

**TOWN OF YARMOUTH
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING**

October 24, 2023

7:00 PM, Town Hall Community Room, 200 Main Street, and via Remote Meeting

<https://meet.goto.com/451872165>

Join by phone: 1 (872) 240-3412, Access Code: 451-872-165

AGENDA

- I. **Public Comment (5 minutes)**
- II. **Review Meeting Summary from September 26 (5 minutes)**
- III. **Planning for Future Land Use Workshop (75 minutes)**
 - a. **Discussion on additional themes from final Community Conversation and how they inform the Future Land Use Workshop**
 - b. **Future Land Use Workshop Agenda and Logistics**
- IV. **Report on Other Events (20 minutes)**
 - a. **Climate Action Workshop**
 - b. **Com-plan-ion Events**
 - c. **HS Assembly**
- V. **CPSC Meeting Schedule (5 minutes)**
 - a. **Upcoming Dates: November 28 and December 19**
- VI. **Adjournment**



YARMOUTH MAINE

To: Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee
From: Erin Zwirko, Director of Planning & Development
Re: Background for October 24, 2023, Steering Committee Meeting
Date: October 18, 2023

Please see the following notes to help you review and be prepared for the October 24, 2023, Steering Committee meeting.

Public Comment

I have not received any additional written comments since our last meeting.

Review Meeting Summary from September 2023

Attached is the September meeting summary from the Steering Committee's previous meeting for the Committee to review and approve. Please let me know if you have any revisions to the meeting summary.

Discussion on Feedback Received to Date

The final Community Conversation was held on October 2, and the Climate Action Plan Community Action Workshop was held on October 10. All of the recordings and activities are available online:

- Community Conversations: <https://www.planyarmouth.com/project-news/come-to-our-community-conversations>
- Community Action Workshop: <https://www.yarmouthclimateaction.org/give-input>

At our September meeting, we had a detailed discussion about themes that emerged from the Housing and the Economy event. I recently made a presentation to the Planning Board providing them with an overview of the preliminary data including from the Environment and Natural Resources Community Conversation. That presentation is attached, and you can watch the [recording online](#). Many of the Planning Board members attended the events and provided their perspective as well.

My takeaways from the Natural Resources and Environment Event include:

- High Priorities for municipal action:
 - Invest in acquiring more conservation land
 - Royal River restoration for fish passage and water quality
 - Education: all property owners on sustainable land care practices and larger property owners on benefits of easements for conservation and recreation

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- Zoning changes for sea level rise and compact development
- Medium Priorities for municipal action:
 - Invasive species management
 - Culvert replacements to reduce flood risk
 - Ensure waterfront parks and trails are resilient to sea level rise
 - Coastal bluff stability
 - Marine habitat restoration
- Areas to be preserved for ecological value and resilience:
 - Land adjacent to Royal River and existing open spaces
 - Similarly, along the shoreline
 - Wildlife corridors between adjacent resources
 - Permanent protections for town owned open space
 - Steep slopes protections
 - Casco Bay for aquaculture uses
- Areas to be preserved for recreation:
 - SLA railroad corridor
 - Public access points to Royal River and Casco Bay
 - Expand recreational opportunities in existing open spaces
 - ADA/UA improvements
 - Powerline corridors
 - Connectivity throughout town

Town staff and North Star Planning will be completing detailed analysis of the results this week, and will be preparing a report memorandum summarizing the findings from the various events. I believe that the report will be available to review prior to the Future Land Use Workshop.

Future Land Use Workshop

North Star Planning will provide an overview of the agenda at the Steering Committee meeting. As previously discussed, the framework of the meeting will include discussion on “places to protect, places to enhance, and places to transform.”

We will also discuss logistics. I hope that Steering Committee members will be able to join on November 13th.

