

TOWN OF YORK, MAINE

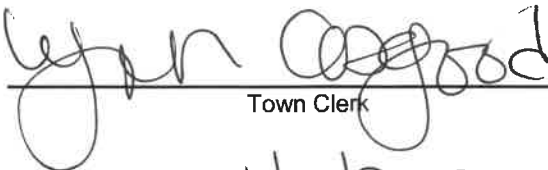
2022 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted
November 8, 2022

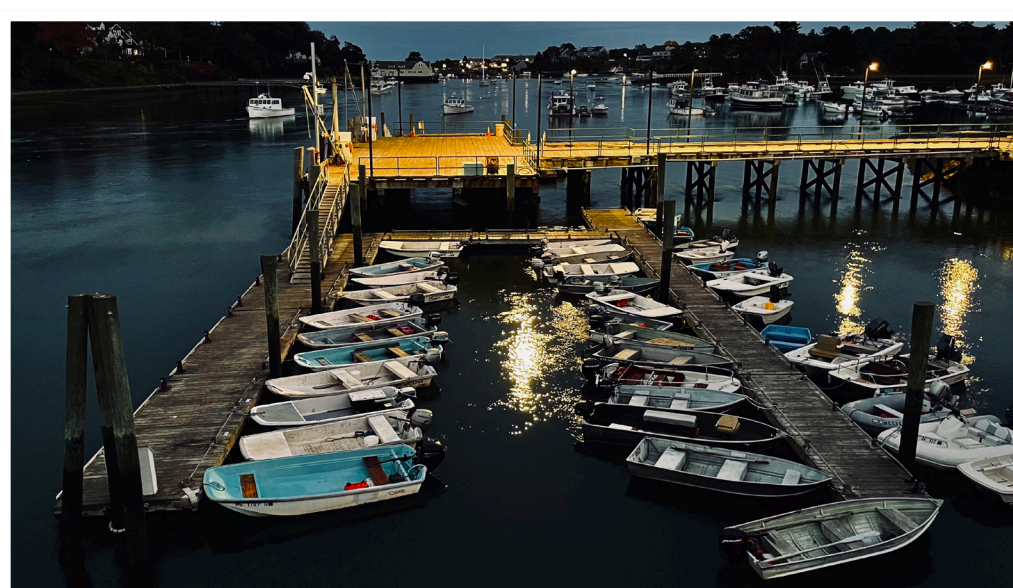
Prior
Amendments
November 6, 2018
November 7, 2017
November 3, 2015
November 4, 2014
November 5, 2013
November 8, 2011
May 21, 2011
November 3, 2009
November 4, 2008
November 6, 2007
November 7, 2006
November 2, 2004
November 6, 2001
May 19, 2001
November 7, 2000
May 22, 1999 (Date
of Original Adoption)

On November 8, 2022, a new Comprehensive Plan titled, "Town of York 2022 Comprehensive Plan" was approved by the voters of York, which replaced the original 1999 Comprehensive Plan that included subsequent amendments through 2018. Dates listed above are for informational purposes only.

The following is a true copy of the Town of York 2022 Comprehensive Plan as adopted on November 8, 2022.

Attest: 
Town Clerk

Date: 11/14/2022



Town of York 2022 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The process to update the Comprehensive Plan began in May 2019 when voters approved funding for the project. Under the purview of the Planning Board, work began that summer and by April 2021 the Steering Committee was formed and met regularly over the next twelve months.

This update to the 1999 Comprehensive Plan has been in the making for a long time, and many dedicated community members have worked in a variety of capacities and participated in many ways throughout the year-long process. Volunteer leaders of Boards, Commissions, and Committees; Town staff; regional and local organizations; and community volunteers have contributed hundreds if not thousands of hours to this endeavor.

We are grateful to the hundreds of community members who attended meetings and events, answered survey questions, and offered feedback on the project website to ensure that this Plan reflects the needs and concerns of the people of York. Your efforts and time are greatly appreciated and made this Comprehensive Plan possible.



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Special thanks to Kenny Churchill, Churchill Barn, York Library,
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WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

York's Comprehensive Plan is a broad, long-term vision for our community, from quality-of-life issues to the financial decisions necessary to maintain them. The goals and recommended actions in this Plan will guide policies, future land use decisions, and Town investments over the course of the next ten to fifteen years.

This Plan lays the foundation for zoning, policies, and implementation strategies, but it is not the same as the Zoning Ordinance itself, nor does it dictate specific Town investments. It is a guide to amending or creating zoning ordinances, conducting feasibility studies for new facilities, and collaborating with other entities to achieve desired goals. Implementation of the Plan in the coming years will require coordination among the Planning Board, Selectboard, and Town staff, as well as voter approval of each initiative.

THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GUIDES FUTURE DECISIONS AND ACTIONS



Residents and community members express their needs and interests.



Feedback helps Steering Committee members formulate Plan goals and strategies.



The Plan offers a set of strategies that represent priorities for the Town. Adoption of the Plan means these recommended strategies will create a road map for future planning.



At the appropriate time, recommended strategies will need further discussion, understanding of impacts and costs, and other actions, such as:



Feasibility study



Fiscal planning and budget consideration



Actions for Town vote



Implementation planning

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Executive Summary

York is a community of over 13,000 year-round residents on the coast of Maine. Beautiful beaches, historic villages and buildings, large areas of forest, and some of the highest levels of biodiversity in the state offer an excellent quality of life to its residents. York's natural and historic features also attract part-time residents and short-term visitors who return on an annual basis, often choosing to make York their permanent home.

Here are some important things to know about our population now, and what we can expect in the future:

- York has experienced a slow overall year-round population growth over the past decade, growing from 12,720 residents in 2010 to 13,070 in 2019, a 2.8% increase. The number of households grew by 7.9% during that time, with average household size decreasing from 2.37 to 2.27 over the same time period (due in particular to a decline in household sizes among renters).
- York's seasonal population and households have grown rapidly over the past decade, by 46% and 38%, respectively.
- The median age in York rose from 46.5 years old to 52.2 years old between 2010 and 2019; the median ages for York County and Maine in 2019 were 45.2 years old and 44.7 years old, respectively.
- School enrollment has slowly declined, along with the number of young families who live in York.
- Poverty rates are highest for residents 65 years and older.
- Despite having a much higher median income compared to the county and state, a surprising number of York households are housing cost burdened (44.9% of renters and 22.9% of homeowners), which means they spend more than 30% of their income on housing-related expenses.

BACKGROUND ON THE PLAN

This Comprehensive Plan (Plan) was developed under the purview of York's Planning Board through a public process led by the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee over a period of one year. The 14-member Steering Committee, led by the Planning Board Chair and comprised of a broad and diverse range of community members representing different components of the community, oversaw the planning process, including the consultant team's work. The Steering Committee's charge was to deliver a Plan that is understandable to the public, provides metrics for success, and meets requirements to be certified by the State of Maine for consistency with the goals and guidelines of Maine's Growth Management Act.

PLAN PURPOSE

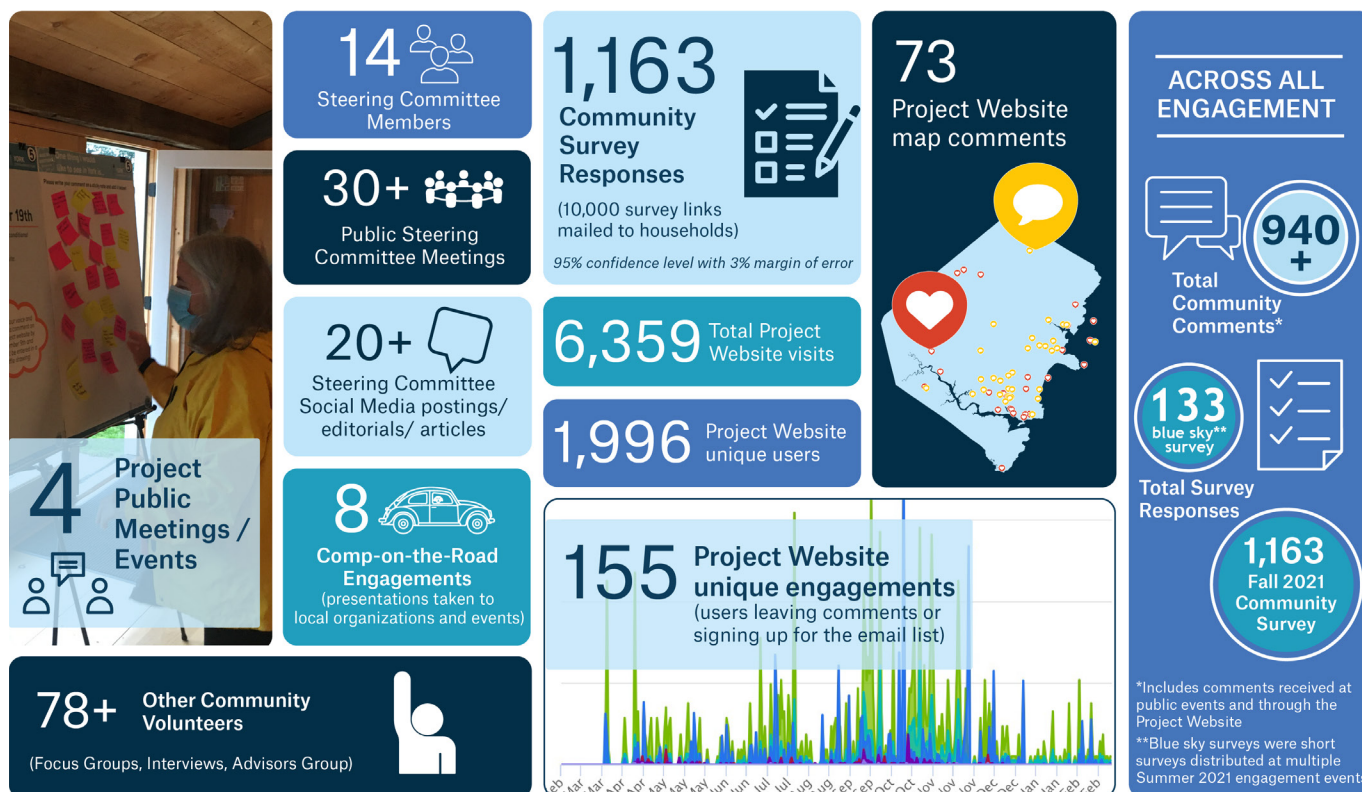
The Comprehensive Plan is a road map, setting a vision and goals that will guide future land use decisions and Town investments. The goals and recommended strategies in the Plan provide a policy guide for the Town for the next ten to fifteen years and address three key questions for the town:

1. **What type of town do we wish to live in?**
2. **What are the goals to help us maintain what we love and successfully shape a resilient future?**
3. **What are the specific strategies and actions that can help us achieve our goals?**

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

The Steering Committee's primary objective was to create a Plan that represents what community members believe to be most important in the coming decade. The COVID-19 pandemic shaped the form of public participation, and feedback

opportunities included in-person and outdoor socially distanced events, online interactions, and a community survey to ensure that citizens could participate in ways most comfortable to them with the greatest convenience and safety in mind.



