



TOWN OF DURHAM
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2023-2024 Town Council Goals *
(Approved May 15, 2023)
Progress Report as of June 30, 2023

Mission

To provide ongoing stewardship for the Durham community including effective and efficient municipal services.

Core Values

Excellence, Integrity, Justice, Resilience, Respect, Transparency

Goals

Note: These goals are intended to convey a **1- to 5-year** time horizon and assume but do not list all baseline activities.

- 1. Facilitate continued optimal functioning of Town government through continuous improvement, new efficiencies, waste reduction, and inter-agency collaboration.**
 - a. Take steps as necessary to ensure Durham's IT infrastructure remains secure from cybersecurity threats, technology obsolescence, and other challenges. [IT, Business Office, Administration]

IT: We continue to monitor and patch equipment throughout the Town automatically and in rare cases manually. Working on a formal Incident Response plan with our insurer, Primex. IT Manager Luke Vincent was able to attend the annual Primex Summit in which an IT focus was on Cybersecurity and included such activities as a simulated attack, a simulated press briefing, and a deep dive into threats members are currently facing. **Next Steps:** Explore ways to extend our logging capabilities, move toward an Identity and Access Management platform, Implement .gov address, implement multi-factor authentication, create training opportunities for IT staff and system users

- b. Research whether consistent municipal financial & permitting software across all departments is possible. [Business Office, PZA Office, Fire, Public Works]

Business: Working with IT on developing an RFP for software that meets the needs of the Town. **Next Steps:** Distribute RFP and review bids.

DPW: Attended Demo with City Works. Will coordinate further vendor demos **Next Steps:** Debrief with rest of team to determine project scope and Town needs

Fire: The Fire Department is moving forward with software to assist with a public facing portal to assist with housing standards ordinance inspections. **Next Steps:** Work with vendor to develop the interface.

- c. Evaluate updating procurement guidelines to determine whether increasing purchasing thresholds due to inflation & establishing exceptions for restoration/repairs of important historic properties to ensure proper historical workmanship would be appropriate. [Business Office, DPW]

Business: Review of purchasing policy ongoing. **Next Steps:** Recommend changes to include adjustments for inflation and a potential carve out for historic rehabilitation work.

DPW: Provided recommendations for possible updates to procurement limits for internal review/discussion.

- d. Complete update to the Fire Department's strategic plan by end of 2023. [Fire]

Fire: The consultant has met with the DFD leadership team to present findings and is final stages of revising the goals and objectives. **Next Steps:** Review findings and format the document into a final product for presentation.

- e. Complete facility improvements at Fire Department within newly occupied space by end of 2023. [Fire/UNH]

Fire: The existing fire station within the UNH General Services building has completed significant second floor renovations. First floor scope of work is still ongoing. Labor has been a significant challenge for the general contractor. This has created operational challenges for the department as well. **Next Steps:** Review work, completing punch list items, and continue with inspections and approvals as needed.

- f. Although unsuccessful in 2022, pursue Federal FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant in amount of \$515,480 for replacement of 2011 SCBA equipment in 2023/24. [Fire]

Fire: A 2023 request for a Federal FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant for replacement of 2011 SCBA equipment was submitted in February 2023. **Next Steps:** Awaiting grant review feedback and response.

- g. Evaluate potential opportunities for shared municipal services with surrounding communities and external entities as opportunities arise. [All Depts./Committees]

Code Enf. This would be possible but I don't see, right now, what the advantage to Durham would be.

DPW: Ongoing effort

IT: Looking to do combined trainings and tabletops with surrounding communities such as Rochester or Dover. We have become a direct participant in the MCDP program.

[<https://www.theatgroup.com/mcdp>]

- h. Completion of Land and Mobile Radio upgrade for public safety services [12/31/23] and emergency generator installation project for Durham's critical infrastructure [6/30/24]. [IT, Police, Fire, DPW, Administration]

IT: Progress continues toward completion on the project. A nesting bird has hampered antenna installation at Foss Farm tank as of June 1st. We are working coordination with Motorola and Stafford to align the completion of this project with the larger radio upgrade project throughout the county. **Next Steps:** antenna install, microwave link install, fiber install, Radio tune-up, baseline coverage collection, testing and launch, coverage comparison

Fire: Awaiting boots on the ground installation of LMR system components.

