

**Lenoir Planning Retreat Agenda - February 11, 2022**  
**Blue Ridge Energies Community Room**  
**8:00 a.m.-11:45 a.m.**

**Breakfast [8:00am]**

**Call to Order, Introductions & Opening Remarks** - Mayor Joe Gibbons/Anthony Starr [8:30am]

**Swearing-In: Kent Greer** - Mayor Joe Gibbons/City Clerk Shirley Cannon [8:35am]

**Mission Statement & Vision Review** - Anthony Starr [8:45am]

**Customer Service Team Update** - Hannah Williams/Joshua Harris [9:15am]

**State of the City “2021 Review” Presentation** [9:30am] - Scott Hildebran

**Break** [10:30am]

**Review of 2021-22 Strategic Priorities** - Scott Hildebran [10:45am]

**Questions/Comments** - Anthony Starr [11:30am]

**Break - Lunch** [11:45am]

**12:15 p.m.-3:45 p.m.**

**Presentations** [12:15pm]

- A. Code Enforcement/Foreclosures Program Update -  
Jenny Wheelock/Brent Phelps/Donna Bean [45 minutes]
- B. Compensation Review & Discussion - Donna Bean [30 minutes]
- C. Grant Funding/Projects Review - Scott Hildebran/Donna Bean [45 minutes]

**Break** [2:15pm]

**Facilitated Discussion - Priorities** - Anthony Starr [2:30pm]

- A. What current issues/projects should be continued as priorities for 2022-23 and what new issues/projects should be included for future consideration?
- B. Which of these issues are the most important for the City invest effort and resources during 2022-23?
- C. Ranking Exercise

**Wrap Up: Questions/Comments** - Anthony Starr [3:30pm]

**Adjournment** [3:45pm]

**Budget Planning Retreat – March 22, 2022, 8:30 a.m.**

**Enclosures**

- Oath of Office - Greer
- City of Lenoir Mission/Vision Statement
- 2022 Customer Service Team Update
- Customer Service Keys
- 2021-22 Strategic Priorities
- 2021 Department Updates/2022 Department Focus Areas
  - Communications
  - Finance/Administration
  - Fire Department
  - Main Street
  - Parks & Recreation
  - Planning & Community Development
  - Police Department
  - Public Utilities
  - Public Works

**Items to be distributed at meeting (February 11)**

- State of City 2021 Slide Show
- Code Enforcement/Foreclosures Program Update
- Compensation Review Presentation
- Grant Funding/Projects Review

CITY OF LENOIR, NORTH CAROLINA

**OATH OF COUNCIL MEMBER**

❧ *F. KENT GREER* ❧

I, *KENT GREER*, solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution and laws of the United States; that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to the State of North Carolina and to the constitutional powers and authorities which are or may be established for the government thereof; and, that I will endeavor to support, maintain, and defend the Constitution of said state, not inconsistent with the Constitution of the United States.

I, *KENT GREER*, further swear that I will execute the duties of the office of COUNCIL MEMBER for the City of Lenoir, North Carolina, to the best of my ability and judgment, so help me, God.

---

**F. KENT GREER**

*Sworn to and subscribed before me this 11<sup>TH</sup> day of February, 2022.*



---

Shirley M. Cannon  
City Clerk, City of Lenoir

## CITY OF LENOIR MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the City of Lenoir is:

- to serve our citizens and the community by providing a clean, safe, healthy, and attractive living and business environment, through the efficient delivery of essential city services in a fiscally responsible and equitable manner.
- to identify, plan, and act on opportunities for preserving and improving the quality of life of all of our citizens and community.

## VISION FOR THE CITY OF LENOIR

*We aspire to be the city of choice in western North Carolina for current and future generations—beautiful, clean and safe.*

*We will achieve our vision through:*

- *a healthy economy*
- *strong businesses*
- *vital neighborhoods*
- *a vibrant downtown*
- *extensive recreational and cultural opportunities*

*We will preserve Lenoir's friendly, small town atmosphere and celebrate the diversity of our people.*

*We require a city government that is:*

- *accessible and engaged with the public*
- *accountable*
- *efficient and responsive*
- *an employer of choice*
- *forward thinking*
- *honest and ethical*
- *inclusive and equitable*
- *innovative and collaborative*
- *transparent*
- *fiscally responsible*





# Customer Service Team 2021 Report

*By Hannah Williams, Chairperson*

The mission of the City of Lenoir Customer Service Team is to encourage and equip all city employees to work together to exceed the expectations of our residents, businesses, and visitors, and to motivate our coworkers through support and recognition of a job well done.

The Customer Service Team continued in their efforts to provide resources to City staff to provide “Service Beyond Measure” to the residents of Lenoir.



## MEETINGS

- The Team met monthly throughout the year to plan employee appreciation events, new hire orientations, and current employee training opportunities.
- Hannah Williams and Maria Swanson co-led the team throughout the year. Parks and Recreation, Police, and Fire have had new members join in 2021.

## TRAINING

- CST held new employee Customer Service orientations at 5 sessions throughout the year. Two were held in person, while three were held remotely over Zoom. During the session, CST members review the customer service keys, set expectations for new employees, and gives an overview city departments and services.
- In late 2021, CST launched a new training resource for all City of Lenoir employees. CST prepared a video skit demonstrating good customer service, which was distributed to each department to watch and discuss. Over 85% of City of Lenoir employees participated in the training.

## RESOURCES

- Team Talk – Joshua Harris published 6 Team Talk employee newsletters, with the help and input of the CST.

## EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION

- CST hosted a Food Truck Rodeo in May at Mulberry Rec, offering employees and their families a meal from one of the participating food trucks: Infusion Smokehouse, El Tacorriendo, and Latin Twist Cafe.

- CST also hosted another Merry Christmas raffle in Dec 2021. Employee' s names were placed in a drawing for various items, which included gift cards, speakers, earbuds, Lenoir-opoly (the board game), a day off with pay, and much more.
- All employees as of April 2021 received a new City branded T-shirt with the newly designed gear logo.

## **GOLDEN TICKETS**

- City employees gave out 26 Golden Ticket nominations to their coworkers. Golden Tickets are given to employees who go above and beyond to provide service beyond measure. The CST team voted on the annual winner and the winner will be announced in March.

## **GOALS FOR 2022**

- Take A Break On Us will resume this year. Due to team turnover and Covid restrictions, CST was not able to pursue this program in 2021. A 2022 schedule for this program has been set, and we look forward to offering a break to departments and divisions as a reward for their hard work.
- As pre-pandemic, CST will host a city tent at festivals this year, as they occur amid Covid restrictions
- Hannah Williams will step down as the CST chair in July after 3 ½ years of service.

## **CUSTOMER SERVICE TEAM**

- Hannah Williams, Planning and Community Development, Chair
- Joshua Harris, Administration
- Erika Leonhardt, Finance
- Jerrica Pritchard, Administration
- Macie Farr, Fire
- Nick Good, Fire
- Katelin Cooke, Parks & Recreation
- Sherry Felts Police
- Brandon MacLeod, Police
- Jonathan Ainsley, Public Utilities
- Kierston Matheson, Public Utilities
- Donovan Church, Public Works
- Gary Leonhardt, Public Works

## **CUSTOMER SERVICE Keys**

- Key 1 • Personable
- Key 2 • Pro-Active
- Key 3 • Effective Communication
- Key 4 • Professionalism
- Key 5 • Timely and Efficient
- Key 6 • Teamwork
- Key 7 • Equitable Service
- Key 8 • Successful Service Recovery

# *Lenoir's Customer Service Keys*

## **Key #1 Personable**

- Be approachable and make a positive first impression
- Demonstrate caring and patience
- Be friendly and outgoing
- Provide polite and helpful service

## **Key #2 Pro-Active**

- Anticipate customer needs
- Make customers feel important
- Go above and beyond – exceed expectations

## **Key #3 Effective Communication**

- Demonstrate positive body language
- Be a good listener
- Keep people updated and informed

## **Key #4 Professionalism**

- Know your job
- Create and maintain a customer friendly atmosphere
- Pay attention to detail
- Be knowledgeable about city services
- Take time and show interest in our customers
- Treat others as you would like to be treated

## **Key #5 Timely and Efficient**

- Be consistent
- Fulfill commitments in a timely manner
- Respond to phone calls and emails promptly

## **Key #6 Teamwork**

- Develop and know your community partnerships
- Provide seamless service between departments
- Deliver good value

## **Key #7 Equitable Service**

- Treat everyone with respect
- Apply policy evenly and fairly
- Be sensitive to the situation

## **Key #8 Successful Service Recovery**

- Listen effectively
- Show empathy and concern
- Take responsibility
- Try to resolve customer concerns
- Follow up promptly



## **2021 Council Budget Priorities**

1. Continue Efforts to Offer Competitive Compensation and Benefits for Employees
2. Pursue Market Rate Housing
  - Encourage Affordable Housing Opportunities
  - Implement Branding/Wayfinding Plan
  - Develop Strategies to Address Commercial Blight (city-wide & downtown)
  - Address Major Appearance Issues (city entry corridors)
  - Continue to Fund Street Paving Plan
  - Continue to Fund Water/Sewer Capital Improvements Plan
  - Develop Strategies for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
3. Continue to Fund Sidewalks/Greenway/OVT
  - Develop West End Area Neighborhood Plan
4. Support Code Enforcement (including Strategic Foreclosures)
  - Develop Plan to Address Litter in Community (State, Local Partners)
  - Re-Initiate Neighborhood Meetings (once safe to do so)
  - Encourage Whitnel & West End Area Improvements

### **Other Areas of Focus:**

#### **Employee Recruitment/Retention:**

- Increase Employee Engagement
- Incentivize/Reward Efficiencies
- Develop Continuing Customer Service Education

#### **Housing:**

- Continue Minimum Housing & Code Enforcement
- Market City-owned Properties to Sell
- Encourage Downtown Living
- Continue to Promote Shovel-ready Residential Subdivisions
- Participate in WPCOG Vacant & Substandard Housing Task Force

#### **Community Beautification:**

- Continue Implementation of North Main Area Plan & Fairfield South Plan
- Consider Gateway Enhancements at Smith Crossroads

#### **Healthy Infrastructure:**

- Support Technology/Cybersecurity/Digital Services
- Continue to Fund City Facilities/Fleet Plan
- Continue to Fund Stormwater Improvements
- Implement Downtown 2-Way Traffic Plan
- Implement Bike/Ped Plan
- Improve/Implement Public Wi-fi at City Parks/Facilities

#### **Economic Development:**

- Encourage Public/Private Partnerships
- Continue Partnership with Caldwell EDC

#### **Public Engagement:**

- Share State of the City Presentations
- Market Quality of Life Amenities
- Schedule Neighborhood Walk-through's
- Develop Strategic/Targeted Communication (multi-lingual)
- Promote Smart City, Online Interaction

#### **Other**

- Pursue COVID-related Funding Opportunities to Help Citizens



# COMMUNICATION & PUBLIC INFO REPORT FOR 2021

*Joshua Harris, Communication & Public Information Director, Jan. 31, 2022*



Last year was another good year for City communications. We added more pages and forms to the website. We sent out more new content about the City, and we grew our followers and impact.

## Accomplishments in 2021

**CONTENT:** 2021 was a more normal year than 2020, and the increase in content creation shows that.

- 94 news releases (62% increase)
- 1,499 photos (261% increase)
- 36 videos that received 20,754 views (a decrease from 2020)
- 352 alerts including Notify Me and CodeRED (a decrease from 2020)
- 68 messages on the electronic sign at the LFD Station 1 (74% increase)
- 6 employee newsletters

**WEBSITE:** Staff created a couple new pages on the website in 2021 including the [Smoke Alarm Program](#) page, [Boil Water Advisories](#) page, [Nuisance Issues](#), [Occupancy Tax](#), and [Taxes & Fees Comparison](#) pages. The top pages for the year excluding the home page were:

#9 is the Boil Water Advisory news release.

|     |                                                    |  |                 |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------|--|-----------------|
| 2.  | <a href="#">/461/Payment-Options</a>               |  | 51,944 (11.20%) |
| 3.  | <a href="#">/198/Water-Sewer-Service</a>           |  | 14,829 (3.20%)  |
| 4.  | <a href="#">/Jobs.aspx</a>                         |  | 14,566 (3.14%)  |
| 5.  | <a href="#">/163/Police</a>                        |  | 9,223 (1.99%)   |
| 6.  | <a href="#">/213/Garbage-Collection</a>            |  | 9,002 (1.94%)   |
| 7.  | <a href="#">/408/Lenoir-Aquatic-Fitness-Center</a> |  | 6,719 (1.45%)   |
| 8.  | <a href="#">/201/Parks-Recreation</a>              |  | 5,520 (1.19%)   |
| 9.  | <a href="#">/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=214</a>          |  | 4,090 (0.88%)   |
| 10. | <a href="#">/101/Services</a>                      |  | 3,889 (0.84%)   |

**TOP NEWS RELEASES:** We got a lot of great media coverage in 2021. Below are the stories that broke 1,000 views on the website, most had many more views on social media.

|                                                    | Site Views | Social Views             |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| • Boil Water Advisory! - Oct. 9                    | 4,090      | 15,188                   |
| • Boil Water Advisory Lifted - Oct. 9              | 3,073      | 8,803                    |
| • Lenoir Crossing getting renovation - Aug. 6      | 2,674      | 118,284 (multiple posts) |
| • Fact statement on Laurel Pl incident – June 30   | 2,233      | (not posted)             |
| • Lenoir police car getting new look – Aug. 10     | 1,907      | 5,368                    |
| • F1 Wagyu beef shop coming – Aug. 19              | 1,738      | 5896                     |
| • More multifamily housing on the horizon – Jan 15 | 1,607      | 6,444                    |

**FOLLOWERS:** The City gained 4,002 followers in 2021 across our website and social media channels. That's a 12.6% increase from 31,754 at the end of 2020 to 35,756 followers at the end of 2021.

**QUESTIONS & REQUESTS:** Residents continued to use the Contact Us form and Sanitation request forms throughout 2021. The forms go directly to staff and cut out the need for a phone call.

- Questions – 303 (9.7% increase)
- Sanitation Forms – 1,271 (64% increase)

**RECRUITMENT:** We posted 28 [jobs](#) to the City website in 2020. Thanks to website alerts and sharing on social media, those City job postings received 31,692 views on the City website.

**CITYLINK & TEAM TALK:** Managed the CITYLINK employee intranet. CITYLINK contains content the Employee Handbook, Forms, Golden Ticket information and form, Insurance & Benefits information, Personnel Resolution & Policies, Team Talk, How To videos, and an IT Portal - more than 60 pages of content.

**TOP POSTS:** New restaurants and apartments made up the top five popular posts of the year.

|                                                                                     |                                                           |      |            |       |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|------|------------|-------|------|
|  | Guess what? Hwy 55 Burgers Shak...<br>Mar 31, 2021        | Post | Boost post | 95.8K | 2.9K |
|  | Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen is comi...<br>Dec 16, 2021      | Post | Boost post | 63.1K | 2.2K |
|  | It looks like Dairi-O has planted thei...<br>Mar 25, 2021 | Post | Boost post | 57K   | 1.6K |
|  | Mayor Joe Gibbons took a tour of t...<br>Nov 19, 2021     | Post | Boost post | 33.8K | 1.3K |
|  | Construction continues on several ...<br>Nov 17, 2021     | Post | Boost post | 26.7K | 646  |

## Goals for 2022

- Increase video production by partnering with County studio staff
- Continue growth of followers on social media
- Complete Public Executive Leadership Academy (PELA)
- Move CITYLINK to [www.cityoflenoir.com](http://www.cityoflenoir.com), make the site more accessible
- Build staff directory on new CITYLINK site
- Increase electronic streaming to reach citizens

## City of Lenoir and Downtown Lenoir Online:

- [CityofLenoir.com](http://CityofLenoir.com)
- [DowntownLenoirNC.com](http://DowntownLenoirNC.com)
- [P2C Police 2 Citizen](#)
-  [City of Lenoir, NC Government](#)
-  [Downtown Lenoir](#)
-  [City of Lenoir Fire Department](#)
-  [Lenoir Parks & Recreation](#)
-  [Lenoir Police Department](#)
-  [City of Lenoir, NC](#)
-  [Downtown Lenoir, NC](#)
-  [cityoflenoirnc](#)
-  [downtownlenoir](#)
-  [City of Lenoir, NC Government](#)
-  [City of Lenoir](#)



**CITY OF LENOIR FINANCE DEPARTMENT**  
**801 West Avenue**  
**Lenoir, NC 28645**

Donna Bean  
Finance Director  
828-757-2180

Below is a list of goals and objectives the Finance Department was able to accomplish in 2021:

- During 2021, the Collections Department processed over 109,000 transactions totaling over \$ 29,280,000. The number of transactions was up 8% compared to the prior year while the amount collected was down 4% largely in part to some business personal taxes. The largest percentage of the transactions was water and tax payments. The majority of the transactions were in the form of checks (90%) with cash making up 2% and credit cards being 8%. The cash and credit card transaction were up while the amount of checks was down 3%. We feel this was due to City Hall re-opening after being closed during the pandemic.
- The Revenue Collector continued working with Metersys, Fortiline, and Mueller vendors to coordinate the reading and billing schedules across four different platforms. This work has included assisting with coordinating route information and changing out schedules with Metersys and Fortiline. She attends weekly meetings to work to optimizing the new billing processes and to prepare the program for rollout to the city's customers. During the past year, the team has been troubleshooting incorrect data in Mi.net, WaterSmart, and Harris to make sure the data in all systems is as up-to-date as possible. The Revenue Collector has worked hard answering questions and assisting customer service/collections staff with the new software and processes. She has also been working with meter reading staff on four different reading processes and verifying results to ensure bills continue to be accurate and on schedule. Once in place, the new system should provide customers with a robust platform for bill management.
- During 2021, the Risk Manager/Purchasing Agent and the HR Director played a major role in the City's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Risk Manager/Purchasing Agent worked to continue to implement the safety plan, made centralized purchases for personal protective equipment and other sanitizing equipment. The HR Director and HR Administrative Assistant worked with the departments to document all COVID-19 related time lost and properly account for it based on the federal guidelines. They also tracked employee vaccine and testing status, number of positive cases, and worked with departments when determining when employees could safely return to work based on the changing CDC guidelines.
- The City of Lenoir received over 3.8 million in American Recovery Plan Act funding to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to delays in the final guidance ruling, recommendations for the spending of these funds was postponed until January of 2022.

