



**TOWN OF BAR HARBOR**  
93 Cottage Street  
Bar Harbor Maine 04609

# **Agenda**

## **Comprehensive Planning Committee Meeting**

**Bar Harbor Municipal Building  
Town Council Chambers**

**February 14, 2024, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM**

**This is an in-person meeting with the option to participate remotely**

Members of the public may attend the meeting and offer comment during one of the two the public comment periods.

Members of the public may attend the meeting and offer comment in person at the Bar Harbor Municipal Building, Town Council Chambers, 93 Cottage Street; or by joining the Zoom webinar by following instructions posted online at: <https://www.barharmoraine.gov/517/Comprehensive-Planning-Committee> .

The public may also view the meeting on Town Hall Streams at:  
[https://townhallstreams.com/towns/bar\\_harbor\\_me](https://townhallstreams.com/towns/bar_harbor_me).

In order to assure your full participation in this meeting, please contact Tammy DesJardin in the Planning & Code Enforcement Department by calling 288-3329 to inform her of any special requirements you might

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|-----|--|-------------|
| 1.  | Call to order  | 6:00 – 6:05 |
| 2.  | Excused absences                                     | 6:00 – 6:05 |
| 3.  | Zoom logistic, review of meeting agenda and adoption | 6:00 – 6:05 |
| 4.  | Adoption of CPC meeting minutes                      | 6:00 – 6:05 |
| 5.  | Public comment period                                | 6:05 – 6:10 |
| 6.  | Update on Edits to Draft Actions                     | 6:10 – 6:20 |
| 7.  | Continue Review of Draft Actions                     | 6:20 – 6:50 |
| 8.  | Proposed Outreach and Engagement with the Public     | 6:50 – 7:30 |
| 9.  | Update on Capital Investment Plan Component          | 7:30 – 7:35 |
| 9.  | Comprehensive Plan Timeline and Next Steps           | 7:35 - 7:45 |
| 10. | Public comment period                                | 7:45 – 8:00 |
| 11. | Adjourn  |             |

**TOWN OF BAR HARBOR**  
**Comprehensive Planning Committee**  
**January 10, 2024**  
**MINUTES**

Comprehensive Planning Committee members present were Elissa Chesler (Zoom), Jacquie Colburn, Greg Cox, Kevin DesVeaux, Cherie Galyean (Zoom), John Kelly, Jim Mahoney (arrived at 6:20 PM during agenda item #6), Michael McKernan, Kristin Murphy, Misha Mytar (Zoom), Val Peacock (arrived at 6:10 PM during agenda item #6), Allison Sasner, and Kyle Shank. Excused was David Woodside.

Planning Director Michele Gagnon, Housing & Community Planner Cali Martinez, and Staff Planner Max Moreno attended.

Participating via Zoom were consultant Steve Whitman and Liz Kelly.

1. **Call to order**  
Vice-Chairperson Greg Cox called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM.
2. **Excused absences**  
David Woodside was excused.
3. **Zoom logistic, review/adoption of meeting agenda**  
**On a motion by John Kelly, seconded by Kevin Desveaux, the agenda was adopted on a rollcall vote (11-0).**
4. **December 13, 2023, minutes**  
**On a motion by Jacquie Colburn, seconded by Kevin Desveaux, the December 13, 2023 minutes were adopted, on a rollcall vote (11-0).**
5. **Public comment period**  
Ruth Eveland commented on Action 4.5 related to the net Zero Energy Plan and mentioned that the Library's new wing is being built to be a demonstration site and source of information. Also under Theme 4 Ms. Eveland commented on #11 and mentioned that the Council has been discussing these items and there could be some coordination with them. In 6.1.B there is also a mention of Form Based Codes and Ruth thought that was a good approach.
6. **Update on edits and draft actions**  
Steve Whitman then provided a brief update on the status of edits resulting from the December committee meeting. The 12/21/23 version of the Themes and Actions document features an updated theme graphic, a link to resources that informed this work, and tracked changes. The biggest change is a reorganization of Theme 1 with assistance from Cali Martinez to ensure there is consistency with other ongoing housing related efforts. Steve then suggested that the Committee begin with a review of Theme 3.

## 7. Continue review of draft actions

Greg Cox asked the committee to provide feedback on any of the items in Theme 3. It was suggested that the Acadia gateway Center and its role as a parking and transportation hub be mentioned. More specific language was also suggested for the Island Explorer, and it was mentioned that the Park is working to electrify the fleet. It was suggested that the Island Explorer expand services for residents as well.

There was then a conversation about the needs of pedestrians. Populations including children and those without their own transportation were mentioned. Ms. Gagnon suggested this could be addressed with some language about respecting the functional area of intersections. There was also a suggestion that some locations be included as “such as but not limited to the intersections of Mount Desert and Main streets, West Street and Route 3, and others.”

The Ferry Terminal as a transit hub, satellite parking location, and pedestrian connection was also mentioned as an action. This led to a discussion on the potential for pedestrian only access to some areas (existing streets, the pier, etc.) at certain times and the need to evaluate the pros and cons of doing this.

Theme 4 was then reviewed. Action #2 was identified as a potential lightening rod and an edit was suggested to reduce the emphasis on tourism. Action 3.F related to a recreation plan was then discussed and it was suggested that the action be moved to #10 under this theme with the other recreation items. 4.F was then discussed at length given the unknowns related to water and septic capacity, and the related unknowns of water and sewer infrastructure. Steve Whitman pointed out that some of the points being made about the growth areas are addressed in the Future Land Use Strategy. It was suggested that “possible” be replaced with “feasible.” It was suggested that there be an action related to “monitoring whether or not there is septic capacity or need for sewer in the identified growth areas.”

Action 4.6 was then discussed. Item A. should reference AOS 91 or just schools. A third item should be added as “C” and should relate to “continue to work with the YMCA to continue offering their services.” The group then went back to Action 3.F to clarify that it should state “continue to coordinate...” Action 4.8 was then discussed as “continue to provide dispatch services, and investigate island-wide public safety.” Given the recent storms, it was decided that an action related to making facilities and infrastructure more resilient to the changing climate is an important action to be added. This should include a reference to new construction and reconstruction.

Theme five was then discussed and there was a request for more direction on action 5.2.i. action 5.5 was then discussed and it was determined that “set limits” should be replaced with “manage.” Action 5.2.e was discussed and it was decided that part of the first sentence should be deleted, and that medical should be added as a sector. Action 5.2.f was discussed because of the detail provided and it was determined that the percentage figure and the focus on hotels should be removed. The Ferry Terminal was also mentioned as something significant and the need to continue to develop and seek funding for the site should be

mentioned. The revenue specific actions were then mentioned as something that could be highlighted or grouped. They could also be identified in the implementation matrix later on.

Theme six and Action 6.1 resulted in a long discussion about the many reason for reducing the number of zoning districts. It was decided that a specific mention of reducing the number of districts should be made in this action. It was suggested under Action 6.2.d that the term “high density” may mean different things in different areas and maybe could be dropped. A general comment about ensuring the adequacy of infrastructure before making zoning changes was made. The language in Action 2 was discussed and “remove” will be replaced with “reduce.” There was then a lodging specific conversation about the definition work underway and the need to quantify capacity.

**8. Distribution of draft actions to board and committees**

Greg Cox encouraged everyone to send their comments in.

**9. Comprehensive Plan timeline and next steps**

Steve Whitman explained that we are still on track with the timeline reviewed in December. Once the latest round of edits is made an updated draft will be circulated to the Boards and Committees for review and comment by the February 14<sup>th</sup> committee Meeting.

**10. Public comment period**

There were none.

**11. Adjourn.**

On a motion from John Kelly, seconded by Kevin DesVeaux, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM on a rollcall vote (13-0).

**Minutes approved by the Comprehensive Planning Committee on February 14, 2024.**

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**Greg Cox**  
**Chair, Comprehensive Planning Committee**

**Date**



## **DRAFT Bar Harbor Comprehensive Planning Themes and Actions**

**Note:** This is a working draft. This document includes:

- Actions noted by the consulting team from the past two years of this planning process
- A series of actions that were identified by the board and committee focus groups this fall while reviewing the actions from the 2007 Plan, and
- Required actions from the State of Maine (labeled as such throughout this document)

This draft includes all the potential actions assembled for the Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC) to review. Potential actions are organized by theme. Some strategies are standalone, while others articulate an overarching concept with more specific steps or ideas that collectively work to achieve that overarching concept bundled underneath. Actions that are bundled appeared to all be related, which was why they were grouped. Additionally, we know that the actions reference a variety of terms and concepts. These will be defined in the Comprehensive Plan itself.

### **WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU**

In reviewing this document, please note that the structure and layout of how the actions are presented, as well as their prioritization, will be finalized during plan development. We ask that you focus less on wordsmithing and stylistic edits and more on whether we have the right set of actions. This level of editing will be accomplished later. We also ask that you note if you think anything is missing or have other comments and questions. Later in this process, more detailed information will be added to the final set of actions including information on responsible parties, level of priority, etc.

### **Major Actions:**

We anticipate pulling out a subset of actions per theme and highlighting these as the “major actions” Bar Harbor is committing to. This will serve to communicate the biggest initiatives Bar Harbor will be taking on over the next 10+ years.

**Overview of Themes:**



**Additional Resources:**

If you are interested in using the Existing Conditions Report, Outreach and Engagement Report, or other comprehensive planning materials as you review these actions they can be found at: <https://resilience.mysocialpinpoint.com/bar-harbor-comprehensive-plan/documents>

## General Actions

1. To guide the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, Bar Harbor will establish a Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee that meets, at a minimum, ~~quarterly~~ twice throughout the calendar year. This committee which may be composed of Board/Committee Chairs, department heads, or their designees will prioritize and coordinate the completion of implementation actions outlined in the Plan to ensure implementation action items are being worked on by the appropriate parties. A Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee also monitors progress towards vision and future land use strategy in the Comprehensive Plan. Example Implementation Committee responsibilities include:
  - a. Prioritize action items to work on annually.
  - b. Serve as a liaison with town boards and committees that have a role in implementing the Comprehensive Plan.
  - c. Assist the various responsible parties in understanding how the Comprehensive Plan integrates with their existing priorities to enable these parties to advance their own goals while simultaneously advancing the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.
  - d. Identify both successful strategies and barriers to progress.
  - e. Be responsible for public education about the Comprehensive Plan implementation process.
  - f. Provide ~~an annual~~ report annually to the Town Council and Town Meeting.
2. Coordinate an annual end-of-year joint meeting of all boards, committees, and local officials in Bar Harbor that are active partners in the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan to evaluate progress from the past year and plan for the upcoming year.
3. Regularly report on the progress of the 2035 Comprehensive Plan to the public through media channels, the town's email lists, a newsletter, and through the town's website.
4. Ensure the Town's Planning Department serves the role of "tracker" to document progress and the completion of specific action items in a master implementation table that includes detailed information including responsible party, potential partners, and level of priority. This will ensure consistency and accountability over the coming years.



