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Building a World-Class City:

The Importance of Community Connections

Best practices from around the world

Telosa Community Foundation

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Excerpt

Case Study: Raleigh, North Carolina - Education and Lifelong Learning



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Vision

Raleigh's vision is often described as a "City of Innovation," and it seeks to be a leading center for innovation, technology, education, and culture.

Goals

Raleigh's goals align with its vision and include several key initiatives:

1. **Economic Development:** The city focuses on attracting and retaining businesses, with an emphasis on technology, healthcare, and the creative sector. Raleigh seeks to create a favorable business environment that stimulates economic growth.

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2. **Education and Research:** Raleigh continues to invest in education and research institutions, including partnerships with universities and organizations that contribute to innovation and knowledge.
3. **Technology and Innovation:** The city supports technology-driven industries, innovation hubs, and startups, with the aim of becoming a recognized center for technological advancement.
4. **Sustainability:** Raleigh works to reduce its environmental impact through initiatives related to clean energy, conservation, and sustainable urban planning.
5. **Quality of Life:** The city places a strong emphasis on enhancing the quality of life for its residents by providing access to cultural amenities, recreational opportunities, healthcare, and affordable housing.
6. **Community Engagement:** Raleigh encourages active community engagement and participation in decision-making processes. The city values feedback from residents and stakeholders.
7. **Public Transportation:** Raleigh aims to improve its public transportation system to reduce congestion, provide convenient transit options, and promote sustainable mobility.
8. **Social Inclusion:** The city promotes social equity, inclusivity, and affordable housing to ensure that all residents have access to opportunities and resources.
9. **Cultural and Creative Initiatives:** Raleigh supports cultural events, festivals, and creative initiatives that celebrate its cultural diversity and artistic expression.
10. **Environmental Stewardship:** Raleigh seeks to protect and preserve its natural environment, green spaces, and natural resources for future generations.

Background

- The city of Raleigh is named after Sir Walter Raleigh (1552 – 29 October 1618), an English statesman, soldier, writer, and explorer. One of the most notable figures of the Elizabethan era, he played a leading part in English colonization of North America, funding the first expeditions to what is now the coast of modern-day North Carolina.
- Following the American Revolutionary War when the U.S. gained its independence, the area was chosen in 1788 as the site of the state capital of North Carolina. Its central location protected it from attacks from the coast.
- Raleigh was later incorporated in 1792.

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- Raleigh is one of the few cities in the United States that was planned and built specifically to serve as a state capital. Raleigh is an early example in the United States of a planned city.
- With the opening of the Research Triangle Park in 1959, Raleigh began to experience a population increase, resulting in a total city population of 100,000 by 1960.
- In the Tech 2022 Innovation Index report - National Metro Comparison that was released by the NC TECH Association, Raleigh was ranked 8th in overall Tech Metro and 2nd for Innovation out of 110 metro areas.

Facts and Figures

- It is one of the fastest-growing cities in the United States.
- The population of Raleigh is 476,587 (2022 census). It is the second-most populous city in North Carolina, after Charlotte. Metropolitan area population of 1,413,982 (42nd largest in the U.S.)
- The city of Raleigh occupies a total area of 144.0 sq. mi.
- Raleigh is known as the "Smithsonian of the South," "The City of Oaks," "The Triangle," and the "Live Music Capital of the South."
- It's known for its universities, including North Carolina State University. Due to the number of technology and scholarly institutions around Raleigh, Chapel Hill, and Durham, the area is known as the Research Triangle.
- In the first decade of the 21st century, Raleigh was featured prominently in a number of "Top 10 Lists," including those by Forbes, MSNBC, and Money magazine, due to its quality of life and favorable business climate.

Social Capital and Belonging

- **Quality of Life**: The city boasts a relatively low cost of living compared to other tech hubs, making it an attractive place to live for young professionals and families. Access to amenities, outdoor activities, and a moderate climate enhances residents' quality of life.
- **Cultural Diversity**: The city's growing diversity has enriched its cultural fabric, creating opportunities for cultural exchange, events, and celebrations that bring the community together.
- **Community Engagement:** Residents actively participate in local organizations, volunteer groups, and neighborhood associations. This engagement fosters connections, shared goals, and a sense of belonging.
- **Family-Friendly Environment:** The city's family-friendly atmosphere and strong education system contribute to a sense of stability and a tight-knit community.
- **Raleigh Neighborhood Exchange:** The Raleigh Neighborhood Exchange program fosters community engagement and strengthens social capital by

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bringing together residents from different neighborhoods to share ideas, resources, and best practices for building stronger communities. https://raleighnc.gov/community/services/raleigh-neighborhood-exchange

Access to Effective Government and Services

- The **Office of Strategy and Innovation** helps set strategy and supports ongoing cycles of continuous improvement for greater service delivery by collecting and connecting talent to spark new ideas. The Office leads city strategy and transformative projects like Bloomberg Challenges, Big Ideas, and Smart Cities initiatives. It also performs legislative and policy analysis, and maps the organization's vision and values in a way that creates innovative solutions.
- **Raleigh's Open Data Program:** Raleigh has an open data program that provides residents with access to various datasets and information about the city's operations. This initiative promotes transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement in government decision-making.
- **Resilience and Recovery:** Raleigh's efforts to recover from challenges, such as natural disasters, demonstrate the community's resilience and ability to come together to overcome adversity.

