

TOWN OF
NAGS HEAD, NC



Strategic Plan 2024 - 2025

Adopted February 7, 2024

Updated, October 18, 2024

Board of Commissioners

Nags Head's Board of Commissioners, comprised of a mayor and four commissioners, makes policy decisions, and adopts ordinances in accordance with procedures and responsibilities set out in North Carolina law. The town manager then carries out these policies and directives.



**Mayor
Ben Cahoon**



**Mayor Pro Tem
Mike Siers**



**Commissioner
Vacant**



**Commissioner
Megan Lambert**



**Commissioner
Bob Sanders**

2024 Town of Nags Head Strategic Plan

Introduction

Welcome to the 2024 Town of Nags Head Strategic Plan. This document serves as a comprehensive guide to our town's strategic direction and was developed collaboratively with the input from our community members and through a joint effort of our dedicated Board of Commissioners and staff. The starting point for this plan was the mission, vision, and goals from the 2021 Strategic Plan. A big thank you to everyone involved in the creation of our prior strategic planning documents.

Strategic Plan Process

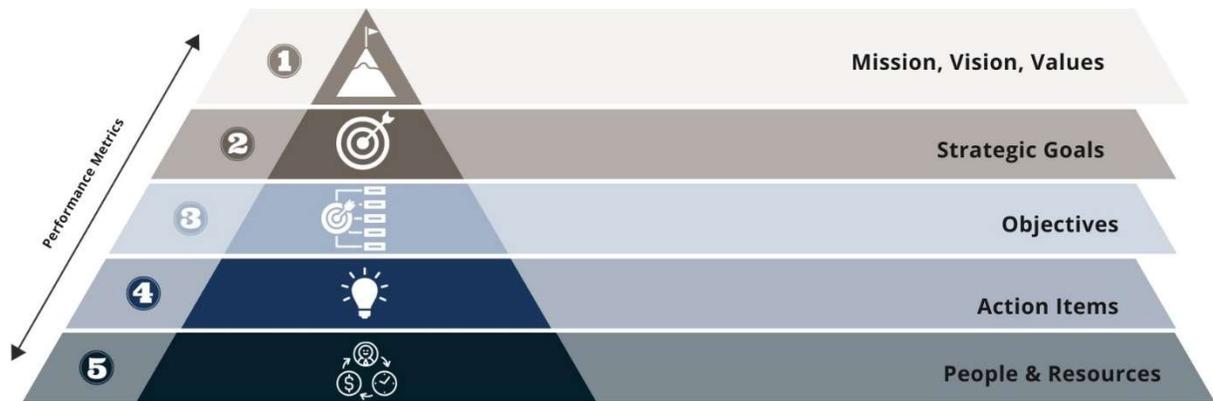
Community Involvement

The foundation of this plan lies in the collective wisdom of Nags Head's residents and property owners. In addition to reviewing strategic guidance from prior plans, we actively sought the input of our community to understand their needs, concerns, and aspirations for the town's future in the [2023 Community Survey](#). The insights gathered in the survey played a pivotal role in shaping the strategic priorities outlined in this plan.

Joint Board and Staff Retreat

To ensure alignment between community expectations and administrative resources, we held a retreat with the Board of Commissioners and Town staff November 16 – 17, 2023. The retreat allowed the Board and staff to align around the Community Survey results and other data, while sharing ideas and working collaboratively. The result is a strategic plan that reflects a shared vision of, and a commitment to, the town's future. [Staff and Board met October 18, 2024 to review progress and consider updates to the plan, which are noted in this document in red text.](#)

Included in the Plan



Goals, Objectives, and Strategic Action Items

The strategic plan goes beyond routine operations and defines a set of goals, objectives, and action items that guide the Town's direction. These items are forward-thinking, innovative, and designed to address both current challenges and future opportunities. They represent a commitment to proactive, intentional efforts to enhance the well-being of all residents and visitors.

Beyond Business as Usual

The strategic plan intentionally outlines action items that are outside the scope of "business as usual," so that we can channel resources efficiently and make a lasting impact on Nags Head's future. However, the daily operations of Town staff should be acknowledged as an integral part of our mission and vision.

Conclusion

The Town of Nags Head Strategic Plan is a dynamic roadmap that reflects the shared aspirations of our community, the dedication of our Board and staff, and a commitment to strategic action items that will shape our town's future. As we embark on this journey together, we invite all residents and property owners to actively participate and contribute to the realization of our collective vision.