## Implementation Actions Organized by Theme:

### Theme 1- Housing Solutions

1. **Develop housing targets and track progress.** This could include:
  - a. Create a housing working group or committee in Bar Harbor comprised of town staff, elected and appointed leaders, businesses and anchor institutions, developers, homeowners, renters, and others who have an interest in housing outcomes in the town. Meet quarterly throughout the year to discuss housing policies and programs, zoning changes, incentives, and how to increase the availability of housing in Bar Harbor through creative partnerships.
  - b. Create a Municipal Data Dashboard that is regularly updated to provide information on Bar Harbor's housing supply, housing demand, resident population, workforce population, visitation, and other metrics. The purpose of this initiative is to ensure that efforts, actions, and initiatives are producing the intended and needed results.
  - c. Document approved PUD-housing projects, track them, and ensure the affordability of designated units overtime.
  - d. Create definitions for the many types of long-term rentals that are permitted so they can be documented and incentivized.
  - e.g. Identifying price points, income targets, numbers of bedrooms, mortgage and rent affordability gaps, etc. for the number of rental units and homes needed to meet projected demand~~the 524 rental units and 92 homes needed by 2033.~~
  - e.f. Identifying other desired targets such as the annual increase in housing stock, % of employees who live where they work, % of deed restricted housing for ~~local~~year-round residents, % of employer-owned dwelling units, and % of year-round-occupied housing units.
  - g. Track progress on the Housing Policy Framework and update it as needed.
  - h. Create a housing webpage so the public can easily access information on the town's housing efforts along with other housing related information.
2. **Investigate potential housing policies, programs, and incentives that help to maintain the existing year-round housing stock ~~in Bar Harbor through collaborative partnerships.~~ This may include the following types of strategies:**
  - a. Implement a property tax abatement program for existing residents to encourage them to remain year-round residents by making it more affordable for them to live here.
  - b. Remove inspection fees and permit fees for certain types of housing. This could be reserved for developments with certain percentage of affordable housing or specific types of housing that are most needed.

- c. Consider a town program that offers incentives to owners of existing seasonally occupied dwelling units if they transition the use of their dwelling unit into a year-round rental unit.
- d. Establish a new local program to acquire deed restrictions to convert existing market-rate homes to affordable homes. This is a method to preserve the existing housing stock as year-round affordable rental and ownership housing.
- e. Promote and expand existing programs and uses to encourage businesses to build new units for their seasonal workforce rather than buying year-round dwelling units.
- f. Monitor short term rental trends in residential neighborhoods to inform future policy decisions, and take appropriate policy actions as necessary to achieve goals.

3. Investigate potential housing policies, programs, and incentives that **increase** available housing in Bar Harbor **through collaborative partnerships**. This **may include** the following **types of strategies**:

- a. Work with businesses and institutions to create seasonal and year-round housing. This may require expanding existing programs and developing new programs, and promoting housing opportunities to businesses (new uses, ordinance amendments, etc.). Major employers and developers will benefit from easy access to relevant information, targeted incentives, and local funding resources tailored to meet community needs.
- b. Encourage the creation of year-round rental units through regulatory and non-regulatory approaches.
- b-c. Educate the public on home sharing opportunities and programs.
- d. ~~Creating~~ **Create** a land acquisition fund that could acquire properties, deed restrict them, and sell or turn them over to a non-profit, housing trust, or private developer to operate and manage. Potentially partner with the Housing Authority, Island Housing Trust, or a private developer to manage these new units.
- d-e. Take a leadership role in the development of the Acadia National Park (ANP) Town Hill parcel.
- e-f. Assist the YWCA with the development of the Hamilton Station parcel.
- f-g. Identify ways to stimulate the creation of housing on vacant, underutilized, and town-owned parcels.

4. **Research, develop, and implement funding mechanisms to help capitalize on housing solutions.**

- a. Consider strategies such as the taxing of real estate transfers, and target any funds generated to subsidize housing opportunities.
- b. Create an annual line item in the budget dedicated to funding housing programs.

~~a-c.~~ Secure a municipal housing bond to capitalize on potential housing projects, land acquisition for housing, subsidization of loans, and other investments in Bar Harbor's housing supply.

~~b-d.~~ Establish a local tax on hotel rooms/short term rentals to be dedicated to an affordable housing trust.

~~e-e.~~ Have Inclusionary Zoning fees in-lieu go directly to the housing trust to fund affordable housing/programs.

~~d.~~ Adopt a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) program/policy for housing in specific locations.

**6- Collaborate with regional partners to support and build on each other's efforts to increase the housing stock.**

- a. Ensure a strong partnership with the housing authority to develop new housing units.
- b. ~~Engaging-Engage~~ with development professionals, realtors, financial institutions, and others to understand the potential impacts of certain initiatives and incentives.
- c. Collaborate with others across the Acadia Region on the implementation of the actions identified at the 2023 MDI Housing Solutions Summit to create a balanced housing market that provides housing options affordable to all incomes.
- d. Work with housing partners to change attitudes towards increased housing production, housing variety, density, and affordability to "Yes In My Backyard."
- e. Work with the Acadia Region partners to develop a region-wide approach to identify, assess, and develop solutions to housing, transportation, workforce development, economic diversity, and sustainable visitation/tourism. This should include representatives of the Acadia Region (Mount Desert, Southwest Harbor, Tremont, Trenton, Ellsworth, and Lamoine), Hancock County Planning Commission, MDI & Ellsworth Housing Authorities, Island Housing Trust, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, Downeast Partners, and others.

## Theme 2 – Stewardship of Resources

### 1. Encourage voluntary protection of important natural, scenic, and cultural resources by:

- a. Pursuing strategic conservation of remaining critical ecosystems that are not protected, and lands that provide protection from the impacts of climate change. Prioritize conservation in Acadia East and Taunton Bay – the two identified focus areas of statewide ecological significance. Lands which sequester carbon should also be prioritized. Coordinate with regional efforts, and continue to coordinate with state and local agencies. (Required by state checklist)
- b. Prioritizing protection of land with Prime Farmland soils and soils of statewide importance while balancing this need with other identified needs including the creation of additional housing. Consider options such as the Maine FarmLink program through the Maine Farmland Trust to support existing and new farm operations. (required by state checklist)
- c. Working with local property owners, land trusts, and others to protect major points of physical and visual access to coastal waters, especially along public ways and in public parks. (Required by state checklist)
- d. Work with an existing local land trust or other conservation organizations to pursue opportunities to protect important open space or recreational land. (Required by state checklist)
- e. Develop a viewshed protection plan to include goals and objectives before developing regulations and standards. This includes working to identify and agree on the viewsheds that are to be protected. This includes protecting the scenic approaches to the villages and the Acadia Scenic Byway.
- f. Work toward greater dark sky compliant lighting throughout the community. This could be informed by a review of the land use ordinance to identify ways to increase compliance with standards or objectives provided by the International Dark Sky Association.

- g. Preserving and maintaining significant habitats by preserving undeveloped parcels and maintaining/increasing connectivity between habitats. To accomplish this:**

  - i. Encourage local landowners to consider conservation easements with local conservation groups (Acadia National Park, Maine Coast Heritage Trust/MCHT, etc.) if they are interested in pursuing long term preservation of their property. Consider protecting critical natural resources with willing sellers, distribute or make available information to those living in or near critical or important natural resources about current use tax programs and applicable local, state, or federal regulations (Required by state checklist).**
  - ii. Take advantage of the Current Use program and Open Space Tax Laws, land valuation, and incentives to adjust property values based on open space (Required by state checklist).**
  - iii. Encourage the conservation of large, undeveloped blocks of at least 100 acres and un-fragmented forest blocks of at least 500 acres through the use of tax incentives, such as the Tree Growth and Open Space Tax Program.**
- 2. 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 where possible. (Required by state checklist)**
- 3. 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. (Required by state checklist)**
- 4. Ensure equitable access to Bar Harbor's publicly accessible natural areas, while considering carrying capacity and overuse issues where necessary. While Bar Harbor is further along on this because of the presence of Acadia National Park and other protected lands, the town should work to make signage and facilities accessible to a broad range of users (language, universal access, etc.)**
- 5. Work with the local or county historical society and/or the Maine Historic Preservation Commission to assess the need for, and if necessary, plan for, a comprehensive community survey of the community's historic and archaeological resources including historic buildings. (Required by state checklist) This effort should inform the regulatory changes.**

6. Encourage the preservation of historic properties and buildings through outreach and engagement.
7. Encourage owners of NRHP-National Register listed properties to be included in the Design Review Overlay District in Appendix A (from 2007 Review).
8. Support the goals and actions in the Climate Action Plan (version 2.0) including (paraphrased here, see Climate Action Plan for the full list of goals and actions):
  - a. Achieving 100% renewable electricity for municipal operations by 2026 and across the community by 2030, with a preference for using locally generated renewable power.
  - b. Electrifying municipal building heating and cooling systems, and supporting residential and commercial building electrification and efficiency.
  - c. Support sustainable transportation through safe, accessible, zero-emissions transportations systems including the electrification of all municipal and school vehicle fleets and a widely used EV-electric vehicle charging network to the greatest extent possible by 2030.
  - d. Support sustainable, low-carbon, and resilient land use and development across Bar Harbor.
  - e. Minimize and divert waste for residential, commercial, construction, and municipal waste and support local food systems across the Island.
  - f. Establish Bar Harbor as a leading green tourism destination and promote climate action as a key component of a sustainable year-round local economy in Bar Harbor.
  - g. Raise public awareness of climate adaptation and resilience across the community, and to protect Town and community assets and investments.
  - h. Raise awareness and understanding of the climate emergency across the community.
9. Protect significant surface waters from pollution and improve water quality where needed by limiting runoff of watershed pollutants, limiting development of impervious surfaces, and preventing water contamination from septic systems. (Required by state checklist)
- ~~9.10.~~ Monitor and report out on the quantity of groundwater that is available. This is especially important in areas like Town Hill that rely on wells for drinking water.