OUR VISION

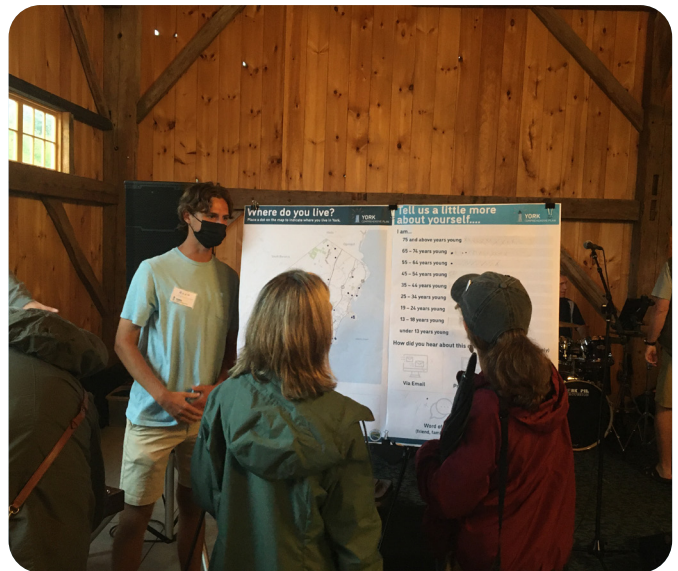
The vision for the Town of York can be expressed through the passionate words spoken by the community. From the spectacular forests and views of Mount Agamenticus to the brilliance of the sea, York is a beautiful and unique land that is a critical piece of Maine's coastline. Our vision demands we maintain our quality of life for all York residents in the face of climate and other global changes. We strive to balance the many needs of the community by continuously improving the quality and diversity of York's economy, community, housing, recreation, and transportation, while at the same time preserving all our precious natural resources and the rich history of York. It is vital that we work together to achieve the community's view of the future.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENTS, GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Everything from public outreach events, the community survey and online communication postings, to the plan elements shown in the graphic below, were scrutinized and evaluated by the Steering Committee, who then reached a consensus on the important goals for this Plan.



Source: 50 most frequently used words submitted as part of the visioning exercise in the Fall 2021 Community Survey



PLAN GOALS TO ACHIEVE THE VISION

01 | Foster a socially and economically diverse population in the town.

York is home to residents of all ages and seeks to be a welcoming community. Providing support and housing choices for those who work in York, are starting families and careers, and older residents wanting to age in community are important to maintaining the vibrancy of our neighborhoods and schools.

02 | Ensure the needs of York's increasing older adult population are met.

York's population is older, on average, than the county's and the state's, and the proportion of older adults has been growing. Meeting the social, housing, transportation, and service needs of older adults is critical for allowing York residents to age in community.

03 | Protect the quality and quantity of water resources in order to ensure the safety and affordability of public and private supplies of fresh drinking water.

The supply of our drinking water depends on minimizing pollution discharges and stormwater runoff, improving water quality, educating landowners, and cooperating regionally to protect water resources.

04 | Preserve, protect, and enhance all natural resources, including wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, sand dunes, shore lands, scenic vistas, and forests.

Our natural resources are a key characteristic of our town. Identifying and protecting high value natural resources and increasing public awareness of them and coordinating with local organizations and neighboring communities on conservation and protection efforts will help preserve our natural environment.

05 | Safeguard agricultural and forest resources from development that threatens those resources.

Protecting existing prime farmland and forests, supporting farming and forestry and encouraging their economic vitality, and ensuring that those who want to farm in York are able to do so are all actions that will preserve our unique resources.

06 | Preserve, protect, and enhance marine resources. Balance competing uses of waterways, lakes, ponds, rivers, and other natural areas in ways that are consistent with health and safety, economic sustainability, and conservation.

As a coastal community, York's marine resources, including its harbors, beaches, parks, estuaries, and coastline areas, are essential to life here.

Protecting, maintaining, and improving marine habitat, water quality, harbor facilities, and public access, while balancing uses and limiting adverse impacts, are all integral to preparing for the future.

07 | Support the potential for responsible increased use of, and access to, recreational resources to meet the needs of users while maintaining protections of critical habitat and drinking water.

York is home to many recreational amenities, including its beaches, fishing and boating opportunities, parks and walking paths, large trail systems and nature preserves, and recreational programming for various age groups. Future enjoyment of these resources depends on balancing recreational access with protecting natural resources.

08 | Preserve York's historic and archaeological resources.

The town's history is a key characteristic of York. Buildings, stories, archaeological sites, and the Museums of Old York are major town assets and points of pride for residents. Actively working toward preserving and encouraging adaptive reuse of these resources, where appropriate, will be key to protecting our character and history.

09 | Minimize impacts of vehicular traffic and reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in York.

Providing an efficient public transportation system, improving safety and opportunities for walking and biking, and planning for land use patterns that minimize total VMT can greatly improve quality of life for residents and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

10 | Improve and expand York's physical, digital, and social connections.

Providing for more ways to travel in town, connecting to regional destinations, improving resident access to technology, and expanding opportunities to connect with neighbors strengthens our community connections in multiple ways.

11 | Optimize and increase resources and capacity for recreation, social programming, and activities for the York community.

Expanding access to existing spaces, supporting the development of new spaces, and increasing options for activities and programming supports our community and connects us to each other.

12 | Manage impacts of tourism and ensure benefits to residents.

The Town receives significant benefits from its tourist economy, including a robust tax base from second homes. Impacts of peak tourist season, including the high levels of vehicular congestion and demands on parking, restaurants, beaches and other natural areas, will need managing to maintain and improve residents' quality of life.

13 | Support the retention, growth, and diversification of York's economic base, including expansion of year-round employment, living wage jobs, and growing industries.

Promoting an economic climate that expands the types of local businesses will help to increase job opportunities, contribute to overall economic well-being, and provide year-round services and activities to residents.

14 | Strengthen, expand, and support community-oriented business opportunities.

Encouraging and enhancing the vitality of York's businesses will expand the supply of goods, services, and other benefits to residents. Community-oriented businesses include shops, healthcare, dining, social events, arts and music spaces and offerings, enrichment spaces, and recreation.

15 | Encourage and promote a variety of types and prices of housing opportunities.

The ability to attract a diverse spectrum of full-time residents who can live and work in York is hampered by limited housing choices and prices that are increasingly unaffordable for many. Adopting housing policies and actions that encourage a variety of sizes, types, prices, and ownership and rental opportunities will help residents to live in the community throughout their life span and allow people who work in York to live in York.

16 | Prepare for impacts of climate change.

The changing climate, with sea level rise, warmer air and water temperatures, and more severe precipitation and storm events, threatens our health and safety, quality of life, the natural environs of the town, the tourism economy, and our tax base. Ensuring that York can adapt and thrive in the midst of climate change will be key to preserving the vibrancy and economic resilience of our town.

17 | Implement policies to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions according to the Town's commitments.

In 2019, the Town Selectboard joined the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy and made a commitment to reduce York's GHG emissions by 50% by 2030 and 100% by 2050 from 2010 levels. Reducing residential building and passenger vehicle emissions—our largest contributors to GHG emissions—will help us meet those commitments and improve our quality of life.

18 | Ensure sufficient municipal facilities, infrastructure, and capacity to meet the changing needs of the community.

Encouraging economic development and accommodating changing demographics requires planning, well-trained staff, financial capacity, and an effective system of public facilities and infrastructure. Together, these measures also support the Town in meeting goals of climate change adaptation, GHG emissions mitigation, implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, and other initiatives as approved by voters.

19 | Improve coordination with local and regional entities and maintain, expand, and improve partnerships among public and private groups.

York is fortunate to have many local non-profits, quasi-municipal agencies and regional partners working on common interests and goals, including the Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission (SMPDC). Working regionally and collaboratively will ensure the Town reaps the benefits of available expertise, funding opportunities, and efficiencies of scale.

20 | Strive for excellence in education and learning opportunities for York school students and residents of all ages.

The community recognizes the importance of life-long learning. Maintaining a quality curriculum and school experience, as well as supporting learning opportunities for residents of all ages, will enhance quality of life in town.

STRATEGIES AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Steering Committee developed 203 strategies to achieve the goals of this Plan (detailed in Chapter 5 and summarized in Appendix D, including the action timeline and implementers responsible for each one). The strategies are intended to be implemented over the course of the next ten years and have been assigned action timelines of immediate, near-term, medium-term, long-term, and on-going. While some are required regulatory mandates, the vast majority of strategies are based on direct feedback from the York community and will involve further study and input. While every one of the 203 strategies is important, listed here are eleven strategies the Steering Committee identified as immediate action items to build a firm foundation for implementing the full Comprehensive Plan and to address immediate needs:

- **Work with local and regional conservation organizations to identify high priority natural resources, open space, and recreational land to be conserved or protected. (2.1; pg 29)**
- **Evaluate the Town's existing Open Space Conservation Subdivision (OSCS) Zoning Development Ordinance to better serve preservation of natural resources. (2.6; pg 30)**
- **Plan for, develop, and manage opportunities for residents to access and enjoy the Town's limited marine resources. (3.1; pg 38)**
- **Establish an Economic Development Committee (EDC) to develop a vision for economic opportunities and a business recruitment plan. (4.1; pg 42)**
- **Conduct design charettes (workshops) for the area surrounding Short Sands Road to determine the appropriate mix of uses for this site, incorporating business, residential, and recreational opportunities. (4.4; pg 42)**

- **Create a Community Housing Committee to address the range of housing costs and types needed in York. (5.4; pg 48)**
- **Commission a comprehensive transportation, traffic, and parking study for the town. (7.1; pg 58)**
- **Perform a complete re-evaluation and re-writing of the existing Zoning Ordinance to ensure that York's zoning clearly matches the goals for each Future Land Use area and is easy to understand, streamlined, and modernized. (8.1; pg 64)**
- **Assign responsibility for implementing the Future Land Use Plan to the appropriate committee, board, or official. (8.8; pg 66)**
- **Consider conducting a needs assessment for Town staffing and volunteer boards to understand capacity and resources needed to address increasing resident needs and expectations for services. (8.50; pg 70)**
- **Explore hiring or sharing a regional Sustainability Coordinator to implement climate adaptation and mitigation strategies. (8.59; pg 71)**

Many of the recommendations in this document will require actions such as Selectboard policy decisions, collaboration with partners, or town vote to approve zoning amendments, modify policies, or allocate funding. The purpose of this Plan is to help ensure that all areas and staff of the Town are working efficiently together in a systems-based approach so that any future decision or action supports one or more Town goals. The Comprehensive Plan is the opposite of a siloed approach to decision-making and spending; it provides a set of overarching goals to guide decision-making across departments, thereby improving overall efficiency and reducing negative unintended impacts. This Plan, then, is about streamlining efforts and creating a cohesive approach to the decisions that affect policies, programs, spending, and the many day-to-day elements of life in York.



