

South Berwick Comprehensive Plan: Goals, Policies, and Strategies

DRAFT 3.18.2024

The following matrix describes chapter by chapter strategies recommended by the Comprehensive Plan Committee for action over the next ten to fifteen years. Policies and strategies are in no particular order, but are generally prioritized into immediate, short-term, long-term and ongoing activities. Strategies are as directive as possible, while still leaving room for the appropriate responsible parties to explore, refine, and implement actions as they are suitable for the town, and in keeping with the goals of this plan.

More details about plan implementation, coordination of responsible parties, and regional collaboration is still in development. The Future Land Use Plan, which will describe how zoning boundaries, uses, and density requirements can support directing growth to suitable areas, and protecting rural areas from overdevelopment, is also still in development and will be appended to these core recommendations.

Matrix Key:

★ Denotes a state recommended strategy for consistency from the Comprehensive Plan Review Criteria Rule (07 105 Chapter 208).

Timeline

- Immediate = 2-3 years
- Short Term = 5-8 years
- Long Term = 10-15 years
- Ongoing = Begin as possible, maintain ongoing

Budget

- N/A = Does not necessarily have a cost component
- \$ = One budget cycle, maybe mid-cycle allocation
- \$\$ = One budget cycle, budgeted ahead of time
- \$\$\$ = Two to three budget cycles
- \$\$\$\$ = three or more budget cycles, maybe a reserve account

Table of Contents

Housing	3
Local Economy & Downtown	6
Transportation.....	9
Natural Resources	13
Historic and Archeological Resources.....	21
Arts & Recreation.....	23
Public Facilities and Services	26
Fiscal Capacity.....	30
Land Use	32

Housing

State Goal: *To promote and work to ensure choice, economic diversity and affordability in housing for low-income and moderate-income households and use housing policy to help address disparities in access to educational, occupational and other opportunities.*

Please note, in these strategies, the term “affordable housing” or “workforce housing” means housing on which the household is paying less than 30% of gross income on housing costs, including utilities, insurance, etc. This is consistent with the U.S. Dept of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Policy	Strategy	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Budget
<i>It is the policy of the town encourage and promote adequate workforce housing to support the community’s and region’s economic development, and ensure diverse housing options for all residents.</i>	Review policy on tax foreclosed properties, develop a set of criteria to determine cases where conversion to workforce housing be considered.	Town Council, Staff	Immediate	N/A
	Participate in regional meetings or workshops exploring regional strategies to provide stable workforce housing, including homeownership and rental housing.	Town Council, Staff	Ongoing	N/A
	Consider participating in the state grant programs aimed at the construction of workforce housing.	Town Council, Staff	Ongoing	N/A
	Explore the feasibility of a housing trust fund to be used as seed money or gap funding for workforce housing developments in town.	Town Council	Short Term	\$\$\$
	Seek to achieve a level of at least 10% of new residential development built or placed during the next decade be affordable. ★	Town Council, Planning Board	Long Term	N/A
	Monitor state housing production goals to ensure South Berwick is consistent with state plans.	Town Council	Short Term	N/A

<i>It is the policy of the town to ensure that land use controls encourage the development of quality affordable housing, including rental housing.</i>	Maintain, enact or amend growth area land use regulations in suitable zones to increase density, decrease lot size, setbacks and road widths, or provide incentives such as density bonuses, to encourage the development of affordable/workforce housing. ★	Planning Board, Town Council	Short Term	N/A
	Consider implementing a provision in the subdivision ordinance which requires that a percentage of all new residential dwellings within a subdivision of 10 or more units, be affordable to low- and moderate-income families.	Planning Board, Town Council	Long Term	N/A
	Exempt affordable housing units from any future impact fee ordinance.	Planning Board, Town Council	Long Term	N/A
	Reduce parking requirements for housing developments in suitable areas of the community, to reduce needed land and cost burdens of developments.	Planning Board, Town Council	Short Term	N/A
	Explore regulations that use the creation of open space conservation to incentivize housing development through waivers, density bonuses, etc.	Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Town Council	Long Term	N/A
<i>It is the policy of the town to encourage and support the efforts of the regional housing coalitions in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.</i>	Create a community affordable/workforce housing committee and/or participate in a regional affordable housing coalition. ★	Town Council, Staff	Long Term	N/A
	Support the efforts of local and regional housing coalitions in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs. ★	Town Council, Staff	Ongoing	N/A
<i>It is the policy of the town to monitor and respond to the needs of</i>	Consider, with input from neighboring communities, the need for a congregate care facility in the next 10	Town Council	Long Term	\$\$

<i>unhoused populations in the community and local towns.</i>	years, and options for developing one in town or regionally as needed.			
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Local Economy & Downtown

State Goal: *To promote an economic climate which increases job opportunities and overall economic well-being.*

Policy	Strategy	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Budget
<p><i>It is the policy of the town to support a thriving downtown business community, including diverse commercial activity and adequate infrastructure.</i></p> <p>★</p>	Complete a Downtown Revitalization Plan that engages property owners and creates specific recommendations for infrastructure and façade improvements.	Town Council	Immediate	\$\$
	Utilize existing tax increment financing (TIF) districts for needed public infrastructure improvements.	Town Council	Ongoing	N/A
	Create a downtown business network to engage business owners as needed on new town policies, programs, and initiatives.	Economic Development	Short Term	N/A
	Host business focused downtown events, such as “Small Business Saturday” to encourage patronage and awareness.	Economic Development	Immediate	\$
	Maintain engagement with York County Chamber and other regional and state agencies to promote accomplishments.	Economic Development	Ongoing	N/A
	Review zoning to ensure adequate mixed-use and multi-family housing is allowed in the downtown area.	Planning Board, Town Council	Immediate, Ongoing	N/A
	Establish a Business Retention and Expansion program to identify issues and opportunities to support existing area businesses.	Economic Development, Town Council	Short Term & Ongoing	\$\$
	Coordinate with regional development corporations and surrounding towns as necessary to support desired economic development. ★	Economic Development, Town Council	Short Term & Ongoing	N/A

