

TOWN OF NANTUCKET

Strategic Plan in Review



AUGUST 2023





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Dear Community Members:

It is a pleasure to serve this community as Chair of the Select Board. In 2018, the Board began a Strategic Planning process that focused on what we needed to do to have a positive impact on the lives of everyone who visits, works, and lives on our Island. Over the past five years, we have been guided by our attention to five focus areas – Housing, Transportation, Environmental Leadership, Efficient Town Operations, and Quality of Life. Each focus area has associated goals and activities identified to implement those goals.

As this work has been underway, we have seen many of our aspirations and goals become part of the daily operations of Town government. We can proudly report that the expectations we set in 2018 – to use a strategic planning process to make a positive difference for the future of our island – are being met. This report identifies the work that has been achieved by the Town departments under the mantle of the Select Board's Strategic Plan. There is much to celebrate in the successes we have realized and they have set a firm foundation for continuing to move forward with the practice of using strategic planning as a guide to Nantucket's future. The Select Board looks forward to continuing these initiatives for ongoing improvement to our island community.

The Select Board will hold a retreat in October 2023 to take a deep look at our Strategic Plan and reflect on where we are, and where we need to focus energy and resources in the coming years. The time is ripe to review the alignment of the focus areas and goals with the new economic and social realities facing our Town.

I hope you will join me in acknowledging and celebrating the successful work that the Strategic Plan has brought to our island community.

Sincerely,

Dawn Hill Holdgate
Select Board Chair

The time is ripe to review the alignment of the focus areas and goals with the new economic and social realities facing our Town.

Introduction

The Town of Nantucket (Town) initiated a strategic planning project in 2018. Organizations driven by clear purposes and shared values have a greater capacity to succeed than those that are not, and, over the course of the last five years, Town staff have worked to implement projects, programs, and initiatives related to each of those outcomes, and to work with the Select Board and Town Administration to build a collective understanding of the available resources, the operating context, and how priorities have shifted as new activities have become part of how the Town does business.

In October 2023, the Select Board will work to develop a refreshed strategic plan, reflective of the outcomes the Town is seeking to advance over the next five years. This document provides a comprehensive update on the work that has been completed as a result of the 2018-2023 strategic plan, as well as some of the initiatives that are still on-going, which is important input for developing future priorities. Some activities associated with the strategic plan have been operationalized – while the Town will continue to work on these activities, they now represent appropriately resourced, day-to-day programs of the Town.



Employees gathered for a volunteer trash pick-up day.

Strategic Plan Overview

Major elements of the Town's strategic plan include the Town's commitment to sustainability, its five focus areas, and several goals related to each area.

The Nantucket Strategic Plan is guided by the principles of Sustainability. Sustainability is how the Town of Nantucket, with a focus on historic preservation, equity and inclusion, natural resources, hazard mitigation, solid waste management, energy, public health, and education, institutionalizes practices in municipal operations that support a balance of the economic, environmental, and social health of our island, which meet the needs of current residents and visitors without compromising the ability of future generations to meet evolving needs.

The plan has five focus areas, which will be reviewed over the next several pages:



Housing



Transportation



Environmental Leadership



Efficient Town Operations



Quality of Life

Select Board's Strategic Planning Timeline



October 2018

Three focus areas identified (Housing, Environmental Leadership, Transportation)



June/July 2019

Retreat to review and refine focus areas



September 2019

Revised strategic plan adopted with Principles of Sustainability



October 2020

Retreat to review aspirational statements and add new Focus areas (Efficient Town Operations and Quality of Life)



October 2021

Retreat to review progress and approve updates



November 2022

Retreat to review progress



January 2023

Updated strategic plan adopted



October 2023

Retreat planned to review progress and refresh focus areas/goals

Housing



Housing that is available, affordable, and appropriate for the island has been at the forefront of the Select Board's Strategic Plan.

ASPIRATIONAL STATEMENT

Nantucket is a diverse community with a broad spectrum of economic circumstances and has housing stock that meets the range of needs. Year-round housing is achievable for everyone who works on the Island, and the various tiers of affordable housing make year-round living comfortable, stable, and inclusive. Our seasonal workforce is able to find safe and secure housing. Homes on Nantucket are well-constructed and integrated into the character of the Island.

