

2025-2026

2026-2027

2027-2028

Town Planner/GPCOG

Energy

Ag Commission/MFT

Agriculture

Town Planner/GPCOG

**Economic
Development**

Planning Board/Town Planner

Codification

Planning Board/Town Planner

Housing

Select Board/Consultant

**Community
Facilities**

Cons Commission/GPCOG

Open Space

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
PHASE 1:**

**Research
Visioning / Public Participation**

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
PHASE 2:
Future Land Use Plan
Policy Goals & Strategies**

STRATEGIC COORDINATION OF DURHAM PLANNING PROJECTS

JULY 2025

Memo: Strategic Vision for Durham's Planning Process

This memo outlines a strategic planning vision for Durham's upcoming two-phase Comprehensive Plan update. The plan integrates seven key planning tracks currently underway and aims to align community goals with state growth management requirements:

1. Alternative Energy
2. Agriculture
3. Economic Development
4. Codification
5. Housing
6. Community Facilities
7. Open Space & Conservation

Key Planning Initiatives

1. Alternative Energy

- Performance standards recently enacted for solar farms and battery energy storage facilities.
- Two major power corridors are available.
- The Conservation Commission analyzed optimal facility locations and revenue opportunities.

2. Agriculture

- Agricultural Commission formed to modernize outdated regulations.
- Focus on agritourism and innovative agricultural development.
- Collaboration with Maine Farmland Trust and State Department of Agriculture.

3. Economic Development

- Concept for a special economic development district combining agriculture and energy assets.
- Powerline access.
- Natural resource-based facilities.

- Sand and gravel aquifer as potential semi-public water source.
- Limited residential developments.
- Aim to broaden the tax base and reduce burden on residential/agricultural taxpayers.

4. Codification

- The Land Use Plan will be revised in a digitized format with technical updates to address errors & legal issues.
- Fourteen minor policy issues will clarify & streamline existing administrative processes.

5. Housing

- State mandates require higher-density zoning to improve housing affordability.
- The Town must reconsider its rural preservation goals tied to large-lot zoning and low-density housing.

6. Community Facilities

- Existing facilities are undersized, strained, and in need of significant investment.
- Growth and housing mandates will increase service demands.

7. Open Space & Conservation

- State grant awarded for a resiliency and conservation plan.
- Goal to guide sustainable growth while protecting natural resources and open space.

Coordinated Planning Process

Public participation in the 2026–2027 Comprehensive Plan phase will gather input from all these planning tracks. Findings will inform the second phase of the Comprehensive Plan in 2027–2028. Coordination ensures continuity, realistic goals, and alignment with community values and State growth management requirements.