

# Mebane City Beat: Charting the course to 2045

BY KELLY HUNTER  
SPECIAL TO THE NEWS OF ORANGE

What will Mebane look like in 20 years? In October 2024, the City introduced the Mebane 2045 Comprehensive Plan in a Mebane City Beat article, “Town sets forth Mebane 2045 Plan,” sharing the vision and steps for developing this long-range initiative. Now, after a year of planning and community input, the City is pleased to announce that the Mebane City Council officially adopted the plan on December 8, 2025. The plan is designed to guide future growth, development, and infrastructure decisions, ensuring Mebane remains balanced, livable, and connected—while preserving its unique identity.

A comprehensive plan is more than just a document—it’s a tool required by the State of North Carolina that helps shape how land is used and how a city grows over time. Since Mebane last adopted a plan in 2017, the community has experienced steady residential, commercial, and industrial growth, particularly in the southern and eastern areas. Combined with an updated long-range utility plan approved in 2024, it became clear that the City needed a refreshed vision to guide the next two decades.

To lead this effort, the City partnered with planning firms Green Heron Planning, LLC, and Nealon Planning, PLLC, supported by additional consultants. Over an 18-month process that began in July 2024, the plan was shaped through extensive public engagement, including surveys, public forums, and a 14-member Community Advisory Committee that met four times throughout the year.

“The Mebane 2045 Comprehensive Plan was rooted in a robust process centered on community engagement. Through surveys, stakeholder interviews, public forums, and

input gathered from the Community Advisory Committee at various stages of the planning process, the team was able to finalize a comprehensive plan that addresses the needs of Mebanites while outlining a path for intentional future growth,” said Mitchell Pinsky, City Planner.

Community input played a central role in shaping the plan. More than 940 residents participated in early surveys, and dozens attended public forums to share their ideas. These discussions about what Mebane should preserve, enhance, or avoid helped identify key themes—such as maintaining the city’s small-town character, revitalizing downtown, expanding recreation, and guiding thoughtful growth—which ultimately shaped the ten core goals of the plan.

The plan is organized into five chapters: existing conditions, community engagement, goals and objectives, a future land-use map, and implementation strategies. Together, these elements provide a clear framework for how Mebane can grow while maintaining what residents value most.

This month, we’re highlighting the first five goals of the Mebane 2045 Comprehensive Plan:

## 1. Vibrant Downtown

A thriving downtown remains a top priority for residents. This goal focuses on supporting local businesses, creating inviting public gathering spaces, improving parking and walkability, and encouraging investment that preserves historic structures. Seven implementation projects were identified to advance this work, with partnerships—especially with the Downtown Mebane Development Corporation (DMDC)—playing a key role in bringing them to life.

## 2. Safe, Walkable, and Bikeable Streets

Residents expressed a strong desire for safer, more connected streets. Plans

include expanding sidewalks and multi-use paths, improving bicycle facilities, and incorporating traffic calming measures. Six implementation projects have been identified, including an update to the Cameron Lane Thoroughfare Plan, which is already underway. Originally adopted in December 2014, the plan aims to improve traffic flow from the Mebane Oaks Road area to South Fifth Street and NC Hwy 119. Implementation Project 2.01 will update the plan and add roadway connections from Lake Latham Road to the NC-119 Bypass.

## 3. Protected Natural Areas

Protecting Mebane’s natural beauty is another key priority. This goal promotes focused development to reduce pressure on sensitive areas, encourages stewardship of green spaces, and supports redevelopment of underused properties. Four implementation projects were identified, including two that focus on updates to the City’s development standards—such as tree protection and cluster design.

## 4. Celebrated Cultural History and Community Character

Mebane’s history and identity are central to its future. This goal emphasizes recognizing important cultural sites, partnering with local organizations, and creating programs that celebrate the stories and traditions that define the community. It also includes preserving agricultural and rural landscapes. Four implementation projects were identified to advance this goal, including one that seeks to learn what residents love about Mebane and encourage participation in community improvement initiatives.

## 5. Plentiful Recreation

Expanding access to parks and recreation is essential for enhancing residents’ quality of life. This goal includes improving existing parks, developing new facilities, strengthening partnerships with schools,

and enhancing connections to regional trails. Four implementation projects have been identified, with continued efforts guided by the City’s 2024 Recreation and Parks Comprehensive Master Plan playing a key role in achieving this goal.

To learn more about the Mebane 2045 Comprehensive Plan and its implementation projects, visit the City of Mebane website, go to the Planning and Zoning Department, select Long-Range Planning, and click on Mebane 2045 Comprehensive Plan.

Together, these goals reflect a balance between preserving what residents love about Mebane today and planning for the opportunities of tomorrow.

