

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

**September 26, 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 August 22 (5 minutes)**
- III. Discussion on Feedback Received To Date (60 minutes)**
  - a. Themes Emerging from Housing and Economy Events**
  - b. How do the themes relate to the Vision Statement?**
  - c. How do the themes feed into the Future Land Use Forum?**
  - d. How do these themes translate into Goals?**
- IV. CPSC Meeting Schedule (15 minutes)**
  - a. Upcoming Dates: October 24, November 28, and December 26**
  - b. Reschedule December date?**
  - c. Social Gathering?**
- V. Adjournment**



To: Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee  
From: Erin Zwirko, Director of Planning & Development  
Re: Background for September 26, 2023, Steering Committee Meeting  
Date: September 20, 2023

Please see the following notes to help you review and be prepared for the September 26, 2023, Steering Committee meeting.

### **Public Comment**

We'll continue to include public comment at the top of the meeting, so that attendees do not have to wait to the very end to make comments.

### **Review Meeting Summary from August 2023**

Attached is the August 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**

We have held two Community Conversations so far: [Housing on September 11](#) and Economy on September 18. Both were well attended by members of the community.

The Steering Committee needs to start thinking about how the themes that are emerging from those events relate to the Vision Statement, the Future Land Use Forum, and crucially how the themes translate into goals. Below are my takeaways from the recent events to prompt the discussion, and I'll ask Committee members who attended to share their thoughts as well.

### Housing Community Conversation

- Housing Mix:
  - Don't abandon single-family homes entirely; be innovative in the types of single-family homes that could be attainable by younger generations that reflect changing lifestyles and needs.
  - Need to do better in offering different options, including duplexes, multifamily of all sizes, mixed use.
  - Need to be offering affordable housing options across the income spectrum, but especially for households that earn a lower income and for seniors.

**ERIN ZWIRKO, AICP, LEED AP | DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT**  
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- Where Should it go?
  - Strong focus on where infrastructure already exists (Route 1 corridor, Village, Medium Density Residential District) with a focus on Transit Oriented Development
  - Others have suggested that housing options need to be offered throughout Town.
- How to get it done?
  - Focus on energy efficient locations and construction.
  - Smaller lot sizes.
  - Rental options.
- What are the implications?
  - Yarmouth's strong active transportation interest must be supported for those on bikes and walking, as well as capitalizing on the potential regional trail connections, by ensuring that neighborhoods are connected.
  - Yarmouth must advocate for better transportation options to reduce vehicle trips, including the Breez, access to the airport, and potential for light rail.
  - Can't forget about continuing to support Main Street businesses and Yarmouth's small business community.
  - Does the future of Wyman Station play a role?
  - Continue to strive to protect valuable open spaces.

#### Economy Community Conversation

- Missing Businesses (less about where)
  - Expand Yarmouth's interesting small business community with specialty food businesses and boutique retailers.
  - Expand restaurant options, including full service, destination, and quick service restaurants.
  - Agri-tourism and recreation opportunities.
  - Businesses focused on people like day cares, elderly services, fitness centers, urgent care (for pets too!)
  - Larger businesses, such as small department stores.
  - Energy generation
- Where Municipal Support should be focused?
  - High support for:
    - Public transit to popular commute locations
    - More apartments and multiunit housing to support workers
  - Mid support for:
    - Tax incentives to attract [all] businesses
    - Expand preschool/childcare programs
    - Increase support for working waterfront initiatives
    - Increase funding for public art, festivals, and events
    - Support for entrepreneurs
    - Parking availability
  - Less support for:
    - Collaborate on a new shared work space or business incubator

- Working Waterfront Support
  - Significantly mixed on what is needed and missing. Perhaps because more learning is needed on this topic, but repeated items included storage, dining, access and moorings for the public and commercial users, energy generation, and public amenities/facilities.
- Creative Economy Support
  - Less mixed on what is needed and missing than above likely because there is acknowledgement that there are organizations in town that offer many of the items identified.
  - Repeated items included marketing, popups, and destination events.

### Vision Statement, Future Land Use Forum, and Goals

I've included the draft Vision Statement from the Imagine Yarmouth initiative last year in the packet for your use. It's been noted that the draft statement doesn't actually include any references to the economy or to housing. Does the Committee think, based on the feedback received, that the draft statement be revised.