Since 2019, the Town's Housing Department, through the Affordable Housing Trust, has worked to achieve Safe Harbor status limiting the number of 40B projects that can be built on island while also creating housing projects and programs to provide safe housing for all residents.

Sixty-seven million (\$67 million) in funding approved through Town Meeting and Town Elections since 2019 has enabled the purchase of property on Orange Street, Bartlett Road, and Fairgrounds Road to build housing units. Some are already under construction and others are well along in the planning phase.

Nantucket has also played a leading role in advancing a home rule petition at the state level that would provide a steady stream of income for housing projects by a proposed .5 % fee added to sale of a home on the amount over \$2 million.

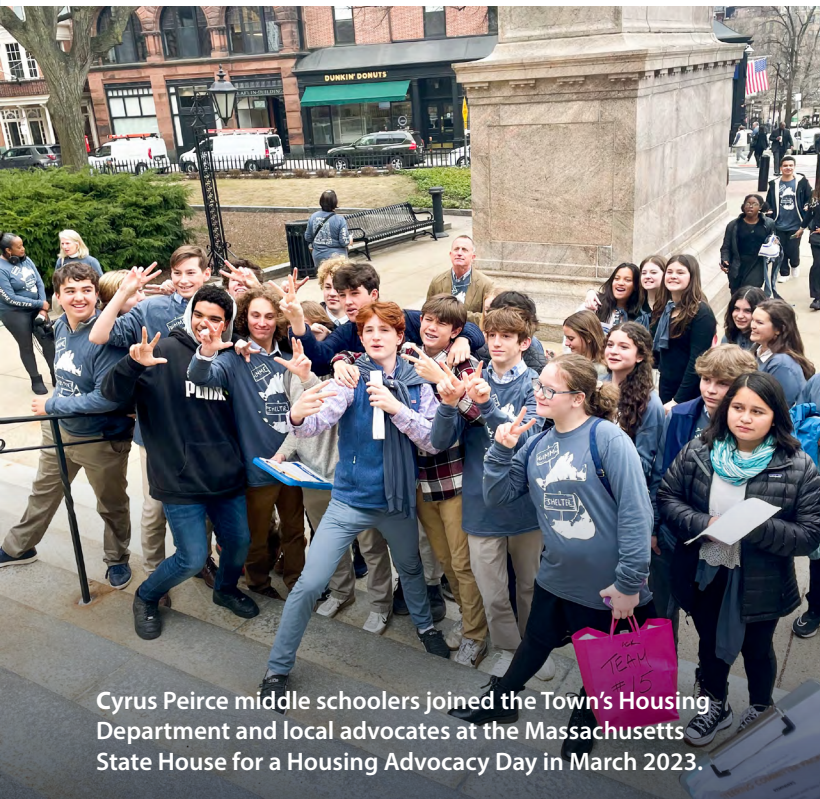
GOALS

- Achieve Safe Harbor status continually until the 10% requirement is met, per the goals set for Nantucket by the Commonwealth through Chapter 40B, and in so doing, maintain local control over affordable and attainable housing initiatives.
- Finalize a plan to address housing needs specifically for Town employees – year-round and seasonal.
- Determine in greater detail the need for housing at all affordability levels – 30% Area Median Income (AMI) to 40% AMI – for the community.
- Through a variety of approaches, promote affordable and attainable home ownership opportunities for the year-round community, which will meet housing needs at all income levels and lessen the burdens on government.