As City Planner Briana Perkins noted, “Mebane 2045 envisions a future where our vibrant downtown reflects the community’s culture and history while supporting growth that balances development with the natural environment. This approach will allow residents to come together in a positively charming Mebane.”

While progress will be tracked through annual updates to the City Council and appointed advisory boards, many of the plan’s outcomes will unfold over time through thoughtful decision-making and community collaboration.

Residents will continue to have opportunities to provide feedback as implementation projects move forward. Upcoming efforts—such as the Cameron Lane Thoroughfare Plan update—will offer additional chances for public input. City staff plans to share more information and invite community participation in May or June.

This is just the beginning. In next month’s column, we’ll explore the remaining five goals that will continue shaping Mebane’s future.

*Kelly Hunter is the Public Information Officer for the City of Mebane.*

# Panthers sweep Jaguars; CRHS grabs two wins

BY ADAM POWELL  
STAFF REPORTER/NEWS OF ORANGE

Cedar Ridge continued its excellent start to the 2026 spring baseball season last week, as the Red Wolves knocked off East Wake Academy and Williams in a pair of non-conference games in Hillsborough and Burlington. Although CRHS fell 5-2 at Western Alamance on March 23, the victories over East Wake Academy and Williams improved the Red Wolves to 8-2 through their first 10 games of the season.

Orange, meanwhile, swept a pair of Big Seven Conference matchups last week against league rival Carrboro, earning a 10-7 triumph over the Jaguars on the road March 24, and a hard-fought 5-4 victory at home on March 27. Although OHS lost a non-conference extra-inning battle March 25 at home against Heritage High, the pair of wins over Carrboro improved the Panthers to 5-6 overall, and an even 2-2 in Big Seven Conference play.

## RED WOLVES WALK OFF OVER EAST WAKE ACADEMY, OUTLAST WILLIAMS ON THE ROAD

Against East Wake Academy, CRHS rallied from a 4-1 deficit in the bottom of the

seventh with four runs in the final inning for a thrilling 5-4 walk-off victory. In the fateful final frame, junior Hudson Kelly led off with a double to left field, which was followed by a single off the bat of Jesus Velazquez. Two batters later, junior Brody Tapper forced a walk, loading the bases for senior Grant McGuffey. McGuffey was hit by a pitch, which scored Henry to pull CRHS within 4-2, with the bases still loaded.

Junior John Grove followed for Cedar Ridge with a grounder up the middle into center field, which drove home Velazquez to make the score 4-3 in favor of East Wake Academy with the bases still loaded. The visitors got a strikeout for the second out of the inning, pushing the Red Wolves one out away from defeat. But the Red Wolves weren’t done, as freshman Will Ebron drew another walk that tied the game. Then senior Dominic Sena came up and got the game’s decisive hit, singling into left field to score McGuffey and ignite a spirited celebration for the Red Wolves as they improved to 7-2.

On March 26, the Red Wolves traveled to Burlington and came away with a 4-2 triumph over Williams. The score was tied 2-2 until the top of the fifth, when the Red Wolves scored a run on a double off the bat of senior Ian McGuffey, which scored Grove

for a 3-2 CRHS lead. Then in the top of the sixth, Grant McGuffey ripped an RBI single to left field that plated teammate Aiden Ryan for a 4-2 CRHS advantage. Ryan had a tremendous game on the mound for Cedar Ridge, allowing just two earned runs on three hits with 10 strikeouts over six innings. Velazquez came on in the bottom of the seventh and struck out two Bulldogs to earn the save.

## ORANGE PICKS UP PAIR OF WINS OVER CARRBORO

Orange’s bats got going in a big way on March 24, as the Panthers put together their highest-scoring performance of the season so far in a 10-7 victory at Carrboro. After scoring four runs in the first three innings for an early 4-2 lead over the Jaguars, the Panthers broke the game open with three runs each in the fourth and sixth innings. Senior Wren Hash drove in three runs for the victorious Panthers, while junior Oliver Van Tiem and junior Gavin Clayton also drove in runs for Orange. Senior Ryan Sawyer got the win on the mound for Orange, as he struck out four Jaguars and allowed one walk and four earned runs over five innings.

After falling 5-2 to Heritage on March 25, the Panthers regrouped two nights later to

earn a 5-4 win over Carrboro, this time at home in Hillsborough in walk-off fashion.

Orange jumped out to an early 2-0 lead in the opening two innings, and then overcame a two-run top of the third by Carrboro with another run in the bottom of the third. Leading 3-2, the Panthers struggled to hold off the pesky Jaguars, who scored runs in the top of the sixth and top of the seventh to take a dramatic 4-3 lead. The Panthers were in danger of falling to 1-3 in conference play, but the veteran OHS squad responded when they needed to most.

