

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

April 23, 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 February 27 (5 minutes)**
- III. Discussion and Review of Public Comment To Date (60 minutes)**
- IV. Upcoming Meetings (30 minutes)**
 - a. Preparation for Joint Public Hearing with Town Council**
 - b. Add a second CPSC meeting in May?**
- V. Adjournment**



To: Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee
From: Erin Zwirko, Director of Planning & Development
Re: Background for April 23, 2024, Steering Committee Meeting
Date: April 16, 2024

Please see the following notes to help you review and be prepared for the April 23, 2024, Steering Committee meeting.

Review Meeting Summary from February 27, 2024

Attached is the February 27 meeting summary for the Committee to review and approve. Please let me know if you have any revisions to the meeting summary.

Discussion and Review of Public Comment to Date

Included in the meeting package is public comment that I've received to date. I previously emailed the Committee comment letters received by the end of March. Also included are the comments that were received via the project website.

I've met with a number of Town Boards and Committees over the past month or so, and all are working toward putting together comments for the Steering Committee.

For discussion at the meeting, we'll review some of the big picture items noted in the comment letters. Thoughts and feedback from the Steering Committee are appreciated to give direction to staff and North Star Planning. The major items I want to flag for the Steering Committee include:

1. The limits of the Growth Area in the area of the Cousins River (i.e. the back end of the Garmin/DeLorme properties) as noted in some individual comments and from the RRTC. This area represents an expansion of the Growth Area from the 2010 Plan.
2. (Re)Establishment of a Conservation Commission. Yarmouth previously had a conservation commission without regulatory authority that was dissolved.
3. Commitment to implementation through the development of priorities and metrics.
4. Ways to reduce the tax burden on community members.
5. Continued discussion on balancing growth and development with open space and natural resource protections.

In addition to these items, Steering Committee members can also share items that may be important for them as well after reviewing the comments to date.

Erin Zwirko, AICP, LEED AP | Director of Planning & Development
207-846-2401 | ezwirko@yarmouth.me.us | yarmouth.me.us
200 Main Street, Yarmouth, ME 04096

Upcoming Meetings Dates

Please take note of the following important dates:

- April 23 CPSC meeting
- April 25 Join Hearing with Town Council
- April 30 comment period closes
- May 28 CPSC meeting
- June 6 Town Council workshop
- June 20 Town Council action to potentially adopt

The CPSC will discuss the following:

1. A detailed presentation was given to the Planning Board at their March 27th meeting. The slides are attached or you can watch the [recording of the meeting](#). Any feedback from the CPSC on streamlining the presentation is welcome to make efficient use of time at the Council's meeting.
2. The CPSC will consider adding a second meeting earlier in May to review the complete batch of public comment.

Members of the Steering Committee are encouraged to attend the April 25 and June meetings with the Town Council.

Attachments:

1. Draft February 27, 2024 meeting summary
2. Slide Deck on Overview of Comprehensive Plan
3. Public Comment Received:
 - a. Comments received via the project website through April 12, 2024
 - b. Ed Libby Comments February 26, 2024
 - c. Christine Force Comments March 20, 2024
 - d. Alan Stearns (Royal River Conservation Trust) Comments March 21, 2024
 - e. Ann Mohnkern Comments April 15, 2024

Yarmouth Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee (CPSC)
February 27, 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	N
Tim McGonagle	N
Tred McIntire	Y
Neena Panosso	N
Todd Rich	N
Bill Richards, Co-Chair	Y
Lynne Seeley	Y
Sophie Wentzell	N
Jamie Whitemore	N
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

None received. No members of the public were in attendance.

II. Review Meeting Summary from February 13

The Committee unanimously approved the meeting summary from February 13, 2024.

III. Overview and Discussion of Revised Draft Comprehensive Plan

Ben gave an overview of the status of the draft and polled the room on whether they believed it had met the goal of submitting it to the State on March 15, 2023. Overall, the group was in consensus that it was ready for submittal and provided some feedback on formatting and photographs, clarifying the priorities vs. “action items,” and discussed the details of the matrix and the priorities under each goal. The group discussed the goal of an “interconnected community” and bolstering those actions around physical infrastructure, like the TIF district and Route 1, and the mixed messages under “enlivening economic centers” and limited growth areas. For the matrix, the group had some formatting suggestions, discussed defining timelines for implementation, and emphasizing the priority actions in the matrix.

IV. Consider Approving Draft Submission to Town Council and State

Vote ready to go to Town Council: Judy made a motion as presented with changes to TC. John seconded. All in favor.

Kate clarified that NSP and the staff can't make all those changes right now. There were additional comments from the CPSC that will be addressed after general public comments and State comments are received. Extreme priorities to add in, like the missing Character Based Zoning from Past Planning efforts, were submitted to Erin.

Erin shared some key dates for the committee and added that she will email the group as others are solidified:

- March 21 first presentation to the Town Council
 - Council may move their voting meeting out of school vacation week to 4/25
- Recommendation may need to come in June so the timeline may need to be refined.

V. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.



Yarmouth Comprehensive Plan Update

April 25, 2024

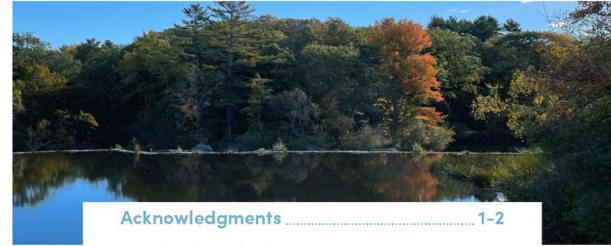
Comprehensive Planning

- Growth Management Law enacted in 1989; various updates since
- Codified at Title 30-A Chapter 187, § 4301-4349-A
- Three main elements:
 - Inventory and analysis of existing conditions
 - Develop policies to respond to topics raised in the inventory analysis
 - Prepare strategies to implement the policies
- Can't forget about developing a vision and offering public engagement!

Draft Comprehensive Plan

Three main sections:

1. Front End
2. Inventory Chapters
3. Appendices



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VISION

The Town of Yarmouth is a small, vibrant, coastal community where residents have a strong sense of connection to the town and to each other. Yarmouth will plan and make decisions through a lens of equity, sustainability, and fiscal responsibility to ensure that the community's valued assets are preserved and enhanced for future generations, while pursuing the transformative changes needed in critical areas to build community resilience.



