

Community Budget Sessions Q&A

The following information is provided as a response to residents' questions during the winter 2024 Community Budget Sessions. Questions are grouped by department.

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT

1. Can the city restore the Rental Unit Certificate of Occupancy (RUCO) program?

No. In 2011 the NC General Assembly enacted law to limit local government's authority to operate proactive rental inspection programs such as RUCO.

2. What is the Nussbaum Fund?

The Nussbaum Housing Partnership Fund is a dedicated local fund for affordable housing initiatives administered by the Housing and Neighborhood Development Department. Nussbaum is funded by \$0.01 of the City's property tax rate.

3. Will an affordable housing study that includes both City and County be conducted?

The City and County staff regularly meet and communicate about housing needs in the Greensboro/Guilford area. The City follows its 10-year affordable housing plan, Housing GSO, and is in its fourth year of implementation. City and County staff work to integrate needs and programming where possible.

4. Does the City have any affordable housing programs?

Yes, the Housing and Neighborhood Development Department administers affordable housing programs that include single- and multi-family housing development, down payment assistance for first-time homebuyers, and home repairs.

5. What city resources are available for the unhoused and how can they be accessed?

City-funded services for individuals experiencing homelessness include emergency shelters, interim winter emergency housing through the Doorway Project, the year-round Safe Parking Program, support for the expansion of the IRC Day Center to 24/7 operations, and supportive services programs. Emergency services can be accessed at any of these locations or by referral. Our Continuum of Care has established a Coordinated Entry system, a central access system for every person experiencing homelessness to access housing programs in an equitable manner.

The Office of Community Safety has created a new approach under what we are calling, **GSO Homeless Outreach Mobile Engagement (GSOHOME)**. This mobile

outreach program will provide high-risk intervention and coordination services to the hard-to-reach unsheltered population in Greensboro. In addition, the program will provide service coordination and collaboration with internal city departments and external stakeholders to provide access to services. They will work intently with high-risk individuals and develop individualized engagement support plans that will assist in providing ongoing support to these individuals at the greatest need.

6. What role does the city play in eviction prevention and the eviction process?

Post-COVID, the City has had less of a role in eviction prevention assistance. Guilford County has funded this service. There are dedicated Eviction Mediation Programs in the city that assist with this process. At this time, there are discussions regarding prevention and diversion services to stem the in-flow into our homeless continuum of care system. Please note, over \$19 million in Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) funds were provided to city residents during the pandemic. If another eviction prevention program is implemented, it would be on a much smaller scale, with more sustainability requirements for eligible households.

7. Does the city offer any resources for residents facing eviction and how can they be accessed?

At this time, there are no financial resources that are provided to residents facing evictions. The Housing and Neighborhood Development Department works closely with UNCG's Eviction Mediation Program, housed in the Center for Housing and Community Studies. All residents that reach out in need of this type of support are referred to this program and to Legal Aid of Greensboro.

8. Has the city explored the possibility of intervening in rent increase regulations (i.e. rent control or limit on rental rate increases)?

Yes, but this is a state-level conversation, and the decision does not rest with the City. Current state laws would need to be amended by the General Assembly and the approved by the governor for this to be allowed.

9. What housing programs are included in the budget?

The budget often includes housing programs for multi-family housing development; down payment assistance for first-time homebuyers; homeowner home repair; lead-safe and healthy homes repair; tenant-based rental assistance; rapid-rehousing providing rent/utility assistance to households experiencing homelessness; rental/mortgage/utility assistance to households with a HIV/AIDS diagnosis; and permanent supportive housing.

10. How are we going to tangibly invest money in housing? What does that look like?



The City has an adopted 10-year affordable housing plan, HousingGSO which outlines the goals and funding needs for affordable housing. The Housing and Neighborhood Development Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget includes housing programs for multi-family and single-family housing development; down payment assistance for first-time homebuyers; home repair; lead-safe and healthy homes; tenant-based rental assistance; rapid-rehousing providing rent/utility assistance to households experiencing homelessness; rental/mortgage/utility assistance to households with a HIV/AIDS diagnosis; and permanent supportive housing.

