

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 Whitemore	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.