

UNION VISION 2020

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT: OUR VISION

By 2020, Union will:

- have an education system that prepares its citizens to be productive, responsible and competitive in the global economy
- have a sense of community and quality of life for all people regardless of age, race, gender or ethnic background.
- build infrastructure that promotes commercial, industrial and agricultural growth and supports residential development while producing a sustainable living environment.
- promote economic development that increases the commercial/industrial tax base and enhances the standard of living for all citizens.
- have responsible, accountable and unified governments that will serve the best interests and needs of its citizens.
- have private sector leadership that will partner with government to realize Union VISION 2020.

OUR CORE VALUES

Our citizens and the community will develop and use these core values as guide posts as we pursue our interdependent Visions and Strategies. Core values are character traits that guide in daily decisions.

Faith in God	Excellence
Integrity	Equal Opportunity
Responsibility	Environmentalism
Honesty	Innovation
Family Values	Committed

STAKEHOLDERS SUMMIT

The participants in the Stakeholders Summit on August 5, 1999 selected their Top Ten Priority issues to be addressed in the Vision Process.

Priority Issues	Number of Points (out of a possible 120)
1. Education	119
2. Quality of Life	93
3. Infrastructure	90
4. Economic Development	70.5
5. Government	57
6. Growth Management	39
7. Transportation	16
8. Private Sector	10
9. Crime and Safety	10
10. Environment	8

The facilitator used this list during the Vision facilitation process in August and September 1999. These issues are addressed throughout the Vision and within the Strategies for the six interdependent Foundations required to provide global competitive advantage for Union County and specifically as noted above. This report includes the annual measurements from the most current data for our Key Benchmarks. We encourage every Vision Partner and Strategic Alliance to either celebrate or “review, revise and refocus” their Action Steps. We also encourage every organization and resident in Union County to commit to help meet these Benchmarks. Working together, we can create the future described by the residents in 1999 when they created Union Vision 2020.

MONITORING THE TRENDS - KEY BENCHMARK REVIEW

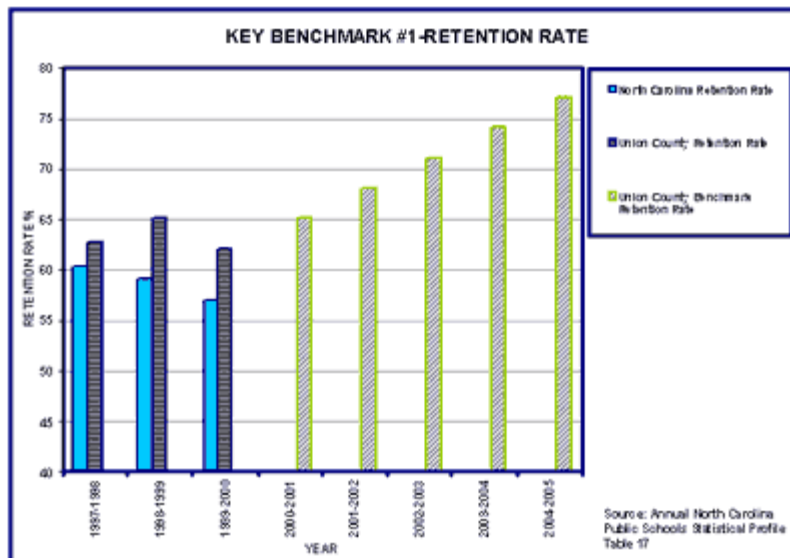
Union Vision 2020 set bold Key Benchmarks to annually measure the success of our interdependent Strategies and Vision. When successful, we can celebrate, but when we fall short of the benchmarks, we have choices:

- ignore the lack of success
- try to spin it positive
- beat up on ourselves
- our Vision Partners can “review, revise and refocus” the action steps of their interdependent strategies.

This report includes the annual measurements from the most current data for our Key Benchmarks. We encourage every Vision Partner and Strategic Alliance to either celebrate or “review, revise and refocus” their Action Steps. We also encourage every organization and resident in Union County to commit to help meet these Benchmarks. Working together, we can create the future described by the residents in 1999 when they created Union Vision 2020

1. EDUCATION - The graduation rate from grades 9-12 will increase at least 3% per year for five years while producing competent graduates. After five years the annual increment will be reset to achieve more than a 90% graduation rate as soon as possible, but well before 2020.