	Continue to assign responsibility and provide financial support for economic development activities to the proper entity, such as the Economic Development Director. ★	Town Council	Ongoing	\$\$
<i>It is the policy of the town to create a downtown with character and sense of place, that supports walkability, recreation, youth, and civic activities.</i>	Pursue funding for downtown beautification, including landscaping and façade improvements, or public art.	Town Council	Long Term	N/A
	Identify specific opportunities for connecting downtown public spaces, including off-street walking paths and sidewalks, and incorporate them into future capital improvements.	Town Council, Recreation	Long Term	\$\$\$
	Consider development of consistent signage, maps and brochures for wayfinding throughout downtown for public areas, parks, municipal facilities, school facilities, etc.	Town Council, HDC	Short term	\$\$
	Prioritize maintenance and expansion of parks and recreation opportunities in or nearby downtown, including river access	Town Council, Recreation	Long term	\$\$\$
<i>It is the policy of the town to support commercial development and growth in suitable areas, such as Route 236, Punkintown, and lower Main Street. ★</i>	Review zoning to ensure desired forms of development are allowed and have limited barriers, including mixed-use development, commercial and industrial uses.	Planning Board, Town Council	Short Term	N/A
	Develop a corridor infrastructure plan to address lack of water and sewer in priority development areas identified in the plan, or by Town Council.	Economic Development, Town Council	Immediate	\$\$
	Complete an Area Master Plan for Punkintown development district, to address zoning, infrastructure, financial and marketing needs to improve development viability of the area.	Economic Development, Town Council, DPW, Sewer District, Water District	Long Term	\$\$

	Increase promotion of economic development potential of South Berwick through town messaging, website, collaboration, and listing specific priority sites.	Economic Development	Immediate	\$
	Work to connect local businesses and start-ups with local, regional and state/federal sources of grant and loan funding.	Economic Development	Immediate	N/A

Transportation

State Goal: *To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development*

Policy	Strategy	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Budget
<i>It is the policy of the town to reduce traffic congestion on downtown roads during peak commute periods through traffic management and alternative transportation options.</i>	Explore expanding transit service to the Dover Transportation Center and to Eliot, Kittery and Portsmouth by working with transit service providers and pertinent state agencies in Maine and New Hampshire.	Town Council, MPO, MaineDOT	Short Term	\$\$
	Explore opportunities to encourage carpooling and rideshare programs, including park & ride development.	Town Council, Implementation Committee, MPO, MaineDOT	Short Term	\$ to \$\$\$
	Encourage the town's representative to the KACTS committee to be a strong advocate for public transportation facilities to link South Berwick with existing transportation centers in New Hampshire and Southern Maine.	Town Council	Ongoing	N/A
	Plan to implement the traffic management recommendations proposed in the 2023 Traffic Study, including signalization of the Main Street/Dow Highway intersection, and the Main Street/Portland Street intersection.	Town Council, MPO, MaineDOT	Short Term	\$\$\$
<i>It is the policy of the town to ensure a balance between the mobility function of major routes, safety of the traveling public, and accessibility</i>	Integrate traffic calming design standards in existing road ordinances, to improve safety of new roads.	Town Council, Planning Board, MPO, MaineDOT	Short Term	\$

<i>to abutting property, especially in downtown and in areas where development may be encouraged.</i>	Prioritize streetscape design in any road maintenance or reconstruction to include green pedestrian buffers where possible, extend sidewalks at crossings, and landscaping.	Town Council, Planning Board, MPO	Long Term	\$\$
	Supplement crosswalks in high traffic areas with pedestrian signals & flashing crossing indicators.	Town Council, DPW	Immediate	\$\$
<i>It is the policy of the town plan for regular maintenance and maintain financial support for the transportation network, including maximizing the efficiency of the state or state-aid highway network. ★</i>	Develop or continue to update a prioritized improvement, maintenance, and repair plan for the community's transportation network. ★	Town Council, DPW	Ongoing	N/A
	Initiate or actively participate in regional and state transportation efforts, including representation on the KACTS MPO Policy Committee. ★	Staff	Ongoing	N/A
<i>It is the policy of the town to promote public health, protect natural and cultural resources, and enhance livability by maximizing the efficiency of the transportation system and minimize increases in vehicle miles traveled. ★</i>	Maintain, enact, or amend ordinance standards for subdivisions and for public and private roads as appropriate to foster transportation-efficient growth patterns, minimizing dead ends, and providing for future street and transit connections. ★	Planning Board	Short Term	\$
	Maintain, enact or amend local ordinances as appropriate to address or avoid conflicts with: a. Policy objectives of the Sensible Transportation Policy Act (23 M.R.S.A. §73); b. State access management regulations pursuant to 23 M.R.S.A. §704; and c. State traffic permitting regulations for large developments pursuant to 23 M.R.S.A. §704-A. ★	Planning Board	Short Term	\$
<i>It is the policy of the town to encourage walking and biking to the greatest extent possible for people of</i>	Develop a plan for additional and rebuilt sidewalks and roadway shoulders outside of the village to encourage bicycle and pedestrian connections.	Town Council, DPW	Long Term	\$\$\$