Report on Other Events

Since the Steering Committee last met, a number of other activities and events have occurred:

- Climate Action Workshop: I have asked Meddy for her takeaways from the event and next steps which I will share at the meeting.
- Com-plan-ion Events: We have two coming up and Julie will report on them:
 - October 20: “Can You Hear Me Now? You’re on Mute!” Breakfast Brainstorming with the Economic Development Advisory Committee
 - October 22: Visualizing Density: A Guided Walking Tour of Our Historically Diverse Housing Stock with the Affordable Housing Committee
- HS Assembly: Neena and Sophie did a fantastic job presenting to the junior and seniors on 10/16.

CPSC Meeting Schedule

Please note the following upcoming meetings:

- November 28
- December 19 (week earlier)

We will hold a social gathering in the new year.

Other Notes

We continue to arrange companion events with support from Steering Committee members:

- October 20: “Can You Hear Me Now? You’re on Mute!” Breakfast Brainstorming with the Economic Development Advisory Committee
- October 22: Visualizing Density: A Guided Walking Tour of Our Historically Diverse Housing Stock with the Affordable Housing Committee

We are also starting to plan events over the winter and into the spring with additional Committee partners and Yarmouth organizations.

List of Abbreviations (Please feel free to add to this list as you come across abbreviations):

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1XNrocha-2zFR0ZVpAKwVFdjVEyy9rQXc2OZ94a5B330/edit?usp=sharing>

Attachments:

1. Draft September 26, 2023 meeting summary
2. Presentation given to Planning Board on October 11, 2023
3. Draft Vision Statement from Imagine Yarmouth Initiative

Yarmouth Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee (CPSC)
 September 26, 2023
 7:00 PM
 Meeting Summary

Name	Attendance
John Auble	Y
Daniel Backman	Y
Crispin Bokota Bolese	N
Emily Bryson	Y
Judy Colby-George	N
Hildy Ginsberg, Co-Chair	N
Kevin Hartnett	Y
Miriam Markowitz	N
Tim McGonagle	N
Tred McIntire	Y
Neena Panosso	Y
Todd Rich	Y
Bill Richards, Co-Chair	Y
Lynne Seeley	Y
Sophie Wentzell	Y
Jamie Whittemore	Y
Sarah Witte	N
Karin Orenstein, Town Council Liaison	Y
Erin Zwirko, Planning Director	Y
Julie Dubovsky, Assistant Planner	Y
Ben Smith, North Star Planning	Y
Kate Burch, North Star Planning	N

- I. Public Comment
None received. No members of the public were in attendance.

- II. Review Meeting Summary from August
The Committee unanimously approved the meeting summary from August 22, 2023.

- III. Discussion on Feedback Received To Date
 - a. Themes Emerging from Housing and Economy Events
Ben presented on North Star’s findings, cautioning that the planning process is in the middle of the public engagement process and the results are preliminary. The summer survey had 123 online and in-person

respondents, and 53 people attended the House Community Conversation and 23 at Economy. They compared the data with what was heard at the public workshops and the Vision Statement, which is missing the themes of “equity, education, families, common sense and the unique history” that were identified in the survey, but “inclusion” did not consistently rank highly even though it was included in the Vision Statement.

The results on housing from the survey and workshop were closely aligned, with stronger support for continuing single-family housing at the community conversations. Affordability was highlighted at both, which suggests support for a spectrum of affordability with an emphasis on the equity of housing for the lower income brackets. As to where new housing should go, the results showed support for development along Route 1, on major corridors, and within the existing village areas, except for Main Street, which should be examined further.

The results on the economy aligned generally as well, with more nuances into the business types and appropriate locations. Strong support was expressed for municipal action on workforce housing and the working waterfront, although there was some debate about working vs. water-recreation oriented businesses. The data on the creative economy suggests that people support public events, but generally think existing programs are largely sufficient and prioritized fundraising over municipal initiatives.

North Star Planning and staff will do a more comprehensive review of the data after the last workshop on October 2.

b. How do the themes relate to the Vision Statement?

