Curry County Strategic Plan

2020-2025

February 19, 2020

Dear Residents of Curry County,

A strong strategic plan is like a roadmap—it identifies a final destination and lays out a clear path to get there. Within this context, we are pleased to present to you Curry County's first ever Strategic Plan.

With this plan, our goal is to set a course of action for the next five years (2020-2025) by establishing priority goals for our county government, selecting actions to effectively achieve those objectives, and setting up a framework to report our progress to the public.

The strategic plan was developed over a four-month process, and included input from County staff and management, the County Commissioners, and the public (through open houses, an online survey, and in-person and online opportunities to provide comment). Over 100 members of the public from all areas of the County participated in this process, and we are extremely grateful for their engagement in this work.

The planning process aimed to balance and prioritize the many issues that were identified by the public and staff as critical needs for the County. While this plan is the first step, the real work begins today as our County leadership and staff begin efforts to turn this roadmap into action.

Sincerely,

Christopher Paasch   Court Boice   Sue Gold
Board of Commissioners   *Board of Commissioners*   *Board of Commissioners*
Chair   *Vice Chair*

Vision, Mission, and Values

Our strategic plan is grounded in the County's **vision** (the ideal state of our community in the future), **mission** (how we, as a County government, plan to achieve our vision), and **values** (the principles of our organization by which we strive to work).

OUR VISION IS THAT …

Curry County is a place where people want to live and visit, known for our safe communities, resilient economy, affordable lifestyle, and spectacular natural beauty.

OUR MISSION IS TO …

Provide high-quality public services.

WE STRIVE TO BE …

Ethical
We act with integrity, transparency, and honesty.

Accountable
We are action-oriented and focused on delivering measurable results to our community. When we say we will do something, we do it.

Financially Responsible
We are resourceful and responsible with the resources we use to serve our community.

Respectful
We are committed to creating a healthy work environment based on teamwork and mutual respect.

Committed
We are dedicated to providing high-quality services to our community.

Strategic Goals

1. Financial Stability

Ensure the county has adequate and sustainable financial funding to continue delivering core services to residents.

2. Economic Development

Expand the local economy by creating opportunities, resources, and incentives for new businesses, jobs, tourism, and other investments in the community.

3. Quality of Life

Provide opportunities for residents to enjoy a high quality of life by ensuring the safety of the community and improving access to affordable housing.

4. Public Trust

Improve public trust in County government by focusing on accountability, effective services, and transparent engagement with the community.

5. Infrastructure

Improve service delivery and employee safety by investing in County infrastructure, including buildings, equipment, roads, and technology.

Goal 1: Financial Stability

Ensure the county has adequate and sustainable financial funding to continue delivering core services to residents.

OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

Strengthen and stabilize the County's financial position to ensure sustainability and a balanced budget.

- Develop and implement a long-term financial plan for the County.

- Consider appointing either a Fiscal Sustainability Committee composed of community members, or an internal review committee composed of staff. This group would work with the Board to ensure the County's fiscal activities are justified, efficient, effective, transparent and sustainable.

- Establish and maintain a three-month/25% operating reserve.

- Work towards establishing credibility with the public to support a future tax rate increase (see Goal 4: Public Trust).

- Increase County revenue by:

    o Reviewing and updating County fees to reflect the full cost of service and identify areas for potential additions. As part of this work, establish reasonable cost recovery goals for County services.

    o Ensuring adequate staff/funding resources are devoted to property tax assessment to address the assessment backlog and meet industry standard assessment cycles.

    o Determining whether additional fee-based services could be provided to residents (for example, a County-based electrical inspection program that could provide expedited services to residents in comparison to the state-run program).

    o Identifying and allocating additional resources to community-focused programs that are generating revenue

(for example, the Parks Department) and could help support other areas of County work.

- Consider assessing additional potential revenue sources. Options to evaluate may include a fuel tax and revenue related to timber/logging receipts.

Identify and prioritize the County's core services.