ACTIVITIES THAT HAVE BEEN COMPLETED OR OPERATIONALIZED

Over the last five years, considerable progress has been made to achieve the goals in the Housing focus area. A selection of completed activities or operationalized programs include:

- More than doubling the Town's official Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) to 273 units in 2021
- Receiving certification for the Town's Housing Production Plan from the Department of Housing and Community Development in 2021
- Achieving and extending Safe Harbor status through December 2024 (anticipated), based on having deployed a portion of the resources approved by Annual Town Meetings (ATM) for affordability buy-downs, SHI-inclusion, and accelerated production
- Surveying Town employees on the topic of housing in 2022, which revealed that 50% of survey respondents were housing cost burdened, and half of that group is extremely housing cost burdened
- Purchasing land at 135 and 137 Orange Street and 12 and 12R Bartlett Road to support creation of up to 36 affordable housing units, which will contribute to Safe Harbor status
- Completing a housing demand study through partnership between the Affordable Housing Trust and ReMain Nantucket in 2021
- Researching community land trusts, which are proven models utilized across the country that may aid the Town in achieving its housing goals. One fundamental principle of the model is that the land trust owns the land and the homeowner owns the home, thereby making the home ownership more attainable
- Approval of a permanent \$6.5 million override at 2023 ATM and Annual Election



Cyrus Peirce middle schoolers joined the Town's Housing Department and local advocates at the Massachusetts State House for a Housing Advocacy Day in March 2023.



Construction of affordable housing at 31 Fairgrounds Road.

AREA OF STRATEGIC FOCUS:

Transportation



The Strategic Plan promotes a variety of transportation options to visitors and residents.

ASPIRATIONAL STATEMENT

Nantucket has no traffic lights. Year-round transportation includes accessible, affordable, and reliable multi-modal options, that respect the historical setting of our community and limits reliance on single occupancy vehicles and private transportation. The Town has improved safety and mobility without accommodating a car centric culture. Pedestrians and bicyclists feel safe as they traverse along paths and walkways that abut our local roads. Our community embraced the use of technology to improve parking turnover in our vibrant Old Historic District and made year-round access a pleasant experience.

Over the past five years, sidewalks have been repaired throughout the downtown area and new bike lane markings have been added. As new road and street projects are brought online, attention is paid to improving walkways and bicycle access – all designed to encourage mobility around the island and in and out of downtown without relying on cars.

Planning also depends on collecting data to better understand traffic flow and parking needs to set policies and create programs to improve traffic and parking programs. Traffic counting stations have been installed at Goose Pond and Orange Street to determine vehicular traffic patterns. Data from License Plate readers used by Community Service Officers for parking enforcement in different seasons and at different times of the day.

GOALS

- Launch a downtown parking management system based on demand management principles that achieves (or is measured by) 85% occupancy of public parking spaces.
- Complete at least one key sidewalk route connection from Mid-Island (Six Fairgrounds Housing Project) to the ferries, with improved standards for accessibility.
- Shift the commuter mode of choice from driving alone to using other modes of transportation.

