



**Wilmington City Council  
Strategic Planning Process  
*Moving Wilmington Forward*  
2017-2021  
Wilmington, DE**

**107<sup>th</sup> Session of the Wilmington City Council  
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# Wilmington City Council

## Strategic Planning Process

### Message From the City Council President

*November 2017*

Dear Colleagues and Constituents,

Before this Session of City Council took office, we initiated discussions about the formulation of a Strategic Plan for Wilmington’s legislative body – a document which would be inspired by the needs of our residents, businesses and visitors, and the responsibilities and interests of elected legislators. Over the course of nearly a year, Council Members have worked collaboratively and with an expert in strategic planning to discuss and identify priorities and set objectives for our term in office.

The pages that follow capture the completion of the first phase in City Council’s Strategic Planning Process. This includes the release of mission statements written for Council as a whole as well as each of its committees, which will serve as valuable tools as we seek to utilize our standing committees not only to vet proposed legislation, but to draw attention to and facilitate discussion about matters of public importance.

This document also includes the priorities established by members of Council through the Strategic Planning Process – priorities which are categorized, and which will help guide our future endeavors and actions through Council. These are comprehensive, and touch nearly every facet of City government and daily life in Wilmington. You will notice that the priorities themselves are not ranked – as each is important in its own way.

It is important to note that Council, as a legislative body, is not able to address each of the priorities on its own – many will require significant collaboration with the Administration and with other agencies and actors in Wilmington across the public, private and nonprofit sectors, including our governmental partners in New Castle County and at the State level. That said, Council can play a key role in facilitating progress, advocating for policies and initiatives, and introducing legislation to effectuate change.

As the title implies, the Strategic Planning Process is not a single, defined effort – rather, it is a commitment to an organized manner of thinking and planning, and one which involves deep reflection and critical thinking.

Included in this report is an overview of the stages of this process, and a preview of what is to come as this session of City Council moves forward. Council will be launching a dedicated space on its new website – [www.WilmingtonCityCouncil.com](http://www.WilmingtonCityCouncil.com) – with details on the Strategic Planning

Process, including a “digital report card,” which will be updated on a regular basis to chronicle the actions taken by Council to address the priorities set forth in this report.

This Strategic Planning Process, having set valuable priorities for this Session of City Council, can serve as a key document guiding Council’s legislative priorities, funding allocations and operational focal points, and I look forward to working with you as we move Wilmington forward together!

Respectfully,

President Hanifa Shabazz

# Wilmington City Council

## Strategic Planning Process

### Overview of the Strategic Planning Process

*Prepared by Raheemah Jabbar-Bey, President, RJB Consulting  
Facilitator for the City Council Strategic Planning Process*



### Overview and Timeline

The efforts to engage the 107<sup>th</sup> Session of the Wilmington City Council in a Strategic Planning Process was initiated by Council President-Elect Shabazz following the General Local, State and National Elections on November 8, 2016.

Council President-Elect Shabazz planned a Full Day Orientation Retreat for the newly elected and returning City Council Members on Saturday, November 12, 2016. The Council Orientation Retreat included the President-Elect's vision to engage the Council in Strategic Planning. Therefore, the retreat included a formal Introduction to Strategic Planning for City Council as a Legislative Body to distinguish strategic planning from that associated with Non-Profit Organizations and/or For-Profit Businesses. The strategic planning process would then take place over a six-month period.

Council President-Elect Shabazz planned the Orientation Retreat based on several motivations: 1) Wilmington has been experiencing major economic, educational, public safety, health and other social problems; 2) Wilmington constituents elected seven new Council Members to office out of a 13-Member Legislative Body with only one of those seven having prior Council/legislative or public administration experience; 3) Wilmington constituents elected a new Mayor whose knowledge and experience was in the private and non-profit sectors; and, 4) to begin the process of further developing and enhancing Wilmington City Council as a more respected legislative body in the state of Delaware. Key personnel in the two branches of Wilmington government would in some ways be new to government processes, protocols, roles and responsibilities. Each Council Member received a binder during the Orientation Retreat that included copies of the City Charter and portions of the Code.