- Strategic Foreclosures have become an important tool for tax collections and code enforcement. Over the past year, 14 new cases were filed and there were 27 cases being processed by the Kania Law Firm currently. Over the past year, \$32,733.47 was collected due to foreclosures. A total of \$90,048.45 has been collected since 2017 and 73 cases have been referred during that same period.
- The Finance Director, Donna Bean, was able to complete the requirements to be a North Carolina Certified Government Finance Officer in 2021. The City of Lenoir was awarded the GFOA Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting once again for the 30<sup>th</sup> year.
- The IT Department continued installing security cameras throughout the city. The installation of cameras has increased security for our facilities and has been beneficial in identifying and resolving various problems/crimes. IT staff installed cameras in the Uptown Parking Lot, replaced cameras at the Lenoir Aquatic and Fitness Center and installed cameras and an Emergency Call Box at the Police Department Entrance.
- The need to evaluate IT security is a constant and the IT Director continually looks for new ways to improve our systems. Almost every day, the City gets three to ten serious virus threats and an average of 500+ phishing attempts. 2021 continued the trend of Cyber threats for all municipal governments, fortunately, due to measures already in place; the City was able to remain secure. To combat external security threats, multi-factor authentication was enabled on critical accounts. The Sr. IT Specialist has an extensive Cybersecurity background and he was able to review our systems and will be a major asset in the result of a serious breach. Having him on staff allows the City to avoid costs for contracting services for a security consultant.
- After many issues with managing multiple domains and the confusion associated with the cityoflenoir.com, ci.lenoir.nc.us, lenoir-nc.gov, and other domains, the decision to move forward with lenoirnc.gov as a permanent consolidated domain was made. This past year, the domain was registered and the primary set-up was completed. Current and existing domains are now forwarded and will eventually be eliminated which will result in reduced costs once the transition is complete.
- Due to concerns about fiber connectivity disruption, IT had new fiber installed at City Hall. Fiber for other City facilities was evaluated to develop a big picture replacement plan.
- Evidence storage is of paramount importance to the Police Department. IT facilitated the installation of a 64TB storage array to avoid the possibility of any body camera retention loss.
- IT has spend many hours in 2021 upgrading servers. The Phone Server was upgraded as well as the server at Public Works to provide additional storage space, improve security and provide redundancy. The IT Department was renovated and a storage area was converted to a new server room. The new room provides a more secure location for the servers as well as a better climate controlled environment.
- IT worked to evaluate the current infrastructure and installed network mapping and discovery tools to help with this process. By having a more organized map of the IT environment, bottlenecks and security concerns are more easily identified. When reviewing

the new map, single points of failure were identified which assisted in planning network improvements.

- The email contracts were migrated from E1 Microsoft licensing to E1 GCC Government Microsoft licensing and the email contacts were updated after the conversion. Office 365 Government plans are designed for the unique needs of government organizations. This Government license provide all the features and capabilities of Office 365 services in a segmented government cloud community that enables organizations to meet U.S. compliance and security standards.
- Telephones, both cellular and desktop, are under IT's oversight. During this past year, the cellular phones were converted to Verizon Wireless' state contract program, which allows for better service in emergencies by giving emergency responders priority service. The transition from Carolina West service to T-Mobile was also completed for non-emergency responder phones. IT worked to replace all the decades old CISCO IP phones and replace them with Yealink phones. IT also began using a Mobile Device Management Platform to streamline device management. Mobile Device Management Systems allows IT administrators to control, secure and enforce policies on smartphones. To further organize and streamline the workflow for IT, a new work order system was installed, IWORQ was launched to trace and prioritize work requests.
- To make users more aware of potential phishing attempts and security issues, IT established baseline Phishing security tools and contracted with a vendor for online training. The vendor will also interact with users to determine if they are able to identify and avoid phishing attempts.
- WI-FI was installed at the Broyhill Walking Park in partnership with Google and Brian Adams.
- New keyless entry devices have been installed at various locations throughout the City utilizing the expertise of IT staff. The new locks provide touchless entry as well as tracking entrances for security purposes. This system allows clearance to be rescinded immediately rather than waiting for keys to be returned once someone leaves employment.

Below is a list of projects, concerns, and impacts the Finance Department plans to focus on in the calendar year:

- IT plans to continue evaluating the City's hardware and infrastructure needs and continue to look for ways to improve the data infrastructure and identify ways to be as cost efficient as possible. Off-site storage remains a high priority as well. The final stages of changing service providers from Conterra to SkyBest are underway, the change required digging and installation fees, but this connection will save approximately \$400 a month in internet costs once complete. The move has taken months to negotiate and get installed. Once the move is complete, IT will work to design and build a new network infrastructure using the SkyBest connection with the goal to maintain/improve internet speed and reliability.
- IT will continue to do some simulated disaster recoveries to provide proof that multiple backups of city data can be recovered in a worst-case scenario. The focus is continuing to take a proactive rather than a reactive approach to cyber security and threats.



- The IT Infrastructure/Cybersecurity and financial software used by the City of Lenoir needs to be upgraded. The Infrastructure upgrades will include network and firewall upgrades as well as optimizing the data flow to add additional layers of security for the systems and avoid bottlenecks with data flow. By reconfiguring the entry point, virtualizing some storage and restructuring IP addresses, our systems will be even stronger and be able to defend in depth against attempts to gain access to internal systems by blocking unwanted incoming traffic from unrecognized sources. Due to the implementation of the new electronic meter reading system, plans to upgrade the financial software were postponed until after the new meter system was completed. The target financial software upgrade date is now 2022 and will take place along with cybersecurity upgrades utilizing American Recovery Plan Act Funding.
- Council and the City Manager have ranked salaries as a priority for several years and again, compensation remains a priority. The 3% COLAs the past three years have made some progress toward closing the pay gap however; there is still work to be done when compared to other municipalities in the region. Feedback from department heads continues to indicate that employees feel positive about the recent attention this item has received from Mr. Hildebran and City Council. Specifically, the bonuses given over the past six years and the COLA percentage appear to have improved morale. Paying competitive salaries is critical to recruiting and retaining quality employees. New hires seem to be more concerned with immediate return rather than the value of benefits. This is especially true for the millennial generation. City staff is continuing to review the City's current pay plan and hiring practices, with the goal to become more competitive while staying within the framework of the current pay plan.
- City Hall is in need of exterior repairs and window replacements and a grant of \$200,000 from the state will make it possible. No significant exterior work has been done since 1982 (40 years ago) when the building was remodeled. The exact date of construction of the building is unknown however, a study by Carter and Burgess dated February, 2003, estimates the building is 80 to 114 years old based on the design features. The exterior of the building is stucco and needs repairs and repainting. The clock tower beside City Hall has matching stucco and also needs repairs and repainting. The estimated cost for the stucco repairs and repainting is \$125,000 for City Hall and the Clock Tower. The building's windows need to be replaced with more energy efficient windows to avoid energy leakage. The estimated cost for windows is \$75,000.
- Revising and implementing the ADA Transition Plan will continue to be a major task in the coming year. Had the COVID-19 pandemic not impacted the work environment, more progress could have been made. Work continues but there is still much to be done. We are in the process of contracting with a firm to inventory the sidewalks and facilities to determine the costs associated with implementation.
- IT plans to continue installations, upgrades and transitions in the coming year. Camera installations and Door Access to various departments will be taking place in the coming year as well transitioning to new server and network infrastructure. Partnerships with other municipalities are being discussed to provide multiple redundancies.



# Lenoir Fire Department

602 Harper Avenue, N.W.  
Lenoir, North Carolina 28645



Fire Chief  
Kenneth W. Hair  
(828) 757-2191  
(828) 394-1206 Fax

Deputy Fire Chief  
Kenneth D. Nelson  
(828) 757-2192  
(828) 394-1206 Fax

Below is a list of goals and objectives Lenoir Fire Department was able to accomplish in the physical year 2021:

- We were able to were able to successfully implement a Quick Response Vehicle (QRV) program. The purpose behind the program was to develop a strategy, with equipment, to provide better service to our aging population. The QRVs are three smaller response vehicles that will aid us with response times and accessibility during medical responses. Medical calls account for more than 70% of our responses and the addition of the QRV program will allow our department to provide us the opportunity to lessen the load on our larger suppression vehicles while providing a cost savings in maintenance. We purchased two 2500 pick-up trucks and one SUV to perform this service and since we have had great success with the implementation. We have received many positive comments about the program from the public and our staff. We also received notoriety from the program and were asked to host a news story on WBTV and I was also asked about our program from fire departments in Tennessee and Ohio. **NOTE:** We purchased all three vehicles for just over \$120,000 and spent approximately \$40,000 in up-fitting and equipment needs. We have already witnessed a decrease in response times and should see a decrease in maintenance costs in the future and hopefully extend the life of our large suppression apparatus.
- We successfully replaced our fire reporting software. Fire reporting is mandated for fire departments and our previous reporting software had become obsolete and in need of updating. The Fire Marshal did a lot of researching and decided that is was in the best interest for us to do a total replacement with a new company due to cost and increased programs/functions available with the new company. Our staff has been utilizing the new software since April of 2021 and our staff has found the new system to be more user friendly and numerous more functions has made the jobs more efficient. We can now check our apparatus and equipment with our tablets instead of using paper and we can keep all maintenance records up to date while providing cost effectiveness. The new program actually costs less than if we had updated the older fire reporting software.
- We were able to continue our smoke alarm campaign. We installed smoke alarms for citizens that could not provide their own to improve their chances of surviving a fire in their residence. The State currently provides the smoke alarms at no cost for distribution but we only receive 54 alarms per year. The City Financial Director allowed us to implement a program with City Funds to purchase additional smoke alarms, up to 100 additional, if needed to install in residences that need them. It typically takes anywhere from 2 to 6 smoke alarms per residence to efficiently provide citizens early warning devices in the case of a fire. The smoke alarms are not given out, our staff goes to the properties to determine need and number of devices and then we install them. We are required to complete paperwork for the State funded alarms and then report back to them. The program has been a success for our department for many years and is great community outreach program.

- We successfully implemented a pay study performed by the Finance Department and Fire Department Administrators. Many factors went into consideration for salary changes for our staff. During the evaluation process, positions and job requirements in the Fire Department were compared to other City departments and other North Carolina fire departments to determine where gaps existed. Based on the evaluation, some positions moved pay grades to better line-up with others in similar positions. Each person's salary was compared to the proposed pay grade minimum versus a 2% increase. Individuals, at the ranks of Battalion Chief and below, were either moved to the new pay grade minimum, after the 2022 COLA, or received an additional 2% increase after the COLA, whichever was greater for the employee. This pay study implementation should prove to make entry-level Firefighters with the City of Lenoir comparable to other entry-level firefighter positions in the State and Regional area.
- We were able to receive two grant opportunities with the North Carolina League of Municipalities (NCLM). These grants were for Safety and Liability and we received a battery operated combination tool (cutter and spreader) for vehicle wrecks and a turnout gear storage rack. The grants were a 50/50 match of up to \$10,000 for each section of the grant. The Combination Tool cost \$10,793.00 and we were awarded \$5,000.00. The turnout gear storage racks cost \$6,236.00 and we were awarded \$3,118.00. The combination tool provided an enhanced service delivery for vehicle extrications and the storage racks will provide better integrity of our turnout gear by allowing it to dry properly.
- We took advantage of having the opportunity to be involved with some Community Outreach by taking part in the Communities in Schools (CIS) mentoring program. Five of our staff took part in mentoring middle and high school children by doing visits with them weekly at their respective schools. When the pandemic was upon us, CIS made it available for the mentors to still be a part of the youth's lives by setting up virtual meetings with them via Zoom and that is still continuing through the new school year. They each have helped the children with schoolwork, issues, or questions in general. NOTE: Reports from the staff members who are participating have stated they have enjoyed the mentoring program and although they are helping develop the youth they have found the participation to be a help to them in their lives.
- We were able to upgrade our facility grounds area by replacing dilapidated concrete for our apparatus aprons. Station 1 replaced their apron at a cost of approximately \$15,000, Station 2 replaced their apron for a cost of approximately \$15,000 and Station 3 replaced their apron for a cost of approximately \$8,000. Station 1 and Station 2 needed replacing due to age and deterioration and Station 3 had to be up-fitted to concrete instead of the existing asphalt due to weight of the truck sinking in the asphalt.
- Our staff took it upon themselves to beautify the property at the stations and perform some major clean ups. At Station 1, the staff installed outside lighting for entrances and lit up the clock affixed to the front of the station and the Kue King art work on the front of the station. At Station 2, the staff took it upon themselves to remove the overgrown and dead bushes in front of the station and with the help of Cemeteries, replaced the bushes with more manageable ones. Also at each station, several painting projects were carried out by staff to improve the aesthetics. At each station each year, the staff always performs the trimming of all shrubbery and yard trimming which always provides a cost saving to the City. NOTE: in most instances, the staff brought in their own equipment and tools to perform these clean ups and they performed while on their downtime from mandatory work and training.
- Response and Operations due to the Coronavirus Pandemic. Through another year of the COVID pandemic, our department has had to alter operations and provide other functions to ensure we are providing the safest atmosphere as possible for the public and most certainly our staff. Our

staffing was affected by members testing positive but we ensured that our services were maintained for our citizens. Early in 2021, we went back to full response to medical calls but at the height of the variant EMS and Dr. McClinton advised for fire departments to no longer respond to known COVID positive patients to help aid our staff in remaining healthy and reduce the chance for on the job contractions of the virus. This year's response numbers will still show a decrease from normal responses due to the shut-down of certain medical responses. We have stayed on top of supply needs to protect our firefighters the best we can and we are still disinfecting our stations weekly and when the possibility of an exposure has occurred. I want to thank our staff for being diligent in their efforts to assist citizens during the time of this on-going pandemic.

- Also with COVID, we were asked by Samaritan's Purse to assist with the set-up of a field hospital at the UNC HealthCare Hospital. We had 12 off-duty staff members who helped with the set-up of the mobile field hospital. Due to the influx of COVID positive patients this 30 bed mobile facility helped with the patient's needs. We also assisted with the cleaning of the oxygen towers located at the hospital. Due to the amount of oxygen flowing to the hospital and field hospital, it was causing the towers to freeze up. We went on several occasions to thaw the towers to ensure the flow of oxygen to the patients would not be interrupted. After the peak started to come down and patients were reduced, we assisted Samaritan's Purse and tearing down the field hospital. I am very proud of the individuals who assisted with this project. It made our City and department stand out and shine.
- In 2021, we had two articles published in National Magazines. The first article published was from the 2019 fire at the old Broyhill Occasional Plant in the NFPA Journal. They had reached out to us and did a story about fires involving demolition of dilapidated buildings. We also had our Thrift Store fire from February 2021 published in Fire House Magazine. They reached out to us to do an article on fires involving strip malls. They did a case study about our experience and we talked to firefighters across the nation including New York, Los Angeles and Phoenix putting the story together. This was great testament to the job our firefighters perform and huge notoriety for the City of Lenoir.

Below is a list of concerns and impacts Lenoir Fire Department may incur in the physical year 2022:

Note: this list is virtually the same as last year's identified concerns due to the unknown impact the pandemic was going to cause the City and we financially could not move forward with these projects but are still very much our concerns for now and in the future.

- The major concern we are witnessing currently is the sink hole at Station 1. We have no idea to the extent the sink hole is underground and is a true concern for the integrity of the facility. We have witnessed the visible exterior hole getting larger but we do not know how big the hole is underground and how close to the building it goes. The Public Works Director and Engineers are currently researching the extent and probable fixes for the sink hole. The good news is we have not noticed any visual effects to our building. If you remember previously we had noticed a shift in our building and cracking of the walls. Engineers put crack monitors throughout the building a couple of years ago and thus far there has been no new movement of the building.
- In 2022 there will be a continuing focus on the COVID-19 pandemic. This virus is still having major impacts on our department and operations. We had several staff have tested positive for the virus and on one occasion had five on one shift out at a time which affected our operational staffing for a period of time. We have purchased protective equipment for our staff to maximize the opportunity for their safety and this will continue in 2022. Our department was fortunate to

receive donations and funding from local businesses, the County's Emergency Operations Center and CARES Act to get ahead of the supply needs. As we have been utilizing protective equipment for our responses, it will be necessary to have future purchases in 2022 to continue to provide for these needs.

- Employee recruitment and retention is a major concern for our organization. The previous five years we replaced 55% of the staffing of our department. Fortunately, this year we only had one employee leave and this was due to retirement. The City went to great lengths to help the pay for our firefighters and made our department comparable to other municipal departments across the State and Region, however, within the first three weeks of 2022 we have already had two employees resign their positions. This trend seems to be a national problem for the fire service as every department is experiencing this. At the end of 2021 a prosperous neighboring City had 12 firefighter positions available and only received 8 applications, which one of the employees leaving currently is going there for employment. In the fire service, experience is very important. Our department takes great pride in working diligently to train our employees to our high standards and this makes them valuable for our citizens. Unfortunately, other departments know how prepared City of Lenoir people are and that makes them valuable in the job market. Recruitment has also been an issue for our department. These two leaving now will be a test for recruitment efforts now that the City has implemented the increased wages for most of our staff and making it comparable to others. We will see if this will have a positive effect on our recruiting efforts as our City already offered one of the best benefits packages from any department near us.
- In 2022 we will need to replace three of the four HVAC roof units at Station 1. Last month we had all four units go out at once at this facility. We had Building Maintenance to come assess the situation and they repaired to get one of them running but had to call Gragg Heating to repair the other three. They stated at that time that we need to seriously consider replacing three units due to age and use. We replaced one of the units last year and said for the other three they would not be able to get certain parts if they should go out again. They have been in service for approximately 20 years and are vital for this station. Based upon the price we were given from the purchase and install last year, we anticipate the total cost to replace the other units to be approximately \$24,000. I have entered these units into the Financial Directors CIP request for the upcoming budget years.
- As typically reflected in our reports, the type of call the fire department responds to is trending heavily toward medical calls. However, within the past few years we have begun to see a steady rise in other responses more specifically wildland fires (grass and woods). With the addition of Fire Station III and the trends in types of responses, staff has begun to evaluate the equipment needs to best meet current and future demands. Based on data reviewed, the recommendations for major equipment purchases are as follows:
  - The rising number of woods and grass fire response needs of our citizens has been a concern for some time now in the City. Our department has experienced a steadily increasing call volume of these types of calls over the past several years. In the past five years, the calls year over year have roughly been 40-50% of our fire responses. Wildland fires across the western part of North Carolina have increased for most areas due to our terrain and topography and the City of Lenoir has not been an exception. We have just been fortunate that we have not experienced a large wildfire but the potential is just as great for our area as any. The North Carolina Forest Service (NCFS) has identified several areas of our City that have a high probability of large wildland fire potential and

threat of significant damage. We have never have had a suppression vehicle dedicated to combat wildland fires. These type of vehicles are known as Brush Trucks. They are smaller vehicles that carry specific equipment for wildland, grass and brush fires and allow better range of accessing wooded and hard to reach areas that are off our main roads. Currently, we rely heavily on the NCFS and volunteer departments that have these type of vehicles to help us combat these fires in off-road areas. On any given year, we utilize their assistance on about 10% of our wild fires. We have evaluated our fleet and determined that our department would be more operationally and cost effective utilizing a Brush Truck instead of our larger apparatus (more suited for structure fires) for wildland responses. The recommendation is to purchase a Brush Truck to handle these types of fires. Brush Trucks with equipment typically cost in the range of \$130,000-\$150,000. This vehicle would be approximately a 1-ton vehicle with a Crew Cab and brush fire skid unit (pump, hose, water, and equipment) suitable for this purpose. I have included this equipment on the CIP for consideration in the future.

