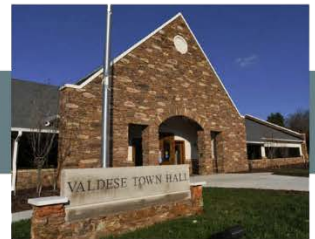




Historic VALDEESE *north carolina*

2018 Action Plan



Mayor and Town Council

The Town Council acknowledges its role in vision and action planning for the future of the Town and pledges that this document will be a living, changing, and evolving document to help guide the Town's future.

Mayor

John F. "Chip" Black, Jr.

Council Members

Susan Stevenson, Mayor Pro Tem

Keith Ogle

Frances Hildebran

Gary Delp

Roy Sweezy

Town Manager

Seth Eckard

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Executive Summary

This year marks the 125th anniversary of the founding of the Town of Valdese by Waldensian settlers. Over the past century, Valdese has developed into a community with a rich heritage, strong industrial base and quaint neighborhoods.

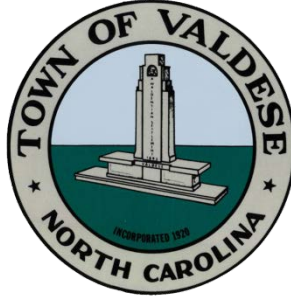
On January 8, 2018 the Valdese Town Council held a strategic planning session to continue and build upon the legacy of the previous 125 years. The Town Council developed a clear, concise action plan to guide the Town towards the future.

The Town Council and Manager, along with facilitation from the Western Piedmont Council of Governments, evaluated major accomplishments, issues, organizational effectiveness, priorities, and concerns for the future. These items were then used to set specific action points, goals and programs to guide the Town over the next several years.

This Plan will be used to establish the Town's priorities as it undertakes new initiatives or amends existing programs. It is a proactive statement of where the Town wants to be in the future. The Strategic Plan identifies key initiatives with corresponding goals to direct the Town's actions to help achieve its mission. The Town Council has committed to an annual review of this plan to measure progress and to update the plan to best suit the ever-evolving needs of the community.

This Plan should be revisited and revised every few years. Each subsequent plan should build on these objectives, and act as a guide for the Council throughout the coming years.

Mission Statement



Mission Statement

The Town of Valdese welcomes growth and diversity to enhance, while preserving, our existing neighborhoods, natural amenities and rich history for current residents and future generations.

Vision

The Town of Valdese will be a modern and innovative town in Western North Carolina, focused on cultural, economic and environmental sustainability.

Our Values

Community We strive to maintain the town as a safe place to live, work, and raise a family. Our community is full of diverse individuals that have different opinions and beliefs; we value and respect the rights and differences of everyone. Our community becomes stronger when we unite with our merchants and business owners by supporting their goals and celebrating their successes.

Leadership We believe that government should be accountable, transparent in all engagements, and fiscally responsible stewards of the town's assets. We will provide and encourage an atmosphere that supports job satisfaction and professional growth for all town staff. Management will identify programs and opportunities to engage future leaders.

Service We are responsive and service-oriented to meet the needs of our citizens. We recruit the best and highest qualified candidates and train a team with the knowledge and skills to carry out the mission of the town through transparent civic engagement and by providing the very best services to our citizens.

Heritage We will encourage growth and rehabilitation of our town through careful planning to provide an improved quality of life and standard of living for our citizens that reflects the town's unique heritage and culture.

Integrity Our personal and professional conduct is guided by high ethical and honest standards. We are open, reliable and consistent in all activities.

Actions Completed

Listed below are some of the items that have been completed prior to the creation of the Action Plan:

PARKS AND RECREATION

- Made improvements to existing parks
- Purchased 302-acre parcel of land to develop a lakeside park
- Constructed the one-acre downtown park, Valdese Family Splash Park
- Remodeled the fitness room
- Revitalized and enhanced bowling amenity at Recreation Center
- Made significant repairs to the Recreation Center (roof, pool heater, bubble)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/GRANTS

- Retained Meridian business in Valdese (Town Incentive)
- Awarded grant funding for projects at Water and Wastewater Facilities (CDBG-IDF Grant, CDBG-ED, Connect Bond and SRVF)
- Made improvements to Downtown Streetscape (NC Commerce Grant)
- Awarded grants for the installation of public downtown Wi-Fi and electronic vehicle charging stations (ARC and Duke Energy Grant)
- Increased parking at the Old Rock School (Rostan Family Foundation Grant)
- Old World Bakery (Main Street Solutions Grant)
- Facilitated the addition or relocation of over 12 downtown businesses

COMMUNICATION

- Optimized communication abilities with residents through various media (CodeRED, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, website improvements and Town Manager's newspaper column)

BUDGET/FINANCE

- Adjusted tax rate to strategically implement various capital improvements
- Partnered with McGill and Associates to develop a 10-year capital improvement plan for the entire utility system. The plan also incorporates a strategic funding model.
- Developed 3-year capital improvement plan for general fund departments.