**10.11. Protect marine resources and encourage working waterfront needs by:**  
(Required by state checklist)

- a. Providing information about the Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program and current use taxation program to owners of waterfront land used to provide access to or support the conduct of commercial fishing activities.
- b. Encouraging owners of marine businesses and industries to participate in clean marina/boatyard programs.
- c. Providing sufficient funding for and staffing of the harbormaster and/or harbor commission.
- d. Considering the feasibility of designating Bar Harbor Bay as a federal "no discharge area" and increasing local enforcement capacity.
- e. Performing a follow-up eelgrass survey in Frenchman Bay.
- f. Conducting a feasibility study of the impacts on expanding aquaculture in Frenchman Bay and the Mount Desert Narrows.
- g. Establishing a pump out station at the Ferry Terminal.
- h. Identifying needs for additional recreational and commercial access (which includes parking, boat launches, docking space, fish piers, and swimming access).
- i. Monitoring water quality of Town beaches and coastal waters and continue to participate in the Maine Healthy Beaches Program. Consider developing ordinances and regulations, as appropriate, to address identified water quality issues and protect coastal and marine waters. ~~Work with local research institutions to~~ ~~Work with College of the Atlantic to~~ establish a long-term scientific baseline study of water quality in Frenchman Bay before, during, and after cruise ship visitation.
- j. ~~Continuing efforts to restore clam flats and eelgrass beds near Hadley Point and, if successful, expand restoration efforts to other areas of the Town.~~ Support efforts to monitor and conserve local marine ecosystems including current commercially harvested species, ~~eelgrass (and rockweed)~~, emerging native species (warmer -water species with northbound-moving ranges), invasive introduced species, native intertidal communities and fouling communities.
- k. Reviewing and updating the Shellfish Management Plan as needed.

**11.12.** Monitor the stability and changes in sensitive shoreline habitats that are vulnerable to climate change, including saltmarshes and other wetland, eelgrass beds, and shoreline vulnerable to degradation due to sea level rise, changing sea-ice, and changing perturbation due to introduced species.

**12.13.** Encourage landowners to voluntarily protect water quality using 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. (Required by state checklist)

**12.14.** Adopt and monitor water quality protection practices and standards for construction, the maintenance of public and private roads, and public properties. Require their implementation by contractors, owners, and community officials and employees. (Required by state checklist)

The Town should also:

- a. Provide educational materials at appropriate locations regarding aquatic invasive species. (Required by state checklist)
- b. Continue funding water quality testing and participate in local and regional efforts to monitor water quality. (Required by state checklist)
- c. Assess the impacts of shoreline development on both freshwater and saltwater.

**14.15.** Identify and preserve freshwater habitat by:

- a. Monitoring and protecting significant vernal pools.
- b. ~~Educating~~ Educate landowners about wetland protection requirements and distributing this information with building permit application packets.
- c. Recommending to the State that the wetland protection evaluation be integrated into the onsite wastewater disposal process to enable the Town to map wetland locations and review development near wetlands.
- d. ~~Educating~~ Educate residential landowners on practices to protect watersheds including a campaign to encourage regular septic system maintenance and information on household cleaning products, pesticides, and fertilizer. Consider subsurface wastewater maintenance reimbursement and assistance comparable to what is available in Mount Desert for landowners that participate.



**15.16. Collaborate with other communities on ~~MDI~~ Mount Desert Island on regional planning, management, and regulatory efforts regarding shared critical resources. (Required by state checklist) This should include:**

- a) Working with neighboring communities on Mount Desert Island MDI to protect water resources. (Required by state checklist)
- b) Working with the communities of Frenchman's Bay, Blue Hill Bay, and Otter Creek, and Acadia National Park to protect the water quality and habitats of the bays and inlets and from marine and shore-based activities. Support regional harbor and bay management plans. (Required by state checklist)

## Theme 3 – People-Centered Transportation

**1. Adopt a complete streets framework that will guide the design and construction of transportation related infrastructure in Bar Harbor. This strategy should include:**

- a) Adopt a Complete Streets Policy that is consistent with Maine ~~DOT~~ Department of Transportation's Policy.
- b) Develop multi-modal design standards to guide the design and construction of transportation related infrastructure.
- c) Investing in Complete Street infrastructure within the Downtown and Village Growth areas, and along the transportation corridors that connect these mixed-use areas to ensure equitable and sustainable transportation alternatives. This might include sidewalks, bicycle lanes, crosswalks, and shared use paths along with supporting infrastructure such as street trees, bus shelters, and bicycle racks.
- d) ~~Plan and design and to build and modify~~ streets that will enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, etc. There should be a focus on connectivity and consideration given to all modes of transportation. Especially the transportation needs of children and those without access to a vehicle.
- e) Consider prioritizing investments that improve pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle safety and the functional area of intersections. This should include but not be limited to the intersections of Mt Desert and Main Street, West Street and Route 3, and others.

e) Incorporate placemaking practices into the transportation infrastructure design process. This will allow the town to test design solutions and engage the community in the process before designs are finalized and construction begins.

f) Identify existing parking and traffic congestion issues in the downtown and other locations, and work to address these transportation challenges with infrastructure improvements and policy changes. This should include the development and updating of a prioritized improvement, maintenance, and repair plan for the community's transportation network. (Required by state checklist)

h) Work toward a Vision Zero-type strategy and additional wayfinding to decrease traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while providing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all.

i) Address line of site issues along existing roadways this should include in town locations and outlying areas where the geometry, tree growth, utility poles and signage are incompatible with traffic speed.

j) Evaluate the potential benefits and impacts of pedestrian only access to some areas of the community (existing streets, the Pier, etc) at certain times. This could be trialed as a pilot "Open Streets" project.

2. Expand electric vehicle charging infrastructure on municipal properties, and through local regulation changes. This ~~should~~ could include electric bicycle charging stations in the downtown and other key locations.

**3. Maintain, enact, or amend local ordinances as appropriate to address or avoid conflicts with:**

(Required by state checklist)

- 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.

**4. Maintain, enact, or amend ordinance standards for subdivisions and for public and private roads as appropriate to foster transportation-efficient growth patterns and provide for future street and transit connections. (Required by state checklist)**

**4.5. Research the potential for abatements for road association costs handled by residents on private roads, to facilitate maintenance, drainage, etc. The intent is to help year round residents in outlying areas who have limited benefit from town services, and are committed to proper road maintenance.**

**5.6. Initiate or actively participate in regional and state transportation efforts. (Required by state checklist)**

**7. Encourage car-pooling and other alternative modes of transportation including the Island Explorer. This strategy should include:**

- a) Collaboration with the Acadia Gateway Center (opening in 2025) and its role as a parking and transportation hub.
- b) Continue to support the operation and expansion of services by the Island Explorer, including expanded services for Bar Harbor residents.
- c) Continue to pursue the use of the Ferry terminal as a transit hub, satellite parking location, and pedestrian connection.

## Theme 4 – Community Services and Facilities

1. Expand and institutionalize a Community Municipal Asset Management Planning Program to include all municipal structures and utilities. Updated inventories and assessments will enable the community to better anticipate and plan for capacity limitations and needed investments.
2. ~~As the shoulder tourist season keeps expanding, a shorter timeframe is~~ Ensure that adequate time is available for the Department of Public Works and others to complete necessary construction and infrastructure related projects. This needs to be addressed and coordinated to ensure these important projects are implemented while being sensitive to the needs of residents and businesses.
3. Continue to plan for critical Capital Improvements including:
  - a. Develop a master plan for town facilities to determine their best use and any needed upgrade, renovation, expansion, or replacement needs.
  - b. Invest in Geographic Information System capacity to assist with planning, asset management, benchmarking, etc.
  - c. Find new ways to plan for and provide parking that is sensible, effective, and fair.
  - d. Renovate the second floor of the municipal building to accommodate additional use by the Town Council and others.
  - e. Based on the 2012 space needs analysis of the Police and Fire departments (~~stations'~~ Fire fly Lane building), expand, and renovate the space and work with the Town of Mount Desert and others to optimize delivery ~~of~~ of services.
  - ~~f. 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. (Required by state checklist)~~
  - g.f. Identify any capital improvements needed to maintain or upgrade public services to accommodate the community's anticipated growth and changing demographics. (Required by state checklist)

Commented [sw1]: Moved to #10

h.g. Locate new public facilities comprising at least 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments in designated growth areas. (Required by state checklist)

**4. Upgrade wastewater treatment facilities and sewer systems as necessary to minimize pollution, and study potential water and sewer service area expansions. This will help the community better understand what such expansions would require, and their feasibility as critical aspects of implementing the Future Land Use Strategy. (Required by state checklist)**  
This should include:

- a. Maintaining the federal waiver for water system filtration requirements.
- b. Working with Acadia National Park to maintain the water quality of the town's drinking water supply - Eagle Lake and Bubble Pond – to retain the EPA-Environmental Protection Agency drinking water filtration waiver. Threats to the water quality include but are not limited to development in the watershed, aquatic invasive species, phosphorus loading, turbidity, and others. Ensure best management practices for portions of the watershed located within the Town of Bar Harbor. Given that Eagle Lake is the source of drinking water for the Town of Bar Harbor, protection of aquifer recharge areas and public wellheads is not applicable. (Required by state checklist)
- c. Monitor water quality of Eagle Lake and Bubble Pond and manage the watershed.
- d. Invest in maintenance and improvements of the water system as recommended in the Water System Master Plan.
- e. Explore expansion opportunities of the public water system outside of the current service areas including converting the seasonal line to a permanent line.
- f. Monitor whether or not there is adequate capacity for treatment using septic systems in the identified growth areas. Where possible/feasible, increase the connection of new development to the sewer system and consider expansion of the sewer system to accommodate additional development density in the areas targeted ~~areas~~ for new development growth. (Required by state checklist)
- g. Continue to invest in maintenance and improvement of the sewer system as recommended in the updated Combined Sewer OverflowCSO Master Plan, as updated.
- g-h. Continue to improve the infrastructure used for stormwater treatment, and ensure it is sized to handle larger weather events.
- h.i. Research funding mechanisms to expand water and sewer infrastructure and services.

5. Create a Municipal Net Zero Energy Plan to guide Bar Harbor's Efforts to reduce air emissions. At the same time the community should support and incentivize the efforts of residents, landowners, businesses, and institutions to complete energy conservation measures and install renewable energy systems and battery storage systems. These efforts should include opportunities for all regardless of income level, and efforts should be made to involve owners and renters. The new wing being planned for the Library is intended to serve as a demonstration site and source of information for other projects in the community. Together these efforts should include completion of the following actions:

- a. Develop clear environmental objectives and policies to guide all municipal purchasing decisions.
- b. Transition the town's fleet of vehicles to electric where feasible.
- c. Develop an energy efficiency program for existing buildings and utilities including street lights.
- d. Convert existing fossil fuel/wood based heating and cooling systems to electric in all municipal facilities/buildings.
- e. Ensure that any new buildings are designed and constructed to net zero standards.
- f. Expand the Town's solar energy production and renewable energy purchasing to meet the Town's total energy needs.
- g. Include nature-based solutions and changes to site maintenance on all municipal properties.
- h. Intentionally and pro-actively offer informational and educational campaigns to show residents how to upgrade their home energy systems to run more efficiently and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, on electric mobility options, and how to evaluate and access the various types of rebates, incentives and tax credit programs available at the state and federal levels.
- i. Within Town right-of-way's Conduct regular Tree Health Assessment and maintain street trees. Select native species adaptable to climate change for new trees.
- j. Commit to a municipal composting program and if possible, expanding this program to include businesses. These efforts will help retain soil nutrients within the community and reduce emissions.

k. To the greatest extent possible, municipal purchasing should focus on products and services that support energy conservation, waste management, and other sustainable systems.

