Executive Summary

What is a Comprehensive Sustainability Plan, and what does it entail?

Sustainability is defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. With this charge in mind, the Town of Hillsborough began preparing its Comprehensive Sustainability Plan in the Spring of 2021. Municipalities are required to create and maintain a comprehensive plan according to North Carolina General Statute 160D-50 (a1). The statute establishes that a comprehensive plan should include "goals, policies, and programs intended to guide the present and future physical, social and economic development of the jurisdiction". As such, this plan establishes a collective vision for the future of Hillsborough to accurately inform decision-making for long-term social, environmental, economic, and infrastructure development.

This plan assesses the current conditions in the town and puts forth goals, strategies, and actions to guide the town toward a sustainable future. The plan is centered around eight focus areas, each with their own dedicated chapter, as detailed below. Each chapter contains themes surrounding equity, affordability, safety, connectivity, and health, as well as specific strategies and actions.

Town Government & Public Services: covers the roles of government and services provided by the town, as well as revenue streams and agency partnerships.

Land Use & Development: promotes sustainable, progressive principles for the development of land in Hillsborough to manage growth pressures and maintain a prosperous town with strong sense of place.

Environment & Natural Systems: outlines plan for the continued stewardship of Hillsborough's natural resources to promote the community's overall health and function.

Transportation & Connectivity: details existing transportation infrastructure and needs, as well as proposed improvements in access and mobility.

Social Systems & Public Space: explores ideas for arts and culture events and installations in the town's public spaces, as well as opportunities for community gathering and placemaking.

Housing & Affordability: highlights opportunities to increase Hillsborough's supply of housing to promote stability in the community.

Economic Systems & Tourism: incorporates sustainability values into economic development strategies to ensure the resilience of the business community and illustrates various development and tourism opportunities.

Climate & Energy: covers climate impacts and conservation needs, including the town's clean energy resolution and a three-pronged sustainability approach including social equity, ecological responsibility, and economic efficiency.

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What is involved in the creation of a Comprehensive Plan?

The process of drafting the plan involved three distinct phases:

PHASE 1:	PHASE 2:	PHASE 3:
Identify Issues & Opportunites	Determine Goals & Strategies	Review & Adoption

The first phase of the plan is dedicated to identifying issues and opportunities in Hillsborough. This phase entailed a review of current and past planning documents, community engagement, and in-depth data analysis. The findings from the research are summarized by a summary of baseline conditions in each chapter. The second phase involved using the baseline conditions and community feedback to determine the appropriate goals and strategies for development. Finally, the third phase involved the creation of an implementation and accountability plan, which detailed the actions necessary to achieve the goals set forth in the plan. The implementation plan identifies who will lead the actions, who will partner with the leads, and whether the action is short, medium, or long-range. Phase three includes review and adoption, which involves providing a draft of the plan for public comment and then revising the plan based on feedback. The plan will be presented to the Hillsborough Board of Commissioners for adoption.

How was the community engaged during the planning process?

Public engagement took many forms throughout the development of the plan, including forums, a visioning survey, focus group meetings, board meetings, public comment period on the draft plan, participation at community events, and a project website. The planning efforts were introduced to the community through an online survey and a virtual public workshop in May of 2021. The surveys, available in both English and Spanish allowed for a wider range of community members to participate and share their feedback.

The town staff from all departments including Administrative Services, Community Services, Financial Services, Police, and Utilities were engaged in the planning process. The town also facilitated focus groups in Spring 2022, each consisting of approximately 12 members and covering a specific topic such as land use, housing, tourism, economic development, or transportation. The members of the focus groups included residents, town staff, industry experts, and regional partners. Collaboration with staff from Orange County, Triangle Council of Government, Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization, and North Carolina Sustainable Energy Association also occurred.

Efforts included presentations to various boards on the progress of the project, as well as a public comment period on the completed draft of the plan. The Town Board, Parks and Recreation Board, Planning Board, Tourism Board, and Tree Board made significant contributions.

Equity and inclusion were the central values leading the public engagement process, as the town sought to include a diverse group of community

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members in every engagement phase. The town utilized its network of community contacts, which included community liaisons, government and non-profit partners, and neighborhood associations to facilitate broad outreach for diverse and representative perspectives and to assure that anyone who wanted to participate was able to do so. The Communications Division utilized various tools such as newsletters, press releases, social media, online surveys in English and Spanish, videos, and local media to disseminate information and receive feedback.

HILLSBOROUGH COMPREHENSIVE SUSTAINABILITY PLAN
Community Visioning Survey Results
SUMMER **2021**

Read through for some of the survey highlights. Stay tuned for a full survey summary in the draft Comprehensive Sustainability Plan.

Over 630 people provided their vision for the future of Hillsborough by taking part in the survey.

87% live …
58% play …
53% own property …
34% work …
16% visit …
9% own a business …

… in Hillsborough.

What makes Hillsborough a great place to live?

Over half of respondents **LOVE** the town's small town feel and natural and scenic areas.

Respondents making less than $49,000 were 2X as likely to respond that **Having a safe place to live** is important to them.

50% of ALL respondents and 90% of respondents making less than $49,000 said the biggest challenge for Hillsborough is **AFFORDABILITY.**

Respondents making less than $49,000 were 2X as likely to be concerned about **LACK OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS.**

Native American respondents were 25% MORE likely to be concerned about **ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION** and **SENIOR SERVICES.**

Most respondents want future development to be **energy efficient (91%)** and to **protect and conserve open space (90%).**

HILLSBOROUGH **COMPREHENSIVE SUSTAINABILITY PLAN**

TOWN OF **HILLSBOROUGH** NORTH CAROLINA

Summary of 2021 Hillsborough Survey Results

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Future housing and commercial development most needed, according to respondents:

HOUSING:

**Single Family Homes
Accessory Dwellings
Townhouses**

Additionally ...

3 in 4 Hispanic respondents said **live/work units** are important.

Respondents making less than $49,000 preferred **single-family homes.**

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT:

**Grocery Stores
Small Retail
Restaurants/Bars/Breweries**

Additionally ...

Native Americans respondents were almost 2X as likely to prefer more **grocery stores.**

Respondents making less than $49,000 preferred more **medical services.**

Respondents said the town's most pressing needs are:

TRANSPORTATION

Reducing traffic congestion
Expanding sidewalk infrastructure

Hispanic respondents were more than 2X as likely to choose **reducing emissions from vehicles.**

NATURAL RESOURCES

Tree and forest preservation

SUSTAINABILITY

Land conservation and protection
Addressing affordability issues

Hispanic respondents were 2x more likely to want **neighborhood parks** and **community wellness/exercise facilities** than other respondents.

RECREATION

Greenways and Trails

HILLSBOROUGH
**COMPREHENSIVE
SUSTAINABILITY PLAN**

TOWN OF
HILLSBOROUGH
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