Evidence-based research indicates that Strategic Plans developed by City Councils yield results while providing a realistic, workable framework, or blueprint to use for developing legislation while preparing Council Members to be ready based on the experience of developing planned legislation for unexpected or unplanned developments or issues that would undoubtedly take place. Strategic planning is adaptable to a changing environment. A multi-year planning process will, inevitably, be affected by the changing internal and external environments. Therefore, a framework is needed that is flexible enough to accommodate flux, while at the same time, strong enough to adhere to Council's basic mission, and objectives of addressing known problems and policy matters.

## Description of the Council Strategic Planning Process

The Wilmington City Council Strategic Planning process was initiated during the Council Orientation Retreat by Raheemah Jabbar-Bey, president of RJB Consulting on November 12, 2016. The Council's Strategic Planning training and development continued to be facilitated by RJB Consulting from then through June 2017. The formal dates of the strategic planning process with Council took place through one-day and half-day trainings in November, February, March, May, and June. Due to the high number of newly elected Council Members, with only one of the seven having prior legislative or public administration experience, the roles and responsibilities of City Council Legislators was incorporated into the training and planning activities. Those roles and responsibilities of Council were derived from researching and examining Cities of similar or comparable size to the city of Wilmington, Delaware. The process for researching, developing public policy positions and shaping those into legislation was also included in the strategic planning process.

A critically important strategic planning activity provided to Council Members early in the process was the provision of two different, yet similar, survey instruments. The surveys were submitted electronically to each Council Member to be completed individually. One survey was designed to capture the knowledge of Council Members representing specific Districts. A second survey was designed to capture the knowledge of At-Large Council Members regarding the City as a whole, as well as their understanding of conditions or matters affecting the residents, businesses and organizations in specific Districts. Both surveys asked Council Members (District and At-Large) to address quality-of-life issues affecting Wilmington residents through the following topic areas, and some responses are included below:

- Greatest Overall Quality of Life Problem (in each District and City Wide)
  - Crime and the deteriorating effects of violence
  - Quality education
  - Responsible development

- Distribution of funding, resources and services
- Greatest Economic Vitality Problem
  - Lack of cohesive business development plan
  - Brownfields clean-up around the Brandywine, Riverfront and Northeast
  - The community doesn't have a Community Benefit Agreement in place
  - Property values and increased vacancies
  - Lack of, or poor, education; Absentee landlords; Vacant housing
- Greatest Employability of Adults Problem
  - Drug addiction; Training
  - Lack of job readiness training and rehabilitation opportunities for ex-offenders
  - Underemployment
  - Lack of education, criminal records, various addiction, mental health disabilities
- Greatest Peace and Public Safety Problem
  - Violent crimes, drug addiction, theft
  - Constant problem with car break-ins, along with some homes
  - Pockets of distress that are breeding grounds for drugs, violence and other crimes
  - Youth, ages 14-25
  - Civic engagement
- Greatest Problem Affecting Youth Graduating from High School
  - Lack of community-based supports to meet the academic and social needs of students
  - Lack of parental guidance and lack of compassion from some teachers
  - How discipline is handled at the schools
  - Youth not graduating; Lack of family input; Distance to travel to school
  - Not having community schools for high school students; Lack of accountability; State control of local schools

These two surveys were distributed to each of the Council Members in February 2017. The surveys asked the Council Members to state the problem, substantiate or cite evidence of the problem, recommend a solution to the problem, and identify which City Department or Office would implement the recommended solution. In some cases, Council Members identified Delaware State Departments or Offices to assist the City in the implementation of recommended solutions.

