



TOWN COUNCIL & PLANNING COMMISSION

Joint Work Session – Strategic Planning

February 24, 2024

Northampton County YMCA Gymnasium

22257 Parsons Circle, Cape Charles

10:00 AM

1. Call to Order:
 - A. Town Council Roll Call
 - B. Planning Commission Roll Call

2. Items for Discussion:
 - A. [Review of Existing 2023 Strategic Plan](#)
 - B. Discussion of Possible Updates
 - C. Develop Consensus for Recommendations

3. Adjournment:
 - A. Planning Commission
 - B. Town Council



The Town of Cape Charles Community Strategic Plan 2023



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 **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 recently 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.

Community Strategic Plan

Our Community Values:

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



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 beach 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 revenues, 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 units
- **To meet our residents' expectation for Town services**
 - Metric: citizen confirmation in 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. Planning Commission and Historic District Review Board to provide an annual briefing to Council
 - ii. Celebrate volunteer appreciation, to include a volunteer of the year award during the annual Town Ice Cream Social – invite all board/commission members
 - iii. Hold an annual strategic plan forum to get input from the public and civic groups
 - iv. Quarterly recognition of a board or commission member in the Gazette
 - v. Town to sponsor annual civic group meet & greet social event

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

- b. Encourage Citizen Engagement:
 - i. Maintain Facebook event postings for public events
 - ii. Continue calendar of public meetings in monthly billings
 - iii. Publish Strategic Plan “report card” prior to the annual Community Survey

Community Strategic Plan

- c. Maintain/improve walkability:
 - i. Continue Community Trail
 - 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
 - iii. Support Rails to Trails project
 - d. Promote and encourage community/quirky events:
 - i. Centralized calendar of events (sharing information)
 - ii. Pursue NHC 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. Develop volleyball/basketball courts
 - iii. Develop official guidance for public art displays
 - f. Study short-term rental regulations
 - i. Establish working group, to include stakeholders, who will develop initial recommendations
 - g. 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
- **Maintain the authentic character of the historic district:**
 - a. Encourage the mission of historic preservation organizations/efforts
 - i. Invite to provide Council briefings
- **Protect and maintain the beach:**
 - a. Develop beachfront master plan (beach, dunes, boardwalk, LOVE sign area, bathhouse, etc.) to include specific 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

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- **Protect and maintain the harbor:**
 - a. Promote a healthy balance of commercial and recreational uses
 - b. Implement long-term major maintenance and replacement plan
 - c. Plan for harbor protection improvements
- **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
 - b. Protect and improve tree canopy and other natural and designed landscapes
- **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
 - b. Improve business access to workforce resources:
 - i. Develop programs with high schools & Eastern Shore Community College (ESCC)
 - ii. Support CCMS 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)
- **Advance a variety of housing options for younger families and workforce:**
 - a. Participate in ordinance barriers to workforce housing study and develop recommendations
 - b. Explore the viability of a workforce housing ordinance
 - c. Work with developers on workforce housing projects

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- **Meet our residents' expectation for Town services:**
 - a. Establish Town staff mission statement
 - i. Ensure a safe/effective workplace
 - ii. Develop an accessible Town Hall
 - iii. Strive to centralize resources
 - b. Continue employee training (cross training, customer service training, etc.)
 - c. 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
 - d. Evaluate the need and viability of additional services
 - i. Recycling
 - ii. Electric automobile charging stations

Implementation:

Any plan is only as good as its implementation strategy. The newly adopted 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 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.

Community Strategic Plan

While money may be less of an issue this year, 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. 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 (FY24 - 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 FY25 or beyond.

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



Community Strategic Plan

Appendix A

Cape Charles Comprehensive Plan Summary of Objectives and Strategies

A) Housing

- 1 Additional supply and diversity of housing
- 2 Workforce housing
- 3 Housing Finance Programs
- 4 Manufactured housing
- 5 STR impacts on housing

B) Economy

- 1 Healthy Balance - residents & tourists
- 2 Attract families with children
- 3 Strengthen household economic wellbeing
- 4 Promote and expand business
- 5 Promote economic benefits for the harbor
- 6 Expand local manufacturing base
- 7 Promote traditional water based economic activities
- 8 Study chains of activities
- 9 Identify placemaking opportunities
- 10 Update Bay Creek 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 Affordable public transportation
- 7 Complete multi-use path
- 8 Intergrade harbor area with other networks
- 9 Support Rails to Trails

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D) Environment

- 1 Enhance Chesapeake Bay water quality
- 2 Promote strong aesthetics and limit litter
- 3 Ensure high quality drinking water
- 4 Long-term viability of beach and harbor
- 5 Increase coastal resiliency
- 6 Protect wetlands
- 7 Implement Coastal Resources Management guidance
- 8 Improve resiliency to storm events
- 9 Establish recycling
- 10 Protect tree canopy
- 11 Evaluate I&I to sewer

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
- 5 Develop policy to pay for facility expansions
- 6 Develop policy to pay for impacts of future developments
- 7 Pursue arts, public events, etc.

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Appendix B Ongoing Town Priorities List

BLUE: still in progress from previous work periods and require additional time to complete; All items in blue are being worked concurrently with resources applied in in the following order:

- 1. Finalize the sale of our water/wastewater utilities**
 - a. Compile/file application for the VA State Corporation Commission**
 - b. Complete appraisals**
 - c. Effectuate closing and transfer of assets**
- 2. Align Zoning Ordinances with new Comprehensive Plan (consultant currently under contract)**
- 3. New Municipal Center and Library building sale/upgrades**
- 4. New Downtown Restroom and Visitors Center**
- 5. Trail Project – Phase 3 – Peach Street**
- 6. Connect Keck Wells to WTP (workforce housing/withdrawal permit)**
- 7. Work with developers/agencies to facilitate workforce housing**
- 8. Negotiate and develop settlement agreement for Preserve Communities' liabilities under the Annexation Agreement (associated with utility sale)**
- 9. Address trailer parking on public streets concern**

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

- 10. Develop short-term rental regulations/ordinances**
- 11. Develop beachfront master plan (beach, dunes, boardwalk, LOVE sign area, bathhouse, etc.)**
- 12. Develop harbor/RR area conceptual master planning and new design guidelines**
- 13. Pursue development of shared revenue agreement with the County**
- 14. Develop a plan to address coastal resiliency, to include RAFT recommendations**