In the bottom of the seventh with one out, Van Tiem provided some heroics for the Panthers with a deep blast over the center field wall, which tied the game at 4-4. Sophomore Mason Bullard took one for the team on the ensuing at-bat by getting hit by a pitch, putting the winning run on first. Gavin Clayton came on to pinch-run for Bullard, and advanced to second on a Carrboro balk. With the winning run in scoring position, Hash was hit by another Carrboro pitch, which put two runners on base. Senior Gary Miller then came through with the climactic hit for Orange, connecting on a bloop single into single field that brought home Clayton for a thrilling 5-4 Panthers win.

## RENEE PRICE

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bring more attention to the fact that North Carolina has a very low minimum wage that needs to be raised. I will advocate for state employees and teachers to make a livable salary and have strong retiree benefits. People who work for the state deserve to have cost-of-living salary increases with their benefits. And I do believe that climate change is real, and we need to do whatever we can for climate change mitigation and being certain that we protect traditionally marginalized communities that are most often affected by climate change.

**NOC:** How would your approach to serving your constituents change if you went from the House to the Senate?

**RP:** Well, certainly I’d have a larger area. Approach wise, I think I would do as I always have. I want to get to know the people in that community, just as I did when I was a county commissioner here. I had to, because I wasn’t born and raised here, but I still had to learn different people, different communities. Learning the history of different areas was always helpful and something I also found fascinating. It’s how I came to know Caswell County. Over the past four years, going to, for example, the Bright Leaf Hoedown Festival, attending ribbon cuttings for the fire departments, being on a committee that is restoring the history and the legacy of Thomas Day up in Milton, and hopefully that will become a destination for many people. So, I would try to do the same in Person County, and continue to get to

know more about the people, their history, their values, their needs.

**NOC:** What do you believe are some of the needs in Person County?

**RP:** Similar to Caswell County, they need economic development. I know they’ve got the Person County Mega Park that’s being developed now, and the challenges they’re facing that are so similar with many of the other counties across North Carolina that are not part of, say, the Triangle or the Triad or Tri city. We’ve got these areas that are struggling to hang on and to get the resources necessary to continue to thrive, but then you have the metropolitan areas grabbing people and resources. These communities need economic development as well, so that they have a broader tax base and can still send their kids to good schools. These areas face difficult crossroads. We’re losing farmland like crazy, but these mega sites, they can provide good jobs. That’s what people are looking for. There are pluses and minuses. People need jobs, but you still don’t like to lose the environment and ecosystems that you were born and raised with. That you cherish.

**NOC:** What are the biggest challenges facing the state and your constituents?

**RP:** Affordable housing is a big issue, not just in our state, but in many states and communities. One of my committees was Regulatory Reform, and we’ve had several discussions over the past three years about how to reduce the cost of housing. Some of the bills, you look at them as, “Oh, this is just a benefit for the developer,” because time is money when you shorten the time to get all those approvals for your develop-

ment. Yes, you can cut the cost of housing, but we don’t want to cut safety. You want to be cautious about safety within the home that is built. But we are looking at ways we can reduce some of the costs that typically will be passed on to the home owner or the home buyer. One of the things that we have done working with representatives on

both sides of the aisle and the Senate, was accessory dwelling units (a self-contained, smaller residential unit located on the same lot as an existing single-family home) and even tiny homes. You may be on someone else’s property, but at least you can have that agreement with the property owner that this is your home.

## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Orange County Board of Commissioners will hold a public hearing at the Whitted Meeting Facility, 300 West Tryon Street Hillsborough, NC, on Tuesday, April 7, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. to hear public comment on the following items:

1. Zoning Atlas Amendment: An application to amend the boundary of the Watershed Protection Overlay District on an unaddressed parcel located off Dodsons Crossroads, in the vicinity of Arden Estate Court, within Bingham Township (PIN: 9851-43-3215).

Additional information regarding the application (MA25-0006) is available at the Planning Department’s Active Developments page: <https://www.orangecountync.gov/3038/Active-Development-Projects>

Substantial changes to the proposal(s) may be made following the public hearing due to verbal or written comments received or based on the Board’s discussions.

Questions may be directed to the Orange County Planning Department via phone at (919) 245-2575 or via e-mail at [planningdept@orangecountync.gov](mailto:planningdept@orangecountync.gov).

Notice to people with special needs: If you have an audio or visual impairment, unique accessibility requirements, or need language assistance, please call the County Clerk’s Office at (919) 245-2130 or TDD# 919-644-3045.

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