Mission, Vision, and Goals

As part of the strategic planning process, the Board of Commissioners reviewed the Town's mission and vision statements. The statements below reflect the revisions from this process. The mission statement describes our purpose, or the reason we exist. The vision statement describes the future we would like to create and/or what success looks like for our community. The goals on the following page further articulate what we must accomplish to achieve our vision.

Mission

To support the well-being of our citizens, property owners, and visitors by delivering municipal services in an open, respectful, and responsive manner.

Vision

To thoughtfully preserve our unique coastal environment, heritage, and lifestyle now and for the future.

This vision is articulated as follows:

The Town of Nags Head is a unique coastal community built upon a legacy rooted in shared values, including our most recognized common bond - a love for the Outer Banks. We recognize that the town must be a good place to live before it can be a good place to visit. We strive to preserve and protect the Nags Head character, environment, tourism-based economy, and sense of place to ensure a high quality of life for residents and a memorable family vacation experience for present and future generations.

Legacy

We uphold our legacy by protecting and promoting our small-town character that includes a sustainable local economy based on family vacation tourism, a high-quality beach experience, and small, locally owned businesses. Fundamental to our legacy and quality of life are preserving the historic architecture and culture that distinguishes our town; providing residents and visitors with excellent public services and well-maintained recreational amenities; and ensuring access to a well-protected natural coastal environment. Our legacy will be strengthened and preserved by a focused, transparent decision-making process that is comprehensive and consistent with the community's vision.

Goals

ENVIRONMENT



To safeguard our critical natural resources and coastal ecosystem.

DEVELOPMENT



To achieve responsible, adaptive development that aligns with our community vision.

ECONOMY



To promote a sustainable economy that supports residents and visitors.

COMMUNITY SERVICES



To maintain an efficient government that provides high quality and cost-effective services.

Town of Nags Head Core Values

<p>Attitude is Key</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The right attitude is critical to our success • We recognize that positivity is a force multiplier • We treat our community and each other with kindness and respect • We are honest and transparent with each other, even when it is uncomfortable 	<p>Our People are in the Know</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We share relevant and timely information at all levels of the organization • Our community deserves to know what we are doing • We actively seek and value feedback • We communicate and follow-up; this is how we establish credibility
<p>We do What's Right, for the Right</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability and integrity are principles we hold dearly • We honor our commitments and do what we say we are going to do • Each team member participates in decision making and takes ownership of the outcomes • We operate with a sense of urgency and get things done 	<p>We are Community Stewards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our goal is to provide top- tier community services • Our Town assets, our environment, and our people deserve our greatest effort and undivided attention • Nags Head has a legacy of strong leadership and values, and we carefully consider how this can be strengthened and upheld
<p>Our People Matter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We recognize that the Town's workforce, our team, is the Town's greatest asset • We value different backgrounds, perspectives, and cultures • We create an environment where people can do their best work 	<p>Excellence Requires Innovation &</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth is accomplished by challenging the status-quo • We encourage new ideas that positively impact how we do things

Goals, Objectives, and Action Items

Environment



Goal: To safeguard our critical natural resources and coastal ecosystem.

Objective #1: Maintain the natural resources that we have	Objective #2: Mitigate the risk of natural disasters	Objective #3: Educate the public about their natural environment	Objective #4: Have a comprehensive strategy for clean water
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Action Items:

#	Action	Related Objective(s)
1.1	Create water rates that incentivize water stewardship	#1
1.2	Develop implementation priorities/strategies for the Estuarine Shoreline Management Plan	#1, #2, #4
1.3	Complete/implement Beach Nourishment Master Plan to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Engineering plan b. Financial plan to include recommended tax rates/revenues c. Include sprigging in all future plans 	#1, #2, #4, Action #3.3
1.4	Complete Stormwater Management Plan/develop implementation plan w/ list of projects (for annual CIP)	#1, #2, #4
1.5	Complete Water System Master Plan/Develop implementation plan w/ list of projects (for annual CIP)	#1, #2, #4
1.6	Implement Decentralized Wastewater Management Plan w/ guidance from the Septic Health Advisory Committee	#1, #2, #4
1.7	Develop creative strategies to increase participation in the Septic Health Initiative	#3, #4
1.8	Create an education program to include a video series on the major threats to water quality in Nags Head (i.e. stormwater/wastewater)	#3
1.9	Consider the impacts of sea level rise and climate change in policies/ordinances/planning studies	#1, #2, #3

Development



Goal: To achieve responsible, adaptive development that aligns with our community vision.

