

2014-2017 Strategic Plan

Mission

The mission of Wilmington Renaissance Corporation (WRC) is to develop and implement strategies that will increase the economic vitality of Downtown Wilmington, strengthen its role as a center of educational, cultural and social activity, and enhance its reputation as an exciting place to live and visit by marketing Wilmington's unique history and character.

Big Ideas Strategy

In March 2012, our board of directors reaffirmed WRC's most important role—to create and implement Big Ideas for Wilmington. The board started a process to bring together thought partners throughout the city, which resulted in four meetings in February 2013 centered on WRC's four core focus areas: Education, Infrastructure, Culture and Quality of Life. In each meeting, groups shared Big Ideas with one another and voted on the top five ideas. WRC staff researched these ideas and presented them to the WRC Board Executive Committee in early April. At the Annual Meeting in April, we held a Big Ideas brainstorming session with all attendees. The next month, we held follow-up sessions with the Big Ideas groups to consider these additional ideas, plus the staff research. We determined which proposals we would pass onto the entire WRC board for consideration at the June 7 board retreat. These proposals also included ideas that people submitted online via our new website. It was then determined that the final ideas that WRC would focus on would be: 1) Education Think Tank: expand or improve educational offerings and experiences in Wilmington that are not duplicative of any K-12 educational initiatives already underway in Delaware, 2) Experience Wilmington: focus on livability and expanding activities and assets that increase the number of people who live in Wilmington and support the economic growth of the city, and 3) Economic Plan for the Arts: focus on developing and expanding cultural activities and assets to increase the number of people who visit Wilmington and support the economic growth of the city.

Strategic Goals

1. **Goal 1: Drive economic impact for Wilmington by formalizing an economic development plan for the arts that establishes Wilmington as a national destination for producers and consumers of art, culture, & creativity and provides long-term financial stability for Wilmington's arts organizations.**
 - 1.1. Implement Wilmington's Creative District Vision Plan
 - 1.1.1. Organizational: Establish Creative District and a sustainable management & fiscal structure
 - 1.1.2. Programming: Engage the creative community & local arts organizations, and creative industries to provide dynamic programming and content that draws visitors
 - 1.1.3. Real Estate: Engage in a comprehensive development campaign to transform the downtown area and adjacent communities into vibrant destinations for residents and visitors
 - 1.1.4. Marketing: Coordinate marketing for the Creative District & Wilmington's cultural and entertainment assets through an expansion of the "IN" campaign.

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1.1.5. Community Engagement: Engage local residents, business owners, artists, and creative entrepreneurs in the development and implementation of the Creative District.

1.2. Engage in ongoing research to identify models to promote financial stability among arts organizations

2. Goal 2: Leverage Wilmington & Delaware’s educational assets to position Wilmington, regionally, nationally, and globally as a destination location or “Think-Tank” for conversations in education where new ideas and models in education are formulated and debated.

2.1. Court local and national education foundations, organizations, and speakers to hold conferences and meetings in Wilmington.

3. Goal 3: Engage in a multidimensional effort to drive critical mass in Wilmington.

3.1. Expand the city of Wilmington’s residential population

3.1.1. Build and expand upon the existing “IN” campaign to promote Wilmington’s neighborhoods to prospective buyers and renters and to establish a reputation for Wilmington as a livable city.

3.1.1.1. *Engage the Realtor community to promote housing opportunities in the city and providing educational opportunities for interested agents to learn about the city and its neighborhoods.*

3.1.1.2. *Recruit a corps of city residents to tell their positive stories of living in the city and to serve as neighborhood ambassadors and to correct the imbalance of negative information about living in Wilmington.*

3.1.1.3. *Collaborate with local school leaders, teachers, parents, students, and partners in the field of education to promote and bring awareness of the successes of local schools and the high-quality educational opportunities within the city to dispel myths and correct the imbalance of negative information about the quality of public schools in Delaware and in the city of Wilmington.*

3.1.2. Support targeted real estate development strategies to drive residential growth

3.1.2.1. *Support the redevelopment of neighborhoods through the development and implementation of comprehensive strategies to eliminate blight and reduce vacancy*

3.1.2.2. *Support the efforts of the West Center City Futures Council to implement the West Center City Strategic Neighborhood Plan*

3.1.2.3. *Establish partnerships to develop higher-density, mixed-use facilities at surface lots in Wilmington’s downtown.*

3.1.2.4. *Support the conversion of excess and obsolete Class B office space into residential facilities*

3.2. Support the growth and expansion of Wilmington’s business community

3.2.1. Establish Wilmington as an “internship capital” to drive young talent to Wilmington through work-experience opportunities with local businesses

3.2.2. Lobby local and state government to address parking and transit issues that impact business growth

3.2.3. Work with partners to address quality of life issues in Wilmington’s business district

3.3. Leverage higher-education institutions to drive economic impact

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- 3.3.1. Support the future plans for expansion or development of institutions of higher learning that are currently located in Wilmington.
- 3.3.2. Pursue opportunities to establish new institutions in Wilmington (not necessarily in the downtown) to expand educational opportunities, attract young people to the city, and generate economic activity within the city.
- 3.3.3. Encouraging and support the expansion of existing programs and the creation of new programs that tie into existing and emerging industries within the city and region.
- 3.3.4. Find a partner to provide a series of workshops in Wilmington communities to promote higher education and to reduce the barriers of entry and the knowledge gap of students and families who may have difficulty navigating the college application and financial aid processes.
- 3.3.5. Identify opportunities to establish professional development and continuing education programs for downtown workers within corporate offices or public buildings.