1

Introduction

chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

THIS PLAN'S PURPOSE

This Comprehensive Plan addresses three key questions for the town...

1. **What type of town do we wish to live in?**
2. **What are the goals to help us maintain what we love and successfully shape a resilient future?**
3. **What are the specific strategies and actions that can help us achieve our goals?**

The answers to these questions form the core of this Comprehensive Plan. This Plan is guided by 20 goals that create a broad, long-term vision for our community accompanied by recommended strategies in eight topic areas¹ to achieve these goals.

York's previous Comprehensive Plan was approved by the voters on May 22, 1999, and it has been amended regularly throughout the years. It is time for a completely updated, in-depth and coordinated road map to lead the Town forward during this time of rapid change. This Plan is that road map, setting a vision and goals that will guide future land use decisions and Town investments. The goals and recommended strategies and policies in the Plan provide a policy guide for the Town for the next 10–15 years.

There are many types of strategies to achieve the goals of this Plan—while some are regulatory, the majority are formed based on direct feedback from the York community and will require further study and examination. Many of the recommendations in this document will require further action in some form or another, such as Selectboard policy decisions, collaboration with partners, or a town-wide vote to approve zoning amendments, modify policies, or allocate funding. The purpose of this Plan is to ensure that the Town is working efficiently together in a systems-based approach so that any future decision or action supports one or more Town goals. The Comprehensive Plan is the opposite of a siloed approach to decision-making and spending, with the hope that it will reduce decision-making that results in unintended impacts or inefficiencies of scale. This Plan, then, is about streamlining efforts and creating a cohesive approach to the decisions that affect policies, programs, spending, and all the day-to-day elements of life in York.

York's needs and desires drove this Plan. At the same time, the Town's goal is to have this Plan certified by the State of Maine for consistency with the goals and guidelines of Maine's Growth Management Act.² In the Appendices and in other places in this document, there are references to state requirements as laid out in the state of Maine's Comprehensive Plan Review Criteria Rule (07 105 Chapter 208) and you will find state checklists as reference to how the Plan meets these requirements.

Elements of the Comprehensive Plan



THE PLANNING PROCESS

This Comprehensive Plan was developed under the purview of the Planning Board through a public process that was led by the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. The Committee, led by the Planning Board Chair, oversaw the consultant team's work and was comprised of a broad range of community members with varied expertise representing different components of the community, including public/private, business and organizational segments, and demographic diversity. The Steering Committee also included Selectboard representation.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

An outreach and communications plan was developed to guide community engagement over the course of the project. A website devoted to the project offered opportunities for online engagement as another option for direct involvement and timely feedback to the Committee.

Outreach and engagement faced unique challenges due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic throughout the entire process. These challenges created opportunities for new ways of engaging York residents. While there were in-person activities, including the Plan launch public event in July 2021

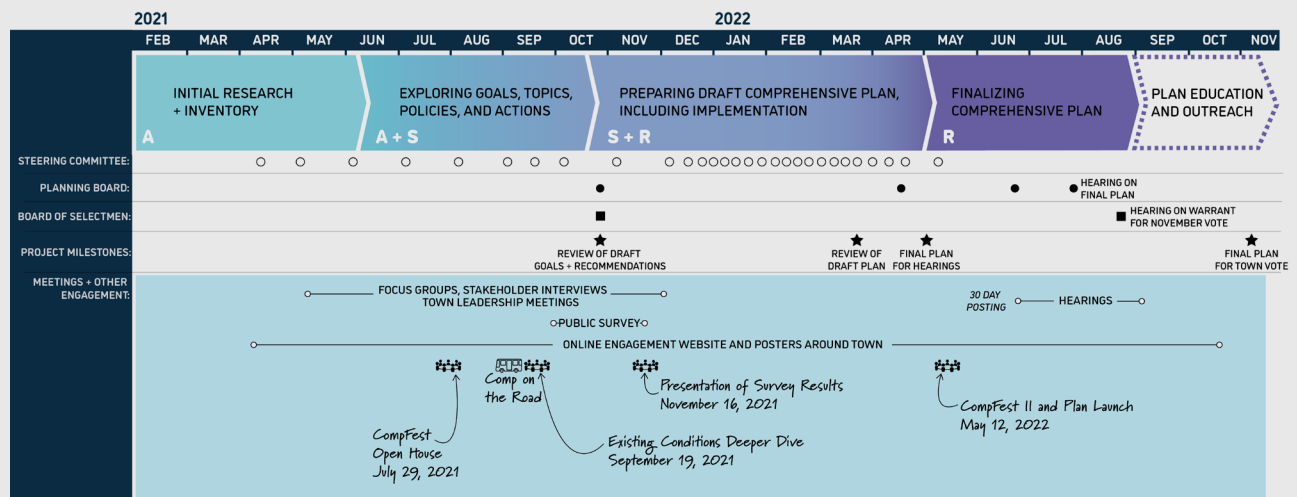
Photo Credit: Geneve Hoffman and Williams Realty Partners



and the September 2021 Open House at the York Community Auditorium, many of the meetings were hosted and open to the public online. We saw York residents participate in these meetings from their living rooms and even from their gardens, holding children (or pets). All Steering Committee meeting recordings were posted on the Town website, and all meeting materials and discussion notes were available on the Comprehensive Plan project website. Specific details about engagement activities can be found in Chapter 3: Engaging the York Community. Details of community feedback are provided for each topic area in Chapter 5 and Appendices.



PROJECT TIMELINE



HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

This Comprehensive Plan is designed to be accessible to everyone as a clear, concise road map for future Town decisions. There were thousands of hours of work, meetings, research, discussions, writing, and re-writing that went into this Plan. This work is the foundation for this 93-page main document. The result is a Plan that looks different from York's amended 1999 Comprehensive Plan, with a concise, reader-friendly main document and multiple appendices with background information and state checklists. You have several ways to access this Comprehensive Plan, depending on your interests or needs:

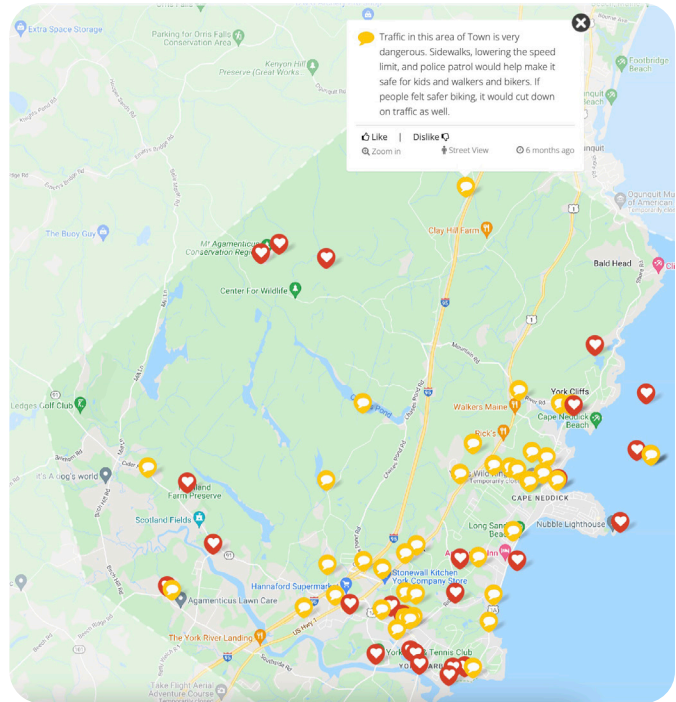
1. **I want key takeaways.** Read the Executive Summary at the beginning of this Plan, which is also available as a separate document.
2. **I want to know what goals and strategies are recommended.** Read Chapter 5: Goals, Policies & Strategies for all strategies to achieve the Plan goals.
3. **I want an understanding of the entire Comprehensive Plan process and outcomes.** Read Chapters 1 through 7, the main body of the Comprehensive Plan.
4. **I want to dig into the background data and information that went into creating this Plan.** The appendices at the end of the Comprehensive Plan provide in-depth information on current conditions in all the Plan elements (Appendix A), fiscal implications (Appendix B), background information on the Future Land Use Plan (Appendix C), details on implementation actions (Appendix D), community engagement efforts (Appendix E), the York Water District Public Water System Report for this Plan (Appendix F), a list of maps found in this Plan (Appendix G), and how the Plan meets state certification requirements (Appendix H).

Read on to Chapter 2 for information on the vision for York and the goals for this Plan.

ENDNOTES

- 1 These Plan elements are combined into the eight strategy topic areas in Chapter 5. Population & Demographics and Existing Land Use are only in Appendix A: Current Conditions; the data and analyses from these elements informed all of the topic areas. Fiscal Capacity & Implementation is discussed in Chapter 7: Implementation and in Appendix B: Fiscal Capacity & CIP.
- 2 State of Maine 30-A M.R.S.A §§ 4312 – 4350.

The Project Website offered the community opportunities to make comments on the town map, answer questions, and access all project materials.



At CompFest! in July 2021, community members visited topic area stations and left comments, completed surveys for raffle prizes, and enjoyed good food!

Photo Credit: Geneve Hoffman and Williams Realty Partners



2

Vision & Planning Goals

A VISION FOR YORK

The vision for the town of York can be expressed through the passionate words spoken by the community. From the spectacular forests and views of Mount Agamenticus to the brilliance of the sea, York is a beautiful and unique land that is a critical piece of Maine's coastline. Our vision demands we maintain our quality of life for all York residents in the face of climate and other global changes. We strive to balance the many needs of the community by continuously improving the quality and diversity of York's economy, community, housing, recreation and transportation, while at the same time preserving all our precious natural resources and the rich history of York. It is vital that we work together to achieve the community's view of the future.





STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

This Comprehensive Plan considers the varied needs and desires of our community with the goal of improving our quality of life and shaping our future. Change will occur whether we plan for it or not. This Plan seeks to protect the things we love while working toward a future that carefully considers differing points of view.

Our future, then, is about balance. Our community has prioritized natural resource protection and conservation as a core goal for the Comprehensive Plan while also expressing a desire for a greater variety of housing choices (costs, sizes, types) to ensure York thrives as a community that provides housing throughout our citizens' lifespans, and that people who work in York can afford to live in York.

Protection of our natural resources is critical, not only for habitat preservation and recreational opportunities they provide, but also for their role in helping our town adapt to climate change. The ability of our forests, rivers, and marshlands to store carbon also assists us with our commitments to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and to do our part to slow global warming.

Housing is linked to the economy and York, like every other coastal town in Maine, suffers from a labor shortage. Increasingly, the diversity of businesses and amenities that we want to see as part of our daily lives—restaurants, independently owned and unique shops, services that help us maintain our health and improve our homes, as well as activities we enjoy throughout the year—is challenged by the lack of affordable housing that limits the ability of employers to attract the workforce we need for the services we want.

The visitors who come to explore our history and enjoy our beautiful beaches and forests support and enable the range of businesses we enjoy. Some stay and build homes for year-round and part-time residence, and the tax revenue from these dwellings supports our quality of life. At the same time, we wish to manage the impacts of tourism in our community such as traffic congestion, a housing shortage, and lack of parking.

The cost of doing nothing is great. Without clear policies and proactive strategies, there will continue to be conflicts between recreational and commercial uses of our waterways, current residents will find it increasingly difficult to find suitable housing to age in our community, and families who help our school system thrive will settle elsewhere. Our neighbors and local workers, and perhaps even ourselves, will be unable to find the housing, goods, and services we desire now, and as our needs change in the future.

The 20 Plan goals, taken together, provide a balanced approach to shaping the future of York. While some goals may appear to be inconsistent with each other, they complement each other when implemented through a cohesive and thoughtful approach. Each of the Plan's goals and resulting strategies must be viewed within the larger context of all goals with a careful consideration of overall land use policies. Each strategy has many filters—land conservation and preservation, adaptation to climate change, providing housing choices for our residents and workers, managing the impacts of tourism, and more. Charts in Appendix D show how the strategies in this Plan service multiple goals and work together to shape the best possible future for our town.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS

These goals were developed from community feedback. Read on to Chapter 3 for details on how we reached out to the community during the planning process.

01 Foster a socially and economically diverse population in the town.

York is home to residents of all ages and seeks to be a welcoming community. Providing support and housing choices for those who work in York, are starting families and careers, and older residents wanting to age in community are important to maintaining the vibrancy of our neighborhoods and schools.

02 Ensure the needs of York's increasing older adult population are met.

York's population is older, on average, than the county's and the state's, and the proportion of older adults has been growing. Meeting the social, housing, transportation, and service needs of older adults is critical for allowing York residents to age in community.

03 Protect the quality and quantity of water resources in order to ensure the safety and affordability of public and private supplies of fresh drinking water.

The supply of our drinking water depends on minimizing pollution discharges and stormwater runoff, improving water quality, educating landowners, and cooperating regionally to protect water resources.

04 Preserve, protect, and enhance all natural resources, including wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, sand dunes, shore lands, scenic vistas, and forests.

Our natural resources are a key characteristic of our town. Identifying and protecting high value natural resources and increasing public awareness of them and coordinating with local organizations and neighboring communities on conservation and protection efforts will help preserve our natural environment.

05 Safeguard agricultural and forest resources from development that threatens those resources.

Protecting existing prime farmland and forests, supporting farming and forestry and encouraging their economic vitality, and ensuring that those who want to farm in York are able to do so are all actions that will preserve our unique resources.

06 Preserve, protect, and enhance marine resources. Balance competing uses of waterways, lakes, ponds, rivers, and other natural areas in ways that are consistent with health and safety, economic sustainability, and conservation.

As a coastal community, York's marine resources, including its harbors, beaches, parks, estuaries, and coastline areas, are essential to life here. Protecting, maintaining, and improving marine habitat, water quality, harbor facilities, and public access, while balancing uses and limiting adverse impacts, are all integral to preparing for the future.

07 Support the potential for responsible increased use of, and access to, recreational resources to meet the needs of users while maintaining protections of critical habitat and drinking water.

York is home to many recreational amenities, including its beaches, fishing and boating opportunities, parks and walking paths, large trail systems and nature preserves, and recreational programming for various age groups. Future enjoyment of these resources depends on balancing recreational access with protecting natural resources.

08 Preserve York's historic and archaeological resources.

The town's history is a key characteristic of York. Buildings, stories, archaeological sites, and the Museums of Old York are major town assets and points of pride for residents. Actively working toward preserving and encouraging adaptive reuse of these resources, where appropriate, will be key to protecting our character and history.

09 Minimize impacts of vehicular traffic and reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in York.

Providing an efficient public transportation system, improving safety and opportunities for walking and biking, and planning for land use patterns that minimize total VMT can greatly improve quality of life for residents and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

10 Improve and expand York's physical, digital, and social connections.

Providing for more ways to travel in town, connecting to regional destinations, improving resident access to technology, and expanding opportunities to connect with neighbors strengthens our community connections in multiple ways.

11 | Optimize and increase resources and capacity for recreation, social programming, and activities for the York community.

Expanding access to existing spaces, supporting the development of new spaces, and increasing options for activities and programming supports our community and connects us to each other.

12 | Manage impacts of tourism and ensure benefits to residents.

The Town receives significant benefits from its tourist economy, including a robust tax base from second homes. Impacts of peak tourist season, including the high levels of vehicular congestion and demands on parking, restaurants, beaches and other natural areas, will need managing to maintain and improve residents' quality of life.

13 | Support the retention, growth, and diversification of York's economic base, including expansion of year-round employment, living wage jobs, and growing industries.

Promoting an economic climate that expands the types of local businesses will help to increase job opportunities, contribute to overall economic well-being, and provide year-round services and activities to residents.

14 | Strengthen, expand, and support community-oriented business opportunities.

Encouraging and enhancing the vitality of York's businesses will expand the supply of goods, services, and other benefits to residents. Community-oriented businesses include shops, healthcare, dining, social events, arts and music spaces and offerings, enrichment spaces, and recreation.

15 | Encourage and promote a variety of types and prices of housing opportunities.

The ability to attract a diverse spectrum of full-time residents who can live and work in York is hampered by limited housing choices and prices that are increasingly unaffordable for many. Adopting housing policies and actions that encourage a variety of sizes, types, prices, and ownership and rental opportunities will help residents to live in the community throughout their life span and allow people who work in York to live in York.

16 | Prepare for impacts of climate change.

The changing climate, with sea level rise, warmer air and water temperatures, and more severe precipitation and storm events, threatens our health and safety, quality of life, the natural environs of the town, the tourism economy, and our tax base. Ensuring that York can adapt and thrive in the midst of climate change will be key to preserving the vibrancy and economic resilience of our town.

17 | Implement policies to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions according to the Town's commitments.

In 2019, the Town Selectboard joined the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy and made a commitment to reduce York's GHG emissions by 50% by 2030 and 100% by 2050 from 2010 levels. Reducing residential building and passenger vehicle emissions—our largest contributors to GHG emissions—will help us meet those commitments and improve our quality of life.

18 | Ensure sufficient municipal facilities, infrastructure, and capacity to meet the changing needs of the community.

Encouraging economic development and accommodating changing demographics requires planning, well-trained staff, financial capacity, and an effective system of public facilities and infrastructure. Together, these measures also support the Town in meeting goals of climate change adaptation, GHG emissions mitigation, implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, and other initiatives as approved by voters.

19 | Improve coordination with local and regional entities and maintain, expand, and improve partnerships among public and private groups.

York is fortunate to have many local non-profits, quasi-municipal agencies and regional partners working on common interests and goals, including the Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission (SMPDC). Working regionally and collaboratively will ensure the Town reaps the benefits of available expertise, funding opportunities, and efficiencies of scale.

20 | Strive for excellence in education and learning opportunities for York school students and residents of all ages.

The community recognizes the importance of life-long learning. Maintaining a quality curriculum and school experience, as well as supporting learning opportunities for residents of all ages, will enhance quality of life in town.



3

Engaging the York Community

chapter 3 ENGAGING THE YORK COMMUNITY

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY – OUR PROCESS

This process was guided by the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, whose 14 members were appointed by the Planning Board for their depth of experience, expertise, or interest in the various components of topics within the Plan. The COVID-19 pandemic shaped the form of public participation and events, and feedback opportunities included in-person and outdoor socially distanced events, online interactions, and a community survey to ensure that citizens could participate in ways most comfortable to them with the greatest convenience and safety in mind.

Over the course of the project, the Steering Committee held over 30 meetings which were open to the public in-person or via the Zoom online platform. Meetings were televised or live-streamed, and all recordings were immediately available for public viewing on the Town and project websites.

The project website was created with information on the planning process, questions for the public, an interactive mapping section, and a community forum for comments. An instructional video provided guidance on using the site and all project materials and presentations were posted for public access.

Public events and workshops included the CompFest! project launch, an indoor/outdoor event with games, food trucks, and poster stations in the summer of 2021, as well as a three-hour Open House and workshop discussion in the fall at the York Community Auditorium. A digital community survey was also conducted in October 2021. Postcards with the survey link were mailed to every registered voter and property owner in York, the link was published online and on social media, and paper copies of the survey were available at Town Hall to be picked up or mailed upon request. With 1,163 responses, the survey respondents were broadly representative of the demographics of the community and had a confidence level of 95% with a 3% margin of error.