6. **Work with surrounding communities and organizations to identify opportunities and optimize shared regional services and facilities, as appropriate and cost effective. Existing intermunicipal and shared services agreements should be maintained, and additional opportunities for shared services and procurement should be explored. (Required by state checklist)**

a) Continue to work cooperatively with ~~School Union 98~~ the local schools to determine the most efficient and affordable method to deliver a high-quality education to our students.

b) Explore opportunities to work with neighboring communities to plan for and finance shared or adjacent capital investments to increase cost savings and efficiencies. (Required by state checklist)

b)c) Continue to support and work with the YMCA so they can continue offering their services.

~~6.8.~~ **Improve wireless and telecommunication services and expand broadband capacity.**

Commented [sw2]: This action was questioned at the December meeting. Should it be dropped or retained?

9. **Ensure collaborative and coordinated public safety which includes:**

a) ~~Continue~~ Continuing to provide Public Safety dispatch services at the local level.

b) ~~and~~ Haveing the Fire Department and Police Department continue to be a resource for the development and maintenance of emergency operations plans for businesses.

a)c) Continuing to investigate opportunities for the coordination of island wide public safety.

~~7.10.~~ **Identify alternative source of revenues such as impact fees and other techniques to help maintain or decrease the tax rate. This should include:**

a) Encourage not-for-profit organizations to ~~pay their fair share of~~ increase their payments in lieu of taxes. This could include the creation of an optional funding model for all payments in lieu of taxes.

b) Create an Economic Development District to fund downtown infrastructure and seasonal municipal facilities and services.

c) Work with the area and statewide communities, the chambers, the business community, and the state legislature to explore tax options including but not limited to a local or

regional option sales tax and property transfer tax, as a supplement to local property taxes to assist in providing the level of services to the tourist industry that is expected of the town.

- d) Seek authority to levy a local/regional option tax. The Town should encourage the state to authorize a local/regional option tax to place the burden of funding tourism-related operational and infrastructure costs on those using and increasing the cost of services.

**8.11. Assess and review amenity needs in parks and other public spaces and determine if there are areas underserved by pocket parks, playgrounds, and other amenities. This should include:**

- a) Providing services and amenities in public spaces that are in-line with the purpose of the space/park.
- b) Providing comfort stations at town-owned properties such as, but not limited to, Hadley Point and Town Hill.
- c) Consider the creation of a Park and Recreation Department to ensure appropriate and efficient delivery of services
- d) Creating a list of recreation needs or developing a recreation plan to meet current and future needs. This should include assigning a committee or community official to explore ways of addressing the identified needs and/or implementing the policies and strategies outlined in the plan. (Required by state checklist)

**12. Given the changing climate and the storms the community has experienced, efforts should be made to make all existing and future facilities and infrastructure more resilient to these changes. This should include new construction and reconstruction efforts.**

**8.13. Prioritize clear municipal communications, transparency, and broader representation within local government (staff and volunteers) to ensure diverse perspectives are represented and that barriers to participation are reduced. This ~~should~~ may include:**

- a. Encourage and promote communication and coordination between the Town Council, three quasi-judicial boards, committees, commissions, and task forces.
- b. Develop strategies and an overarching approach to enhance municipal communication to residents and other community members regarding town projects, initiatives, and



events. This should include examining the town website, newsletter, media channels, and messaging.

- c. Create a campaign to promote civic engagement and a culture of participation in town affairs. ~~This could include increasing the presence of town boards and committee activities, clarifying and communicating the processes and procedures around public input, and educating residents and property owners about how local government works and how, when, and where their voice can be heard in shaping town policy. to the broader community.~~
- d. Engage the community, especially traditionally historically underserved populations, about services, programs, and support available and provided by the town and regionally.
- e. Consider allowing participation of non-Bar Harbor residents for certain committees such as the Marine Resource Committee.
- ~~f. Establish a Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee and assign oversight of the implementation and monitoring of success to the Town Council, with support from Town Manager and the Planning Director.~~

## Theme 5 – A Diverse Economy

1. **Commit to regular facilitated meetings of representatives of all sectors (Municipal, Residential, Business, Institutional, etc.) to engage in tourism management in a mutually beneficial way. This could be based on the identified peak population number, capacity of municipal infrastructure, or other documented factors. The management objectives guiding this effort should include:**
  - a. Ensuring tourism management is equitable, it should benefit the whole and be perceived as being fair by most. The benefits must not be limited to one segment of the community (i.e. business community) at the expense of another (i.e. year-round residents).
  - b. Ensuring tourism is sustainable for future generations, the negative impacts of tourism growth and development must not be so severe that the community loses the very qualities and assets that attract people to live and visit.
  - c. Ensuring tourism management is efficient and produces enough value for the efforts expended that it results in economic and other benefits.
  - d. Ensuring tourism is resilient and responds to changing environmental conditions so that the system continues to function when circumstances change.
2. **All sectors need to work together to address and fund solutions to the labor and housing related shortages through the creation of housing units, infrastructure improvements, and transportation solutions.**
  - a. To facilitate these ~~Economic-economic Development-development~~ related initiatives, the Town should assign responsibility and provide financial support to a designated staff person or entity (e.g., a local economic development committee, a local representative to a regional economic development organization, the community's economic development director, a regional economic development initiative, or other). (Required by state checklist)
  - b. The community should identify mechanisms to finance public infrastructure and service investments and housing solutions that support the local economy (local tax dollars, creating a tax increment financing district, a Community Development Block Grant or other grants, bonding, impact fees, etc.). (Required by state checklist)

- c. Consider establishing a Capital Improvement District in the downtown and possibly in other mixed use village areas. This would allow the municipality to make capital improvements within the designated district area and then assess the cost to the property owners within the district. These improvements would be restricted to roads, drainage, and water/sewer infrastructure.
  - d. Participate in regional economic development planning efforts. (Required by state checklist)
  - e. Develop an Economic Development strategy that is informed by the Tourism Management initiative ~~and used to explore new and untapped markets~~. This strategy should balance competing interests among various tourism sectors and the hospitality industry; among different fishing interests; ~~the medical community; and~~ between the Town's not-for-profit research and education organizations' interest.
  - f. Consider the adoption of a Tourism Development District which would levy a ~~potential 1-5% tax on hotel bookings~~. The funds raised could be used to offset municipal funding for tourism related services and infrastructure.
  - g. Continue to work with the Chamber of Commerce, cultural organizations, and the National Park Service to promote the community.
  - h. Provide incentives for growth of year-round businesses and consider expanding the provisions for home-occupations.
  - i. Support investment, implementation, and updating of a Downtown Master Plan, and a companion Transportation Plan for the downtown and villages.
3. Retain, expand, and acquire water access for working waterfront, water-dependent uses, businesses, and residents. This should include:
- a. Providing more moorings through a better organized mooring field(s), and providing equal access to moorings, ~~but while ensuring that ensure priority to~~ water-dependent uses and businesses ~~are being served~~.
  - b. Manage the harbor as a shared resource between users such as commercial fishing, recreational boats, cruise lines, kayak companies, whale watch operators, etc.
  - c. Continue ~~to setting to~~ aside parking for commercial fishing.

~~e.d. Continue to develop and identify funding for improving the Ferry Terminal.~~

~~e.e. Continue to work with the Coast Guard, pilots, and NOAA-the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to identify recommended travel routes for larger vessels.~~

~~e.f. Support efforts to monitor, improve, and manage the Town and region's marine resources industries, including the quality of marine waters and associated habitats. Increase communication around the diverse forms of water quality information, including PWD (CSOs, BDOs), DMR bacterial sampling, cruise ship monitoring, harmful algal bloom sampling, and microbial source tracking. Increase communication around the diverse forms of water quality information, including drinking water and wastewater monitoring, state bacteria tracking in coastal waters, cruise ship monitoring, harmful algal bloom sampling, and microbial source tracking."~~

**4. Participate in the creation of a Route 3 Corridor Management Study that includes Ellsworth, Lamoine, Trenton, Bar Harbor, Mount Desert, and Acadia National Park. A Corridor Management Plan is needed to ensure sustainable tourism, successful economic development, and a better quality of life.**

~~4.5. Continue to work toward divesting the municipality from fossil fuel interests.~~

~~Explore ways to set limits on the number of visitors/cars that visit Bar Harbor annually. This could be based on the identified peak population number, capacity of municipal infrastructure, or other documented factors. If a limit is not feasible t~~

~~5.6. Identify relevant data to inform and guide the management of tourism. This could include infrastructure capacity, residential access to services, demands on housing stock, and other information. This effort could become the baseline for collaborative and ongoing efforts on tourism management with other sectors that what to meet or exceed this limit.~~

## Theme 6 – Regulatory Revisions

1. **Complete a Policy and Regulatory Audit of Bar Harbor’s existing land use regulations against the adopted Comprehensive Plan’s Vision, Future Land use Strategy, and Implementation Actions. This process will identify disconnects and inconsistencies that must be addressed through regulatory amendments over the coming years. This process will also be used to identify how best to reduce the overall number of zoning districts. After completing the Policy and Regulatory Audit, the town should also do the following:**
  - a. Engage in the rewriting and formatting of the zoning ordinance to better meet the needs and goals of the community in a user-friendly, readable, simplified style that incorporates visuals.
  - b. Consider the development of a Form-Based Code or similar regulatory approach for the Downtown and all mixed-use village areas to clarify the development process and what Bar Harbor desires from developers. This type of zoning provides an opportunity to streamline, help visualize, and clearly communicate the regulatory requirements (including building form, density, site design, architecture, and streetscape) and opportunities to future applicants.
  - c. Use the descriptions provided in the Future Land Use Strategy narrative to maintain, enact, or amend local ordinances as appropriate to: (Required by state checklist)
    - i. Clearly define the desired scale, intensity, and location of future development and economic development activity;
    - ii. Establish and/or maintain fair and efficient permitting procedures, and explore streamlining permitting procedures in growth areas; and
    - iii. Clearly define protective measures for critical natural resources and, where applicable, important natural resources.
    - iv. Clearly define protective measures for any proposed critical rural areas and/or critical waterfront areas, if proposed.
    - v. Direct a minimum of 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments into designated growth areas identified in the Future Land Use Plan. (Required by state checklist)

2. Research and develop regulatory provisions that address the creation of year-round housing ~~units, to remove/reduce zoning related barriers to housing development, direct new housing development to locations informed by the future land use strategy,~~ and provide zoning incentives for the creation of workforce housing. This may include:

- a. Developing new provisions for the construction of tiny houses, cottage developments, co-housing opportunities, conservation subdivisions, townhouses, small apartments, and other types of year-round homes that serve the changing needs and demographics of the population, and match the future land use strategy. At least 10% of the new residential development built during the next decade should qualify as affordable. (Required by state checklist)
- b. Study the feasibility of adopting Inclusionary Zoning in Bar Harbor which should include assessing the financial implications on future development, how to tailor the policy to Bar Harbor's local market conditions, and where the policy would be applied in the town. The policy could also consider in-lieu fees that could be used to offset housing construction costs in other developments or finance other housing programs in Bar Harbor.
- c. Adopt zoning changes that build ~~on state legislative initiatives off LD2003~~ to remove barriers to housing development in Bar Harbor.
- d. Identify and address any constraints to infill and other ~~high density denser~~ housing alternatives in the areas of the community served by municipal water and sewer while considering the character of these areas. Consider incentives such as density bonuses in these areas to encourage the development of affordable/workforce housing. (Required by state checklist)
- ~~e. Propose ways to simplify the subdivision review process. This may, especially include for amendments to approved plans and could incentivize simple subdivisions, e.g. individual lots.~~
- ~~f. Propose allowing variations in minimum lot sizes in new subdivisions while maintaining the same number of units per acre by right.~~
- ~~g. Consider the creation of pre-approved building plans, sometimes called "pattern zones", for mixed use areas and residential neighborhoods near the Downtown and village centers. Such programs reduce development cost and time for small scale projects and encourage designs that fit into the context of existing neighborhoods. <https://www.cnu.org/publicsquare/2023/02/15/spokane-streamlines-missing-middle-housing/>~~

~~h.f.~~ Maintain, enact, or amend ordinances to allow the addition of at least one accessory ~~apartment dwelling unit per residential dwelling~~ unit in growth areas, subject to site suitability. (Required by state checklist)

~~h.g.~~ Consider the creation of pre-approved building plans for Accessory Dwelling Units. This would expedite the construction process if allowed by right and only requiring inspections by the building inspector.

~~h.h.~~ Designate a location(s) in growth areas where mobile home parks are allowed pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A. §4358(3)(M) and where manufactured housing is allowed pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A. §4358(2). (Required by state checklist)

~~h.i.~~ ~~Change attitudes towards increased housing production, density, and affordability to "Yes in My Backyard."~~

Commented [sw3]: Moved to Housing section

3. Limited land is available for future development ~~and~~, sprawl has cost, ~~climate, and visual impact~~-implications ~~and visual impact~~, and Bar Harbor's Identity is shaped by its resources and assets. To address these issues, the Town will create and adopt Performance Standards to address the specific needs of the Downtown/Village Growth Centers and the Rural Areas of the community. These standards will be used to strategically guide new development and minimize impacts on the town's natural and cultural resources. This could include:

- a. Evaluate the effectiveness of existing natural resource related regulations to determine if they are effective tools, or if a different standard could be used to accomplish the intended goal – examples - shoreline/wetland setbacks ~~and nitrate loading~~.
- b. Reconsider requirements for large minimum lot sizes that are intended to reduce pollutants from reaching surface waters as they may have limited influence on overall nitrogen export and further, and have unintended consequences for development potential on vacant, developable land. The Town might instead consider:
  - i. Identify and enforce maintenance of existing septic systems that may be malfunctioning or failing. This could include mandatory pump-outs via a pump-out ordinance and required septic inspections and performance standards implemented during property transfer above and beyond those required by the State in the coastal zone and along lakes. ~~This could also include subsidies/assistance for septic maintenance.~~

ii. Rather than a blanket minimum lot size requirement, strengthen enforcement of new septic system placement (Article V Private Sewage Disposal, §165-18: §165-21) to focus on protecting sensitive areas, for example as defined in the 2007 Comprehensive Plan as:

1. Areas on or near dug wells
2. Recharge zones (the upper third of a watershed)
- ~~3. Localized features like fractures that exhibit strong hydraulic connections with soil and the groundwater beneath septic systems, areas where well yield is marginal relative to bedrock fractures, soil type, groundwater recharge zones, or drought conditions~~
- 4.3. Areas in close proximity to older wells or deep excavations such as rock quarries
- 5.4. Areas of thin soils (~~less than five feet~~), soils with low recharge rates (~~5-15%~~), ~~exposed bedrock, topographic heights, and coastal areas within 200 feet of the shoreline~~, and other areas where ground or surface water is vulnerable.

c. Ensure local land use ordinances remain consistent with Maine Stormwater Management regulations (Title 38 M.R.S.A. §420-D and 06-096 CMR 500 and 502), Maine Department of Environmental Protection's allocations for allowable levels of phosphorus in ~~lake/pond watersheds~~surface waters, and the Maine Pollution Discharge Elimination System Stormwater Program. (Required by state checklist)

~~4. Continue to analyze the location and extent of lodging operations in the community, and work to determine how much lodging is needed and desirable. This effort should include the simplifying and clarifying of lodging definitions, and a determination of which zoning districts should accommodate future lodging operations.~~

~~4.5. Ensure Bar Harbor's natural resources are protected through sound land use policy and regulations. This includes:~~

- a. ~~Through Continue requiring local land use ordinances, require~~ subdivision ~~or and~~ non-residential property developers to look for and identify critical natural resources that may be on site and 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; require the planning board (or other designated review authority) to include as part of the review process, consideration of pertinent Beginning with Habitat@ww4 maps and information regarding critical natural resources. (Required by state checklist)



- b. Manage nutrient loading and eutrophication in the Northeast Creek drainage in line with current science and studies and adjust land use policies and regulations as applicable. Use findings from the National Park Service/U.S. Geological SurveyUSGS Water Quality Partnership's anticipated study "A predictive tool for understanding the impact of development on nutrient loads to Northeast Creek, Mount Desert Island, Maine" which is intended to provide National Park ServiceNPS managers with a means to assess the tolerance of estuaries of ANP to increasing nutrient loading and eutrophication associated with increasing development and changing climate, and to help guide MDI Mount Desert Island town planners accordingly, specifically within the Northeast Creek drainage area.
- c. Preserve high value watershed and water resources by limiting runoff of watershed pollutants (especially nitrogen and phosphorous), and limiting the development of impervious surfaces, especially in outlying districts. (Required by state checklist) This includes:
  - i. In growth areas (Downtown, Town Hill, Hulls Cove), balance protecting fresh water resources while allowing for more intensive growth demands, such as through amending the land use ordinance to incorporate low impact development and/or green infrastructure standards where applicable. (Required by state checklist)
  - ii. The Town, developers, and landowners should work to ensure that the open space set aside in new subdivisions is the central design feature around which roads and buildings are organized, using a conservation subdivision strategy. The open space should be contiguous with open space on adjacent properties, incorporate critical natural and cultural resources found on site, and be permanently protected from development. Measures should be taken to prevent roads and other forms of development from dividing the open space into smaller fragments or impacting the identified resources in the future.
- d. Maintain, enact, or amend public wellhead and aquifer recharge area protection mechanisms, as necessary. (Required by state checklist)
- e. Comply with State Shoreland Zoning updates.
- f. Working with the Forest Service and the Soil and Water Conservation district when developing land use regulations relevant to agricultural and forestry.

- g. ~~Limiting~~ ~~Minimize~~ non-residential development in rural areas to natural resource-based businesses and services, nature tourism/outdoor recreation businesses, farmers' markets, and home occupations.
- h. Permitting 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.
- i. Reviewing/revising existing regulations to adopt ~~Best Management Practices~~ for agricultural activities and definitions of such activities.

**6.6. Other specific policy and regulatory considerations and changes that have been identified include:**

- a. Improve buffering and screening standards to ensure compatibility between uses.
- b. Include a shade trees requirement in buffering and landscaping standards.
- c. Apply National Fire Protection Association historic standards to historic properties.
- d. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and performance of programs and ordinances.
- e. Update the minimum standards for both public and private roads.
- f. Update the Town Council Policy for accepting roads built to town standards.
- g. Adopt an ~~Enhanced~~ 911 ordinance.
- h. Assist businesses in understanding the regulations and local regulatory process.
- i. Review the purpose and make-up of boards, committees, and task forces to ensure meaningful and efficient operations.
- j. Evaluate the community's interest in ~~changing the Charter and pursuing a~~ different forms of ~~local~~ government.
- k. Consider the Code Enforcement Officer as the permitting authority for certain town-owned projects.

**6.7. Protect Bar Harbor's historic and cultural resources as development occurs in town.**

- a. For known historic archeological sites and areas sensitive to prehistoric archeology, through local land use ordinances 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. (Required by state checklist)
- b. Adopt or amend land use ordinances to require the ~~planning~~ ~~Planning board~~ ~~Board~~ (or other designated review authority) to incorporate maps and information provided by

the Maine Historic Preservation Commission into their review process. (Required by state checklist)

- c. The town, developers and landowners should work to ensure that the open space set aside in new subdivisions is the central design feature around which roads and buildings are organized, using a conservation strategy.
- d. Encourage cluster development through zoning, ensuring large areas, especially core habitat remain intact.

**7-8. Consider expanding the Design Review Board's jurisdiction to other areas of town. This could include:**

- a. Study the villages to identify features, structures, and visual aspects that warrant preservations.
- ~~a-b. Review and make changes to the design review standards to better align with the Maine Historic preservation guideline and other related standards.~~
- ~~b. Outside of the downtown, consider developing design standards for the relocation of historic properties.~~
- ~~c. Within the downtown, consider developing design standards for additions to historic properties and new construction.~~

**8-9. Assign responsibility for implementing the Future Land Use Plan to the appropriate committee, board, or municipal official. (Required by state checklist)**

**9-10. Meet with neighboring communities to coordinate land use designations and regulatory and non-regulatory strategies. (Required by state checklist)**

**10-11. 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. (Required by state checklist)**

**11-12. Track new development in the community by type and location. (Required by state checklist)**

**12-13. Periodically (at least every five years) evaluate implementation of the comprehensive plan. (Required by state checklist)**

# General Actions

- 1. To guide the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, Bar Harbor will establish a Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee that meets, at a minimum, twice throughout the calendar year. This committee which may be composed of Board/Committee Chairs, department heads, or their designees will prioritize and coordinate the completion of implementation actions outlined in the Plan to ensure implementation action items are being worked on by the appropriate parties. A Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee also monitors progress towards vision and future land use strategy in the Comprehensive Plan.**

**Example Implementation Committee responsibilities include:**

- a. Prioritize action items to work on annually.**
  - b. Serve as a liaison with town boards and committees that have a role in implementing the Comprehensive Plan.**
  - c. Assist the various responsible parties in understanding how the Comprehensive Plan integrates with their existing priorities to enable these parties to advance their own goals while simultaneously advancing the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.**
  - d. Identify both successful strategies and barriers to progress.**
  - e. Be responsible for public education about the Comprehensive Plan implementation process.**
  - f. Provide an annual report to the Town Council and Town Meeting.**
- 2. Coordinate an annual end-of-year joint meeting of all boards, committees, and local officials in Bar Harbor that are active partners in the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan to evaluate progress from the past year and plan for the upcoming year.**
  - 3. Regularly report on the progress of the 2035 Comprehensive Plan to the public through media channels, the town's email lists, a newsletter, and through the town's website.**
  - 4. Ensure the Town's Planning Department serves the role of "tracker" to document progress and the completion of specific action items in a master implementation table that includes detailed information including responsible party, potential partners, and level of priority. This will ensure consistency and accountability over the coming years.**

