

Policy Referral

Legislation on Quality of Life / Public Safety Issues

BUDGET, GOVERNANCE & INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

NOVEMBER 17, 2025



Policy Referral Summary

Determine any additional legislative support needed to advance public safety and Quality of Life for Charlotte, to inform the city's 2026 State Legislative Agenda

2026 Legislative Agenda Development Timeline

► October – December

- Annual staff process to develop State/Federal legislative priorities
- November 17, 2025: Special BGIR Committee discussion focused specifically on potential public safety-related items for inclusion in 2026 State Legislative Agenda

► January

- BGIR discussion regarding proposed State/Federal Legislative Agendas (Jan. 5th – tentative)

► February

- BGIR adopts State/Federal Legislative Agenda (Feb. 2nd)
- Council adopts State/Federal Legislative Agenda (Feb. 23rd)

► April

- NCGA short session commences (April 21st)

Potential Public Safety State Legislative Agenda Items

Item	Summary Description	EXAMPLES
1. State support for law enforcement recruitment/retention	Law enforcement staffing shortages are a state-wide challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bonuses for local law enforcement (new hires, and/or retention starting at year-5) Examine enhanced retirement options
2. Additional state funding to increase staffing levels for DA's Office, Public Defender's Office, and Courts	Adequately staffed criminal justice system is essential to timely justice, and could support the community's desire for more active prosecution of low-level offenses (which can be deprioritized due to staffing constraints)	Additional ADAs, public defenders, clerks and magistrates are needed, as well as higher compensation for private attorneys accepting cases assigned by the Public Defender's Office
3. Strengthen required (statutory) qualifications – and pay – for magistrates	Magistrates are often the first point of contact with the judicial system, responsible for critical decisions such as setting conditions for release and bail	Evaluate adequacy of minimum education requirement (currently allows for associate degree) and entry level pay (currently \$47,228)
4. Additional state funding for mental health support	Improving access to mental health facilities/services can be an impactful crime prevention strategy	More NCDHHS behavioral health investments in crisis services, justice-related and reentry programs
5. Strengthen North Carolina's sentencing guidelines for chronic repeat offenders	Data demonstrates a small percentage of people are responsible for a disproportionately large share of crime (felony and misdemeanor)	Strengthen NC's punishment charts for repeat offenders, with emphasis on certain misdemeanors (e.g., habitual trespass)
6. Advocate for certain quality of life violations to be prohibited by state statute	Class 3 misdemeanor (max. penalty for local ordinance violation) may not be a sufficient enforcement tool for certain egregious behaviors	Identify a short list of local ordinances (e.g., public masturbation) that warrant a stronger enforcement tool achievable through state law
7. State support to reestablish a local Juvenile Detention Center	When juvenile detention is necessary for public safety it would be beneficial to have a <u>local</u> Detention Center	Examine state-local partnerships to re-open Jail North or build another facility

Potential Public Safety State Legislative Agenda Items

Item	Summary Description	EXAMPLES
1. State support for law enforcement recruitment/retention	Law enforcement staffing shortages are a state-wide challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bonuses for local law enforcement (new hires and/or retention starting at year-5) • Examine enhanced retirement options
2. Additional state funding to increase staffing levels for DA's Office, Public Defender's Office, and Courts	Adequately staffed criminal justice system is essential to timely justice, and could support the community's desire for more active prosecution of low-level offenses (which can be deprioritized due to staffing constraints)	Additional ADAs, public defenders, clerks and magistrates are needed, as well as higher compensation for private attorneys accepting cases assigned by the Public Defender's Office
3. Strengthen required (statutory) qualifications – and pay – for magistrates	Magistrates are often the first point of contact with the judicial system, responsible for critical decisions such as setting conditions for release and bail	Evaluate adequacy of minimum education requirement (currently allows for associate degree) and entry level pay (currently \$47,228)
4. Additional state funding for mental health support	Improving access to mental health facilities/services can be an impactful crime prevention strategy	More NCDHHS behavioral health investments in crisis services, justice-related and reentry programs
5. Strengthen North Carolina's sentencing guidelines for chronic repeat offenders	Data demonstrates a small percentage of people are responsible for a disproportionately large share of crime (felony and misdemeanor)	Strengthen NC's punishment charts for repeat offenders, with emphasis on certain misdemeanors (e.g., habitual trespass)
6. Advocate for certain quality of life violations to be prohibited by state statute	Class 3 misdemeanor (max. penalty for local ordinance violation) may not be a sufficient enforcement tool for certain egregious behaviors	Identify a short list of local ordinances (e.g., public masturbation) that warrant a stronger enforcement tool achievable through state law
7. State support to reestablish a local Juvenile Detention Center	When juvenile detention is necessary for public safety it would be beneficial to have a <u>local</u> Detention Center	Examine state-local partnerships to re-open Jail North or build another facility

