

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

February 13, 2024

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 January 23 (5 minutes)
- III. Overview and Discussion of Revised draft Comprehensive Plan (80 minutes)
- IV. Updated Timeline to Adoption (30 minutes)
- V. Adjournment



YARMOUTH MAINE

To: Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee
From: Erin Zwirko, Director of Planning & Development
Re: Background for February 13, 2024, Steering Committee Meeting
Date: February 6, 2024

Please see the following notes to help you review and be prepared for the February 13, 2024, Steering Committee meeting.

Review Meeting Summary from January 2024

Attached is the January meeting summary for the Committee to review and approve. Please let me know if you have any revisions to the meeting summary.

Overview and Discussion of Revised Comprehensive Plan

Please see the following links:

Draft 2/6/24 Comp Plan: <https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:VA6C2:356291eb-6b99-4395-9c47-00ffa973fac7>

Implementation Matrix: <https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:VA6C2:ed0afdfb-4b28-42d8-bec1-d43d35e89763>

Town staff and North Star Planning received constructive feedback at the Steering Committee's January meeting. We took in that feedback, and the revised draft is the outcome of synthesizing that feedback to form a better document.

The key changes include:

1. A land acknowledgement statement (the same that is featured in the climate action plan and vetted through local community members and Wabanaki Reach).
2. A single page "Plan Summary" which will ultimately be a graphically designed page that showcases the mission statement, the revised priority goals, and top action items.
3. A "Yarmouth Today" context statement that describes a changing community, past successes and failures, and how that shaped this plan.
4. A description of "Yarmouth's Priority Goals" with clearer description of the interconnectedness and trades offs between those goals, followed by each priority goal (revised since the previous version) showcased on a two-page spread in sets the context and the approach, and identifies priority action items.
5. A "Future Land Use Plan" which greater context for each section that is tied back to the discussion of interconnectedness and trades offs as well as showing the shades of each area.
6. Greater clarity in the implementation matrix, renamed Goals, Strategies, and Actions, including numbering all of the action items.

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We believe that this updated version is a more action-forward document that addresses comments from the Steering Committee without being so specific that it dictates the actions that the implementation committee needs to take.

We also understand that it is tricky to see what the designed plan will look like from the Google Document that we've been editing. Before the 2/13 meeting, example pages of the "Plan Summary" and the "Priority Goals" will be presented for you to review.

Please let me know if you would like a printed copy.

Timeline to Adoption

Following consultation with the Town Manager and the Assistant Town Manager, a less aggressive schedule for adoption has been developed giving ample time for both the Town Council and Planning Board to hold hearings, including a joint public hearing of the Town Council and the Steering Committee in late April, accommodate a 45-day public comment period, and allow detailed review by boards and committees, as well as providing enough time for the Steering Committee and staff to consider revisions to the document prior to adoption by the Town Council.

Please see the attached memo, which has been shared with the Town Council and Planning Board.

In order for us to stay on this schedule, at the February 27th meeting, we are asking the Steering Committee to come to consensus that the complete draft of the plan can be submitted to the Town Council and the state, understanding that we can continue to tweak in response to public comment opportunities over the next two months as well as in response to the state's consistency review. The goal is to present a final document that reconciles all of that information to the Town Council in June for adoption.

Finally, in order to complete design of the plan, we ask that any edits from the Steering Committee be provided by 2/27 for inclusion in the draft document to be presented to the community.

Attachments:

1. Draft January 23, 2024 meeting summary
2. Revised Comprehensive Plan Six Month Timeline to Adoption Memo, dated February 6, 2024

Yarmouth Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee (CPSC)
 January 23, 2024
 7:00 PM
 Meeting Summary

Name	Attendance
John Auble	Y
Daniel Backman	Y
Crispin Bokota Bolese	N
Emily Bryson	Y
Judy Colby-George	Y
Hildy Ginsberg, Co-Chair	Y
Kevin Hartnett	N
Miriam Markowitz	Y
Tim McGonagle	N
Tred McIntire	Y
Neena Panosso	N
Todd Rich	N
Bill Richards, Co-Chair	Y
Lynne Seeley	Y
Sophie Wentzell	N
Jamie Whittmore	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 December 19

The Committee unanimously approved the meeting summary from December 19, 2023.

III. Overview and Discussion of Draft Future Land Use Plan and Town Priorities for Goals, Policies and Strategies

A. Feedback on Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Ben gave an overview of the first draft, highlighting the state requirements and local components, and emphasized that formatting and graphics are to come. The intention of the discussion was to confirm if it captures the discussions of the workshops, has clear direction on actions, conveys the Future Land Use Plan focus areas, and what adjustments to make if not.

For the Interconnected Goals and Policies, which is synonymous with “policies and strategies,” Ben suggested that the CPSC needs to pick one and be consistent. The current draft is framed around the graphic (wheel and spokes) proposed in previous

meetings organized by the interconnected goals and policies discussed at the December meeting. The summary page for each broad statement shows the local actions (which are also in the matrix with state required actions) and will be updated with responsible parties and timeframe. Erin also pointed out the column for Climate Action Plan to track shared goals. The larger matrix is broken out by inventory chapter, as required by the state.

Ben provided an overview of the Future Land Use section of the plan, noting that it included lessons learned from the 2010 plan implementation. Ben the inclusion of draft graphics that illustrate the concept of “preserve, enhance, transform”: a “transect” to show ranges of growth intensity across the different environments, and the “heat map” that illustrates perceptions of the village versus the suburban, predominantly residential neighborhood and Low Growth/Rural Areas where the emphasis is on preservation. Another key difference is that the Future Land Use Map draws lines at the parcels due to LD 2003’s emphasis on a designated growth area.