Further, it does seem like there are high level themes emerging that can help shape the Future Land Use Forum based on my notes above. The October Committee meeting will focus on the planning for the Future Land Use Forum, but we are asking for the Committee to provide input on whether there is some agreement on emerging themes.

Finally, I can start to see goals being developed on the Housing themes as well as potential ways to expand the Yarmouth economy, but the goals around the working waterfront and the creative economy seem less clear. We will need feedback from the Committee.

### **CPSC Meeting Schedule**

As we move into the holiday season, the Steering Committee needs to review their meeting schedule and reschedule at least the December meeting. The scheduled upcoming meeting dates are October 24, November 28, and December 26.

Potential dates for the December meeting include: 12/18, 12/19, 12/20 or 12/21. Please come with your holiday schedule so we can reschedule this date as soon as possible.

We would also be interested in scheduling a social gathering earlier in December. I might suggest that we select a location (perhaps Maine Beer Company or Goodfire, or for a place in Yarmouth, we could try for the Cousins Island Community House again) and a date (maybe a Friday or a Sunday afternoon). During this busy time of the year, a low key social gathering may fit the goal without any pressure.

### **Other Notes**

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

- Town Scavenger Hunt will be extended through November 3, with any announcement of the winner at the Future Land Use Forum
- September 23: Natural Resources Tour at Riverfront Woods with Parks and Lands Committee, YCARE, Royal River Conservation Trust, and Rotary
- 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.

I am attaching correspondence received as outlined below.

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 August 22, 2023 meeting summary
2. Draft Vision Statement from Imagine Yarmouth Initiative
3. Correspondence Received
  - a. Memo from Andrew Dolloff, Yarmouth Schools Superintendent, August 29, 2023

Yarmouth Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee (CPSC)

June 27, 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	Y
Miriam Markowitz	Y
Tim McGonagle	Y
Tred McIntire	Y
Neena Panosso	N
Todd Rich	Y
Bill Richards, Co-Chair	Y
Lynne Seeley	Y
Sophie Wentzell	N
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	Y

**I. Public Comment**

Josh Royte, member of the Parks & Lands Committee, attended and encouraged bolstering the comp plan with the 2019 Open Space Plan's grid of potential land parcels for preservation and data from public participation, and serve as a resource for the fall community conversations too.

**II. Review Meeting Summary from June 27**

The Committee unanimously approved the meeting summary from June 27, 2023.

**III. Fall Engagement**

a. **Review Schedule for Events**

September 11: Community Conversation with Housing Focus (*with Levine Planning Strategies*)

September 18: Community Conversation with Economy Focus (*with Camoin Assoc.*)

October 2: Community Conversation with Open Space and Natural Resources Focus (*with FB Environmental*)

October 10: Climate Action Plan Workshop on Goals, Strategies, and Actions

November 13: Future Land Use Workshop

After hearing feedback on the initial location, Patriot Insurance's multi-purpose room was chosen for the events for the flexible set up, ample parking and consistency it provided for participation. Colleague, Shawn Quirk, has offered to record the session for asynchronous participation and for YMTV.

b. **Discussion on Community Conversations Format**

Erin and the NSP team gave an overview of the shape of the events so far and reiterated that the CPSC's role is shifting to synthesizing, analyzing, and making connections. The goal is for all the Community Conversations to be interactive and conversational, and to provide feedback into the Future Land Use Workshop. They are not meant to be chapter-focused or siloed, rather, they should be the nexus of these topics; the discussion prompts should illuminate the nexus of housing typologies, affordability, economics, equity, zoning, etc. Each session will be joined by the respective team of experts (see above); they will briefly present information and then facilitated conversations will be held at each table. The intention is to have the recordings on the website immediately afterwards for viewing and interactive online participation, as they are envisioned as primarily in-person events.

The committee discussed potential roles at the events, such as facilitators, scribes, greeters, check-in table, with staff expected to float and assist. Jamie offered an idea of table scribes posting trending comments to prompt online discussion boards; NSP liked the idea and will see if feasible. Although participants will not have to register, those at the check-in table could try to make tables the same size and diverse, and the introductions at the beginning will go over format. Tim suggested doing targeted outreach to specific community-based organizations, which Erin

affirmed will be part of targeted outreach conducted by the Planning Department.

