TOWN COUNCIL
Work Session
Cape Charles Civic Center
February 27, 2025
6:00 PM

At 6:00 p.m. Mayor Adam Charney, having established a quorum, called to order the Work Session of the Cape Charles Town Council. In addition to Mayor Charney, in attendance were Vice Mayor Buchholz, Councilmen Butta, Grossman and Newman, and Councilwomen Ashworth and Holloway. Also, in attendance were Town Manager John Hozey, Project Manager Bob Panek, Treasurer Marion Sofield and Town Clerk Libby Hume. There were 4 members of the public in attendance.

John Hozey provided an overview of two potential property acquisitions – the railroad property when it became available and the Meatland property for the new town hall. He also reviewed the upcoming capital projects, associated costs and available funding and payment options. There was some discussion about the possibilities and for keeping these matters in mind when updating the strategic plan.

John Hozey went on to review the strategic plan process for the benefit of the two new Council members, explaining that initially, all town stakeholder groups were brought in to develop the initial plan and every third year the entire group would meet for a complete review. This was done last year. This year's plan was an update and not many changes were being made. Councilman Grossman noted that the strategic plan tied back to the comprehensive plan. John Hozey confirmed that the strategic plan was the implementation tool for the comprehensive plan.

Council went on to review the strategic plan by page with changes made to the following pages/items:

Page 4-Our Goals: i) Bullet #6 re housing options – reference to younger families and workforce housing was deleted since the town was working to advance a variety of housing options not just for younger families but for the community as a whole; ii) Protecting and maintaining Central Park was moved from an objective under the Goal "Promote environmental stewardship" to become a new standalone goal; iii) Another new goal "To enhance the visitor experience in Cape Charles" was added.

Page 5-Our Objectives: i) Objective a.i was revised to include the chairpersons from all the Town's boards and commission to provide an annual briefing to Council versus just the Planning Commission and Historic District Review Board; ii) Objective b.ii was deleted since the Town no longer had monthly billings and inclusion of meeting calendars in the quarterly billing would only be current as of the date it was printed; iii) Two new objectives were added – "Provide routine reporting of Town business and outcomes" and "Promote subscription to e-Notifications and other sources of information."

Page 6-Our Objectives continued: i) c.ii.c – "provide capital funding as available" was added for sidewalk infill; ii) The recommended changes to f and f.i were okayed; iii) A new item h.v was added to evaluate better golf cart connectivity options between Bay Creek and the remainder of the Town.

Page 7-Our Objectives continued: i) "Protect and maintain Central Park" was added as a new goal with the objectives = a. "In collaboration with Citizens for Central Park, promote an attractive, yet sustainable, multi-function public park" and "Implement long-term major maintenance and replacement plan;" ii) Under the Goal Promote environmental stewardship, the language in objective b. was revised to "Review *adequacy of* existing/previous public green/open space…;" iii) Under the Goal Retain and expand businesses in a business-friendly environment, objective b.i was revised adding reference to the Rosenwald School; iii) b.ii was updated deleting Northampton Chamber of

Commerce since it was no longer in existence, and adding Cape Charles Main Street; iv) Under the Goal Advance a variety of housing options, two new objectives were added = "Promote the ability of accessory dwelling units to be workforce housing units" and "Stay informed about Northampton County efforts."

Page 8-Our Objectives continued: i) Under the Goal Meet our residents' expectation for Town services, objective g.ii was revised by changing electric *automobile* to electric *vehicle* which also included golf carts; ii) a new objective was added "Evaluating the need and viability of temporary office space for town staff until a new town hall can be built." Additional staff was needed to provide the necessary services to the Town's residents and businesses but there was insufficient space to house them in the existing town hall.

Page 10-Appendix A – Cape Charles Comprehensive Plan Summary of Objectives and Strategies: Under B-Economy, item 8 was revised to "Study chains of activities *to identify gaps in a visitor's day.*

Page 11-Appendix A continued: Under D-Environment, items 3 and 11 were revised adding reference to Virginia American Water since the water and sewer systems were sold to them in 2024; ii) Under E-Facilities & Services, reference to Virginia American Water was added to item 4.