The CPSC discussed how these relate to the Vision Statement, how there are aesthetic elements, but also those that are intangible, abstract concepts like inclusivity, history, equity and volunteerism. Another interpretation was that the priorities affirm maintaining the way Yarmouth is and then challenging us to do better. The group reached consensus that people felt it was both an affirmation of the good of the present and a hope for Yarmouth of the future.

Connections were drawn between public transit, protecting open space, and housing that supports local businesses, which were identified in the Vision Statement.

c. How do the themes feed into the Future Land Use Forum?

Ben presented the three different scenarios that were in development: maximizing preservation of open space, housing expansion, and public

transit tie-in, rather than building on the current comprehensive plan and the current growth area. An alternative is to drill down deeper into the different parts of the growth area.

A lengthy discussion followed as to how the Vision Statement doesn't reflect the "how" Yarmouth is to grow or help to guide. There is no call to action in the draft visions statement. The conversation turned to public outreach and how the summer outreach didn't capture opinions on future land use or zoning.

The group agreed that for 11/13 the focus on the land uses should connect with what was heard from the greater community previously, with specificity needed to visualize where growth could and could not work. The Committee discussed the framework of places to protect, places to enhance, and places to transform.

d. How do these translate into Goals?

It was suggested that the draft vision statement be paired with an executive summary, as those values provide a lens through to which to view and define those actions identified in the strategies. The 2010 plan didn't have a vision statement, just the 5 main principles, and this update could include a different approach. Erin suggested that everyone look at the [DACF webpage on comprehensive plans](#) recently submitted and come to the next meeting ready to share preferences.

The group agreed that it should implement the community values in the comprehensive plan's goals with specific actions that lead Yarmouth where it aspires to be – more inclusive, diverse and affordable. While a vision statement cannot go on a bumper sticker, it could be summarized with a short mission statement or become a guiding policy. Either way, the plan could be a tool to give a face to those values expressed in the vision statement in 2022.

IV. CPSC Meeting Schedule

a. Upcoming Dates

Due to meeting dates falling close to Thanksgiving and Christmas, the group decided to not reschedule the November meeting and to move the December meeting to the 19th. Lynne offered to host a new years social gathering after the second week of January.