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction compiles a substitute for graduation rate each year. They call it the “retention rate”, which is a simple comparison of graduates (diplomas and certificates) with 9th grade enrollments four years earlier. For a school growing the retention rate will normally overstate the graduation rate.

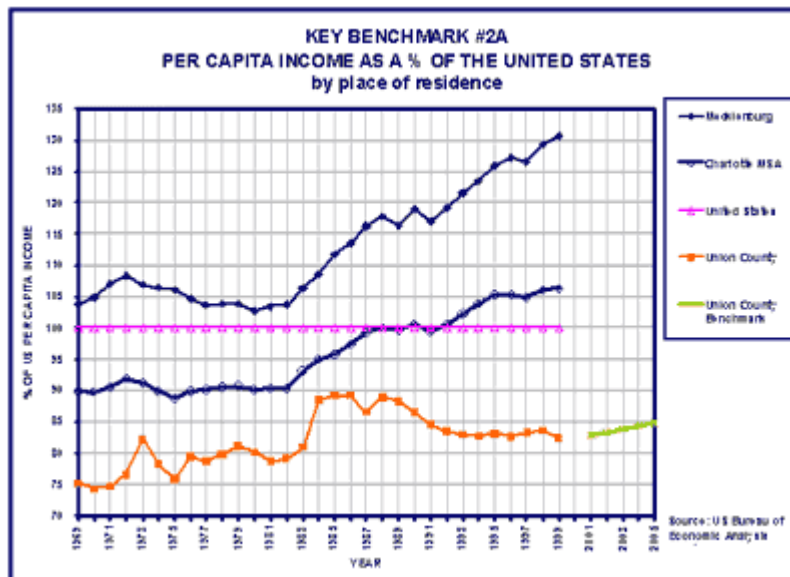


As noted in the chart, the Union Retention Rate is above North Carolina's, but declined in 1999-2000. North Carolina declined in both school years. As graduation requirements increase, we will have to refocus our efforts across many strategies to meet our aggressive benchmark.

2A. INCOME GROWTH - Per Capita Income - Increase Union County per capita income as a percentage of the United States per capita income by 0.5% each year.

This measure of income is calculated as the total personal income of an area divided by the population of the area. Personal income is made up of:

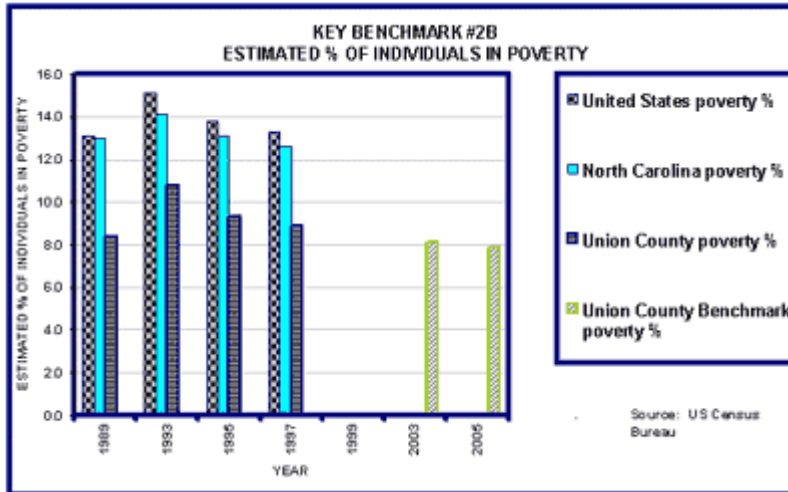
- *wages and fringe benefits such as employer contributions to health insurance, pension fund and, retirement plans*
- *transfer payments not received as part of earnings, such as social security and certain in-kind transfer payments—such as Medicaid, Medicare, and food stamps and*
- *all interest, dividends and rent received by individuals*



Union County per capita income as a percentage of the US per capita has been declining since 1988. By 1999, the gap with Mecklenburg County was 48%, up from 20% in 1984. The gap with the US in 1999 was 17.6%, up from 10.7% in 1985.

2B. INCOME GROWTH - Poverty Reduction - Reduce the Union County percentage of individuals in poverty to below either half of the US poverty rate or half of the North Carolina poverty rate, whichever is lower.