DPW: Support LMR Team including IT, Motorola and 2 Way as needed.

Police: In process. Providing support as needed.

- i. Ongoing compliance with Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) at Durham Police Department in preparation for 2025 reaccreditation process. [Police]

Police: In process. DPD is scheduled for the yearly CALEA inspection on July 7th, 2023. **Next Steps:** Participate with the assessor and provide all required documentation.

- j. Complete Comcast/Xfinity cable franchise renewal process. [IT/DCAT/Administration]

Admin: In process. Compliance survey, which was initial step in process, is now complete.

- k. Ensure optimal working environment for staff members. [Administration/Business Office]

Admin: Evaluating through collective bargaining process whether modifications are needed within contracts across divisions to attract and retain the modern workforce. Has included a re-visit of vacation accruals based on length of service, reimbursement for bona-fide educational expenses toward advanced degrees or certifications, wages, etc.

- l. Annual orientation for new Town Councilors [Administration – Completed 4/3/23]

Admin: Completed 4/3/23.

- m. Annual orientation for new board/committee officers in fall 2023 (if needed) [Administration]

Admin: Determined not needed as most officers are continuing from last year. To the extent useful, will provide one-on-one guidance to new chairpersons.

- n. Annual forum on Right-to-Know Law for committee members and Durham community scheduled for May 25, 2023. [Administration]

Admin: Completed May 25, 2023.

- o. Replacement of 2011 aerial bucket truck totaling \$135,000 in 2023. [DPW]

DPW: Received bids back from vendors **Next Steps:** Evaluating bids and available budget for planned approval request.

- p. Replacement of 1998 Landini sidewalk snow tractor totaling \$195,000 in 2023. [DPW]

DPW: Received bids back from vendors **Next Steps:** Council Communication for approval to purchase Completed and placed on 6/5 agenda.

- q. Replacement of 2008 International combination vacuum/jet rodder truck totaling \$520,000 in 2023. [DPW]

DPW: Completed and approved by Town Council - Order Placed with CN Wood.

2. Conduct planning and take steps as necessary to protect public health and safety and provide ongoing service continuity given the anticipated impacts of climate change, the post-pandemic era, and general operational challenges.

- a. Continue to monitor and evaluate the reliability, capacity, and functionality of public water, wastewater, and stormwater services, and move ahead with associated capital initiatives as appropriate and work with the EPA and NHDES on swift enforcement for any violations that impact Durham/UNH infrastructure or resources. [DPW/Administration]

DPW: Several Capital Project on going including Emerson Road Watermain, Littlehale and Pettee Brook Culvert Improvements, Mill Pond Dam Removal and upstream UNH Dam Natural Fish Passage, MS4

permit requirements, Bennett Road Culvert, Madbury Road Complete Streets Project, etc. **Next Steps:** Continue to advance designs and construction improvements.

- b. Make changes to land use and other regulations as necessary to ensure local resilience associated with climate change in accordance with the recommendations of the Climate Action Plan. [Planning Board, Energy Committee, Conservation Commission, Agriculture Commission, Council, Administration]

Admin: Evaluation of wetland conservation overlay district is under way by DCC. First batch of changes approved by Town Council on June 5, 2023. Draft 2022 Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan still under review by FEMA as of June 27, 2023. Bennett Road culvert replacement project grant application in process.

- c. Adopt the draft Climate Adaptation Chapter as an Administrative document if not adopted as part of the Master Plan by end of 2023. [Planning Board/Administration]

Planning: Public hearing continued to June 14, 2023 and adoption by the Planning Board on that date.