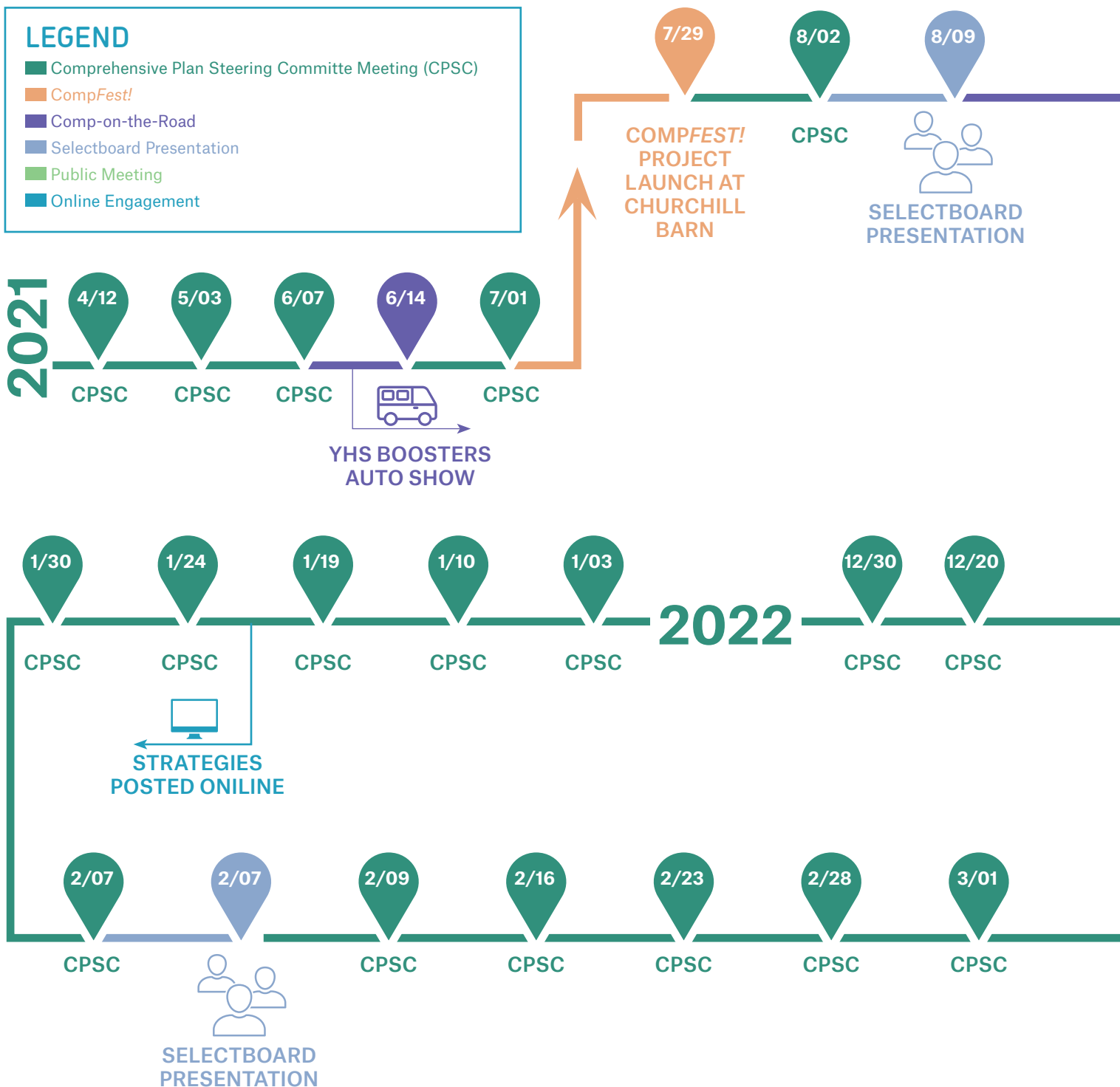


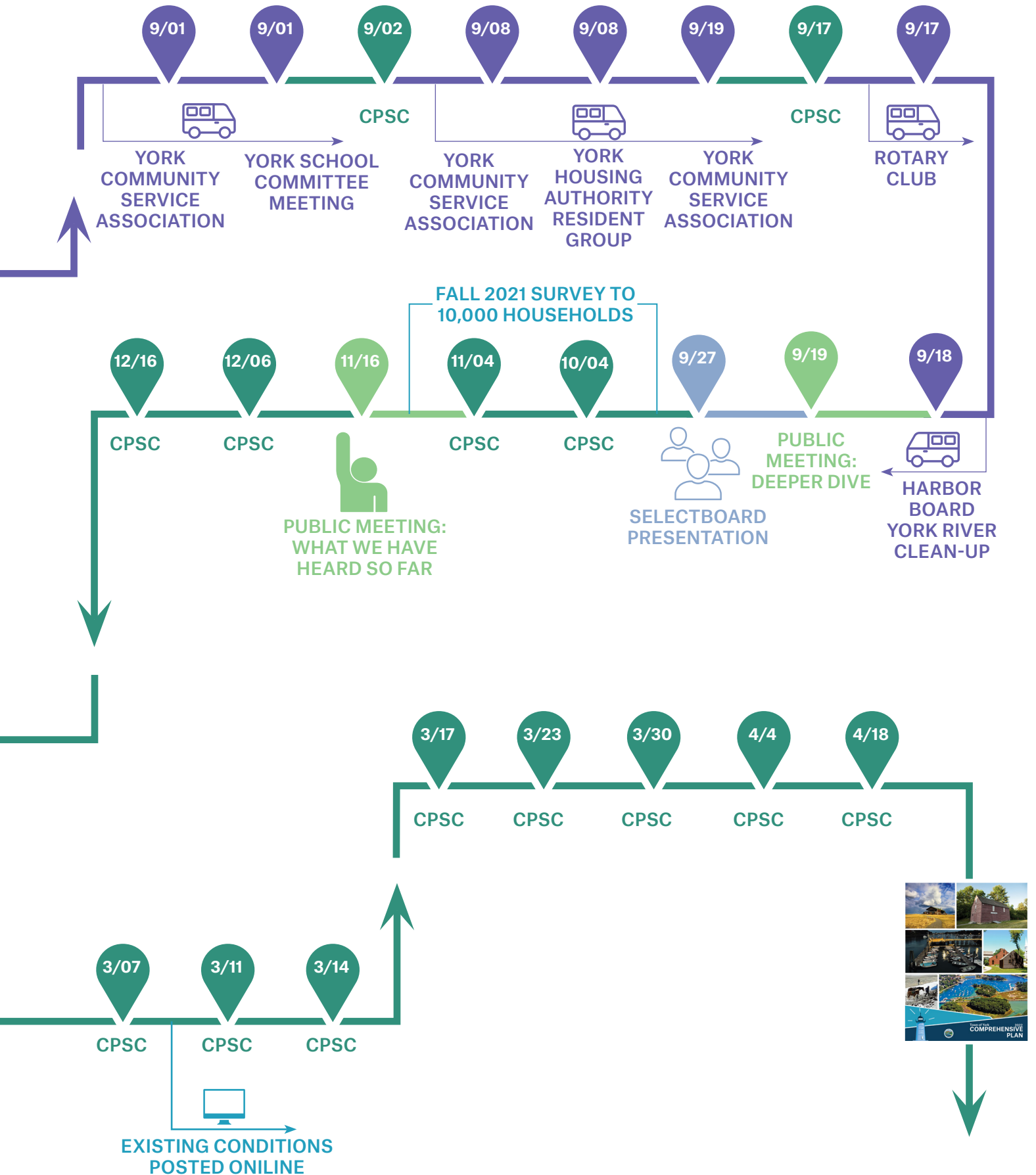
Community engagement at CompFest! in July 2021

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE

The consultant tabulated feedback consisting of comments on topic boards at *CompFest!*, the Current Conditions Open House and Presentation, the Community Survey, and online engagement through the project website, which was then presented to the public in November 2021. Throughout December, the Steering Committee

used the community's comments and observations to develop the 20 goals of this Plan. During the subsequent development of strategies to achieve the goals, feedback summaries, in particular the Community Survey that was widely representative of the town, were provided in each topic area as context for the Committee's decisions.





SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



WHAT THE COMMUNITY SAID

While feedback varied, overall themes emerged during the Comprehensive Plan process that are worth noting here as these themes have shaped the vision and goals for this Plan.

Strive for balance:

- Keep land conservation a priority while expanding housing choices for York residents.
- Continue to enjoy a robust tax base while managing impacts of tourism.
- Attract young families and professionals to our town, and enable older adults to age in their community.
- Ensure commercial uses of our waterways and enhance recreational access where possible while protecting natural areas from overuse that threaten water resources.
- Support a strong tourism economy while maintaining quality of services and access for residents to town recreation and amenities.

- Maintain high-quality public facilities, services, programs, and infrastructure to support a thriving and connected community.
- Ensure the needs of York's increasing older adult population are met.
- Consider climate change, including climate change adaptation and greenhouse gas emissions reduction measures, in Plan strategies and throughout York's policies and decision-making.
- Protect and celebrate York's historic and archaeological resources.
- Continue and expand the Town of York's collaboration and coordination with local and regional entities, as well as public and private groups.

Detailed community feedback can be found in Chapter 5, organized by Plan topic area. The complete report of community engagement is included in Appendix E and each Current Conditions document in Appendix A also includes feedback highlights. Read on to Chapter 4 for a snapshot of York today, with information on population and demographics and projections for the future.



4

York's Community Today

chapter 4 YORK'S COMMUNITY TODAY... AND LOOKING AHEAD



Photo Credit: Robin Kerr Parks & Recreation

OUR COMMUNITY

York is a community of over 13,000 year-round residents on the coast of Maine. With beautiful beaches, large areas of forest, some of the highest levels of biodiversity in the state, and historic villages and buildings, the town offers a high quality of life to residents. York's natural and historic features also attract part-time residents and short-term visitors.

When asked about important elements for a vision for the town in the Fall 2021 Community Survey, the most common response from residents was "community." This theme of community recurred throughout the planning process and is reflected throughout the goals, strategies, and policies of the Plan. Below is a snapshot of York's community today, trends, and expectations for the future.

What are important things to know about our population now and what can we expect in the future?

The number of households has been increasing but the average household size is decreasing.

School enrollment has slowly declined, along with the number of young families who live in York.

Poverty rates are highest for residents 65 years and older.

York's seasonal population and households have grown rapidly over the past decade.

York will continue to have a population that is older than the county and state; the population aged 60 and above is expected to grow as a proportion of the total community.

York will continue to see steady and moderate year-round population growth.

Despite having a much higher median income compared to the county and state, a surprising number of York households are housing cost burdened, which means they spend more than 30% of their income on housing-related expenses.

YORK'S POPULATIONS

York's seasonal population and households have grown rapidly over the past decade, by 46% and 38%, respectively.

A unique characteristic of York is the three populations that contribute to our town: year-round residents, our seasonal population, and our peak summer population.

York has experienced a slow overall year-round population growth over the past decade, growing from 12,720 residents in 2010 to 13,070 in 2019, a 2.8% increase. The number of households grew by 7.9% during that time, with average household size decreasing from 2.37 to 2.27 over the same time period (due in particular to a decline in household sizes among renters).