GOALS

- 1. Strengthen our inclusive, welcoming, and connected community.**
- 2. Create, expand, and protect housing options throughout Yarmouth.**
- 3. Enliven Yarmouth's economic centers through increased amenities, jobs, and local business opportunities.**
- 4. Protect the natural environment in our growing community.**



Implementation of this comprehensive plan must be informed by the vision to move toward balanced solutions.

→ **Strengthen our inclusive, welcoming, and connected community.**

"A return to the traditional mix of occupations, income and housing to include blue collar, lower income brackets and multi family housing."

"Strengthen an already strong sense of community. We must not dilute that feeling and work to make it stronger."



"Hoping for a more racially & economically diverse population - so that Yarmouth is recognized as welcoming & inclusive in its diversity"

→ Create, expand, and protect housing options throughout Yarmouth.

"Make an absolute commitment to affordable housing rather than lip service that has been the case over several cycles of comp plan. Continue to encourage all types of diversity."



"There should be a recognition that historically Yarmouth was a mix of blue collar workers, middle class folks and some wealthy people. There is a shift underway toward wealthy people, leaving blue collar people and even lower middle class people out of the town's future... an ominous trend for our town's future as a healthy, vibrant and resilient place to live."

→ **Enliven Yarmouth's economic centers through increased amenities, jobs, and local business opportunities.**

"The thoughtful development of Main Street with small boutique retail businesses. We are all looking for informal places to gather and be together. We want those central places to take walks and see one another."

"Making Route One from Cumberland line to Freeport line more 'homey': very walkable, more crosswalks, trees, esplanades - create space between and create a nice green/flowery divider."



→ **Protect the natural environment in our growing community.**

"We have a significant percentage of Casco Bay Shoreline, and we have a responsibility - the Bay is under stress from sprayed on insecticides, fertilizers, growing grass to the water's edge."

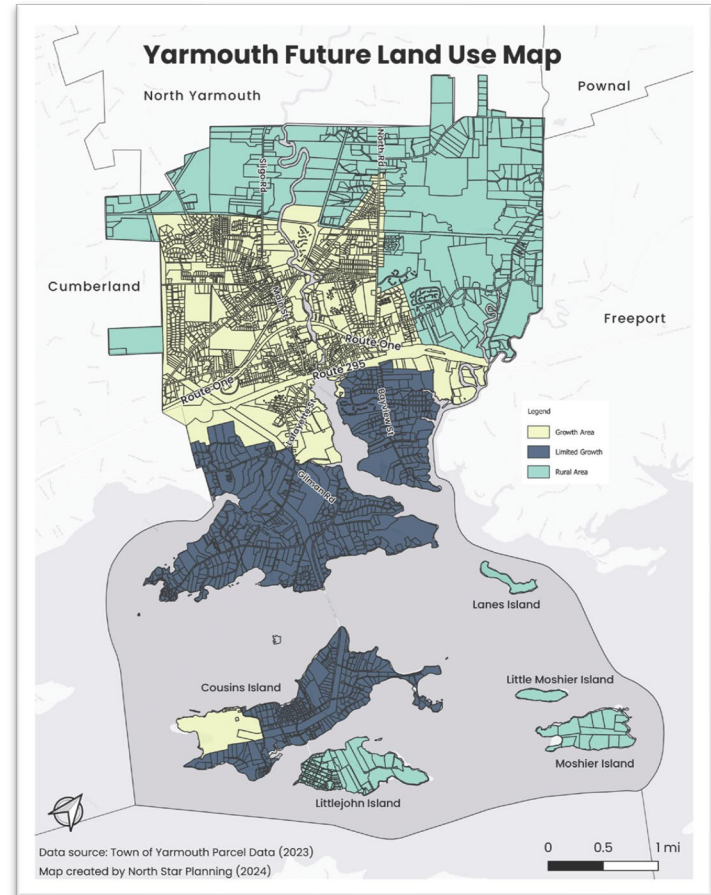


"Keep our trees and green space throughout our growth area."

"The town needs to commit money to land acquisition and create a plan to protect undeveloped places."

Future Land Use Plan

- **Growth Area:** places suitable for orderly residential, commercial, or industrial development, and are the places where most development and investment should occur.
- **Rural Area:** places that deserve protection from development.
- **Limited Growth (Transition):** places that are suitable for some residential, commercial, or industrial development, but are not intended to accept the amount of development appropriate for a growth area, nor to require as much protection as rural resources.



Follows a basic transect pattern



Main Street

- Enhance Main Street and the Village by making them more active and vibrant and its implementing actions.
- Assess recent departures of small businesses for conditions that are within the Town's control that could be mitigated to prevent further departures.
- Encourage the adaptive reuse of historic buildings.
- Support the Yarmouth farmers market as an economic development multiplier.
- Incorporate ADA improvements and increased accessibility for all users in sidewalk and street upgrades.

"Anchor more into Main Street on a community-basis (like Second Saturday or First Fridays) to encourage those who live in Yarmouth to come out more through organized events."

"Encourage more art/music/special events to attract visitors."

"You cannot have a vibrant Main Street without dense residential surrounding it. One can't survive without the other. Both are 'vibrant'."

The Village

- Amend the zoning ordinance to reduce the minimum lot size in the Growth Area that is consistent with the historic pattern of development creating more dense and walkable neighborhoods.
- Implement zoning changes to be consistent with the historic pattern of development creating more dense and walkable neighborhoods.
- Evaluate zoning tools such as lot coverage and/or tree preservation to balance open space and development on individual lots.
- Expand and promote resources for upgrading historic buildings through weatherization, efficiency, electrification, and other emission-reducing upgrades.
- Evaluate the need for bike parking, benches, and other amenities at key facilities, businesses, and schools.

“In village, mixed-use development: retail/ office on ground floor, residential (apts and condos) on upper floors”

“More pocket parks - green space, public access - in the Village.”

“The village still has space for densification while keeping open space.”

Residential Neighborhoods

- Allow a wider range of housing types to support a spectrum of households and needs and its implementing actions.
- Update the open space residential development section of the zoning ordinance to include more specific performance standards around density bonuses and open space protection and ownership.
- Improve sidewalk and trail connectivity to destinations and between residential areas.
- Assess access to open space and recreation areas through town, with the goal of a park or publicly accessible natural area within a 10 minute walk or bike ride from every neighborhood.
- Amend land use ordinances and other town ordinances, as applicable, to incorporate low impact development standards and comply with MS4 standards and requirements.