*Annual Report?  
(official record)*

## Implementation Actions Organized by Theme:

# Theme 1- Housing Solutions

### 1. Develop housing targets and track progress. This could include:

- a. Create a housing working group or committee in Bar Harbor comprised of town staff, elected and appointed leaders, businesses and anchor institutions, developers, homeowners, renters, and others who have an interest in housing outcomes in the town. Meet quarterly throughout the year to discuss housing policies and programs, zoning changes, incentives, and how to increase the availability of housing in Bar Harbor through creative partnerships.
- b. Create a Municipal Data Dashboard that is regularly updated to provide information on Bar Harbor's housing supply, resident population, visitation, and other metrics. The purpose of this initiative is to ensure that efforts, actions, and initiatives are producing the intended and needed results.
- c. Document approved housing projects, track them, and ensure the affordability of designated units overtime.
- d. Define the many types of long-term rentals that are permitted so they can be documented and incentivized.
- e. Identifying price points, income targets, numbers of bedrooms, mortgage and rent affordability gaps, etc. for the 524 rental units and 92 homes projected to be needed by 2033.
- f. Identifying other desired targets such as the annual increase in housing stock, % of employees who live where they work, % of deed restricted housing for locals, % of employer-owned dwelling units, and % of year-round-occupied housing units.
- g. Track progress on the Housing Policy Framework and update it as needed.
- h. Create a housing webpage so the public can easily access information on the town's housing efforts along with other housing related information.

### 2. Investigate potential housing policies, programs, and incentives that help to maintain the existing year-round housing stock . This may include the following types of strategies:

- a. Implement a property tax abatement program for existing residents to encourage them to remain year-round residents by making it more affordable for them to live here.
- b. Remove inspection fees and permit fees for certain types of housing. This could be reserved for developments with certain percentage of affordable housing or specific types of housing that are most needed.
- c. Consider a town program that offers incentives to encourage home owners of existing seasonally used dwelling units to use their property as long-term rentals.

- d. Establish a new local program to acquire deed restrictions to convert existing market-rate homes to affordable homes. This is a method to preserve the existing housing stock as year-round affordable rental and ownership housing.
- e. Promote and expand existing programs and uses to encourage businesses to build new units for their seasonal workforce rather than buying year-round dwelling units.
- f. Monitor short term rental trends in residential neighborhoods to inform future policy decisions.

**3. Investigate potential housing policies, programs, and incentives that increase available housing in Bar Harbor . This may include the following types of strategies:**

- a. Work with businesses and institutions to create seasonal and year-round housing. This may require expanding existing programs and developing new programs, and promoting housing opportunities to businesses (new uses, ordinance amendments, etc.). Major employers and developers will benefit from easy access to relevant information, targeted incentives, and local funding resources tailored to meet community needs.
- b. Encourage the creation of year-round rental units through regulatory and non-regulatory approaches.
- c. Educate the public on home sharing opportunities and programs.
- d. Create a land acquisition fund that could acquire properties, deed restrict them, and sell or turn them over to a non-profit, housing trust, or private developer to operate and manage. Potentially partner with the Housing Authority, Island Housing Trust, or a private developer to manage these new units.
- e. Take a leadership role in the development of the Acadia National Park (ANP) Town Hill parcel.
- f. Assist the YWCA with the development of the Hamilton Station parcel.
- g. Identify ways to stimulate the creation of housing on vacant, underutilized, and town-owned parcels.

**4. Research, develop, and implement funding mechanisms to help capitalize on housing solutions.**

- a. Consider strategies such as the taxing of home sales and target any funds generated to subsidize housing opportunities. *unclear*
- b. Create an annual line item in the budget dedicated to funding housing programs.
- c. Establish a local tax on hotel rooms/short term rentals to be dedicated to an affordable housing trust. *yes!*

- d. Have Inclusionary Zoning fees in-lieu go directly to the housing trust to fund affordable housing/programs.

Adopt a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) program/policy for housing in specific locations. ~~ED~~

**Collaborate with regional partners to support and build on each other's efforts to increase the housing stock.**

- a. Ensure a strong partnership with the housing authority to develop new housing units.
- b. Engage with development professionals, realtors, and others to understand the potential impacts of certain initiatives and incentives.
- c. Collaborate with others across the Acadia Region on the implementation of the actions identified at the 2023 MDI Housing Solutions Summit to create a balanced housing market that provides housing options affordable to all incomes.
- d. Work with housing partners to change attitudes towards increased housing production, density, and affordability to "Yes In My Backyard."
- e. Work with the Acadia Region partners to develop a region-wide approach to identify, assess, and develop solutions to housing, transportation, workforce development, economic diversity, and sustainable visitation/tourism. This should include representatives of the Acadia Region (Mount Desert, Southwest Harbor, Tremont, Trenton, Ellsworth, and Lamoine), Hancock County Planning Commission, MDI & Ellsworth Housing Authorities, Island Housing Trust, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, Downeast Partners, and others.

# Theme 2 – Stewardship of Resources

## **1. Encourage voluntary protection of important natural, scenic, and cultural resources by:**

- a. Pursuing strategic conservation of remaining critical ecosystems that are not protected, and lands that provide protection from the impacts of climate change. Prioritize conservation in Acadia East and Taunton Bay – the two identified focus areas of statewide ecological significance. Coordinate with regional efforts, and continue to coordinate with state and local agencies (Required by state checklist)
- b. Prioritizing protection of land with Prime Farmland soils and soils of statewide importance. Consider options such as the Maine Farmlink program through the Maine Farmland Trust to support existing and new farm operations. (required by state checklist)
- c. Working with local property owners, land trusts, and others to protect major points of physical and visual access to coastal waters, especially along public ways and in public parks. (Required by state checklist)
- d. Work with an existing local land trust or other conservation organizations to pursue opportunities to protect important open space or recreational land. (Required by state checklist)
- e. Develop a viewshed protection plan to include goals and objectives before developing regulations and standards. This includes working to identify and agree on the viewsheds that are to be protected. This includes protecting the scenic approaches to the villages.
- f. Work toward greater dark sky compliant lighting throughout the community. This may require a review of the land use ordinance to identify ways to increase compliance with the standards set by the International Dark Sky Association.
- g. Preserving and maintaining significant habitats by preserving undeveloped parcels and maintaining/increasing connectivity between habitats. To accomplish this:
  - i. Encourage local landowners to consider conservation easements with local conservation groups (Acadia National Park, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, etc.) if they are interested in pursuing long term preservation of their property. Consider protecting critical natural resources with willing sellers, distribute or make available information to those living in or near critical or important natural resources about current use tax programs and applicable local, state, or federal regulations (Required by state checklist).



- ii. Take advantage of the Current Use program and Open Space Tax Laws, land valuation, and incentives to adjust property values based on open space (Required by state checklist).
  - iii. Encourage the conservation of large, undeveloped blocks of at least 100 acres and un-fragmented forest blocks of at least 500 acres through the use of tax incentives, such as the Tree Growth and Open Space Tax Program.
2. **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 where possible. (Required by state checklist)**
  3. **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. (Required by state checklist)**
  4. **Ensure equitable access to Bar Harbor's publicly accessible natural areas, while considering carrying capacity and overuse issues where necessary. While Bar Harbor is further along on this because of the presence of Acadia National Park and other protected lands, the town should work to make signage and facilities accessible to a broad range of users (language, universal access, etc.)**
  5. **Work with the local or county historical society and/or the Maine Historic Preservation Commission to assess the need for, and if necessary, plan for, a comprehensive community survey of the community's historic and archaeological resources including historic buildings. (Required by state checklist) This effort should inform the regulatory changes.**
  6. **Encourage the preservation of historic properties and buildings through outreach and engagement.**
  7. **Encourage owners of National Register listed properties to be included in the Design Review Overlay District.**
  8. **Support the goals and actions in the Climate Action Plan (version 2.0) including (paraphrased here, see Climate Action Plan for the full list of goals and actions):**
    - a. **Achieving 100% renewable electricity for municipal operations by 2026 and across the community by 2030, with a preference for using locally generated renewable power.**

all while burdening the taxpayers

- b. Electrifying municipal building heating and cooling systems, and supporting residential and commercial building electrification and efficiency.
- c. Support sustainable transportation through safe, accessible, zero-emissions transportations systems including the electrification of all municipal and school vehicle fleets and a widely used electric vehicle charging network to the greatest extent possible by 2030.
- d. Support sustainable use and development across Bar Harbor.
- e. Mir: Encourage local elementary & High school to offer/teach sustainability course. Commercial, construction, and municipal Island.
- f. Est: Destination and promote climate action local economy in Bar Harbor.
- g. Raise public awareness of climate adaptation and resilience across the community, and to protect Town and community assets and investments.
- h. Raise awareness and understanding of the climate emergency across the community.

9. **Protect significant surface waters from pollution and improve water quality where needed by limiting runoff of watershed pollutants, limiting development of impervious surfaces, and preventing water contamination from septic systems. (Required by state checklist)**

10. **Monitor and report out on the quantity of groundwater that is available.**

11. **Protect marine resources and encourage working waterfront needs by: (Required by state checklist)**

- a. Providing information about the Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program and current use taxation program to owners of waterfront land used to provide access to or support the conduct of commercial fishing activities.
- b. Encouraging owners of marine businesses and industries to participate in clean marina/boatyard programs.
- c. Providing sufficient funding for and staffing of the harbormaster and/or harbor commission.

- d. Considering the feasibility of designating Bar Harbor Bay as a federal “no discharge area” and increasing local enforcement capacity.
- e. Performing a follow-up eelgrass survey in Frenchman Bay.
- f. Conducting a feasibility study of the impacts on expanding aquaculture in Frenchman Bay and the Mount Desert Narrows.
- g. Establishing a pump out station at the Ferry Terminal.
- h. Identifying needs for additional recreational and commercial access (which includes parking, boat launches, docking space, fish piers, and swimming access).
- i. Monitoring water quality of Town beaches and coastal waters and continue to participate in the Maine Healthy Beaches Program. Consider developing ordinances and regulations, as appropriate, to address identified water quality issues and protect coastal and marine waters. Work with College of the Atlantic to establish a long-term scientific baseline study of water quality in Frenchman Bay before, during, and after cruise ship visitation.
- j. Continuing efforts to restore clam-flats and eelgrass beds near Hadley Point and, if successful, expand restoration efforts to other areas of the Town. Support efforts to monitor and conserve local marine ecosystems including current commercially harvested species, emerging native species (warmer -water species with northbound-moving ranges), invasive introduced species, native intertidal communities and fouling communities.
- k. Reviewing and updating the Shellfish Management Plan as needed.