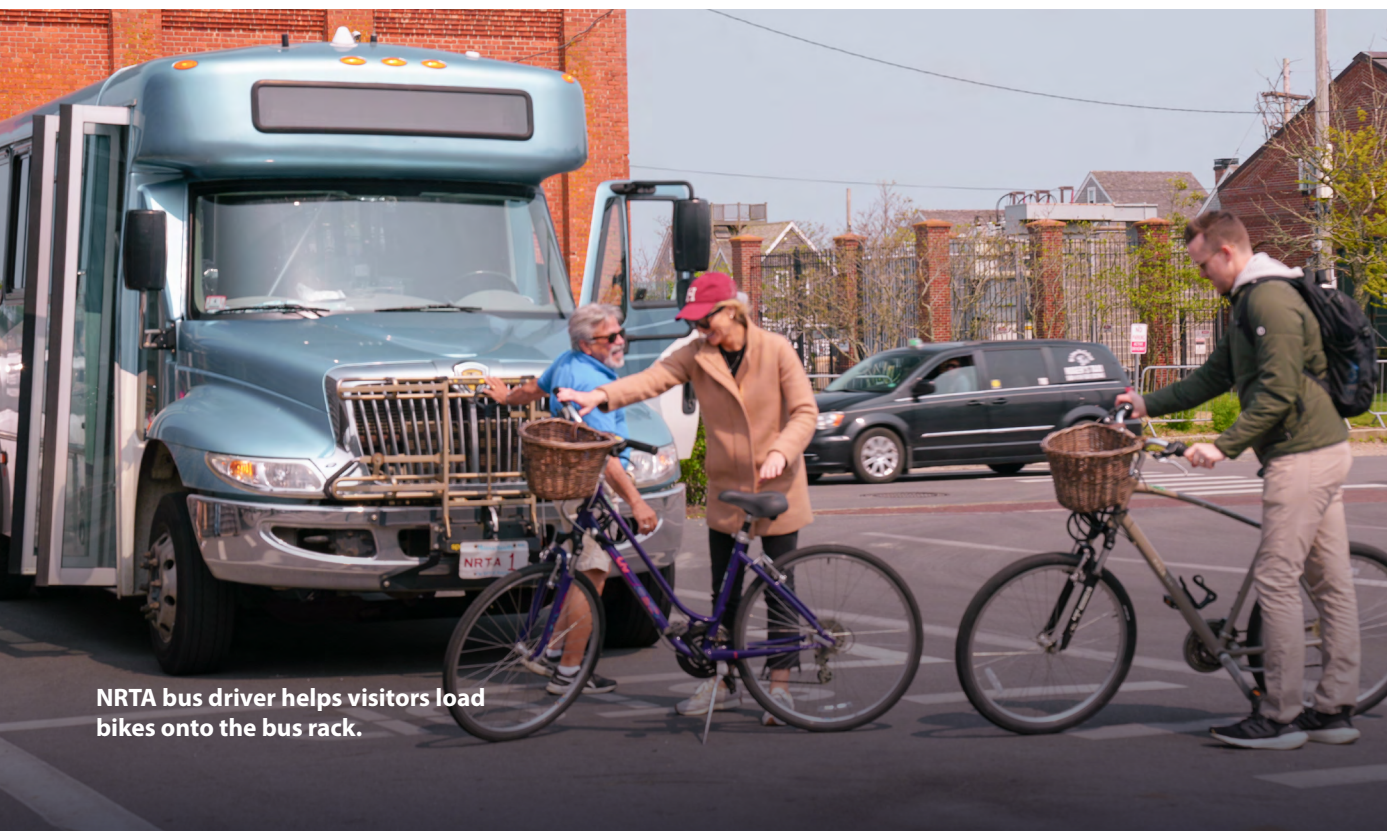
ACTIVITIES THAT HAVE BEEN COMPLETED OR OPERATIONALIZED

Since initiating the strategic planning process in 2018, the Town's commitment to improving transportation has yielded considerable results. Some of the completed activities or operationalized programs related to this focus area include:

- Completing the Orange Street bike lane from Milestone Road to Landmark House and improving the Candle Street bike lane
- Repairing sidewalks on:
 - Easy Street
 - Broad Street
 - Washington Street
 - Salem Street
 - Centre Street
 - South Water Street
 - India Street
- Installing a traffic counting station at Goose Pond/ Orange Street
- Researching software to support parking management systems
- Conducting outreach and education related to motorized bicycle and scooter safety
- Determining low-cost and high-yield measures to better understand year-over-year changes to transportation mode share



Biker rides on sidepath along Cliff Road.



NRTA bus driver helps visitors load bikes onto the bus rack.

AREA OF STRATEGIC FOCUS:

Environmental Leadership



The Town's Environmental Leadership goals focus on long-term stewardship of water quality and effective solid waste management.

ASPIRATIONAL STATEMENT:

Nantucket residents and visitors share responsibility for the long-term sustainability of our beautiful island. We recognize our stewardship of the land, air, and water and work to ensure our community is resilient and self-sufficient. Other communities look to Nantucket to learn how to care for the natural environment.

With the Town's contract for solid waste management coming due in 2025, the need to prepare for a vendor to manage the town's solid waste has been a critical focus of the strategic plan. A working group meets monthly to discuss long-term solid waste planning. To date, the Town has issued an "Expression of Interest" for future vendors to oversee the Town's solid waste facility that will address needs and opportunities in solid waste management practices that have occurred since the original contract was issued in 1996. In the shorter-term, improvements have been made to the "Take It or Leave It" and the separation of recyclable and non-recyclable materials. Additionally, the Town has implemented a ban on single-use plastics including a public outreach program focused on alternatives to single-use plastics.

