

Adopted Town Council FY2024/25-FY2025/26 Goals
Dated March 11, 2024

Economic Development

Goal: Develop policies and implement practices to foster and maintain a diverse business base that is appealing to residents, students, and visitors. ♦

Objectives:

- Consistently employ the Mansfield “brand” and market the Town’s unique strengths.
- Create a business-friendly climate.
- In partnership with the University of Connecticut develop a shared framework for economic development to help foster and guide future commercial and residential growth.
- In collaboration with the Mansfield Downtown Partnership enhance overall vibrancy and “activation” of storefronts in Downtown Storrs.
- Enhance overall commercial vibrancy and activation of businesses and storefronts throughout the community.
- Continue to support the Town of Mansfield’s active engagement in the Four Town Economic Vitality initiative through “Connecticut’s Countryside”.
- Leverage the University of Connecticut Technology Park to promote economic development in Mansfield.
- Focus redevelopment efforts toward the Four Corners area and other areas identified in the Plan of Conservation and Development.

Financial Management

Goal: Proactively and responsibly manage municipal financial resources to sustainably provide those services needed by the community. ♦

Objectives:

- Responsibly increase the tax base through growth, including further completion of Storrs Center, development of Four Corners, and in the Eastbrook Mall area.
- Sustain a General Fund Balance of at least 17% of the operating budget over a five-year period.
- Foster and shape a vision for the Mansfield Parks and Recreation Department that is both financially sustainable and responsive to community members.
- Balance services with revenue constraints to promote the Town’s affordability.
- Explore additional opportunities for sharing services regionally.
- Responsibly appropriate ARPA funds to generate maximum community value.

Housing

Goal: Improve the breadth, quality, and diversity of housing, focusing on increasing the inventory of affordable housing, to ensure that individuals and families of all economic means can secure housing that meets their needs. ♦

Objectives:

- Support affordable housing in Mansfield based on recommendations from the Affordable Housing Committee, using the town’s affordable housing trust fund, employing funding incentives and researching new and creative solutions.
- Research and initiate proactive strategies to prevent existing housing from falling into disrepair.
- Promote the expansion of additional senior housing through new construction or redevelopment of existing buildings.

- Encourage developers of multi-family housing to include design options that cater to non-students.
- Empower town staff to productively respond to issues related to blighted and nuisance properties.
- Research and report on strategies and actions employed by other jurisdictions where student and non-student neighbors live comfortably and harmoniously.
- Continue to collaborate with the University of Connecticut to address quality-of-life issues in off-campus neighborhoods, including student behavior.
- Advocate for the expansion and enhancement of the University of Connecticut's own graduate student housing inventory to bolster the supply of rental housing options in the community for non-student residents.

Human Services

Goal: Provide timely, relevant, and effective human services to residents in need.

Objectives:

- Enhance town-administered human service programs to more effectively reach vulnerable populations.
- Fully leverage federal and state funding sources available for enhancing the depth and breadth of services available.
- Continue to participate in the regional youth diversion program to promote principles of restorative justice.
- Participate in regional collaborations with area human service agencies that offer assistance to Mansfield individuals and families.

Municipal Facilities & Planning

Goal: Ensure that municipally-owned public facilities are successfully supporting town goals and capable of effectively meeting present and anticipated future community needs.

Objectives:

- Support the completion of the municipal facilities master planning project.
- Improve accessibility and modifications to older Town facilities and parks for persons with disabilities.
- Expand accessibility to Town facilities and parks for people with disabilities.
- Enable increased access to public meetings through electronic resources.
- Explore the viability of providing additional dedicated space for community arts purposes.
- Follow a robust preventive maintenance program for municipal facilities to preserve capital investments and extend the useful life of our public buildings.

Sustainability and Energy Efficiency

Goal: Develop and implement policies and initiatives that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote renewable energy adoption, and foster climate resiliency.

Objectives:

- Confirm that the new Mansfield Elementary School (which achieved substantial completion in late-January 2023) is meeting its objectives and achieving Net Zero energy targets.
- Engage in practices and projects that promote energy efficiency, including, but not limited to, solar projects, and other sustainability improvements.
- Reduce the Town's municipal government carbon footprint in an effort to respond to climate change and keep the Town on pace to achieve carbon neutrality across all aspects of the municipal government (buildings, vehicles, etc.) by 2030.

- Facilitate completion of the planned large-scale solar field to be situated on the Town's capped landfill.
- Incorporate principles of climate change resiliency when planning and implementing public infrastructure improvement projects.
- Work to achieve Sustainable CT Gold Certification which includes a strong focus on equity and inclusion.

High-Quality Customer Service and Responsiveness

Goal: Ensure that management and staff of each municipal operating department actively cultivates an evident culture of helpfulness and interdepartmental cooperation that advances public and community goals and needs.

Objectives:

- Provide town employees with appropriate training and guidance in interdepartmental collaboration and customer service.
- Update the Town's Customer Service Policy to reflect and promote a culture of interdepartmental collaboration, customer service, and collective productivity.
- Establish flexible, creative, and responsive teams—or other vehicles—to enhance interdepartmental cooperation and communication to more effectively serve our residents and visitors.