<i>all ages, as means of reducing traffic, promoting sustainability, and increasing wellness.</i>	Encourage or support the construction of off-road trails or on road infrastructure to access the Eastern Trail.	Town Council, Implementation Committee, Eastern trail Alliance, MPO	Short Term	\$\$
	Create or improve trails or paths to provide off road access to Great Works Middle School from Old Mill, Agamenticus Estates, or other high concentrations of residential development.	Town Council, SAD 35, DPW	Short Term	\$\$
	Develop a bike-friendly initiative including installation of bike racks at town facilities and in the village and adding signage to encourage motorists to share the road.	Town Council, DPW	Immediate	\$
	Review existing street lighting throughout the community, and improve lighting in high traffic areas, consistent with neighborhood character, to improve safety.	Town Council, DPW	Short Term	\$\$
	Consider adding bike lanes in the village and during the reconstruction of existing roads.	Town Council, Planning Board	Ongoing	\$\$
<i>It is the policy of the town to provide adequate parking for downtown visitation, and protect existing parking, both on-street and off.</i>	Develop a parking management strategy for downtown. Review parking requirements in zoning ordinance to ensure that they do not provide disincentives for business and development in downtown.	Planning Board, Town Council	Short Term	\$
	Reduce perception that parking is limited by developing signage and an education program.	Town Council, DPW	Immediate	\$
	Develop small satellite parking areas.	Town Council, DPW, MPO	Short Term	\$\$\$
	Evaluate suitable areas and add EV charging stations to areas of public parking	Town Council, DPW	Immediate	\$\$

	Update conditional use requirements for parking lots of a certain size to include EV charging stations	Planning Board, Town Council	Immediate	N/A
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Natural Resources

State Goal: *To protect the State's other critical natural resources, including without limitation, wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, sand dunes, shorelands, scenic vistas and unique natural areas.*

Policy	Strategy	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Budget
Regional Approaches				
<i>It is the policy of the town to cooperate with neighboring communities and regional/local advocacy groups to protect water resources, and shared critical natural resources.</i>	Provide local contact information at the municipal office for water quality best management practices from resources such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Soil and Water Conservation District, Maine Forest Service, and/or Small Woodlot Association of Maine. ★	Conservation Commission, Staff	Immediate	\$
	Distribute through the town newsletter & assessing office information s about current use tax programs and applicable local, state, or federal regulations. ★	Conservation Commission, Town Council	Short Term	\$
	Continue to participate in interlocal and/or regional planning, management, and/or regulatory efforts around shared critical and important resources such as the York River Partnership, the Mt. Agamenticus Conservation Steering Committee, Eastern Trail, and the Salmon Falls Watershed. ★	Town Council, Conservation Commission	Ongoing	N/A
	Participate in local and regional efforts to monitor, protect and, where warranted, improve water quality. ★	Town Council, Conservation Commission	Ongoing	N/A
Conservation				

<i>It is the policy of the town to participate in, incentivize, and plan for the conservation of land for the protection of water resources, critical natural resources, and agricultural lands.</i>	Develop a Conservation Checklist which the Planning Board is required to incorporate into development review proposals. Checklist will include the review of best known mapping datasets and ensure decision-makers are aware of project impacts to known natural resources in the area.	Conservation Commission, Planning Board	Short Term	\$
	Update the South Berwick Open Space Plan and implement recommendations to prioritize lands for future town acquisition and conservation. Consult regionally completed plans to incorporate best known information. Use the plan as a reference for development review and potential adverse impacts.	Town Council, Conservation Commission	Short Term	\$\$
	Establish conservation corridors between existing conservation lands, and work with bordering communities to create contiguous conserved lands.	Town Council, Conservation Commission	Long Term	\$\$
	Work to develop incentives for private landowner conservation and recreational easements, including the state Open Space Taxation program.	Town Council, Planning Board	Long Term	N/A or \$\$
	Create a municipal fund or trust which reserves resources for the purchase of land for conservation and protection. Could be funded through impact fees, annual appropriations, or tree growth and open space withdrawal penalties.	Town Council	Short Term	\$\$
	Maintain existing relationship with Great Works Regional Land Trust and explore ways the town could better support the organization or advance similar goals at the municipal level.	Town Council, Conservation Commission	Short Term	N/A or \$\$
	Improve communications and process to ensure the Conservation Commission is notified of all project proposals to the Planning Board and receives materials and invitations to site walks on the same timeline as the Planning Board.	Staff, Planning Board	Immediate	N/A

	Review Conservation Commission responsibilities and the additional tasks outlined in these recommendations and adjust the committee's annual budget as necessary.	Town Council	Immediate	\$\$
Water Resources				
<i>It is the policy of the town to maintain water quality information from best known sources and expand municipal testing as necessary.</i>	Work with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection to understand the best sources of water quality and pollution monitoring. Annually review for any major water quality issues of concern for the community.	Town Council, Conservation Commission	Immediate	N/A
	Access any available state resources to better understand the threat of PFAS contamination in South Berwick waterbodies, including testing, new information or legislation.	Town Council, Conservation Commission	Short Term	N/A
<i>It is the policy of the town to protect significant surface water resources and drinking water sources from pollution and improve water quality where needed.</i>	Adopt or amend local land use ordinances as applicable to incorporate stormwater runoff performance standards consistent with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Maine Stormwater Management Law and Maine Stormwater regulations (Title 38 M.R.S.A. §420-D and 06-096 CMR 500 and 502). b. Maine Department of Environmental Protection's allocations for allowable levels of phosphorus in lake/pond watersheds. c. Maine Pollution Discharge Elimination System Stormwater Program ★ 	Planning Board, Town Council	Short Term	N/A
	Review local land use ordinances, as applicable, to incorporate low impact development standards. ★	Planning Board, Town Council	Immediate	\$