High Quality Jobs and Economic Opportunity

- **Technology and Innovation:** The city's focus on innovation and technology-driven industries has created a sense of dynamism and forward-thinking, attracting entrepreneurs and fostering a spirit of entrepreneurship.
- **Economic Growth:** Raleigh is part of the Research Triangle Park, a hub for technology, research, and innovation. The presence of major universities, tech companies, and research institutions has led to job opportunities, economic growth, and a dynamic business environment.
- As of 2011, Time ranked Raleigh as the third **most educated city** in the US based on the percentage of residents who held college degrees.
- **Local Businesses:** Raleigh's support for local businesses, including restaurants, cafes, and shops, fosters economic interdependence and contributes to a sense of community pride.
- **Innovate Raleigh:** Innovate Raleigh and the Chamber of Commerce work to promote innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic development in the region. They support startups, foster collaboration among businesses, and help create high-quality job opportunities.
- Raleigh has one of the most successful CBUSA (**Custom Builders USA**) chapters in America. It empowers members to strike a balance between

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competing and collaborating with access to a network of similar businesses to make real growth happen. https://cbusa.us/

Quality Education and Lifelong Learning

- By creating a **world-class education hub**, Raleigh has attracted top academic talent to the city. This serves as a positive feedback loop in attracting top tech businesses and spin off companies from the research conducted at the universities.
- In 1976, the Raleigh City and Wake County schools merged to become the Wake County Public School System, now the largest school system in the state and 19th largest in the country.
- **Educational Institutions:** Raleigh is home to several prestigious universities, including North Carolina State University. These institutions attract students, researchers, and academics, contributing to a culture of learning and intellectual engagement.
- **Wake County Public Libraries:** The Wake County Public Libraries offer a wide range of educational programs, resources, and events for residents of all ages. These libraries promote lifelong learning and provide access to educational materials.

Arts, Culture, and Recreation

- Raleigh is well known for its quality and quantity of free museums and has often been referred to as the “Smithsonian of the South.”
- Raleigh offers a range of cultural and entertainment options, including art galleries, music venues, theaters, and festivals.
- Access to **cultural facilities** like the Durham Performing Arts Center, the North Carolina Museum of Art, the Contemporary Art Museum Raleigh, and the North Carolina Symphony.
- **Green Spaces:** Raleigh places emphasis on parks, greenways, and recreational areas. These spaces provide opportunities for outdoor activities, exercise, and social interaction.
- **Raleigh Arts:** Raleigh Arts is a city department that supports the arts through grants, public art installations, and cultural programs. It enhances the cultural vibrancy of Raleigh by providing opportunities for artistic expression and community engagement.

Design and Environmental Stewardship

- Raleigh is known for its tree-lined avenues and a commitment to preserving its natural environment.

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- Raleigh is known as the "City of Oaks" for its many oak trees, which line the streets in the heart of the city.
- **Raleigh Greenway System**: Raleigh's extensive greenway system includes a network of trails and parks that promote outdoor recreation, environmental stewardship, and a well-designed urban environment. These green spaces contribute to the city's quality of life.

Success / Failures

- Raleigh has also been able to attract leading technology companies, such as Red Hat, Cisco, IBM, and SAS because of the tech talent emerging from the universities, as well as the high quality of life and lower cost of living.
- The substantial, consistent tax base has funded the construction of concert halls, parks, and other recreational facilities which enhance the quality of life even further.
- They have reinvested back into the community to alleviate some of the wealth and income inequality that has arisen between the highly paid corporate professionals and the traditional agricultural residents.
- City design that incorporates nature and green space contributing to higher quality of life.
- Raleigh has a higher than average crime rate.

Telosa Best Practices

- **Collaborative Environment:** The Research Triangle area encourages collaboration between academia, research institutions, and businesses, fostering a culture of cooperation and shared progress.
- Raleigh is known for having a **thriving job market**, an affordable cost of living and diverse communities.
- Overall, the city's emphasis on education, innovation, cultural engagement, economic growth, and quality of life contributes to its reputation as a **vibrant and thriving community**.

Raleigh, NC Reference Information

Strategic Plan for the City of Raleigh
https://raleighnc.gov/government/services/strategic-plan

City of Raleigh, NC - FY21 - FY25 Strategic Plan
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https://raleighnc.gov/strategy-and-innovation

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https://www.nctech.org/resources/tech-innovation-index.html

Raleigh Chamber
https://www.raleighchamber.org/

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