- Identify core services and service levels for both mandated services, and non-mandated services that the County is committed to providing by:
  - o Incorporating staff and community input to identify and define core services and service levels.
  - o Determining staffing and funding needed to adequately support core services.
  - o Developing a prioritization/decision/funding matrix for non-core services.
  - o Prioritizing programs and services to ensure delivery of strategic and essential services within a balanced budget.

Seek collaborative and partnership-based solutions to fund County services.

- Continue work to engage regional partners in funding and service coalitions. Options for joint and shared services may include functions like:
  - o Assessment and taxation
  - o Campground/park management
  - o Code enforcement
  - o Facilities maintenance
  - o Shared dispatch and law enforcement
  - o Road maintenance
- Initiate and advance state and federal strategic alliances to improve funding and resource opportunities.
- Increase the County's grant funding by:
  - o Establishing grant support program for relevant staff (training on grant writing, support to identify, track, and

report on grants, providing County-wide grant tracking software, etc.).

- o Continue efforts to hire a part- or full-time grant manager to provide cross-departmental coordination and innovative grant strategies to maximize the County's grant opportunities.

- o Completing plans that are necessary requirements to secure grant funding or identify projects that could be supported through grants, such as the Transportation Systems Plan and the Road Facility Strategic Plan.

Identify long-term cost savings and cost-containment opportunities.

- Hold annual work sessions to identify potential cost savings and cost-containment opportunities. Options may include:

  - o Operational efficiencies that can be gained through software implementation and business process improvements

  - o Adjustments to service levels

  - o Outsourcing services that can be provided at a lower cost via the private sector

  - o Inter-agency relationships that can result in cost sharing or savings (for example, cooperative purchasing)

- Inventory County assets (see Goal 5: Infrastructure).

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR FINANCIAL STABILITY

> County revenue levels

> County revenue to expense ratio

> Percent of road fund is used to fund non-road purchases and services

> Grant funding levels

> 3-month operating reserve level

> Number of County foreclosed properties returned to the tax roll

> Number of financial audit findings

MILESTONE MEASURES FOR FINANCIAL STABILITY

> Long-term financial plan established

> External or internal Fiscal Sustainability Committee established

> County core services defined and prioritized

> Grant manager hired or contracted

Goal 2: Economic Development

Expand the local economy by creating opportunities, resources, and incentives for new businesses, jobs, tourism, and other investments in the community.

OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

Create and implement a prioritized Economic Development Plan.

- Create and implement a prioritized Economic Development Plan.

    o Complete an economic vision project to incorporate input from residents and other stakeholders like local businesses, non-profits, and government agencies.

    o Collaborate with relevant County departments.

- Develop a Tourism Infrastructure Needs Assessment and Plan that is aligned with and supports the economic development plan.

Support and advance tourism.

- Initiate collaborative local and regional partnerships to create more special events and activities to stimulate tourism, retail, restaurant and lodging demand.

- Strategically invest resources into parks and recreation to increase well-maintained, accessible (ADA compliant), and enjoyable recreational opportunities and facilities for tourists and local residents.

    o Develop a comprehensive and updated County Parks Master Plan that accounts for parks and related recreational facility development.

- Develop a comprehensive marketing plan to support tourist and recreation events and opportunities.

- Continue efforts to sustain and increase the local fish population, as well as other initiatives to support tourism-related fishing.

- Explore opportunities for additional grant funding to support tourism (see Goal 1: Financial Stability).

Cultivate partnerships with cities, ports, chambers, Special Districts, state and federal agencies, and businesses to support regional economic development projects.

- Continue work to improve relationships between the County and the regional cities, ports, schools, and other Special Districts. This effort should include both County leadership and staff.

- Work with cities, Chambers and businesses to determine the viability of establishing a County Chamber of Commerce or Merchants Association to increase coordination around economic development activities.

- Create opportunities for dialogue between business and civic leaders to discuss what we can do as a community to improve our local economy.

- Continue efforts to build partnerships and programs that support youth development to ensure a prepared and skilled local workforce.

