



MINUTES

The Holly Springs Town Council met in a workshop session on Tuesday, April 14, 2026 at the Law Enforcement Center and via livestreaming. Mayor Kondratick presided, calling the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. A quorum was established as the Mayor and five Council members were present in the room as the meeting opened.

Council Members Present in the room: Mayor Mike Kondratick, Mayor Pro Tem Annie Drees, Council members Daniel Hewetson, Chris Deshazor, Sarah Larson, and Kara Foster.

Council Members Absent: none.

Staff Members Present in the room: Randy Harrington, Town Manager; Linda McKinney, Town Clerk (recording the minutes); Daniel Weeks, Assistant Town Manager; Scott Chase, Assistant Town Manager; Jay Osborne, Assistant Town Attorney; Jesse Dixon, IT; Cassie Hack, Director, Communications and Marketing; Corey Petersohn, Director of Budget, Innovation, and Strategy; MaryBeth Spohr, Budget, Innovation, and Strategy; Tina Stroupe, Director, Finance; Chris Hills, Director of Development Services; Elizabeth Goodson Christopher Ritter-Garcia, Sarah Sularz, and Sean Ryan, Development Services; LeeAnn Plumer, Director, Parks and Recreation; Thomas Gull, Parks and Recreation; Sadel Lassiter, and Mike Leones, Utilities and Infrastructure.

1. Mayor Kondratick called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. **Overview:** Randy Harrington, Town Manager, gave an overview of the meeting agenda.

3. FY27 Budget Check-In

a. Strategic Plan and Budget Updates

Corey Petersohn, Office of Budget, Innovation and Strategy, said this item was for Council to review final updates to the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Strategic Plan and receive updates on the development of the Town Manager's Recommended Budget. He said that, after the last workshop on this topic, Initiative 5.2 under Growth Management & Economic Vitality was amended to read "Support an efficient and connected local and regional multi-modal transportation system through engagement with adjacent municipal partners." Further a new initiative was added under Organizational Excellence which reads "Seek new, creative opportunities for the Governing Body and staff to engage residents, neighborhood organizations, and businesses, on community issues; sharing information in transparent, accessible ways." Council consensus was that these were the changes they wanted. These will be presented for adoption at the April 21st meeting.

Mr. Petersohn gave a recap from March's workshop on budget considerations for Fiscal Year 2026-27 including property tax revenue growth slowing, balancing key personnel considerations for service growth and organizational management, and opportunities to use strong fund balance level for one-time smaller capital projects.

Mr. Peterson showed statistics on building permits issued for single family homes and town homes in Holly Springs from 2015 to 2025. He showed where the "hot spots" for growth have shifted over that ten-year period. This does not account for Economic Development projects where

one permit creates more valuation than others. He said that economic conditions that need to be considered include the conflict in Iran impacting supply chains and inflation rising above 3%. There is also future budget uncertainty at the state and federal levels. However, the Raleigh-Cary Metro area is considered one of the most economically resilient areas in the country, and economic development wins are offsetting the slowing growth.

Mr. Petersohn compared budling a balanced budget to a three-seater teeter-totter with the need to maintain services levels, maintain affordability, and fund new programs and infrastructure. He showed Holly Springs' tax rate from 2019 to the present compared to the other 11 Wake County municipalities, and Holly Springs went from the 8th lowest in 2019 to the second lowest in 2025, a period that encompassed two revaluation years. He said that the General Fund is fed by property tax, sales tax and other revenue sources. Funds from this go into the Operating Budget, which includes funds for the Pay-As-You-Go (PAYGO) accounts for capital investments and into the Community Investment Plan (CIP) for capital projects, debt services, and building future debt capacity. He showed the amounts budgeted in FY26 for five PAYGO funds and the amount planned in FY27, and some shifting of funding sources to fund Sidewalk, Pedestrian & Bike Safety and Neighborhood Traffic Calming from Vehicle Fee revenues and Facility Maintenance & Repair and Playground Rehabilitation & Amenities from the CIP.

Council member Deshazor asked what facilities staff is looking at for repairs in the upcoming budget year. Mr. Petersohn said we are looking at life-cycle replacements at Fire Station 1, Bass Lake and the Hunt Center. There is a model that looks out 20-30 years, and we are planning to fix more before it breaks to keep costs lower. MPT Drees asked where the vehicle fee goes in the current budget. Mr. Petersohn said it flows into the operating budget and some of it is operating, some is used to fund our match on Microtransit, and a portion left over goes into Street Reserves. This would right source us for the future and maintain balance.