The collective results of the two Surveys were recorded in summary documents and reported to all Council Members during a Strategic Planning training session. In addition to identifying the understanding of the greatest overall problems affecting quality of life in their Districts and City

wide, Council Members also identified other quality of life issues they understood would also need to be addressed through policies and legislation. Some of the issues identified were:

- Public education equity issues in Wilmington
- High quality and affordable housing throughout the City
- Physical and mental health issues of individuals and families
- Neighborhood brownfield remediation and redevelopment
- The redevelopment of neighborhood business corridors with access to business development planning support and financial resources
- More effective drug treatment programs
- Job training programs directly linked to employment
- Youth master plan
- Revenue enhancements
- Improved relationship with the Delaware General Assembly

## **Formulation of Mission Statements**

Through the Strategic Planning Process, Council Members were engaged in developing Mission Statements for the seven Council Standing Committees to capture the objectives, functions and focus areas for each. There was no record of any previous Committee Mission Statements. The Council Standing Committees are: Community Development and Urban Planning; Education, Youth and Families; Finance and Economic Development; Health, Aging and Disabilities; Public Safety; Public Works and Transportation; and the Wilmington Cable, Video and Telecommunications Commission.

## **Identifying Priorities**

Another key area of the planning process was to engage Council Members in the process of determining the priority of the policy areas they stated in the surveys that should be addressed during this 107<sup>th</sup> Session of Council. Council Members were initially engaged in determining which policy issues were most affiliated with each of the Council Committees.

The individual decisions of Council Members were obtained from this process, and combined and aggregated to identify the key priorities and the detailed objectives included with each. These are the heart of the Wilmington City Council Strategic Planning Process, and encompass priorities for policy, advocacy and other action. This framework provides room for Council to be prepared for problems and policy issues that most likely will surface in unexpected areas that may require Wilmington government responses during the subsequent years of the 107<sup>th</sup>



Session, including each of the fiscal years encompassed by the four-year term. The timing of some initiatives will likely depend upon budgetary allocations and planning, which underscores the importance of aligning some plans with these individual fiscal years.

The Wilmington City Council Strategic Planning Process is a multi-year endeavor which provides continuity to Wilmington City Government moving forward into the 108<sup>th</sup> Session of City Council and the next Administration, regardless of who occupies the elected offices in the City.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The overarching purpose for developing and implementing a Strategic Planning Process for Wilmington City Council is multi-fold:

- 1) A legislative body must be organized and put a framework of policies in place to address that it is based on its interactions with a broad base of constituents, department leaders and administrative office staff during the timeline in which the plan is developed;
- 2) A legislative body must not crowd its policy development agenda in ways that would preclude the ability to leave space for addressing the unexpected issues that will arise that government would need to resolve;
- 3) A legislative body must engage in policy making and legislative development on a broad number of issues to meet the needs of its citizens, to establish legislative protocols and priorities for future high quality public service delivery that would enhance the quality of life of their numerous constituents; and
- 4) A legislative body must provide fiduciary protocols, and guidelines to support an efficient and effective use of taxpayer resources in the operation of its local government.

The Strategic Planning Process developed and utilized by Wilmington City Council is poised to bring these purposes to fruition through thoughtful, collaborative and deliberative decision-making in the development and execution of the road map they have designed and produced. The efforts to meet and even exceed these purposes requires time, effort, collaboration and research. Council Members have access to a highly competent and experienced staff to assist them with these tasks.

Key recommendations for Council to consider are:

- 1) Provide City Council staff with the public policy areas that need to be researched and request a review of what laws currently exist in the City Code that are in the same areas of focus as the priority policy areas identified in this Strategic Planning Process.
- 2) In recognition of the priority policies Council has determined to address and the budget that was recently passed, what are the budgetary parameters and/or constraints that may need to be understood and considered relevant to the legislative work Council seeks to address?
- 3) In what ways do the public policy areas your Strategic Planning Process seeks to address, support, differ from, strengthen, or add to the agenda of the Administration? Develop strong, evidence-based arguments that support Council positions. Council staff can also assist by researching similar Ordinances developed and passed by City Councils representing cities of comparable size to Wilmington.
- 4) Review the legislative actions that were implemented by and from the preceding Council's legislative mandates (Ordinances). What impact are those having on this session of Council? On the Administration?
- 5) Meet regularly with various and diverse Constituent Groups to share the elements of the Strategic Planning Process, and obtain their input on aspects of any intended Ordinances that may add improvements to elements in each one.
- 6) Council President/Committee Chairs should identify and meet with City Department leaders whose work may be affected by new or revised Ordinances developed in Committees.
- 7) Schedule two to three times during each fiscal year to assess progress on those Ordinances and Resolutions identified for Council Committees to address and develop. Determine if new areas of public policy work that may have surfaced need to be integrated into the Strategic Planning Process.
- 8) City Council Communications and WITN 22 Staff should be apprised of the Council Strategic Planning Process and develop informational pieces to help facilitate and share information regarding the priorities set forth through this process, and efforts to address them.

