

TOWN of BARNSTABLE
TOWN COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN
FISCAL YEARS 2019-2020

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to protect the Town of Barnstable's quality of life and unique character, engage our citizens, and enact policies that respond to and anticipate the needs of our community.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We believe in our oath of office:

I will perform my duties as a Town Councilor for the Town of Barnstable to the best of my ability, keeping uppermost in my mind the rules and laws that govern my office and my responsibility to the citizens of the Town of Barnstable.

We also believe in:

- ✓ Involving residents in the decision-making process
- ✓ Modeling ethical behavior
- ✓ Protecting citizen rights
- ✓ Protecting the health and safety of citizens
- ✓ Being fiscally responsible
- ✓ Being accountable
- ✓ Being respectful of the people and the process
- ✓ Giving the highest priority to the rules and laws that govern the office of the Town Council
- ✓ Operating fairly, predictably and efficiently
- ✓ Providing a consistent process
- ✓ Operating creatively and with flexibility
- ✓ The manager's job to manage the staff
- ✓ Preserving the integrity of the Town of Barnstable
- ✓ Each council member's stake in the betterment of the community
- ✓ Listening and respecting each other's contributions
- ✓ The right to disagree
- ✓ Being accessible and keeping the process open
- ✓ Decisions being made in the best interest of the whole Town of Barnstable

PRIORITY AREAS

We have identified a single goal and several strategies in nine priority areas. For each, it is understood that the Town Council will formulate and enact policy, the Town Manager and staff will implement and manage programs to achieve the policy goals, and the Town Council and Town Manager will communicate frequently to ensure accountability to the residents of the Town of Barnstable. The Town Council and Town Manager will meet periodically to review progress on meeting the goals laid out in this Strategic Plan and identify areas of the Strategic Plan that require more attention.

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Shaped like a wheel, the strategic plan diagram shows *Quality of Life* at the hub, surrounded by eight priority areas: *Communication, Economic Development, Regulatory Process and Performance, Housing, Public Health and Safety, Environment and Natural Resources, Infrastructure, and Education*. These areas function like lug nuts, securing a high quality of life for Barnstable residents regardless of circumstances beyond their control (or “bumps in the road”). Finance supports and protects the wheel like a tire – if it deflates, any or all areas may be compromised.

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Finance

Goal: Provide a viable financial plan for meeting the operational and capital needs of the town with a balanced budget that includes ongoing cost reductions, cost savings for residents, maintaining reserves, and aggressively pursuing new growth dollars and revenue sources.

Strategies:

- Explore and create new growth dollars and revenue sources (including grants) for the town and schools to alleviate strain on municipal and school budgets, perform operational auditing, advance greater energy efficiency, and stimulate new growth.
- Ensure adherence to a sound financial plan to meet short- and long-term priorities and liabilities of the operating and capital needs of the town.
- Evaluate and assess, on an on-going basis, alternative methods to decrease the cost of services by exploring the financial benefits of regionalization, consolidation, privatization, and collective bargaining.
- Support and promote the Open Budget.

Communications

Goal: Improve communication amongst the Town Council and Town Manager and their staff; amongst Town Councilors; between the Town and its residents, boards, commissions, volunteers and visitors to foster participation and positive results that meet the needs of the community.

Strategies:

- Provide regular opportunities for Town Council members to receive briefings or updates on Town initiatives and other important topics from the Town Manager and department heads.
- Use the council liaison system to improve communication between Town committees, boards, and commissions. Encourage regular updates from the liaisons to Town Council.
- Utilize existing communication boards and partner media outlets to make public service announcements. Work with community groups to disseminate information to their members.
- Communicate Town information to non-English speaking community members.
- Utilize the Town website, social media, Town newsletter, Citizen's Leadership Academy, Channel 18 (municipal television station), and local newspaper and radio stations as outlets to communicate with the public. Specifically:
 - Encourage all boards and commissions to record their proceedings and make them available to foster communication and increased transparency.

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- Reach out to citizens in all seven villages to increase resident involvement in Town government; improve citizen understanding of Town services and government structure, and improve public confidence in the Town.
- Coordinate and consolidate information distribution with other town, county, and state officials and legislative delegations whenever possible.

Economic Development

Goal: Town Council and Town Manager to support and grow a vibrant economy with a diversity of businesses, organizations, and services, as well as a strong, educated labor force.

Strategies:

- Continue to support Zoning and Regulatory Committee to determine any zoning changes that may require legislative action.
- Identify and encourage redevelopment of underutilized and/or blighted properties.
- Town Manager to work proactively to retain and/or expand existing businesses and to attract new ones using innovative approaches, such as:
 - Provide economic incentives that increase business diversity in Barnstable and promote desirable economic activity, such as clean industries and smart growth.
 - Create marketing specifically to attract desirable new businesses to Barnstable.
 - Create or deepen connections between local educational institutions and businesses.
- Support efforts to grow the arts and culture sector to contribute to the Town's overall economic development.