Mr. Petersohn said that in order to maintain service levels and affordability there is some potential trade off in debt affordability capacity. However, the Town's debt affordability model is designed to absorb and mitigate these types of impacts. The timing of projects is critical to maintaining the currently projected \$100 - \$150 million of future projects from 2028-2034.

Mr. Petersohn outlined eight small projects that could use between \$4 and \$4.5 million in Unassigned Fund Balance. These include improvements to the North Main Athletic Complex, Facility maintenance and ADA backlog, Wake County / Town Partnership Cultural Center renovation, Intelligent Transportation System, Law Enforcement Center Improvements, Downtown Area Plan Improvements, Middle Creek Greenway Pedestrian Beacon Partnership with Apex, and the Sesquicentennial Celebrations. There are also some projects in Fire Station 2 that could be requested in the future, but they are still in the design phase. There was discussion about the next steps in the ITS program and the evolution from NCDOT control to local control.

Mr. Petersohn said that compensation considerations for the FY27 budget include the 0-6% merit adjustments, adjusting the salary grade ranges, including Mayor and Council, according to inflation (2.4%), funding 16-19 new positions, a 5% health insurance premium increase, and rebidding the dental insurance coverage.

Randy Harrington, Town Manager, said that to speed recruitment, he is requesting authorization for two personnel management actions, that have no cost impacts right now. The first is shifting the Sustainability Coordinator, an existing position, from the Budget, Innovation, & Strategy Department to Public Works. Given that the majority of the work is associated with facilities and vehicles, this move to Public Works makes sense. The second is to begin recruiting for an Engineering Project Manager, with a target start date of July 1. This position would support the high volume of Town infrastructure projects. He said that if the position is not approved in the budget, no job offer would be made. Council consensus was to grant him that authority.

Mr. Harrington said that looking beyond FY27 the largest budget drivers will be FY28, new positions and operating expenses for Eagles Landing Park; FY29-30 anticipated ramp up for 12-24 firefighters and equipment for Fire Station 4, and FY31-33 Fire Station 5 personnel and equipment. Each of these will be about a \$2 to \$2.5 million investment. Future budget years require Council to consider the balance of Affordability (Holly Springs has one of the lowest tax rates in Wake County and revenue growth is slowing) Maintaining Service Levels (population is growing, facilities are aging, and there are inflationary pressures) and New Programs and Investments (Eagles Landing Park, Transportation investments, Fire Stations 4, & 5, Operations Campus Phase 2, and other Council Strategic Initiatives.) He said next steps include the presentation of the Manager's Recommended Budget on May 12th in the Council Chambers, the Budget Public Hearing on May 19th, the Budget Workshop on Thursday, May 21st, and the anticipated budget adoption at the June 2nd business meeting. Council member Deshazor asked if, with the headcount needed for new Fire Stations, there was a way to start hiring and phasing in ahead of time. Mr. Harrington said yes, we have to do it that way because there is a training and recruiting class. It will easily cross two fiscal years. MPT Drees said sidewalks and trails were a priority and we're not putting money in PAYGO. Mr. Petersohn said that would be the debt capacity side. Mr. Harrington said there will also be unallocated money for Council to decide what to do with in the future.

b. Holly Springs Hopper (Microtransit)

Christopher Ritter-Garcia, Development Services, said this item was to provide an update on the first three months of service for the Holly Springs Hopper and discuss future service growth opportunities. He said there have been 2,431 rides for 3,238 passengers in the first three months, with a service rating of 4.9 out of 5. The average wait time is 12.65 minutes, multi-person rides make up 32.60% of the rides, and fare free rides make up 53.72%. Ridership has been growing with more passengers in March than in January and February put together. He showed the "hot spots" for destinations, including downtown, Walmart, Target shopping center, and the hospital. He gave statistics on the most used times of day and days of the week.

Mr. Ritter-Garcia said that public engagement has been ongoing with visits to Parks and Recreation facilities, senior living communities, local businesses and medical offices. Upcoming engagement includes an in-app survey, Hopper-branded CVS Pharmacy bags, and a visit to the Salamanders game as part of the 150th anniversary. He gave demographics of ridership with most riders being between 21 and 34, but an almost equally large share in the 35-50 and 65 and over categories. He said that while the average wait time was 12.65 minutes, 44% of rides had a wait of 0-10 minutes. Mayor Kondratick asked if there was a wait time increase between February and March and Mr. Ritter-Garcia said the increase was one minute. Council member Deshazor asked about pooled rides and Mr. Ritter-Garcia said we are seeing that go up as more people are using the service. Council member Larson asked if there was a way to see the wait time before you click "confirm" Mr. Ritter-Garcia said there are 2 parts, when you first book the ride there is no wait time given, but once you are connected with a driver you get the wait time. It fluctuates depending on the time of day and the day of the week. There was discussion on whether Council wanted to have the wait time indicated earlier in the process.