Objective #1: Proactively balance appropriate types of land uses	Objective #2: Ensure resilient development and infrastructure	Objective #3: Ensure public spaces are preserved and maintained equitably	Objective #4: Ensure efficient traffic movement and pedestrian safety
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Action Items:

#	Action	Related Objective(s)
2.1	Apply for a grant to place Place conservation easements on Town-owned properties (ensuring equitable access)	#3
2.2	Identify and correct areas of land use incompatibility within the town; correct inconsistencies between the Comprehensive Plan and the Unified Development Ordinance. (i.e. this involves eliminating land uses permitted within a zoning district but may not be compatible with existing development and/or the future development plan as described in the Comprehensive Plan). Items to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Revisit the appropriateness of the Hotel Overlay District b. Identify areas where the zoning designation and existing development patterns may not be aligned c. Examine Beach Road vs US 158 uses (Corridors Character Area) d. Examine the allowable uses within the Commercial Outdoor Recreation District 	#1
2.3	Review the character areas set forth in the Comprehensive Plan and suggest strategies for implementation.	#1, #2,
2.4	Develop and present an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) ordinance with a menu of optional provisions/regulatory standards that may improve community acceptance (i.e. zoning districts allowed, minimum lot size, maximum square footage of unit, height limits, deed restrictions for certain purposes, parking requirements, etc).	#1, #2

#	Action	Related Objective(s)
2.5	Recommend non-regulatory approaches to minimize residential lighting impacts. Suggestions include increased education on dark sky benefits, a program to provide residents with free light shields, a “keep it dark/be a good neighbor campaign”, turtle friendly lighting, and education on how to provide security lighting without creating nuisance lighting for neighbors.	#1
2.6	<u>COMPLETED</u> Implement the current model for streets/water/stormwater CIP projects; incorporate projects resulting from infrastructure planning studies (#2)	#2
2.7	Explore and pursue grant opportunities to leverage town resources for infrastructure planning, maintenance, and enhancements, where necessary	#2
2.8	<u>COMPLETED</u> Develop and recommend a process for handling neighborhood requests for traffic calming	#4
2.9	<u>COMPLETED</u> Discuss the existing Pedestrian Plan priorities with the Board	#4
2.10	Advocate to NCDOT for a corridor study of US 158 to improve safety while considering access, function, and efficiency	#4
2.11	<u>COMPLETED</u> Develop an initiative to improve pedestrian safety at crosswalks/reduce user conflicts on multi-use paths	#4

Economy



Goal: To promote a sustainable economy that supports residents and visitors.

Objective #1: Provide workforce housing for the Town	Objective #2: Support and encourage small businesses	Objective #3: Maintain a free, family-friendly, non-commercial, well-maintained beach
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Action Items:

#	Action	Related Objective(s)
3.1	Define the Town's goals as a participant <u>Participate</u> in Dare County's Housing Taskforce (and collaborate with the other towns) and apply a menu of strategies from the Taskforce to the Town's housing needs	#1
3.2	Find a model to provide housing for Town staff, focusing on Ocean Rescue and potentially other employees <u>Evaluate optimal housing options for the Ocean Rescue staff within the Town Campus Master Plan, and explore opportunities to accommodate additional employees</u>	#1
3.3	Facilitate the creation of a Merchants Association (or similar) to have more proactive engagement with businesses	#2
3.4	<u>COMPLETED</u> Continue to monitor and facilitate educational opportunities within the community as it pertains over-occupancy issues, including wastewater, traffic, sanitation, noise, etc. Engage local real estate agencies, the Outer Banks Association of Realtors, and local event planners with educational efforts.	#2
3.5	Update portions of the Town Code as needed to clarify that commercialization of the beach is prohibited within the town	#3

Community Services



Goal: To maintain an efficient government that provides high quality and cost-effective services.