Page 12-Appendix B – 2025 Ongoing Town Priorities List: i) The first section was updated removing the completed items; ii) Since the zoning ordinance was adopted by the Town Council in December 2024, the priority related to the zoning ordinance was updated to "Publish recently adopted Zoning Ordinances to online platform." Staff was currently working to review the adopted zoning ordinance to ensure proper formatting, section numbers and references to other internal sections of the zoning ordinance were correct before providing it to CivicPlus, our current vendor for the Town Code, to have it codified; iii) There was much discussion about the new items to be started as time/resources became available. (Please see attached.)

John Hozey provided an update on the following: i) The Town granted a six-month extension to the potential purchasers of the Sea Breeze apartment property; ii) Usually by this time of year, a good number of business license renewals were received, and many short-term rental inspections had been completed. To date, the Town had received 157 out of 1,300 business license applications. Staff was hearing about a protest against the new regulations so license applications were not being submitted. Unfortunately, deadlines were deadlines, and there were consequences for missing them. If a business had not submitted their applications by the April 15th deadline, they would be penalized to the full extent of the law. Business license violations were class 3 misdemeanors and subject to a $500 penalty for each day the business was not in compliance. There was some discussion about the number of pages and the requirements in this year's application for short-term rentals.

Councilman Grossman had been following the State Corporation Commission's rate case for Virginia American Water's water and sewer rate request. The case had been finalized and the Town needed to obtain that information about the new rates for the Town's residents and businesses. John Hozey would contact Virginia American Water.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Buchholz, seconded by Councilwoman Ashworth, to adjourn the Town Council Work Session. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

The Town Hall Meeting was adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

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Mayor Charney

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Town Clerk

The Town of Cape Charles
Community Strategic Plan
2025

DRAFT

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 **Comprehensive Plan** is required by Virginia Administrative Code, which prescribes a detailed set of 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 time needed 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 any particular need of a community and are more easily digestible by members of the public. Strategic Plans also happen quicker, which facilitates more interest and better participation by community members. Our Strategic Plan shares the same community values and vision as our Comprehensive Plan but can be updated annually if desired, making the Strategic Plan a living document; flexible enough to react to current community developments in real time. This makes the Strategic Plan an ideal implementation tool for our Comprehensive Plan.

Both the Comprehensive and Strategic Plans start broad, and then become more specific. They begin with the values that are important to us and define us as a community. These values inspired our vision; a brief statement that looks to the future; is a source of inspiration; and serves to identify the ideals or characteristics we desire in our future.

The vision and its supporting 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 next annual budget.

Following a three-year development period, the Town Council approved the most current Comprehensive Plan in December of 2022. The Strategic Plan will now start tackling the many discrete goals/objectives in the Comprehensive Plan by determining current priorities to assist with developing annual work plans.

While goals are longer term and subject to ongoing metrics, the Strategic Plan objectives are more fluid. As some 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 complete list, but rather what is considered important or desirable to tackle first.

Community input to the annual Strategic Plan update is critical, and it will be solicited from annual community surveys and public input sessions.

Our Community Values:

1) Sense of Community
2) Heritage – Traditional
3) Diversity – Tolerance – Respect
4) Adaptability
5) Environmental Stewardship

Our Goals*:

- **To retain the small-town character of Cape Charles**
  - Metric: citizen confirmation in annual survey
- **To protect and maintain the beachfront**
  - Metric: no degradation via annual beach survey
- **To protect and maintain the harbor**
  - Metric: maintain/increase occupancy
- **To protect and maintain Central Park**
  - Metric: maintain/increase appearance and usage
- **To promote environmental stewardship**
  - Metric: develop implementable plans
- **To retain and expand businesses in a business-friendly environment**
  - Metric: increase in business licenses, increase in business-related revenues, and data from building permits issued and an annual questionnaire on employment
- **To enhance the visitor experience in Cape Charles**
  - Metric: maintain/increase visitation and tourism related revenues
- **To advance a variety of housing options ~~for younger families and workforce~~**
  - Metric: increase in ~~related~~ more affordable housing units
- **To meet our residents' expectation for Town services**
  - Metric: citizen confirmation in annual survey