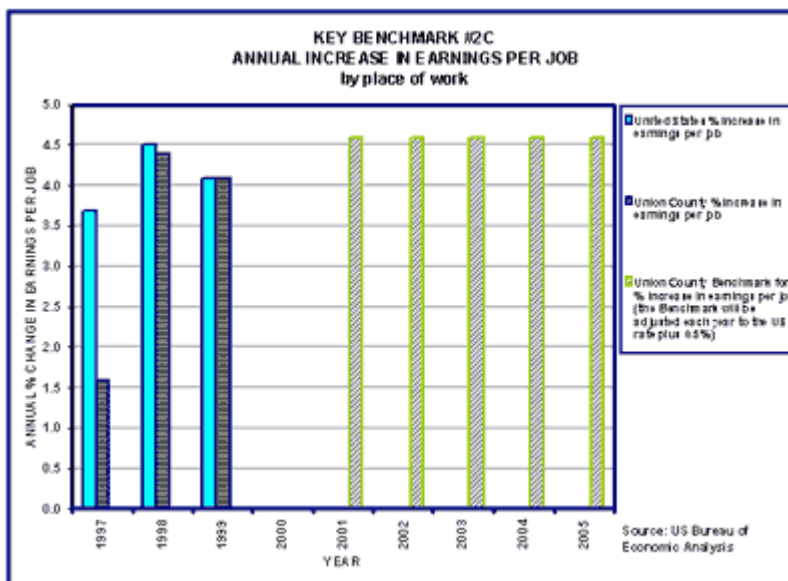
The U.S. Census Bureau uses a set of income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is poor. If a family's total income is less than that family's threshold, then that family, and every individual in it, is considered poor and below the poverty line. The official poverty definition counts income before taxes and does not include capital gains and non-cash benefits (such as public housing, Medicaid, and food stamps.) Each year the Census Bureau readjusts the thresholds for inflation. The threshold for a family of four in 2000 averaged \$17,600. Local area poverty rates are not computed annually. 1997 is the most current information.



The Union individual poverty rate is well below the US and NC for each of the years in the chart and declined in 1993, 1995, and 1997. However, the 1997 Union County poverty rate is still 0.5% higher than the 1989 rate. The Union County Benchmark is an annual decrease of 0.25%. This is the estimated annual reduction required to meet the Key Benchmark in twenty years.

2C. INCOME GROWTH - Annual Change in Earnings per Job - increase earnings per job each year at a rate 0.5% higher than the United States rate.

Average earnings are computed per job, not per person. Both full and part-time jobs are included.



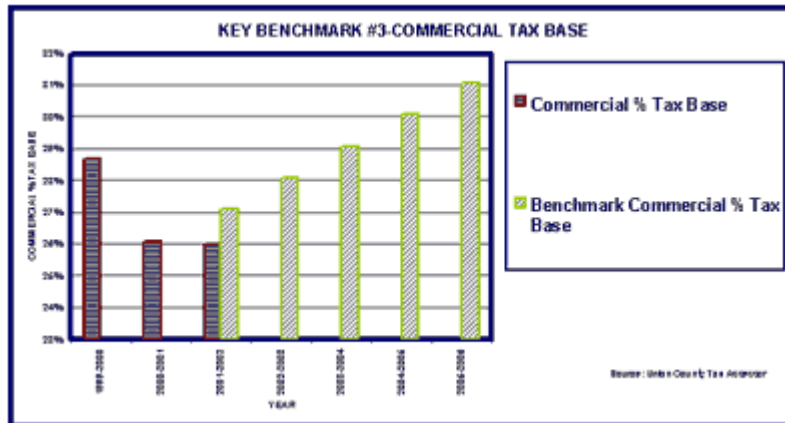
In 1999, the average earnings per job in Union County were \$23,522 compared to \$28,546 for the US. In 1997 and 1998, the average annual % increase for Union was below the US and equal in 1999. As a result the Union gap in earnings per job of 2% of the US increased from 16.7% in 1996 to 18.4% in 1999. We must refocus to attain a US average % increase plus 0.5%

Given the assets of Union County and its proximity to one of the strongest economies in the US, it is not acceptable nor reasonable that our county's per capita income, our earnings per job and our poverty rates continue to lose ground with the rest of the region and nation. This highlights the importance of continuing to monitor these trends as our strategies and action steps begin to show an impact. If the impact is positive, we know we're doing the right things and we build on that success. If it is negative, we know we must revise and refocus our efforts until the trends become what we want and need them to be.

