



# Yarmouth Comprehensive Plan Update

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March 27, 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!

# Where We've Been

- Yarmouth's last comprehensive plan was adopted in 2010
- Major themes of the 2010 Plan:
  - Yarmouth Village
  - Diversity of Population
  - Historic Character
  - Route One
  - Rural Character and Open Space
- Lots of successes, but still a few setbacks in the implementation

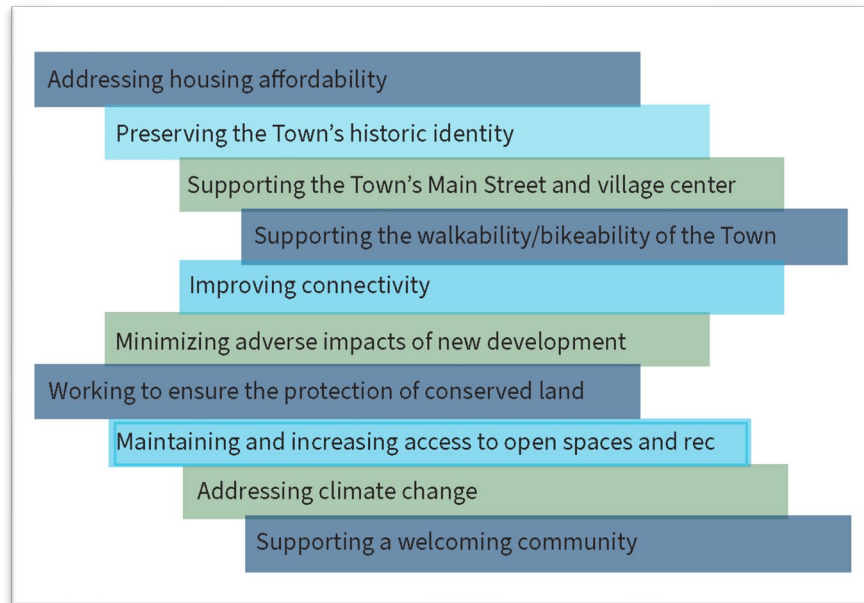
Town of Yarmouth Comprehensive Plan



2010

# What We've Been Doing

- Visioning Initiative completed in 2022
  - Included public engagement
  - Support the development of the Vision and Values
- Steering Committee appointed in December 2022
- Immediately began working on the inventories and analysis



# Public Participation

- Data Highlights Workshop
- Summer Survey and Pop-Up Events
- Housing Community Conversation
- Economy Community Conversation
- Natural Resources & Environment Community Conversation
- Future Land Use Forum

*Shared information learned with the Climate Action Plan team!*



The graphic features a light blue background with a white border. At the top left is the Yarmouth, Maine seal. To its right, the word "PLAN" is written in bold, followed by a blue arrow pointing right, and then "YARMOUTH" in bold. To the right of this is a green hexagonal logo with a white outline, containing a stylized tree and the text "YARMOUTH CLIMATE ACTION". Below these logos, the text "Join us for these Fall Events!" is written in bold. Underneath, the events are listed in italics: "Plan Yarmouth: Community Conversations" followed by "Housing" and "Monday, 9/11 - 6-8 PM"; "Economy" and "Monday, 9/18 - 6-8 PM"; and "Environment & Natural Resources" and "Monday, 10/2 - 6-8 PM". Then, "Yarmouth Climate Action Plan" is written in italics, followed by "Community Action Workshop" and "Tuesday, 10/10 - 6-8 PM". Finally, "Plan Yarmouth: Future Land Use Workshop" is written in italics, followed by "Monday, 11/13 - 6-8 PM". At the bottom, a paragraph states: "All events held at Patriot Insurance Multipurpose Event Room, 701 Route 1, Yarmouth. Please enter from the parking lot side of the building."

**PLAN** → **YARMOUTH**

**YARMOUTH CLIMATE ACTION**

**Join us for these Fall Events!**

*Plan Yarmouth: Community Conversations*

**Housing**  
Monday, 9/11 - 6-8 PM

**Economy**  
Monday, 9/18 - 6-8 PM

**Environment & Natural Resources**  
Monday, 10/2 - 6-8 PM

*Yarmouth Climate Action Plan*

**Community Action Workshop**  
Tuesday, 10/10 - 6-8 PM

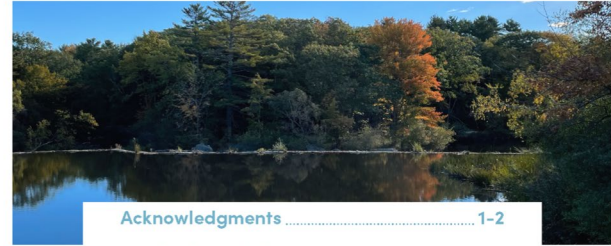
*Plan Yarmouth: Future Land Use Workshop*  
Monday, 11/13 - 6-8 PM

All events held at Patriot Insurance Multipurpose Event Room, 701 Route 1, Yarmouth. Please enter from the parking lot side of the building.