## References

The following references were reviewed in the creation of the strategic planning activities and process:

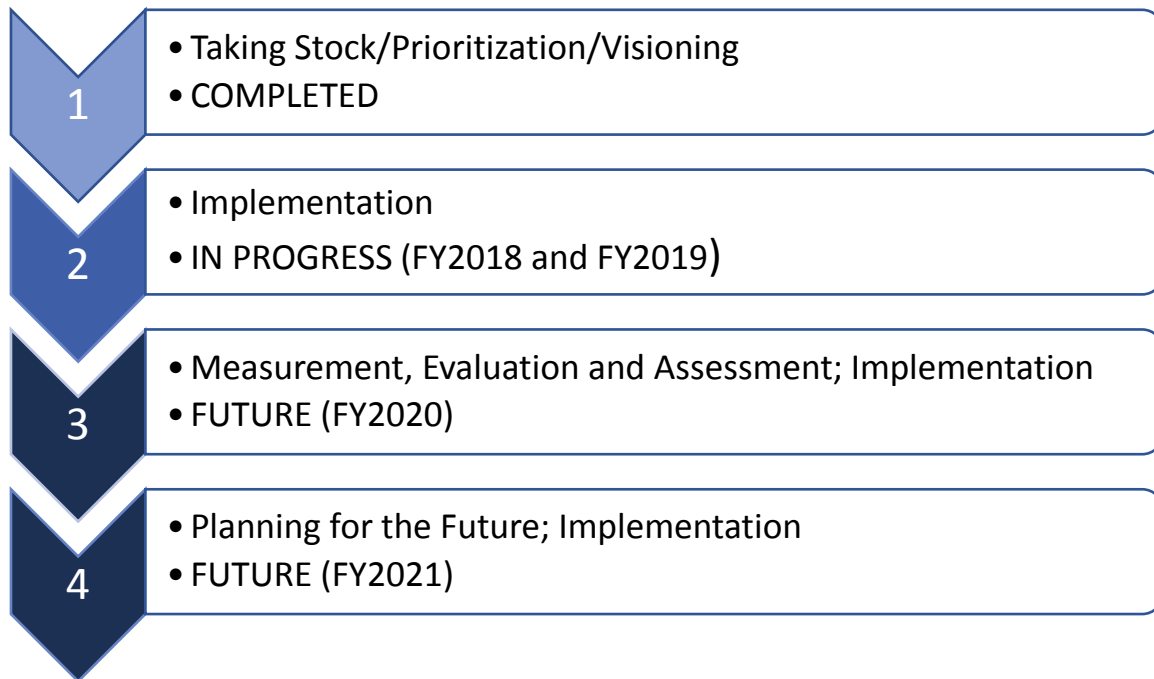
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Denhardt, Robert, B. (1985). *Strategic Planning in State and Local Government*. Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management. Vol. 17, No.1. (pp. 174-179).

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# Wilmington City Council Strategic Planning Process Phases

Included here is a projected timeline of the various phases of the Strategic Planning Process:



# Wilmington City Council

## Strategic Planning Process

### Mission Statements

A critical component of the Strategic Planning Process involved considering the purpose and objectives of City Council. The result of this process was the formulation of a mission statement for Council as the legislative branch of government, in addition to similar mission statements for each of Council's seven standing committees. It is also important to note that City Council, from time to time, meets as a Committee of the Whole to consider specific matters on a variety of topics.

