



TOWN OF DURHAM
8 Newmarket Road
Durham, NH 03824-2898
603.868.5571
www.ci.durham.nh.us

2023-2024 Town Council Goals *
(Approved May 15, 2023)
Progress Report as of September 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've submitted a request for funding in the 2024 operating budget. We've picked a cloud vendor who provides both IAM and RMM. We have submitted an application to the SLCGP who should be issuing MFA tokens by the end of year. **Next Steps:** Continue work on IR plan, coordinated tabletop with Primex and Rochester IT.

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

Code Enforcement: PW is looking at an overall program. I have watched the demo but it appeared to be focused on a much larger building department.

DPW: In progress no additional meetings undertaken. **Next Steps:** Debrief with rest of team to determine project scope and Town needs

Fire: Nothing new to report. **Next Steps:** Standby, work with vendor to explore and/or develop the interface.

Business Office: Ongoing discussion on needs.

- 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: Recommend changes. **Next Steps:** Review begun of current purchasing guidelines and monetary limits and what adjustments are to be recommended due to inflation.

DPW: Provided recommendations for possible updates to procurement limits for internal review/discussion. **Next Steps:** Review by Business office and Town Manager

Admin: We paused to see what was happening with inflation across the country and construction pricing locally, etc. Generally speaking, the cost to procure goods and services continues to rise and an adjustment is warranted.

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

Fire: The plan materials have been delivered to the fire department and the chief is reviewing the content with the town administrator. **Next Steps:** Final proof with photo updates for review and then publication.

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

Fire: The fire chief continues to work with UNH facilities to achieve inspections and approvals. **Next Steps:** Obtain occupancy permit for decon. room. Demolish legacy laundry area and install SCBA compressor. Paint exterior facade. Install interior and exterior sign packages. Follow up on emergency power for administrative suite.

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: In process. Durham Fire had submitted an application in 2022 but we were unsuccessful in obtaining the grant. A renewed application was resubmitted in 2023 and we’re hopeful we’ll be funded this year. **Next Steps:** Awaiting results from grant application.

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 as opportunities arise.

IT: Due the scheduling issues the MCDP is requiring a new setup process to participate. Still planning on future dates for collaboration in the program. **Next Steps:** Reestablish scheduled sessions

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: This has been a major project for several departments working in cooperation. LMR is currently undergoing functional tests. All networks are in place and event monitoring has been enabled for sites. R56 audits have been done and only minor issues found. Working toward project completion this fall.

Next Steps: Consider site electrical protection. Install of HVAC at Stoke site. Baseline test of points in Town using 3039B analyzer through the county.

Fire: In process. Durham equipment has been installed and vendors conducted R56 electrical inspections in September for WUNH, Foss Farm, and Stoke Hall equipment sites. **Next Steps:** Initial equipment operational system testing is scheduled for Durham and Strafford County in October.

DPW: Progress continued to be made - supported IT, Motorola and 2 Way 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: We were evaluated beginning on July 7th by CALEA. Durham Police Department was found to be in full compliance with only one recommended policy change which was accomplished immediately upon discovery.

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. We await follow up from Comcast but our regional representative has retired and there is a delay in the process.

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

Admin: Completed. 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. **Next steps:** Completed collective bargaining including negotiations, tentative agreements, and ratification votes for both Durham Professional Municipal Management Association (6/23) and AFSCME Public Works (3/23).

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: Completed. 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: Will rebid later this fall when dealers have updated pricing - no pricing available at this time

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

DPW: Purchase completed.

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

DPW: Purchase completed

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: Emerson Road Project Complete, Ross Road Emergency Repair completed and Wetland App Filed, Littlehale and Pettee Brook Culverts bid with award pending, Bennett Road culvert feasibility study

complete awaiting EPA approval of CDR funding grant, Design continues to be advanced for Mill Pond Dam, Madbury Road Project design continues to advance.

- 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, Ag. Commission, Council, Administration]

Admin: Complete. Evaluation of wetland conservation overlay district changes completed by DCC and adopted by Council in June 2023. 2022 Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan still under review by FEMA as of October 10, 2023. We don't expect any changes.

- 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: Complete. Adoption by the Planning Board on June 14, 2023.

- 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. We plan to invite Clean Capital to attend an upcoming Energy Committee meeting to discuss. Ongoing.

- 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: Roofing project at Bickford Chesley House Complete, LCHIP Grant for Bickford House submitted site visit scheduled for 9/26, Courthouse mortar repairs scheduled for October.

- 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: Town Paving program nearing completion with Emerson Road binder and sidewalk to be completed in October. Durham Public Works lot topcoat planned to be completed on September 29th.

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 is under way. To be provided to Council by the last business day in October. Very directly, there is insufficient new revenue coming on line through redevelopment projects to offset the impact of naturally occurring increases in spending to accomplish this goal effectively.

- 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 across all departments as opportunities present themselves. To date, we have been very successful in this area.

- 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: Coordinate with other Departments as needed and provide support in redevelopment technical evaluations example: Tideline public house review and coordination.

Admin: We continue to be on the lookout for opportunities for the Town to support local groups and organizations that are themselves providing programming that helps to support the Town's overall mission.