	Maintain, enact, or amend public wellhead and aquifer recharge area protection mechanisms, as necessary. ★	Planning Board, Town Council	Short Term	\$
	Adopt water quality protection practices and standards for construction and maintenance of public and private roads and public properties and require their implementation by contractors, owners, and community officials and employees. ★	Planning Board, Town Council	Short Term	N/A
	Provide educational materials at appropriate locations regarding aquatic invasive species. ★	Conservation Commission	Immediate	N/A
<i>It is the policy of the town to protect water resources in growth areas where development is most intense and upgrade existing public sewer and wastewater facilities to minimize pollution discharge.</i>	Identify areas of stormwater infrastructure that are out of date or over capacity and plan for future upgrades and improvements pursuant to the town's MS4 designation.	Town Council, DPW, Staff	Short Term	N/A
	Consider streamlining on-going oversight of stormwater management plans by the creation of databases and/or GIS that can be utilized by appropriate Town staff.	Town Council, DPW, Staff	Short Term	\$
Critical Natural Resources and Wildlife Habitat				
<i>It is the policy of the town to prioritize the protection of undeveloped blocks, biodiversity, and critical wildlife habitat.</i>	Ensure that land use ordinances are consistent with applicable state law regarding critical natural resources. ★	Planning Board, Town Council	Short Term	\$
	Continue to require subdivision or non-residential property developers to look for and identify critical natural resources that may be on site and to take appropriate measures to protect those resources, including but not limited to, modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, and/or extent of excavation. ★	Planning Board, Town Council	Short Term	N/A

	Require the Planning Board to include as part of the review process, consideration of pertinent maps and information regarding critical natural resources from the updated Open Space Plan and other state resources . ★	Planning Board, Town Council	Short Term	N/A
	Pursue public/private partnerships to protect critical and important natural resources such as through purchase of land or easements from willing sellers. ★	Town Council, Conservation Commission	Ongoing	\$\$\$
	Review the current ordinances which allow the filling of wetlands and amend to minimize allowed filling and reduce impacts to wetlands and vernal pools.	Planning Board, Town Council	Short Term	N/A
	As part of Subdivision review, encourage retention of natural cover and vegetation to the maximum extent possible.	Planning Board, Town Council	Ongoing	N/A
	Include spatial data of wetlands delineation on GIS tools. Refer to current established wetland mapping criteria as developed by the National Wetlands Inventory to update town maps to determine total wetland size.	Town Council, Staff	Short Term	\$
	Consider amending ordinances to require a wetland values and functions assessment for certain new developments, to better understand the full impact of a project.	Planning Board, Town Council	Short Term	\$
	Incorporate wildlife conscious design in updates to all stream crossings identified as inadequate by the US Fish and Wildlife Service for better stream continuity and future increased flows.	Town Council, DPW, Staff	Ongoing	\$\$

	Recognize the value of vernal pools in the Greater Mount Agamenticus area as significant breeding habitat that supports other forms of wildlife and afford appropriate protection, such as shoreland zoning.	Planning Board, Town Council	Short Term	\$
<i>It is the policy of the town to consider the future impacts of climate change on the health and wellbeing of residents and the operations of town programs and services.</i>	Enroll in available regional and state partnerships to to access grants resources and guidance around climate change planning, such as the Community Resilience Partnership.	Town Council	Immediate	N/A
	Apply for grants from state programs to conduct a climate change study, consider the community’s greenhouse gas emissions or take action on climate change mitigation strategies.	Town Council	Short Term	\$\$
	Conduct a Climate Action Plan which addresses specific actions the community can pursue to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase sustainability and resilience to climate impacts. Could be funded through state grant programs.	Town Council	Long Term	\$\$
	Identify and inventory flooding impacts due to sea level rise and inland flooding areas from stormwater overflow and increased rain volumes. Implement infrastructure improvements or adaptation to reduce impacts to public facilities and safety.	Town Council	Long Term	\$\$\$
Agriculture and Forest Resources				
<i>It is the policy of the town to safeguard lands identified as prime farmland or capable of supporting commercial forestry.</i>	Form an Agriculture and Food Security Commission and provide an annual funding allocation for outreach and engagement.	Town Council	Short Term	\$
	Consult with the Maine Forest Service district forester when developing any land use regulations pertaining to forest management practices as required by 12 M.R.S.A. §8869. ★	Planning Board	Ongoing	N/A

	Consult with Soil and Water Conservation District staff when developing any land use regulations pertaining to agricultural management practices. ★	Planning Board	Ongoing	N/A
	Amend land use ordinances to require commercial or subdivision developments in suitable rural areas maintain areas with prime farmland soils as open space to the greatest extent practicable. ★	Planning Board, Town Council	Short Term	\$
	Include spatial data of priority farm and forest land on GIS mapping tools and tax maps. Data should include soil analysis and other factors.	Town Council, Staff	Short Term	\$
<i>It is the policy of the town to support farming and forestry and encourage their economic viability.</i>	Amend zoning to allow farming in all zones with the exception of livestock operations.	Planning Board, Town Council	Short Term	N/A
	Limit non-residential development in the most rural zones to natural resource-based businesses and services, nature tourism/outdoor recreation businesses, farmers' markets, and home occupations. ★	Planning Board	Ongoing	N/A
	Encourage owners of productive farm and forest land to enroll in the current use taxation programs. ★	Town Council, Staff	Ongoing	N/A
	Consider creating a Municipal Farm Support Program to create farmland easements, as well as other tax incentives to encourage farm enterprises.	Town Council, Agriculture Commission	Long Term	\$\$
	Permit land use activities that support productive agriculture and forestry operations, such as roadside stands, greenhouses, firewood operations, sawmills, log buying yards, and pick-your-own operations. ★	Planning Board	Ongoing	N/A

	Include agriculture, commercial forestry operations, and land conservation that supports them in local or regional economic development plans. ★	Town Council, Staff	Ongoing	N/A
	Review ordinances and remove any regulations which are not consistent with Maine's Right to Farm law.	Planning Board	Short Term	N/A