- o In accordance with the CIP, we are schedule for a new apparatus to replace an aging fleet. In the prior year's CIP, based on trends and demands, we revised our plan from purchasing another Quint apparatus and recommended purchasing two Rescue/Pumpers. Through cost/benefit analysis it was determined this would better meet the current and future demand for our citizens. Further evaluation will continue to ensure the citizens' and our infrastructure needs are met and sustained for years to come. It should be noted that putting these two apparatus' into service would allow Station #1 and Station #2 to respond independent of one another and should provide cost saving for operations and maintenance needs in the future. Purchasing these apparatus this budget year would save money as apparatus prices usually increase 6 - 9% annually. During the past year, the prices increased \$45,000.00 for each apparatus. The cost of the original Quint apparatus, included in the CIP in prior years, was approximately \$850,000.00 and the price projection for the two apparatus would be approximately \$1,250,000.00. If this purchase is approved, the department should not need to purchase another apparatus until the year 2026-2027, which should also be the time these trucks would be paid off. It takes approximately 12 to 18 months to build and deliver these apparatus' and they would not be placed into service until 2023.

Submitted by:

Kenneth W. Hair  
Fire Chief, City of Lenoir



## Downtown Lenoir & Main Street Revitalization

Below please find a list of goals and objectives the COL Main Street Program (LMStP) and Economic Development Department was able to accomplish in 2021.

Presented by Kaylynn Horn, Economic Development Main Street Director

It seems almost unbelievable that this report should begin in much the same manner as was done to describe the heroic efforts undertaken by TEAM Lenoir in 2020...but, none-the-less, I would be remiss in not doing so. Once again, before describing the following initiatives of 2021, the Economic Development Department would like to take a moment and extend a sincere expression of gratitude and appreciation to the City of Lenoir Administrative Staff, fellow Department Heads and City Council for their efforts in 2021. This year posed just as many challenges as the previous year and in many ways more so with difficult decisions left up to local interpretation. Navigating through the waters of 2021 while keeping the best and safest decisions in mind for staff and our citizens was not an easy journey. Yet still, in their tireless efforts, Team Lenoir has kept the safety of City staff a priority; the welfare of our citizens paramount; and the dedication to quality and customer service in front of every decision. It is for this reason that once again **the Economic Development Department is proud to look back at each Department, City Board and Council and be grateful for all of their accomplishments and their exemplary conduct in the face of such continued adversity....** Hopefully, next year this intro will look decidedly different!



### Downtown Lenoir & Main Street Program Development and Revitalization

- During 2021, the Economic Development staff continued to make a conscious effort to **raise awareness and expose the initiatives of the downtown district** on



818 Harper Ave

a local, regional, state and national level through marketing efforts and participating in award/recognition programs. The Downtown Lenoir Main Street Program was recently in the spotlight during several NC Main Street trainings for employing best practices with regard to promotion and marketing efforts. The Downtown Lenoir Main Street Program ( LMStP ) submitted one application in 2021 and was honored by being the recipient of the following **NC Dept. of Commerce Main Street State Awards:**



- Best Endangered Properties Rescue Efforts ~**  
One Building Impacts the Block: Stine's Ice Cream Parlor - Harper Ave Project owners David Maurer and Allison Grey.





**Downtown Lenoir NC Main Street Champion** for 2021 was local architect and developer Jesse Plaster



Both of these awards were honored during the virtual NC Main Street Conference in March of 2021. These recipients, as well as those announced during the upcoming virtual conference in March of 2022, will be honored here locally during the *I Heart Main Street Gathering*. We were unable to hold an in-person gathering this year which is a celebration of these winners, the Gibbons Award winners and our great Main Street Volunteers, but we have high hopes to hold this event in the coming months. Although many of our volunteers were still unable to gather to support Downtown Lenoir events and activities this year, they continued to organize numerous projects to **share appreciation and gratitude for hundreds of essential workers within our community**.

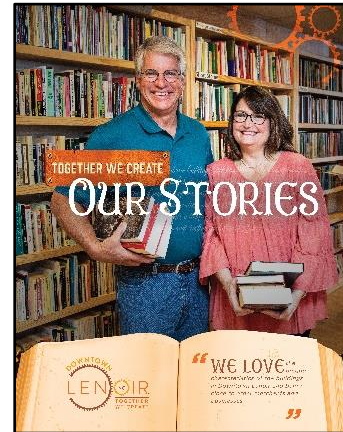
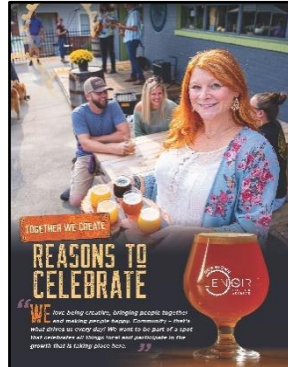
- **City of Lenoir CIP 2022-2023 Reference:**

**Lenoir's first Downtown Master Plan will be referenced in the CIP.** The goal of strategic Downtown master planning is to assist the local Municipality, Main Street, Downtown, Economic Development, or planning organization in developing and refining the community's vision for their area of responsibility, the organization's role in making that vision a reality, set several key organizational goals for the coming years and create an implementation plan to achieve the goals. This service engages the local organization, community, and appropriate state and regional level partners and stakeholders. Having a Downtown Master Plan in place also helps to clearly communicate to potential grant funders the goals and direction of the Municipality's program and commitment. **Estimated Cost: \$75,000 – This project could potentially receive ARPA funding**

- On a national level, the Lenoir Main Street Program (LMStP) continues to work with the **National Park Service / National Main Street Center Façade Improvement Grant**. The Lenoir Main Street Program was honored to be **one of 12 communities from across the country** selected to be a recipient. This selection was primarily based on the recent revitalization and redevelopment initiatives in Downtown; projects focused on the preservation of our historic properties; and the increased efforts to utilize Historic Tax Credits within the district. This \$48,000 grant is used primarily for façade improvements and building stabilization and is available to properties within the historic district. Another example of why maintaining our historic district can be so beneficial.



- The Lenoir Main Street Program ( LMStP ) continues to expand its award winning branding campaign. We produced new 2021 Downtown Ambassador Vignettes. These Ambassador businesses are selected by a committee and their story is used to represent the district as a whole.



- The Lenoir Main Street Program, like all organizations in 2021, continued to pivot and reevaluate the delivery of many of its services, activities and offerings. A great many of our traditional events, either co-sponsored or our own, were cancelled due to the pandemic. Staff diligently worked to offer new and alternative, family- friendly activities that were digitally-based and promoted limited gathering numbers such as Leprechaun Chase, the Haunted Heist and Elf on a Shelf in a Store in Lenoir. We were able to hold two Summer Music Madness events and were pleased to honor our frontline and healthcare workers during one of these events. The LMStP co-sponsored with downtown businesses to bring these activities encouraging foot traffic and participation from local and surrounding counties. We also introduced Downtown Carriage Rides during the winter season which proved to be quite a success with our community and look forward to their return next year.



| CATEGORY                                                   |           |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Promotions/Events                                          | SUBTOTALS |
| Leprechaun Chase                                           |           |
| Summer Music Madness                                       |           |
| Southern Sundown 4-Miler                                   |           |
| Walker Stadium Events : CCCTI Cobra & Lenoir Legends Games |           |
| Haunted Halloween Heist                                    |           |
| Tattoo & Art Gathering                                     |           |
| Elf on a Shelf in a Store in Lenoir                        |           |
| Shine On Shop Small (Light Up Lenoir)                      |           |
| Teacher's Treasures Downtown Luminaries                    |           |
| Starry Night Christmas Parade                              |           |
| Downtown Carriage Rides                                    |           |
| Winter Wonderland Christmas Décor                          |           |
| Christmas on The Campus                                    |           |
| Cruise-In                                                  |           |
| Caldwell County Farmer's Market                            |           |

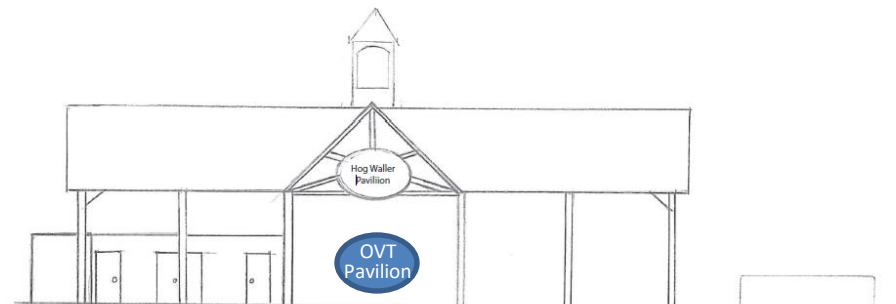
- We were quite pleased to be able to once again hold the **Starry Night Christmas Parade** as during this period our case counts were quite low. We were pleased to be able to honor our **Frontline and Healthcare Workers as this year's Grand Marshalls**. Also new this year, the **Foothills Performing Arts** organization held much appreciated plays and holiday events in the Historic Lenoir High School on the newly branded **Campus**. The LMStP continued to disseminate information about state and federal programs design to assist small business during this difficult period.



- City of Lenoir CIP 2022-2023 Reference:**

For many years, the **Holiday Light Show and Decor** have been an attraction and community engagement opportunity for the City. Christmas and Holiday Décor is in need of replacement and enhancement. Existing Acorn Light Pole wreaths and bows are many years old, damaged and in need of replacing. Additional light pole rope lighting needs to be replaced and additional rope lights purchased. Lighted trees and a walk-thru archway would enhance this holiday attraction. An image projector would allow for holiday themes to be illuminated on the facades of Downtown buildings in the squares and utilized throughout the year. Acorn light banner brackets and Downtown logo banners have already been purchased in budget year 2020/2021. The addition of seasonal baskets and seasonal **banners (Christmas and Patriotic)** would add to the welcoming aspect of our gathering events. **Estimated Cost: \$98,000**

- The LMStP continues to partner with the NC Agriculture Extension Office of Caldwell County and the **Caldwell County Farmers Market (CCFM)** now relocated in Downtown. The CCFM reported that even during these difficult times, the vendors of this market continue to see dramatically increased sales due to this relocation. They certainly hope to continue to collaborate with the City of Lenoir and foster the growth and presence of this market in Downtown. The farmers markets, considered essential, have been permitted to operate throughout all stages of the pandemic. Conversations continue regarding the possibility of providing a more permanent structure to house the Farmer's Market, such as an outdoor pavilion. This type of facility could house not only the market, but serve as a larger outdoor venue - a need which as certainly demonstrated itself during these last months of pandemic impact. Nestled along side the





Overmountain Victory Trail running through Downtown, the “Overmountain Victory Pavilion” might provide a site to safely gather outside for biking events, music events and *Unity Park Community Garden Healthy Eating Demonstrations*, just to name a few.

- **City of Lenoir CIP 2022-2023 Reference:**

The impact **farmers markets and permanent outdoor pavilions** make on their local communities inspires place-making, improves the local economy, and preserves rural livelihoods. These markets create and revitalize communities as rich as the produce they sell. Markets bring farmers to urban and rural settings where consumers shop for fresh, locally grown foods. The direct-to-consumer connection builds relationships between consumers and farmers, giving farmers a source of income and consumers’ confidence in the foods they are choosing for their families.

Pavilions recently constructed in our area provide an outdoor venue that is suitable for outdoor concerts and any large gathering (100+), such as a company picnic, awards banquet, fundraiser, family reunion and wedding receptions. The Pavilion has electricity, tables and restrooms for men and women. The impact farmers markets and permanent outdoor pavilions make on their local communities inspires place-making, improves the local economy, and preserves rural livelihoods. These markets create and revitalize communities as rich as the produce they sell. Outdoor pavilions such as these have been greatly appreciated and utilized during these many months of pandemic conditions. **Estimated Cost: \$540,000**

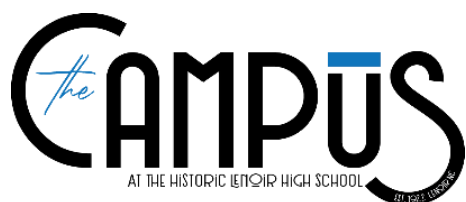
- The **Lenoir Legends** were also new this year to Lenoir’s Downtown Historic Walker Stadium. This program, coupled with **CCC&TI Cobras program**, will continue to be an asset for our Downtown community. Although many games and activities were cancelled due to the pandemic, **the improvements at Historic Walker Stadium** will certainly be an asset for Downtown Lenoir. This will certainly bring visitor traffic, as well as local support, into Downtown to the benefit of everyone.



- In 2020, staff collaborated Parks and Rec to provide picnic tables in the square to **facilitate outdoor dining** and, with LTDA support, **black iron tables with the City brands have been produced** to be placed on the square to enhance this objective. This year, **umbrellas were purchased** to help facilitate even greater use of these attractive tables which will provide years of use well into pandemic recovery.

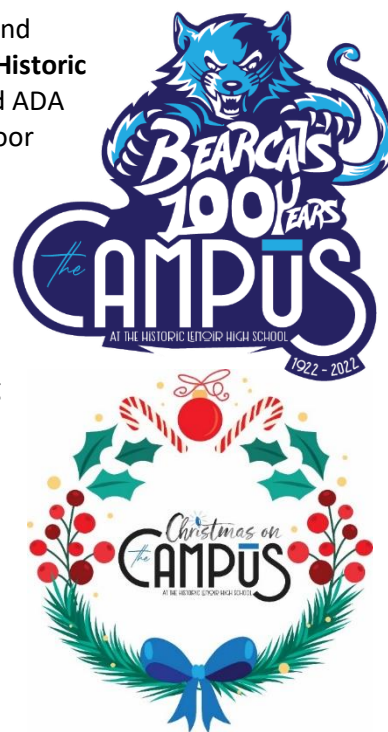


- Economic Development Dept continues to collaborate with the COL Parks and Recreation Department regarding **improvements in the auditorium in the Historic**



**Lenoir High School.** The completed ADA compliant and accessible ground floor bathrooms will help to facilitate greater use of the auditorium. A closer look and evaluation of the adjacent buildings will also allow

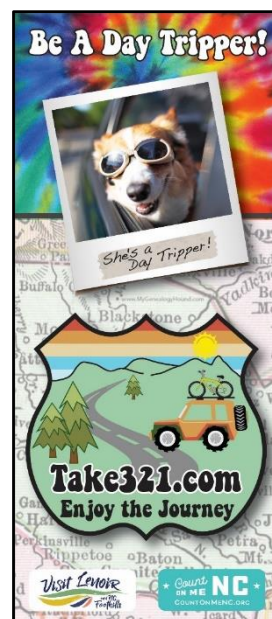
for much needed event spaces in the Downtown core. Theater/stage and audio upgrades to the auditorium would provide us with an ideal setting to host a variety of events and meetings. Discussions are underway evaluating the use of adjacent buildings in order to maximize the use of these City owned properties. The Landmark Properties firm continues to make improvements on the LHS apartments now totaling nearly \$5 million in private investment just outside the district. Also new this year, **the Foothills Performing Arts** organization held much appreciated plays and holiday events in the Historic Lenoir High School. The site has been recently branded: **The Campus.**



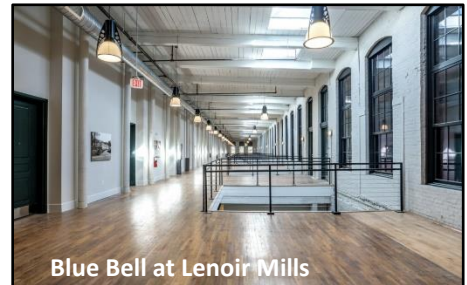
- In addition to the Downtown audio/speaker system and additional power grids installed, the COL Department Staff members continue to implement initiatives that support the **Downtown Lenoir Event Safety and Improvement program.** With the much-appreciated help of Public Works and IT Department, additional **street lighting and video cameras** were installed in the parking lot between Main Street and Mulberry Street to increase the security in that area. Additional **“bike gate” crowd control fences** were purchased to help protect citizens during large events such as the Starry Night Christmas Parade. These fences have proven to be quite effective and beneficial during such events. Police, Parks & Rec, Public Works and the Fire Department assist not only in staffing certain activities, but also in providing heavy equipment when needed to block vehicular access when streets are closed and occupied by pedestrians. Security has become a high priority and must be considered when budgeting for these events, especially in terms of traffic control, equipment, design, and personnel.



- The Economic Development Dept continues to work collaboratively with the Chamber of Commerce to lay the ground work for the **Take 321 Enjoy the Journey Adventure Starts Here** campaign. During 2021, a commercial was completed and produced, a rack-card was designed and produced, and a website, landing pages and social media campaigns produced. Partnering with the Chamber, plans are underway to launch this during this quarter.