ADMINISTRATION

- Hired a good town manager

Action Plan Outline

This Action Plan serves as a guide for the Town to identify and define key initiatives and includes corresponding goals to direct future actions by the Town to achieve the vision of the plan and the Town's Mission and Core Values. The Plan is broken down into four key areas:

- *Parks*
- *Arts*
- *Main Street Revitalization*
- *Economic Development*

Each of these key areas includes goals, which reflect the specific desires of the Town Council over the next one to three years. The goals are seen as comprehensive and give shape and substance to each key area of the plan.

Parks

The Town of Valdese desires to provide community oriented parks that enhance the local economy, provide a safe place for families to exercise, and protect the environment.

Goals

Develop Valdese Lakeside Park

- Partner with Destination by Design and Friends of the Valdese Rec to develop the newly acquired land on Lake Rhodhiss

Improve Existing Parks

- Finish Park and Recreation projects in older parks
- Utilize existing parks to their full potential

Arts

The Town of Valdese desires to emphasize our community as an arts mecca to enhance artistic and cultural opportunities and assets, and to celebrate the town's diversity and history.

Goals

Improve Amphitheater and Outdoor Drama

- Strategically invest in infrastructure improvements at the Outdoor Drama

Redevelop Older Buildings for Art Studios

- Identify and facilitate the development of downtown spaces to be used for the visual arts
- Find opportunities for murals and other public art projects

Art in the Park

- Host Art in the Park events

Main Street Revitalization

The Town of Valdese desires to enhance the central business district by identifying strategic infrastructure investments, enhancing relationships and communication with small business owners, while promoting the unique characteristics and assets of the downtown area.

Goals

Street Lights on Main Street

- Replace non-functional or damaged lights

Streetscape

- Make improvements to current Main Street Streetscape

Economic Development

The Town of Valdese desires to create and maintain a strong and vibrant local economy by attracting and retaining quality businesses.

Goals

Develop property

- Identify properties for residential, retail and industrial development
- Work with entrepreneurs to help achieve their business goals
- Recruit quality industries that provide well-paying jobs

Overnight Accommodations

- Identify and facilitate a “bed and breakfast” or other overnight accommodations in town

Rail Service

- Explore and identify rail opportunities for existing and potential businesses

Implementation

The Action Plan is not significant unless it is implemented. The Town Manager will be chiefly responsible for the Action Plan's implementation but will rely on Council's direction regarding the feasibility and timing of certain items. The Action Plan should be analyzed and assessed annually. The Action Plan is a living document that is subject to change.

Appendix

The Appendix includes the results of the planning and goal setting session held by the Town Council on Monday, January 8, 2018, facilitated by WPCOG Director Anthony Starr. Mr. Starr presented questions to Council, documented their responses, and then asked Council to vote on their top choices. Council responded with the following:

What do you believe are the town's top accomplishments in last 2-3 years?

- Capital Improvements Plan - 3
- Retaining Meridian's operations in Valdese - 3
- Successfully obtaining grants for the water and wastewater facilities - 3
- Improvements in parks and recreation - 2
- Voting for a tax increase - 2
- Success of Main Street Program - 2
- Hiring a good town manager - 1
- Downtown streetscape improvements - 1
- Issues with The Settings ending – 1
- New fire truck
- Downtown WiFi
- Employee Satisfaction
- Outdoor Drama/Old Colony Players
- Communication with Downtown merchants
- Cultural programs (shows, movies, concerts)
- Keeping Council together with good relationships
- Hiring new clerk

What challenges, obstacles, and concerns do you have for the town?

- Century-old infrastructure replacements needed - 5
- Lack of affordable housing - 4
- Out-migration of youth - 4
- Availability of resources for senior care needs (housing, transportation, etc) – 4
- Need for business and economic development – 4
- Employee turnover in finance department – 2
- Lack of quality jobs in Valdese that offer a good pay rate – 2
- Need for a palatable code enforcement system – 2
- Lack of leadership in a department – 1
- Low membership in Valdese Merchants Association
- Decisions of past administration
- Lack of tax increase for decades
- The need for more market rate housing (such as condos)

What opportunities, projects, and priorities can you identify for the town?

- Start on new park – 4
- Emphasize Valdese as an art mecca – 4
- Improvements to Main Street streetscape – 4
- Finish park and recreation projects in older parks – 3
- Street lights on Main Street – 3
- Improve amphitheater and outdoor drama – 3
- Transition to new staff in key positions – 3
- Establish a bed and breakfast or other overnight accommodations – 2
- Identify properties for construction with willing developers and banks – 1
- Host art in the park events four times a year – 1
- Establish commercial rail service in town – 1
- Redevelop older buildings for art studios
- Buy Property across from Town Hall

What will you take away from this meeting?

- How much we have accomplished and how well this meeting was organized
- Council works well together and takes a team approach to setting and achieving goals
- Valdese is a great town
- When things come up Council should ask if it fits into the picture that we developed tonight
- Council tends to focus on what needs to be done and we should reflect on what has been done
- We are six people with different groups all working for the common good of the town