Historic and Archeological Resources

State Goal: *To preserve the State's historic and archeological resources.*

Policy	Strategy	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Budget
<i>It is the policy of the town to ground South Berwick's future development in solid, accurate information, and maintain up to date cataloged information on areas of historic and archaeological significance throughout town.</i>	As part of any downtown revitalization plan, consider including additional inventory work of historical structures within the village area and consider updating the 1998 Inventory.	Historic District Commission (HDC)	Short Term	\$
	Look to expand the inventory of historical sites beyond downtown. Encompass areas of historical and archaeological significance throughout South Berwick: mill sites, historic churches, schools, railroad/trolley features, important transportation routes, archaeological sites, sites of important events, cemeteries and homes of significant people. Ask that residents voluntarily opt into the inventory.	HDC	Short Term	\$\$
	Create a centralized inventory of town historical structures and sites.	Town Council/HDC	Long Term	\$\$
	Include any inventory of historic sites on town GIS mapping tools.	Town Staff, HDC	Short Term	N/A
<i>It is the policy of the town to ensure our treasured resources benefit future residents by encouraging the preservation and maintenance of areas of historic and archaeological significance. ★</i>	Explore expanding the downtown South Berwick Historic District as a means of discouraging the loss of historic features downtown. Likely expansion areas include the following corridors and adjacent neighborhoods: Main Street (bridge to bridge), Portland Street (to the Golf Course), and Norton, Academy, Liberty, Vine and Brattle Streets.	Town Council, HDC, Planning Board	Immediate	N/A

	Through codification in town ordinances, for known historic archeological sites and areas sensitive to prehistoric archeology, require subdivision or non-residential developers to take appropriate measures to protect those resources, including but not limited to, modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, and/or extent of excavation. ★	HDC, Planning Board	Short Term	N/A
	Adopt or amend land use ordinances to require the planning board to incorporate maps and information provided by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission into their review process. ★	Planning Board	Short Term	N/A
<i>It is the policy of the town to encourage all citizens to enjoy and protect South Berwick's history by building a heightened awareness of our architectural and archaeological treasures.</i>	Continue to support the work the Old Berwick Historical Society, Historic New England, and other local organizations.	HDC, Town Staff	Ongoing	\$
	Develop a heritage tourism program to attract visitors, benefit residents and bolster local businesses. Such a program could include events, guided tours, signage for self-led walking tours, and open houses.	HDC, Town Staff	Immediate	\$
	Create attractive and interesting signs and/or plaques around town with dates, names and pertinent information to enrich the experience of visitors and residents alike.	HDC	Long Term	\$\$

Arts & Recreation

State Goal: *To promote and protect the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities for all Maine citizens, including access to surface waters.*

Policy	Strategy	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Budget
<i>It is the policy of the town to invest in the creation of new and improvement of existing public lands and recreation facilities to meet community needs and provide a variety of recreational opportunities.</i>	Establish an account for dedicated funds and donations for open space and recreational purposes. Include this fund as part of the capital improvement plan.	Town Council	Short Term	\$
	Encourage municipal acquisition of riverfront land for public cultural and recreational use.	Town Council, Conservation Commission	Long Term	\$\$\$
	Update the Open Space Plan to reflect current data and conservation priorities.	Staff, Recreation, Conservation Commission	Short Term	N/A
	Work with public and private partners to extend and maintain a network of trails for motorized and non-motorized uses. Connect with regional trail systems, such as the Eastern Trail, where possible. ★	Staff, Recreation, Conservation Commission	Long Term	N/A - \$
	Investigate the feasibility of creating a multi-use trail system in the Powderhouse Hill and Agamenticus fields complex area.	Town Council, Conservation Commission	Long Term	\$\$\$
	Invest in sidewalks or off-road infrastructure to improve connectivity between town parks and land.	Town Council	Short Term	\$\$\$
	Create policy incentives on the local level for donation or creation of conservation and recreational easements.	Town Council, Conservation Commission	Immediate	N/A

	Evaluate capital needs for municipal parks and recreation staff and regional recreation non-profits to consider the feasibility of a combined community center.	Town Council	Long Term	\$\$\$
	Ensure co-location of recreation facilities suitable for a range of ages and ability types, to encourage family outings in public spaces	Town Council, DPW, Recreation	Ongoing	N/A
	Invest in existing public spaces with annual allocations for infrastructure, signage, informational or amenities improvements a town park or land. (i.e. Town Forest, Cummings Mill Park, Shoetown Park)	Town Council, DPW, Recreation	Immediate	\$
	Assess parking needs & develop a plan for additional parking at the Agamenticus Recreation area.	Town Council, DPW	Short Term	\$\$
	Create a list of recreation needs or develop a recreation plan to meet current and future needs. Assign a committee or community official to explore ways of addressing the identified needs and/or implementing the policies and strategies outlined in the plan. ★	Town Council, Recreation	Long Term	\$
<i>It is the policy of the town to develop and expand cultural activities including community events, music, the arts, and facilities to host or house them.</i>	Consider partnering with local historic groups to identify a shared central site for communication or display of cultural events or activities.	Recreation	Immediate	N/A
	Develop a Town green or outdoor meeting area and venue through the purchase or reuse of land around the Town Hall, Central School, Powderhouse, or other town owned property.	Town Council	Short Term	\$\$\$

	Encourage or support public seasonal events community-wide.	Town Council	Ongoing	\$
<i>It is the policy of the town to improve awareness of cultural and recreational opportunities, as well as foster productive communication and coordination among all organizations and groups involved.</i>	Develop a plan to improve communication between the town and various volunteer groups that contribute to recreation and cultural facilities in town, including regular updates with the Town Council, to encourage better coordination among organizations.	Town Council	Short Term	N/A
	Develop GIS mapping of local recreation and cultural opportunities, including both town-owned and non-profit/private owned but publicly accessible assets. Share and promote the resource for public awareness of available assets and activities.	Town Council, Staff	Immediate	\$
	Provide educational materials regarding the benefits and protections for landowners allowing public recreational access on their property. At a minimum this will include information on Maine's landowner liability law regarding recreational or harvesting use, Title 14, M.R.S.A. §159-A. ★	Town Council, Staff	Long Term	\$