Environment and Natural Resources

Goal: Conserve, protect, and enhance areas in the town that are most significant as natural and historical resources for water supply, visual quality, outdoor recreation, public access, wildlife habitat and cultural history.

Strategies:

- Review progress of the comprehensive dredge plan.
- Investigate innovative, cost-effective techniques for invasive species control.
- Investigate innovative techniques and legislative options to address beach erosion, neighborhood flooding, beach and water access challenges and otherwise prepare for and adapt to extreme weather events, including those brought on by climate change

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- Support programs that emphasize environmental protection while ensuring economic development as articulated in local and regional comprehensive planning documents.
- Raise awareness of conservation areas and Town-owned open space, and promote public use of these spaces.
- Establish management and maintenance plans for conservation areas and Town-owned open space.
- Work in conjunction with federal, state, regional, and local agencies to protect critical environmental areas, including fragile coastlines, marine embayment areas, and all water bodies vulnerable to nitrogen loading.
- Support efforts to build coastal resiliency.

Regulatory Process and Performance

Goal: Work with Town Manager and staff to have an efficient, customer-friendly, consistent, and predictable regulatory process.

Strategies:

- Continually improve the permitting process, including policies, rules and regulations, personnel, customer/citizen experience, and impact on economic growth. Implement necessary changes.

Public Health and Safety

Goal: Promote the protection of health, safety, and wellness of our community to maintain a high quality of life of all town residents, businesses, and visitors.

Strategies:

- Support collaborative action to protect and expand our drinking water supply, including (but not limited to) ongoing monitoring for existing contaminants and contaminants of emerging concern. Support efforts to address changing federal thresholds for different contaminants.
- Continue to support substance use prevention efforts and programs that offer treatment. Seek to promote best practices in educating our youth and engaging community stakeholders' experience in substance abuse matters.
- Support the development and implementation of quality public health and safety policies and procedures. Promote effective enforcement.
- Support efforts to improve and expand telecommunication networks with local control.

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Housing

Goal: Identify needs, and develop, promote, and monitor town-wide initiatives for income-equitable, affordable, workforce, senior, and rental housing to meet the needs of residents and increase the overall quality and availability of housing in Barnstable.

OR

Goal: Identify needs, and develop, promote, and monitor town-wide housing initiatives serving diverse ages, incomes, and needs.

Strategies:

- Review existing zoning and other issues identified by the Council and the Committee to Review Zoning and Permitting Regulations to determine how best to achieve housing goals through zoning changes. Proactively engage stakeholders with influence over this issue. Review the Housing Production Plan to support this goal.
- Work in partnership with developers so they can take advantage of the available resources, funding, and assets to initiate housing projects.
- Explore permanent supportive housing solutions, including regional collaboration and creative financing, to address homelessness in Barnstable.
- Explore the possibility of using town assets to create private housing opportunities.

Town Infrastructure & Assets

Goal: Maintain and improve existing infrastructure, capital assets, and aquatic resources, and make improvements when necessary.

Strategies:

- Facilitate comprehensive infrastructure improvement planning for municipal roads, buildings, facilities, transportation systems, communication systems, information infrastructure, water and wastewater systems, historical properties, and other capital assets with an eye toward permit-ready and shovel-ready projects.
- Support the exploration of traditional and non-traditional methods for comprehensive water management and monitoring of implementation efforts.

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- Continue to inventory and evaluate the status of Town assets and dispose of assets as appropriate.
- Evaluate options for effective and economical energy conservation programs, and solid waste and recycling programs.
- Support efforts to build resiliency of the Town's coastal assets.

Education

Goal: Support the provision of a safe, high-quality public education for all students in an increasingly diverse student body, in partnership with local, state, and federal entities and encourage life-long learning opportunities in the Town.

Strategies:

- Work cooperatively with the School Department and School Committee to approve a budget that adheres to standard municipal accounting practices, is clear and understandable for all residents, and meets the short- and long-term operating and capital needs of the school system and the municipality.
- Work in conjunction with the School Department and School Committee to deliver a substance use prevention model for grades PreK-12.
- Advocate for more equitable funding in order to provide more resources to the Town. Strive to reduce the impact of unfunded state and federal mandates in addition to the revised Chapter 70 funding and make public aware of impact of same.
- Work cooperatively with school administration to develop plans for administrative and infrastructure consolidation. Conduct periodic assessments of consolidated services.
- Support initiatives to create a culturally-diverse educational environment for all public school students.
- Work to incorporate technology, including social media, to engage students and improve communication with them and their families.
- Identify and support opportunities for life-long learning in the Town for all constituencies.
- Support efforts to provide academic environments that promote physical, mental, and social wellness for all students.