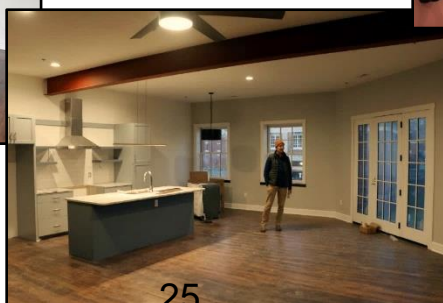
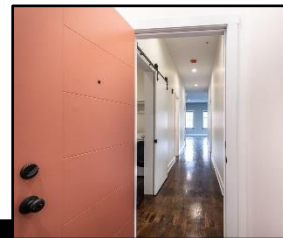
- The Economic Development Department continues to make residential living in and around the Downtown core a priority.** To date, with the implementation of **Moving Lenoir to the 2nd Floor initiative**, Main Street has toured nearly **30 properties** and initiated conversations with dozens of Downtown property owners interested in renovating their properties. In 2021, we have seen an additional **Historic Tax Credit project completed** take place within the district and others being considered. Recently, we have seen at least **seven apartments** moving toward completion in the Downtown core. Continued efforts will be made to update the property inventory and evaluate the current condition of the Downtown buildings. Staff continues to collaborate with Planning and Code Enforcement to educate and help property owners get their historic structures placed back into service. Econ. Dev. Staff continues to work with Administration and Dept. Heads by engaging with developers whose focus is providing market-rate apartments and commercial use within the Fairfield South Area by rehabilitating the **Blue Bell Mill, the Steele-Cotton Mill and the Freight Depot Building** which border the Downtown Core. Not only do these mill projects address the documented need for market-rate housing, but they will have a profound and lasting impact on the economic engine of Downtown. Each person living in or near a Downtown core contributes on average \$10,000 annually back into the core. Since 2015, Downtown Lenoir has attracted approximately **\$9 million in private investment** and improvements and **30+ property acquisitions**. Even during these difficult times, we have seen the following:



#### RECENT PROPERTY ACQUISITIONS:

### A Year in Review 2021

| PROPERTY ACQUISITIONS | DATE   | OWNER                                          |
|-----------------------|--------|------------------------------------------------|
| Address               |        |                                                |
| 814 Harper Ave        | 21-Oct | Wolf Moon Yoga LLC / Jason & Stefanie Keller   |
| 818 West Ave          | 21-Oct | William & Janet Huntsinger                     |
| 217 Main St           | 21-Sep | John & Sharon McNeely                          |
| 118 Mulberry St       | 21-Sep | GPS Dental Lab Inc / Gail Perricone            |
| 118 Main St           | 21-Aug | Lenoir First LLC / David Reule                 |
| 115 Main St           | 21-Jun | R & J Piedmont Developers LLC / Rich Marco     |
| 1036 Harper Ave       | 21-Mar | Liquid Roots Brewing / Taylor & Katie Brummett |
| 215 North Main St     | 21-May | Jennifer Saunders / Alexandria Bumgarner       |





## RECENT BUSINESS OPENINGS / EXPANSIONS / RELOCATIONS

| NEW BUSINESSES                    | OPEN DATE |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| Address                           |           |
| Twisted Ks Korral                 | 2/28/21   |
| Studio 305                        | 2/11/21   |
| Golden Cardnial Gallery           | 8/18/21   |
| J Birds                           | 9/24/21   |
| Stewart & Assisocates             | 6/21/21   |
| DoodleBug's Boutique - Relocation | 9/24/21   |
| K & K Sparkle - Relocation        | 8/7/21    |
| Artem Gallery                     | 10/22/21  |



- Citywide Branding and Vehicular Wayfinding**

In collaboration with the City of Lenoir's Planning Department and Public Works Dept, the Econ Dev

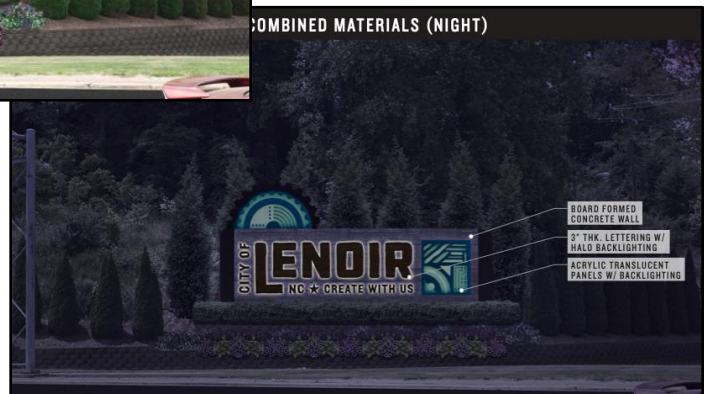


Dept continues to work with Destination by Design, a consulting firm in Boone, NC and the Lenoir Branding Team of citizens to design and produce A city of Lenoir Brand and City of Lenoir Gateway and Wayfinding signs. Previously, the pandemic certainly slowed down these efforts, but many of the goals and objectives have been achieved and well received.

Incorporating the recently developed **City logo/brand and tagline "CREATE WITH US," gateway sign located at Smith Crossroads and various other gateway locations have been designed.** With support from the LTDA and other funding, the process of manufacturing and implementation for the Smith Crossroads location has begun.



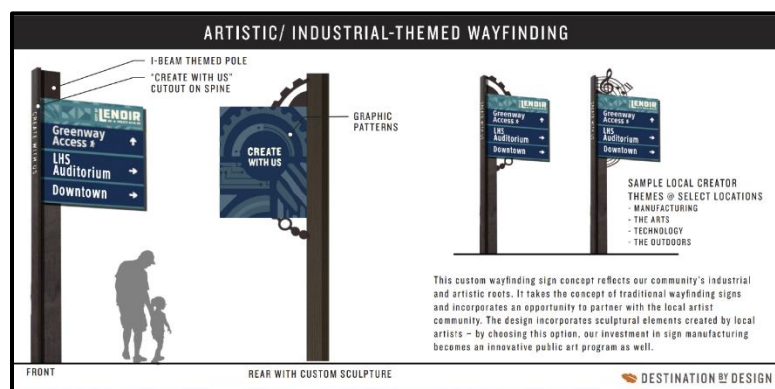
COMBINED MATERIALS (NIGHT)





**Wayfinding sign design is well underway** and the Team will continue its efforts with DbD to complete the technical aspects of vehicular sign manufacturing and sign location planning. Wayfinding is an excellent way to create a sense of place and tell residents and visitors about our amenities. Investing in wayfinding would demonstrate the City's commitment to public investment, **create a stronger sense of place in Lenoir, and encourage travelers on 321 to make a turn at Smith Crossroads and head downtown.** Once the plan is complete, we will have a better idea of cost to implement and seek funding for fabrication and installation. Staff and the Branding Team are very pleased that not only will our wayfinding sign investment create a sense of place, but it will **simultaneously be a public art program**, as well, **further emphasizing our invitation to "CREATE WITH US!"**

This City-wide branding and vehicular wayfinding sign system could be expanded in the future, with subsequent phases being **coordinating pedestrian-scale wayfinding in the Downtown**, signage along our **Greenways**, and neighborhood "street topper" signs for **neighborhood branding**.



- **City of Lenoir CIP 2022-2023 Reference:**

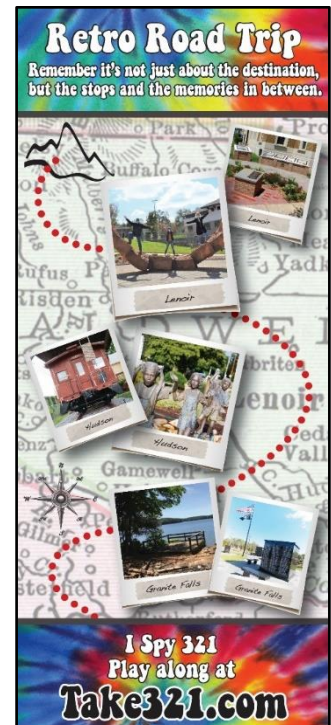
A **well-designed wayfinding system** can convey information effectively and have a positive impact on both individuals and the community through increased comfort and awareness of the users as well as increased visibility for attractions, municipal amenities and local businesses. Investing in wayfinding would demonstrate the City's commitment to public investment, create a stronger sense of place in Lenoir, and encourage travelers on 321 to make a turn at Smith Crossroads and head downtown, and the LHS Theater Auditorium and Recreational Fields or continue on to find our Mountain Bike Trails, OVT Trails, Greenway MLK and Aquatic Center - to name just a few. This project has the potential to be phased by implementation in one area then another - 321 Corridor, Leading to Downtown, Morganton Blvd, etc.

**Estimated Cost: \$641,500**

**Below please find a list of initiatives/projects the Economic Development Department plans to address in 2022:**

- The Lenoir Main Street Program staff will continue to be actively involved in the **City-wide branding** and vehicular wayfinding system projects currently underway.
- The Lenoir Main Street Program staff will continue to encourage participation in the Moving Lenoir to the Second-Floor program and help to facilitate the **rehabilitation and residential use of our Downtown Historic buildings**.

- The LMStP staff continues to work with the National Main Street Center to manage the National Park Service / National Main Street Façade Improvements Grant and assist property owners through the process.
- Through invitations to present at conferences (virtually for now), recognition programs, and marketing efforts, the LMStP and the Economic Development Staff will continue with efforts to **raise the awareness locally and across the State about the Lenoir Main Street Program and Downtown Lenoir accomplishments and growth.** LMStP is currently engaged in regional initiatives within the NW prosperity zone of neighboring Main Street communities. These programs include the new Main to Main Trail program and the Little Brown Jug Tour program. We look forward to sharing more about these programs in the near future.
- The LMStP is laying the ground work for an entrepreneur boot camp program, **GEARED UP for GREATNESS.** This program would be similar in nature to the award-winning GEM Program in Marion Downtown. Discussions are underway with GEM program directors, the Caldwell Chamber and the Small Business Center
- The LMStP and the Economic Development Department will work with community partners and COL Departments to **ensure the safety and quality of our events.** We will monitor and follow all State mandates as directed by City Administration and City Council. We will endeavor to transition back into in person activities with the utmost consideration to safety and regulation.
- The Lenoir Main Street Program, COL Police, Parks & Rec, Public Works and the Fire Department continue with discussion on **Downtown Lenoir Safety and Event Improvement** plans focused on potential security and safety issues addressing Downtown during events and on a daily basis. Safety and security continue to be a high priority and must be considered when budgeting for these events when they return, especially in terms of traffic control, equipment, design, and personnel.
- Efforts to re-establish **the nonprofit arm of the Downtown Lenoir Main Street program** are underway and this process is very near completion.
- The Economic Development Dept will continue to work collaboratively with the Chamber of Commerce to lay the ground work for the **Take 321 Enjoy the Journey and the Adventure Starts Here** campaign.
- In collaboration with the COL Parks and Recreation Department and with support from the LTDA, discussions will continue in 2021 that focus on the potential use of the **Historic Lenoir High School** auditorium and adjacent buildings as potential event spaces in order to maximize the use of these City owned properties.
- The Economic Development Department hopes to continue to work with Public Works Dept to further solidify plans for **an outdoor pavilion venue** for Downtown.
- The Economic Development Department plans to continue providing our community with an engaging and enjoyable holiday experience. We hope to be able to **enhance and improve our existing holiday décor** for Downtown for the enjoyment of our citizens.



### Sister Cities

Our Sister Cities program has languished for several years. Also, the Western Piedmont Sister Cities Association, which was organized in the early nineties as an area non-profit organization, has struggled in maintaining a viable program as well. The original intent of the program was to exchange ideas and develop friendships with other cultures. There has been discussion to dissolve the program and the board is currently still suspended.

### Retire NC

As part of Lenoir's participation in the Retire NC program, staff has access to excellent demographic data and marketing trend data which is being utilized by our Communications Director and the LTDA. The Caldwell Chamber of Commerce is assisting in this endeavor.

**Thank You for your continued support of the initiatives and goals of the Economic Development Department** and the Lenoir Main Street program.

Looking forward to *"Great things to do in 2022!!"*

Kaylynn Horn & Matthew Anthony





Recreation Administrative Offices (828)757-2165 - Fax (828)758-1315  
W.B. Stronach Lenoir Aquatic & Fitness Center (828)757-2196  
Mulberry Recreation Center (828)757-2165  
Martin Luther King Center (828)757-2170  
[www.cityoflenoir.com](http://www.cityoflenoir.com)



**Below is a list of goals and objectives Lenoir Parks & Recreation accomplished in 2021:**

- Installed a new facility sign at Wilson Park
- Replaced three lower sections of the roof at the MLK Center
- Replaced the roof at LAFC. The indoor pool roof was replaced with new plywood and a new metal roof and the other parts of the roof was replaced with TPO roofing
- Replaced lights in gym at Mulberry Recreation Center with LED lighting. By changing these to LED, it will reduce the energy bill as well as giving more light.
- Replaced bulbs/capacitors/ballast at the baseball and softball fields at Optimist Park.
- Replaced compressor in one of the HVAC units at LAFC.
- Replaced the Ice Maker at MLK Center.
- Replaced the Fire Alarm Panel at LAFC with a new Firelite ES200X Fire Alarm Panel.
- Installed two aluminum canopies at the MLK Center. These canopies were put on the outside of the building on the softball field side over the two exit doors. This was done to stop water from coming in on the gym floor.
- Renovations were done on two diving boards at LAFC. These boards were done because the grip on the boards were wearing off and this was a safety concern.
- Paved a section of the Greenway on the big loop, and a section along the creek going to the soccer complex off of Powell.
- Installed two new Aquastor VGB drains and grates for the indoor pool at LAFC. The new drains and grates had to be replaced because of North Carolina Health guidelines for pools.
- Replaced Chlorinator Pump for indoor pool at LAFC
- Installed Continuous Hinges on all entrance doors at Mulberry Recreation Center. This was done because the doors kept coming off of the hinges that were there. This upgrade will help maintain the life of the doors.
- Purchased a new 4500Z Ventrac Tractor with a 72" mower and a Power Broom. This machine has other adaptors that can be hooked up to it to help maintain the greenway as well as mowing steep terrain that the Parks & Grounds Crew has to maintain. This machine was worth the purchase because it can do a lot of things.

**Lenoir High School Property Enhancements:**

Renovations on the LHS Auditorium project begin in late January 2021. Work that has been completed to date includes renovations to the downstairs restrooms, new doors, painting, lighting and the stage floor area has been sanded and varnished. Phase two of this project will continue in January of 2022. Work to be done in phase two includes general painting & repairs, painting of the walls and ceiling in the entry lobby and main lobby, roofing repairs over the entry lobby, painting of the existing walls in the stage area, replacement of broken glass window panes in the stage area, new HVAC system, conversion of existing Auditorium lighting to LED. These upgrades are being done with CDBG Funds.

**T.H. Broyhill Park Improvements:**

Renovations were made to the restrooms and the large deck that overlooks the pond. This project was done with the \$100,000.00 donation from the Broyhill Family Foundation. **The project was completed in June 2021.** We want to say thank you again to the Broyhill Family Foundation for their generous donation.

**Disc Golf:**

Staff is continuing to explore areas within the city to place a course.

**Dog Park:**

Staff is continuing to look at areas to place a dog park within the city. Locating a desirable site and lack of interest from private groups to help with the park have been issues. We have been in discuss with United Presbyterian Church on Pennell Street about a park on their property near the Greenway.

**Below is a list of concerns and impacts Lenoir Parks & Recreation may incur in 2022:**

- The road leading into the Lenoir Aquatic & Fitness Center (Jim Barger Court) is in need of repairs. One side of the road is deteriorating and has been repaired once this year. The bank is washing out and this is causing the road to fall in. Also the whole road leading up to the center needs to be paved at some point.
- Replace one HVAC units at MLK
- Renovations to MLK Center (Paint the Exterior of the facility)
- Replace one HVAC system at LAFC
- Replace the entire roof at Mulberry Recreation Center
- Change lighting at Mulberry/MLK/LAFC to LED lighting. Building Maintenance advised us that Duke Energy had rebates if we replace our existing lights with LED.
- Slides on Playgrounds at Mulberry and JE Broyhill Park need replacing.

**Highlights for future projects:**

- Lighting Mack Cook Stadium as well as the Rotary Soccer Complex.
- Interior/Exterior Renovations to the Optimist Park Clubhouse.



- Renovations to Mulberry Recreation Center (Replace tile flooring, Cut/Sand/Paint & Refinish gym floor).
- Update Shelter and Basketball court at West End Park (Paint shelter, add new picnic tables, resurface the basketball court, add new backboard and rim on basketball court).
- Renovations to MLK Center (Replace tile flooring, Cut/Sand/Paint & Refinish gym floor)

#### **LAFC Improvements (PARTF Grant Application):**

The Recreation Department is working with McGill Associates, PA on applying for a PARTF Grant this year. The grant would be for renovations at the LAFC and the Rotary Soccer complex. The LAFC facility is in dire need of some upgrades and this may be a way to improve the facility. Some of the updates would include a splash pad outside where the kiddie pool is now, also we would like to renovate the locker rooms from top to bottom, put new flooring throughout the whole building, including the pool deck, new LED lighting, a new decktron system that helps with the moisture inside the building. Also we are looking at building a picnic shelter and some playground equipment at the Rotary Soccer complex.

#### **West End Park Improvements:**

Renovations to the West End Community Park would include updating the shelter and basketball court. This would include painting the shelter, add 4 new picnic tables, two new trash cans, resurfacing the basketball court, replacing some fencing around the court, replace backboards, rims and nets. We may be able to renovate the park by using CDBG funds.

#### **Old City Property – Stage/Prospect Streets (Old Tennis Court Area):**

The city owns five or six parcels of land around these streets which at one time had tennis courts and playground equipment on some of the property. The property has not been used in quite a long time. There is no parking at these sites. My suggestion would be to sell the property.

#### **JE Broyhill Park (Stormwater Grant):**

This project is being done by NCSU and they are working on a design plan at this time. I spoke with Seth Nagy the Director of the NC Cooperative Extension about the project and he told me he spoke with Dr. Bill Hunt from NCSU about the project and they will be coming out with updates on the Water Quality Projects in early February. We should have more information on this once they do the summary of the projects.