***Not in any particular order**

Our Objectives:

- **Retain the small-town character of Cape Charles:**

  a. Encourage a sense of engagement and inclusion among our community service organizations:
     i. ~~Planning Commission and Historic District Review Board~~ Town boards and commissions chairpersons to provide an annual briefing to Council
     ii. Celebrate volunteer appreciation, to include a volunteer of the year award during the annual Town Council Ice Cream Social – invite all board/commission members and civic groups
     iii. Hold an annual strategic plan forum to get input from the public and civic groups
     iv. Quarterly recognition of board/commission members or other volunteers in the Gazette, on Facebook, and during Regular Council meetings
     v. Invite local civic groups, as appropriate, to participate in Town working groups

  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, CC Historic District Civic League, Vacation Rental Home Owners Association, Bay Creek Community Association

  b. Encourage Citizen Engagement:
     i. Maintain Facebook event postings for public events
     ii. ~~Continue calendar of public meetings in monthly billings~~

ii. Provide routine reporting of Town business and outcomes
iii. Promote subscription to e-notifications and other sources of information
iv. Publish Strategic Plan "report card" prior to the annual Community Survey

c. Maintain/improve walkability:
   i. Complete multi-use path between historic district, harbor, and Bay Creek
   ii. Promote improvements to, and additions to sidewalks
      a. Press for state maintenance
      b. Explore ordinance changes for rehabilitation and resale
      c. Explore ways to assist with sidewalk infill and provide capital funding as available
   iii. Support Rails to Trails project
d. Promote and encourage community/quirky events:
   i. Promote centralized calendar of events (sharing information)
   ii. Pursue Northampton County Infrastructure Grants to support events
e. Promote the arts, entertainment, and recreation:
   i. Provide services and venues at low or no cost to local non-profits
   ii. Evaluate ways to provide volleyball/basketball courts; work with the YMCA to promote available scholarships
   iii. Develop official guidance for public art displays
f. ~~Enact~~ Evaluate short-term rental (STR) regulations
   i. Evaluate recently adopted STR regulations to determine if tweaks or changes are required. ~~recommendations provided by STR working group, solicit public input via town hall meetings and public hearings, and establish STR regulations~~
g. Manage tourism benefits and impacts to ensure a healthy balance between a quality of life for our residents and the quality of place for our visitors
   i. Develop a visitor pledge to communicate the important values of responsible behavior to visitors
   ii. Improve accessibility for people of all age groups and abilities
h. Foster a safe golf cart culture:
   i. Better and more signage
   ii. Better enforcement (information to rentals and better reporting)
   iii. Designate golf cart parking spots
   iv. Foster positive relationship and meet annually with golf cart rental companies
   v. Evaluate better connectivity options between Bay Creek and the balance of the Town

- **Protect and maintain the beachfront:**

a. Develop beachfront master plan (beach, dunes, boardwalk, LOVE sign area, bathhouse, etc.) to include specifc parameters for beach and dune management, detailing desired size and characteristics of both
b. Continue annual surveys and sand replenishment budget
c. Evaluate survey data to determine erosion protection strategy

- **Protect and maintain the harbor:**

  a. As part of larger area planning efforts, develop criteria to promote a healthy balance of commercial and recreational uses
  b. Implement long-term major maintenance and replacement plan

- **Protect and maintain Central Park:**

  c. In collaboration with Citizens for Central Park, promote an attractive, yet sustainable, multi-function public park
  d. Implement long-term major maintenance and replacement plan