- 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: The group met in early-spring and decided to hold off further. We probably won't visit this issue for at least another year and minimally not until the University's graduate housing study is complete. In the meantime, the parcel has been put to productive use as a pocket park, site for the Durham Farmers' Market, business parking permit parking, etc.

- 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: Kiosks have been ordered and we are awaiting shipment. We also implemented a new payment system – ParkMobile - which allows customers to download an app and to pay for parking without having to purchase time at a parking kiosk. The ParkMobile App had just launched as of 9/23. Fine tuning parking along Dennison, Coe, Strafford Ave as downtown parking needs change.

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

Assessing: The 2023 full revaluation and final notices have been mailed to property owners. The USPAP Report is being drafted and will be completed 30 days after the MS-1 is submitted to the DRA, which was the week of September 11th. The project has been very successful.

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

Assessing: Retirement date is tentatively scheduled for February 29, 2024. In process of reviewing/updating job description and drafting job posting. **Next Steps:** Plan to advertise for

replacement first of November with a possible January 2024 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 steps to help pursue this goal. Evaluating potential grant possibilities to bolster Durham’s efforts. Continuing to evaluate CPCNH or a private provider such as Standard Power to kick off a community power initiative.

- 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: Under evaluation. To date, we believe it is possible to comply in a more efficient and less time consuming manner than was the case in 2022. This effort is being led by our UNH Sustainability Fellow.

- 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: Complete. 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: Our new UNH Sustainability Fellow is Erin Dennehy and she is working to have an updated GGI for both 2021 and 2022. We are waiting on Eversource data to be able to complete the studies.

- 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: Developed and presented findings and recommendation for installations of compactors and single stream recycling and solid waste collection to IWMAC and Planning Board. Reviewed plans during budget meetings. **Next Steps:** Continue to advance program design to implementation. The Administrator is interested in launching the volume-based initiative in 2024/25 and DPW was able to

secure a \$740,000 grant +/- to offset the cost of 45% of two new EV trash/recycling collection vehicles. These would be the first two such EV vehicles in NH.

- 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: Continuing to develop design and permitting package. Have secured significant grant dollars to largely offset the originally projected cost of this project for Durham taxpayers.

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

DPW: Submitted grants to NFWF and CZM programs for \$1.9 million in funding. In process of finalizing design, spec and bid package. Schedule virtual site visit with NFWF. **Next Steps:** Awaiting results of grant submittal LOI and applications. We are optimistic about the likelihood of being funded.

- 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: Project bid over \$20 million over estimate Portsmouth is evaluation options. **Next Steps:** Working with Portsmouth to evaluate possible interconnections with Portsmouth and Durham systems as part of Dover interconnection study/project.

- 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: Worked with UNH Proves, Liberty Mutual, service palooza and other groups over the summer to improve town lands. **Next Steps:** Ongoing coordination.

Admin: The Lands Stewardship Coordinator is doing yeoman work in this area in conjunction with the Land Stewardship Subcommittee.

- 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: Will review once revaluation process is behind us.

- 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: Continue with Solid waste initiative and review of bulky waste program. Complete HHW day collection to ensure proper disposal.

Planning: Nothing new for Planning.

Police: On going. Our POP Officer continues to follow-up on all noise disturbances as well as disorderly behavior call reported to the police.

- 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. The Durham Historic Association is also an active party as part of these discussions as is the NH Commission for Native American Affairs. The HDC/HC is working to organize a forum to try to find a solution to this issue in conjunction with the NH Division of Historic Resources.

- 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 effect with Housing Task Force. Visiting pocket neighborhood development in Dover on October 12.

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

Planning: Nothing new for Planning.

DPW: Undertook Pedestrian crosswalk study in conjunction with UNH project to review short term and long-term improvements to increase pedestrian safety. Included 2 RRFB's in FY2024 Budget for installation at identified locations. 2 additional RRFB's potentially in 2025 as well.

- 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: Roadway, Drainage and Utility project funding included in FY2024 Budget for planned construction in upcoming construction year. Applied for and was originally included in Federal earmark legislation for funding courtesy of Senator Shaheen but due to budget compromise package funding was reduced and the project was cut. We continue to seek additional external funding to support project parameters.

- 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: Three members of the fire department leadership team have completed the Cornell University Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion certificate program. **Next Steps:** Deliver training component to the fire department leadership team.

IT: Budget request for DCAT hardware to support, among other things, closed captioning in 1+ languages in real time. Website/Hosting RFP in progress but deadline has shifted a year out. **Next Steps:** Complete RFP process, if approved get CASTUS replacement scheduled.

Planning: Organizing meeting with stakeholders to discuss wording of Oyster River Massacre NH State Marker. The sign removed by NH Historic Resources a while ago after concern was expressed by the NH Commission for Native American Affairs.

- 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: Completed.

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

Assessing: Council approved revisions to elderly, blind and disabled income, asset and exemption limits on 9/11/2023. Complete.

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: Continuing discussions with Ken Weston, UNH Campus Architect. They received grant for NOAA building so we will need to plan for the building before the West Edge Master Plan is finalized.
Admin: Participate with representatives of DPD and DFD on the UNH Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) committee.

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.*