- d. As time allows, evaluate the cost/benefit of buying out the 2016 Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) relative to the 640 kW Oyster River Solar Array located at the Town's Packers Falls Road gravel pit. Estimated purchase price is \$850,000. [Energy Committee/Administration]

Admin: Town Councilor Joe Friedman has reviewed PPA and we have requested Clean Capital to provide a proposal/analysis to Durham as of June 12, 2023.

- e. Continue developing plans and commencing work for the rehabilitation of both the Old Town Hall/Courthouse and the Bickford-Chesley House at Wagon Hill Farm (new roof in 2023). [DPW, Working Group, Administration]

DPW: Masonry Work (repointing) for Old Court House to be completed by Richard Irons - quote received with award pending. Wagon Hill Farmhouse - Working with LCHIP working group for grant submittal.

Next Steps: Continue efforts as described

- f. Complete annual \$490,000 road resurfacing program (with an additional \$131,250 funded by UNH for University roadways) and \$84,500 sidewalk program focusing on Emerson Road, Durham Point Road, DPW Facility lot, Misc. locations during 2023 paving season. The 2023 sidewalk program focuses on the southern side of Main Street from approx. Smith Park Lane to Mill Pond Road including ADA tip downs, relocation of crosswalk in front of Town Hall, etc. [DPW, Historic District/Heritage Commission, Planning, Administration, Council]

DPW: Contract awarded to Continental Paving for 2023 Road and Sidewalk Program - Expect Mobilization during over the next 2 weeks in early July to begin work on sidewalk. Received permit from NHDOT for work in State ROW. Emerson Road work to be completed following water main installation over the next 5 weeks. **Next Steps:** Coordinate pre-construction meeting to include traffic management plan and inspection.

Planning: Nothing new on this from Planning

3. Pursue long-term economic strength and resiliency, anticipating the community's, the region's, and the nation's economic characteristics and opportunities.

- a. Task the Administrator with meeting the following: a) Holding the updated (post-revaluation) municipal tax rate at the 2023 level or less. b) Continue to make an effort to control spending, enhance revenues, broaden the tax base, and explore innovative ways to stabilize or reduce the municipal tax rate. [Note, this item is part and parcel of adopted Council goal.]

Admin: Budget development process to begin in summer 2023.

- b. Work to secure meaningful external grant funding opportunities and successfully manage a rigorous web of required Federal, state, and third party financial and programmatic reporting.

Admin: Underway.

- c. Support as appropriate the efforts of local businesses, the Durham Business Association, and Celebrate Durham as they plan and host events and activities intended to maintain and enhance a vibrant downtown Durham. [Administration/Parks & Rec. Dept./DPW]

DPW: Coordinating with other Depts as needed. Providing support for events such as Durham Day

- d. Continue planning for the re-development of 66 Main Street beginning in spring 2024 or as circumstances dictate and consider adding the Town's Pettee Brook Parking Areas to the project. [Administration/Planning]

Planning: Nothing now. Our working group met in early-2023 and decided to revisit after UNH and Durham housing studies were completed and once impacts from the pandemic settled, perhaps next year. Hope to take up in the spring of 2024.

- e. Consider working with the General Services Administration for the possible redevelopment of U.S. Government properties in Durham. [Administration/Planning/Council]

Planning: Nothing for Planning. No action to date.

- f. Continue to work toward understanding, defining, and addressing downtown parking challenges in the post-Covid era to support local businesses, the diversification of downtown housing opportunities, and the expansion of the tax base. [Administration, Police, Code Office, Council, Planning Board]

Code Enf.: Continue enforcement of the unrelated maximum so that properties may over time become more attractive to resident homeowners.

Police: In process. We have been given approval to replace 1/3rd of the parking kiosks. The new kiosks will have updated software that will allow for pay and display and other technological improvements. Payment by App is also being explored and will be integrated over time with the new parking kiosks.

Next Steps: Order and installation of replacement kiosks, likely scheduled for Council action in July 2023.