Erin indicated that she would send a follow up email to the CPSC with their action items, including recommendations for discussion prompts and ideas for table activities. She also noted that she will need volunteers from the CPSC for each of the events, including discussion guides, scribes, and greeters. She offered to host a meeting with any volunteers interested in being a discussion guide so they feel comfortable and equipped to handle leading a discussion. .

#### **IV. Discussion on Feedback Received to Date**

##### **a. Inventory Chapter Feedback**

Several public comments and town/resident advisory comments have been received and distributed to NSP and the CPSC co-chairs. They were included in the agenda packet.

##### **b. Online (Survey and Mapping Exercise) Feedback**

NSP needs to review the materials at the end of August when the survey closes.

##### **c. Pop Up Feedback**

Julie shared that although housing was not a dominant theme over the summer, possibly due to the weather events seen locally and globally, climate change impacts and adaptations (such as walkability and bikeability) were. Those that mentioned housing opportunities and aging in place were seniors, those with children aging out of schools.

##### **d. Subcommittee Reviews**

Nearly every subcommittee sent back comments on the inventory chapters. The CPSC discussed the overall need to start to develop goals and policies, which NSP clarified would go into development after the Community Conversations and likely take shape at the Future Land Use Workshop. The subcommittees for Transportation, Economy, Housing, and Land Use/Forestry/Agriculture also shared some ideas for the fall Community Conversations, including incorporating visual aids for basic background information, and the need to balance resources at each table without overwhelming participants with information. Erin also recommended turning Camoin's analysis into easily digestible infographic for the September 18<sup>th</sup> discussion on economics and fiscal sustainability. Staff and NSP will develop a resource packet and large format boards.

#### **IV. Committee Supported Outreach**

##### **a. Social Media Promotion**

Erin asked everyone using social media to please help spread the word and follow the Town's revitalized social media accounts. The Town website's pop-up window has also be co-opted for the next month or so to promote the Comp Plan and CAP with a shared landing page. The shared landing page can be updated as each event happens to direct viewers to follow up materials.

##### **b. Flyering**

Volunteers were asked to sign up to put up the fall flyers and making connections in their neighborhoods. The Engagement Subcommittee will be mapping by neighborhood to distribute flyers.

Additional strategies that will be explored include "town swag" giveaways at the events, using the Town EMS electronic message boards on North Road, asking YCS to put on their A-frame message boards, asking the school superintendent to include the Comp Plan on the school newsletter/website/social media.

#### **VI. Adjournment**

## 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.



# YARMOUTH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

*"Empowering all students"*

To: Nat Tupper, Yarmouth Town Manager  
Erin Zwirko, Yarmouth Director of Planning & Development  
From: Andrew Dolloff, Yarmouth Schools Superintendent  
RE: School capacities and projected enrollments  
Date: August 29, 2023

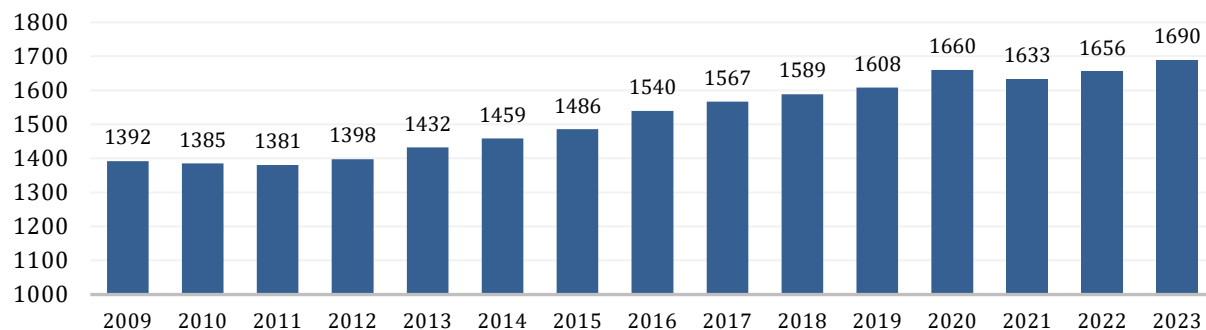
With the completion of the renovation and expansion projects at all four Yarmouth School Department (YSD) schools, I am providing you with this update on projected school enrollment and school building capacities, which may serve some useful purpose as the Town Council and Planning Board consider potential impacts of changes in State Law (i.e. L.D. 2003) and proposed local ordinances.