The group predominantly discussed the organization of the goals, policies and strategies, and the four “interconnected policies.”

There was general support for reorganizing the layout to help “sell” the priorities better. Members who were on the previous Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee (CPIC) shared their perspectives on how the formatting of the 2010 plan narrative and matrix impacted implementation, and what elements should be reused now or improved upon.

The group discussed adding “Land Use” at the center of the wheel, since that is the primary purpose of a comprehensive plan, and making revisions to the matrix including freezing the top row “title” on each page, distinguishing state requirements from local actions, having columns for “primary and supporting” to show responsible entities and partnerships, organizing actions by topics (e.g. Housing, Economy), numbering them (e.g. “1a”), adding a column to show what the action also relates to (e.g. “See also 1b and 2c), and linking them within the narrative and the spreadsheet.

The group discussed the merits of making the actions more direct (to give credibility) or using softer language (to give flexibility to future context). Erin clarified that the actions shouldn’t presuppose the outcomes, and that the next implementation committee will use the spreadsheet for tracking and to establish performance measures to guide progress.

The group came to consensus around bringing directives to the front of the document, like an executive summary, with an upfront and decisive one-page:

- Who is Yarmouth
- What are the biggest problems
- What is the vision for the future to fix them (using the “*preserve, enhance, transform*” framework)
- And what are the 5 most important things to achieve

The group also noted that there needs to be a clearer explanation of how the goals are interconnected and transparency about where they are in conflict. It should reflect the challenge of balancing policies and action, as explored in the Community Conversations.

There were two suggestions to modify the current organization: to strengthen the narratives, note this tensions in each section, and to omit the abbreviated table; or to convey this in the beginning and then to use iconography to convey overlap. A third was to scratch the current organization, and to return to conventional headings, (such as Housing, Economy, and the Natural Environment), that they're too vague (specifically #2 and #4) and are more indicative of interconnected *values* rather than the real priorities.

It was also suggested to add a Land Acknowledgement Statement, even though the Town has not adopted one townwide yet.

IV. Timeline to Adoption

Erin reviewed the proposed timeline and Ben reiterated that in the next two weeks North Star will focus on revising the draft based on the feedback received. The next step is for the CPSC to review the specific actions.

After hearing concerns about the expediency of the timeline, Erin clarified that the goal is for the public review process to kick off March 15th and that the intention is to submit it to the state for review so that their comments can be included with the public revisions prior to the anticipated Town adoption in May or June.

The group determined that a second meeting would be held for February 13th and that the revised draft would be distributed beforehand so the CPSC could focus on the content of the matrix.

V. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.



YARMOUTH MAINE

To: Yarmouth Town Council, Town Manager, and Assistant Town Manager
From: Erin Zwirko, Director of Planning & Development
CC: Planning Board, Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, and North Star Planning
Re: UPDATED Comprehensive Plan Timeline to Adoption
Date: February 6, 2024

In January, I previously provided a memorandum outlining the anticipated schedule for the next six months and through the adoption of a new Comprehensive Plan for Yarmouth. Since that memo, the milestones have become clearer and the original timeline with an adoption in May was too compressed. Spring 2024 will be a busy time for the Council and the community, and it is important to allow everyone the opportunity to digest and react to a new Comprehensive Plan that will be a foundational document for the next decade.

As such, following consultation with the Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager, the following timeline emerged as the timeline that will give ample opportunity for public presentations and public comment while still being efficient with the required state review.

February 27, 2024:

- Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee authorizes submission of the draft Comprehensive Plan to Planning Board and Town Council

March 2024:

- Full draft Comprehensive Plan released no later than March 15, 2024
 - Begins 45-day public comment period.
 - Public comment period is announced with a Town-wide mailing, local news postings, Yarmouth Municipal TV announcements, and social media and newsletter notices, among other outreach methods.
 - Circulate to Town Advisory Boards and Committees for review and feedback.
- Request and presentation made to Town Council to authorize state submission (please see note about state submission)
 - Workshop Item on 3/7, Action Item on 3/21
 - Both meetings offer the opportunity for public comment.
- Presentation made to Planning Board on 3/27
 - The Planning Board meeting offers the opportunity for public comment.

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April 2024:

- Public Hearing during the Town Council's 4/18 meeting on the draft plan.
 - To be scheduled with the CPSC present to provide context and/or clarity.
 - At least 30 days after the start of the public comment period, but before the end of the public comment period, offers opportunity for public comment.
- Request and presentation made to Planning Board for a recommendation to the Town Council on 4/10
 - The Planning Board meeting offers the opportunity for public comment.
- Public comment period closes on 4/30

May 2024:

- Revisions made to draft Comprehensive Plan in response to public comments received and state review.
- Final Comprehensive Plan is released.

June 2024:

- Request and presentation for adoption of the Comprehensive Plan by the Town Council.
 - Workshop Item on 6/6, Action Item on 6/20.
 - Both meetings offer the opportunity for public comment.

As a reminder, the state must make a finding of consistency with the Maine Growth Management Act. It is our intention to request that the Town Council authorize submission to the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry's Municipal Planning Assistance Program in March when we have a completed draft of the comprehensive plan. This is an administrative task and does not mean that the Town Council is endorsing the document. By requesting that this submission is made when we have a completed draft, we can incorporate any revisions required by the state into the final document at the time that we request Town Council adoption of the document.

Within the week, I will be happy to share an updated draft of the comprehensive plan and the implementation matrix.

I am happy to answer any questions that the Town Council members have, or present at any upcoming meeting.