V. Adjournment



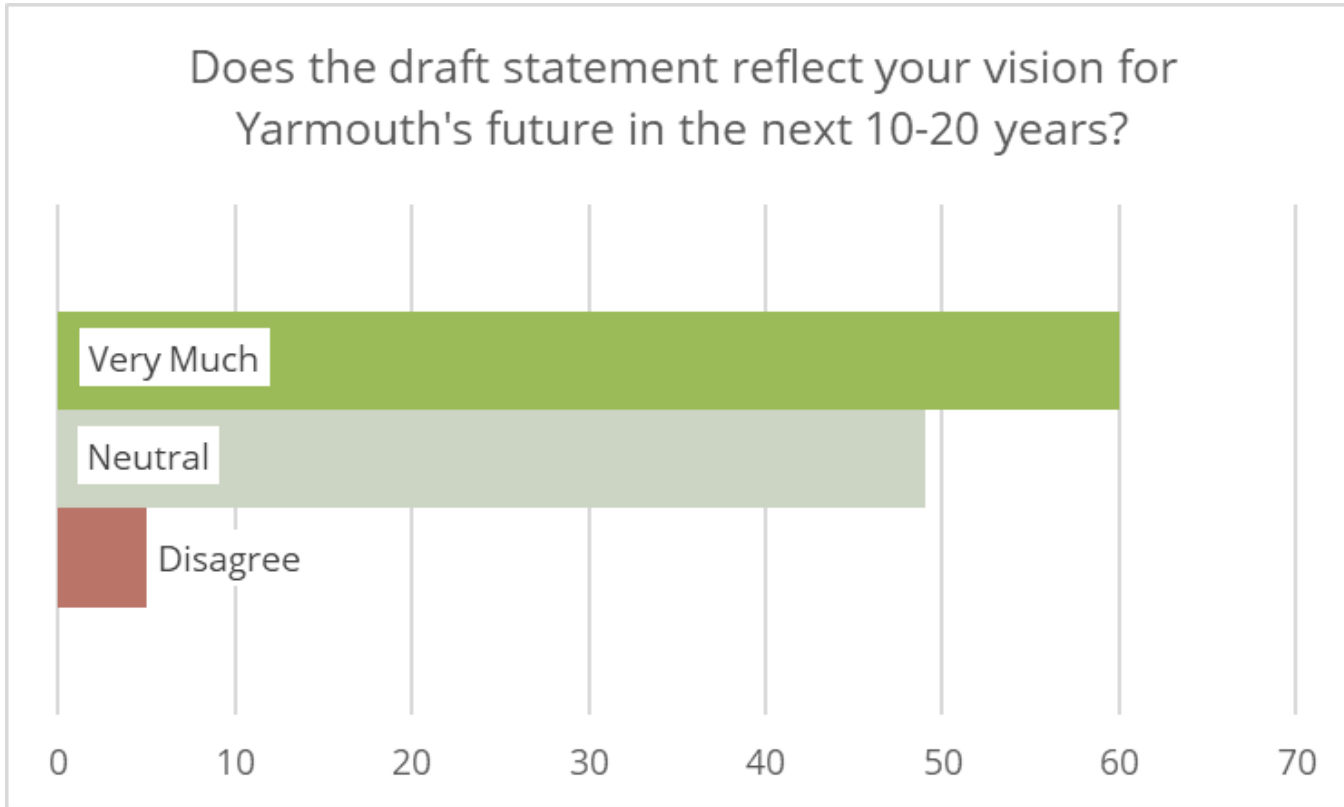
Initial Results: Summer Survey & Community Conversations