## Historical data

As I have shared each year since joining the YSD team, enrollment growth in the district continues its steady pace. Although growth slowed noticeably during the COVID-19 pandemic, we are beginning to see an uptick in enrollment that once again puts us on pace to approach the projected enrollments provided in two separate studies conducted just prior to the 2018 referendum.

As shown below, enrollment in the Yarmouth Schools has increased by more than 22% since 2011, with a student population in 2023 of nearly 1,700 students.

**Exhibit 1: Yarmouth Schools Enrollment, 2009-2023**



This number includes 50 pre-K students who would not have been included in the 2011 student count, along with approximately two dozen Chebeague Island students for whom tuition is paid in grades 6-12. Discounting those students, YSD has experienced 17% growth in the past 12 years.

## Enrollment projections

During the 2016-17 school year, YSD commissioned two enrollment studies to inform the facilities planning process. It is important to remember that these studies were conducted prior to the global pandemic, which had a noticeable impact on families moving into Yarmouth, as well as increasing the number of families selecting to homeschool or send their children to private schools. Those studies projected YSD enrollment in 2022-2023 (the most recently completed school year) as follows:

- Wandell study: 1,760 students
- NESDEC study: 1,873 students
- Actual '23 enrollment: 1,690 students



During the 2022-2023 school year, NESDEC used updated data to project YSD student counts for the next ten years. NESDEC uses a cohort-survival method, considering data such as resident births, HUD-reported building permits, migration rates, and retention rates. Using updated data, NESDEC projects enrollment levels lower than those originally forecast in 2016, but noticeably higher than current enrollment, reaching a high of 1,825 students in 2032-33. This does not take into account the potential impacts of LD 2003 or proposed changes to local ordinances.

### **YSD capacity**

As part of the facilities planning for the 2018 referendum, Harriman Associates provided a “Capacity Utilization” study, identifying the target student population for each school based on the square footage of various types in each building (classrooms, cafeteria, library, etc.), Maine Department of Education standards, and YSD class size policies.

Upon completion of the construction projects at each school, the target enrollments were projected as follows:

	<u>Target</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Variance</u>
William H. Rowe School (PreK-Grade 1)	270	282	(12)*
Yarmouth Elementary School (Grades 2-5)	588	474	114
Frank H. Harrison Middle School (Grades 6-8)	531	383	148
<u>Yarmouth High School (Grades 9-12)</u>	<u>822</u>	<u>551</u>	<u>271</u>
TOTALS	2,211	1,690	521

\*It should be noted that Pre-K students currently attend school on a half-day schedule, so while 56 students attended in 2022-23, it could be argued that a maximum of 32 are present at any point (16 students per classroom is the state-allowed maximum). Factoring in the Pre-K half-day attendance lowers the actual daytime enrollment at Rowe School to 258.

Using these figures, it would appear there is room for growth in YSD enrollment. The facilities were clearly designed to provide for continued growth and avoid the need for additional construction bonds in the next two decades. Still – it is not definitive that the schools have the capacities indicated above, as it is unlikely we would make use of every square foot to the level required to meet these numbers as the impact on culture, climate, and programming would be significant. To maintain the current level of programming with minimal adjustments to class sizes, a more realistic view of excess capacity is shown below:

	<u>Target</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Variance</u>
William H. Rowe School (preK-grade 1)	292	258	34
Yarmouth Elementary School (grades 2-5)	566	474	92
Frank H. Harrison Middle School (grades 6-8)	500	383	117
<u>Yarmouth High School (grades 9-12)</u>	<u>700</u>	<u>551</u>	<u>149</u>
TOTALS	2,058	1,690	368

With projected growth to 1,825 students in the next ten years, this leaves room for an additional 233 students who may arrive in Yarmouth as a result of LD 2003 or local changes. As long as these new students arrive at a fairly consistent rate for each grade level, the facilities should be sufficient without major additions or renovations. The challenge would be more significant if large numbers of students arrive in one particular school or grade level – something that is unlikely, but also unpredictable.