11. How much would it save the City to invest in preventing evictions than funneling more people in homelessness?

There are no exact numbers established that would outline the amount of money it would save the City to implement an eviction prevention program. If one were created, it would be on a smaller scale than the COVID emergency response, with more sustainability requirements for eligible households. Supportive services must accompany the financial assistance to achieve the highest and best use of funds with long-term housing sustainability.

12. What city resources are available to the unhoused and how can they be accessed?

Specifically, City-funded services for individuals experiencing homelessness include emergency shelters, the Doorway Project, the Safe Parking Program, support for the expansion of the IRC Day Center to 24/7 operations, and supportive services programs. Emergency services can be accessed at any of these locations or by referral, but our continuum of care has established the Coordinated Entry system, a central access system for every person experiencing homelessness to access housing programs in an equitable manner.

13. How do unsheltered residents get to the Regency Inn?

Regency Inn no longer exists as an option for winter emergency shelter. However, when it was in operation, all referrals came from homeless service providers in the community. Certain eligibility criteria were established, to target those with the highest level of need and those most to exposure. Our plan is to redevelop this property for permanent supportive housing, a best practice that ends homelessness for individuals with high acuity needs.

14. How does the city maintain the affordable housing stock that we do have?

The City has invested in the Greensboro Housing Loan Fund with a goal to increase the inventory of attainable housing in Greensboro through new development and repair/rehabilitation of existing housing. The housing programs administered by the Housing and Neighborhood Development Department also help to maintain the existing affordable housing stock through programs like Home Repair and Lead-Safe GSO that allow low- to moderate-income households to remain in their affordable units. The



Homebuyer Assistance Program allows for low- to moderate-income households to be competitive in the housing market with gap financing in the form of down payment assistance.

15. Is the city seeking more funding opportunities to support rental assistance?

The Housing and Neighborhood Development Department has dedicated HOME-ARP funding for the purpose of tenant-based rental assistance. That new program will come online in Fiscal Year 2024-25.

16. What are the federal and state limitations on what cities can and cannot do in regards to housing?

We are bound by Statute 160A-17.1. Grants from other governments. (a) Federal and State. – The governing body of any city or county is hereby authorized to make contracts for and to accept grants-in-aid and loans from the federal and State governments and their agencies for constructing, expanding, maintaining, and operating any project or facility, or performing any function, which such city or county may be authorized by general law or local act to provide or perform. The City has fairly broad authority under NCGS 160D-1316 to address the development and rehabilitation of affordable housing for low and moderate income households. The City cannot discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin or disability.

17. Is there any part of this upcoming budget that invests money in a permanent rental assistance program for families struggling with the high cost of housing? What, if anything does the City already offer?

The Housing and Neighborhood Development Department has dedicated HOME-ARP funding for the purpose of tenant-based rental assistance. That program will come online in Fiscal Year 2024-25. The City currently offers rapid-rehousing with rent/utility assistance to households experiencing homelessness and rental/mortgage/utility assistance to households with an HIV/AIDS diagnosis.

18. How much ARPA funding has gone towards housing-related programs?

- Southwoods Rehab - \$2,079,823
- Home Repairs and Accessibility Modifications for Older Adults in Greensboro - \$800,000
- Greensboro Urban Ministry Building Uplift Project - \$200,000
- Habitat Building Community Together - \$1,000,000
- Servant House Transformation - \$450,000
- GHC Operating Support - \$500,000
- IRC Integrated Care Expansion - \$100,000
- Micro-units/creative housing solutions - \$1,000,000
- #100 Homes Campaign - \$1,000,000
- Tornado Reinvestment - \$250,000
- Small/Minority Contractor Support Program - \$500,000



- **Total:** \$7,879,823

19. Can the city offer eviction court counseling?

This is not a service that the City provides. There are established community programs with subject matter experts in this type of counseling. (Legal Aid/UNCG)

20. Does the city own any vacant buildings that could be used for temporary housing sites?

The City has used city-owned property for temporary housing in the last two years for The Doorway Project. The Doorway Project is a temporary shelter community located at Pomona Park during the winter months for people experiencing homelessness. The Housing and Neighborhood Development Department is actively exploring additional transformative affordable housing conversions in Fiscal Year 2024-25, as well as ways to leverage other vacant property or City assets.

