

2025/26 Town Council Goals

Approved June 16, 2025

Mission

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

Core Values

Excellence, Honesty, Integrity, Justice, Resilience, Respect, Transparency

Goal 1 - Facilitate optimal functioning of Town government through continuous improvement, new efficiencies, waste reduction, and inter-agency collaboration.

- A. Continuously assess cybersecurity risks and address vulnerabilities, with a focus on enhancing security at the Wastewater Facility.
- B. Analyze options for Councilors and potentially committee chairs to use municipal email accounts.

Goal 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. Update long-term feasibility planning with UNH for the future Durham Fire Station capital project (Waterworks Road or B-Lot, as determined), and raise awareness of improvements needed for MacGregor Memorial EMS buildings.

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

- A. The Council, Administrator, local Boards, and Departments will work collaboratively to broaden and diversify Durham's tax base as the primary strategy for maintaining a stable municipal tax rate, adjusted over time for inflation using the Boston-Cambridge-Newton CPI-U and trends in construction and labor markets. This includes promoting taxable business development in the commercial core, guided by smart growth principles and at key locations such as Technology Drive and Stone Quarry Drive. It also involves partnering with UNH on economic development projects like The Edge at West End and potentially 66 Main Street. At the same time, we will continue to manage spending and reserve levels prudently, increase non-tax revenues and external grant funding where possible, and make the strategic personnel and capital investments necessary to support the ongoing delivery of high-quality services for residents and businesses.
- B. Continue to develop and adopt ordinance and policy changes that increase the availability of a full range of housing options.
- C. Increase connection and collaboration between the Town and local businesses to help foster a supportive and beneficial atmosphere to increase the desirability and profitability of downtown Durham.

- D. Respond to federal or state economic policy changes that negatively impact the Town, acting swiftly to protect essential operations and community services. The Council may issue statements or resolutions as needed.

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

- A. Work toward continued Town-wide reductions in solid waste generation per resident through full implementation of a volume-based collection system.
- B. Support pedestrian, public and active transportation alternatives to the automobile, and continue taking steps to address downtown multi-modal options such as the Cat Trax bikeshare program.
- C. Encourage and enable local and residential food production, preservation, and storage, and protect existing farming businesses and infrastructure, through policies that aid in or remove barriers to local food production and consumption to include ordinances/resolutions, development, and the expansion of community gardens.
- D. Finalize the 2025–2030 Climate Action Plan working toward reduction strategies to achieve a 42.8% carbon reduction by 2030 are integrated into long-term planning. Engage committees, departments, and most importantly the broader community in implementation.
- E. Improve accuracy of the greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory by tracking electric vehicle registrations and heat pump installations in collaboration with the Town Clerk and Assessor Offices.
- F. Align long-range capital improvement planning (CIP) with the 2024 Durham Multi-hazard Climate Mitigation Plan and the 2023 Climate Adaptation Chapter of the Master Plan.

Goal 5 - Pursue long-term social resiliency and quality of life in Durham intended to strengthen the community in a welcoming and inclusive manner.

- A. Proactively anticipate, monitor and respond to changes in federal and state laws and policies, particularly those that may affect human rights or the well-being of residents, students, and employees, through coordinated action with UNH and other relevant partners. When necessary, express clear and timely concerns to safeguard the safety and rights of the entire Durham community.
- B. Make all Town operations inclusive of non-binary options.
- C. Support the recreational, educational, and social needs of residents through Parks & Recreation, Durham Public Library, and programming for all ages including the celebration of Durham's rich history.
- D. Explore establishing an Arts Commission for the Town of Durham.

Goal 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. Encourage the UNH administration to collaborate with Durham's Administrator on decisions and planning that affect the university, the town, local businesses, and residents.
- B. Encourage UNH to actively promote awareness among Durham residents and invite their participation in the university's athletic, cultural, social, health and fitness, recreational, and educational programs.
- C. Endeavor to establish Durham as an epicenter of off-campus volunteerism and research by UNH students, faculty, and staff.

Goal 7 - Lead efforts to promote inter-municipality awareness and collaboration on issues of mutual interest and concern.

- A. Establish working relationships with municipal officials in surrounding communities to foster a timely and collaborative regional network.
- B. Oppose state attempts to undermine local authority and control through vocal, visible, collaborative opposition.

Note: The numerical order of the goals does not imply priority.