Resulting from these careful considerations, deliberations and discussions are the following mission statements:

#### Wilmington City Council

The mission of the Wilmington City Council is to:

- Provide visionary leadership in policymaking on quality of life matters
- Develop well-researched legislation that will enable Wilmington government to provide its residents, visitors and businesses with the highest quality of public services in a fiscally responsible manner through cooperative decision-making, strong ethical leadership, open communications and transparency with its public
- Fulfill the critical responsibility of providing a check on the executive branch of City government both through individual City Council Committees, and legislative measures to enhance transparency, accountability and adherence to stated and collectively agreed upon goals for City operations
- Connect with constituents to identify needs in the community and to devise strategies to address those needs, both through legislation and through collaboration with the executive branch of City government

## Community Development and Urban Planning

The mission of the Community Development and Urban Planning Committee is to:

- Provide the City and its residents with a City-wide view on the developmental efforts around neighborhood revitalization, including housing and land use, to enhance and enforce codes for collective impact to improve the lives of all our citizens
- Monitor and evaluate housing development, including through the activities of the Wilmington Neighborhood Conservancy Land Bank
- Identify neighborhood revitalization efforts, and evaluate their effectiveness and the appropriate allocation of resources
- Work with the Planning Department on land use activities, including green space usage in community development plans

## Education, Youth and Families

The mission of the Education, Youth and Families Committee is to:

- Advocate for and create legislation that improves the overall quality of life for youth and their families in the focus areas of education, youth development, and career and community development
- Collaborate with the Department of Parks and Recreation to discuss and monitor programming and provide support and encourage for additional programming
- Facilitate and support the process of creating a Youth Master Plan

## Finance and Economic Development

The mission of the Finance and Economic Development Committee is to:

- Work with the administration to approve an annual balanced budget that sets priorities for our City
- Monitor revenues and expenses across funds and budgets throughout the year to ensure fiscal stability
- Vet proposed legislation pertaining to the administration of City government
- Explore ideas to enhance revenues and cost savings to maintain a tax base that encourages residential and business development
- Identify evidence-based and research-supported policies and strategies to address risk management issues and controls, worker's compensation, and human resources

## Public Safety

The mission of the Public Safety Committee is to:

- Build relationships between Police, Fire and Emergency Management personnel and all facets of the Wilmington community – residents, businesses and visitors
- Connect with the public to obtain input and analyze any community public safety needs or concerns which might exist throughout Wilmington
- Recommend policies and practices that could enhance the professionalism, integrity and effectiveness of Police, Fire and Emergency Management personnel, and which could enhance the relationship between and among the three public safety departments
- Identify evidence-based strategies proven to reduce crime and create safer communities, and utilize fiscal strategies to accommodate such strategies with the available resources

## Health, Aging and Disabilities

The mission of the Health, Aging and Disabilities Committee is to:

- Recommend to Council evidence-based policies in the areas of senior services; adult, child and family homelessness; social services related to aging, disabilities, public health, mental health services, substance abuse services; and human advocacy
- Monitor policies and subsequent legislation pertaining to the above areas, and communicate that with members of Council and with the public
- Leverage Committee meetings as opportunities for presentations from health practitioners and others on matters of interest to Council and to the public

## Public Works and Transportation

The mission of the Public Works and Transportation Committee is to:

- Recommend effective policies that facilitate the provision of quality Public Works services which enhance the living and working environment in the City of Wilmington, including prompt and efficient trash pick-up and recycling services, oversight of the City's Water Sewer System and Clean Drinking Water, the provision of construction and maintenance of City roads and right-of-way's, and the maintaining of safe roadways for motor vehicles, emergency and school bus traffic.
- Explore the existing approach for parking in the City of Wilmington, and consider innovative techniques in the troubleshooting of possible deficiencies, and in anticipation of future economic and concrete development
- Collaborate with key external stakeholders around possible enhancements to the transportation infrastructure in Wilmington and throughout the region to increase connectivity and options both for Wilmingtonians, and for visitors to Delaware's largest City.