Mr. Ritter-Garcia said that the Town could invest up to \$38,089 in expanding the service without amending the grant agreement with CAMPO. This could include adding an extra hour onto weekday service and a 6-hour weekend timeframe which would cost \$27,759. Council member Deshazor asked if there are fewer than 3 vehicles running in the morning, could we maneuver those hours to add on to other hours. Mr. Ritter-Garcia said we are billed by vehicle service hours, so we are not paying for three vehicles at those times when only two vehicles are running and we can bank those hours to use at times when we need more vehicles. Council member Hewetson said we need to manage expectations for large events, like July 5th so that we don't have 50,000 people

waiting for three vehicles. MPT Drees wondered if the free rides confused seniors who now need to pay or prove age. Mr. Ritter-Garcia said the data for free rides weren't divided by age, but they are working with residents to verify IDs and other issues so that they are able to use the app and ride the Hopper. MPT Drees asked if staff could gather data on how many seniors ride, and the time differential between riders using the app versus using the phone. Mr. Ritter-Garcia said he would look into it, but many more people are using the app than the phone to schedule rides. Council member Deshazor asked what times were being considered for the 6-hour weekend. Mr. Ritter-Garcia said they want to see what people value more – middle of the day or morning. Mr. Harrington said the default would be 8 – 2 to start on Saturdays. Council member Hewetson suggested that 9-3 might be better. MPT Drees asked if we were using the in-app survey to determine that. Mr. Ritter-Garcia said we are looking at that. Council member Larson suggested that on the weekend there will be more younger people using it who might want more hours. She sees youth using it in the summer. Mr. Ritter-Garcia said that Freebie has seen spikes in the summer in other communities they serve and staff is aware of that. Council member Deshazor said he could see people using the Hopper all day on Saturday. He thinks we might want to extend it longer. Council member Hewetson said there was unallocated grant money. She asked if we want to consider an 8-hour weekend and adding 2 hours during the week. Mr. Ritter-Garcia said this is the most we can add without going into half hours. We could do something to extend it using a half hour, like Wake Forest does. Chris Hills said one of the most important things about mass transit is maintaining reliable hours that don't fluctuate. He recommends making a decision and pushing out one change to the schedule rather than fluctuating often. Council member Hewetson would like to know what 9 pm and an 8-hour weekend looks like. Council agreed and staff said they would look into it. Mr. Harrington said he is hearing that Council wants to maximize the full grant amount and get as many hours as possible. And he will put that into the budget. He said we are only three months in and we are going to learn a lot about this as the year goes on. There is a little bit of crawl-walk-run to maintain expectations.

4. Bicycle Facilities Planning

Sean Ryan, Development Services, said this item was to provide a foundational understanding of current bicycle policy efforts in Holly Springs. He reminded Council of the transportation trade-offs that were discussed at the Retreat. He said that bicycle facilities vary by community and different settings are better suited to different types of bike routes. He said that best practices on whether to use a shared use path, a buffered bike lane or a shared lane depend on the volume of traffic on a given route and the speed limit on that route.

Mr. Ryan said that the town's Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) has an active transportation focus to improve public health, reduce emissions, promote economic development, reduce household costs, provide accessible options, and improve safety. He explained that the former Pedestrian Transportation Plan from 2007 and the Bicycle Transportation Plan from 2011 were integrated into the 2022 Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) for a wholistic approach to transportation. He said the 2022 Community Engagement for the CTP showed that 87% of walking or bike riding is for exercise or recreation and 31% to go to shops or restaurants. When asked why they do not walk or ride a bike, the most common responses were 1. Not enough sidewalks, bike lanes, or greenways; 2. Not feeling safe; 3. There is nowhere to ride or walk to. Safety, design, and education were the top three concerns that came out of this engagement. When bicycle network planning is integrated into the CTP it identifies where deficiencies and gaps exist, recommends safety enhancements, and implements bicycle infrastructure into street cross-sections and greenway recommendations. This creates facilities that are safe and welcoming for all users,

regardless of age and ability. The CTP strives to create interconnected greenway network with sidepaths for leisure riders and wider lanes for sport riders. He showed the Future Active Transportation Map with sidewalks, sidepaths, bike lanes, sharrows, and other on and off street active connections.