Our island community must focus on the quality of its water sources and management efforts. The Strategic Plan has supported the development of a comprehensive Water Quality Management Plan including the quality of surface and harbor waters as well as stormwater and wastewater management. A new sewer force main running from the Sea Street Pump Station to the Surfside Wastewater Treatment Facility on South Shore Road is under construction;

an extended new sewer line is operational in the Shimmo and mid-Island areas, and PLUS parcels, and a stormwater enterprise fund has been authorized. The emergence of PFAS as a critical issue occurred during the early stages of the Strategic Plan and the Select Board modified the Plan to devote resources to conduct assessments and provide recommendations for best practices to deal with the hazard.

GOALS:

- Provide data-driven recommendations on island-wide solid waste management guided by principles of sustainability.
- Finalize an island-wide, long-term water quality management plan that addresses ponds, harbors, stormwater, and wastewater with specific ways/methods to measure improvement.

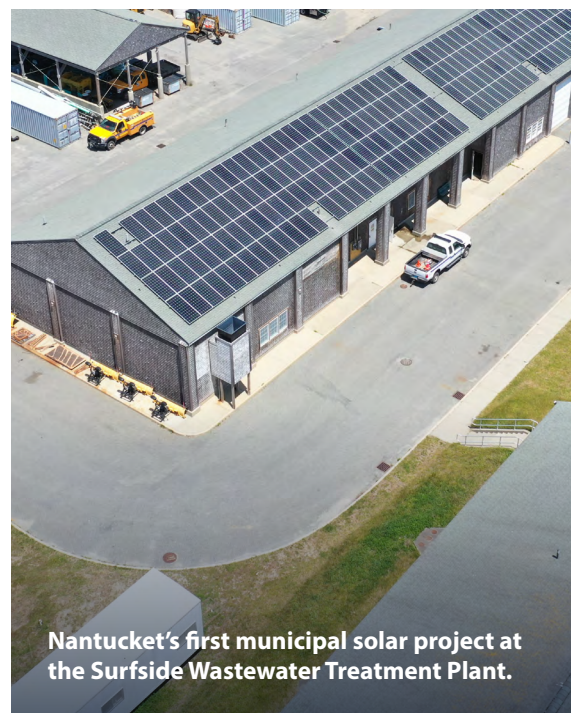
ACTIVITIES THAT HAVE BEEN COMPLETED OR OPERATIONALIZED

With regard to Environmental Leadership, the Town's goals generally align with solid waste management and water quality. Some of the completed activities or operationalized programs related to this focus area include:

- Finalizing the Island-wide, long-term water quality management plan, which:
 - Identified management strategies to reduce the controllable nutrient load to surface water
 - Worked to integrate existing plans related to water quality
 - Explored improvements to water quality testing procedures and habitat quality evaluation
- Continuing use of Nantucket WQAV - an interactive, web-based water quality monitoring tool
- Evaluating bay scallop and eelgrass populations for both harbors
- Researching and developing illicit discharge regulations, including for stormwater and pools
- Creating a robust PFAS awareness and education program to share recommendations and best management practices
- Implementing requirements related to the Town's Green Communities designation
- Requesting expressions of interest for future solid waste management
- Conducting a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) condition and project assessment



Natural Resources Department employee working on bay scallop spawning efforts at the Brant Point Shellfish Hatchery.



Nantucket's first municipal solar project at the Surfside Wastewater Treatment Plant.

AREA OF STRATEGIC FOCUS:



Efficient Town Operations

Town services, programs, and policies rely on dedicated professional staff and committed residents to positively impact the community

ASPIRATIONAL STATEMENT:

The Town of Nantucket reflects the community value of fiscal responsibility in its operations. Governance is collaborative; and representation on Boards, Committees, and Commissions is reflective of the diversity of our community. Town facilities and offices incorporate modern technology and are efficient in design, energy use, and location. The Town is committed to planning for a resilient and sustainable community and maintaining and improving municipal infrastructure and assets. Town employees provide vital municipal services that are valued by residents and visitors and are engaged members of our community.