Objective #1: Maintain a work environment where people feel valued, appreciated, and respected	Objective #2: Provide friendly, accommodating, and responsive customer service	Objective #3: Provide the highest quality services possible and review the needs of the community to ensure that resources are available to meet those needs	Objective #4: Enhance internal and external communication that reflects the town's the goals, values, and heritage	Objective #5: Collaborate with other local and state agencies to align or expand services
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Action Items:

#	Action	Related Objective(s)
4.1	Highlight high performing employees and accomplishments to the Board and the public throughout the year	#1
4.2	Design and implement a performance-based merit structure as part of the FY 2024-25 budget process (incorporate values)	#1, #2
4.3	Evaluate the Town's total rewards framework to ensure competitiveness	#1
4.4	<u>Discuss what department data is meaningful to the Board and then Establish-establish</u> KPIs (performance measures) for departments <u>and develop an automated reporting system</u>	#2, #3
4.5	Create and present to the Board a "Town Campus" Master Plan	#3
4.6	Create public services announcement (PSA) videos and events (like Ash Wednesday storm video and event)	#3
4.7	Create formal mechanisms to work with other local or state agencies to align initiatives	#5

New Action Item Prioritization

We asked the Board and staff to prioritize the most important NEW action items that came out of the retreat. In other words, what are we not already working on that we need to tackle first. Those items are listed below.

- 1.1 Create water rates that incentivize water stewardship
 - 1.2 Develop implementation priorities/strategies for the Estuarine Shoreline Management Plan
 - 1.3 Complete/Implement Beach Nourishment Master Plan to include the following elements:
 - a. Engineering plan
 - b. Financial plan related to tax rates/revenues
 - c. Include sprigging in all future plans
 - 1.4 Complete Stormwater Management Master Plan/Develop implementation plan with list of projects for annual Capital Improvement Program
 - 1.5 Complete Water System Master Plan/Develop implementation plan with list of projects for annual Capital Improvement Program
- 2.2 Identify and correct areas of land use incompatibility within the town; correct inconsistencies between the Comprehensive Plan and the Unified Development Ordinance. (i.e. this involves eliminating land uses that are permitted within a zoning district but may not be compatible with existing development and/or the future development plan as described in the Comprehensive Plan). Items to consider:
- a. Revisit the appropriateness of the Hotel Overlay District.
 - b. Identify areas where the zoning designation and existing development patterns may not be aligned.
 - c. Examine Beach Road vs US 158 uses (Corridors Character Area).
 - d. Examine the allowable uses within the Commercial Outdoor Recreation District.
- 2.4 Develop and present an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) ordinance with a menu of optional provisions/regulatory standards that may improve community acceptance (i.e. zoning districts allowed, minimum lot size, maximum square footage of unit, height limits, deed restrictions for certain purposes, parking requirements, etc).

- 3.1 ~~Participate in Dare County's Housing Taskforce and apply menu of strategies from the Taskforce to the Town's housing needs. Define the Town's goals as a participant in Dare County's Housing Taskforce (and collaborate with the other towns).~~
- 4.2 ~~Design and implement performance-based merit structure as part of the FY 2024/25 budget process.~~
- 4.3 ~~Evaluate total rewards framework to ensure competitiveness.~~
- 3.2 ~~Evaluate optimal housing options for the Ocean Rescue staff within the Town Campus Master Plan, and explore opportunities to accommodate additional employees. Find a model to provide housing for Town staff, focusing on Ocean Rescue and potentially other employees.~~
- 1.7 Develop creative strategies to increase participation in the Septic Health Initiative.
Note: If grant is awarded for this, it will remain on the priority list.
- 2.5 Recommend non-regulatory approaches to minimize residential lighting impacts. Suggestions include increased education on dark sky benefits, a program to provide residents with free light shields, a "keep it dark/be a good neighbor campaign", turtle friendly lighting, and education on how to provide security lighting without creating nuisance lighting for neighbors.

Plan Implementation

As part of the implementation process, staff ~~will has develop~~ developed timelines and champions who will be responsible for overseeing the action items. Most action items will be implemented in two years or less; however, some actions will be ongoing and will be implemented as part of the Town's annual CIP and budget process.

Staff will also develop mechanisms to track implementation progress of actions. Formal updates on the progress of implementation will be provided to the Board of Commissioners twice a year. The strategic plan will continue to be updated on an annual basis, typically in the fall, to allow for action items to be considered in the budget cycle, which begins in February/March of each year.