Mr. Ryan said that CTP implementation opportunities include building a connected network, prioritizing targeted safety improvements and connecting land use and transportation to encourage ridership. He said that enhancing funding would facilitate the mode shift as well as identifying and funding priority greenway and sidepath corridors. Maintenance opportunities can also be used to evaluate and retrofit streets with bicycle facilities. Other opportunities include identifying crossings and intersections for improvements, enhance bike education, safety training, and engagement programs, and revising the traffic study policy to strengthen bicycle and pedestrian considerations.

Mr. Ryan said that connecting land use to transportation could support community cycling by improving access to jobs, schools, and shops. Maintaining the land use plan's focus on walkable neighborhood centers also strengthens active transportation, as does applying context-sensitive facilities in key areas, like the downtown. He said that the CTP is multimodal and includes bicycle network planning. Recommendations are based on best practices and community feedback. There may be opportunities to further implement the Plan's recommendations, and there could be additional opportunities in the Comprehensive Plan updates targeted for 2028.

Mayor Kondratik asked whether there is Holly Springs specific data or benchmarking from other towns that we can use to anticipate changes in ridership as we improve our bike accommodations. Do we have any way to understand what to anticipate? Mr. Ryan said we don't have any data to share tonight, but there may be an opportunity to get that information with revised traffic plan changes. Council member Larson asked if the eBike ordinance would take this into consideration. Mr. Ryan there is a cross-department group working on that ordinance to make sure it meets our goals. Council discussed building the network out as we build road improvements. They discussed needing a way for bikers to find safe routes from one place to another. Mr. Hills said there are ways to use branding to show routes and distances. Council member Larson suggested expanding the greenway app to show sidepaths and bike routes as well.

5. Future Greenway Investment Considerations

Thomas Gull, Parks and Recreation, said this item was to provide updates on priority and current greenway projects and consider recommendations for future greenway segments. He said he would discuss the greenway planning process, greenway progress updates, recommended priority greenway additions, bike and pedestrian improvements around Eagles Landing Park, and experiential elements for consideration. He said the Greenway Master Plan adopted in 2021 was a 10-year plan that aligned with the Comprehensive Transportation Plan. This plan allows the town to plan for funding, align with the UDO and set priorities for future greenways. The Town currently has 15.12 miles of greenways, 3.22 miles of natural surface trails and 6.93 miles of greenways in progress. New Priority projects could add 3 more miles to the system.

Mr. Gull explained the cycle of prioritization and how it works over years to identify, prioritize, fund, and construct greenway projects. He said that prioritization was based on six factors: connectivity, equity and accessibility, existing greenway expansion, site constraints, safety, and land development status. He said that since 2023 3.56 miles of greenway have been completed, including Carolina Spring Phase 1A, Oakview Innovation, Middle Creek, and Holly

Springs Road to Jones Park. He showed the locations of and status of the six priority projects identified in 2023. The Jones Park project is completed and the Oak Hall to NMAC and Middle Creek to Camp Branch projects are in progress. Three other projects are on hold due to various issues including funding, easements, and other issues.

Mr. Gull said that in addition to those six, four developer-led greenway segments and four town-led segments would add 5.67 miles of greenway to the system. He said that staff recommended additions to the priority list include Bennet Knoll Phase 1 which would connect a neighborhood to destination with .60 miles of greenway; the Eden Glen to Optimist Farm Road which would extend an existing sidepath a total of .54 miles to connect a neighborhood to a destination and provide a future regional connection; Tuscany to Sunset Pointe and Scots Laurel is a .22 mile section that would connect a neighborhood to a future destination; and Utley Creek Phase III, a total of 1.64 miles to expand and existing greenway, connect to neighborhood and future regional connection. He showed the location of the recommended town-led projects and the developer-led greenways. He summarized the progress of fourteen greenway projects, some completed, some in progress, and some recommended priorities. Randy Harrington, Town manager said that the bids for the Oak Hall project came in over budget. Daniel Weeks, Assistant Town Manager, said they came in \$470,000 over budget for this project. Staff met this afternoon and think it is best to reject the bids at this point and make modifications to the bid requirements to get results better in line with the project budget. Council discussed the timing of construction due to rebidding, and that construction would probably start in 2026 but not be completed until 2027.