“More public space, not just private courtyards – places people can walk through, connecting areas”

“Make sure we give people who work here a chance to live here – teachers, police, restaurant employees.”

Route One Corridor

- Continue to implement the CBDC to transform Route One into a streetscape that embodies historic streetscape patterns with dense, mixed use development close to transit.
- Build people-centered infrastructure.
- Improve wayfinding between Route 1 and Main Street/the Village.
- Continue to work with Greater Portland Metro to improve transit options that support additional frequency and access.
- Continue to implement the Town's stormwater management plan.

“More complete sidewalks, bike paths connected to other parts of town.”

“Infill but that looks consistent with existing village.”

“Landscaped medians, like in Falmouth.”

Wyman Station

- Actively monitor future plans for Wyman Station to ensure productive and beneficial reuse of the property that maintains or improves the local tax base.
- Develop a public benefits statement for the reuse of Wyman Station, balancing the desire to limit impacts to Cousins Island, but also provide a beneficial property tax position.

“Optimize usage of Wyman Station property (offshore wind hookup site/ clean power battery storage site/deepwater docking access). Add multi-use options there such as marina, shorefront restaurant.”

“Some day when Wyman Station is available for development it would be nice to see lots of common area for residents and some amenities for the island residents and visitors.”

Limited Growth Area

- Amend land use ordinances to increase shoreline setbacks for freshwater and saltwater areas while encouraging low impact development, in consultation with DEP as applicable.
- Amend land use ordinances to allow context-appropriate housing types and lot sizes in the Limited Growth and Rural Areas.
- Track short-term rentals to determine if a registration system or further regulation is needed to keep housing available.
- Assess and amend land use ordinances for increased commercial opportunities at an appropriate scale for Yarmouth's coastal, island, and rural areas.
- Enhance bike and pedestrian connections from rural, coastal, island areas to Route One, Main Street, and the Village, including other popular destinations.

"Reconstruct Route 88 for sidewalks and bike corridors."

"[Preserve] historic, classic New England rural charm."

"Protect shoreland from intense development and erosion; adjustments to move higher and back to avoid sea level rise damage."

Rural Area

- Increase the amount of protected resources and open space in Yarmouth and the implementing actions.
- Amend land use ordinances to allow expanded agricultural and agritourism commercial ventures, including restaurants, event venues, tasting rooms, among other uses that rely on the agricultural use of the property.
- Enhance bike and pedestrian connections from rural, coastal, island areas to Route One, Main Street, and the Village, including other popular destinations.
- Continue to limit the extension of sewer services to the islands to discourage incompatible growth.
- Consider adopting an Open Space District for existing and new open space properties owned by the town, state, and other partners that includes standards appropriate for the use of those properties.

"In the rural areas, allow for more density at crossroads."

"Continue to protect public access to the coastal and island areas."

"The open space and the view sheds are what make the rural parts of Yarmouth equally as special as the village."

Plan Implementation

- Creation of an Implementation Committee to be coordinated with the implementation of the Climate Action Plan
- Annual Reporting
- Future Updates
- Implementation Matrix identifies responsibility party, timeline, relevance to Climate Action Plan, and local goals

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & ACTION ITEMS

The following matrix compiles all of the goals, objectives, and action items needed to implement this Comprehensive Plan. It includes goals, objectives, and actions that are required by the State, along with local initiatives.

The matrix is organized by inventory chapter topic. Each objective and action is accompanied by a timeframe and the town staff and committees who will be responsible for it, as well as links to local goals. Every strategy also lists if it is related to a Climate Action Plan action item. This matrix is expected to be a living document that a future Implementation Committee can use to create work plans, identify interconnected objectives and actions, and determine stakeholder involvement.

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Major Feedback to Date

- Expansion of the Growth Area to Cousins River marsh
- Commitment to implementation
- Commitment to reduce the tax burden on community members
- Commitment to balance growth and development with open space and natural resource protections



**Visit [Planyarmouth.com](https://planyarmouth.com) for more
information!**

Erin Zwirko, Director of Planning & Development

ezwirko@yarmouth.me.us

207-846-2401

Comments from Project Website as of 4/12/2024

Submitted On	Name	Comment
4/10/24	Kathy Mills	<p>In the Inventories document, in the Recreation section under Conditions and Trends, on the page cited below, there are descriptions of Sandy Point and Madeleine Point. Swimming is included in the description of Sandy Point, but not Madeleine Point. This is an error. While Sandy Point is clearly larger for swimming, Madeleine Point, though smaller, is also a popular place for swimming, and not just for teens who hang out on the docks. I have been swimming there for many years, and there are far more people who swim at Madeleine Point than have picnics at "Contemplation Rock." Swimming at M Point is mentioned under Marine Resources - Conditions & Trends (p. 2-123, pdf 62), but not under the Recreation - Conditions & Trends section, noted above. Could you correct this to properly identify swimming in your description of M Point under Recreation? Thank you. If someone could confirm receipt of this email, and let me know if the correction will be made, I would appreciate it. Good luck with this important work!</p>
4/7/24	Kathleen Patterson	<p>One of the best aspects of living in Yarmouth is that it is a safe community - one where families, children, women can walk, run or bike through Main Street or local parks and feel safe. It's also a pleasantly quiet community. We moved out of downtown Portland and chose Yarmouth for our home because of those characteristics - and not in favor of densifying commercial districts with plans that could lead to higher crime indices or significantly increased traffic levels. The intentions to "enliven" economic centers including Main Street should also strive to preserve and strengthen the safety of being out and enjoying Yarmouth. Plans should also consider that Main St is a primary traffic corridor for surrounding neighborhoods to get to Rt 1, and that an alternative route or traffic improvements may be needed if the longer term plans make Main St more focused on pedestrian, bike, dense business activity.</p>
4/7/24	Kathleen Patterson	<p>Regarding the housing approach, the recommendations to expand housing through density can further hurt affordability without proper planning and due diligence. One of the factors putting "blue collar and lower middle income" and retirees at risk of being able to keep their homes in Yarmouth is the significantly increasing local cost structure - municipal taxes, school taxes and costs of public services. The recommendations to increase Yarmouth population via dense housing and commercial developments would also increase investments needed in infrastructure and services - e.g. schools, public utilities, waste facilities, roads, transportation, public services. The amenities discussed in other sections will also require significant investment - parks developments, Rte 1 improvements. Proposed new developments should require an economic impact analysis and a plan to fund the costs for associated infrastructure and services expansion, as they can otherwise increase the tax burden on residents and further hurt affordability. Making Yarmouth affordable to live in for all residents requires careful evaluation of existing costs, proposed developments, and due diligence to make informed decisions that will impact the financial futures of Yarmouth and its residents.</p>
4/5/24	caroline norden	<p>I heard that some of the growth areas that allow higher density are in the cousins marsh migration area and other top priorities for conservation highlighted on the map that was prepared as part of the Open Space Plan. It's called the town of Yarmouth 1-acre Fishnet Showing Sum Score of High Open Space Plan Values. At public meetings, we urged you to honor this map. Its also part of the approved Climate Action Plan. Please dont put high growth areas in important areas for conservation.</p>