Public Facilities and Services

State Goal: *To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.*

Policy	Strategy	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Budget
<i>It is the policy of the town to plan for the maintenance and care of municipal facilities and buildings, and make improvements based on general government staff needs and capacity.</i>	Create a Municipal Buildings Master Plan that inventories the current space and uses of facilities in town, considers future maintenance and capacity needs, plans for periodic improvements, and appoints responsible staff for these tasks. Could include hiring a facilities manager or adding responsibility to current staff.	Town Council, Building Committee, Staff	Short Term	\$
	Engage current staff departments on facility space, capacity, and equipment needs and incorporate findings in the Municipal Buildings Master Plan.	Town Council, Building Committee, Staff	Immediate	N/A
	Evaluate the potential for providing space for local non-profits and volunteer organizations which provide recreation or cultural opportunities.	Town Council, Building Committee, Staff	Short Term	N/A
	Locate the majority of new municipal growth-related capital investments in designated growth areas. ★	Town Council, Staff	Ongoing	N/A
	Identify any capital improvements needed to maintain or upgrade public services to accommodate the community's anticipated growth and changing demographics. ★	Town Council, Staff	Short Term	N/A
<i>It is the policy of the town, in partnership with the South Berwick Sewer District and the South Berwick Water District, to provide adequate water and sewer</i>	Evaluate the SBWD and SBSB fee structure to ensure that developers are bearing an appropriate share of future upgrades and improvements to the sewer and water systems.	Town Council, Planning Board, SBWD, SBSB	Short Term	N/A

<i>infrastructure to meet the needs of current and future development.</i>	Encourage the extension of public water and sewer to newly developing areas adjacent to the existing sewer service areas when developers will pay the costs and where such extensions do not occur in environmentally sensitive areas.	Planning Board, Town Council, SBWD, SBSB	Long Term	N/A
	Consider water and sewer district needs and concerns in all zoning ordinance revisions.	Planning Board, Town Council, Staff	Ongoing	N/A
	Involve SBWD and SBSB in discussions of strategic infrastructure expansions in targeted areas of economic development and in keeping with recommendations of the Future Land Use Plan. ★	Town Council, Economic Development Staff, SBWD, SBSB	Short Term	\$
	As public water expansion is anticipated, ensure protection of suitable water supply sources. ★	Town Council, SBWD, Conservation Commission	Long Term	\$\$
	Designate a council member to annually engage with the SBWD and SBSB for updates on facilities, water quality, costs, and other current issues or needs.	Town Council	Short Term	N/A
	Assess South Berwick water supply sources for PFAS contamination. If present, understand sources of contamination and seek guidance and funding from the State for remediation.	SBWD, Town Council	Short Term	\$
<i>It is the policy of the town to provide adequate emergency services, and continuously improve those facilities and programs based on changing community needs.</i>	Monitor and participate in regionalization efforts for providing police, fire, and rescue services. ★	Town Council, Public Safety Staff	Ongoing	\$
	Evaluate the current level of service and monitor the extent to which the town's needs are met relative to national and state service standards.	Town Council, Public Safety Staff	Immediate	\$\$

	Plan for the expansion and/or renovation of the Fire Station to accommodate the addition of more staff, increased training requirements, and community changes in the next ten years.	Town Council, Public Works Staff	Long Term	\$\$\$\$
<i>It is the policy of the town to provide adequate solid waste disposal facilities and make continuous improvements to meet changing community needs.</i>	Address concerns of traffic flow and overcrowding at the transfer station, and periodically evaluate needs based on community changes.	Town Council, Public Works Staff, Building Committee?	Short Term	\$\$\$
	Consider whether regionalization of solid waste management may be more cost effective, efficient or resilient for South Berwick and surrounding communities. ★	Town Council, Staff	Long Term	\$\$-\$\$\$
	Provide public education and enforce mandatory recycling policies for paper, aluminum, plastics and other metals. Continue offering household hazardous waste disposal.	Public Works Staff, Town Council	Ongoing	\$
	Consider implementing other solid waste disposal options, such as a community composting program, to reduce overall waste to landfill.	Town Council, Public Works Staff	Short Term	\$\$
<i>It is the policy of the town to maintain an ongoing dialogue with MSAD #35 to collaborate on mutual long term planning goals.</i>	Meet with school officials on a regular basis to consider facility needs, to analyze the impact of school assessments on the tax rate and to analyze the implications of residential growth.	Town Council, School Board & Staff	Ongoing	N/A
	Explore new ways to work with the district to maximize the use of school facilities.	Town Council, School Board	Short Term	N/A
<i>It is the policy of the town to maintain and continuously improve government transparency and communications with residents.</i>	Create a welcome packet for new South Berwick residents that includes information on meeting times & places, website resources, services, etc.	Town Council, Staff	Immediate	\$
	Host a volunteer/engagement fair at Town Hall to introduce local non-profits, committees, and other organizations to the public.	Town Council, Staff	Short Term	\$

	Consider allocating funds to communications as its own budget item and/or providing funds to town committees to conduct outreach.	Town Council	Immediate	\$\$
	Consider the feasibility and need to hire communications staff, potentially shared with neighboring towns.	Town Council, Staff	Short Term	\$\$\$