Potential Public Safety State Legislative Agenda Items

Item	Summary Description	EXAMPLES
1. State support for law enforcement recruitment/retention	Law enforcement staffing shortages are a state-wide challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bonuses for local law enforcement (new hires, and/or retention starting at year-5) Examine enhanced retirement options
2. Additional state funding to increase staffing levels for DA's Office, Public Defender's Office, and Courts	Adequately staffed criminal justice system is essential to timely justice, and could support the community's desire for more active prosecution of low-level offenses (which can be deprioritized due to staffing constraints)	Additional ADAs, public defenders, clerks and magistrates are needed, as well as higher compensation for private attorneys accepting cases assigned by the Public Defender's Office
3. Strengthen required (statutory) qualifications – and pay – for magistrates	Magistrates are often the first point of contact with the judicial system, responsible for critical decisions such as setting conditions for release and bail	Evaluate adequacy of minimum education requirement (currently allows for associate degree) and entry level pay (currently \$47,228)
4. Additional state funding for mental health support	Improving access to mental health facilities/services can be an impactful crime prevention strategy	More NCDHHS behavioral health investments in crisis services, justice-related and reentry programs
5. Strengthen North Carolina's sentencing guidelines for chronic repeat offenders	Data demonstrates a small percentage of people are responsible for a disproportionately large share of crime (felony and misdemeanor)	Strengthen NC's punishment charts for repeat offenders, with emphasis on certain misdemeanors (e.g., habitual trespass)
6. Advocate for certain quality of life violations to be prohibited by state statute	Class 3 misdemeanor (max. penalty for local ordinance violation) may not be a sufficient enforcement tool for certain egregious behaviors	Identify a short list of local ordinances (e.g., public masturbation) that warrant a stronger enforcement tool achievable through state law
7. State support to reestablish a local Juvenile Detention Center	When juvenile detention is necessary for public safety it would be beneficial to have a <u>local</u> Detention Center	Examine state-local partnerships to re-open Jail North or build another facility

Potential Public Safety State Legislative Agenda Items

Item	Summary Description	EXAMPLES
1. State support for law enforcement recruitment/retention	Law enforcement staffing shortages are a state-wide challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bonuses for local law enforcement (new hires, and/or retention starting at year-5) Examine enhanced retirement options
2. Additional state funding to increase staffing levels for DA's Office, Public Defender's Office, and Courts	Adequately staffed criminal justice system is essential to timely justice, and could support the community's desire for more active prosecution of low-level offenses (which can be deprioritized due to staffing constraints)	Additional ADAs, public defenders, clerks and magistrates are needed, as well as higher compensation for private attorneys accepting cases assigned by the Public Defender's Office
3. Strengthen required (statutory) qualifications – and pay – for magistrates	Magistrates are often the first point of contact with the judicial system, responsible for critical decisions such as setting conditions for release and bail	Evaluate adequacy of minimum education requirement (currently allows for associate degree) and entry level pay (currently \$47,228)
4. Additional state funding for mental health support	Improving access to mental health facilities/services can be an impactful crime prevention strategy	More NCDHHS behavioral health investments in crisis services, justice-related and reentry programs
5. Strengthen North Carolina's sentencing guidelines for chronic repeat offenders	Data demonstrates a small percentage of people are responsible for a disproportionately large share of crime (felony and misdemeanor)	Strengthen NC's punishment charts for repeat offenders, with emphasis on certain misdemeanors (e.g., habitual trespass)
6. Advocate for certain quality of life violations to be prohibited by state statute	Class 3 misdemeanor (max. penalty for local ordinance violation) may not be a sufficient enforcement tool for certain egregious behaviors	Identify a short list of local ordinances (e.g., public masturbation) that warrant a stronger enforcement tool achievable through state law
7. State support to reestablish a local Juvenile Detention Center	When juvenile detention is necessary for public safety it would be beneficial to have a <u>local</u> Detention Center	Examine state-local partnerships to re-open Jail North or build another facility