21. Has the city considered converting other vacant residential and commercial properties into affordable housing sites?

Yes, the Housing and Neighborhood Development Department is actively exploring transformative affordable housing conversions in Fiscal Year 2024-25.

SOLID WASTE & RECYCLING

1. How did the City decide to make changes to the loose leaf program?

City staff was asked by Council to evaluate the ongoing costs of the vacuum collection services and possible alternatives. In looking at both short term environmental factors in support of the adopted Comprehensive Energy Plan and the long term cost of personnel and equipment, the recommendation was made for changes to the yard waste and leaf vacuum program. The changes are more environmentally aware and produce a long term cost savings for the City.

2. Is there a timeline to evaluate whether the changes in the loose leaf collection program are working or not?

City staff continually evaluates programs. These evaluations include looking at best management practices for the services, comparisons to other municipal operations completed by the UNC School of Government, and our own metrics. At the end of the first season, approximately March 2025, the Solid Waste & Recycling Department will be able to evaluate actual costs as compared to the projections.

POLICE

1. How many vacancies does the Police Department have this year versus last year?

At the end of March 2023, the Police Department had operational vacancies that accounted for 16% of the overall budgeted positions. Currently, at the end of March 2024 the Police Department has operational vacancies that account for 13% of the overall budgeted positions. Operational vacancies do not include newly hired employees completing the six-month-long Police Academy and field training. Only fully trained officers occupy budgeted positions.

BUDGET & EVALUATION

1. Is there any money remaining from the PB funding?

Occasionally a PB project will come in under budget. In such cases, remaining funds are then used to support ongoing maintenance and repairs for the projects.

2. What is the Youth Sports Capital?

This priority is about youth sports programs and facilities. This includes the experiences for kids, young adults, getting coaches and volunteers, money and sponsorship, participation, training, and communication. It means the City will work with sports organizations to promote Greensboro as a preferred host destination for sporting events and tournaments.

3. Does the city collaborate with the county?

Yes, the City collaborates with the County. The most concrete collaborations take the form of interlocal agreements. The City and County share the costs of various functions like GM911, animal control, libraries, and elections to name a few.

4. What is the status of the ARPA fund?

Information regarding the City ARPA funds can be found on the city American Rescue Plan page on the city [website](#).

5. How does the city support small businesses?

The city has a dedicated [business webpage](#) to assist business trying to do business with the city. This includes bidding opportunities and resources from our Economic Development and Minority and Women Business Enterprise offices. The city also collaborates with community partners such as the Greensboro Chamber of Commerce and other local economic development partners to provide additional resources to small business.

6. How much funding does the city provide to Piedmont Business Capital?

The city provided Piedmont Business Capital (PBC) \$2.5 million dollars in ARPA funds to support women and minority business recovering from the effects of COVID-19. The city also supported PBC with funding prior to COVID-19 in the amount of \$400,000 to provide low interest loans and greater access to working capital to small and minority owned business in the community.

7. How and when does compensation (salaries, minimum wage, etc.) play a role in the budget process?

Compensation conversations are a collaborative effort between several stakeholders. Conversations are revisited each year and various factors are taken into consideration. Generally, discussions include the financial position of the organization, benchmarking of like positions in other organizations, and the desires of the Council.

8. Why is the Transportation department's budget on one page of the budget document and the Greensboro Transit Agency Fund's budget is on another?

The Transportation Department and the Greensboro Transit Agency Fund are two separate departments, despite having similar names. The Transportation Department, often referred to as GDOT, administers functions like street resurfacing, sidewalk construction, and parking. GDOT concerns itself with providing the space for transportation to occur. The Greensboro Transit Authority (GTA) provides vehicles such as buses and cars to help residents move about the City.

9. What fund are salaries paid out of?

The city has several operating and special project funds. Salaries are paid through the fund that a position is budgeted in. For example, Water Resources employees are paid from the Water Resources Fund while Parks and Recreation employees are paid from the General Fund.