Comments from Project Website as of 4/12/2024

4/1/24	Marge Titcomb	The draft Comp Plan is an impressive work product! I do, however, have one comment that I hope is considered carefully. The image behind the Land Acknowledgement is lovely, but it EXACTLY CONTRADICTS the words in the Acknowledgement. It is a lovely white colonial settler's farm and buildings (albeit new, but still of colonizers). An appropriate image would show Land in its natural state, as it might have been before 'we' came. Placing this image with Land Acknowledgement words contradicts the stated purpose (page I-14) that all endeavors will "start by acknowledging the history of the land on which Yarmouth was established prior to white settlement." The placement is an example of work we still have to do to understand the impact we've had on our Indigenous People.
4/1/24	Margaret Downing	Figure 5-12 This information on the expiration of the affordability covenant to is incorrect. For Bartlett circlet, it's "in perpetuity". For Bartlett Woods, it's 30 years or 2048.
3/29/24	Mary Lou Michael	I appreciate the ways in which this Comprehensive Plan draft acknowledges the broader history of Yarmouth in the section Historical & Archaeological Resources (HA). Under p. 1-5 - I encourage you to change the background photo of the Land Acknowledgment, choosing a natural setting that reflects what a Land Acknowledgment means. I'm guessing the current photo is a placeholder but the house in the background runs counter to the meaning. Under HA 2.3 - In the statement: "Encourage public knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of Yarmouth's history, from the use by Wabanaki and Abenaki tribes to current day." please consider the word "stewardship" in place of the word "use" i.e." Encourage public knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of Yarmouth's history, from the stewardship by Wabanaki and Abenaki tribes to current day.
3/26/24	Chris Stetson	Hi, This is excellent. Congratulations to the team and much appreciation for the working sessions which were very well done. It's all in the implementation. I have some questions on details and concerns about how the ambitious climate action plan will work. Looking forward to future engagement. Best, Chris Stetson

Comments from Project Website as of 4/12/2024

3/20/24	Anne Turner	I was very disappointed to see almost no mention at all about trees. The only focus on open space and natural resources seems to be either agricultural/forestry/farming, (which seems to me to be somewhat irrelevant), or on recreation. While I'm happy to consider the importance of recreational opportunities, there was no mention of keeping natural, undeveloped land intact for the purposes of enhancing wildlife habitat, or wetlands/drainage issues, or other ecosystems concerns. There was no mention in all the development/housing/infill conversations about the need to protect our "big trees" or to minimize paved areas and make landscaping a high priority. I thought there was a Tree Committee in Yarmouth looking into these issues - didn't they have input into this plan? I saw one minor statement about monitoring the tree canopy, but little else. I see this as a major oversight.
3/18/24	Jesica Garrou	Why is Bayview not considered a "residential neighborhood" but Lafayette Street is? There seems like way more housing off Bayview...
3/14/24	David Craig	Item HA-2.3 -- Add School Department as a Responsible Partner
3/14/24	David Craig	FLU-2.1 -- Remove the quotation marks ("") at beginning and end of Action Item.

Public Comment Submitted to Yarmouth's Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee 2/26/24 from Ed Libby.

1. Suggest adding Transportation Oriented Development (TOD) as a new zoning category and locations on the zoning map. These would focus on higher density mixed uses being allowed near public transit and/or corridors. The benefit of this new zoning would align with many climate goals as well as affordable housing and placing more dense housing in the right places.
2. The new Comp Plan MUST include new areas to accommodate our Mobile Home Park overlay district (s). The State requires multiple areas to be designated as MHP overlay areas. Our current locations in the middle of Frank Knight Forest and the Astilbe Lane subdivision are not acceptable. MHP's only need 3 units to qualify, and the definition of Manufactured housing would include not just traditional mobile homes, but also modern modular homes built off site such as companies like Backyard ADU's and Bright Built Homes. I suggest including the entire current area of MDR and the Character Code areas to be included in the new overlay. This could be an incredible opportunity to give the private sector a chance to participate in producing housing scattered all over Town. Release the Swarm!
3. Create an affordable housing overlay district. Again, this should be the entire MDR plus CBC areas on Rt. 1 and Main St. Higher density and smaller lot sizes allowed for units that include an affordable deed covenant. Again, this would put a tool into the hands of individual property owners who could choose to produce an affordable unit. This would be much more powerful than allowing another unit on the same property, which is financially out of reach for many. Instead, it would give folks a chance to carve off a small lot that could be sold/rented to someone meeting the affordability covenant. This would be an organic way to grow housing within Town without the negative impact sometimes associated to larger projects. The "developer" would simply be an existing property owner so that the financial benefits accrue to a citizen instead of an outside developer. Release the Swarm!
4. Set a firm Housing Production Goal with metrics and timeline to be achieved.
5. Allow multifamily housing as use in the area of the current MDR. This should be done immediately. It requires only adding one word to the existing zoning ordinance.
6. Consider rezoning MDR into subsections that would recognize a more nuanced approach to existing conditions. Likely an area immediately adjacent to the village and radiating outward, but then another area beyond that, but not into the current RR or LDR.

7. Reduce minimum lot size. 5000 square feet anywhere in the Designated Growth Area served by town water and sewer. This should be done immediately. This aligns with mitigating climate change, affordable housing, housing production goals, as well as more dense housing in the right places.