Year-round residents consider York their primary residence.

Seasonal population refers to those who live in York but consider another place their primary residence. The "total seasonal population" includes both year-round residents and those who live in York for only part of each year.

Peak summer population includes year-round and seasonal residents, as well as those who visit in the summer for shorter stays.

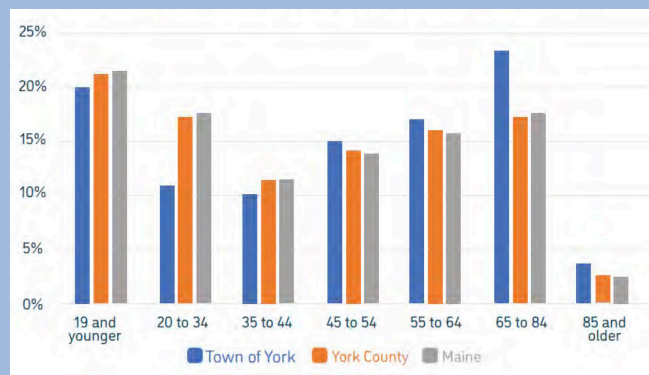
MEDIAN AGE

York has an older population than York County and the State.

The median age in York rose from 46.5 years old to 52.2 years old between 2010 and 2019; the median ages for York County and Maine in 2019 were 45.2 years old and 44.7 years old, respectively.

At approximately 23%, York has a much higher percentage of residents aged 65 to 84 years than the rest of the county or the state (Fig. 1). At the same time, York has fewer young adults between the ages of 20-34 years compared to the county or state.

Figure 1. Population by Age, Town of York, York County, and Maine, 2019



Source: 2019 Five-Year American Community Survey U.S. Census.

MEDIAN HOUSHOLD INCOME

The median household income in York grew from about \$64,000 in 2010 to \$93,333 in 2019, a 46% increase in less than 10 years. The town's 2019 median household income was substantially higher than for the county (\$67,830) and state (\$57,918).

Poverty rates are highest for those 65 and older in York

Among all age groups, poverty rates are highest for those 65 and older, which is a growing proportion of the population (Table 1).

Many in York are Housing Cost-Burdened

Even with a high median household income, a high percentage of renters in York in 2019 had housing cost-burdens (44.9%), as did 22.9% of homeowners. The percentage of renters and homeowners who were housing cost-burdened declined between 2011 - 2019.

Table 1. Household and Resident Well-Being Indicators for York, York County, and Maine, 2019

Indicator	York	York County	Maine
Median Age	52.2	45.2	44.7
Unemployment Rate	2.5%	2.6%	2.6%
Median Household Income	\$93,333	\$67,830	\$57,918
Poverty Rate-All Residents	4.1%	7.9%	10.9%
Under Age 18 Poverty Rate	4.6%	8.2%	15.1%
Age 65+ Poverty Rate	6.7%	6.7%	8.7%
Percent of Population 25+ with Bachelor's Degree or Higher	52.2%	32.5%	31.8%
Self-employment Rate	6.3%	8.0%	8.4%
Employed in Management, Business, Science, or Arts Occupations	49.4%	37.6%	40.1%

Source: 2019 Five-Year American Community Survey U.S. Census.

POPULATION GROWTH

Making the reasonable (but not definitive) assumption that 25 units of seasonal housing will convert to year-round every year starting in 2021, York's year-round population could increase from 13,247 in 2021 to 14,697 in 2031 and to 15,422 in 2036.

AGING POPULATION

A Growing Proportion of Residents will be 60 Years and Older

While all age groups will likely see an increase in numbers, the largest percentage increases will likely be in those age 60 and over (Table 2). This increase in older York residents will affect future housing demand, as these residents are more likely to seek smaller and lower-maintenance homes, including one- and two-bedroom units and rental units.

Table 2. Town Population by Age Group (2015-2031)

	2015	2019	2031 (Estimated)	2019-2031 Estimated Increase
5 to 14 years	1,361	1,391	1,514	8.8%
15 to 17 years	382	634	1,558	145.7%
15 to 44 years	3,561	3,577	3,762	5.2%
16 years and over	10,886	11,069	12,052	8.9%
18 years and over	10,593	10,660	11,243	5.5%
60 years and over	4,095	4,646	6,672	43.6%
65 years and over	2,760	3,543	6,364	79.6%
75 years and over	1,183	1,375	2,072	50.7%
TOTAL POPULATION	12,717	13,070	14,697	12.4%
Median age (years)	50.3	52.2	56.0	3.8

Source: 2019 Five-Year American Community Survey U.S. Census and Levine Planning Strategies.



Photo Credit: Robin Kerr Parks & Recreation

SEASONAL AND YEAR-ROUND

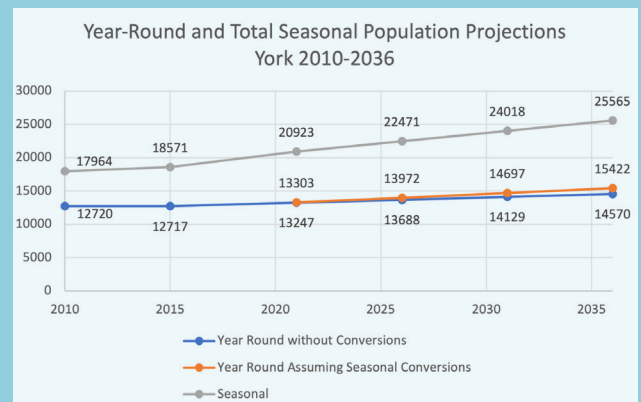
Both year-round and seasonal residents are expected to increase from 2021-2031 (Fig. 2).

York's year-round population is projected to increase from 13,247 in 2021 to 14,697 in 2031, assuming some seasonal housing conversion.

The seasonal population, which includes summer homes but not day visitors or those who stay in hotels, is estimated at 20,923 in 2021, and is expected to increase to 24,018 by 2031.

The summer peak population of the town, which includes the seasonal population as well as those who stay in hotels, is estimated at 30,914 in 2019 with an estimated increase to 31,180 by 2029.

Figure 2. Year-Round and Total Seasonal Population Trends and Projections for York (2010-2036)



Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey and Levine Planning Strategies.

"York has a strong community closeness, village feel, and embraces natural/wild/open spaces"

(Fall 2021 Community Survey)



Photo Credit: Robin Kerr Parks & Recreation



Photo Credit: David McCarthy

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

Based on current population trends, demand for school services should not dramatically change. While the population of school-aged children (5 to 19) stayed relatively constant between 2010 and 2019 and the population of young children (0 to 5) declined by nearly half, the school enrollment has been decreasing since the 2011–2012 school year (Table 3). The number of adults aged 20 to 39 also

decreased by 13.7%, suggesting a continuing trend of fewer young families.

York School Department's projected total school enrollment for the 2022–2023 school year is an estimated 1,618 students. From 2011–2023, that would be a decrease of 258 students and a projected change of -13.75%.

Table 3. Total Actual School Enrollment in All York Public Schools (2011 – 2021)

School Year	2010–2011	2011–2012	2012–2013	2013–2014	2014–2015	2015–2016	2016–2017	2017–2018	2018–2019	2019–2020	2020–2021	Change 2011–2021	% Change 2011–2021
# Students	1876	1850	1846	1826	1788	1746	1746	1729	1684	1639	1627	-249	-13.27%

Source: York School Department

**“Beautiful place to live
and raise a family.”**

(Project Website kick-off survey)

For other information on aspects of York, the Current Conditions documents in Appendix A contain more extensive population and demographic information as well as details on a range of characteristics of York including our Housing, Economy, Natural Areas, Recreation, Transportation, Town Resources, and Historic and Archaeological Resources.



Photo Credit: Geneve Hoffman and Williams Realty Partners



5

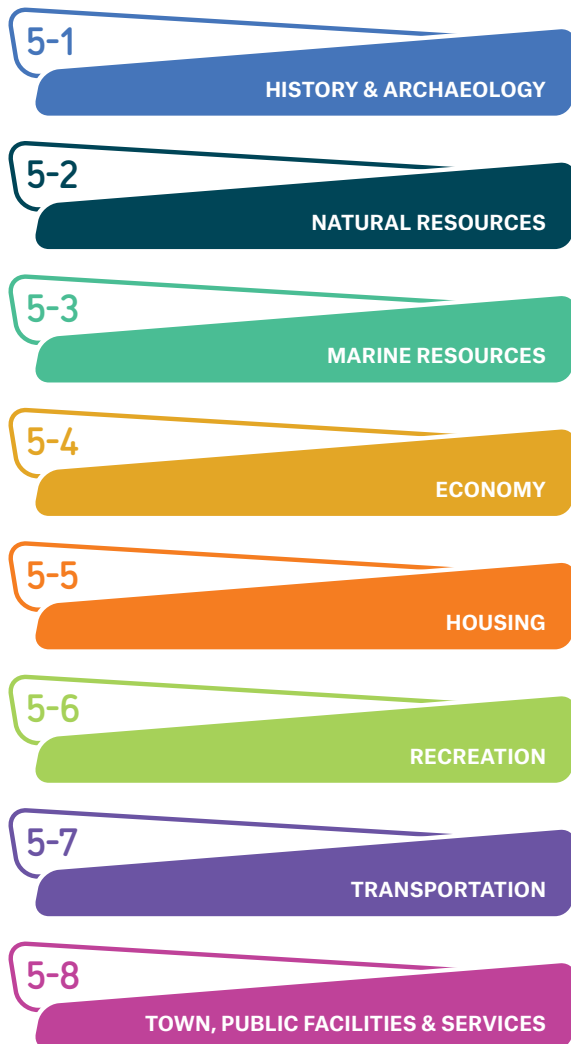
Goals, Policies & Strategies

chapter 5 GOALS, POLICIES & STRATEGIES

OVERVIEW

The 20 goals of this Plan support the York community's overall vision for the next 10-15 years. This chapter is the core of the Plan and contains the 203 strategies spread across eight topic areas that support multiple goals and maximize the benefits of planning comprehensively.