10. How do you find the Economic Development division in the budget?

The Economic Development is a division of the Executive Department. The Executive Department can be found under the General Government tab of the FY 2023-24 [budget document](#) on the City website.

11. Where in the budget can residents see funding for housing programs?

The budget for housing programs can be found on the Nussbaum Housing Partnership Revolving Fund page in the FY 2023-24 budget document. However, the Housing and Neighborhood Development Departments receives federal funding such as the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) that assist with housing initiatives. Approximately \$5 million dollars in grant funding is leveraged annually to support housing programs. These are special project funds and not part of the city's operating budget.

12. Inquiry about where the County is with releasing their ARPA funds.

Information regarding Guilford County ARPA funds can be found on the Guilford County [website](#).

PARKS & RECREATION

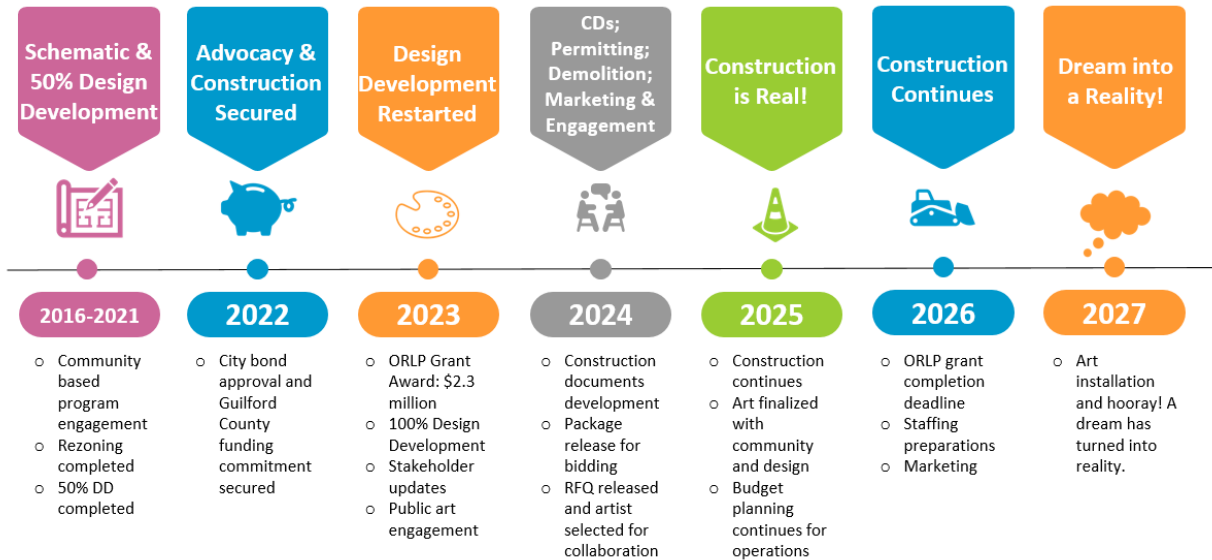
1. What funding has been awarded to the Bingham Park remediation funding project and what additional funding is needed?

Funding that has been identified for this project includes \$1,116,279 from a federal THUD appropriations bill, a portion of the State's \$11,000,000 remediation allocation for Bingham Park and downtown, and State Dept. of Environmental Quality (DEQ) remediation funds ranging from \$7,000,000 to \$10,000,000. The projected remediation project budget ranges from \$24,121,407 to \$53,885,998, depending largely on the waste disposal location that is selected and when the project is contracted. Thus, the funding gap could be as low as \$2,005,128, if the State allocations were able to be maximized. Note, these cost estimates are preliminary; final cost estimates will be prepared as a part of the remedial action plan led by the State.