- g. Complete the 2023 full revaluation of the Town of Durham including public engagement, mailings, and the abatement process as necessary. [Assessing Department]

Assessing: Completion date for full revaluation is July 31, 2023. Preliminary assessed values mailed week of June 16th. Informal hearings scheduled for week of June 26th. Once hearings have concluded, revised assessments will be finalized and brought to Council for approval in July (date tbd). USPAP manual to be completed 30 days after MS-1 submitted to DRA. Abatements may be applied for at local level after December tax bills issued. **Next Steps:** Continue review of contractor's work.

- h. Navigate planned retirement transition of Assessor position scheduled to occur in early 2024. [Assessing/Administration]

Assessing: Retirement date scheduled for late 2023 or early 2024. Job posting in September/October 2023. **Next Steps:** Consult with Administration regarding replacement. We have evaluated three potential scenarios, each to include an annual statistical update, as follows: 1) Status quo with experienced assessor capable of undertaking statistical update in-house; 2) Assessing technician requiring more robust external contractor services; 3) Contract out for assessing services. At this time

we are leaning toward scenario 1. Plan to advertise for replacement in late-August/September 2023 with a possible December 2023 start date but the plan is not yet set in stone.

4. Pursue long-term environmental sustainability and resiliency, taking into account existing and predicted impacts of climate change in multiple areas including drinking water, agriculture, food, society, transportation, ecology, and economy.

- a. Take steps that reflect the implementation and, when appropriate, revisions to Durham's Climate Action Plan (CAP) toward a reduction in GHG emissions of 2019 levels by 42.8% by 2030, and achieving zero emissions by 2050. [Energy Committee/Administration/UNH Sustainability Fellow]

Admin: Energy Committee is in the process of developing an action plan as of June 2023. Evaluating potential grant possibilities to bolster Durham's efforts.

- b. Evaluate whether Durham's commitment to the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy (GCoM) has been effective and whether that commitment going forward is the best framework for achieving Durham's CO2 reduction goals. [Energy Committee/Administration/UNH Sustainability Fellow]

Admin: To be evaluated in fall/winter 2023.

- c. Work with the Town Clerk, Town Assessor, Code Officer, and Admin. Asst. to Administrator to implement a method for tracking EV adoption and building electrification in Durham and create a plan for promoting and educating residents on both. [Administration/Energy Committee]

Admin: Town Clerk and Admin. Office have set up a mechanism to track number of EV/Hybrid vehicles registered in Durham, as well as building permits issued for efficiency/weatherization/electrification work at private properties.

- d. Complete an updated greenhouse gas inventory using previous modeling methodologies and evaluate the feasibility of using a consumption-based model for the inventory by May 2024. [UNH Sustainability Fellow]

Admin: We have just onboarded our new UNH Sustainability Fellow and will be tackling this summer/fall.

- e. Monitor and continue evaluating opportunities to move forward with Durham Community Power with the goal that the default rate is less than Eversource and the renewable content is greater. [Administration/Energy Committee]

Admin: Community Power being evaluated by working group – potentially CPCNH or Standard Power utilizing the recent Keene bid process.

- f. Support efforts of the Integrated Waste Management Advisory Committee, Agricultural Commission, and Public Works to reduce municipal solid waste landfill use through a volume-based approach and increase composting. [DPW/Integrated Waste Management Advisory Committee]

DPW: Public Works attending meetings and providing support. Continuing to develop plan for implementation of automated collection of MSW and single stream recycling and compaction of MSW and single stream Recycling at the Transfer Station. Next Steps: Continue efforts as described.

- g. Complete the regulatory requirements for dam removal, secure grant funding and finalize the Mill Pond dam removal plan and river restoration design, including the possibility of adding a fish ladder to the upstream UNH dam, such that permitting and contractor bids can be secured in 2024. [DPW/Administration]

DPW: Continued progress in design and permitting ongoing. VHB provided an update to Council on June 26, 2023.

- h. Move forward with Phases II and III of the Wagon Hill Farm Shoreline Restoration project. [DPW, UNH, NHDES Coastal Program, Administration]

DPW: Finalized contract with Streamworks for final design of Phase 2 improvements. Procured wetland delineation services and flagged wetlands. Procured Archeological Phase 1A Services - Report from Monadnock Arch. Services Pending **Next Steps:** Complete design by late June 2023 for NFWF Grant Submittal requesting +/- \$2 Million to complete construction improvements.