8. **Strengthen our inclusive, welcoming, and connected community.**

From page 12 of the Draft Plan.

I would like to see more language that builds on being an inclusive and welcoming community and that our policies are developed with a “latchstring always out” bias. We have much room to improve upon providing ways for those who would like to become part of our community but can’t because of the exclusionary zoning policies that make the barrier to entry too high. As recently as 2000, the median income here could purchase the median priced home. In just 20 years that is no longer possible, not by a long shot. We need to reverse the effects of these policies and introduce new ones that allow a more diverse set of people to become part of our community. We have fallen into a trap of “I got here first” mentality of many existing citizens that belies our town motto of “latchstring always out”.

9. Put some real teeth in the implementation portion of the plan. Develop priorities and stick to them. Be specific about where our energy should be focused and provide specific outcomes so that the Town Council can act on them without caving in. Give them a roadmap that will act as political cover when the time comes to make the difficult decisions of change, especially when it comes to zoning.

From: [Christine](#)
To: [Erin Zwirko](#)
Subject: Comprehensive Plan
Date: Wednesday, March 20, 2024 8:37:35 AM

Hi Erin,

Congrats on the Comprehensive Plan. It is a lot to digest. I am impressed by the thoroughness.

I have a few added thoughts. Recently I heard that Camden and Yarmouth are the two most sought out towns in Maine to live. I know we are looking at ways to make route one more attractive. I would love to see more interesting retail and fewer banks. I know people who travel to Rockland to shop at the Grasshopper shop. I like the idea of making route one more appealing with more varied retail, not the big box stores.

Also, the town needs more staff. Everyone works so hard. Could we consider adding a Conservation Commission like Falmouth?

Finally, I work at Freeport community services, which is not a town dept, but a non-profit. We are a third place because all of our services are under one roof- the food pantry, thrift shop, programs for seniors, toddlers, etc. it is so heartwarming to see the diversity of generations coming together for enrichment and essential services. The Thrift shop brings in solid revenue with staff and volunteers. It would be wonderful for Yarmouth to have such a facility. Please let me know if you would like a tour. Thank you!

Christine Force
88 Sisquisic

Sent from my iPhone

Erin Zwirko

From: Alan Stearns <alan@rrct.org>
Sent: Thursday, March 21, 2024 12:52 PM
To: Erin Zwirko
Cc: Jerry King; Janet Hansen; Joshua Royte; Jeremy Gabrielson; David Craig
Subject: Growth Areas: lower Cousins River marsh
Attachments: Yarmouth proposed 2024 Growth Areas.pdf; Yarmouth_2010 comp plan 57.pdf; Yarmouth_2010 comp plan p 61.pdf

Erin:

Thanks for the time earlier today.

The draft Comprehensive Plan is a tremendous achievement. I wish I had time to list the aspects that deserve robust support and applause.

I see growth area designations as among the most legally-significant aspects of any comprehensive plan. Thus I single out that issue for earliest-possible collaborative input, urging that the issue be anticipated pro-actively as you bring the plan to various boards and committees. My organization doesn't typically get involved in zoning or ordinances, but the lower Cousins River marsh stands above all other zones of Yarmouth for ecological significance of state-wide importance. Rather than cry foul, we can cry waterfowl.

To this email I attach maps showing the proposed significant expansion in the growth area at the lower Cousins River marsh -- 2010 compared to 2024 (proposed). The proposed growth area expansions strike me as the riskiest -- and most significant -- aspects of the draft plan.

The Cousins River marshes are too important ecologically -- with too much recent conservation success both in Yarmouth and Freeport -- to risk overly broad designations as growth areas. The health and future of Casco Bay has too much recent attention to take too many risks. You and I discussed possible refinements. While today's Council may have no intention to exploit the growth area in a way imbalanced with ecological goals, future Councils and future growth pressures should not have a road map authorizing exploitation. We have seen that future state legislation and future policy initiatives beyond local control can exploit growth areas with incentives and tools not known today, resulting in growth pressure.

On the positive side:

- Bringing Yarmouth's successful Route One Character Based Zoning to the existing commercial zone near Casco Bay Ford is a good recommendation. FLU 8.5. Good work.
- Bringing growth area tools to existing buildings-hotels near the Muddy Ruddy is a good recommendation. Good work.
- Bringing tools to allow success at the Even Keel facility is a good recommendation. Yet that facility should not expand into the marshes, nor create domino effect.

In terms of needed refinements:

- It should be express that growth area designation should in no way be used in the future to justify a relaxation of natural resource zoning. Rather the general intention of the plan to increase resiliency and environmental benefit should be expressly linked to the Cousins River marsh system, and the pending growth zone.
- Existing Route One forests, vegetative buffers, riparian buffers, and scenery -- even if not today protected by natural resource zoning -- should not be compromised.
- It should be express whether this plan creates a basis for rezoning other than rezoning the current Commercial zone. I've heard neither a goal nor basis for rezoning existing residential zones which are within the proposed growth zone. Would growth zone designation automatically trigger state statutes which authorize more residential density?

A related larger issue is the need to deliver ambitious habitat and open space goals with one set of tools, while the marketplace dominates with pressures in opposite directions. Any expansion of growth areas should come with a fierce recognition that open space goals and recommended tools often drift to the background, while the market marches forward and Town Hall attention gets swallowed by the march of progress.

- The comprehensive plan should fiercely commit -- prior to any rezoning or growth zone efficacy -- to long-unattended yet now-repeated goals to rewrite Yarmouth's open space development provisions. It has been too long, with too many plans, and no implementation.
- The open space aspects of Route One Character zoning in town should be reviewed, as against the "character" opportunities presented by the extraordinary ecology of the lower Cousins River marsh. With good ordinances, we can deliver win-win balance to incentivize Route One development without compromising Cousins River and Casco Bay ecology.

Thank you, as ever, for your extraordinary professional contribution and your hard work.

Thanks,

Alan



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Alan Stearns, Executive Director *he / him*

RRCT | P.O. Box 90 | 52 North Road | Yarmouth, ME 04096

www.RRCT.org | Alan@RRCT.org | (207) 215-8315 (cell)

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The Future Land Use Plan is a core component of the Comprehensive Plan that will guide Yarmouth’s future decisions on zoning, land preservation, and public investments over the next decade or so.