- **Promote environmental stewardship**

  a. Develop an implementable coastal resiliency plan, to include the Resilience Adaptation Feasibility Tool (RAFT) recommendations and VIMS Comprehensive Coastal Resource Management Portal
  b. Review adequacy of existing/previous public green/open space infrastructure plans and develop an updated implementable plan
  c. Protect and improve tree canopy and other natural and designed landscapes
  ~~d. Protect and maintain Central Park~~

- **Retain and expand businesses in a business-friendly environment:**

  a. In collaboration with Cape Charles Main Street (CCMS) develop a public/private effort to guide business development and help remove obstacles
     i. Review ordinances, regulations, and processes to identify business impediments
     ii. Distribute the CCMS business tool kit to assist with common questions/concerns
     iii. Support the economic vitality of the commercial district
  i. Improve business access to workforce resources:
     i. Develop programs with high schools, the Eastern Shore Community College (ESCC), and the restored Cape Charles Rosenwald School
     ii. Support CCMS Job Fairs through ~~Northampton County Chamber of Commerce~~ Cape Charles Main Street, Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce, and/or Eastern Shore Tourism
     iii. Develop internships and apprenticeships (Dept of Labor & Industry - DOLI)

- **Advance a variety of housing options ~~for younger families and workforce~~:**

  a. Explore the viability of a workforce housing ordinance related to Planned Unit Developments (PUDs); pursuant to VA Code Sec 15.2-2305.1

b. Work with developers on workforce housing projects
c. Promote the ability of accessory dwelling units to be workforce housing units
d. Stay informed about Northampton County efforts

- **Meet our residents' expectation for Town services:**

a. Establish modern municipal facilities
   i. Ensure safe/effective workplaces
   ii. Develop an accessible and efficient Town Hall
   iii. Strive to centralize resources

b. Manage smart growth and development, ensuring our small-town character remains balanced against increasing needs for services/infrastructure
   i. Perform analysis of public service needs as a function of anticipated growth
   ii. Evaluate potential financial impacts on municipal budgets
   iii. Develop proffer policy to pay for impacts of future developments
c. Conduct master planning for potential development of the old railroad property and surrounding harbor areas
d. Develop a town-wide parking capacity inventory and develop recommendations for possible expansions or improvements
e. Continue employee training (cross training, customer service training, etc.)
f. Continue citizen concern reporting system
   i. Promote citizen use of "Report a Concern" on Town website
   ii. Follow up public comments expressed during council meetings and through emails received from citizens
g. Evaluate the need and viability of additional services
   i. Recycling, when feasible
   ii. Electric ~~automobile~~ vehicle charging stations, when feasible
h. Evaluate the need and viability of temporary office space for town staff until a new town hall can be built

Implementation:

Any plan is only as good as its implementation strategy. Our current Comprehensive Plan identified this Strategic Plan as its implementation tool. That was because this plan is reviewed annually and can be updated as needed to react in real time to current conditions. However, that does not mean that it is possible for all the objectives in this plan to be accomplished immediately or concurrently. Therefore, the Strategic Plan must be seen as a multi-year planning tool, which is updated each year.

Successful implementation depends on many things, including Political Will, money, staff capacity, and the time to do the work; with each of these representing their own unique challenges.

Political Will was demonstrated by the Mayor and Town Council through their participation in the development of this Strategic Plan. However, this Will can only be sustained with public support. 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 public meetings to obtain input and address any questions/concerns; as well as using an annual community survey to gain insights and collect data over time regarding community needs and satisfaction.

The Town's fiscal situation has improved significantly since the first Strategic Plan was adopted in 2021. While this does not mean we can fund everything at once, it does mean that we can now begin to put together a reasonable, prioritized spending plan.

While money may be less of an issue, the staff resources necessary to carry out this work remains constrained. Town staff are typically fully engaged in their routine day-to-day duties, which does not afford much additional capacity to take on new objectives. Staff workspace is an additional constraint. If more staff were hired, there is currently insufficient space to house them. While volunteer resources can often help, volunteers cannot be counted upon to shoulder the sole responsibility for specific actions. Volunteer help is an excellent force multiplier but should not be counted upon as the primary resource in formal implementation planning. Therefore, expectations must remain reasonable, so that annual work plans don't become impractical.