Implementing the goals of the Strategic Plan and the day-to-day operations of the Town depend upon the strength of the Town's staff and the ability to recruit and retain them. Several initiatives are underway and/or completed to address the Town's staffing needs including a review to ensure a competitive compensation package and programs to achieve succession planning by developing and promoting staff from within the organization. A work group has been created to identify actions to enhance employee morale ranging from multi-departmental team activities to improved communication channels. To address housing needs of Town employees, an internal team meets regularly to identify opportunities to pursue for year-round and seasonal employees.

Technology that is reliable and secure is also critical to efficient town operations. Attention to cybersecurity on the Town's network is vigilant if not visible and keeps the Town's information safe. New methods of authentication have been introduced for all Town

technology equipment and on-going training is part of every staff member's work.

The Town's electronic communication and social media tools are consistently upgraded and refreshed to keep the public informed. A Communications Plan is in place with the goals of reaching all of the island's population in media and formats appropriate to their needs.

GOALS

- Develop a Facilities Master Plan
- Invest in technology

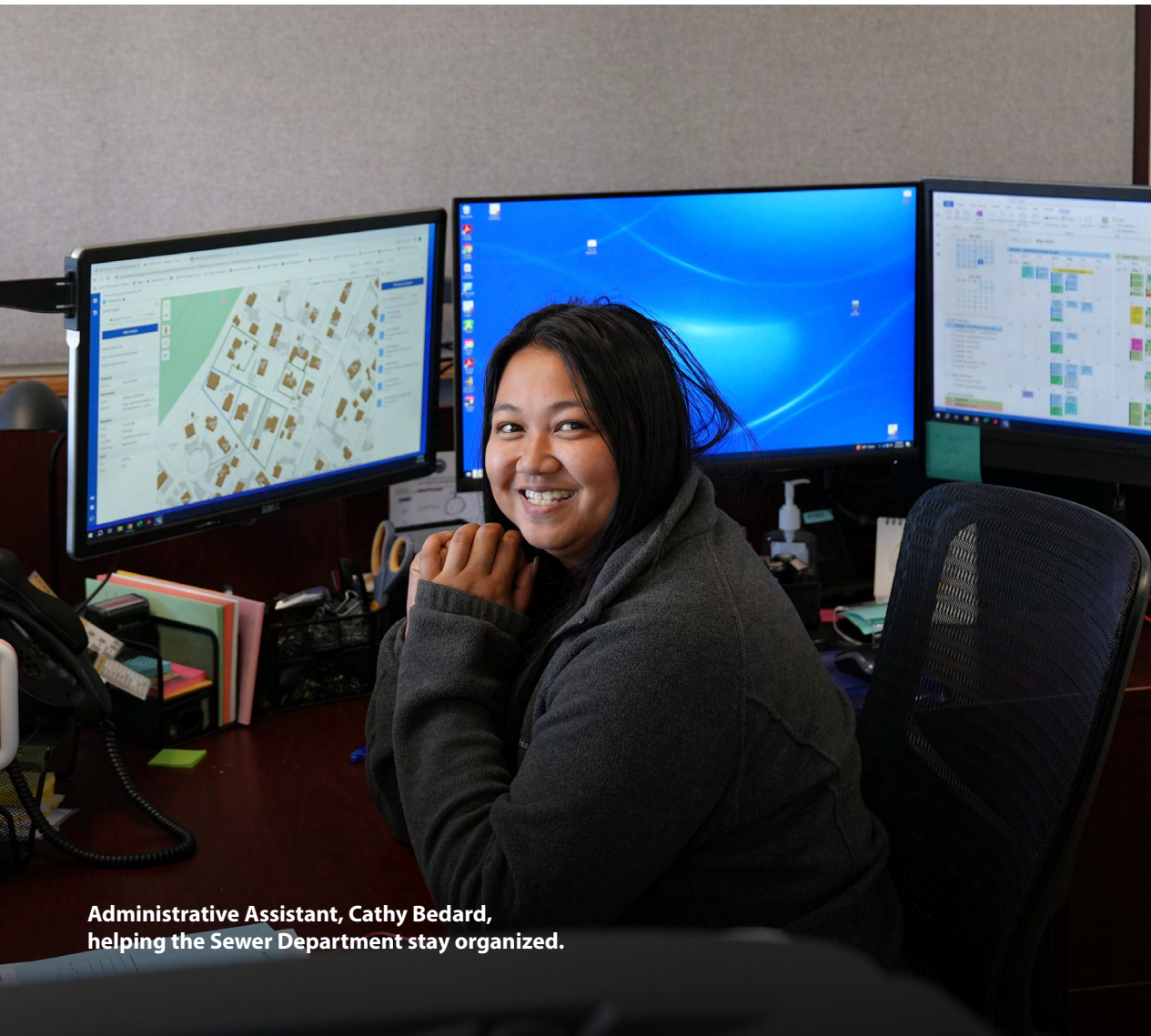
ACTIVITIES THAT HAVE BEEN COMPLETED OR OPERATIONALIZED

Over the last five years, considerable progress has been made to achieve the goals in the Efficient Town Operations focus area. A selection of completed activities or operationalized programs include:

- Developing a Concessions Master Plan
- Updating the Parks Master Plan to align with the Open Space Plan and Coastal Resiliency Plan
- Developing a plan for a new DPW facility
- Focusing on cybersecurity to address increasing threats faced by local governments
- Facilitating a process for the Select Board to discuss future Facilities Master Planning
- Evaluating the Town's role in wifi and cell phone
- Reviewing the requirements to offer municipal broad band



DPW employees, including Richard Thomas, can be seen around town working on projects, making repairs, and keeping Nantucket clean.



Administrative Assistant, Cathy Bedard, helping the Sewer Department stay organized.

AREA OF STRATEGIC FOCUS:

Quality of Life



The island’s population is changing, with residents and visitors focusing on different parts of their Nantucket experience.

ASPIRATIONAL STATEMENT:

Nantucket is a vibrant and inclusive community committed to the health and well-being of our residents and visitors. The local economy provides middle-class job opportunities, and the Old Historic District is vibrant year-round. The economic vitality of the Island is bolstered by seasonal residents and visitors. Everyone enjoys public access to our beaches, waterways, and conservation land. The Island has maintained its strong rural identity and well-preserved historic character.

Recognizing that the current demographic distribution of the island’s population and the Town’s workforce is far more diverse than it was twenty years ago, the Town established an office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. The Town hired a DEI Director who immediately worked with a team of town employees and a consultant to develop a strategic plan to address DEI issues and opportunities to support a more diverse workforce within Town government. The Select Board endorsed that plan in May 2023 and actions are underway to implement it.

Among the gifts of living on-island are the abundant resources for enjoying the Town’s recreational facilities and programs. A Parks and Recreation Manager was hired in 2021 who oversees the condition of the Town’s playing field and sports programs including the completion of a field house at Nobadeer Field. The Parks and Rec Manager also monitors the Town’s concessions and parks master planning.

Nantucket has a wealth of agencies and services to address the behavioral health of island residents. The COVID pandemic exposed unmet and underserved needs of different populations. Guided by this lens, the Town supported an allocation of \$175,000 at the 2023 Annual Town Meeting to support local agencies addressing youth behavioral health needs.

GOALS:

- Develop a comprehensive plan to address and ensure equity throughout Town policies and procedures.
- Evaluate partnership opportunities that promote healthy, active living and provide facilities, programs, and support for vulnerable populations.

ACTIVITIES THAT HAVE BEEN COMPLETED OR OPERATIONALIZED

Since adding the Quality of Life focus area in 2020, the Town's commitment has led to demonstrable progress. Some of the completed activities or operationalized programs related to this focus area include:

- Hiring a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Director and establishing the Town's DEI Office
- Developing a DEI Strategic Plan for Town government, which includes an equity assessment of existing policies and procedures
- Completing the construction of the Nobadeer Field House
- Conducting DEI community outreach to local businesses, nonprofits, etc.
- Establishing an internal DEI Committee for Town employees
- Expanding Human Services offerings related to behavioral health and support for vulnerable populations
- Hiring a Parks and Recreation Manager
- Recognizing Juneteenth and Columbus Day as Indigenous Peoples' Day



Soccer player at the Nobadeer Athletic Fields.



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