- Work with the Fair Board to improve the Event Center, its maintenance, and the promotion thereof.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

> Transient Lodging Tax volume

> Increase in total jobs created

> Retail and office vacancy rate

> Percentage increase in business tax base

> New commercial and residential permit dollar volume per capita

> Local fish counts

> Park user rates and camping reservations

> Use and attendance at the Event Center

> Number of events and attendance at events

MILESTONE MEASURES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

> Economic Develop Plan complete

> Tourism Marketing Plan complete

> County Parks Master Plan complete

> Evaluation and decision made on establishing a County Chamber or Merchants Association

Goal 3: Quality of Life

Provide opportunities for residents to enjoy a high quality of life by ensuring the safety of the community and improving access to affordable housing.

OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

Increase housing options for residents to reduce the incidence of homelessness and increase affordability.

- Continue to work to and implement relevant adjustments to fee structures, improvements to County-controlled permitting and development processes, and any relevant tax incentive programs that could be used to incentivize the construction of affordable multi-family housing.

- Support hiring a local or regional coordinator to oversee and manage relevant US Department of Housing and Urban Development funding.

- Build relationships with housing-focused nonprofits that are effectively working in other rural areas to develop enhanced knowledge, ideas, and resources to tackle this issue in Curry County.

- Continue efforts to review County land holdings and identify potential alternate uses, when applicable.

- Continue work to explore public-private partnerships for affordable housing.

- Continue work to review County codes to identify and implement options to increase the efficiency of the permitting process.

Improve building permit and code enforcement support to ensure buildings are built and maintained safely and efficiently.

- Provide adequate staffing and funding resources to continue efforts to improve safety-related zoning and building code enforcement for all areas of the County.

- Continue efforts to explore and act on opportunities to partner with local cities to ensure consistent code enforcement coverage/protections across the region.

- Ensure all County buildings are code compliant.

Identify and secure permanent funding for law enforcement to meet the community's desired level of service.

- Continue to explore opportunities to combine duplicate services and resources related to public safety, with a focus on reducing redundancy between the services provided by the County and cities.

- Develop a policy around the use of Road Funds to support public safety. The policy should take into account that ongoing use of the Road Fund is not a sustainable or fiscally responsible method to fund public safety efforts.

- Pursue additional grant funding for public safety needs.

- Evaluate the option of creating a Law Enforcement Special District or tax levy.

  o If either option is pursued, invest resources into marketing and community outreach, where allowed by law, to provide clear and transparent public information around the need for additional funding to meet community-requested service levels.

Increase investments in emergency preparedness.

- Continue work to complete a County Resilience Plan for Disaster Preparedness that includes protocol around delegations of authority and orders of succession.

- Explore the option of building a North/Central Area Emergency Operations Center.

- Partner with agencies to implement the Curry County Community Wildfire Protection Plan and other applicable wildfire plans.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR QUALITY OF LIFE

> Affordable housing units permitted

> New affordable housing units constructed

> Code enforcement case resolution percentage

> Average building permit turnaround time, by type

> Serious crime rate

> Number of Search and Rescue Missions

> Parole and Probation recidivism rates

> Number of public safety service calls

> Number of unpermitted structures identified/brought into compliance

MILESTONE MEASURES FOR QUALITY OF LIFE

> County codes reviewed and revisions adopted to improve permitting efficiency

> Road Fund Usage Policy developed

> Evaluate and make decision about pursuing a Law Enforcement Special District or tax levy

> County Resilience Plan for Disaster Preparedness complete

> Evaluate and make decision on the development of a North/Central Area Emergency Operations Center

> All wildfire protection plans updated

Goal 4: Public Trust

Improve public trust in County government by focusing on accountability, effective services, and transparent engagement with the community.

OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

Maximize transparency around County activities by ensuring effective communication with County residents and stakeholders.

- Provide consistent, timely financial and outcome reports to the Board and public, including budget-to-actual comparisons for major funds and grants.

- Invest in a communications position within the County to promote high-quality, consistent, and transparent communication with the public.