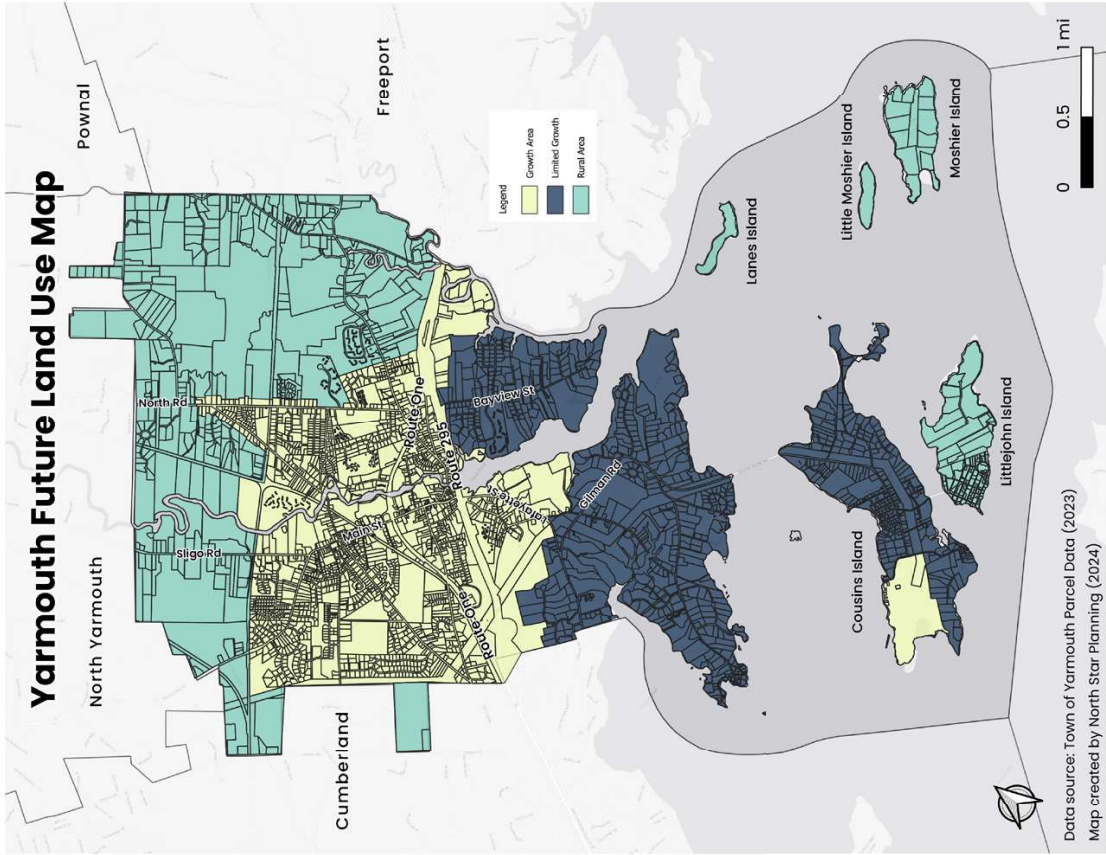
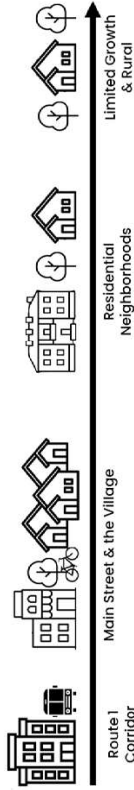
The Future Land Use Plan consists of a map and an accompanying narrative to describe where and how development and investments should be focused in the community. It provides more detail to the town’s Vision Statement and core values, and explains what those elements mean for different areas of Yarmouth. It builds on the 2010 Comprehensive Plan and the town’s significant accomplishments since then to meet the current interrelated needs identified by the community.

By state statute, the Future Land Use Map shows three basic areas: Growth Areas, Rural Areas, and Transition Areas (called Limited Growth in Yarmouth). Growth Areas are places suitable for orderly residential, commercial, or industrial development, and are the places where most development and investment should occur over the next 10 years. Rural Areas are places that deserve protection from development. Transition Areas are places that are suitable for some residential, commercial, or industrial development, but are not intended to accept the amount of development appropriate for a growth area, nor to require as much protection as rural resources. Key locations are detailed within these broader land use categories, with narrative descriptions based on public participation and input received throughout this planning process.

Note that the Future Land Use Map and the narrative below are not regulatory on their own. They are intended to guide future zoning updates and provide program and policy direction to help implement this Plan. Moving forward, an implementation committee will make recommendations and decisions based on this guidance, while considering context and balancing priorities. This Future Land Use Plan will guide future land use and zoning in tandem with other local and state regulations, such as Resource Protection areas and the Character Based Development Code, and open space preservation in the Growth, Limited Growth, and Rural Areas.

Yarmouth’s land use follows a basic transect pattern that radiates outward from the center of town, with the most intensive development along the Route One Corridor and the historic core of Main Street and the Village, moving towards less density and more open space in the Limited Growth and Rural areas of town.

With these general patterns of development, there are many unique circumstances that characterize different parts of Yarmouth. Implementation will consider context and conditions that may ebb and flow to meet the needs of Yarmouth over time. Achieving the vision in this Plan will require zoning reform, as well as use of Yarmouth’s contract and conditional zoning tools, which can help advance specific goals in a context-sensitive manner.