On the following pages, there is a section for each topic area:



Each of these Plan topic areas offers the following information:

- A brief **description** of what is included in the topic area.
- **Highlights of Current Conditions** (the full information can be found in Appendix A).
- **A Sample of What the Community Said** (Appendix A and Appendix E have detailed information).
- **Terms to Know** provide definitions of elements in the strategies that may not be common knowledge.
- **Policies and Strategies** – these are York's strategies to achieve the 20 goals of this Plan. Charts illustrating which strategies meet the 20 Plan goals are included in Appendix D. State-required strategies have been incorporated here and are referenced at the end of applicable strategies in parentheses indicating the state topic area and strategy number. The checklist in Appendix H cross-references all policies and strategies to the state criteria.
- **Endnotes for Chapter 5 appear on page 73.**

THE 20 GOALS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The strategies in each topic area indicate the goals they address, and at the end of each topic area, and charts in Appendix D show how the strategies for each topic area address multiple goals.

1. Foster a socially and economically diverse population in the town.
2. Ensure the needs of York's increasing older adult population are met.
3. Protect the quality and quantity of water resources in order to ensure the safety and affordability of public and private supplies of fresh drinking water.
4. Preserve, protect, and enhance all natural resources, including wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, sand dunes, shore lands, scenic vistas, and forests.
5. Safeguard agricultural and forest resources from development that threatens those resources.
6. Preserve, protect, and enhance marine resources. Balance competing uses of waterways, lakes, ponds, rivers, and other natural areas in ways to be consistent with health and safety, economic sustainability, and conservation.
7. Support the potential for responsible increased use of, and access to, recreational resources to meet the needs of users while maintaining protections of critical habitat and drinking water.
8. Preserve York's historic and archaeological resources.
9. Minimize impacts of vehicular traffic and reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in York.
10. Improve and expand York's physical, digital, and social connections.
11. Optimize and increase resources and capacity for recreation, social programming, and activities for the York community.
12. Manage impacts of tourism and ensure benefits to residents.
13. Support the retention, growth, and diversification of York's economic base, including expansion of year-round employment, living wage jobs, and growing industries.
14. Strengthen, expand, and support community-oriented business opportunities.
15. Encourage and promote a variety of types and prices of housing opportunities.
16. Prepare for impacts of climate change.
17. Implement policies to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions according to the Town's commitments.
18. Ensure sufficient municipal facilities, infrastructure, and capacity to meet the changing needs of the community.
19. Improve coordination with local and regional entities and maintain, expand, and improve partnerships among public and private groups.
20. Strive for excellence in education and learning opportunities for York school students and residents of all ages.

Other Comprehensive Plan elements are not included in this chapter but provide background information or are woven across chapters and approaches:

- **Population & Demographics** – Found in Chapter 4 and Appendix A1, and used as the basis for Current Conditions and addressing trends.
- **Existing Land Use** – Found in Appendix A10 and used to make assessments about future goals and land capacity.
- **Fiscal Capacity & Capital Investment Plan (CIP)** – Background information provided in Appendix B and information on Plan impacts is listed in Chapter 7: Implementation and the detailed Chart in Appendix D.
- **Climate change considerations** are woven throughout the topic areas and throughout Appendix A Current Conditions sections.

Chapter 7 provides information on Plan immediate action strategies, Town capacity, and overall implementation information.



HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY

Historic Buildings • Landscapes • Villages • Archaeological Sites

CURRENT CONDITIONS HIGHLIGHTS

For complete current conditions, including community feedback, see Appendix A2.

- Four Historic Districts on the National Register of Historic Places: York Cliffs Historic District, York Historic District, Boon Island Light Station, and Brave Boat Harbor Farm.
- 13 buildings on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Three Local Historic Districts, 18 local historic landmarks, and one local historic site.
- 23 known prewritten history* archaeological sites in York.
- 207 known written history* archaeological sites in York.
- Sites estimated to be five to seven thousand years old.
- Some of the earliest English archaeological sites in the State of Maine.
- Old York Historical Society is caretaker for a number of historical structures and is the town's main non-profit promoting York's History and preserving key historic buildings.

*Note on Terminology

The term "prewritten record history" is used to describe resources and history before 1600 and "written record history" to describe from 1600 onward. The use of this language is an attempt to balance the telling of York's stories and history; much of the Native American history of the town was never written down but survived as oral history.



Photo Credit: Jeff Levine



A SAMPLE OF WHAT THE COMMUNITY SAID¹

Survey Results

- 56% believe preserving the town's historic character, buildings, and spaces should be an overall priority of the plan (second highest ranked priority in the survey); 62% think the Town should devote more resources and increase existing regulations to protect historic structures and sites.

Other Feedback:

- Residents value the Old York Historical Society and the historic buildings it maintains, as well as the local churches. People are concerned about losing the historic cemeteries and the Native American archaeological sites.
- There is disappointment that a measure (specified in the Town's amended 1999 Comprehensive Plan) to extend the Village Historic District was not placed on the ballot for voter discussion and vote.

- Most privately-owned historic structures in the Historic District are under threat, and demolition delays (60 days) often result in demolition with no other solution to save buildings.
- Historic tax credits² are available but have not been used, presumably due to the amount of paperwork and other aspects involved and the low amount of the credit (10% of project cost).
- No current capacity, including staff and funding (Town or Old York Historical Society), to offer programming and education that can help make residents aware of the town's historic resources and perhaps support their adaptive reuse and preservation.

Varied Feedback: Quotes from meetings, online engagement, and the Community Survey:

- "York is one of the most beautiful places in the world. Its preservation of the past in this incredibly beautiful setting should be the town's top priority." (Project Website Map Comment)
- "Maintain historical ambiance of York." (Fall 2021 Community Survey)



STRATEGIES

Relevant goals are shown in parentheses at the end of the strategy. Strategies involving regional or state coordination/collaboration are indicated with a .

1.1 Support an inventory and general assessment of historic resources in the town.

- a. Work with the Historic District Commission, local or county historical society, and/or the Maine Historic Preservation Commission to plan for a comprehensive community survey of the community's historic and archaeological resources, including information on possible historic significance, property and building condition, and ownership/contact information. (HA.S3)
- b. Support efforts to maintain an up-to-date inventory, recording changing conditions and transfers of ownership. .

(Goal 8)

1.2 Support efforts to identify high priority properties for protection, conservation, and acquisition. Develop criteria for assessment which might include considerations for such things as: level of endangerment, opportunities for acquisition (underutilized, for sale, abandoned), importance to the story of York and/or state history. (Goal 8)

1.3 Support a regular outreach program, conducted by the Historic District Commission or other entity, to contact owners of historic properties. The program would provide information on available technical assistance, funding and financing, and tax credits. Outreach can also include a regular survey to understand owner needs and judge effectiveness of preservation programs and assistance efforts. (Goal 8)

1.4 Use the historic inventory and general assessment, as well as feedback from any property owner surveys, to inform Town policies. Use this feedback to consider preservation incentives and set priorities for possible publicly funded purchase, restoration, and protection. (Goal 8)

1.5 Support the formation of a new organization or expand the mission of an existing non-profit to conduct town-wide advocacy, identify grants and funding opportunities, provide education, and offer technical assistance (guidance on use of Historic Tax Credits, energy efficient updates to properties, etc.), and other resources for owners of historic and older properties in York to encourage and support preservation and adaptive reuse. (Goal 8)

1.6 Support the expansion of historic resources, histories, and destinations for visitor and resident activities in York through local and regional collaborations. Consider the following:

- a. Increase awareness of historic resources in the town through additional signage, historic markers, information pamphlets and online marketing tools.
- b. Incorporate untold historic narratives of indigenous people and slavery into tours, written information, etc.
- c. Create historic trails highlighting York's history.
- d. Support enhanced offerings by the York Public Library, the Old York Historical Society, and the York Public Schools.

(Goal 8)

1.7 Evaluate the local Historic Tax Credit application process and consider streamlining or simplifying the requirements. Evaluation of the current program could be supported by an owner survey identifying barriers to applying for the tax credit. (Goal 8)

1.8 Consider expanding the York Center Historic District, using current Town map of proposed expansion and the 2018 Survey of Properties as a guide (see Fig. 11 map in Appendix A2: History & Archaeology Current Conditions page 34). (Goal 8)

1.9 Consider increasing Town administrative and other support for the Historic District Commission, including space for document archives and resources to meet state and local standards. (Goal 8)

1.10 Support the reactivation of the Historic Markers initiative. Considerations for reactivation should include:

- a. Determine which entity or Town department will have responsibility for the markers and program implementation and management.
- b. Complete inventory and visual documentation of existing markers.
- c. Prioritized plan and criteria for new markers.
- d. Marker maintenance plan.

(Goal 8)

1.11 Work with local and state archaeologists to determine priority sites (historic and prehistoric) and better prepare for potential threats such as development, climate change, and sea level rise. Work should include:

- a. Review of the “Short Sands Shipwreck Project Documentation and Analysis”, prepared for the State Historic Preservation Commission in 2018, and determine what recommendations, if any, to implement.
- b. Identification of funding sources such as Federal grants available to Certified Local Governments (CLGs) for survey and inventory work.
- c. Preparation for designation of Wild and Scenic status for the York River which will create opportunities for grants and funding for an archaeological survey of the York River corridor.

(Goal 8)

1.12 Join state-wide efforts to address how to protect architectural and archaeological resources in low lying areas (Atlantic coast, York and Cape Neddick River areas) that are threatened by sea level rise and inland flooding. (Goal 8) 

1.13 Partner with local non-profits such as the York Land Trust to preserve important archaeological sites in York. Consider acquiring ownership or easements to protect the archaeological sites included in the Cider Hill Archaeology District and other archaeological sites. (Goals 8, 19)

1.14 Amend ordinances to require subdivision or non-residential development projects to take appropriate measures to protect known historic archeological sites and areas sensitive to prehistoric archeology, including but not limited to, modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, and/or extent of excavation. (Goal 8) (HA.S1)

1.15 Amend land use ordinances to strengthen requirements for the Planning Board to incorporate maps and information provided by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission into its review process. (Goal 8) (HA.S2)



REGIONAL COORDINATION

Regional and state coordination strategies, as shown above, are 1.1, 1.11, and 1.12.

See Chapter 7: Implementation for a general statement of regional and state coordination across all topic areas and strategies of the Plan.



NATURAL RESOURCES

WATER, FOREST & AGRICULTURE, & NATURAL RESOURCES

Wildlife Habitats • Sand Dunes • Wetlands • Conserved Lands •
Agriculture and Forests • Water Quality³ • Climate Change Threats

CURRENT CONDITIONS HIGHLIGHTS

For complete current conditions, including community feedback, see Appendix A3.