Our future is in our hands. We need to work as a total community to understand our performance and what it means to our future. As a community, we need to work together to overcome our shortcomings and ensure the success of our vision.

3. COMMERCIAL TAX BASE – Increase the industrial/commercial tax base as a percentage of the total property tax base by at least 1% per year until reaching 40%.

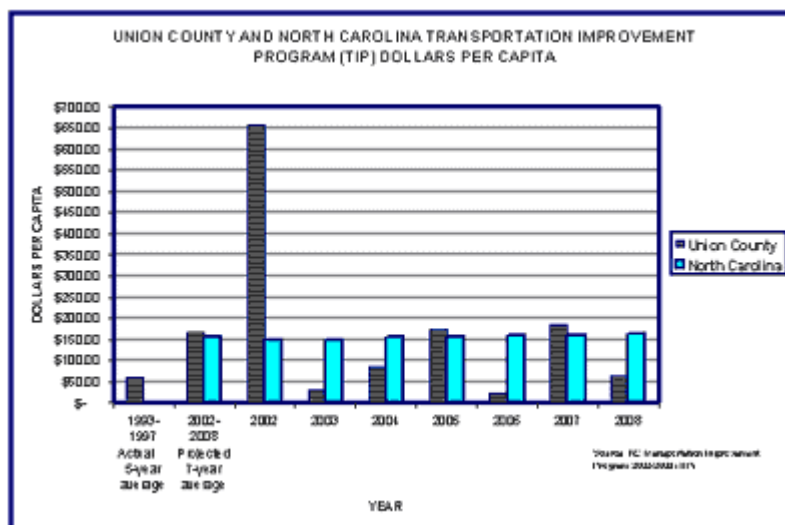
Commercial Tax Base includes all commercial and industrial real estate, equipment and furnishings, public utilities and farm property. Residential Tax Base includes single family, multi-family and individual personal property. Motor vehicle values are not included. In 2001, exempt property values are not included.



In 2001-2002, the commercial tax base % stabilized, but did not reach the Benchmark.

4. Transportation Funding - Provide enough funding for a combination of roads and mass transit for all roads to be rated at an acceptable level of service quality.

Dollars per capita is the TIP program dollars divided by population.

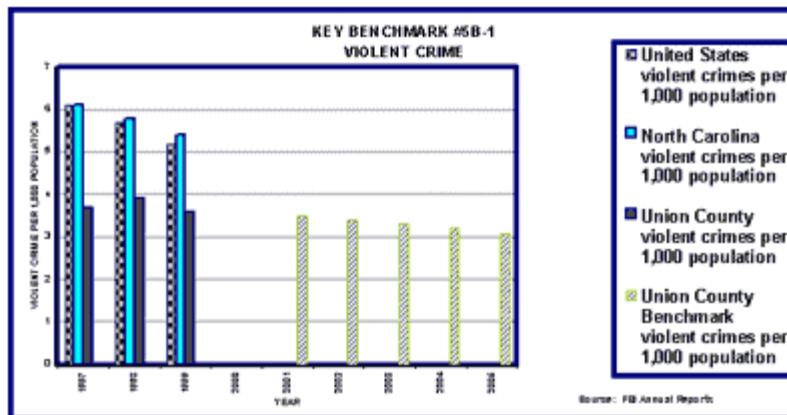


Union County has significantly improved dollars in the North Carolina Transportation Program (TIP) for 2002-2008. The 1993-1997 average spending of \$58.51 per year per capita increased to an average of \$166.77. This exceeds the \$156.60 for the state. The major projects are for the US-74 Monroe By-pass with \$78.4 million in 2002 and \$35.4 million in 2005 and 2007. These projects also need \$115 million after 2008.

5. QUALITY OF LIFE - During the first three years of Collaborative Implementation, we will develop Strategy Benchmarks to measure the progress of individual strategies in the Quality of Life Foundation. These Strategy Benchmarks, together, will serve as an annual measurement of the improvement of our Quality of Life.

B-I-Violent Crime - Reduce the violent crimes per 1,000 population each year.