Potential Public Safety State Legislative Agenda Items

Item	Summary Description	EXAMPLES
1. State support for law enforcement recruitment/retention	Law enforcement staffing shortages are a state-wide challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bonuses for local law enforcement (new hires, and/or retention starting at year-5) Examine enhanced retirement options
2. Additional state funding to increase staffing levels for DA's Office, Public Defender's Office, and Courts	Adequately staffed criminal justice system is essential to timely justice, and could support the community's desire for more active prosecution of low-level offenses (which can be deprioritized due to staffing constraints)	Additional ADAs, public defenders, clerks and magistrates are needed, as well as higher compensation for private attorneys accepting cases assigned by the Public Defender's Office
3. Strengthen required (statutory) qualifications – and pay – for magistrates	Magistrates are often the first point of contact with the judicial system, responsible for critical decisions such as setting conditions for release and bail	Evaluate adequacy of minimum education requirement (currently allows for associate degree) and entry level pay (currently \$47,228)
4. Additional state funding for mental health support	Improving access to mental health facilities/services can be an impactful crime prevention strategy	More NCDHHS behavioral health investments in crisis services, justice-related and reentry programs
5. Strengthen North Carolina's sentencing guidelines for chronic repeat offenders	Data demonstrates a small percentage of people are responsible for a disproportionately large share of crime (felony and misdemeanor)	Strengthen NC's punishment charts for repeat offenders, with emphasis on certain misdemeanors (e.g., habitual trespass)
6. Advocate for certain quality of life violations to be prohibited by state statute	Class 3 misdemeanor (max. penalty for local ordinance violation) may not be a sufficient enforcement tool for certain egregious behaviors	Identify a short list of local ordinances (e.g., public masturbation) that warrant a stronger enforcement tool achievable through state law
7. State support to reestablish a local Juvenile Detention Center	When juvenile detention is necessary for public safety it would be beneficial to have a <u>local</u> Detention Center	Examine state-local partnerships to re-open Jail North or build another facility

Potential Public Safety State Legislative Agenda Items

Item	Summary Description	EXAMPLES
1. State support for law enforcement recruitment/retention	Law enforcement staffing shortages are a state-wide challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bonuses for local law enforcement (new hires, and/or retention starting at year-5) Examine enhanced retirement options
2. Additional state funding to increase staffing levels for DA's Office, Public Defender's Office, and Courts	Adequately staffed criminal justice system is essential to timely justice, and could support the community's desire for more active prosecution of low-level offenses (which can be deprioritized due to staffing constraints)	Additional ADAs, public defenders, clerks and magistrates are needed, as well as higher compensation for private attorneys accepting cases assigned by the Public Defender's Office
3. Strengthen required (statutory) qualifications – and pay – for magistrates	Magistrates are often the first point of contact with the judicial system, responsible for critical decisions such as setting conditions for release and bail	Evaluate adequacy of minimum education requirement (currently allows for associate degree) and entry level pay (currently \$47,228)
4. Additional state funding for mental health support	Improving access to mental health facilities/services can be an impactful crime prevention strategy	More NCDHHS behavioral health investments in crisis services, justice-related and reentry programs
5. Strengthen North Carolina's sentencing guidelines for chronic repeat offenders	Data demonstrates a small percentage of people are responsible for a disproportionately large share of crime (felony and misdemeanor)	Strengthen NC's punishment charts for repeat offenders, with emphasis on certain misdemeanors (e.g., habitual trespass)
6. Advocate for certain quality of life violations to be prohibited by state statute	Class 3 misdemeanor (max. penalty for local ordinance violation) may not be a sufficient enforcement tool for certain egregious behaviors	Identify a short list of local ordinances (e.g., public masturbation) that warrant a stronger enforcement tool achievable through state law
7. State support to reestablish a local Juvenile Detention Center	When juvenile detention is necessary for public safety it would be beneficial to have a <u>local</u> Detention Center	Examine state-local partnerships to re-open Jail North or build another facility