## **2022 Strategic Planning Retreat**

### **Planning & Community Development Initiatives & Projects**

#### **CURRENT PLANNING/DEVELOPMENT**

2021 saw unprecedented amount of permit and site plan review for the Planning Department, as permit applications and requests for pre-application meetings increased to, and then surpassed, pre-pandemic levels. Planning staff reviewed and approved 163 permits in 2021, a 22.5% increase over what we did in 2020 (163 v. 133) and a 66% increase over 5 years ago (163 v. 98). The types of permit requests have shifted, too, with more permits needing full site plan/design review (most greenfield, scrape-and-rebuild, or substantial improvement/renovation projects). This is where “the rubber meets the road” – each development is a chance to implement pedestrian connections, plant new trees, remove deteriorating signs, breathe new life into old buildings, or invest in something brand new.

#### **Lenoir Development Trends:**

It was the year of Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs) – nationally, QSR (Fast Food) rebounded quickly from early 2020 shut-downs to finish 2021 with record sales. QSR actually stood to benefit from the Covid -19 crisis – affordable prices, already offering drive-through, take-out, and delivery options, and generally trusted as safe, clean, and convenient. We approved 5 of these projects on US 321 this year – Chipotle, PopEyes, Highway 55, Jersey Mikes and Dari-o (note: Dari-o does not have issued permits, we are waiting on applicant to provide additional information).

Other commercial/industrial new construction permitted this year included Aspen Dental, Caldwell Animal Shelter, Mavis Tire, JBS expansion, and substantial renovations for 4440 Ranch and Cattle Company, Lenoir Crossing Shopping Center, Cube Smart storage, and Pelican Snowballs.

Permit applications for single family homes and for manufactured homes were also on the rise – we permitted 15 detached single-family homes and 12 manufactured homes in 2021 (about half of the MH within established MH parks).

On the opposite end of the spectrum, work without permits has also increased. We issued 5 stop work orders in 2021, for work without permits – essentially a 500% increase over years past. Our goal in zoning enforcement is always compliance. Some notable property improvements that we worked with property owners to address violations and get property in compliance include: 2-story garage on Prospect St, site wall/patio area at former Gibbons Electric building (under construction), 385 Harper Avenue (car lot with new office building; log cabin demolition – under construction), closure of Brice mobile home park and replacement of one single wide manufactured home for a residence for new owner, Lisa Yost.

**LOOKING AHEAD** → We’ve already issued over 20 permits in 2022, and have two substantial medical office improvements and BREMCO’s next phase of renovations/site improvements going through review now that were not on our radar until very recently. We’ve been fielding more questions about vacant lots in Park View, Huntington, etc., and Council just approved 18-lots for recording Phase 2 of Summerhill. The owners in two residential subdivisions, Rocky Top Ct. and Summerhill Phases 1 and 2 have petitioned the City of Lenoir for Conditional Zoning districts to facilitate development of the remaining lots.

We have been trying to attract this kind of residential development for many years. During periods of slow

growth and economic downturns, we have the ability to examine and amend ordinances, study and analyze data and engage with communities to do comprehensive planning – but when development is booming, some of that long-range work necessarily has to take a back seat to keeping permit review moving efficiently. Filling the vacant position in Planning will help support this goal – the zoning and housing enforcement officer should be able to take on some residential permit reviews, in addition to the mobile home park permits and manufactured housing permits.

## **CODE COMPLIANCE**

### **Ordinance Amendments:**

Several big ordinance amendments were adopted in 2021, in order to comply with current state statutes and adopt best practices:

- 01/2021: Omnibus Chapter 160D updates/edits (all but streets and subdivisions chapter)
- 06/2021: Edits to Streets and Subdivision chapters; adoption of a Technical Review Committee
- 12/2021: Criminal Justice Reform – local follow-up changes

### **Minimum Housing Enforcement:**

The robust local housing market has started to increase demand for foreclosure properties, as well as resulted in several long-time vacant homes see investment/renovations. The Larinco neighborhood is attracting lots of renovation activity, with several tax and bank foreclosures resulting in visible victories for the neighborhood. Our city-wide housing enforcement approach continues to be to push for quick owner abatement when we can get it, to send properties that are most suitable to be renovated to tax foreclosure (structure is intact/reasonably could be renovated; location is desirable). For concentrated pockets of disinvestment, staff recommends a similar approach to our west end study, as the “next step” to the Minimum Housing Priority Formula – which has for the most part reached the end of its usefulness as we’ve cleared most of the backlog.

### Chronic Nuisance → “Offenses Against Public Morals” (NCGS Chapter 19)

For the past few years, Planning and Police have encountered a handful of properties where the owners and/or occupants (rather than a specific physical condition) repeatedly disturb the neighborhood and elicit a high volume of citizen complaints – examples include Jolly Place and the Ridgecrest/Circle duplexes. While housing violations may be present, they are typically “minor” compared to the behavior of the occupants. Classic nuisance violations (junk, debris) are also usually found on these properties – but enforcement and abatement feels ineffective due to the chronic and re-occurring violations. Planning and Police are exploring how we might better engage with each other on these difficult enforcement cases (through iWorq implementation). We’ve also recently learned that ALE has a task force that will help local communities enforce against these types of chronic “Moral Nuisance” properties using Chapter 19 of the NCGS. City Attorney Rohr would lead the coordination with the task force, for those particularly difficult cases.

### **Stormwater Audit/Program Changes (UPDATE):**

The City is back in compliance with the Phase 2 Stormwater regulations – we have adopted a stormwater ordinance and an illicit discharge ordinance, have an approved Stormwater Management Plan (SWMP),

and we hold a current NPDES permit for our MS4 (municipal separate storm sewer system). Coordination with the WPCOG regarding the review and permitting of new developments has been very successful, with the support from Caldwell County Building inspections we have been about to use inspection holds to ensure compliance with stormwater regulations. Our MS4 is partially mapped, and we did not do any additional mapping of MS4 infrastructure this year. Might be a good intern project for this summer, to help us fill in gaps in our network.

#### **Total Audit of Powell Bill Maps/ROW books (UPDATE):**

Audit and update is complete – for 2021 Powell Bill we submitted 68 street segments to be added to our Powell Bill map, for an additional 3.02 miles, and submitted 34 street segments to be deleted, for a reduction of 3.47 miles. For the most part, the corrected street lengths canceled each other out, but we discovered some segments of private and state roads we had been claiming in error, resulting in an overall reduction of 0.47 miles of Powell Bill streets.

#### **I-worq Permitting/Code Enforcement Module:**

We now have one full year of using the iworq permitting module as our primary method of documenting and tracking permit reviews, and are exploring refining slightly to be better queried/build better reports. We are just starting to use the code enforcement module – it's "live" now, so that we can start establishing case notes, but we will plan to convert fully to managing all our permitting and enforcement through this module starting July 1, 2022.

#### **Comprehensive Plan:**

PLAN UPDATE is underway!!

#### **Small Area Plan Updates/Implementation Progress:**

##### **Fairfield South/Mill Projects progress**

Blue Bell historic re-use apartments, related city infrastructure improvements, and cleanup of the old Broyhill site continued to progress in 2021, and the first residences are already occupied in Blue Bell. Planning staff met with the developers on Steele Cotton, but have not yet had any formal application related to that next phase. Design work is underway for greenway crossings.

##### **West End**

We conducted in-depth GIS analysis on the parcels in West End in 2019, and began reaching out to stakeholders. Although community gatherings have been delayed, we've been able to maintain some community connections through existing relationships, connections to City Council, etc. In 2021, Planning staff completed windshield surveys throughout West End, to develop a **demolition and foreclosure work plan** to be able to prioritize funding and enforcement around (we used community-driven complaints and the minimum housing priority formula, in conjunction with data on unpaid taxes, inactive water accounts, and police data, verified through windshield surveys to identify the most distressed properties). We've engaged with Charles Woodard/Michael Perkins, who have connections throughout the community and also own the equipment necessary to demolish houses. Through

frequent conversations between planning staff, Perkins/Woodard, and their community connections, we've had two owner-abated demolitions in recent months (one on Stonewall and one on Hartley Place, not exactly in West End, but both had been vacant for many years). Three more houses are in the final stages of enforcement/negotiations for owner abatements. In 2022, we will engage the community through creative stakeholder input methods, which might include one-on-one interactions or meeting with a block of residents at a time, or if we can safely hold a community gathering we will try to arrange that.

### **North Main Street progress**

The implementation of stormwater improvements for JE Broyhill park has been slowed down considerably by COVID, but design is complete and Public Works is now working with NC State on construction. Anticipated to be finished by the end of FY21-22.

## **TRANSPORTATION PLANNING**

### **Greenway Planning:**

- o **OVT:** design and build the road crossings and missing segments of the rail trail between Habitat for Humanity ReStore and the Freight Depot (RTP grant implementation)
- o **OVT:** work with NCDOT to design and permit a crossing of Hwy 18 in order to connect the Rail Trail with the "google" section of Greenway.
- o **Mulberry Connector:** finalize Greenway easement across Old Lenoir Mall; design and build.
- o **Mulberry Connector:** easement discussions with Lenoir Golf Course, to connect to Smith Crossroads/possible use of culvert and sewer easements.

### **NCDOT Transportation projects:**

- o Access Management on US 64/NC 18 Wilkesboro Boulevard from Linkside Ct. to US 64/90 ("Regional Impact" project – higher chance of funding)
- o Arterial-to-superstreet project on NC 90/SR 1300 (Harper Avenue/Creekway Drive/North Main Street) from US 64 to US 321 ("the bypass") ("Division Needs" project – more competitive than regional or statewide projects) NOTE: NCDOT's funding has been severely impacted by COVID shut-downs and reduced gas tax revenues. We anticipate a backlog of projects waiting to be funded, which will likely delay these projects a few years in Lenoir.

**Neighborhood and Greenway Signs:** Lenoir, like all cities, is a city of neighborhoods, and many times neighborhoods are more cohesive and inspire more loyalty than the city as a whole. However, the historic names of many neighborhoods are not a part of the collective conscious of many residents, especially as new residents are attracted to the City. Using the recently created neighborhood map and input from the public at the neighborhood map meeting, staff proposes an inexpensive project to add historic neighborhood markers to the street signs around the downtown neighborhoods (at least as a "phase 1". These are little "love notes" that help communicate that these neighborhoods are unique and special places within Lenoir.) Now that we have successfully developed a city-wide brand and design concept for vehicular wayfinding, we can use these design concepts to explore smaller off-shoot projects like



neighborhood signs and signage on the greenway. NOTE: This was not a project we were able to tackle in 2021, but remains a relatively low-cost and “doable” project. Design of the signs is our biggest hurdle, and staff time to implement. Would be a great topic for community meetings and/or comprehensive plan outreach (to get feedback on design elements/logo elements for neighborhoods), and could make a great intern project for the summer, to do the field work and determine final number of signs and placement.

### **Outstanding Projects (No Changes)**

These are projects that have been lower priority, or have implementation challenges, and have not had progress in several years. They are still good projects, and we intend to work on them as opportunities/needs arise.

### **Watershed Property:**

This property, while annexed, still has no city zoning. At one time, we had contemplated a Conditional Zoning district on this property that would basically implement the conditions of the conservation easement as the only zoning standards for the property.

### **Stormwater Utility Fee/Stormwater CIP:**

Freese and Nichols has created an inventory of SW needs, a tracking system/database to compile new issues, and provided information on the adoption of a SW utility fee to fund capital needs. This project was completed at the same the City transitioned SW management duties to the WPCOG. However, the City remains responsible for the maintenance of the municipal storm sewer system, as well as the cost for contracting with the WPCOG to handle the administrative tasks (education, outreach, enforcement, permitting) related to compliance with the Clean Water Act. Should the City choose to move forward on the adoption of a Stormwater Utility Fee, the funding could be used to pay for WPCOG services as well as fund capital projects. Next steps for this project (if any) will likely be implemented by the Public Works and/or Finance Departments.

### **Creation of Two National Register Districts:**

A high level of community interest in finalizing the two National Register Districts that were study-listed as a result of SHPO’s survey in Lenoir. This would make homeowners in two neighborhoods – Fairfield (west of Downtown) and Maehill Park/Oak View (south/east of Downtown) – eligible for historic preservation tax credits. (No changes since 2019 – finding a “champion” for the project has been difficult. We need to do “fundraising” if it is not going to be funded through the City directly, and no one has emerged to lead this effort. We will have to return the \$5,000 grant we received to use towards this project if we are unable to complete it.)



*Brent Phelps*  
*Chief*

# CITY OF LENOIR POLICE

*1035 West Avenue NW*  
*Lenoir, NC 28645*  
*828-757-2100*



*Scott Hildebran*  
*City Manager*

## **The following are items for Manager Hildebran's review for the upcoming Council Retreat and Budget Planning Process.**

Calendar year 2021 felt like an extension of 2020. Our department; along with the rest of the world, was continuing to navigate thru the pandemic. The safety of our officers and citizens was under constant review by agency leadership. Small amounts of training classes began to meet back in person, and we continued to zoom meetings and training. We have learned how to accomplish areas of our responsibilities remotely, but the foundation of our work is hands-on, person to person interaction. Hopefully we will be able to get back to some of the in-person activities which promote positive relationships with our citizens and community.

The police department experienced a small wave of retirements this year; which in turn, created several areas of growth for officers. Several department members were promoted to new positions. Also, several members of the rank of Lieutenant and Sergeant were rotated within the agency to help create growth for the individuals and the department as a whole. Many surrounding agencies experienced staff vacancies at troubling levels. We were extremely fortunate that for the calendar year 2021, we didn't lose any employees to other departments. This speaks highly in regards to the employee morale currently at the department.

Our department; along with agencies across the country, experienced rises in overdoses, mental health concerns, and community concerns regarding homelessness. Officers worked with community members and resource agencies to attempt to assist in these community issues. This will continue to be an effort for our department and the law enforcement profession.

The law enforcement profession has been working on trying to improve in the area of mental health and wellness for our officers. The profession realizes the need to provide better assistance to the men and women that are taking care of our communities. This past year, our community and officers had to deal with several serious violent incidents, to include officers defending themselves against an individual with a deadly weapon. Fortunately, the officers were not seriously injured and were able to stop the individual's actions without taking his life. The leadership of the department is continuing to work on creating programs to assist our officers in the performance of their duties and in dealing with the emotional toll that the job takes on our officers and employees.

Even with all of these events and challenges, I'm proud of the accomplishments of our department. Our officers and employees have continued to diligently work to provide the best services possible in serving our city. Please review the following pages of accomplishments this past year and future obstacles for our agency and the law enforcement profession.

## Accomplishments for our Department during 2021

### Patrol Division:

In 2021, the Patrol Division continued to operate while navigating the ongoing pandemic conditions. However challenging, officers still accomplished a great deal.

Officer Joe Lo and his canine partner completed a very time consuming training program and was introduced to council upon completion of the training.



*City Council welcomed new K9 team MPO Jo Lo and Atos during the regular meeting Tuesday, June 1, 2021. Pictured from left: Councilmembers Crissy Thomas and David Stevens, Captain Andy Wilson, Councilmember Ralph Prestwood, MPO Lo, Councilmember Ike Perkins, Mayor Jo Gibbons, Councilmember Todd Perdue. Atos is lying in front.*

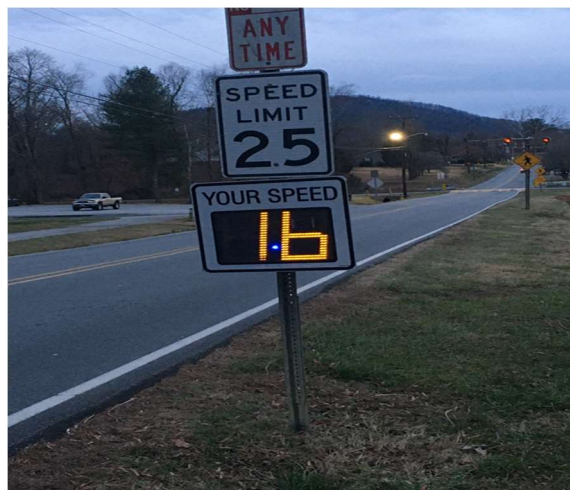
Faced with difficulty in matching “LPD blue” across manufacturers, the police department instituted a new car color/stripping scheme during the year.



A Citizen's K-9 Academy was held this year, even though a lot of other events were cancelled due to the ongoing pandemic. The class size was lessened from previous years and all classes were held in an outdoor/open setting. See photo below:



The department purchased two electronic speed limit signs to help collect traffic data, including total number of cars and speed ranges while traffic units look at problem areas. The signs are equipped with strobe notifications to make drivers aware when they are above the speed limit. The signs are lightweight, battery operated, and can be placed on existing signs.



The department as a whole experienced several retirements in 2021: CRO Scott Kanupp, Corporal Thai Lee, Sgt. Greg Snider, and Lt. Eddie Keefer. As such, we were able to promote existing officers and hire several new ones. In the below picture, Sgt. Moore and Sgt. Bumgarner hold Bibles for new officers, Jesse Pennell and Herbert Reid.





The patrol division's Motorola hand-held radios still in use are no longer supported for repair (unless parts are on hand). Motorola has stated that they will not support the upcoming radio programming changes. We began to phase-in new Kenwood radios. These radios were field tested; it was found that there is a significant cost savings compared to Motorola. Currently there are no issues so far with functionality. We will continue to purchase 15-25 a year until all aging Motorola's are replaced.

### **Investigations Division:**

During the past year, our Investigations Division has worked diligently with the community and inside our neighborhoods to push out criminal activity of all types. The General Investigations Division has investigated an array of cases in 2021 totaling 1,298.

In 2021, the Investigations Division continued to work strongly with Code Enforcement and the Planning Department. Focused efforts resulted in 136 properties being investigated for various nuisance violations. Of the 136 investigations, 77 of those were abated either by the owner or the City of Lenoir.

Below are examples of the continued effort to clean up areas within the City of Lenoir.