Violent crime includes murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault.



The Union County Violent Crime Rate is dramatically below the United States and North Carolina. The Union County rate increased in 1998 and declined in 1999.

* Note: The highest priority strategies within each foundation are indicated in bold type.

EDUCATION

VISION

Union County will have an education system that prepares its citizens to be productive, responsible and competitive in the global economy.

Strategies

A. K-12

- Expect every school to be a community of learners where young people are taught in an exciting atmosphere for learning and are challenged to meet high standards for advancement at each grade level, ultimately resulting in graduation. Each graduate will have the competency to either go to work, attend a community college or enter a four year university. All graduates will have the basic life skills, technical knowledge and work ethic to be productive citizens able to compete in the 21st Century global economy. Competency will be measured by appropriate testing at each grade level and compared to the best in North Carolina and the US. The school system will investigate and implement proven teaching strategies. This will require a strong commitment to dropout prevention programs, remedial help for under performing students and enrichment programs.**
- Ensure that each young person has at least one adult mentor involved in his/her life. Break the cycle of non-involvement by parents. The school system will provide the leadership to develop a strategic alliance to help those students whose parents cannot or will not provide the support needed to help them progress through the grades and graduate with competence. Remove the negative relationship between education attainment and low socio-economics, addressing such factors as free lunch programs, frequent transfer between schools in the system and school safety. There is not only a personal cost, but a**

community cost associated with lack of education. Profile of a 1997/98 dropout = 36% female, 64% male, 61% white, 32% black, 5% hispanic and 2% other.

3. **Expect parents to be involved, responsible and committed to the education, training and discipline of their children. Respect and support the classroom teacher in achieving a disciplined, safe and excellent learning environment. The school system will provide effective means for communication with parents about their young person's progress on a regular basis or as needed when parent intervention is required.**
4. **Require that school space be planned and funded concurrently with new housing construction through coordination with the County, municipalities and the Board of Education. Use innovative and creative approaches in attaining the resources and facilities to educate all students.**
5. Pursue dedicated state funding for school construction and rehabilitation.
6. Enhance business and schools strategic alliances through programs like the UC Job Ready Partnership, which would include school and class adoption by businesses, shadowing opportunities for students, summer internships for teachers and opportunities for one-day shadowing of school principals by business and community leaders.
7. Maintain neighborhood/community related schools.
8. Increase pay for teachers.
9. Provide more training for teachers to enhance their productivity.
10. Redraw attendance lines.
11. Reduce class size.
12. Provide work experiences outside of school to help prepare students for entering the workplace as a part of an expanded vocational/technical training curriculum.
13. Encourage alternative options such as private schools, home schooling and charter schools.
14. Maintain a partnership between all recreational organizations in the County and the school system that opens school recreation facilities for use by the public.
15. Maintain safe and reliable bus transportation for students.
16. Provide an open line of communication for students to talk with school officials about their concerns.

B. Lifelong Learning and Technical Education

1. **Support commercial/industrial growth by providing job skills training for employees at new, existing and expanding businesses, making Union County competitive in the market place. Encourage adult citizens at all income levels to increase their productivity by expanding their skills on a continual basis. Strive to eliminate illiteracy and encourage dropouts to earn GED.**
2. Build, support and maintain state of the art library systems that are accessible throughout the County.

C. General

1. Support economic development initiatives that provide jobs to keep graduates in our county.

D. Pre-Kindergarten

1. Ensure that all children are ready to enter Kindergarten, utilizing resources such as Smart Start and other quality programs.

E. Higher Education

1. Deliver comprehensive higher education within Union County at South Piedmont Community College and Wingate University using their resources and the internet/distance learning programs from the best educational institutions in North Carolina and the US.

Note: The highest priority strategies within each foundation are indicated in bold type.

QUALITY OF LIFE

VISION

Union County will have a sense of community and quality of life for all people regardless of age, race, gender or ethnic background.

Strategies

A. Sense of Community

1. **Create a Union County sense of community that includes developing an understanding of what it means to live, support and be a sales agent for the Union County lifestyle. Welcome and assimilate all newcomers into the Union County lifestyle.**
2. **Enhance communication between all municipalities, county government, and school board, and local (grass root) communities.**
3. Develop a positive attitude about Union County.
4. Increase the percentage of citizens voting.