Potential Public Safety State Legislative Agenda Items

Item	Summary Description	EXAMPLES
1. State support for law enforcement recruitment/retention	Law enforcement staffing shortages are a state-wide challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bonuses for local law enforcement (new hires, and/or retention starting at year-5) Examine enhanced retirement options
2. Additional state funding to increase staffing levels for DA's Office, Public Defender's Office, and Courts	Adequately staffed criminal justice system is essential to timely justice, and could support the community's desire for more active prosecution of low-level offenses (which can be deprioritized due to staffing constraints)	Additional ADAs, public defenders, clerks and magistrates are needed, as well as higher compensation for private attorneys accepting cases assigned by the Public Defender's Office
3. Strengthen required (statutory) qualifications – and pay – for magistrates	Magistrates are often the first point of contact with the judicial system, responsible for critical decisions such as setting conditions for release and bail	Evaluate adequacy of minimum education requirement (currently allows for associate degree) and entry level pay (currently \$47,228)
4. Additional state funding for mental health support	Improving access to mental health facilities/services can be an impactful crime prevention strategy	More NCDHHS behavioral health investments in crisis services, justice-related and reentry programs
5. Strengthen North Carolina's sentencing guidelines for chronic repeat offenders	Data demonstrates a small percentage of people are responsible for a disproportionately large share of crime (felony and misdemeanor)	Strengthen NC's punishment charts for repeat offenders, with emphasis on certain misdemeanors (e.g., habitual trespass)
6. Advocate for certain quality of life violations to be prohibited by state statute	Class 3 misdemeanor (max. penalty for local ordinance violation) may not be a sufficient enforcement tool for certain egregious behaviors	Identify a short list of local ordinances (e.g., public masturbation) that warrant a stronger enforcement tool achievable through state law
7. State support to reestablish a local Juvenile Detention Center	When juvenile detention is necessary for public safety it would be beneficial to have a <u>local</u> Detention Center	Examine state-local partnerships to re-open Jail North or build another facility

BGIR Committee Next Steps

- ▶ Today's feedback will inform the development of the proposed State Legislative Agenda to be discussed at the first BGIR Committee meeting of 2026
- ▶ BGIR is expected to vote/adopt the 2026 State/Federal Legislative Agenda (i.e., all items, not just public safety) in the February 2026 timeframe

Potential Public Safety State Legislative Agenda Items

Item	Summary Description	EXAMPLES
1. State support for law enforcement recruitment/retention	Law enforcement staffing shortages are a state-wide challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bonuses for local law enforcement (new hires, and/or retention starting at year-5) Examine enhanced retirement options
2. Additional state funding to increase staffing levels for DA's Office, Public Defender's Office, and Courts	Adequately staffed criminal justice system is essential to timely justice, and could support the community's desire for more active prosecution of low-level offenses (which can be deprioritized due to staffing constraints)	Additional ADAs, public defenders, clerks and magistrates are needed, as well as higher compensation for private attorneys accepting cases assigned by the Public Defender's Office
3. Strengthen required (statutory) qualifications – and pay – for magistrates	Magistrates are often the first point of contact with the judicial system, responsible for critical decisions such as setting conditions for release and bail	Evaluate adequacy of minimum education requirement (currently allows for associate degree) and entry level pay (currently \$47,228)
4. Additional state funding for mental health support	Improving access to mental health facilities/services can be an impactful crime prevention strategy	More NCDHHS behavioral health investments in crisis services, justice-related and reentry programs
5. Strengthen North Carolina's sentencing guidelines for chronic repeat offenders	Data demonstrates a small percentage of people are responsible for a disproportionately large share of crime (felony and misdemeanor)	Strengthen NC's punishment charts for repeat offenders, with emphasis on certain misdemeanors (e.g., habitual trespass)
6. Advocate for certain quality of life violations to be prohibited by state statute	Class 3 misdemeanor (max. penalty for local ordinance violation) may not be a sufficient enforcement tool for certain egregious behaviors	Identify a short list of local ordinances (e.g., public masturbation) that warrant a stronger enforcement tool achievable through state law
7. State support to reestablish a local Juvenile Detention Center	When juvenile detention is necessary for public safety it would be beneficial to have a <u>local</u> Detention Center	Examine state-local partnerships to re-open Jail North or build another facility

Appendix

2025 Safety-Related Legislative Agenda

► State Legislative Agenda *

- **Public Safety:** Support initiatives to reduce community violence and improve disaster preparedness
- **Court System:** Support Mecklenburg County state court agencies as they seek the allocation of additional state resources for their operation

► Federal Legislative Agenda *

- **Public Safety:** Support initiatives to reduce community violence, improve disaster preparedness, and administer justice fairly and quickly

* 2025 State and Federal Legislative Agendas adopted by Council on December 9, 2024