



TOWN COUNCIL
Public Input Session
March 13, 2021
Cape Charles Civic Center
2:00 PM

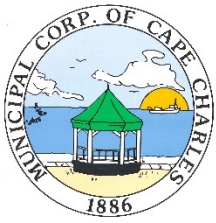
1. Call to Order
 - A. Roll Call
 - B. Establish quorum
2. Receive Public Input re: Draft Community Strategic Plan (3 minutes)
3. Adjournment

After careful consideration of health and safety concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic and due to the nature of the business to be discussed, this Town Council meeting is being held in-person at the Cape Charles Civic Center to allow citizens to provide their direct input regarding the Draft Community Strategic Plan.

The Mayor, Town Council and management are confident that the Civic Center can safely accommodate ten members of the public for in-person attendance while meeting the social distancing guidelines. Masks will be required. As each person concludes their comments, they will be asked to leave the building and another individual will be permitted to enter. Please also provide a written copy of your comments to the Town Clerk to be compiled for Council review and inclusion in the minutes in their entirety.

This meeting will be [live streamed on Facebook](#) and the computer lab at the Cape Charles Memorial Library will be open for those who do not have internet or computer access at their homes.

Individuals unable to attend in person are encouraged to email their comments to clerk@capecharles.org prior to the meeting.



Municipal Corp. of Cape Charles

March 1, 2021

Greetings Cape Charles,

I am so thrilled to let you know about a new strategic planning effort that the Town Council, the Town Planning Commission, and I have recently worked on, which is now ready for your review and feedback.

Cape Charles is a wonderful place to live, work, and visit and we all want to keep it that way. So it is important for us to come together as a community to help define just what it is that makes Cape Charles, Cape Charles. To express our community values, to develop a vision for our future, and to shape the strategies needed to get us there. That's community strategic planning, and we would sure appreciate your thoughts on what we have come up with so far.

The attached draft plan is intended to be relatively short and hopefully easy to follow. It is meant to represent the character and priorities of the town, which can be updated every year. And unlike other planning efforts that never seem to go anywhere, we are hopeful this one can succeed because of you. With enough citizen involvement, this plan becomes a true "community" plan, serving to inspire town decision makers appropriately.

Unfortunately, the current pandemic is putting a crimp in our plans for the hoped-for public interaction. This plan deserves a full-blown Town Hall style meeting where we can properly engage with community members. And while that is what we will certainly do for future updates; this year's COVID restrictions will require a modified format.

While we'd be very happy to take your written comments, if you'd like to come and provide your thoughts in-person, there will be a public input session on Saturday, March 13th at the Civic Center. We'll start at 2:00 pm and stay until everyone is heard. We ask that you also provide your comments in writing to the Town Clerk for the record. The meeting will be live-streamed on Facebook as well. Please understand that if we reach maximum capacity, we'll need to ask speakers to leave once they've finished their comments to allow others to come in. So this will resemble a public hearing.

But once the public has weighed in, and this plan is properly adopted, the town will finally have a meaningful roadmap to the future; and I'm so excited to pledge my support to help facilitate it.

I want to thank you for your time and attention, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Mayor William "Smitty" Dize



The Town of Cape Charles
Draft
Community Strategic Plan
2021



Community Strategic Plan

What is a Strategic Plan, and what makes it different than our Comprehensive Plan? These are great questions, and understanding this difference is critical to any evaluation of this document.

A local Comprehensive Plan is required by Virginia Administrative Code, which prescribes a detailed set of procedures and requirements. A Comprehensive Plan is a lengthy, intricate document, that can take a very long time to create. Due to its complexity and the length of the process to develop it, the average citizen does not typically take the time to study a Comprehensive Plan in detail.

Strategic Plans on the other hand are much nimbler, they can be customized to the particular needs of the community, and can be more easily digestible by members of the public. Strategic Plans can also happen quicker, which facilitates more interest and better participation by community members.

A good Strategic Plan can help implement an existing Comprehensive Plan, and/or can serve to inform the development of a Comprehensive Plan update (the Planning Commission is working on that now). Strategic Plans generally capture the broader aspirations of the community and can be updated frequently (as much as annually if desired), making the Strategic Plan a living document; flexible enough to react to current community developments in real time.

This Strategic Plan starts broad, and then becomes more specific. It begins with community ideals. Those values that are important to us and define us as a community. These values then inspire a vision; a brief statement that looks to the future; is a source of inspiration; and serves to identify the ideals or characteristics desired in our future.