October 11, 2023

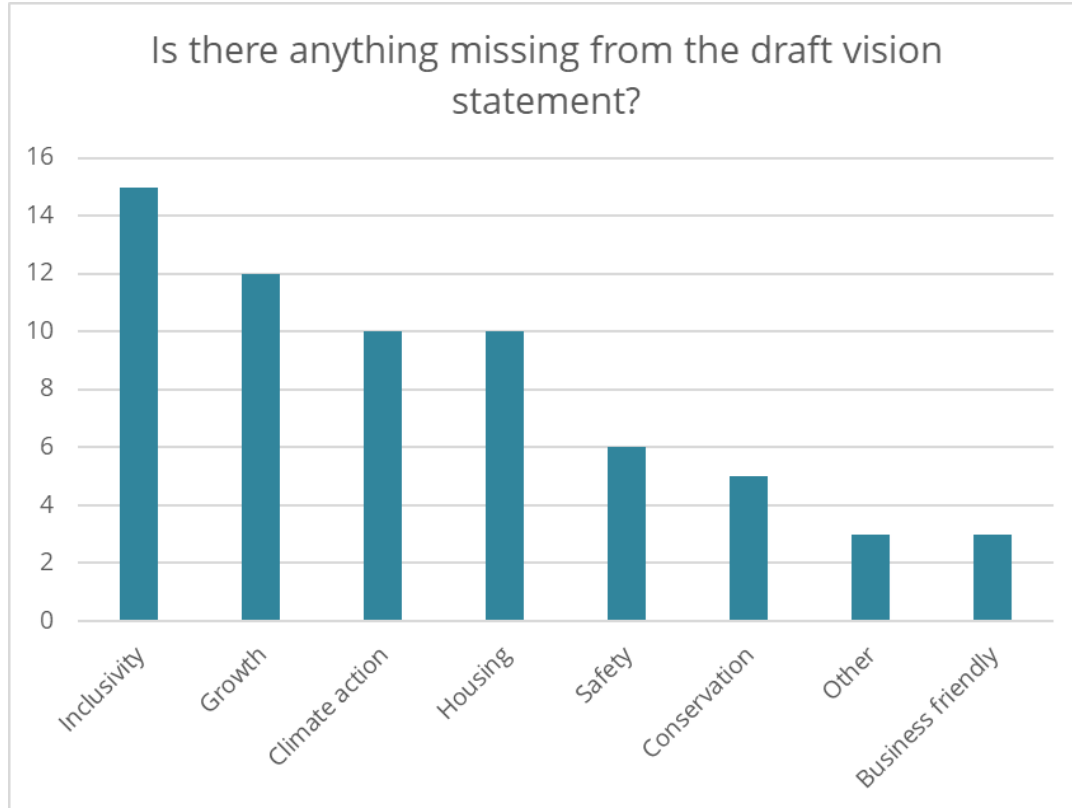
Public Participation

- Summer Survey: 123 respondents
 - Includes online and pop-ups
- Housing Conversation: 53 attendees plus facilitators
- Economy Conversation: 23 attendees plus facilitators
- Natural Resources & Environment Conversation: 29 attendees plus facilitators