Fiscal Capacity

State Goal: *To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.*

Policy	Strategy	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Budget
<i>It is the policy of the town to actively seek new non-tax sources of revenue and other methods of offsetting the costs of increased growth and development.</i>	Require that developments which would create an unreasonable burden on Town services be built in phases which parallel planned expansion of municipal facilities as provided in the town's Capital Improvements Plan.	Planning Board, Town Council	Short Term	N/A
	Include in the Subdivision Ordinance provisions to allow the town to require that developers participate in the provision or expansion of public facilities to service the development.	Planning Board, Town Council	Short Term	\$
	Evaluate the town's fee, permit and license structure to ensure prices are in line with similar communities regionally and are consistent with the cost of providing services.	Town Council, CEO, Staff	Short Term	\$
	Consider the implementation of an impact fee program to offset the costs of future development.	Town Council, Economic Development	Short Term	\$
	Investigate collaborative purchase of materials and equipment with adjoining towns and through SMPDC's collaborative purchase program.	Town Council, RPO, Staff	Long Term	\$\$
	Stay updated on new federal and state grant programs that would be suitable for community projects and needs. ★	Town Council, Economic Development	Ongoing	N/A
<i>It is the policy of the town to maintain a responsible tax rate</i>	Fund long term capital expenditures through bonding.	Town Council, Staff	Ongoing	N/A

<i>which is consistent with maintaining the current levels of service. ★</i>	Follow an annually updated 5-10 year Capital Improvements Plan for large purchases, projects and the implementation of town plans. ★	Town Council, Staff	Ongoing	N/A
	Decrease Town reliance on property tax to the maximum extent possible.	Town Council, Staff	Ongoing	N/A
	Remain in compliance with municipal LD spending limitations. ★	Town Council, Staff	Ongoing	N/A

Land Use

State Goal: *To encourage orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of each community and region while protecting the State's rural character, making efficient use of public services, and preventing development sprawl.*

Policy	Strategy	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Budget
Town-wide Land Use Strategy				
<i>It is the policy of the town to monitor growth, regularly review ordinances, and have appropriate staff to maintain effective land use planning.</i>	Maintain a database of building permit approvals which tracks new single-family units, multi-family units, and commercial development. Report trends to the Planning Board and Council periodically.	CEO	Immediate	\$
	Periodically review the boundaries and minimum lot size requirements of each zoning district.	Planning Board, Town Council	Short Term	N/A
	Provide the code enforcement officer with the tools, training, and support necessary to enforce land use regulations, and ensure that the Code Enforcement Officer is certified in accordance with 30-A M.R.S.A. §4451. ★	Town Staff	Ongoing	\$
	Evaluate the need for additional planning staff, including a town planner, and make recommendations as needed.	Town Council, Planning Board	Short Term	\$\$
	Conduct an immediate review and update of all zoning ordinances as an administrative clean-up for clarity, redundancies, and readability. Conduct a similar review every 3-5 years.	Planning Board, Town Council	Immediate	\$\$
	Conduct updates necessary to bring the ordinance in line with the Comprehensive Plan recommendations in this and all chapters. Plan to address recommendations in a phased approach over time, if needed.	Planning Board, Town Council	Short Term	N/A - \$

	Develop a unified shoreland zoning ordinance – while maintaining most or all the current standards, either separate from the general zoning ordinance, or integrated.	Planning Board, Town Council	Immediate	N/A - \$
<i>It is the policy of the town to promote infill development and concentrate growth in downtown areas, and near public water and sewer.</i>	Assist the SBWD and SBSB with a public utility capacity analysis to understand the total capacity of the water and sewer systems, and phasing of expansions based on projected growth. Based on the study, consider expansion of water and sewer service in R1, R1A, R2, R2A, B1, B2 and I1 Districts.	SBWD, SBSB, Town Council	Long Term	\$\$\$
	Maintain the differential growth cap which imposes a limit on permits issued in the rural zones but not in the business, industrial or higher-density residential areas.	Planning Board, Town Council	Short Term	N/A
	Seek funding opportunities for infrastructure development and downtown improvements through state and federal agencies, such as Maine DOT, Rural Development.	Town Council, Staff	Short Term	N/A
	Examine the feasibility of “Contract Zoning” in which proposed developments are allowed to exceed established base densities. In return, consider requiring developers to pay a density transfer fee that is allocated to a Trust or similar vehicle for purchasing development rights in highly valued rural areas.	Planning Board, Staff, CEO	Long Term	N/A
	Review and refine the subdivision phasing requirements to consider growth areas and service capacity in different zones. For instance, longer phasing may be required in rural areas than in growth areas.	Planning Board, CEO, Staff	Short Term	N/A
	Direct a minimum of 75% of new municipal growth- related capital investments into designated growth areas identified in the Future Land Use Plan. ★	Planning Board, Town Council	Ongoing	N/A

<i>To coordinate the community's land use strategies with other local and regional land use planning efforts. ★</i>	Meet with neighboring communities to coordinate land use designations and regulatory and non- regulatory strategies. ★			
<i>It is the policy of the town to use the Future Land Use Plan proposed in this document to inform future amendments to the communities zoning ordinance and land use regulations. ★</i>	Assign responsibility for implementing the Future Land Use Plan to the appropriate committee, board or municipal official. ★	Town Council	Immediate	N/A
	Using the descriptions provided in the Future Land Use Plan narrative, maintain, enact, or amend local ordinances as appropriate to: a. Clearly define the desired scale, intensity, and location of future development; b. Establish or maintain fair and efficient permitting procedures, and explore streamlining permitting procedures in growth areas; and c. Clearly define protective measures for critical natural resources and, where applicable, important natural resources. d. Clearly define protective measures for any proposed critical rural areas and/or critical waterfront areas, if proposed. ★	Town Council, Planning Board	Short Term	N/A - \$\$
	Meet with neighboring communities to coordinate land use designations and regulatory and non-regulatory strategies. ★	Town Council, Planning Board, Staff	Short Term	N/A
	Periodically (at least every five years) evaluate implementation of the Future land Use Plan in accordance with Section 2.7. ★	Town Council, Planning Board, Staff	Ongoing	N/A
Protection of Natural Resources & Shoreland Zoning				
<i>Provide adequate protection for wetlands, waterbodies, and watersheds through buffer zones as</i>	Consider extending shoreland zoning to all 10-acre wetlands, including forested wetlands and/or those of moderate and high value.	Planning Board, Town Council	Short Term	N/A