The plan then focuses on the discrete goals needed to achieve the vision. These goals are defined by metrics and can be ongoing. The vision and goals represent the long-term view. The specific strategies needed to attain these goals are more short-term in nature and are considered objectives. They are the distinct, measurable deliverables that are affordable and implementable actions the Town can work into its annual work plans.

Objectives are the most fluid part of the Strategic Plan. As certain objectives are completed, others may be added, contributing to the living nature of this document. Therefore, the objectives listed here should not be considered the definitive or final word, but rather what is considered important or desirable to consider first.

Future updates to the Strategic Plan will solicit input from town boards and commissions, other community groups, and the public at large. Ultimately, public approval and validation of the Strategic Plan is what will be needed to provide the authority required to ensure its implementation.

Community Strategic Plan

Our Community Values:

- Friendliness
- Sense of Community
- Heritage – Traditional
- Diversity – Tolerance
- Determination
- Caring
- Hope – Optimism
- Adaptability
- Respect
- Citizenship



Our Vision:

Preserve our historical, natural, and cultural resources, while fostering a sense of community that enhances well-being and prosperity, now and for generations to come

Community Strategic Plan

Our Goals*:

- **To retain the small-town character of Cape Charles**
 - Metric: citizen confirmation in annual survey
- **To maintain the authentic character of the historic district**
 - Metric: maintain status on the national registry and a satisfactory audit from the Dept of Historic Resources
- **To protect and maintain the beach**
 - Metric: no degradation via annual survey
- **To protect and maintain the harbor**
 - Metric: maintain/increase occupancy
- **To plan for coastal resiliency**
 - Metric: develop an implementable plan
- **To protect and improve public green/open space infrastructure**
 - Metric: develop an implementable plan
- **To retain and expand businesses in a business-friendly environment**
 - Metric: increase in business licenses, increase in business-related taxes, and data from building permits issued and an annual questionnaire on employment
- **To advance a variety of housing options for younger families and workforce**
 - Metric: increase in related census data
- **To meet our residents' expectation for Town services**
 - Metric: minimal complaints (annual survey)

*Not in any particular order

Community Strategic Plan

Our Objectives:



- Retain the small-town character of Cape Charles:
 - a. Encourage a sense of engagement and inclusion among our community service organizations:
 - i. Boards and Commissions asked to provide a semi-annual briefing to Council
 - ii. Create a social volunteer appreciation event – volunteer of the year award
 - iii. Hold an annual strategic plan forum to get input from all civic groups
 - iv. Quarterly recognition of a board or commission member in the Gazette

Note: Current Cape Charles Civic Groups – Friends of the Library, Citizens for Central Park, Cape Charles Main Street, Cape Charles Rotary, Cape Charles Historical Society, Cape Charles Rosenwald School Restoration Initiative, Cape Charles Yacht Club, New Roots Youth Garden, GEAR, Arts Enter

- b. Encourage Citizen Engagement:
 - i. Create Facebook events for public events (continue post COVID)
 - ii. Add calendar of public meetings to monthly water bills
 - iii. Name badges or Town clothing for officials to wear during public events
 - iv. Hold a State of the Town – Town Hall semi-annual meeting

Community Strategic Plan

- c. Maintain/improve walkability:
 - i. Continue Community Trail
 - ii. Improve and add sidewalks
 - a. Press for state maintenance
 - b. Explore ordinance changes for rehabilitation and resale
 - iii. Support Rails to Trails project
- d. Promote community/quirky events:
 - i. Centralized calendar of events (sharing information)
- e. Promote the arts and entertainment:
 - i. Providing services and venues at no cost to local non-profits
- f. Study short-term rental regulations and make recommendations
- g. Foster a safe golf cart culture:
 - i. Better signage
 - ii. Better enforcement (Information to Rentals)
 - iii. Establish charging stations
 - iv. Designate golf cart parking spots
 - v. Foster positive relationship with golf cart rental companies
- Maintain the authentic character of the historic district:
 - a. Review and update the ordinances and guidelines of the Historic District Review Board
 - b. Encourage the mission of historic preservation organizations/efforts
 - i. Invite to provide Council briefings
 - c. Review the Christopher Newport University perception on Cape Charles preservation
- Protect and maintain the beach:
 - a. Update beach/dune management plan to include specific parameters for beach management and desired beach size/characteristics
 - b. Continue annual surveys and sand replenishment budget
 - c. Evaluate survey data to determine erosion protection strategy