Vision Statement – Summer Survey Feedback

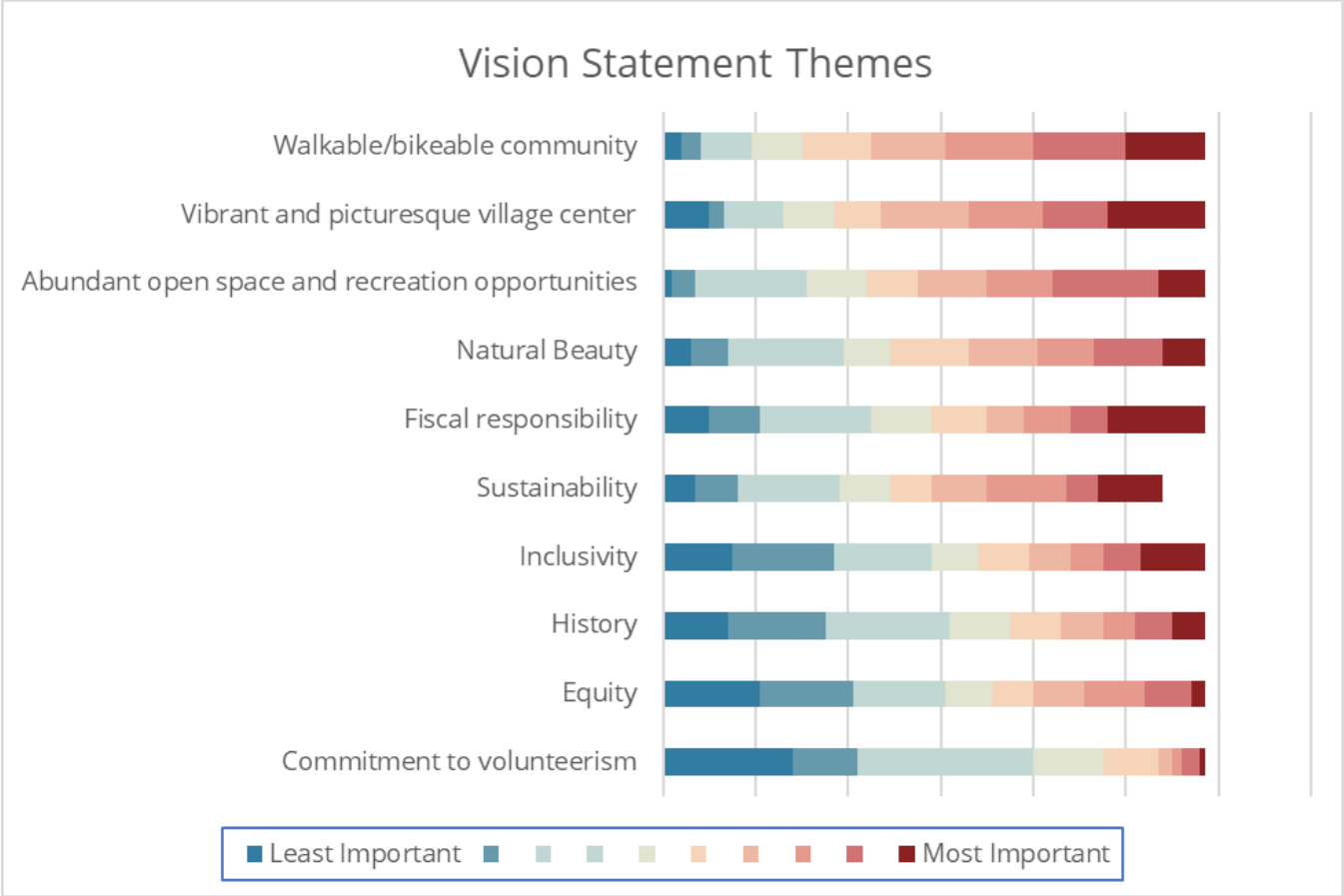


Vision Statement – Summer Survey Feedback



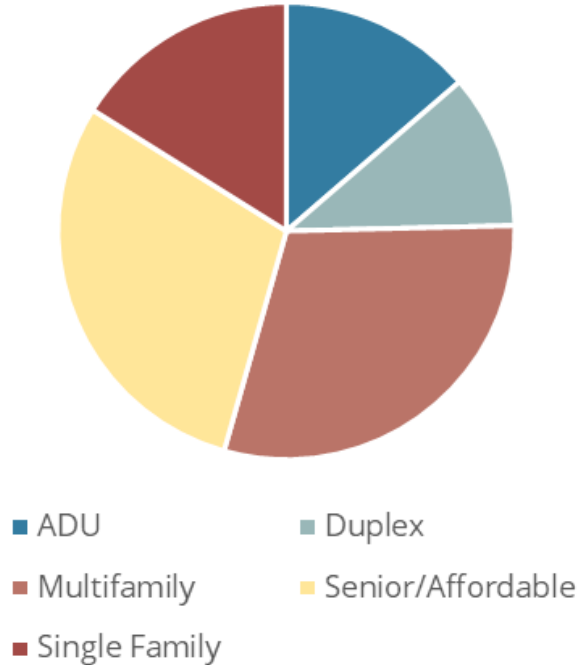
Other includes: common sense, education, families, and unique history