- i. Work with City of Portsmouth to mitigate impacts to Wagon Hill Farm as part of waterline replacement project under Little Bay. [DPW/Administration]

DPW: Finalized Agreement with Portsmouth and received favorable support from Durham Town Council in spring 2023. **Next Steps:** Execute Agreement with updated Exhibit A and monitor project permitting progress. NHDOT driveway permit submitted for access to WHF via new temporary access per ongoing conversations with Portsmouth.

- j. Support local and regional efforts to promote and improve the long-term health of the Great Bay Watershed, including its tributaries and surrounding catchment areas. [DPW/Administration/Conservation Commission/Planning Board/Council]

DPW: Ongoing work with WWTP, stormwater improvements, involvement with Epping AO **Next Steps:** Continue efforts as described.

- k. Continue to support the proactive stewardship of Town-owned lands and other lands in Durham held in conservation or under easement with nonprofit organizations while improving appropriate and sustainable public access and use of those lands. [Land Stewardship Subcommittee, Land Stewardship Coordinator, DPW, Administration]

DPW: Working with Land Steward to plan and implement projects. Coordinated with volunteer groups for maintenance projects at WHF Shoreline, Jackson's Landing, Town Landing, etc. **Next Steps:** Ongoing coordination.

- l. In 2023, review and possibly update renewable energy exemptions now available to property owners under NH laws in order to support community transition to renewable energy alternatives versus fossil fuels. [Assessing Office/Energy Committee/Administration]

Assessing: Municipality has adopted RSA 72:62 Exemption for Solar Energy Systems. **Next Steps:** Discuss with Energy Committee and Administration.

- m. Support and preserve a potential and/or working landscape of farms, gardens, and forests. [Agricultural Commission, Land Stewardship Subcommittee, Conservation Commission]

Admin: Nothing to report at present.

5. Pursue long-term social resiliency and quality of life in Durham intended to strengthen the community in a welcoming and inclusive manner by supporting the needs of residents, families, and other identified stakeholders by offering a wide array of active and passive parks & recreation and library opportunities,

programming, events, facilities, and publicly facing educational information celebrating the rich tapestry of Durham history.

- a. Continue to work to preserve the health and vitality of Durham’s neighborhoods by addressing noise, trash, and zoning violations. [Code Office, Police, DPW, Planning Board, Administration, Council]

Code Enf.: Consistently enforce regulations so that consequences become anticipated and avoided.

DPW: Completed Annual Bulky waste cleanup. Recommend we revisit this practice for future years. Work with Code Enforcement as needed.

Planning: Nothing new for Planning.

Police: Ongoing with the police department.

- b. Work with the NH Division of Historic Resources to develop updated wording on the State Historic Marker commemorating the July 18, 1694 attack on the Oyster River settlement by Native American forces under French command during King William’s War consistent with the above stated goal. [Durham Historic Association, Historic District/Heritage Commission, Human Rights Commission, Administration, Council]

Admin: Ongoing discussion by the HDC/HC and to a lesser extent the Human Rights Commission.

- c. Support efforts to investigate opportunities, challenges, and options to ensure the availability of a full range of housing types in Durham. [Housing Task Force, Energy Committee, Human Rights Commission, Conservation Commission, Agricultural Commission]

Planning: Ongoing effort. Working closely with Housing Task Force. Housing survey being discussed as of early-June 2023.

- d. Support ongoing improvement of pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and access to public transportation. [Administration, UNH, DPW, Planning]

Planning: Nothing new for Planning.

DPW: Integrated into all transportation related projects i.e. Madbury Road Complete Streets, Road and Sidewalk Project, crosswalk evaluation, Stealth Stat Requests. Prioritize pedestrian Travel in Winter Maintenance Program. Will be coordinating with UNH on a crosswalk/pedestrian signalizations study through downtown and additional Town-identified locations. Total cost \$75,000 with around \$65,000 covered by UNH and \$10,000 covered by Durham. **Next Steps:** Continued Focus.