Community Strategic Plan

- Protect and maintain the harbor:
 - a. Issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to determine market forces (i.e. Co-Op markets) necessary to promote a healthy balance of commercial and recreational users
 - b. Develop long-term major maintenance and replacement plan
- Plan for coastal resiliency:
 - a. Develop an implementable plan, to include the Resilience Adaptation Feasibility Tool (RAFT) recommendations
- Protect and improve public green/open space infrastructure:
 - a. Review existing/previous plans and develop an implementable plan
- Retain and expand businesses in a business-friendly environment:
 - b. Develop a public/private collaboration effort to guide business development and help remove obstacles (i.e. Cape Charles Main Street (CCMS))
 - i. Review ordinances, regulations, and processes to identify business impediments
 - ii. Work with CCMS to develop a business tool kit to assist with common questions/concerns
 - c. Improve business access to workforce resources:
 - i. Develop programs with high schools & Eastern Shore Community College (ESCC)
 - ii. Job Fairs through Northampton County Chamber of Commerce, Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce, and/or Eastern Shore Tourism
 - iii. Develop internships and apprenticeships (Dept of Labor & Industry - DOLI)
 - d. Improve availability of a variety of workforce housing options (see below)
- Advance a variety of housing options for younger families and workforce:
 - b. Participate in regional housing study and evaluate recommendations
 - c. Participate in ordinance barriers to workforce housing study and develop recommendations
 - d. Explore the viability of a workforce housing ordinance

Community Strategic Plan

- Meet our residents' expectation for Town services:
 - a. Establish service standards
 - b. Improve employee training (cross training, customer service training, etc.)
 - c. Develop citizen concerns tracking system
 - i. Promote citizen use of tracking system
 - ii. Follow up public comments expressed during council meetings and through emails received from citizens

Implementation:

Any plan is only as good as its implementation strategy. And while everyone would like to see all these objectives accomplished immediately, that is not practical. Therefore, the Strategic Plan uses a six-year planning horizon. We must also concede that the success of implementation strategies is completely dependent on political will, money, the people to do the work, and the time to do it. Each of these things represents its own unique challenges.

Political will has been demonstrated by the Mayor, Town Council, and Planning Commission by their participation in the long work session days required to develop the initial draft of the Strategic Plan. However, as representatives of the people, that will can only be sustained with public endorsement of the plan. The Strategic Plan cannot be seen as the Town Council's plan, but rather must be perceived as the community's plan. This public buy-in will be sought via annual Town Hall style meetings to obtain input and address any questions/concerns. The Town will also initiate an annual citizen survey to gain input over time regarding community satisfaction.

Money is the tougher nut to crack. In fiscal year 2021 (FY21), the Town of Cape Charles operated at a fiscal deficit of over \$200,000. This was not due to the 2020 pandemic, but rather represents a structural problem with the budget. The Town has not significantly raised taxes in at least twelve years, and that has finally caught up with us. Therefore, increased revenues will likely be needed in FY22 just to balance the budget, let alone implement anything in this plan. As a result, the implementation schedule for the listed objectives will prioritize those actions that can be accomplished with minimal additional cost in FY22.

The staff resource necessary to carry out the plan is similarly constrained. There are insufficient funds to hire more staff, and the current Town staff are fully engaged in their current day-to-day duties, which does not afford significant additional capacity to take on new objectives. Volunteer

Community Strategic Plan

resources can often help, but volunteers cannot be counted upon to shoulder the sole responsibility for specific actions. Volunteer help can be an excellent force multiplier but cannot be counted upon as a resource in formal implementation planning.

This brings us back to time, and why the implementation planning horizon is six years. As a practical matter, it will take more time than we would like to achieve the desired results of this plan in a cost-effective manner.

Work Plans:

Despite the challenges described above, good faith efforts will be attempted to “begin” a majority of the objectives listed (within available resources) during the balance of FY21 and during FY22. However, due to resource limitations, the objectives that are currently scheduled in FY23 or beyond include:

- Work on the Community Trail beyond Phase 3 (Peach Street). Phase 3 is not currently funded but will be considered during the development of the FY22 budget
- Improving or expanding sidewalks, except when funded by VDOT
- Building new infrastructure for golf carts
- Analyzing beach survey data to develop long-range erosion protection strategies
- Develop/issue an RFP to determine market forces associated with the harbor to help balance commercial/recreational use
- Review ordinances, regulations, and processes to identify business impediments
- Develop programs with high schools and the ESCC for business placement
- Promote Job Fairs through Northampton County Chamber of Commerce, Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce, and/or Eastern Shore Tourism
- Develop internships and apprenticeships (DOLI as a resource)
- Develop an implementable plan for coastal resiliency, to include RAFT recommendations
- Review existing/previous plans for open/green space and develop an implementable plan
- Improve availability of a variety of workforce housing options
- Explore the viability of a workforce housing ordinance