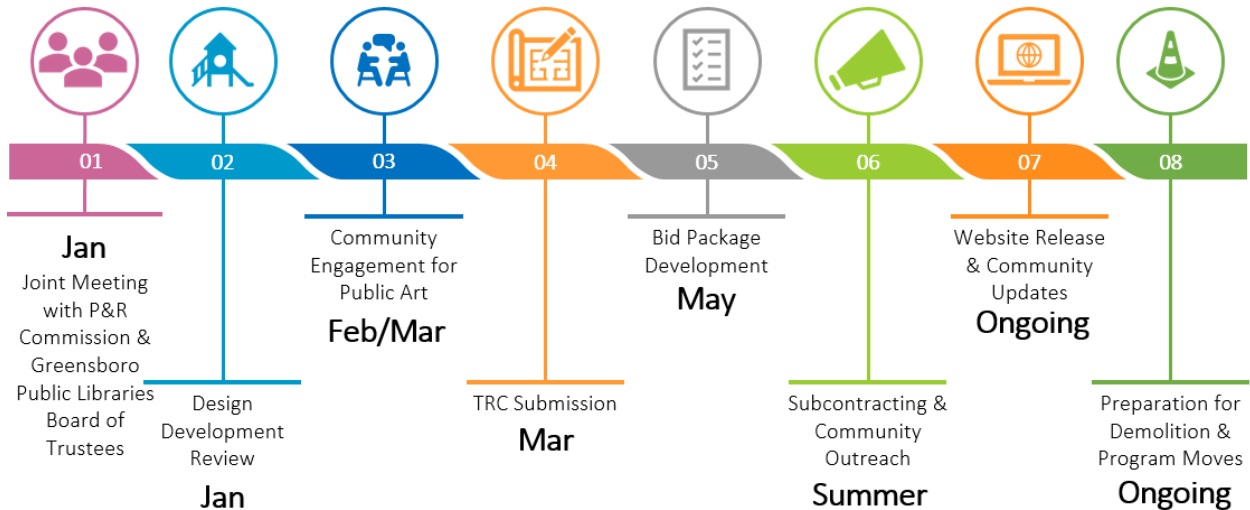
2. How many facilities and amenities are in the community that are within walking distance for youth that also have youth programming? (may require a multi-department response with libraries, arts and culture)



3. What is the status of the Windsor Chavis Nocho facility?



2024 Priorities



4. Will the Bog garden boardwalk be replaced?

The replacement of the Bog Garden boardwalk is currently unfunded. Initial costs estimates completed as a part of a design for replacement indicate a price of \$1.7 million. Funding options are being explored for this and other Parks & Recreation maintenance needs through debt capacity and future operating budgets and general obligation bonds.

5. What is Parks and Recreation deferred maintenance?

Deferred maintenance refers to uncompleted projects that are a result of an unfunded maintenance backlog and includes items such as building maintenance and roof repairs, playground equipment, parking lot, accessibility needs, dock upgrades, and more. The Parks and Recreation Commission has identified \$9.8 million in urgent deferred maintenance and capital project priorities. These projects are reflected in a larger, \$280 million unfunded Capital Improvement Program (CIP) that will largely be funded with future general obligation bonds.

COMMUNITY REATIONS

1. How does the City communicate and address inquires raised during Council meetings? How can residents stay informed?

Inquiries are gathered by staff, as well as follow up contact information. Depending on the topic of inquiry, staff contacts department representatives to advise a reply. Some questions can be answered relatively easily and quickly, while others may involve coordinated efforts between departments.

In addition, City Council always invites public comment, on any subject, at the first Council meeting of the month. Speakers get up to three minutes to discuss any topic on their mind. Residents and visitors to Greensboro are also encouraged to submit questions/comments to City Council through the online portal located on the City's website. You can access the portal here: [E-mail City Council | Greensboro, NC \(greensboro-nc.gov\)](mailto:CityCouncil@greensboro-nc.gov)

To stay informed about City of Greensboro business, you can always follow us here: [City News | Greensboro, NC \(greensboro-nc.gov\)](http://www.greensboro-nc.gov/news) or sign up for automatic alerts here: [e-Notify | Greensboro, NC \(greensboro-nc.gov\)](http://www.greensboro-nc.gov/notify)

COMMUNITY SAFETY

1. What is the Office of Community Safety and BHRT?

The goal of the Office of Community Safety (OCS) is not to replace the current public safety infrastructure, but to enhance it by inserting community-centered initiatives with trained and dedicated professionals who have the time, and skills to address the specific needs of the community and provide opportunities for greater access to social services from governmental entities and community-based organization.