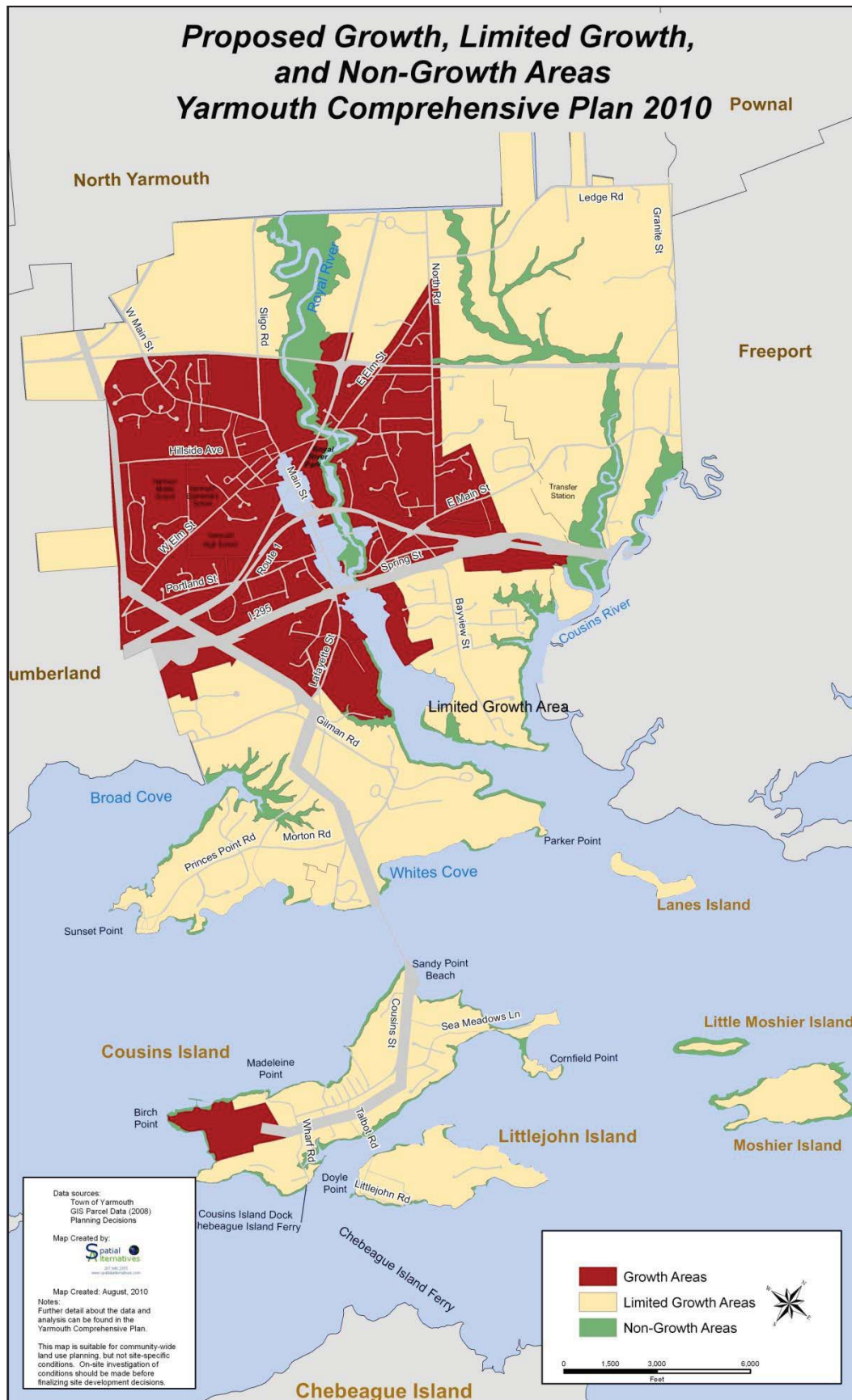
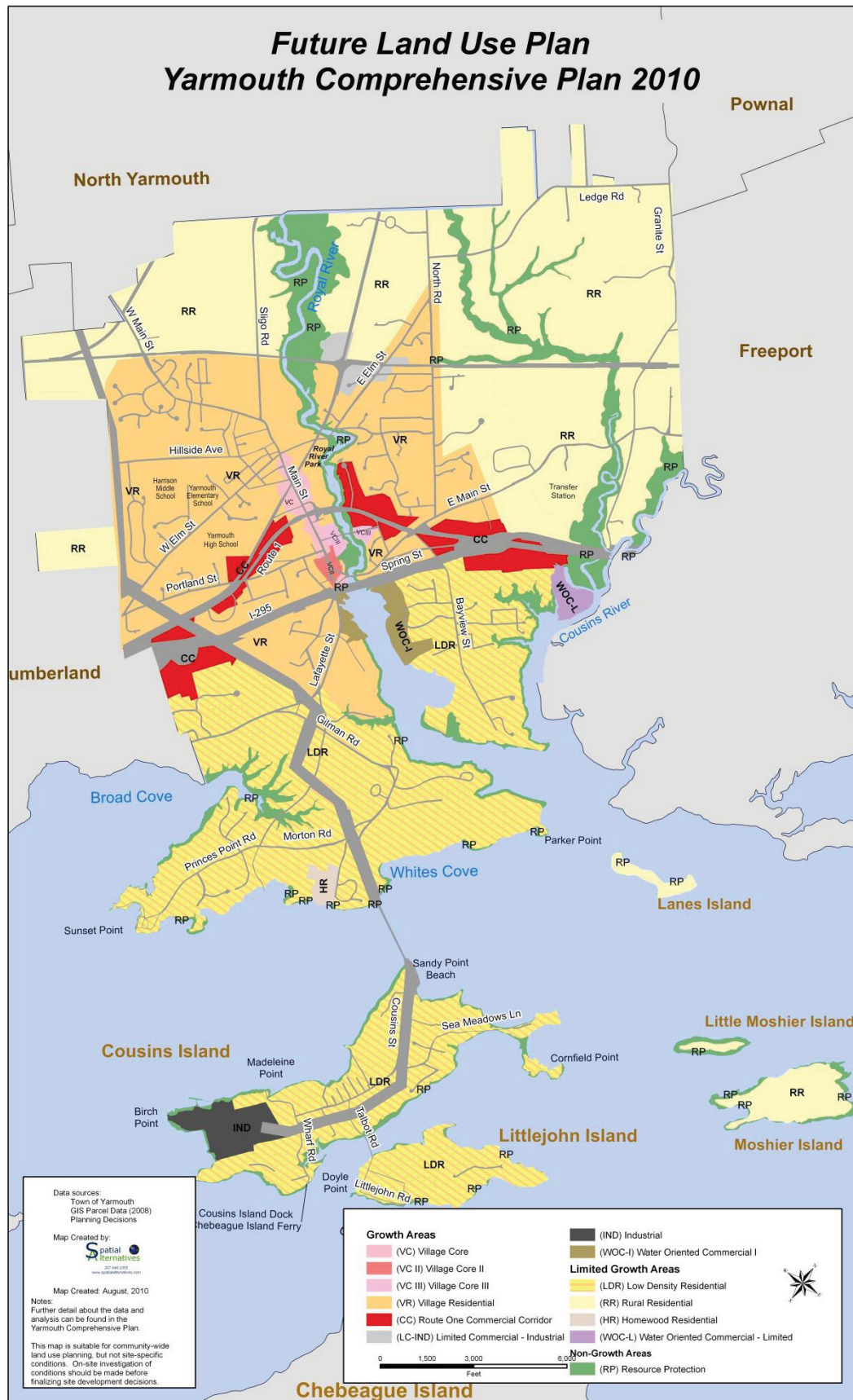