B. Crime and Safety

1. **Reduce violent crime and murder through community policing on a county-wide basis and by attacking the root causes, such as the overall drug problem and school dropouts. Provide proper counseling, education and pre-incarceration rehabilitation.**
2. Establish a strategic alliance between the judicial system, the school system and other community organizations with an emphasis on parental involvement.
3. Increase the number of law enforcement officers and their pay.
4. Support volunteer fire departments.
5. Reduce time between arrest and trial date.
6. Establish a Citizens Review Board to review accusations of misconduct of Law Enforcement Officers (city and county).

C. Social Services

1. **Create collaboration between agencies to provide needed services, eliminate program duplication and to utilize resources more efficiently and effectively. Constantly monitor the cost benefit ratio and productivity of programs, refocusing resources where required.**
2. Provide decentralized services throughout the county where appropriate.
3. Provide an adult day health center in Union County.

D. Recreation, Arts and Culture

1. **Develop a comprehensive recreation and open space plan with established standards for the types and amount of recreation and open space per 1,000 residents. Bring the county recreation facilities and open space up to the standards established in the comprehensive plan and increase those facilities and open space in accordance with the standards as the population grows.**
2. Expand arts and cultural opportunities and programming for all ages citizens.

E. Healthcare

1. Provide high quality, efficient and affordable healthcare for all people through a combination of support for the Health Department and coordination between all healthcare providers. This should begin with an emphasis on prevention, education and public information about making right lifestyle choices.

F. Race Relations

1. Eliminate all racial discrimination in education, employment and community.
2. Strive to assimilate minority newcomers into the community as quickly as possible, with programs like a summer immersion program to teach children and adults English and local cultures.
3. Create a Diversity Council.
4. Expand our knowledge base about the culture of minorities moving into Union County to enhance our understanding and their assimilation.
5. Maintain diversity on boards and authorities.

G. Families and Youth

1. Encourage people during their working years to prepare for the financial responsibilities of retirement through vehicles such as life insurance, health insurance, nursing home insurance and retirement savings.
2. Provide affordable after school youth programs for all age students.
3. Provide affordable adult and youth day care.
4. Ensure that each young person has at least one adult mentor involved in his/her life.
5. Provide qualified Family Court Judges to handle family court issues.

INFRASTRUCTURE

* Note: The highest priority strategies within each foundation are indicated in bold type.

VISION

Union County will build infrastructure that promotes commercial, industrial and agricultural growth and supports residential development while producing a sustainable living environment.

A. Growth Management, Transportation and Utilities

1. **Develop county-wide master plans (including capital improvement plans) that provide for anticipated growth for the following infrastructure elements: transportation – roads and mass transit, including bus, rail, bicycle and airport; water; sewer; solid waste; drainage; schools; libraries and recreation. The master plans will include acceptable levels of service that must be met within a project service area in order for a residential building permit to be issued for that project service area. A mechanism will be provided that allows**

a residential developer to enhance the level of service for a non-conforming infrastructure element.

2. **Maintain and enforce the Union County land use plan and zoning ordinance. Recognize that the county-wide land use plan and zoning ordinance will not change the land use and zoning for those municipalities that administer their own land use and zoning.**
3. **Establish a land banking procedure that purchases open space and preservation land using foundation funding, federal funding, state funding and other available sources.**
4. **Establish “Transfer of Development Rights” (TDR) policies that perpetually maintain agriculture areas. The TDR’s would be paid for by purchases of higher density residential rights.**
5. **Maintain buffers and access control in the 74 By-Pass corridor that will make the commercial and industrial areas attractive for high class facilities.**
6. **The land use plan and all infrastructure master plans will provide a strong emphasis on mass transit, including passenger rail to downtown Charlotte.**
7. Create and maintain state of the art telecommunication services available for work, learning, living and recreation.
8. Coordinate and connect with a Charlotte MSA-wide regional land use and infrastructure plan.

B. Funding

1. **Develop comprehensive funding sources for infrastructure that strongly promotes commercial growth and supports residential growth. The funding sources will be balanced among a variety of broad based resources between taxes and developer support in a way that makes all of the strategies and benchmarks a success. Concentrate initial infrastructure construction to support commercial and industrial areas.**

C. Housing

1. **Ensure that competitively priced homes and apartments are available for all income levels in Union County. Provide incentives for rehabilitating downtown housing.**
2. Spread affordable housing throughout the county.