The City of Greensboro Office of Community Safety offers an alternative perspective on public safety that provides custom support to the Greensboro community. The philosophy is simple: to improve outcomes for the community and reduce the need for police response. OCS offers the community support through civilian first responders, known as "Community Responders," of whom comprise the Behavioral Health Response Team (BHRT). These Community Responders function as the first-line public safety



response to de-escalate violence and address mental health crisis, addiction, and homelessness issues. OCS operates under the core beliefs of Co-Production, Partnership Equality, & Integrity.

2. How is the Office of Community Safety funded and what programs are offered by this division?

OCS is funded as part of the City's General Fund.

3. Are there plans to expand the Office of Community Safety to a full department?

Currently, the Office of Community Safety will remain a division of the Executive Department.

4. What additional services does the city provide for public safety, apart from the police department?

The city provides multiple public safety efforts through the community. Code compliances helps to address neglected properties in the community to deter unlawful activities. The city contracts with community violence intervention groups to provide grassroots crime prevention in the community. And departments such as Libraries and Parks & Recreation provide numerous programs to engage youth and provide a safe and positive alternatives. These are just a few examples of how the city provides services that influence public safety.

HUMAN RIGHTS

1. How does the City educate the community about tenant rights and eviction rights specifically? What resources does the City offer in regards to fair housing and when residents are facing eviction?

The Human Rights Department offers City residents a Landlord-Tenant Dispute Program /Outreach. The program is designed to prevent housing displacement by way of mediation between landlords and tenants, which may address payment schedules, repairs, and other compliance issues. The goal is to help both parties reach agreements and prevent the issuance of orders to remove individuals/families from their dwellings, while also maintaining any reasonable standards established by landlords.

TRANSPORTATION

1. How does the City decide where to install sidewalks?

Sidewalk projects built by the City are prioritized based on the adopted Bicycle Pedestrian and Greenways Master Plan. Factors include land use connections, land use density, proximity to transit stops and number of transit users; proximity to greenways and trails; sidewalk gaps; road classification; number of households under the poverty level; number of workers commuting to work with no vehicle; as well as safety issues including pedestrian crashes. Community requests are given consideration as well. Sidewalks can also be constructed through NCDOT as part of a



state-funded roadway or construction project. Additionally, developers may put in sidewalks per local ordinances.

For information on sidewalks projects (2016-present): <https://www.greensboro-nc.gov/home/showdocument?id=50936&t=637715353815705832>

2. How will the parking rates increase the foot traffic downtown?

Parking rates directly impact how frequently a parking space turns over – meaning it’s used by multiple cars over the course of the day. When priced appropriately, a parking space is used multiple times, creating more foot traffic in downtown. Parking rates also positively influence the adoption of mass transit and ride-share use to access places like downtown.

For more information on transportation plans: <https://www.greensboro-nc.gov/departments/transportation/metropolitan-planning-organization/mpo-plans-programs>

WATER RESOURCES

1. Do County residents accessing City water pay taxes? Do they pay the same water rates?

No, county residents who have access to and use city water and/or sewer service do not pay city taxes. The rate for a customer outside the city limit is 2.5 times higher than the rate for a customer inside the city. Here is a link to Greensboro’s [water and sewer rates](#).

CITY CLERK

1. Can the public attend the Manager’s Recommended Budget presentation? Do you need to sign up to speak at the meeting?

Yes, the public can attend the Manager’s Recommended Budget presentation. It is scheduled for May 21, 2024, in the Katie Dorsett Council Chambers. The public is also welcome to attend Council Work Sessions in which Council discusses various budget topics. Budget-related work sessions are tentatively scheduled for May 16 and Jun 13. Annually, Council holds a public hearing to receive public comments on the budget. The public hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, June 4. The public is encouraged to attend and speak. Speakers must register at the meeting to speak before 6pm, or residents can pre-register through the City’s website.