- e. Move forward with multi-phased Madbury Road Complete Streets and water/sewer initiative over the next four to five years. [DPW, Administration, Council]

DPW: Completed Design and Permitting of Littlehale and Pettee Brook Edgewood Culvert - Bid Projects on 6/2/2023 with bids to be received on 7/5. Received recommendation from Sen. Shaheen on CDR of +/- \$5 Million for utility improvements requiring schedule revisions for utility construction until we confirm if funding will be included in FY24 Federal Budget. **Next Steps:** Award Culvert projects and manage construction while Continuing to Advance design for balance of project.

- f. Support initiatives that welcome diversity, equity, and inclusion within our community. [All]

Code Enf. Be open to discussing new ideas and methods suggested by residents

Fire: Four members of the fire department leadership team are enrolled in the Cornell University Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion certificate program.

IT: In the next version of the Town's website we should adopt the ADA guidance to accessibility [<https://www.ada.gov/resources/web-guidance/>]

Planning: HDC working on new language for the Oyster River Massacre state marker that is respectful of all parties.

Police: Increase training in ethics, de-escalation and bias.

- g. [Edit Town forms to include a nonbinary option by the end of 2023. \[Business Office/Administration\]](#)

Business: Ongoing.

- h. [Update 2003 General Public Assistance/Welfare Regulations for readoption in 2023. \[Business Office\]](#)

Business: Developed by the Business Office in spring 2023 and approved by the Town Council on June 26, 2023.

- i. [Update Elderly Exemptions qualification thresholds for income and assets \(last updated around 2017\) to coincide with 2023 revaluation. \[Assessing\]](#)

Assessing: As a result of the full revaluation and increase in property assessments in tax year 2023 as well as inflation rate since 2016 (when last updated) recommendations for revisions to Elderly, Blind and Disabled exemptions will be brought to Council for approval in July/August 2023, with effective date 4/1/2024. **Next Steps:** Finish analyzing recommended qualification thresholds.

6. Continue cooperative and collaborative efforts with UNH to enhance mutual intellectual, cultural, environmental, social, and economic benefits associated with hosting New Hampshire’s flagship state university.

- a. [Work collaboratively with UNH to develop The Edge at West End in ways that support both Town and Gown. \[Planning/Administration/Council\]](#)

Planning: Nothing new. Waiting for word from UNH to move forward with PUD. In addition, UNH will shortly begin to undertake a 10-year Campus Master Plan update and will be including representatives from Durham on various subcommittees. Planner Michael Behrendt and UNH Campus Stewardship Director Ken Weston are in discussions about this upcoming process.

7. Leverage town committees and subcommittees to develop tactical plans to align with the broader goals of the Council and encourage them to collaborate with each other and communicate as necessary with the community at large.

- a. [Town committees are encouraged to outline 3-5 goals with the Council & Administrator that support initiatives outlined herein as well as plans for working to achieve them.](#)

Admin: Under discussion by various committees of the Town.

Parks & Rec. Committee:

1. Collaborate with Downtown Businesses for Community Events- *aligns with TC goals 5 & 7*
2. Connect with Lee & Madbury Rec. Committees/Staff: Possible partnerships with programs, events and resources. Marketing recreation efforts of the three towns cohesively to the OR community. *aligns with TC goal 5*
3. Support DPR in the parks/playground community needs assessment- *aligns with TC goals 1 & 6*
4. Support Director/Rink Manager Goal to Create a working group for Churchill Rink- Help guide renovation planning, fundraising efforts, and decision-making as needed- aligns with TC goals 1, 3, 4 & 5
5. Create P&R specific Data/Impact Reports & Graphics- *aligns with TC goals 3 & 7*

6. Investigate Potential Grant Opportunities (Playgrounds)- *aligns with TC goals 3*

** Note that the order of the goals does not imply priority.*