**12. Monitor the stability and changes in sensitive shoreline habitats that are vulnerable to climate change, including saltmarshes and other wetland, eelgrass beds, and shoreline vulnerable to degradation due to sea level rise, changing sea-ice, and changing perturbation due to introduced species.**

**13. Encourage landowners to voluntarily protect water quality using 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. (Required by state checklist)**

**14. Adopt and monitor water quality protection practices and standards for construction, the maintenance of public and private roads, and public properties. Require their implementation by contractors, owners, and community officials and employees. (Required by state checklist)**

**critical aspects of implementing the Future Land Use Strategy. (Required by state checklist)**  
**This should include:**

- a. Maintaining the federal waiver for water system filtration requirements.
  - b. Working with Acadia National Park to maintain the water quality of the town's drinking water supply - Eagle Lake and Bubble Pond – to retain the Environmental Protection Agency drinking water filtration waiver. Threats to the water quality include but are not limited to development in the watershed, aquatic invasive species, phosphorus loading, turbidity, and others. Ensure best management practices for portions of the watershed located within the Town of Bar Harbor. Given that Eagle Lake is the source of drinking water for the Town of Bar Harbor, protection of aquifer recharge areas and public wellheads is not applicable. (Required by state checklist)
  - c. Monitor water quality of Eagle Lake and Bubble Pond and manage the watershed.
  - d. Invest in maintenance and improvements of the water system as recommended in the Water System Master Plan.
  - e. Explore expansion opportunities of the public water system outside of the current service areas including converting the seasonal line to a permanent line.
  - f. Monitor whether or not there is adequate capacity for treatment using septic systems in the identified growth areas. Where feasible, increase the connection of new development to the sewer system and consider expansion of the sewer system to accommodate additional development density in the areas targeted for new development growth. (Required by state checklist)
  - g. Continue to invest in maintenance and improvement of the sewer system as recommended in the updated Combined Sewer Overflow Master Plan, as updated.
  - h. Continue to improve the infrastructure used for stormwater treatment, and ensure it is sized to handle larger weather events.
  - i. Research funding mechanisms to expand water and sewer infrastructure and services.
- 5. Create a Municipal Net Zero Energy Plan to guide Bar Harbor's Efforts to reduce air emissions. At the same time the community should support and incentivize the efforts of residents, landowners, businesses, and institutions to complete energy conservation measures and install renewable energy systems and battery storage systems. These efforts should include opportunities for all regardless of income level, and efforts should be made to involve owners**

and renters. The new wing being planned for the Library is intended to serve as a demonstration site and source of information for other projects in the community. Together these efforts should include completion of the following actions:

- a. Develop clear environmental objectives and policies to guide all municipal purchasing decisions.
- b. Transition the town's fleet of vehicles to electric, *where possible / feasible*
- c. Develop an energy efficiency program for existing buildings and utilities including street lights.
- d. Convert existing fossil fuel/wood based heating and cooling systems to electric in all municipal facilities/buildings.
- e. Ensure that any new buildings are designed and constructed to net zero standards.
- f. Expand the Town's solar energy production and renewable energy purchasing to meet the Town's total energy needs.
- g. Include nature-based solutions and changes to site maintenance on all municipal properties.
- h. Intentionally and pro-actively offer informational and educational campaigns to show residents how to upgrade their home energy systems to run more efficiently and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, on electric mobility options, and how to evaluate and access the various types of rebates, incentives and tax credit programs available at the state and federal levels.
- i. Within Town right-of-way's conduct regular Tree Health Assessment and maintain street trees. Select native species adaptable to climate change for new trees.
- j. Commit to a municipal composting program and if possible, expanding this program to include businesses. These efforts will help retain soil nutrients within the community and reduce emissions.
- k. To the greatest extent possible, municipal purchasing should focus on products and services that support energy conservation, waste management, and other sustainable systems.

6. **Work with surrounding communities and organizations to identify opportunities and optimize shared regional services and facilities, as appropriate and cost effective. Existing intermunicipal and shared services agreements should be maintained, and additional opportunities for shared services and procurement should be explored. (Required by state checklist)**

- a) Continue to work cooperatively with the local schools to determine the most efficient and affordable method to deliver a high-quality education to our students.
- b) Explore opportunities to work with neighboring communities to plan for and finance shared or adjacent capital investments to increase cost savings and efficiencies. (Required by state checklist)
- c) Continue to support and work with the YMCA so they can continue offering their services.

7. **Improve wireless and telecommunication services and expand broadband capacity.**

8. **Ensure collaborative and coordinated public safety which includes:**

- a) Continuing to provide Public Safety dispatch services at the local level.
- b) Having the Fire Department and Police Department continue to be a resource for the development and maintenance of emergency operations plans for businesses.
- c) Continuing to investigate opportunities for the coordination of island wide public safety.

9. **Identify alternative source of revenues such as impact fees and other techniques to help maintain or decrease the tax rate. This should include:**

- a) Encourage not-for-profit organizations to increase their payments in lieu of taxes.
- b) Create an Economic Development District to fund downtown infrastructure and seasonal municipal facilities and services.
- c) Work with the area and statewide communities, the chambers, the business community, and the state legislature to explore tax options including but not limited to a local or regional option sales tax and property transfer tax, as a supplement to local property taxes to assist in providing the level of services to the tourist industry that is expected of the town.

ADD EMT Services

Create a funding model for all PILOT

- d) **Seek authority to levy a local/regional option tax. The Town should encourage the state to authorize a local/regional option tax to place the burden of funding tourism-related operational and infrastructure costs on those using and increasing the cost of services.**

**10. Assess and review amenity needs in parks and other public spaces and determine if there are areas underserved by pocket parks, playgrounds, and other amenities. This should include:**

- a) **Providing services and amenities in public spaces that are in-line with the purpose of the space/park.**
- b) **Providing comfort stations at town-owned properties such as, but not limited to, Hadley Point and Town Hill.**
- c) **Consider the creation of a Park and Recreation Department to ensure appropriate and efficient delivery of services**
- d) **Creating a list of recreation needs or developing a recreation plan to meet current and future needs. This should include assigning a committee or community official to explore ways of addressing the identified needs and/or implementing the policies and strategies outlined in the plan. (Required by state checklist)**

**11. Given the changing climate and the storms the community has experienced, efforts should be made to make all existing and future facilities and infrastructure more resilient to these changes. This should include new construction and reconstruction efforts.**

**12. Prioritize clear municipal communications, transparency, and broader representation within local government (staff and volunteers) to ensure diverse perspectives are represented and that barriers to participation are reduced. This may include:**

- a. **Encourage and promote communication and coordination between the Town Council, three quasi-judicial boards, committees, commissions, and task forces.**
- b. **Develop strategies and an overarching approach to enhance municipal communication to residents and other community members regarding town projects, initiatives, and events. This should include examining the town website, newsletter, media channels, and messaging.**
- c. **Create a campaign to promote civic engagement and a culture of participation in**

To the members of the Comprehensive Planning Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the Task Force on the Climate Emergency (CETF) to give our comments on the current draft (from Jan. 17th) of the Comprehensive Plan. On the whole, we are really pleased with the draft and thrilled to see so many climate-centered initiatives highlighted throughout! We had just a few comments or questions for you to consider, which I organized by headings below;

#### **Overview of Themes**

- We like the addition of a "Sustainability, Efficiency, and Resilience" ring surrounding the 6 themes. We are curious to see the introductory language explaining this when it is ready and are hopeful that it will thoroughly underline what an important part of the town's identity this is.

#### **General Actions**

- We really like the idea of an implementation committee and are excited to participate and connect more regularly with other committees and town staff.

#### **Theme 1 - Housing Solutions**

- Add that the creation of new housing allows us to simultaneously create more efficient buildings, which save on utility money — maybe use the example of Island Housing Trust to combine affordability with energy efficiency?
- Increasing density rather than allowing sprawl has great climate benefits. Building density is addressed really nicely in Theme 6, but we think it might also be added to this section, beyond simply attempting to adjust attitudes (#5d).

#### **Theme 2 - Stewardship of Resources**

- (1a) We recommend adding that lands which sequester carbon most should be prioritized as well.
- We really like the specific reference to the Climate Action Plan (CAP) and selection of key initiatives, but we are still a bit uncomfortable with lumping climate actions into the "Stewardship of Resources" Theme as it seems to limit all value in nature to its utility to humans. Is a livable world just a "resource"? Are species on the brink of extinction a "resource"? We wonder if there is something broader that this Theme might be titled or if an additional Climate Action or Climate Responsibility Theme should be included.
- The CAP actions fall within so many Themes. Is there a way to color-code or asterisk all actions connected to the CAP so it is readily clear to readers where the overlap is?

#### **Theme 3 - People- Centered Transportation**

- Should explicitly spell out that Bar Harbor will increase its investment in existing public transportation like the Island Explorer and seek to expand hours, frequency, and operating season to accommodate more riders.
- Should "complete streets" be capitalized to show it's referencing a specific smart growth approach?

#### **Theme 4 - Community Services & Facilities**

- Sections 4, 5, and 11 might fit better in a climate-focused theme and have corresponding CAP goals to reference.



- Does #5 "Municipal Net Zero Energy Plan" refer to a particular template or document (since it is capitalized), or is it just a description of something that would be useful? We do not reference this particular phrase in the CAP, but we will happily add it for consistency between the two documents so long as we understand what is intended a bit more. Theme 5 seems to be mostly what is covered in the "Building Electrification and Energy Efficiency" strategy of the CAP.
- F seems repetitive to General Action #1 (?)

**Theme 5 - Diverse Economy**

- (1b) Maybe explicitly spell out the negative environmental effects of unchecked tourism.
- One action in the CAP that could be included here is working toward the town divesting from fossil fuel interests.

**Theme 6 - Regulatory Revisions**

- Great section with lots of strong actions to address sprawl and habitat fragmentation. Reasoning for increasing density could include the reduced climate impacts.

Please reach out to me or the CETF as a whole if you have any questions or thoughts to share. Thank you for your work on this plan!

Best,

-Ruth Poland (CETF Chair)

**From:** [James Mahoney](#)  
**To:** [Michele Gagnon](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Revised CP actions for review  
**Date:** Saturday, January 20, 2024 11:00:37 AM

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Michelle

I have the following general comments.

- My reading of the document is that action and priority to increase housing is very clear. I think more language needs to be added to indicate that actions proposed to add housing will be considerate of existing neighborhoods and infrastructure capacity. The Comprehensive Plan and any Land Use Ordinance revisions will require majority citizen support and I think residents will want to know that their legitimate concerns and interests will be considered.