D. Environment

1. Maintain air and water quality standards at applicable state and federal standards.
2. Enhance the aesthetic beauty of our county.

E. Other Facilities

1. Build hotels, including banquet and convention facilities.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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VISION

Union County will promote economic development that increases the commercial/industrial tax base and enhances the standard of living for all citizens.

Strategies

A. Economic Development Promotion and Targeted Industry

1. **Expand our commercial/industrial tax base and jobs by providing a high energy economic development alliance that facilitates the creation of high paying jobs that bring outside dollars to Union County through retention and expansion of existing business, creation of new business enterprises and recruitment of other businesses to the county. The alliance will aggressively network with and seek the support of the Carolina's Partnership, the state and private development organizations in marketing and sales and in provision of incentives. Special emphasis will be placed on creating jobs in Union County that would encourage our residents to seek employment within the county and would encourage Charlotte businesses to expand into Union County. We will target the following business clusters: financial services, transportation and distribution services, high growth manufacturing, software, services that use advanced telecommunication technology, non-labor intensive businesses, agriculture, retail (including a full range of high quality shopping centers and restaurants) and visitor services for tourists and conventioners (including high quality hotels, a convention center and sports facilities).**

B. Business Environment

1. **Create an image based on a) business friendly tax and regulatory policies and services and b) competitive cost structure that makes people want to expand and locate their businesses in Union County. Provide high quality business/industrial parks.**

C. Workforce Development and Recruitment

1. **Create a workforce with continuously improving productivity and work skills that is expanding fast enough to meet the needs of our targeted industry, all employers and Key Benchmarks. Retain high school, community college and university graduates. Retrain the existing workforce for new technology industries. In partnership with South Piedmont Community College and the Career Center, promote technology careers as an alternative, realizing that only 25% of future jobs require a four year university education. Stop hiring young people under age 19 who have not graduated from high school to work more than 10 hours per week during the school year. Offer every high school student an opportunity for a summer job or internship. Change Union County from a net exporter of workers to a net importer of workers by attracting residents who now work outside the county. Throughout Union County provide rental apartment and housing at prices young people can afford as they enter the workforce for the first time and affordable/competitive housing that they can move into as a first time home owner. Provide a job opportunity for all regardless of age, race or gender.**

D. Small Business Development and Entrepreneurship

1. **Encourage small business development through: business planning assistance and advice; entrepreneurial networking; a full range of financing, including initial seed capital, high-risk early investors, venture capital and operational loans; business incubators and move-up facilities; global marketing assistance; workforce enhancement; and programs such as volume insurance purchases to reduce operating costs.**

E. Revitalize Downtowns

1. **Encourage revitalization of downtowns. Maintain traffic flow conducive to business development. Provide residential opportunities in downtown utilizing second level and higher.**

F. Retain and Attract High Income Retirees

1. **Utilize Wingate University as an attraction for retirees by providing an upscale retirement community in close proximity. Provide high quality rental and ownership apartment communities for retirees.**

G. Research and Development

1. Encourage the development of UNC-Charlotte as a major research university with connectivity to businesses and education in Union County.

H. Art and Cultural Activities

1. Recognize the importance of arts and cultural activities and use as an economic development asset.

GOVERNMENT

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VISION

Union County will have responsible, accountable and unified governments that will serve the best interests and needs of its citizens.

Strategies

1. **Maintain cooperation and coordination between the elected officials and staffs of all government entities in the county that will ensure making Union Vision 2020 a reality. This will be attained through regular meetings of elected officials and their staffs. The emphasis will be on what's best for the entire county while balancing the interests of individual neighborhoods and cities. All of the cooperation and coordination will be developed within a spirit of trust and open communication between government officials.**
2. **Develop a responsible and accountable structure of governments within Union County that efficiently and effectively provides services which are coordinated with neighborhoods, towns, the entire county and the region. This includes seeking new and innovative approaches to reallocating resources to achieve success.**
3. **Expect all governments, departments of government and state and federal elected representatives to endorse Union Vision 2020 and to be actively involved in its implementation.**
4. **Develop an open communication process that provides an opportunity for effective interaction between citizens and their governments. This interaction process will begin well before final decisions are made on issues. It will present issues to citizens in an open format so that citizens can ask informed questions and make informed decisions.**
5. **Recognize that Union County is a part of the 14 county Charlotte region. Union County will support regional efforts and develop a clear Union County advocacy position on those issues of strong importance to the county, including environment, infrastructure, commercial corridor land use planning, transportation planning and higher education. The Union County Vision position will be pursued aggressively within the region, state and nation.**
6. Aspire for Union County to have two Representatives in Raleigh whose majority electoral base is Union.
7. Increase diversity and inclusion in all government elected and appointed entities, including minorities, women and other nationalities.