Mr. Gull said that bicycle and pedestrian improvements for connectivity to Eagles Landing Park include greenway, sidewalk, and sidepaths that would be constructed over a 3 to 7 year timeframe and connect neighborhoods to the park from multiple directions. He said that there are experiential elements that can be included in all our greenways such as public art, benches, or fitness activities. He said that things to be considered when contemplating experiential elements are easements, safety considerations (including vandalism and environmental factors) maintenance, and budget. While the focus right now is on expanding and connecting the system, planning now for future elements makes sense. Council member Larson asked if we could partner with anyone as we are expanding our greenways, maybe adopt a greenway or other partners to include some of these options. Mr. Gull said it is about establishing relationships long-term. Mr. Harrington said maintenance is one of the important considerations with those partnerships. Mr. Gull asked Council if the four proposed priority greenway segments aligned with Council's vision and asked for their thoughts on specific experiential elements on greenways.

Council consensus was that they agreed with the priorities as given. Council proposed ideas for partnerships to assist with the experiential elements including HOAs, small businesses, and volunteer groups. They agreed with incorporating what we can with the space and funding we have now and planning greenways for future additions. Specific enhancements mentioned were benches, a rainbow bridge, swings, yoga mats, and bike racks.

6. Open Discussion:

Council member Foster said she appreciates the discussion tonight and everyone's work. Council member Hewetson mentioned the CSL Seqirus event for First Responders. She said she got an email from a resident singing the praises of the fire department's response to a 911 call. She is grateful to our first responders for the work they do and the event to celebrate that good work.

Mayor Kondratick said he was honored to attend Mayfield Woodard's 90th birthday over the weekend. He said he had one request for staff. Following up on a Friday briefing where we discussed the projected timeline of projects in the Piney Grove Wilbon corridor, he would like a presentation for Council to be able to engage residents in that corridor over the next 6 weeks or so. Council agreed. Mr. Harrington confirmed that he wanted a community engagement meeting in the June timeframe.

MPT Drees was grateful that we are no longer using bottled water at these meetings. She asked for a summary on the water bill Round Up program. Mr. Harrington asked Tina Stoupe, Finance Director, to comment on the considerations on implementing this in advance of implementing the new software system. Ms. Stoupe said staff reached out to our current ERP provider and are waiting to hear back on what they could do. Staff has talked to peer communities and they are with Neighbor Up now and they actually run the program. Apex does it differently – paying staff of Neighbor Up to run it; Cary and Morrisville give Neighbor Up funds. She said next steps will be to see how Council wants to implement the program. We would have to budget money upfront to get it started, or ask people to round up before it starts. We would need to meet with Neighbor Up to discuss how it would work. We cannot do it internally, so we need to partner with someone else and they are the most likely partner.

Council member Hewetson asked how the need was determined and who makes that determination. She asked if there would be an application process, and how that would work. Ms. Stoupe said that is what we are doing now. That needs to be another part of the discussion, working with Neighbor Up to put guard rails in place. MPT Drees said it sounds like we need to do more research, but she would like to have a plan prior to August when the next rate hike is expected. Mr. Harrington said there can be more work that Ms. Stoupe and he can do and if it is the recommendation of the group he can include that in talking about the water rates. Or we can include it in the budget workshop conversation in late May and Council can address it then. Council member Hewetson asked if it is a onetime cost to get off the ground that could be funded from fund balance. Mr. Harrington said, perhaps, but we need to figure out how long it would take to reach a level that is worthwhile. He said he would welcome any guidance the group has on whether to roll it into the recommendation or tee it up at the budget workshop. Council would like something in the Friday briefing and to cue it up at the budget workshop.

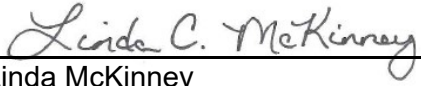
Council member Larson said the grant committee met and there were over \$50,000 of asks, and only \$20,000 available. She said there are a lot of great nonprofits and wants to ask Council to consider increasing the amount for nonprofit grants in future budgets. Consensus was agreement. Council member Larson said Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee met and discussed eBikes. The meeting in May will have the Mayor announcing the Monarch Pledge and everyone is invited. She loved the number of applications for received for PRAC and TAC and recommended applicants reach out to Council. Today is national gardening Day and the Food Cupboard has a plant sale on Saturday.

7. Closed Session: none.

8. Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn was made by Council member Deshazor, seconded by Council member Hewetson and passed with a unanimous vote. The April 14, 2026 workshop meeting of the Holly Springs Town Council was adjourned at 8:33 pm.

Respectfully submitted on Tuesday, May 19, 2026.



Linda McKinney
Town Clerk