Vision Statement – Summer Survey Feedback

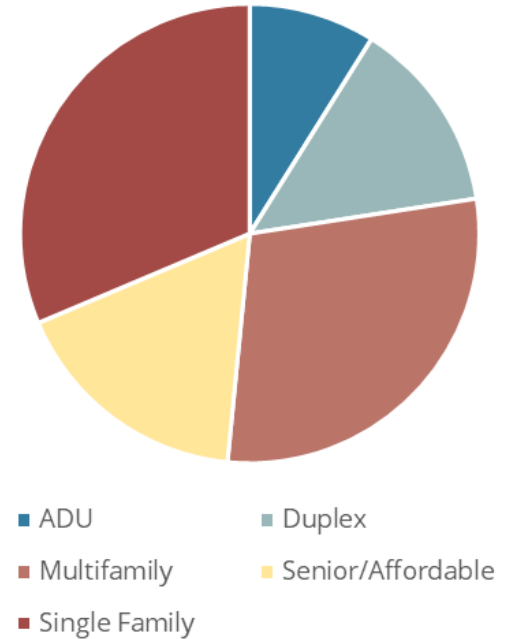


Housing Mix

Housing Mix - Summer Survey



Housing Mix - Community Conversation

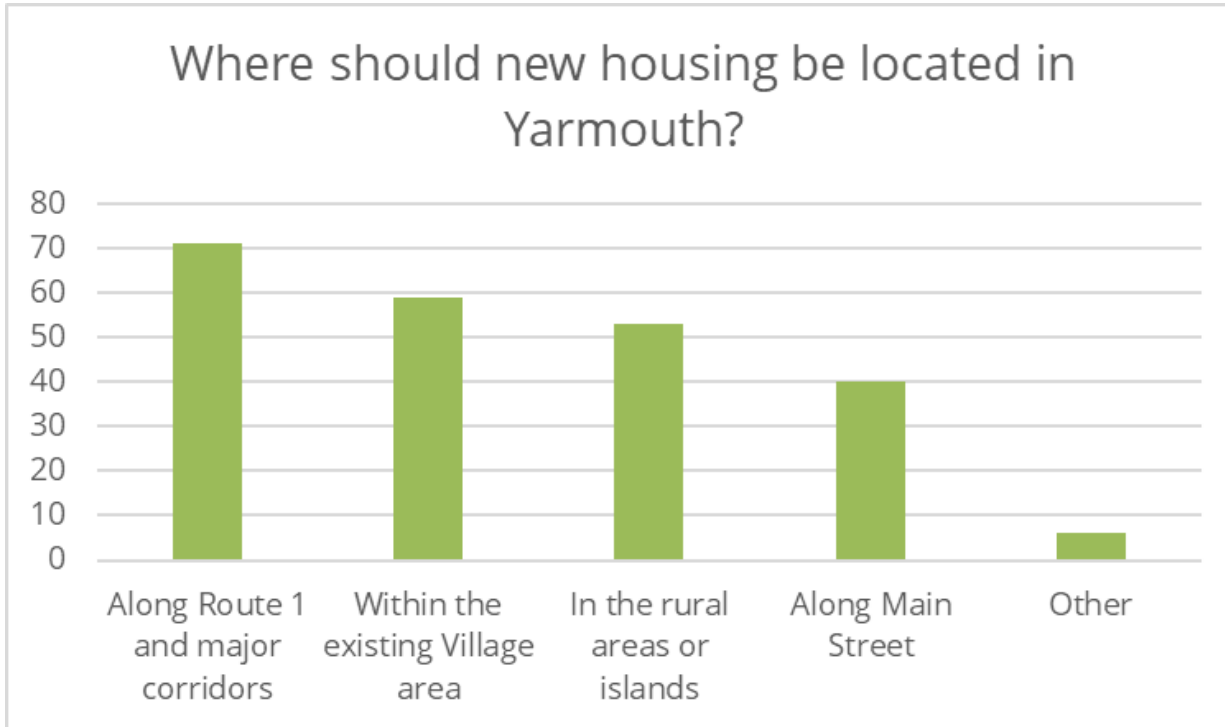


Housing Mix

- CC discussion of different types of single family – cottages, starter homes, small homes
- A few groups proposed a baseline of ~20% affordable housing across all housing types
- ~ 1/3 multifamily in both Summer Survey and CC event

Housing Location

Summer Survey results:



CC Event:

- Focus on areas of existing infrastructure (Route 1, Village)
- Some desire to see new housing throughout town

Housing Connections

- Focus on transportation:
 - Breez bus, future rail connections
 - Bike and pedestrian infrastructure
- Continue to strive to protect valuable open spaces
- Housing opportunities support local businesses
- Does Wyman Station play a role?

Summer survey also had strong support for public transit improvements

Business Types

Summer Survey

1. Restaurants & Cafes
2. Small businesses & shops
3. Working waterfront
4. Business incubator/coworking space
5. Art studios/maker spaces
6. Entertainment activities

CC Event

1. Restaurants (full service, quick service, cafe, diner)
2. Outdoor recreation and agri-tourism
3. Boutique retailers
4. Daycare/childcare
5. Urgent care

Business Locations

- Restaurants, cafes, stores: Route 1 or Village
- Urgent care, vets: Route 1
- Daycare: Village or in neighborhoods
- Recreation: Route 1, village, and in neighborhoods
 - Royal River Corridor
 - Cousins Island
- Some desire for restaurants and retail in neighborhoods including on Cousins Island

Municipal Actions

Strongest support for:

1. Workforce housing
2. Working waterfront initiatives
3. Public transit improvements
4. Support for entrepreneurs
5. Shared workspace/business incubator

Creative Economy

- Existing organizations and programs largely sufficient
- Private organizations/funding over municipal initiatives
- Support for public events/activities
- Marketing!