- I may have missed it if you addressed the following but:

I continue to support my previous comment that there should be a review of allowed commercial uses in mixed use zones that are primarily residential.

I continue to suggest that we reference the ongoing analysis of lodging uses to indicate that the process to simplify and clarify lodging definitions should not allow additional lodgings uses in mixed use zones that are primarily residential.

The recommendation to update the downtown master plan should give guidance to that plan update.

- Minor grammar suggestions, for housing #1, e & f, use identify rather than identifying to maintain parallel structure

Jim

On Wed, Jan 17, 2024 at 3:52 PM Michele Gagnon <[mgagnon@barharbormail.org](mailto:mgagnon@barharbormail.org)> wrote:

Good afternoon, attached are the revised actions based on comments we heard from the CPC in January, as well as other comments. I know how busy we all are but we hope you can make some time to review and comment (mark it up) on the document prior to Wednesday January 31. Comments should be emailed to me or dropped off at the municipal building. This will allow us to consider and include the comments in the document that will be reviewed at the meeting on February 14.

Let me know if you have any questions.

-mg

**Michele Gagnon**

**Planning Director**

**Town of Bar Harbor**

**207.288.3329**

**Correspondence to and from this office is considered a public record and may be**

**subject to a request under the Maine Freedom of Access Act. Information that you wish to keep confidential should not be included in email correspondence.**

**From:** [Elissa Chesler](#)  
**To:** [planner@barharbormaine.gov](mailto:planner@barharbormaine.gov)  
**Subject:** one more comp plan point  
**Date:** Thursday, January 25, 2024 3:05:32 PM

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Michele,

In relistening to the last CPC meeting, I don't think the final conversation raised by Jim Mahoney was not included as a new strategy. We discussed adding a specific strategy about managing lodging uses, to evaluate where, how large and how much lodging use is desirable in future growth planning. This could go in theme 5.

Thanks,  
Elissa

**From:** James Mahoney <[jamesmahoney6532@gmail.com](mailto:jamesmahoney6532@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 4, 2024 10:43 AM  
**To:** Michele Gagnon <[mgagnon@barharbormail.org](mailto:mgagnon@barharbormail.org)>  
**Subject:** Re: Revised CP actions for review

Michele

The guidance I would give in the Comp plan for downtown would be:

Downtown has a mixed-use core surrounded by primarily residential districts with residential densities at higher levels than elsewhere in Town.

My initial thought for defining the downtown mixed use core would be Downtown Village I and II, Mount Desert Street Corridor, and Shoreland General. The surrounding districts would be considered primarily residential, consistent with existing uses and development patterns.

Jim

**From:** James Mahoney <[jamesmahoney6532@gmail.com](mailto:jamesmahoney6532@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 6, 2024 9:01 AM  
**To:** Michele Gagnon <[mgagnon@barharbormail.org](mailto:mgagnon@barharbormail.org)>  
**Subject:** Re: Revised CP actions for review

Michele

I also think it would be very helpful to do a buildout analysis. I think this was discussed based on Stewart's suggestion at a Lodgings changes meeting. I don't need to tell you this but this should be a relatively straightforward analysis for the near downtown residential districts. # of units on the parcel, maximum # of units based on density in the LUO, subtract to yield # of units to be added. Could be mapped using a heat map based on ranges of added units that could be added on each parcel. This would help us judge whether increasing allowed densities in the LUO is prudent. You could just adjust the allowed densities in a district to see how that would change maximum buildout. Constraints layers like wetlands and topo could be added as needed to reduce the realistic maximum buildout #s.

My hypothesis is that market factors are a powerful factor that results in densities that are significantly less than the LUO would allow. The questions are then how much you would need to change densities in the LUO in order to change market conditions to result in significant added housing and whether these density levels would be acceptable, especially given that high density projects would likely be very different than existing surrounding uses.

Jim

**From:** James Mahoney <[jamesmahoney6532@gmail.com](mailto:jamesmahoney6532@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Sunday, February 4, 2024 10:43 AM

**To:** Michele Gagnon <[mgagnon@barharbormail.org](mailto:mgagnon@barharbormail.org)>

**Subject:** Re: Revised CP actions for review

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**Sent:** Tuesday, February 6, 2024 9:01 AM

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Jim

**From:** [Elissa Chesler](mailto:Elissa.Chesler)  
**To:** [planner@barharbormaine.gov](mailto:planner@barharbormaine.gov)  
**Subject:** feedback on Comp plan strategies  
**Date:** Thursday, January 25, 2024 2:49:17 PM

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Michele,

My feedback on the comp plan strategies is below. Feel free to email if you need clarification.

Elissa

Theme 1.

1.b. The municipal data dashboard provides information on housing supply, but should also capture housing demand. Some metrics of demand might include workforce size, housing needs by income and population, etc. If commercial growth outpaces housing growth, we will not meet the growing demand regardless of additional supply.

1.d. "Document the many types of long-term rentals that are permitted so they can be documented and incentivized." Change the first "document" to "Create Definitions for". The reason for the requested change is that currently a 30 day rental is classed as a long term rental. Bona fide year round rental housing is not the same...many "Long Term Rentals" are only available when the property is not in use as a vacation rental and therefore are not even available throughout the school year (for teachers, families with children, and college students). Creating separate definitions for LTRs that meet the needs of different segments of the population (year round, academic year, winter, etc) can enable more nuanced incentivization. The edit that was made is a bit circular (document, so they can be documented) and does not convey the purpose.

1e. seems too specific in that it gives a number of rental units and homes needed. Change to "For the number of rental units and homes needed to meet projected demands" (the demands may change)

1f and throughout. Try to use "person-first language". E.g. % of deed restricted housing for "locals" could be % of deed restricted housing for people who live in Bar Harbor year-round. At least use "year-round residents". The term "locals" means a lot of things to people, and may not include new arrivals, not born here, etc. I suggest to screen carefully for any terms applied to groups of people and try to ensure that they are 1) not derisive or exclusive, 2) defined in terms of policy issue.

2c. The terms used in 2c may not capture the issue and desired outcomes. "seasonally used dwelling units" may be a variety of non-primary residences (second home used seasonally, residents temporarily away, vacation rental). Long term rentals are not necessarily sufficiently long term to merit incentivization. E.g. I suspect we have adequate supply of winter rentals that are off season vacation rentals, but what we really need are long term rentals that are available to year-round workforce.

2f. as written this is much weaker than the 2007 policy action, which actual states that the town shall take policy action if goals not met. Revise to say "monitor...and take appropriate policy actions as necessary to achieve goals".

4a. "home sales" could be expanded to include other "real estate transfers".

4. add an action for a "housing bond" to capitalize housing projects, land acquisition, subsidization of loans, etc.

5b. add "financial institutions" "Engage with development professionals, realtors..."

5d. add "housing variety" in addition to production, density and affordability. There is a push toward single family and it is based on an old understanding of desirable housing. I do have some concerns

about casting everything as YIMBY vs. NIMBY, and think we need to work toward a community wide understanding of where growth and density is best supported by our land and other resources, ie, defining some areas as less ideal for density means identifying the areas where such development is suitable, and recognizing that it is a zero sum game—we can't make more land, so we may have to limit some types of development to hit the balance that we want to achieve. Thus a policy action that I'd like to see is to foster dialogue and compromise among various interest to identify solutions that strike this balance. By taking things one issue at a time the total goal is not realized. I had hoped we'd get at this in comp plan, but if we need to have these conversations in the future then we need a strategy to do so.

#### Theme 2

1.b. we need to balance this Farmland protection with SA/ELQ and growth in town hill.

1.e. the acadia scenic byway should be explicitly mentioned. Viewshed from the byway is poorly protected in the lu.

1f. The IDSA has an old model ordinance and suggested standards, but they don't have "set standards" I would just be less proscriptive here.

4. equitable access. Can some of the Bar Harbor areas be designated for residential use only. E.g. Hadley point beach, maybe others. Our town owned areas become hard to access by residents once they are marketed as amenities for visitors.

9 and 10. Here I think specific actions for monitoring in Town Hill should be mentioned.

15.d. consider subsurface wastewater maintenance reimbursement and assistance comparable to what is available in Mount Desert for residents.

#### Theme 3.

1. Add a strategy about improving addressing line of site issues, including many in outlying areas where the geometry, tree growth, utility poles and signage are incompatible with traffic speed, but also in town as well.

4. Consider a strategy allowing abatements for road association costs born by residents on private roads, to facilitate maintenance, drainage, etc. The idea is to help year round residents in outlying areas who have limited benefit from town services, and to encourage proper road maintenance.

#### Theme 4.

10. this is very focused on Parks and Rec, but I agree with committee members that we have multiple civic and cultural organizations that are supported by the town in various ways and fulfill missions that are often services provided by town governments...library, Y, parks, etc. can we be more holistic about this approach—independent non-profits are not really sustainable due to rising labor costs and we have no holistic approach to cost effective delivery of these services.

12.c. This action should not just promote civic engagement, but clarify and communicate the processes and procedures around public input. Help educate the town about how our government works and how, when, and where their voice can be heard in shaping town policy. Work with boards and committees to 'listen well' and respond appropriately to community input—this doesn't always mean to acquiesce to community input, but rather to respond to it in a meaningful way to acknowledge the input and clearly convey how the input does or doesn't shape the policy outcome.

#### Theme 5.

1. There should be a strategy to evaluate capacity and demand growth to limit unsustainable pressures on housing and municipal services.

Former number 5. Explore ways to set limits... I think this was a much needed action in the sense that it was intended to establish metrics for the management of tourism. I would bring it back in a more nuanced way.. "identify relevant metrics to guide the management of tourism including



infrastructure capacity, residential access to services, demands on housing stock..." Beware of inappropriate use of metrics. Overarching citizen sentiment is a metric that may not be captured in the physical capacity of streets and sidewalks. Are we really saying that unless we can document the physical limits of our capacity are being exceeded that we have no legal foundation for limiting tourism? Must we rely on public nuisance law as the standard by which we measure acceptable levels of tourism?

#### Theme 6.

2. Focus is on removing barriers and therefore increasing supply, but there is less focus on managing demand growth, ie, potentially limiting zones/disincentivizing commercial development in favor of housing development to rebalance supply and demand.

2e. incentivize/subsidize simple subdivisions, e.g. individual lots, to free up land for infill development.

3bi. Maybe a place to put in subsidies/assistance for septic maintenance.

5.f. the standards for accepting roads needs a purpose—is the idea to have fewer private roads, help with resident borne maintenance costs and/or improve public safety?

5 j. still not clear—the objective is to streamline govt decision making and policy making for greater efficiency and responsiveness. Is the current form of government moves at a glacial pace but allows a lot of citizen input. Citizens may desire more rapid policy action but would have to cede certain opportunities for input to achieve this goal.