

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**