GREENSBORO TRANSIT AGENCY

1. How much funding does the city contribute to the PART bus service?

The City contributes \$78,000 per year.

2. How can we justify operating GTA when it does not bring in enough revenue to support it?



Public Transportation is supported by local, state, and federal funding, as well as fare revenues. We can justify public transportation by the impact it has on boosting economic growth around the bus routes, giving more individuals access to jobs, connecting communities, and connections to healthcare.

3. How much has the city spent on the purchase of electric buses? Are they more or less costly to operate than traditional buses?

Each electric bus costs \$784,000. The City's current fleet of electric buses cost about the same as the diesel buses to operate and maintain. Future replacement electric buses are anticipated to require less maintenance, thus less expensive to maintain and operate than diesel buses over the vehicle operating lifetime.

PEOPLE & CULTURE

1. How can the city help employees pay higher medical premiums and other higher cost of living expenses?

The City of Greensboro offers robust benefit plan offerings to our employee population and contributes a majority percentage to the employees' medical premiums, to help control costs and preserve our low employee premium rates. We're able to do so by conducting market research, running competitive RFP processes, and negotiating lower prices with our vendors without compromising access to quality healthcare services. We have also implemented several programs and created benefit offerings that promote the physical and financial well-being of our employees to assist with addressing the overall increased cost of living experienced by all residents.

One strategy to assist with lowering premiums has been the implementation of a High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP) with an integrated Health Savings Account (HSA). This is an excellent option for our younger and healthier employees who do not have high healthcare expenses. The HDHP is a cost-saving medical plan which offers lower monthly premiums for our employees. Additionally, the City of Greensboro provides a contribution to the HSA on behalf of the employees, to help offset their out of pocket costs. Employees may also contribute to their HSA on a pre-tax basis, which decreases the employee's taxable income. An HSA can not only be used for covered medical expenses, but is also deemed another great way to save for retirement. Employees enrolled in our PPO medical plans may contribute to a Flexible Spending Account (FSA) instead of an HSA, on a pre-tax basis, for covered medical, dental, vision, prescription drugs, and dependent care expenses. Contributing to a FSA also allows employees to decrease their taxable income, thereby potentially increasing their net pay, and assists with paying out of pocket for these expenses.

The City of Greensboro's Employee Wellness Program provides an holistic approach to our employees well-being. Our Health Rewards programs focuses on the physical aspect of wellness, which directly impacts the cost of healthcare and promotes early detection, prevention, and care adherence. Examples of our plan designs include no out



of pocket costs for preventive medical and dental exams for employees and their covered dependents. In an effort to encourage our employees to obtain their screenings, there are opportunities to schedule onsite appointments for specific preventive services throughout the year. Our wellness program and voluntary benefit plans also financially incentivizes employees who complete their preventive screenings. Employees earn monetary wellness rewards which provides additional compensation for their households. Our medical plan design also includes no cost virtual visits with network providers, a mail order prescription drug plan allowing employees to obtain a 90-day supply of their medications at a lower cost, and 10 free mental wellness visits, per episode, per calendar year with network clinicians through our Optum Live and Work Well Employee Support Program. The Optum Live and Work Well Program also offers free Work Life benefits which provide referrals to community resources and consultations with mediators or financial and legal experts.

Our financial wellness programming aims to direct employees to a state of being financially secure, both short term and long term. Prioritizing financial wellness can help avoid both the physical and mental effects of financial stress. Employees may participate in seminars and workshops scheduled at different work sites throughout their work day, which involve courses that teach budgeting, credit repair, building an emergency fund, and preparing for retirement by saving early. We will continue strategizing to create and implement evidence based programming, to assist employees concerned about making ends meet and paying living expenses. These programs would help employees with goals such as paying off or reducing debt, increasing their credit score, and assist with creating strategies for savings and homeownership.

Our team will continue collaborating with internal departments and community partners and share referrals to resources to help address common employee concerns such as access to affordable housing, food insecurity, and access to public transportation. We are committed to creating and sustaining a culture of caring about the total well-being of our employees.