<i>currently defined in the Resource Protection and Shoreland Zoning section of the Zoning Ordinance, as well as critical rural zones, or critical habitat overlays.</i>	Consider a 25-foot setback for wetlands under 2 acres.	Planning Board, Town Council	Short Term	N/A
	Consider implementation of shoreland zoning in areas within 100 feet of wetlands between 2 and 10 acres.	Planning Board, Town Council	Short Term	N/A
	Consider expanding the resources protected under shoreland zoning or resource protection to include priority natural areas, such as endangered species habitat, or adding significant vernal pools within the Mt. Agamenticus area. Recommendations should reflect priority conservation areas identified in the Open Space Plan.	Planning Board, Town Council, Conservation Commission	Short Term	N/A
	In areas of documented large block habitat and high conservation priority, as documented in the Natural Resources Chapter, consider changing parts of the current R3 zone to R4 or R5. Suggested areas include the Mt. Agamenticus region along the southeast border.	Planning Board, Town Council, Conservation Commission	Short Term	N/A
<i>It is the policy of the town to enact land use regulations that curb impacts to natural resources and promote conservation where possible.</i>	Review and rebrand the cluster subdivision ordinance as a “Conservation Subdivision Ordinance”, which prioritizes preserving land in the most sensitive or high-priority areas of a parcel in tandem with housing density.	Planning Board, Town Council	Short Term	N/A
	Strongly encourage preserved lands within conservation subdivisions be contiguous with other preserved lands when applicable.	Planning Board, Town Council	Short Term	N/A
	Examine impacts of extending additional town services in the rural zones, and recommend limits to extending additional town services in the R-3, R-4, and R-5.	Planning Board, Town Council, SBSD, SBWD	Long Term	\$\$

	Review Town ordinances to ensure they are consistent with the Natural Resources Protection Act (38 MRSA 400-A et. seq.), the Endangered Species Act (12 MRSA 7751 et. seq.), the Mandatory Shoreland Zoning Act (38 MRSA 435 et. seq.) and any other applicable state or federal regulations.	Planning Board, Town Council	Short Term	N/A
	In areas of documented large block habitat and high conservation priority, as documented in the Natural Resources Chapter, consider changing parts of the current R3 zone to R4 or R5. Suggested areas include the Mt. Agamenticus region along the southeast border.	Planning Board, Town Council, Conservation Commission	Short Term	N/A
<i>It is the policy of the town to enact land use regulations that curb impacts to natural resources and promote conservation where possible.</i>	Review and rebrand the cluster subdivision ordinance as a “Conservation Subdivision Ordinance”, which prioritizes preserving land in the most sensitive or high-priority areas of a parcel in tandem with housing density.	Planning Board, Town Council	Short Term	N/A
	Strongly encourage preserved lands within conservation subdivisions be contiguous with other preserved lands when applicable.	Planning Board, Town Council	Short Term	N/A
	Examine impacts of extending additional town services in the rural zones, and recommend limits to extending additional town services in the R-3, R-4, and R-5.	Planning Board, Town Council, SBSD, SBWD	Long Term	\$\$
	Review Town ordinances to ensure they are consistent with the Natural Resources Protection Act (38 MRSA 400-A et. seq.), the Endangered Species Act (12 MRSA 7751 et. seq.), the Mandatory Shoreland Zoning Act (38 MRSA 435 et. seq.) and any other applicable state or federal regulations.	Planning Board, Town Council	Short Term	N/A
Zoning for Residential Uses				

<i>It is the policy of the town to expand current high-density residential areas, in areas with the least environmental impact, to accommodate future growth and housing needs.</i>	Consider the expansion of high-density residential areas in accordance with the recommendations of the Future Land Use Plan, to allow more housing in areas well suited for residential growth. Ensure that new activity within the expanded areas is in keeping with the architectural integrity of the existing neighborhood through a site plan review process.	Planning Board, Town Council	Long Term	N/A
	Review and make recommendations to expand the types of housing allowed in each residential district, including the consideration of single-family homes, duplexes and attached housing, multi-family and apartment housing, mobile home parks, manufactured housing, tiny homes, and group homes.	Planning Board, Town Council	Short Term	N/A
	Evaluate short-term rental popularity in the community to understand whether rentals are limiting housing opportunities and adjust regulations accordingly.	Planning Board, Town Council	Long Term	\$
Town Character & Village Development				
<i>It is the policy of the town to encourage rural character, community beautification, and consistent architectural styles for the economic benefit of the community, and overall sense of place.</i>	Review and consider expanding existing performance standards related to design, particularly as to their application in the village area/downtown.	Planning Board, Town Council	Short Term	N/A
	Promote the continuity of architectural facades for all renovations and new buildings.	Planning Board, Town Council	Ongoing	N/A
	Review ordinance options that could reduce unkept property, dumping, illegal disposal, and disrepair of buildings.	Planning Board, Town Council	Short Term	N/A
	Allow mixed-use development along Route 236, especially within the Punkintown priority development area.	Planning Board, Town Council	Short Term	N/A

	Conduct ordinance updates necessary to implement the recommendations of the Downtown Revitalization Plan.	Planning Board, Town Council	Short Term	N/A
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