FIGURE 2-2 FUTURE LAND USE MAP



Erin Zwirko

From: Kate Burch <kburch@northstar-planning.com>
Sent: Monday, April 15, 2024 10:06 AM
To: Erin Zwirko
Subject: Fwd: Form Submission - Comp Plan Draft Comments

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Squarespace** <form-submission@squarespace.info>
Date: Sun, Apr 14, 2024 at 12:37 PM
Subject: Form Submission - Comp Plan Draft Comments
To: <kburch@northstar-planning.com>

Sent via form submission from [Yarmouth Comprehensive Plan](#)

Name: Ann Mohnkern

Email: ahmohnkern@gmail.com

Comment: April 14, 2024

To: Erin Zwirko and Members of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Committee

From: Ann and Kent Mohnkern
191 Sisquisic Trail
Yarmouth ME 04096
ahmohnkern@gmail.com
207-239-9440

I am writing to express our grave concerns about the proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan designating the entire DeLorme property from Rt. 1 all the way down to the Cousins River as a Growth Area for development. This proposed expansion from the 2010 Plan is in direct contradiction with the stated goal "to protect the natural environment in our growing community." This change would have far-reaching implications for the region, would do irreversible damage to a fragile ecosystem, including wildlife and marine habitat, and would reduce our resiliency to the impacts of climate change. It would also significantly impact the character not only our neighborhood, but of our Freeport neighbors, and others from Yarmouth and beyond whose livelihoods and recreational opportunities depend on clean water.

Our perspective on the importance and value of the DeLorme property is personal. Forty-five years ago,

in 1979, my husband Kent and I moved from West Main Street to built our present home on Sisquisic Trail. Because our lot extends to the “thread of the creek” we abut the DeLorme property, looking directly across to it, as well as to the Freeport side of the Cousins River. Since first moving here we have confronted many threats to this ecologically critical area, from CMP’s proposal to locate a fly ash dump on the edge of the river, to the more recent illegal clear cutting of trees below the Garmin building. We are dismayed to have to confront yet another threat.

I believe very few people in town understand and appreciate the beauty and vitality of the lower Cousins River. This is because it can be seen and accessed only by living along its shore or owning a boat and venturing in from Casco Bay. There simply is no public access here. For this reason, I want to focus on why this is such an extraordinary place worthy of protection.

When Kent and I, together with our two young boys, moved to Sisquisic Trail in 1979 the river was in poor condition. The sewer system had not yet been extended to the residential areas along the river. It was closed to clamming. Few waterfowl, fish or shorebirds were here. People rarely used the river. There was an odor from the mud flats at low tide.

What a difference between then and now! The river is absolutely full of life. The clam flats are open. Oysters have been farmed here. Fish are here, from tiny minnows to large species like menhaden, bluefish and striped bass. Seals follow them into the river from Casco Bay. The fish have attracted a broad array of birds - great blue heron, snowy egrets, American egrets, greater and lesser yellowlegs, Canada geese, green wing teal, mallard, black duck, merganser, bufflehead, even wood duck. They come in by the hundreds, especially during the spring and fall migration. Eagle, osprey red-tailed hawk and kingfisher all come to dine. People are here for food too - hunting, clamming and fishing. Commercial and recreational boaters utilize the river most of the year, including working boats from Sea Meadow, as well as personal watercraft such as canoes, kayaks, motor boats and rowing shells. There are even paddle-boarders and waterskiers. The health, abundance and beauty of the river made all this happen.

Last year, on the marsh across from our home, a white-tailed deer walked out on the marsh from the DeLorme property to give birth. The fawn took cover under the big pine tree just above the high water mark. This fall we saw two bucks locking horns in a battle for territory.

Two days ago we saw a red fox hunting mice on the edge of the DeLorme property. Their kits will make their appearance soon. We have also seen grey fox, which have a stripe on their backs and actually climb trees! And we have at least one resident coyote.

A pair of Canada geese has just returned to nest on the edge of the hill, for the fifth year in a row. They parade their goslings out over the mud once they’re off the nest, returning to the nest for a week or two, then head off until the following spring.

Kent built a bluebird trail on the edge of the property when it was owned by Howard Small, and over the years this has brought in many bluebirds which now winter over, as well as tree swallows which are just arriving for the summer.

A magnificent pair of red-tailed hawks is here regularly now.

Raccoons go into the creek at low tide and wash clams that the clam diggers tossed aside. So too, the crows glean what was left behind on the mud.

This year the river never froze over for the first time in our memory, and great blue heron fed here all winter long.

If you allow - encourage - commercial or large scale housing development onto this land, all this beauty and wildness, and the ecological value of the river and its salt marshes, will be permanently and irreparably damaged.

With regard to preserving the character of neighborhoods, it is important to say that current zoning permits commercial development along Rt. 1 down as far as the power lines, and low density residential development below that towards the river. Our family moved here and invested here in reliance on these laws, which struck a reasonable balance between commercial and housing needs on the one hand, and protection of the marshes and the river on the other. Changing the Comprehensive Plan now to encouraging an increase in the nature and density of development on the DeLorme property will unfairly threaten the value and character of our home and that of our neighborhood.

The proposed Comprehensive Plan speaks of the value of this area ecologically, aesthetically and environmentally. It also places high value on open space, public access to the water, recreational opportunities, preserving neighborhoods, and conservation and protection of marine resources. Designating this area for growth flies in the face of all of these identified priorities. We strongly disagree with this proposed change, and urgently ask that the identification of the DeLorme property as a focus for future growth and development be withdrawn.

Thank you for your encouragement of input, and for your consideration of our concerns.

Ann and Kent Mohnkern

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Kate Burch (she/her)

Senior Planner

kburch@northstar-planning.com

(207) 805-4767


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