## Cable, Video and Telecommunications

The mission of the Cable, Video and Telecommunications Committee is to:

- Provide administration and monitoring of any Franchise Agreement(s) for Cable Services in the City of Wilmington
- Conduct the cable renewal process under the CCPA, as amended (47 U.S.C. 521 et seq.) to ensure that Public, Educational and Government (PEG) information, services and affairs are accessible to Wilmington residents, communities, schools and government entities through locally controlled television channels such as WITN, LAPA and operating on Cable platforms
- Be accountable for enforcing the City's responsibilities related to enforcing the provisions of any franchise granted pursuant to this article related to cable communications



# Wilmington City Council Strategic Planning Process Priorities

City Council is committed to working towards a...





## **Safe and Secure Wilmington**

City Council has identified priorities surrounding public safety and security in Wilmington, including:

**Crime Prevention and Suppression**

**Community Policing and Outreach**

**Implementing the Recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Report Related to Youth Firearm Violence**



## Growing Wilmington

City Council has identified priorities related to growth, development and neighborhood revitalization in Wilmington, including:

Neighborhood Revitalization Plans

Comprehensive Development Plan

Infrastructure Development and Revitalization (Repairs, Water, Sewer, Sidewalks, Roads)

Brownfields Remediation, Cleanup and Redevelopment

Mixed Housing Development



## **Stabilized Wilmington**

City Council has identified priorities related to enforcement of the City Code, the management of vacant properties and the initiatives of the Land Bank in Wilmington, including:

Code Enforcement

Vacant Properties

Land Bank



## **Resident and Visitor Friendly Wilmington**

City Council has identified priorities related to the provision of basic municipal services – including trash and recycling collection and the enforcement of parking regulations – and the importance of fostering a Wilmington that is friendly and welcoming to residents and visitors:

Trash and Recycling Services

Parking Enforcement

Parking Enhancements and Planning (Commerical, Residential, Downtown, Smart Meters, etc.)

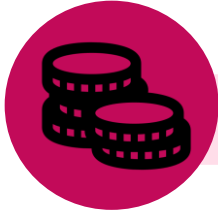


## **Business Friendly Wilmington**

City Council has identified priorities related to fostering an environment that is ripe for business development as a key to more broad economic development and growth, including:

**Disadvantaged Business Enterprise and Minority Business Enterprise Development**

**Business Plan Development and Resources for Neighborhood Business Corridors**



## **Prosperous and Sustainable Wilmington**

City Council has identified priorities related to City government operations in Wilmington, with the objectives of enhancing revenue opportunities, controlling for expenditures and instituting personnel and financial policies, including:

Revenue Enhancements

Budget and Expenditure Controls

Policies and Strategies Regarding Risk Management, Workers Compensation and Human Resources



## Wilmington for All Ages

City Council has identified priorities related to fostering a Wilmington that is inclusive of all ages, and which provides opportunities for residents and visitors at every stage of life, including:

Advocacy and Support for Wilmington's Youth in the Educational Process

Youth Master Plan

Adult and Youth Workforce Development

Implementing the Recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Report Related to Positive Youth and Family Development Activities





## Healthy Wilmington

City Council has identified priorities surrounding the promotion of health and wellness in Wilmington, including:

Mental and Physical Health Services

Adult, Family and Youth Homelessness

Senior Services



## **Transparent and Well-Represented Wilmington**

City Council has identified priorities related to fostering a transparent and well-represented Wilmington, including:

Transparency of City Government

Redistricting



## **Connected, Informed and Engaged Wilmington**

City Council has identified priorities related to encouraging communication, sharing information and fostering engagement in Wilmington, including:

Constituent, Civic and Community Engagement

Oversight of Franchise Agreement for Cable Services

Providing Access to PEG (Public, Education, Government) for Access to Television for Local Community, Schools and Government