Before



After



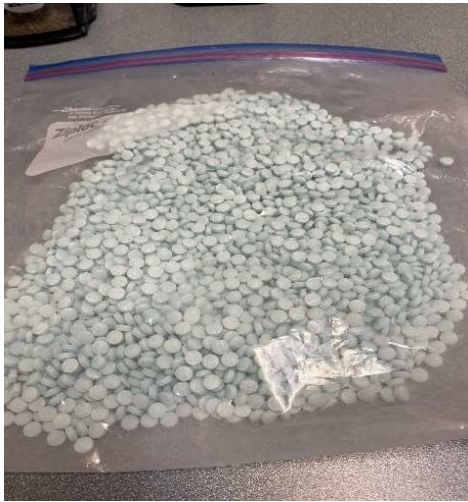
Before



After



The opioid crisis has touched the lives of many families throughout the City of Lenoir. Investigators have worked 54 opioid-induced overdoses that have negatively affected husbands, wives, mothers, fathers, children, and other loved ones. The Narcotics Investigators have seized \$483,250 worth of illegal narcotics within the City of Lenoir and \$1,857,218 worth of illegal narcotics while assisting other agencies. Cases of criminals illegally distributing these various forms of deadly narcotics to our citizens continues to be a top priority.



In late October of 2021, Lenoir Police Department Investigators; in conjunction with agents from the North Carolina Alcohol Law Enforcement, conducted a joint operation investigating illegal activity related to ABC permitted establishments and surrounding areas in Lenoir. “Operation Game Over” was launched on January 29, 2021 and was prompted by community complaints involving gun and drug activity, as well as illegal gambling. As a result from this operation, forty (40) individuals were served with outstanding arrest warrants. These warrants ranged from illegal firearm possession, narcotic violations, to gambling offenses. An operation such as this makes a true impact to the quality of life for City of Lenoir residents and the surrounding area. It takes a big bite out of criminal organizations at one time. Operations such as these make a noticeable impact in various criminal activities.

### **Support Services:**

In the Support Services Division, several administrative functions of the police department are managed. This past year, the department hired four (4) full time sworn officers (Allen Smith, Breanna Christian, Hunter Carswell and Seth Clark). We are always excited when a new officer joins our law enforcement team. We are supportive of these officers and have committed to training and assisting them during their career. New officers go thru an extensive field training program.

During the past year, we had several promotional processes and were excited to promote the following officers to new supervisor positions: Tyler Sanders and Jen Banks to the rank of Police Corporal. John Howard was promoted to the rank of Police Lieutenant.

Our department participated with Appalachian State University and Gardner Webb University with criminal justice interns.

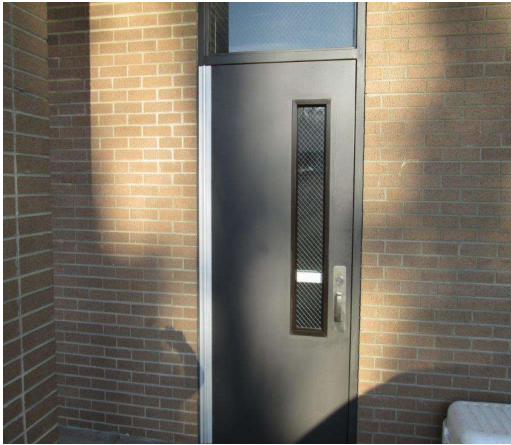
Our agency went thru a North Carolina Training and Standards compliance audit for training, personnel, firearms, medical and instructor files. Upon completion, the audit was successful with zero deficiencies.

The department’s logistics officer worked on improving our in-house processes for equipment and employees. A module in our Records Management System was utilized for our



vehicle inventory to track up-to-date information on all department vehicles (mileage, maintenance costs, and assignment).

Several upgrades were made to our facility this past year and are pictured below:



Rear door to lounge area



New flooring in records

The Division of Criminal Information Network audit was successfully completed by our Communications Director for the agency.

The department's evidence room worked diligently this year on intake, as well as return and destruction of property items. During the year, 2,523 items were submitted into evidence and 2,804 items were destroyed. Three separate trips were made to the destruction site, totaling 17 barrels of property. The evidence technician also made 9 trips to the state crime lab in Asheville for the destruction of 310.7 pounds of unwanted medication from our lobby drop box.

## **Potential obstacles for the department this year and beyond**

### **Recruitment and Retention of employees:**

Recruitment and retention of employees is a problem facing many Law Enforcement agencies across the state. There are a lot of factors that make this unique to every agency. A common theme is that fewer people are choosing to pick this profession. With the increased unrest across our nation this past year, the number of individuals pursuing a career in law enforcement continues to decline. This makes for fewer candidates coming out of BLET and thus harder to recruit, as all surrounding agencies are working on recruiting the same individuals. Every agency in the state is working hard to recruit minority officers, which makes it extremely difficult to attract minority candidates to our agency.

As I mentioned previously, we had four (4) officers retire this past year. Two of the retirements we were prepared for; however, the other two were medical retirements that were not planned. I am proud of the fact that we didn't lose any officers to other agencies during 2021. Many departments in the surrounding counties had multiple openings, and the majority of the agencies would have been able to give our employees a pay increase. The fact that our officers stayed at our department speaks to the commitment and morale of the officers with our department. However, the overall morale of the profession as a whole is struggling with our current nationwide atmosphere.

One area in which the leadership of the department has been focusing on is succession planning. In the next 3 to 5 years, approximately 70% of upper management in the department will be retiring. This is slightly over 200 years of law enforcement experience walking out the door of our agency. In attempting to prepare for this event, we have been strategically moving current leadership into other positions to broaden their area of knowledge within our department.

The City Manager, Finance Director, and other department leaders have been working to close the gap, comparing city employees' salaries with other nearby agencies. As we have worked to improve in this area, so have other agencies. Our department has well trained and experienced officers, and they are recruited on a continual basis by other agencies. We are aware that with upcoming retirements, we are going to experience a loss in manpower. If we were to lose a handful of other officers to nearby agencies, the department could be in a very difficult position.

Using the data released by the League of Municipalities in October 2021, the finance department and police department leadership searched thru the information to confirm the need to continue the efforts for our department's salaries. We need to do everything we can to continue to work to be competitive with our salaries for the future of the department and city. This has to remain the top priority for our city.

The professional men and women of the police department and all our departments are our biggest resource.

### **Code Enforcement concerns:**

Since moving the nuisance portion of code enforcement to the police department, it has become an established part of our response at the department. I feel that we are doing code enforcement as efficiently as we can with the current resources we have. Finance was able to increase our allotted funding for abatements two years ago for police and planning. However we are using more than 50% of that money by the end of August.

The leadership of the police department and planning department are working to develop software and improve work practices, along with additional abatement funding to increase the level of production for our nuisance complaints. We will continue to strive to make positive impacts in the various neighborhoods throughout our city.

### **Department evidence room concerns:**

The evidence room has been a focus for the department for the last couple of years. In 2020, the evidence technician position was restructured from Investigations to Support Services to stream line the chain of command from support services captain and directly to the chief.

We have worked hard this past year to make a dent in the backlogged evidence needing to be destroyed. There is a legal process for evidence destruction. Each case has to be researched by the evidence technician to determine if the judge in the case has ruled that the evidence could be destroyed. If the judge didn't, then a destruction order has to be completed and taken to court to get a judge's signature in order for us to have legal documentation that the evidence can be destroyed.

The process of gaining legal authority to destroy evidence on a case by case basis is very time consuming. With one fulltime employee focusing on the constant flow into the evidence

room, working on the backlog becomes difficult. We have assigned other employees to assist in the evidence room, but they most often are juggling other duties inside the department which makes the process slow. This year we were able to place extra officers in evidence for extended periods and were able to destroy more evidence than received. This is the first time this has occurred in several years.

The department has assigned a back-up tech and this is helping somewhat. But at some point down the road, it is likely we will need a second fulltime position in order to make any headway. We do not have a position that I feel we can efficiently re-classify at this time. The evidence technician is preparing to retire at the end of this year. We will be re-assigning or hiring her replacement this spring to give as much time as possible with our current technician before she retires.

### **Vehicles for Department:**

Our biggest expenditure on a yearly basis is our yearly fleet vehicle cost. This has to remain a matter of expected expenditure in the maintenance of our fleet. We typically need 6-7 vehicles a year to surplus older vehicles before they become unsafe to operate. Vehicle costs continue to rise on a yearly basis which makes it difficult to purchase the number of vehicles and equip them at a professional level. The finance director has been supportive in trying to provide needed amounts for our department, along with meeting the needs of other departments at the same time.

### **Communications Center:**

Our agency has begun to partner with Caldwell County to look into the feasibility of consolidation for our two centers. The state 911 board has developed funding priorities that will affect the City's future operations and heavily impact the funding needs for our communications center.

The state 911 board has expressed, in person, one of their main goals is to consolidate centers across the state. Consolidation is where you have two PSAPs in the county and they join them together to provide one 911 center to provide services for all the stakeholder agencies and all of the citizens in the county. Consolidation is their goal, and it is also the trend for centers. Several of the changes that the state board made a few years ago began to force our department to fund more of the items in our center for continued service. I believe it is in the city and county's best interest at this current time to explore the consolidation option for the future.

### **NC League Risk Management:**

The department began the risk assessment program several years ago. This project got put on hold due to the pandemic. The department once again began to work on this in late fall, and we have submitted our policies for their initial review. Our goal is to complete this program this year.

# Memorandum

To: Mayor, City Council Members and City Manager

From: Radford L. Thomas – Director of Public Utilities

Date: January 25, 2022

Re: Public Utilities Department Projects Update

## **Water**

Water Treatment Plant Rehabilitation Project # 2 – (Completed) The Bernhardt Water Treatment Plant Project # 2 began in February 2018. It involves adding two new filters, the construction of a mechanical pre-treatment facility and other appurtenances to facilitate the addition of the two filters and mechanical pre-treatment. Installation of these structures has been completed. The cost of the construction is approximately \$8.1 million, with a total project budget of just over \$10 million. The removal of the sludge from the lagoon located next to the lake was also completed. This work was completed outside of the construction contract. The plant is currently operating at a firm capacity of 12 MGD year-round.

Joyceton Water System - We have entered into discussions with Joyceton Water Works to purchase the drinking water distribution system and the related assets that are necessary for the operation of the system. We have also entered into agreements with Joyceton to provide meter reading service, system maintenance as well as billing and collections services. We will continue evaluation of this arrangement and hopefully be ready to move forward with a purchase agreement during the first quarter of 2022.

Water Meter Replacement Project –The City awarded the Meter Replacement Project to Mueller Systems for the development an AMI meter reading network and the installation of new residential water meters with remote disconnects and all commercial and industrial water meters. The project is currently underway with the completion of the network and the continued work replacing meters over the next two months. Meter replacements are at approximately 99% completion. The new network is functional and city staff has already begun to use the analytical data transmitted from the meters to address customer concerns. In addition, the customer portal WaterSmart being developed is up and running for use by the customers. We are currently completing the remaining punch list items and hope to complete this project soon.

Finley Area Water System /Pressure Improvements Project – This project was identified and placed in the CIP several years ago. Its purpose is to improve the low pressure concerns in the area around the Finley water tank through system improvements that create a medium pressure zone in the specified area. Preliminary engineering has been completed and the report was used for a funding application that was submitted to the State Revolving Fund in the fall of 2020. The first application was declined however we have resubmitted the funding application after making several changes to the scope of the project. We are currently waiting for the acceptance of the application and funding approval from the State SRF program.

The end results of this project will provide better water pressure and well as improved fire protection to the identified area.

Collections and Utility Service Policy and Fees Review – With the implementation of the new metering system, staff implemented a review of our current policies and fees related to service applications, cut on and cut off procedures and policies. Billing and collection policies will also be reviewed. The technology in the new smart meters is much more expensive than the analog meters we have traditionally used. Fees for tampering with or damaging a meter will need to be increased to reflect the increased cost of the meters and the transmitters associated with the AMI network. We will also review the current water and sewer tap fees to make sure they are adequately covering our cost for a new service installation. This process is ongoing at this time.

Water Plant Capacity Expansion Study – **(Completed)** This study was completed by McGill Associates to evaluate the requirements for expanding the treatment capacity of the water treatment plant. Current capacity is 12 MGD. The study considered the construction, permitting and site requirements for expanding to 14 MGD and in the future to up to 18 MGD. The evaluation of permitting requirements for expansion is on-going.

Water Distribution System Evaluation – **(Completed)** This evaluation performed an analysis of the distribution system for improvements that may be needed to accommodate the potential new flow being distributed as a result of the improvements/expansion at the water plant and increased customer demands.

The results of this study led us to further evaluate possible interconnections with other utilities in the region as well as begin the surveying and pre-engineering work for the Whitnel water line replacement project from the water treatment plant to Sawmills.

## **Sewer**

Bio-solids System Improvements – This project is currently underway and has made great progress in spite of delays in manufacturing and shipping of certain pieces of equipment due to the pandemic. The City received an SRF loan in the amount of \$6.6 million for the design and construction of a new bio-solids treatment process and facility. The interest rate on the loan is 1.53%. Council received a report from McGill Associates recommending the Gryphon Drying system. Council approved the dryer purchase in February of 2019. The notice to proceed with the construction project was issued in January 2020 and the contractor has been on site and project construction is well underway. The dryer unit and belt press have been installed and are operating very well. There are a few punch list items to complete as we work towards the closeout of this project.

Smith Crossroads Sewer Line Project – An application was submitted to NC Division of Water Infrastructure in October of 2018 for an SRF loan to fund the sewer line replacement and rehabilitation from the manhole behind Yokefellow to the golf course. As we continue to have manholes in this location that will overflow during heavy and extended rain events, this project is a portion of a larger project in the CIP along Harper Avenue. Due to the continued problems, it was decided to move more quickly with a project to address the concerns associated with the overflows. NC DWI approved the loan application in late February 2019. The design of the sewer line relocation or replacement will take into consideration options to accommodate the extension of the greenway through Smith Crossroads towards the golf course. The bridge area brings into question whether or not the line location will complicate being able to extend the path under the bridge or even if the line can be relocated at



all due to the bridge structure. NC DWI has approved our loan package in the amount of \$2.7 million. The amount was increased due to the addition of additional work to eliminate a sewer line that runs under the major intersection of US 321 and Hwy 18/64 at Smith Crossroads. The contract for construction has been awarded and we anticipate construction to begin in early February 2022.

Stormwater Permitting for Lower Creek WWTP and Gunpowder Creek WWTP – The Utilities Department is working in conjunction with the Public Works Department regarding stormwater permitting for several city facilities. Sharing resources will reduce duplicating work and reduce expenses for the development of the permit requirements. This project is currently underway (See Jared Wright's information in the Public Works project update).

## **Water/Sewer/Grants**

### **Risk and Resiliency Analysis, Source Water Planning and Emergency Response Plan Development (Completed)**

The Utilities Department entered into a service agreement with Freese and Nichols, Inc. in January 2020 to assist with the compliance requirements for the American Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 (Sec. 2013 Community Water Risk and Resilience) as well as assistance to comply with North Carolina General Statute 130A-320, Source Water Protection Planning (15A NCAC 18C .1305). Their services will be utilized to develop a Drinking Water Risk and Resiliency Assessment, a Source Water Protection Plan and an Emergency Response Plan according to the requirements set forth in the federal and state legislation previously mentioned. The Risk and Resiliency Assessment has been completed and submitted to EPA the last week of December 2020. Work is now complete on the Emergency Response Plan and the Source Water Protection Plan. The deadline for the completion of this work was June 30, 2021. Funds for the implementation of the recommended improvements identified in the RRA were included in the CIP last year. The improvements will enhance security and emergency response capabilities at the facilities in the water treatment and distribution systems.

Lead and Copper Rule Revisions – Freese and Nichols is currently working with staff to develop a plan for lead and copper rule compliance as required by EPA. Funds for this assessment have been re-allocated from the remaining funds approved for the Risk and Resiliency and the Emergency Response Plan projects.

### **Brownfields/EPA Assessment Grant (Completed)**

The city was awarded an EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant in April of 2018. Work was completed with Greg Icenhour, our consultant with Mid Atlantic Engineering and Environmental Solutions, to implement the grant through the execution of Phase I and Phase II environmental assessments on identified sites. The evaluation of several sites included the old City Service Cleaners location on Harper Avenue as well as the old Bost Lumber site, the former Norfolk Southern depot and the former Blue Belle building. The City has had continued involvement with the former Blue Belle site assisting with asbestos and lead evaluation. In addition, the grant allowed the city to complete an evaluation of the old Western Auto building in downtown with Phase I and II environmental studies as well as asbestos and lead evaluations. We were also able to assist the new owner of the former Gibbons Electric building with an underground storage tank evaluation. Completed site assessments thus far are the Old City Service Cleaners, Bost Lumber site, old Blue Bell site, former Western

Auto site, former Gibbons Electric site (as previously mentioned) as well as the former Jo Jas Service Station and the old Norfolk Southern Freight Depot. Current focus is on the old Broyhill site for cleanup and completion of the environmental assessment. The purpose of the funding is to conduct environmental assessments on locations that were once manufacturing facilities or properties such as the former dry cleaning service location. The grant will enhance the city's ability to market and reuse some of the existing properties located in Lenoir. This funding is a key strategy to the implementation of the Funkytown/Fairfield South small area plan.

The city has submitted an application to EPA for a second Brownfield assessment grant in the amount of \$500,000.00 to complete the work at the old Broyhill site and several other sites in Lenoir including the former American and Efrid furniture location. We should be notified in the spring if the grant application was funded.

**Appalachian Regional Commission Grant for Site Cleanup – (Completed; closeout in process)** In addition to the EPA funding, we were able to leverage the EPA grant and receive ARC funding to assist with the cleanup of the old Broyhill site owned by the city at the corner of Virginia Street and College Avenue. Debris removal has been completed within the funding limits of the grant, however there remains approximately 3000 to 4000 more tons of material to be removed. The ARC grant funded \$300,000 of the cleanup with the City contributing \$250,000. Now that the site is cleared of the majority of the debris, a complete Phase 2 environmental analysis funded by the EPA Grant can be conducted. Once the Phase 2 data is available the city can complete the application for a Brownfield agreement for this property. Approximately \$40,000 of EPA funds will be used as part of this project to cover the cost of the Phase 2 environmental assessment.