PRIVATE SECTOR LEADERSHIP

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VISION

Union County will have private sector leadership that will partner with government to realize Union Vision 2020.

Strategies

1. **Encourage every private sector organization (for profit and not for profit) to endorse the Union Vision 2020 and to be actively involved in the collaborative implementation process.**
2. **Develop true public/private partnerships that foster and enhance the full development of Union County's potential by aggressively pursuing our vision within .the region, state and nation.**
3. **Develop an atmosphere that encourages people to step forward as leaders. Recognize that the "limited number of decision makers" must be replaced by a large network of people working together.**
4. **Identify and develop a large number of new leaders. Expand and promote leadership development programs such as Leadership Union.**
5. **Develop a strong sense of community and pride by motivating large numbers of new residents to become involved. Expect the private sector to be a catalyst for promoting healing, trust and cooperation within the community and between governments. Develop an attitude of inclusion and sense of community between all geographic areas of the county.**
6. Encourage churches to be involved in the Vision implementation process.
7. Encourage our leaders to take their turn in providing government leadership by accepting board appointments and running for elective office. Support these leaders during their term in office as they inevitably experience the conflicts and challenges of making difficult decisions in the best interest of the county at large.
8. Encourage volunteerism. This could include employers having defined programs which provide release time for employees to volunteer.
9. Encourage increased awareness of issues and increased voter turnout.
10. Create a business climate that results in success and fosters growth in the momentum of success.
11. Celebrate our victories and learn from them. When a benchmark is missed or progress on a strategy does not meet expectations, use this as an opportunity for the Strategy's Vision Partner to review the Action Steps for the Strategy(s) with flexibility and elasticity, revise where needed and refocus those Action Steps that will lead to success in the future.

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VISION 2020 STEERING COMMITTEE

	<u>Term Expires:</u>
Ernest Collins	12/1/2002
Zane Eargle	12/1/2002
Richard Simpson	12/1/2002
Monica York	12/1/2002
Donna Sentendry	12/1/2002
Rosana Campos	12/1/2002
Katie Velez	12/31/2003
Bill Alston	12/31/2003
Jill Santuccio	12/31/2003
Frank Elliot	12/31/2003

Doug Harris	12/31/2003
Chuck Palmer	12/31/2003
John Roberts	12/31/2003
Jose Suarez	12/31/2003
Helen White	12/31/2003
John Ashcraft	12/34/2004
Allan Baucom	12/34/2004
Frank Carpenter	12/34/2004
Dennis Layton	12/34/2004
Martha Parris	12/34/2004
Don Brown	12/34/2004
Isabelle Gillespie	12/34/2004
*Randy Baucom	
*Phil Bazemore	
*Lucy Drake	
*Mike Gaddy	
*Mike Hafey	
*Jack Hemby	
*Bill Howie	
*Ed Howie	
*Linda Isner	
*Ed Smith	
*John Ross	
*Gordon Suhre	
*Kevin Pressley	
*Paul Standridge	
**C.W. Adcock	
**Tom Batchelor	
**Dryw Blanchard	
**Jim Carpenter	
**Randall Darnell	
**Mark Donham	
**Pam Duke	
**Barbara Faulk	
**Woody Faulk	
**Richard Heins	
**Martin Irvine	
**Bud Marchant	
**Brain Mathews	
**Frank McGuirt	
**John Munn	
**Chris Platé	
**Mike Shalati	
**Jerry Simpson	
**Doug Spell	
**Jerry Thomas	
**Bill Trimble	
**Lorey White	
**Jammie Eubanks	

***Local Government Representatives**

****Community Organization Representatives**