Work Plans:

The Strategic Plan was referenced during this year's annual update to the Town's ongoing project priority list. That list, along with this plan will be used in the development of the next Town budget (FY26 - which begins on July 1). That budget is what will establish the resources and expectations for Town work plans in the coming year. A good faith effort will be attempted to work on those objectives which receive sufficient resources in the next budget. However, since this is a multi-year plan, we must accept that some objectives contained herein will not be scheduled until FY27 or beyond.

Please refer to Appendix B to see the current ongoing Town project list and how objectives have been prioritized for the coming year.

Appendix A
Cape Charles Comprehensive Plan Summary of Objectives and Strategies

A) Housing

1. Pursue additional supply and diversity of housing
2. Encourage workforce housing
3. Participate in Housing Finance Programs
4. Promote manufactured housing
5. Address STR impacts on housing

B) Economy

1. Seek healthy balance - residents & tourists
2. Attract families with children
3. Strengthen household economic wellbeing
4. Promote and expand business
5. Promote diverse economic benefits for the harbor
6. Expand local manufacturing base
7. Promote traditional water based economic activities
8. Study chains of activities to identify gaps in a visitor's day
9. Identify placemaking opportunities
10. Update Bay Creek Planned Unit Development (PUD)

C) Transportation

1. Reduce traffic congestion
2. Enhance walkability
3. Maintain safe golf cart operations
4. Increase parking
5. Identify and maintain alleys and easements
6. Promote affordable public transportation
7. Complete multi-use path between historic district, harbor, and Bay Creek
8. Intergrade harbor area with other trail/path networks
9. Support Rails to Trails

D) Environment

1. Enhance Chesapeake Bay water quality
2. Promote strong aesthetics and limit litter
3. Ensure high quality drinking water (Now Virginia American Water)
4. Maintain long-term viability of beach and harbor
5. Promote coastal resiliency
6. Protect wetlands
7. Implement Coastal Resources Management guidance
8. Develop recommendations to improve resiliency to storm events
9. Assess feasibility of recycling
10. Protect and promote tree canopy
11. Evaluate I&I to sewer (Now Virginia American Water)

E) Facilities & Services

1. Pursue amenities for town facilities
2. Create modernized municipal facilities
3. Create multi-use recreation field
4. Ensure effective water & sewer utilities (Now Virginia American Water)
5. Develop policy for paying for facility expansions
6. Develop proffer policy to pay for impacts of future developments
7. Pursue arts, public events, etc.

Appendix B
2025 Ongoing Town Priorities List

BLUE: still in progress from previous work periods and require additional time to complete; All items in blue are currently being worked concurrently (not listed in any particular order):

- **Develop New Municipal Center**
- **Develop New Downtown Restrooms and Visitors Center**
- **Finish Library building sale/upgrades**
- **Work with developers/agencies to facilitate workforce housing**
- **Publish recently adopted Zoning Ordinances to online platform**
- **Develop beachfront master plan (beach, dunes, boardwalk, LOVE sign area, bathhouse, etc.)**

New items to be started as soon as time/resources are available:

1. Develop harbor/RR area conceptual master plan, new design guidelines, and Article IX update
2. Review efficiency of current planning and zoning processes and fees
3. Pursue development of shared revenue agreement with the County
4. Develop a town-wide parking plan to include a parking capacity inventory and recommendations for possible parking area expansions or improvements
5. Survey former residents to determine the circumstances of their departure
6. Review short term rental ordinances/codes to determine if changes or updates are needed
7. Develop a plan to address coastal resiliency, to include RAFT recommendations

NOTE: *Refer to the Town's FY25 Capital Asset Management Plan (CAMP) to see a five-year schedule of proposed capital projects.*