Open Space and Agriculture

Goal: Actively promote and facilitate the preservation of open space and working farmland.

Objectives:

- Target and pursue the preservation of agricultural land through direct purchase, purchase of development rights, donation, or other means.
- Follow current best practices to steward and maintain existing town-owned open space including adopting land management plans as appropriate.
- Target and pursue the protection and/or acquisition of ecologically sensitive/valuable open space for conservation and protection.
- Support efforts to improve access to Town-owned open space that is ecologically sensitive.
- Support local food production through programming.
- Review and update the Town's PA-490 criteria regarding the valuation of privately owned farmland, forestland, and open space.
- Research policies and practices that promote natural stewardship (e.g., pollinator habitat).
- Encourage and incentivize farming in Mansfield.

Public Safety

Goal: Ensure that Mansfield public safety services- police, fire and EMS- are appropriately staffed and resourced to effectively protect life and property as community needs continue to evolve.

Objectives:

- Provide sufficient funding to allow for the addition of one new resident trooper during FY 2024/25 and a second during FY 2025/26. (This will bring the total number of uniformed personnel to 12, inclusive of the Resident Trooper Supervisor).
- Continue to support the resident sergeant's hiring of a Community Liaison Trooper to implement the department's principles of community policing, trust, and harmonious relationships between local law enforcement and Mansfield's youth and families.

- Evaluate Fire Department staffing levels and their impact on service delivery and costs.
- As part of the municipal facilities needs assessment study, ensure that any (re)design of municipal facilities addresses the anticipated future needs of police and fire/EMS services, especially in light of evolving patterns of development.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging

Goal: Ensure that municipal policies, programs, and services reflect the community's commitment to the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEI+B)

Objectives:

- Improve ADA accessibility at town-owned buildings, trails, and roadways.
- Mandate Universal Design standards for all new construction and renovation projects.
- Support ongoing DEI+B training among members of the Town's workforce.
- Support ongoing efforts of municipal management to enhance diversity in the Town's workforce.
- Support the Town's ongoing efforts to develop and implement "welcoming" efforts intended to advance efforts to promote cultural inclusion and sense of belonging through the community.
- Continue to lend institutional support to the work of the Council-appointed Human Rights Commission.

Town-University Relations

Goal: Collaborate and actively coordinate with University of Connecticut officials to identify, promote, and achieve common goals regarding public safety, quality of life—on and off campus—civic engagement, and other topics of shared interests or needs.

Objectives:

- Actively engage and cultivate an effective working relationship with the President of the University of Connecticut and staff.
- Productively participate on the Town-University working group that is developing a shared framework for economic development.
- Continue using the Town-University Relations Committee as a working committee and important information source.
- Through the Town-University Relations Committee, continue to explore ways to address inappropriate student behavior off campus, especially in non-university housing.
- Promote internship and volunteer opportunities to cultivate community engagement, build relationships, and expand positive student involvement in Town life and events (e.g., Celebrate Mansfield, student recreation programs, etc.).
- Explore the viability and efficacy and costs of establishing an on-campus polling location within the Town's Voting District No. 1.

Transportation

Goal: Maintain and enhance an integrated transportation system that provides residents and visitors with safe and well-designed infrastructure needed to get from one place to another via motor vehicle, bike, foot, or other means. ♦

Objectives:

- Employ Complete Streets design principles where possible to make Town roadways accessible and safe for pedestrians, wheelchairs, and bicyclists.
- Expand Mansfield's network of sidewalks, bikeways, and trails to safely connect residents with key community facilities, amenities, services, and open spaces.
- Improve Town roads to safely accommodate various modes of transportation, including bicycle and pedestrian access and use where possible.

- Collaborate with the University of Connecticut and the CT Department of Transportation to address needed pedestrian safety improvements in the Downtown Area (with a particular focus on Storrs Road and South Eagleville Road crosswalks) as identified in the recently completed Road Safety Audit (RSA).
- Support Town staff efforts to secure external funding for the proposed multi-use paved trail that would extend from Tower Loop Road to Four Corners.
- Collaboratively explore solutions to challenges and constraints related to parking availability in the Downtown area. Partner entities include Mansfield Downtown Partnership, the University of Connecticut, Regional School District #19, and others.
- Research, and implement when possible, the feasibility of dedicated bicycle lanes on local roads.
- Actively participate in the Windham Region Transit District (WRTD) to improve services being provided in the regional transportation network.
- Coordinate with the University of Connecticut/WRTD on transportation initiatives that take into consideration increased demand and new development patterns and population distribution.

◆ Denotes accomplishment, goal or objective links to *Mansfield Tomorrow*, the Town's strategic plan.

Legislative = linkage to Natural Systems; Open Space, Parks and Recreation; Community Heritage and Sense of Place; Community Life; Diversifying the Economy; Housing; Future Land Use and Community Design; Infrastructure; Stewardship and Implementation