## **Future Projects**

**FEMA BRIC Grant Application** - FEMA made available a grant opportunity for funding projects that improve or mitigate infrastructure that is located in flood hazard areas. The Utilities Department, working with the Western Piedmont COG, identified two potential projects and submitted a grant application for 70% funding with a 30% local match. The projects would involve the construction of an equalization basin to equalize the flow during severe rain events and a new septic tank receiving station at the Lower Creek Wastewater Treatment Facility. In addition, funds have been requested to replace the sewer line that follows Zack's Fork Creek from Pennell Street to the soccer complex on Zack's Fork Rd. The total project cost is \$8.0 million with \$5.6 million in grant funding and \$2.4 million in local match. The sewer line replacement is currently in the Utilities department CIP. The equalization basin is part of a larger renovation project for Lower Creek also identified in the current CIP.

**Whitnel Water Transmission Line Replacement** – This project was identified in the water distribution system analysis as a top priority project. It would replace the existing 20 inch line from the water plant to Sawmills with a 24 inch line. Cost estimates range from \$7 million to \$10 million dollars. Surveying is underway to determine the location of the new line.

**Interconnection with Neighboring Water Systems** – Also identified in the water distribution system analysis was the possible interconnection of the Lenoir water system with a neighboring utility in the region. A more detailed engineering review of this project is being finalized. Funds being made available through the state and federal government are being considered to facilitate this project as they come available.

Morganton Road Water Line Loop – This project would connect the Whitnel 20 inch transmission line from east of Harrisburg Drive to Fairview Drive along Morganton Road.

Divisional Valve Replacements – This project would begin the process of replacing the valves that separate the high pressure side of the distribution system (Cajah's Mountain side) from the lower pressure side of the system (Whitnel side).

Pressure Reducing Valve Vault – Replacement of the vault located on Fairview drive that connects the high pressure side to the low pressure side on the 24 inch main transmission line from the Cajah's Mountain tanks.

Hudson Valve Insertions – Continue adding strategic valves to the Hudson distribution system to improve divisional separation during water main repairs.

Flash Mix Basin Repairs (Water Plant) – This project would include concrete repairs and replacement of old equipment.

AWIA Compliance Projects – This project may include the purchase of large, portable generators, security cameras and alarms and fencing to improve security measures at the water treatment plant.

Water Plant Operational Building Upgrades – This may include interior and exterior painting, HVAC updates, window replacements and lighting improvements.

Vehicles and Equipment – Replacement of service trucks, mowers and other maintenance equipment.

Manhole Improvements – This project includes the repair or replace of old brick or deteriorated manholes in the collection system.

Vehicles and Equipment – Replacement of service vehicles and equipment such as backhoes used in the maintenance of the sewer collection system.



# Public Works Department

510-B Greer Circle SW  
Lenoir, North Carolina 28645

Public Works Director  
Jared Wright  
(828) 757-2183

## Public Works Department – Annual Report for Calendar Year 2021

### Engineering Division (2 FTE)

- Continued implementation of *Automated Refuse Collection* with Sanitation Division staff; further refinement of processes led to a transition of yard waste collection to the same day as standard, household garbage collection, and developing a more consistent system to handle bulk pick-up requests and collection;
- Oversaw completion of public improvements within the right of way near the Blue Bell Historic Mill project; these included drainage improvements, the addition of curb and gutter on College Avenue, and geometric improvements of the intersection at College Avenue and Underdown Avenue. \*\*Final asphalt resurfacing/stripping, and removal of an existing traffic island is planned for Spring, 2022\*\*;
- Worked with legal counsel and property owners to execute shared-use parking agreements for the Waterlife Church parking lot and the United Presbyterian parking lot. These lots are adjacent to City facilities (MRC and the Lower Creek greenway);
- Completed execution of a greenway easement with Waterlife Church (negotiations began in 2020 and were contingent upon execution of the shared-use parking lot agreement);





- Worked with the Parks and Recreation Department and Building Maintenance Division to develop a bid package for roof replacements at two (2) Parks and Recreation facilities (MLK and LAFC). The project was awarded in August, 2021, and is nearing completion;
- Worked with legal counsel to facilitate condemnation of property required for the construction of Hotel Street. Worked with McGill Associates to finalize construction plans, advertise, bid and award the project. Construction began in November, 2021, and is nearing completion (final completion date of February 21, 2022, per the construction contract).



- Worked with consultant, Mattern and Craig, to develop a FEMA grant application for replacement of the Arrowood Street Bridge. The application process began in November, 2021, with intermediate submission deadlines in November, December, and a final submission deadline in January, 2022. The application includes a funding request for \$525,000 (70%), and notice of award, if successful, should occur in July, 2022.

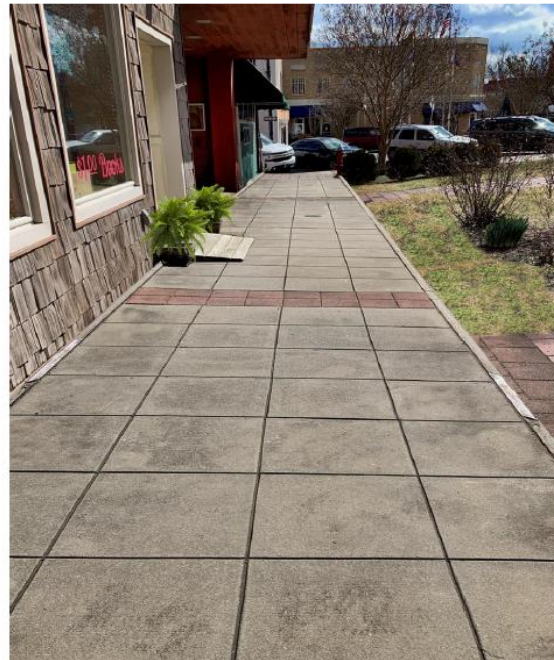




- Worked with Downtown Economic Development staff and consultant, Destination by Design, to begin contract documents for the Smith Crossroads gateway signage project. This project will include installation of a back-lit decorative sign, and requires coordination with multiple stakeholders (NCDOT, Duke Energy, sub-consultants);

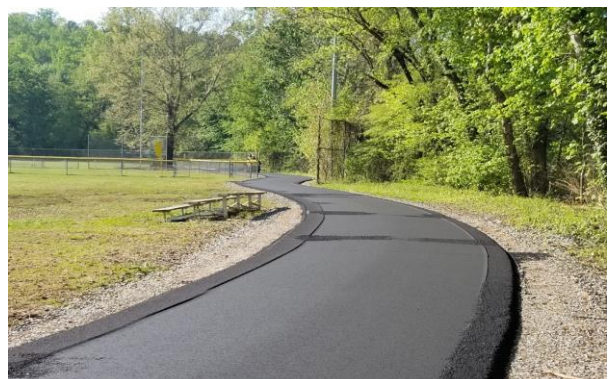


- Continued coordination with design and acquisition consultants for right of way acquisition for the Hospital Avenue Sidewalk project. A total of twenty-two (22) parcels are impacted by the project. To-date, sixteen (16) parcels have been acquired, three (3) full appraisals are scheduled to be completed, and negotiations are continuing with two (2) owners. In discussions with NCDOT, a preliminary bid date in March, 2022, was established. \*\*This date is subject to right of way certification.\*\*;
- Developed a bid package and supervised construction of sidewalk replacement and streetscape in the Downtown square (NE Quad). The project consisted of removal of existing concrete sidewalk, and installation of new decorative sidewalk and pavers;



## **Street Division** (15 FTE)

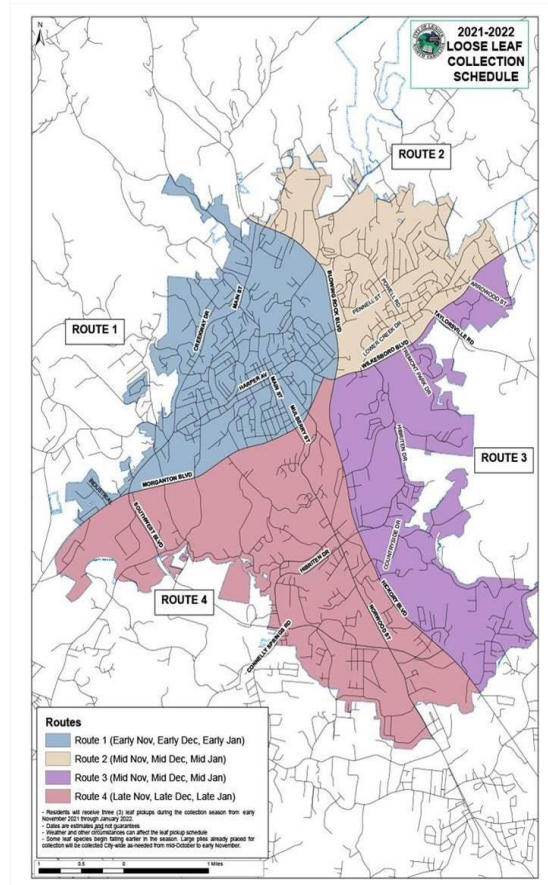
- Supervised resurfacing of eighteen (18) streets in the City of Lenoir (9 streets in FY20-21 and 9 streets in FY21-22). Resurfacing for the current fiscal year is ongoing;
- Assisted the Fire Department with removal and replacement of concrete entrance aprons at Station 1 – Headquarters and Station 2;
- Constructed the greenway extension connecting the Parkview Estates subdivision with the soccer Complex parking area and main greenway trail (parking lot to main trail connection to be paved in Spring, 2022), complete with a trailhead at the intersection of Ebel Place and Sassafras Court;
- Completed repairs and resurfacing on existing greenway trail sections of the “Big Loop” in Lower Creek (near the Powell Road parking area);
- Paved greenway trail sections at the Mulberry Recreation Center and north of Sherlee Street. \*\*The stone base for these sections had been in-place for several years\*\*;
- Completed chip seal repair and surface treatment on Arrowood Street Bridge. \*\*Bridge replacement has been included in our CIP for several years, and a funding application was submitted to FEMA (BRIC - Hazard Mitigation) in January, 2022\*\*;
- Standard operations included the following:
  - Completed 1,878 work orders
  - Hauled 434 loads of brush (**approximately 9,000 cubic yards of debris**)
  - Approximately 70 uses of “Hot Box” asphalt recycling equipment
    - 51 potholes and 103 utility cuts patched





## Sanitation Division (13 FTE)

- Continued transition to *Automated Refuse Collection*:
  - Moved yard waste collection to same day as household garbage
  - Worked to improve bulk collection request and collection processes
- Performed loose-leaf collection from mid-October through the end of January (2022). \*\*Due to difficulties in hiring seasonal staff to assist with leaf collection, off-duty Fire Department employees were utilized in leaf collection. Three (3) employees worked each day during leaf season, which allowed the Sanitation Division to field a separate collection crew (in addition to the automated leaf collection truck). This initiative was extremely beneficial and allowed the division to stay on schedule with collection throughout the season.\*\*;



- Administered the roll-off dumpster rental program from February through October
  - 79 dumpster rentals in CY2021 (54 rentals in CY2020);
- Worked with the Public Works Director, Finance Director, and Human Resources staff to develop and implement a training program for CDL drivers that acknowledges the increases in job responsibilities and training requirements necessary to operate automated collection vehicles. The training protocol includes increasing awareness of vehicle operation, maintenance responsibilities, and efficient job performance, and includes incremental milestones that span one (1) calendar year. Successful completion of each element/milestone includes increases in compensation (within the current pay grade).
  - Two (2) laborers have also successfully prepared for, tested, and obtained CDL driving permits or full licensure in 2021 and early 2022;

## **Building Maintenance Division** (6 FTE)

- Completed reconstruction of the observation deck at TH Broyhill Walking Park;
- Assisted the IT Division with installation of new card reader/controlled access door locks, and completed a renovation of the IT Division office space in City Hall;
- Installed cast-in-place sleeves/bollards on recently constructed section of the greenway/OVNHT;
- Poured concrete bases and installed new, decorative trash receptacles adjacent to the stage in the downtown square area;
- Assisted the Police Department with concrete building pad placement for the classroom facility constructed at the shooting range property near Zack's Fork Road;
- In coordination with the IT Division, assisted with installation of a decorative pole, security cameras, and LED pole lights in the leased City parking lot between Main Street and Mulberry Street. \*\*This item was identified in the downtown safety and security plan completed by LPD, Downtown, and Public Works Department staff, in 2019;
- Installed LED lighting at City facilities; this is an ongoing project with more facilities planned for installation during CY2022. A summary of completed facilities and description of fixtures is included below:

| Facility                        | Description                |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Mulberry Recreation Center      | LED Tube Retrofit (Gym)    |
| Martin Luther King Center       | LED Outdoor Lighting       |
| Lenoir Aquatic & Fitness Center | LED Outdoor Flood Lighting |
| Blue Ridge Memorial Park        | LED Tube Retrofit (Gym)    |
|                                 |                            |

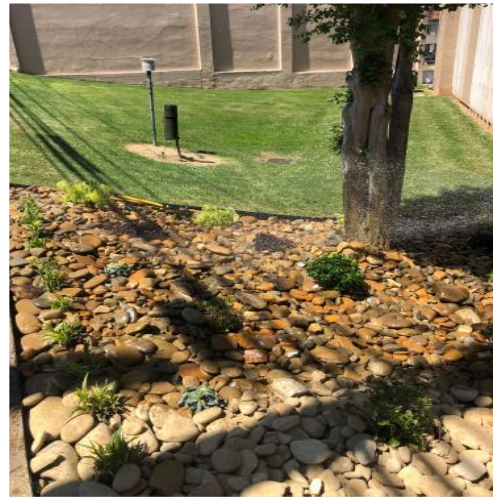
- Assisted with installation of new mini-split HVAC units in the server rooms at Public Works facility and City Hall. \*\*This was necessary due to immense heat generation from equipment in these spaces.\*\*;
- Assisted with flooring installation at the Police Department;
- Installed seasonal downtown decoration (Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays);



- Standard operations included the following:
  - Performed monthly inspections of City buildings (exit signage, plumbing, lighting, and HVAC systems)
  - Performed maintenance and repairs on City-owned traffic signals (downtown area)
  - Performed required inspections of the TH Broyhill Walking Park Dam

### **Cemeteries Division** (7 FTE)

- Completed installation of a decorative landscape bed at LFD – Headquarters as part of the Kue King sculpture commemoration (plaque and pedestal installed by Building Maintenance Division);
- Through coordination with the Finance Department, Downtown Economic Development, and Public Works administration, created a custodial position to perform regular cleaning and maintenance of the downtown areas. This also allowed the City to transition away from contracted custodial services at LPD and Public Works by incorporating these duties into the downtown custodial position. This is an ongoing process and further duties and responsibilities are being evaluated for CY2022;
- Hosted the annual *Luminary Display* at Blue Ridge Memorial Park. In 2020, due to gathering restrictions and impacts from COVID-19, this event utilized LED candles in place of traditional candles. Due to poor performance and public reception, the decision was made in 2021 to return to traditional candles. Over 100 volunteers from numerous agencies and institutions assisted with bag placement and lighting of candles. The event in 2021 proved to be a tremendous success;



- Standard operations included the following:
  - Seasonal maintenance of City cemeteries (Blue Ridge, Bellview, Fairfield – approximately 30 acres total), managed grave site and monument sales, performed regular Downtown grounds maintenance, street and sidewalk cleaning, tree and shrub pruning, and refuse removal
  - 2021 Burials - 220
  - 2021 Plot Sales - 209

**\*\*Refer to page 12 for 6-year burial trends and future needs\*\*;**



## **Vehicle Services Division** (5 FTE)

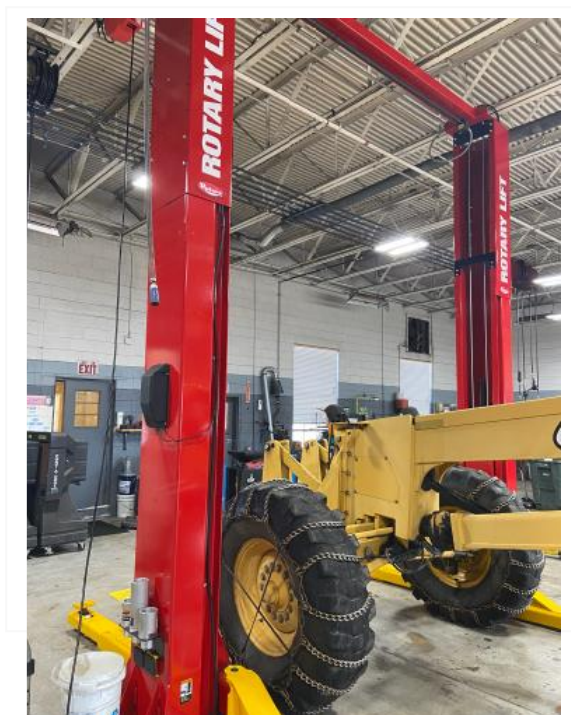
- Following resignation of the Division Superintendent in October, 2021, completed transition to a new superintendent and promotion of an existing mechanic to the Assistant Superintendent position;
- Managed the fuel distribution system for the City fleet. In December, also began investigating costs and processes to perform a fuel system upgrade, including distribution software, pumping hardware, and the card-reader system. **\*\*The current distribution software is over 20 years old and is no longer supported through vendor IT protocols.\*\***;
- Through coordination with Finance Department staff, began discussions with CCC&TI to develop an on-site training program for diesel mechanics scheduled to begin in Q1, 2022. **\*\*Over the past year, this specialized area has been identified as a need for current and future division staff.\*\***;
- Continued focusing on the preventative maintenance program, resulting in fewer service calls:

| Off-site Service Call Summary (6-year) |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|----------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Calendar Year                          | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
| Off-site Service Calls                 | 111  | 72   | 47   | 42   | 35   | 32   |

- Managed the GovDeals program for the disposal of surplus vehicles and equipment:

| GovDeals Summary - CY2021  |          |              |
|----------------------------|----------|--------------|
| Item Description           | Quantity | Sale \$      |
| Misceallaneous small parts | 1        | \$ 3,081.71  |
| Vehicles                   | 6        | \$ 20,721.00 |
| WTP miscellaneous equip.   | 1        | \$ 10,700.00 |
| WWTP belt press            | 1        | \$ 1,500.00  |

- Completed installation of a new 2-post lift to replace an aging lift system. This item was funded through the 2021 CIP;
- Standard operations included the following:
  - Completed 1,295 work orders
  - During CY2020 the Vehicle Services Division had zero (0) lost-time accidents. **This is the third consecutive year with no lost-time accidents.**



**Public Works Department – Calendar Year 2021 Concerns and considerations (update), and Calendar Year 2022 outlook:**

The Public Works Department has continued to complete infrastructure and facility upgrade projects, and sincerely appreciates Council's commitment to funding projects throughout the City. In the past several years, we have been fortunate to acquire much-needed vehicles and equipment replacements, and complete important facility upgrades, but we still consider our fleet to be aging and in need of significant investment. The below sections identify vehicle, equipment, and facility needs that have been scheduled in recent years, completed, deferred, or added as needs evolved.