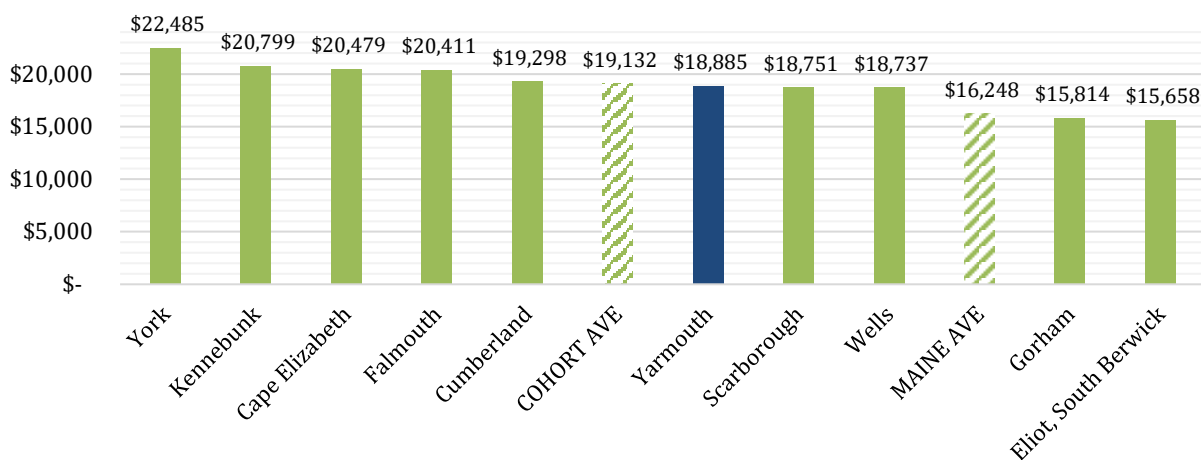
### **Financial considerations**

Schools are personnel-driven organizations, with salaries and benefits comprising 78-82% of the annual operating budget. While our facilities may have the capacity to withstand continued growth, it is clear that

YSD staffing levels will need to increase proportionally with enrollment, which will have a measurable impact on the annual budget (approximately 80% of which is paid for through local taxes).

YSD has been identified by the Maine Educational Policy Research Institute (MEPRI) as a “more efficient” school district. Districts attain this identification only when their students perform at the highest level academically and the schools operate at a lower cost than expected. YSD is among a handful of districts to have schools earn this status, with per-pupil expenditures in FY22 of \$18,885 – slightly below the average of other “more efficient” districts in southern Maine.

**Exhibit 2: FY22 Total Per Pupil Expenditures**  
(All expenditures, per Maine Department of Education)



One might argue that the addition of 368 students could result in an increase in the YSD annual budget of \$6,949,680 (368 students x \$18,885, in 2022 dollars). Keeping in mind that the approved FY24 budget is \$36,590,456, an increase of this amount represents a 19% jump in expenditures. In reality, the math is not quite that simple, as each new enrollee does not necessarily result in an increase of \$18,885. We might add 28 students to the district - with 2 at each grade level - and experience negligible financial impacts, as the students could easily be absorbed into existing classrooms. On the other hand, 28 students added to the district but split only among four grade levels may result in the need for additional teachers and support staff – a noticeable impact on the budget.

Another financial consideration that cannot be predicted is the need for special services. Students for whom these services are required by law typically comprise approximately 15% of the student population, but it is impossible to anticipate the impact of unknown students on school capacity and budgeting. One placement in a special purpose school can cost \$100,000 per year, while residential placements can exceed \$200,000 annually. While such placements are rare, the cost of other, in-house services (speech therapy, social work services, physical therapy, etc.) are also impactful and difficult to predict. In the end, it is probably safe to say that for every 100 students added to the school district, the annual budget will increase by \$1.5 million to \$2.0 million.

### Summary

The Yarmouth School Department’s facilities are well-positioned to absorb projected enrollment growth and appear to be in good shape to handle additional growth that may result from LD 2003 or other changes in Maine or Yarmouth laws/policies/ordinances. That being said, a larger impact will be felt in the annual operating budget, which would likely increase by \$1.5 million to \$2.0 million (in 2023 dollars) for every 100 students added.