Working Waterfront

- Not all groups completed - but a few individuals did this activity on their own
- Interest in increased public access, boat ramps, facilities, energy generation
- Moderate support for dedicated commercial moorings, storage, and education
- Divided on recreational boat tours, waterfront dining, and other more “touristy” activities

Natural Resources and Environment

High Priority for Municipal Action:

1. Invest in acquiring more conservation land
2. Royal River restoration for fish passage and water quality
3. Education:
 - All property owners on sustainable land care practices
 - Large property owners on benefits of easements for conservation and recreation
4. Zoning changes for sea level rise and compact development

Natural Resources and Environment

Medium Priority for Municipal Action:

1. Invasive species management
2. Culvert replacements to reduce flood risk
3. Ensure waterfront parks and trails are resilient to sea level rise
4. Coastal bluff stability
5. Marine habitat restoration

Honorable mentions: Access to the waterfront, ADA/UA trails, overall water quality improvements through regional approaches and eliminating point sources

Natural Resources and Environment

Preservation for Ecological Value/Resilience:

- Land adjacent to Royal River and existing open spaces
- Similarly, along the shoreline
- Wildlife corridors between adjacent resources
- Permanent protections for town owned open space
- Steep slopes protections
- Casco Bay for aquaculture uses

Preservation for Recreation:

- SLA railroad corridor
- Public access points to Royal River and Casco Bay
- Expand recreational opportunities in existing open spaces
- ADA/UA improvements
- Powerline corridors
- Connectivity throughout town

Wyman Station (and many other locations) were tagged for both ecological value/resilience and recreation

Next Steps

1. Analyzing the quantitative data out of the survey and recent events
2. Reviewing open ended comments and categorizing
3. Identifying themes out of quantitative and qualitative data
4. Connecting with outcomes of Climate Action Plan Community Action Workshop
5. Reviewing themes to shape approach of Future Land Use Forum

Community Values

COMMUNITY VALUES

We value the **natural environment**, including the numerous parks, open space preserves, rivers, and Casco Bay, and prioritize preserving and protecting these areas for enjoyment by all and as critical ecosystems.

We value a **connected community** where residents have strong social bonds through a shared commitment to civic engagement, and where community members can safely and easily access services, amenities, recreation, jobs, and social opportunities within the Town.

We value the **history and culture** of the people and land that is now the Town of Yarmouth and the physical environment that embodies that history, from the natural land and water features to the built environment.

We value a **welcoming and inclusive environment** where neighbors help one another and a strong sense of community brings all people together, regardless of background.

Draft Vision Statement

The Town of Yarmouth is a small coastal community with a vibrant and picturesque village center. Yarmouth's identity is deeply rooted in the Town's history, beauty, and commitment to community. The walkability of the Town's historic Main Street, abundant open space areas, and active community groups all contribute to community members' sense of connectedness to the Town.

The Town is dedicated to protecting and preserving what makes Yarmouth a great place to live. At the same time, residents recognize the significant local, regional, and global challenges that the Town faces, and are committed to addressing these issues with careful consideration for the Town's history and culture and with creativity to leverage opportunities to enhance the Town's defining characteristics— beauty, history, inclusivity, abundant open spaces and recreation opportunities, and commitment to volunteerism – to build an even stronger community.

To meet the needs of residents and community members, the Town will plan and make decisions through a lens of equity, sustainability, and fiscal responsibility to ensure that the community's values and critical assets are sustained for future generations.