area plan.

Encourage Completion of Critical State Intersection Projects

Strategy – Encourage Completion of Critical State Intersection Projects.

Action Items:

- Potter-Pleasant Plains Intersection - Continue to work towards turning the project over to NCDOT. Contact utility companies to encourage them to expedite utility movements as quickly as possible. (ASAP – Admin.)
- Old Monroe Road – Provide a monthly update to Council on project status. (Monthly FY 23-24 – Eng.)

Sustain Core Services

Strategy – To be able to maintain community service levels in a cost-efficient manner, attract/retain high quality staff and evaluate revenue sources.

Action Items:

- Staff will present to Council a proposal to address immediate market pay disparity for sworn police officers using existing FY 22-23 budget funds. (3/27/23 – PD, Admin.)

- *Rationale: Nationally, the supply of competent police officers is outweighed by demand. Competing jurisdictions have increased police compensation since the Town last conducted a pay study. If the Town loses an officer, it is challenging to find an equivalent replacement. Without adjustment, then the likely result will be having less experienced officers on a shift combined with having fewer officers on a shift.*
- Provide police staffing analysis for Council's consideration during budget process. (Spring/Summer 2023 - PD)
 - *Rationale: Determine the right police staffing level to ensure adequate service level.*
- Budget in FY 23-24 for an employee pay study and implementation. Plan to conduct a pay and classification study once every 3 years. (Spring/Summer 2023 – Admin.)
 - *Rationale: Turnover tends to be more expensive than retaining competent staff and can affect service levels. Conducting a pay study once every 3 years will allow the Town to address market inefficiencies quickly and (hopefully) before it affects service levels by impacting recruitment/retention.*
- Provide analysis on adding solid waste fee during FY 23-24 budget process. (Spring/Summer 2023 – Admin.)
- During FY 23-24 budget process, staff present cost to hire contractor to identify actionable impervious surface calculations in Town to make stormwater rate structure more equitable and ensure calculations support current and projected storm water expenditures. (Spring/Summer 2023 – Eng.)

Misc. Action Items

- Schedule a time on a future Council Agenda to discuss the Stallings 50th Anniversary. (7/31/23 – P/R)
- Write a letter to the Stallings Fire Department indicating the Town Council's response to the fire department request. (3/10/23 – Admin.)