- Develop communications strategies that support the needs of citizens and promotes frequent, transparent communications. Options may include:

    o Annual report, monthly e-newsletter, County service guide, social media updates, press releases

    o Additional public meetings to elevate the County's significant initiatives

Establish an annual Community Satisfaction Survey to gather statistically significant community data and track residential concerns over time.

Support staff effectiveness via professional development and process improvements.

- Invest in professional development and educational opportunities for all staff, with a particular focus on increasing management skills for supervisors.

- Develop strong performance management processes, including consistent performance appraisals for all staff to ensure accountability, professional conduct, and adaptation to change.

- Implement forward-thinking employment policies and practices that will enhance the County's ability to attract, reward, and retain top talent. As part of this work, maintain fair and transparent recruitment and hiring policies.

- Conduct business process analyses to update processes and procedures and identify areas where reliance on paper and manual processes could be reduced through improving and updating IT systems.

- Complete a wage study and identify funding options to ensure employees are compensated fairly.

Improve the County's customer service.

- Where practical, continue working to develop and implement a centralized customer support team so that residents can have a one-stop-shop experience for all County services.

- Provide customer service training to relevant employees.

- Evaluate options to consolidate payment systems, so residents have fewer systems to navigate.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR PUBLIC TRUST

> Community satisfaction survey results

> Professional development training hours

> Number of business processes improved through reengineering, workflow process improvement, or technology automation

MILESTONE MEASURES FOR PUBLIC TRUST

> On-schedule financial reports shared with Board/public

> Community Satisfaction Survey administered annually

> Customer service one-stop-shop established for selected County services

Goal 5: Infrastructure

Improve service delivery and employee safety by investing in County infrastructure, including buildings, equipment, roads, and technology.

Develop a comprehensive Capital Improvement Program and Plan (CIP) for the County.

- Develop a comprehensive Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for the County.
  - o Inventory capital needs for the County. Priority infrastructure projects may include the County Courthouse, Jail, and communication towers.
  - o Integrate and align with Roads, Parks, IT and other department-specific operating and capital plans.
  - o Develop a CIP funding strategy that involves establishing capital reserve funding. Funding options may include general fund, grants, and bonds and levies.
  - o Develop annual processes to assess comprehensive capital improvement needs, prioritize projects, and identify funding.
  - o Ensure CIP information is available to the public.

Develop a Road Facilities Strategic Plan for the County.

Establish a County asset inventory system.

- Establish a County asset inventory system to identify potential opportunities to pool or share resources (including IT, tools, vehicles, etc.).
  - o Develop methods, staff resources, and procedures to ID, track, introduce, and retire equipment.
  - o Procure an asset inventory technology system to simplify ongoing tracking, monitoring, and replacement of assets.

Explore options to construct a new, code-compliant County Courthouse building.

- Explore options to fund and construct a new County Courthouse building that is code-compliant, tsunami safe, and more energy efficient.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

> Road, bridge, and culvert condition ratings

> County building condition ratings

> Unfunded capital improvement needs

MILESTONE MEASURES FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

> Capital Improvement Plan complete

> Road Facilities Strategic Plan complete

> County asset inventory system complete

Acknowledgements

The following individuals dedicated time and provided valuable input during the development of this strategic plan.

The Residents of Curry County

The Employees of Curry County

Curry County Board of Commissions

Christopher Paasch, Chair

Court Boice, Vice Chair

Sue Gold

Curry County Elected Officials

John Ward, Sheriff

Jim Kolen, Assessor

Renee Kolen, Clerk

Debbie Crumley, Treasurer

Everett Dial, District Attorney

Curry County Leadership

Anthony Voudy	John Ward	Richard Christensen
Becky Crockett	Josh Hopkins	
Chet Brewer	Julie Schmelzer	Shelley Denney
David Fortman	Julie Swift	Summer Matteson
Jeremy Dumire	Marc Bangma	Tracy Garner
John Huttl	Phil McDonald	Wendy Lang