- **Capital Improvements – Vehicle/Equipment Needs (update):**

In an effort to assemble a comprehensive list of capital/equipment needs, each Division superintendent supplied a list of vehicle and equipment replacements to be entered into the CIP. These have been ranked based on priority.

| Division                | Equipment Description           | Comment                                                  | Cost (\$)             | Priority |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------|
| Streets                 | Single Axle Dump Truck          | MY1997 Replacement (currently out of service)            | \$125,000.00          | High     |
| Streets                 | Single Axle Dump Truck          | Replacement for MY1998 Truck                             | \$125,000.00          | High     |
| Streets                 | Single Axle Dump Truck          | Replacement for MY 2000 Truck                            | \$125,000.00          | Mod.     |
| Streets                 | Single Axle Dump Truck          | Replacement for MY 2005 Truck                            | \$125,000.00          | Mod.     |
| Streets                 | 1-Ton Service Truck             | FY21-22 - On order                                       | \$60,000.00           | N/A      |
| Streets                 | Asphalt Tack Truck              | Replacement for MY1987 Truck                             | \$250,000.00          | Mod.     |
| Streets                 | Motor Grader                    | MY1991 Replacement (break down during snow event - 2022) | \$275,000.00          | High     |
| Streets                 | Wheeled Loader                  | Replacement for MY1991 Equip.                            | \$210,000.00          | Mod.     |
| Streets                 | Skid Steer Loader               | Replacement for MY2008 Equip.                            | \$85,000.00           | Mod.     |
| <b>STREETS TOTAL</b>    |                                 |                                                          | <b>\$1,320,000.00</b> |          |
| Sanitation              | Automated Garbage Truck         | ARPA - 2022                                              | \$325,000.00          | N/A      |
| Sanitation              | Automated Leaf Collection Truck | Replacement for Pull-Behind Vac.                         | \$275,000.00          | High     |
| Sanitation              | Pak-Rat Small Garbage Truck     | Replacement for MY2000 Truck                             | \$120,000.00          | High     |
| <b>SANITATION TOTAL</b> |                                 |                                                          | <b>\$395,000.00</b>   |          |
| Building Maintenance    | Light Duty Truck - 1/2 ton 4WD  | Replacement for MY2002 Truck                             | \$30,000.00           | High     |
| <b>BM TOTAL</b>         |                                 |                                                          | <b>\$30,000.00</b>    |          |
| Vehicle Services        | Above-Ground 2 Post Lift        | FY21-22 - Complete                                       | \$20,000.00           | N/A      |
| Vehicle Services        | Light Duty Truck - 1/2 ton 4WD  | Replacement for truck transferred to Planning Department | \$30,000.00           | High     |
| <b>VS TOTAL</b>         |                                 |                                                          | <b>\$30,000.00</b>    |          |
| Cemeteries              | Light Duty Truck - 1/2 ton 4WD  | FY21-22 - Complete                                       | \$30,000.00           | N/A      |
| Cemeteries              | Zero-Turn Mower 60"             | Replacement for MY2012 Mower                             | \$15,000.00           | High     |
| <b>CEMETERIES TOTAL</b> |                                 |                                                          | <b>\$15,000.00</b>    |          |

- **Capital Improvements – Facilities (update):**

Over the past three years, the City has completed several important facility upgrades, including six (6) roof replacements and numerous, LED lighting upgrades, and HVAC system replacements. The updated spreadsheet below contains projects from previous years that have been completed, are scheduled or planned for in the immediate future, or have been recently added due to facility condition assessments:

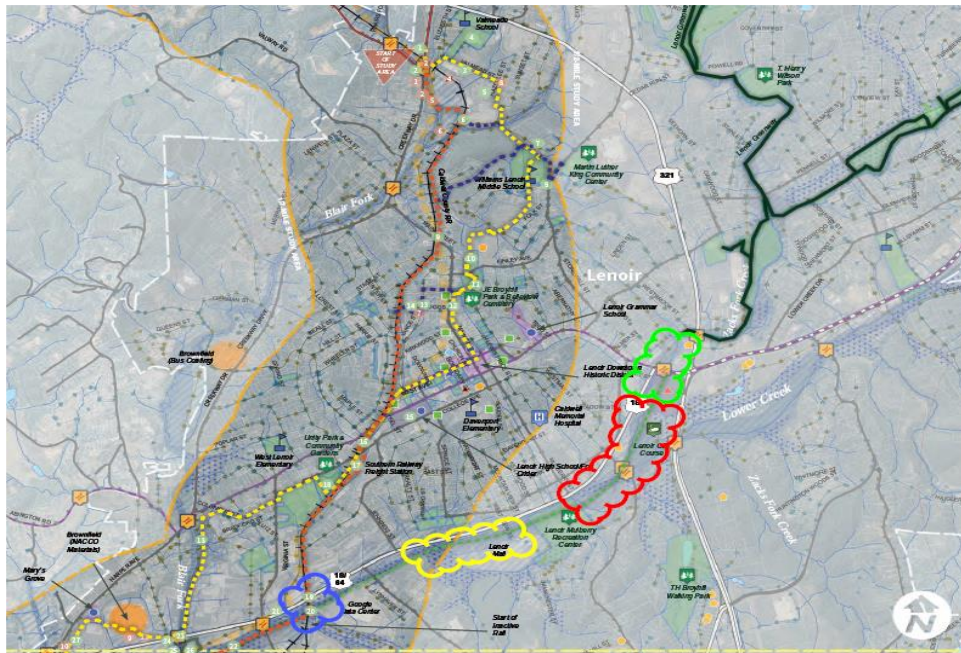
| Facility             | Project Description               | Comment                        | Priority | Notes        |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------|--------------|
| City Hall            | Stucco/Plaster Exterior           | Small areas of cracking/deter. | High     | ARPA - 2022  |
| Clock Tower          | Stucco/Plaster Exterior           | Significant cracking           | High     | ARPA - 2022  |
| MLK Center           | Roof Replacement                  | FY21-22                        | N/A      | Complete     |
| LAFC                 | Roof Replacement                  | FY21-22                        | N/A      | Underway     |
| Mulberry Rec. Center | Roof Replacement                  | Quote Secured (for budgeting)  | High     | \$130,000.00 |
| Mulberry Rec. Center | LED Lighting                      | Complete LED conversion        | High     | \$1,000.00   |
| LAFC                 | HVAC (1 unit)                     | Increasing repair frequency    | High     | \$22,000.00  |
| LAFC                 | LED Lighting                      | Full conversion                | High     | \$6,000.00   |
| MLK Center           | HVAC (2 units) - multipurpose rm. | Increasing repair frequency    | High     | \$8,500.00   |
| MLK Center           | Entrance Awning(s)                | Deferred due to roof costs     | High     |              |
| PU Shed              | Vactor Shed Roof Replacement      |                                | High     |              |
|                      |                                   |                                |          |              |

- **Capital Improvements – Projects (current and future):**

- **Hospital Avenue Sidewalk Project:** Right-of-way acquisition for this project has been ongoing for approximately one year. Currently there are still three (3) properties that have not agreed to the offer(s) to purchase the necessary right-of-way or easements for the project. These properties, in accordance with NCDOT standards, must be fully appraised to determine land values. The appraisal process is underway. A tentative bid date of March 08, 2022, was established for the project, but this date is contingent upon right-of-way certification by NCDOT.
- **Hotel Street (Linkside Connector):** This project began construction in November, 2021, and is over 95% complete. Remaining items include installation of a new fence above the retaining wall and any punch list items identified during the final walkthrough. The project should be complete and ready for public use by mid-February, 2022.
- **Harper/West Avenue Two-Way Street Conversion:** This project continues to be a future priority for the City, but is highly dependent on funding. Preliminary work on signalization design has been completed by transportation consultant, Mattern and Craig. We anticipate the project to be completed in phases, with 1A (Steel Street closure) already completed. Remaining phases include the following: 1B – Harper/West Avenue intersection improvements; 2 – Harper Avenue conversion; and 3 – West Avenue conversion (if deemed necessary).
- **RTP Trail Grant:** The City was awarded grant funding to complete trail crossings of Harper Avenue, Light Street, and College Avenue (near the Blue Bell project), in December of 2020. Transportation consultant, Mattern and Craig, assisted with the funding application and is currently working on project design. A final design, bidding, and construction schedule should be available in Q2, 2022.
- **College Avenue Infrastructure Improvements:** The City pledged to perform roadway improvements within the right-of-way of College Avenue and Underdown Avenue to address traffic patterns around the recently completed Blue Bell mill project. These improvements, which included drainage and curb and gutter installation, were completed by the site contractor for the

mill project in 2021. Removal of an existing traffic island, and final asphalt overlay, will be completed by City staff in Spring, 2022.

- **Parkview Estates Improvements:** Due to this subdivision being targeted for in-fill development, and the construction of several new homes being completed, the City initiated a greenway connection and roadway improvements to improve access and visibility for the neighborhood. The greenway connection to the Zack's Fork Road main trail network was completed in 2021. This included construction of a small trailhead and parking area near the intersection of Ebel Place and Sassafras Court. The roadway improvements to Ebel Place, which will include minor widening and asphalt resurfacing, may be completed in Q2, 2022, if funding allows.
- **Greenway Expansion – Gaps and Connections:** The City continued its expansion of the greenway trail network in 2021 with the completion of new trail sections serving the Parkview Estates subdivision, and asphalt surfacing of existing trails sections at the Mulberry Recreation Center and north of Sherlee Street. We also continue to work with transportation consultant, Mattern and Craig, for design development of the RTP connection between Harper Avenue and College Avenue, and the Highway 18 OVNHT/greenway crossing. Additionally, in 2021, the City received a greenway easement from Waterlife Church for construction of a trail through their parcel (former mall property). This trail section will tie in to the recently paved section at Mulberry Recreation Center, and will serve as a starting point to transverse the remainder of the former mall property. During the next fiscal year, we expect to continue identification of trail network gaps, and with adequate funding, continue with construction in key areas. These focus areas include the [Highway 18 crossing](#) (noted above), a connection from the [Pennton Avenue terminus that will cross Harper Avenue](#), [Lenoir Golf Course property](#), and additional easement(s) through the [former mall property](#).



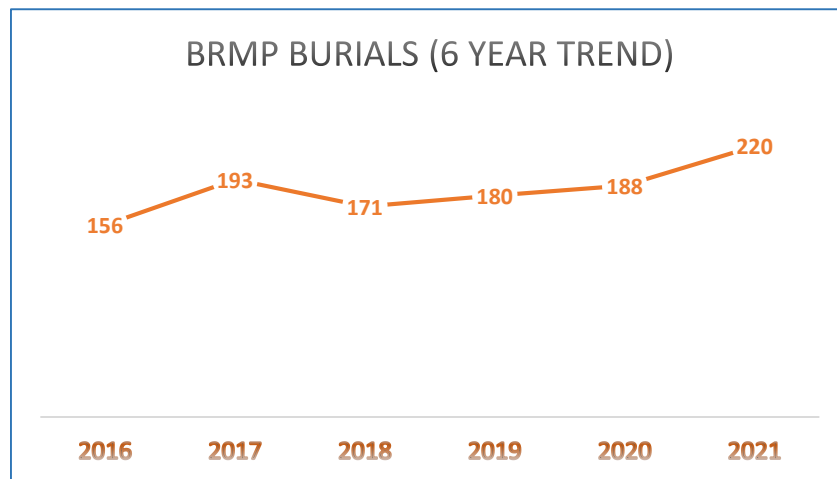
OVNHT Master Plan Excerpt

- **Arrowood Street Bridge Replacement:** Previously noted, this prioritized project was included in a funding application to FEMA in January, 2022. Public Works staff worked with Mattern and Craig to develop the application, and successful recipients will be notified of award in July, 2022. Bridge inspections (performed by NCDOT consultants) in 2016, 2018, and 2020 categorized the structure as poor, and in need of significant repair or replacement. The asphalt



wear surface continues to fail, and in 2021 City staff attempted a chip seal repair as a temporary solution, to offer a consistent roadway surface. This repair has begun failing due to continuous movement of the timber decking.

- **ADA Transition Plan:** Updates to the City's ADA Transition Plan are underway. This is a combined effort among several departments being led by the City's Risk Manager. The updates are comprehensive and will include identification of compliance barriers in public spaces (facilities and sidewalks), and programming for necessary repairs and upgrades to achieve compliance. Project types will include accessible sidewalk ramps (complete with tactile markings) at street intersections, and facility improvements (ingress and egress paths, door-pulls, signage and visibility improvements, etc.). We have currently received two (2) quotes for consultant services to assist with plan development (waiting on revisions to a third quote).
- **Blue Ridge Memorial Park Expansion:** A *Master Plan* for the remaining approximate 15 acres of City-owned property at Blue Ridge Memorial Park has been included in the CIP for several years. In 2019, cemetery staff contracted with a surveyor to lay off the last remaining vacant section of the existing park, and since that time sales and burials have continually increased. If these trends continue, remaining capacity will be exhausted in 3-4 calendar years.



**\*\*It is important to note that following completion of a master plan, but prior to being able to sale grave sites in new section(s), substantial site work must be completed to establish roadways, grave sites, and other site-related features. This is considered a major civil project, so time is of the essence to not only complete the master plan, but also develop a construction project, complete the necessary improvements, and allow for two (2) growing seasons to establish turf on the site.\*\***

In addition to a master plan for remaining cemetery acreage, construction of additional columbarium niche space continues to be a high priority. We are currently at 100% occupancy of columbarium space, and requests for internments of this type are increasing each year. We currently offer burial of cremated remains in traditional gravesites as an accommodation, but dedicated columbarium space is preferred.

- **LFD – Headquarters Sinkhole:** Following heavy rain events in 2021, a sinkhole was discovered in the northeastern lawn of the LFD – Headquarters property near the Harper Avenue and Ridge Street intersection. After investigation, it was determined that the large (48”), corrugated metal culvert that runs through the property was compromised. A video camera inspection of the pipe showed significant rust and erosion of the pipe invert (bottom flow-line), as well as metal deformation and debris collection. The pipe also appears to be undersized for the drainage area, as frequent surcharging of upstream manholes has been observed by LFD staff on



numerous occasions. The pipe is 25'-30' in this location, and its proximity to the fire department building makes an excavated repair nearly impossible to complete. We have engaged *Catawba Valley Engineering & Testing* to lead the geotechnical and civil engineering efforts to design a suitable system replacement in this area. This firm previously installed crack monitoring devices in the building to monitor and measure any foundational movement after concerns arose (~2019). This project is ongoing, and construction estimates are only preliminary. Project costs may exceed \$500,000.

- **Finley/Greenhaven Sidewalk Rehabilitation:** In 2021, several concerns were raised by community members and elected officials about the condition of the sidewalk that parallels Finley Avenue between North Main Street and the newer sidewalk installed on the northern end of Greenhaven Drive. The existing sidewalk is narrow (approximately 3' in width), and is in poor condition. We also have frequent complaints with vegetation overgrowth preventing safe travel on the sidewalk. With the existing width not compliant with ADA standards, this sidewalk section has been identified as a priority for replacement. Cost estimates for the project have not been developed to date, and right-of-way/street lane widths have not been investigated to determine if sufficient area exists for replacement without the need for additional right-of-way from neighboring property owners.
- **Circle Drive Repairs:** A Public Works Department memorandum was presented to Council in 2020 highlighting issues with Circle Drive in the Lower Creek neighborhood. The curb and gutter and asphalt in a 200' section of northern Circle Drive appeared to be failing due to subgrade issues. The memorandum suggested a repair method using soil undercutting and replacement with stone to create a firm subgrade, then replacement of failing concrete curb and gutter and asphalt. The initial cost estimate for the project, anticipating self-performance of the work by Street Division staff, was \$30,000. This funding would have been taken from the division's general operating budget, therefore the project has not been completed to date.
- **Greenway Culvert Repairs:** In 2020, after several attempts to repair settling asphalt in the greenway trail near the Red Roof Inn property, it was discovered that a large culvert (96") in this area had failed and surcharging stormwater flows were creating voids under the trail surface. The City enlisted McGill Associates to design a culvert replacement project featuring new 96" pipe, cast-in-place end walls and trail surface restoration. The project design and permitting is complete, but has not been advertised for bids. Public Works and Parks and Recreation Department staff continue to monitor the area for impacts. \*\*Approximately 200' upstream of the culvert replacement location, a section of streambank has eroded to the edge of the asphalt trail. This condition will need to be included in the culvert replacement project, after a contractor has been selected.\*\*
- **Tuckers Gallery – Sculpture Pedestals:** In 2021, the City was approached by the Caldwell Arts Council with a proposal to change the sculpture mounting bases in fourteen (14) downtown brick planter boxes. The change, according to the Arts Council, would facilitate a greater variety of sculptures in the Tuckers Gallery area of downtown, since interested sculptors would have greater flexibility in mounting bases. The proposal originally included removal of the current, steel pedestals and replacement with a concrete slab. After a meeting between the Arts Council and City of Lenoir staff, it was decided that a steel adapter plate would best meet the needs of potential, participating sculptors. The City is in the process of fabricating the adapter plates. These will be reusable, and can be custom-drilled to meet a variety of sculpture bases.
- **Downtown Beautification:** After receiving comments regarding the appearance of downtown, including old and discolored sidewalk/concrete, Public Works and Main Street Program staff solicited informal quotes for sidewalk cleaning in the downtown area. A general description of the area was provided, but prices varied considerably for the work: 3 quotes ranging from \$5,000

- \$48,000. Given the large variance, and informal nature of the project description, after receiving quotes a decision was made to develop a formal bidding package to more accurately identify a scope of work for interested vendors. The bidding package has not been finalized to date, but there are also considerations for an updated *Downtown Master Plan* that may impact the scope of work.

---

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jared Wright', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Jared Wright  
Public Works Director