# Draft Comprehensive Plan

## Three main sections:

1. Front End
2. Inventory Chapters
3. Appendices



Acknowledgments .....	1-2
Land Acknowledgment .....	1-4
Vision & Goals .....	1-5
Yarmouth Today .....	1-6
Yarmouth Tomorrow .....	1-8
About this Plan .....	1-10
Yarmouth's Goals .....	1-12
Future Land Use Plan .....	1-22
Regional Coordination .....	1-32
Plan Implementation .....	1-34
Public Process .....	1-36
Summary of Past Planning .....	1-42
Goals, Objectives, and Action Items .....	1-49

# 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"*

# Priority Action Items

- Work with town staff, partners and indigenous community members, and the indigenous communities of Maine to affirm a town-wide land acknowledgement statement.
- Advance policies that support the participation of underrepresented and underserved community members in future planning processes, town programming, and town decisions.
- 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.
- Enhance bike and pedestrian connections from rural, coastal, island areas to Route One, Main Street, and the Village, and other popular destinations.
- Adopt an ADA Transition and Self Evaluation Plan for municipal buildings and facilities, properties, and right of ways.

## → 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."*

# Priority Action Items

- 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.
- Adopt an affordable housing strategy that includes developing new deed-restricted affordable housing based on a production goal, revising zoning requirements, and continuing to support the development of accessory dwelling units.
- Ensure regular funding of the capital reserve account or a general budget line item to support housing initiatives, or establish a separate Housing Trust.
- Conduct an audit of the current land use ordinances to evaluate impediments to housing development and amend land use ordinances to ensure compliance with the Fair Housing Act and state requirements.

→ **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."*



# Priority Action Items

- Amend the land use ordinances to allow a greater range of businesses including entertainment, retail, and restaurants, that broaden the activity on Main Street.
- 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.
- Activate public spaces through outdoor dining, public art, temporary events and festivals. Review and amend ordinances and policies that limit or prohibit these types of activities.
- Assess needs and facilities to enhance recreational and commercial access to the waterfront.
- Amend land use ordinances to allow expanded agricultural and agritourism commercial ventures in the rural areas of town.

→ **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."***

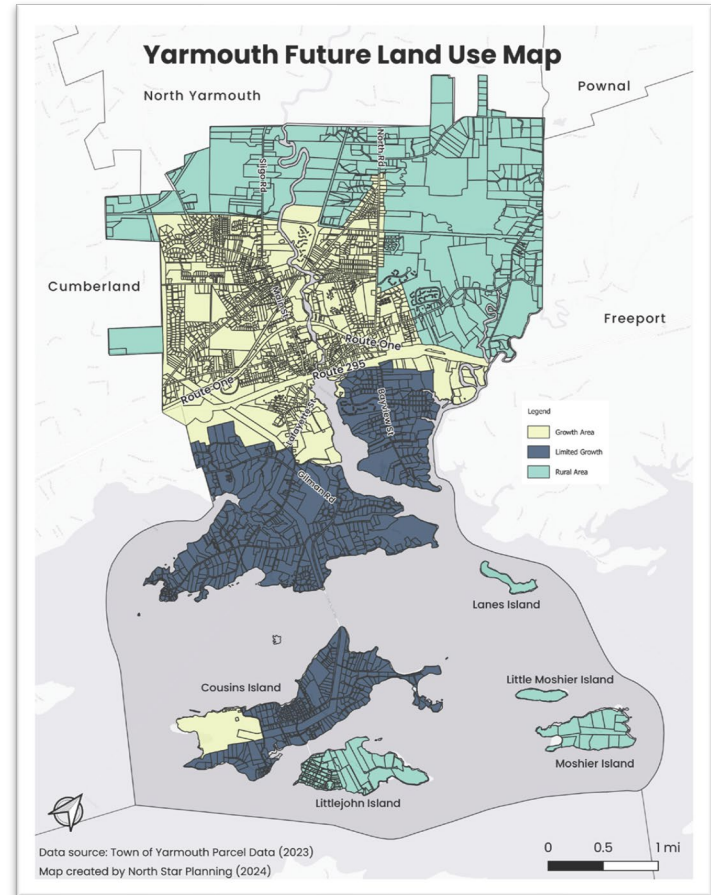


# Priority Action Items

- Identify an open space acquisition goal.
- 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.
- Amend land use ordinances and/or establish incentives that serve to protect mature trees and reduce lot clearing.
- Provide educational workshops for property owners on sustainable land management practices and on land conservation, current use taxation programs, and the benefits of conservation easements.
- Promote guidance for protection/restoration of erodible bluffs, steep slopes, and shorelines for both private and town-owned properties.

# 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. Include in the assessment long-term businesses and the conditions that have allowed them to stay. Use this analysis to develop policies and ordinances to retain businesses.
- 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.

### Matrix Index

Historic & Archaeological Resources	1-50
Agriculture & Forestry	1-52
Population & Demographics	1-54
Economy	1-55
Housing	1-58
Recreation	1-63
Transportation	1-65
Marine Resources	1-69
Natural Resources	1-71
Water Resources	1-75
Public Facilities & Services	1-78
Fiscal Capacity & Capital Investments	1-80
Future Land Use	1-81

# Where We're Going

- **March 15:** Draft Plan released for public input, including from boards and committees
- **March 27:** Presentation to the Planning Board
- **April 25:** Joint public hearing of Steering Committee and Town Council
- **April 30:** Public comment closes
- **June:** Final plan presented to Town Council for adoption





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information!**

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