Wildlife Habitats

- Home to some of the highest biodiversity in Maine.
- Three Beginning with Habitat (BwH)⁴ Focus Areas of Statewide Ecological Significance: Brave Boat Harbor – Gerrish Island, Mt. Agamenticus, and the York River headwaters.
- Significant wildlife habitats, including Candidate Deer Wintering Area, Inland Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitat, Wildlife Wetlands, Shorebird Areas, Tidal Wading Bird and Waterfowl Habitats, and Significant Vernal Pools.
- Particularly around the Mt. Agamenticus area, the state has classified many areas as buffers for endangered, threatened, and special concern species habitats as well as rare plant communities.

Undeveloped Blocks

- An extensive, undeveloped block of forested open space, essential to York's rich biodiversity, surrounds Mount Agamenticus and the watersheds of the York and Kittery water supplies.
- At 2,500 acres and above, unfragmented blocks generally do not restrict species. Within York there are two blocks in excess of 2,500 acres—one just to the north of Mountain Road and the other just to the south of Mountain Road.⁵

Sand Dunes

- The state has identified two coastal sand dune systems: along Long Sands Beach and along Short Sands Beach. Dunes buffer inland areas from storms, provide important wildlife habitat, and enhance the scenic beauty of the coastline.

Wetlands

- 57% of York's wetlands have been found by the state to have "Values at a Significant Level" for flood flow function.

Climate Mitigation and Adaptation Benefits

- York's wetlands and sand dunes are important tools for mitigating the impacts of sea level rise and more frequent flooding events.
- Natural resources provide opportunities for carbon sequestration (absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere). The management, preservation, and expansion of these lands can be key components of York's climate action planning and strategies to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Conserved Lands and Collaborative Efforts

- There are approximately 9,000 acres of conservation land and easements in York. The vast majority of conservation land in York is located in the greater Mt. Agamenticus area, although there are significant holdings throughout town.
- Government conservation land and easements are held by the Town of York, the York Water District (YWD), the Kittery Water District (KWD), the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IF&W), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&W).

- The Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative (MtA2C) has targeted 15,086 acres of open space within its focus area across York and neighboring towns.
- On December 1, 2020, a bill was introduced in the U.S. Senate to designate York River as ‘Wild and Scenic.’ The Bill must be passed by Congress and signed by the President to achieve designation.

Threats to Natural Resources

- Residential development in rural or high value natural resource areas is the largest threat to natural resources.
- Historical development patterns included development in environmentally unstable areas, such as on coastal dunes and in the former marshlands behind the dunes. Sea level rise will contribute to worsening erosion and other problems.
- Threats from growth pressures and development include groundwater pollution, lack of biodiversity from habitat loss, worsened flooding problems, overcrowding of harbor and other waters.

Policies and Regulations

- Policies, regulations, and other tools protecting natural resources in York include the following: Shoreland Overlay Zoning District; Watershed Protection Overlay Zoning District; Wetlands Protection Overlay Zoning District; The Farm Enterprise Overlay Zoning District; Open Space Conservation Subdivisions; York Conservation Commission Review; York Shellfish Conservation Ordinance; State’s Current Use Tax Laws, and other development and performance standards.

A SAMPLE OF WHAT THE COMMUNITY SAID⁶

Survey Results:

- 90% listed Natural Resources as ‘very important’ to quality of life.
- Conserving forests, open space, and land ranked as the top priority of the Comprehensive Plan (57%), and protecting the town from the impacts of climate change ranked third (45%).
- 80% said local and regional efforts to conserve and protect natural resources in York are ‘very important.’ Only 3% ranked conservation efforts as ‘not important’.
- 70% believe York’s beaches and oceans are the most vulnerable natural resources. Other top vulnerable areas included forests and wildlife habitats (62%), the York River and Harbor (60%), and waterfront areas including the Cliff Walk (60%).

Other Feedback:

- The Mt. Agamenticus area and York’s existing forests and tree canopy are among the town’s most valuable natural resources and warrant proactive preservation efforts.
- Achieving a balance between recreational users, commercial users, and conservation/protection of these resources is important.

Varied Feedback: Quotes from meetings, online engagement, and the Community Survey:

- “York has a natural beauty that is a mixture of country roads, it’s own mountain, varied waterfront areas. It is an attraction in all seasons.” (Blue Sky Survey)
- “I believe we need to step up our effort to prepare for rising sea levels and do all we can to avoid further hurting the environment.” (Summer 2021 Blue Sky Survey)



STRATEGIES

Relevant goals are shown in parentheses at the end of the strategy. Strategies involving regional or state coordination/collaboration are indicated with a 

2.1 Work with local and regional conservation organizations to identify high priority natural resources, open space, and recreational land to be conserved or protected. Prioritization criteria should be developed using the latest available data from the state and other sources. Criteria might include the following:

- a. Areas identified as priorities in the Beginning with Habitat⁷ co-occurrence maps that show areas that have multiple high-value natural resources.
- b. Continuity of wildlife corridors.
- c. Areas appropriate for intelligent forestry to maintain forest health and high conservation value forest or shrubland.
- d. Proximity to water bodies.
- e. Large tracts of undeveloped land.
- f. Areas adjacent to existing conservation land.
- g. Large tracts of land and land that can increase existing contiguous tracts in ecologically fragile and climate-vulnerable areas.
- h. High-value carbon storage⁸ areas.
- i. Land with high value in limiting impacts of sea level rise and storm surge. (R.S3-partial) 

(Goals 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 16, 17, 19)

2.2 Support the protection and conservation of high priority natural resources, open space, and recreational land in the following ways:

- a. Work with local and regional conservation groups to pursue public/private partnerships involving purchases of land by Town or non-profits, or easements from willing sellers. (N.S6) (R.S3-partial)

- b. Develop a program of tools such as certification or Town policies.
- c. Promote a plan to annually review and place undeveloped property of high conservation value into permanent conservation status.

(Goals 3, 4, 5, 6, 17)

2.3 Establish a program to track and monitor land conservation status throughout York and coordinate with the York and Kittery Water Districts to ensure permanent protection of their lands from development and ensure the safety of water supply. (Goals 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 16, 19)

2.4 Study and amend zoning in the Rural Areas of the Future Land Use Plan to reflect land conservation and protection priorities. Continue to direct development to within the Growth Area boundaries and outside of resource protection districts. Consider adoption of new zones and/or revisions to current resource protection areas, including:

- a. Establishing Rural zones in place of the areas currently identified as General Development 1 (GEN-1) and General Development 2 (GEN-2) to reflect specific desired development characteristics.
- b. Creating a high-value conservation land protection overlay district for areas with critical or important natural resources and establishing overlay policies that protect areas of high conservation value including forests, native vegetation, scenic views, wildlife, streams and wetlands from destruction. (N.S2)
- c. Revising zoning regulations to limit development and to mitigate development impacts in areas that are contiguous to conserved land, are large undeveloped habitat blocks, and/or have high habitat/carbon sequestration value.
- d. Ensuring that land use ordinances are consistent with applicable state law regarding critical natural resources.⁹ (N.S1)

(Goals 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 16, 17, 18, 19)

2.5 Support the identification of key wildlife corridor areas and consider integrating information into local regulatory and non-regulatory resource protection approaches. Create development standards in these areas, to protect wildlife travel paths. (Goals 4, 5, 6) 

2.6 Evaluate the Town's existing Open Space Conservation Subdivision (OSCS) Zoning Development Ordinance and consider the following:

- a. Continue to require the early involvement of the Conservation Commission and local land trusts or other potential conservation easement holders.
- b. Identify opportunities to simplify the process; improve coordination among town staff, developer and conservation entities; and strengthen requirements. Changes might include:
 - i. Stricter standards for evaluation of site conditions, stormwater management, preservation of natural elements, and mechanisms for long-term maintenance.
- c. Identify opportunities to prioritize OSCS development town-wide by expanding the applicability of the Ordinance and defining appropriate requirements for different areas of town.
- d. Consider expanding options through the OSCS process to allow for protection of open space without a "qualified" conservation organization overseeing the open space, such as deed restrictions and include requirements for third-party inspections and maintenance.
- e. Increase the amount of open space required as part of subdivisions in Rural Areas.

(Goals 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 16, 17, 18, 19)

2.7 In areas where appropriate, consider establishing standards (including performance standards) and a mechanism for administrative site plan review for construction not already being reviewed through site plan or subdivision processes:

- a. Establish clear review thresholds based on the level of construction.

(Goals 3, 4, 5, 7, 16, 17, 19)

2.8 Ensure all Planning Board decisions will strive to optimize conservation of natural resources while enabling development that has minimal environmental impacts and align with all town goals:

- a. Continue to require applicants to submit to the Planning Department pertinent Beginning with Habitat (BwH) maps and other information regarding critical natural resources as part of the application submission process.¹⁰ (N.S4)
- b. Consider revising regulations to incorporate Planning Board consideration of pertinent Beginning with Habitat (BwH) maps and information regarding critical natural resources as part of the review process.
- c. Continue existing requirements for subdivision or non-residential property developers to look for and identify critical natural resources that may be on site and to take appropriate measures to protect those resources. If necessary, strengthen or add natural resource protection standards. (N.S3)
- d. Evaluate existing standards for private road construction and consider strengthening standards and/or changing the threshold for projects that require review by the Planning Board or Town staff in order to mitigate negative impacts to natural resources.

(Goals 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 16, 17, 19)

2.9 In areas where appropriate, consider prioritizing non-residential development related to natural resource-based businesses and services, nature tourism/outdoor recreation businesses, farmers' markets, and home occupations that would not have undue impacts on Rural Areas. (Goals 4, 5, 7, 13) (AF.S4)

2.10 Adopt or amend local land use ordinances as applicable to incorporate stormwater runoff performance standards consistent with:

- a. Maine Stormwater Management Law and Maine Stormwater regulations which provide stormwater standards for projects that include one acre or more of disturbed area or may have a substantial effect on the environment (Title 38 M.R.S.A. §420-D and 06-096 CMR 500 and 502).¹¹
- b. Maine Department of Environmental Protection's allocations for allowable levels of phosphorus in lake/pond watersheds.¹²
- c. Maine Pollution Discharge Elimination System Stormwater Program,¹³ regulating pollution discharges. (W.S1)

(Goals 3, 4, 6)

2.11 Explore the applicability of the Shoreland Overlay Zone and/or opportunities to extend it when considering implementing recommendations from the Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission's 2018 *York River Watershed Study: Regulatory and Non-Regulatory Recommendations Report*.¹⁴ (Goals 3, 4, 5, 6, 16) 

2.12 Continue to protect public drinking supplies through the York Watershed Protection Overlay District and other protection mechanisms, as necessary. (Goals 3, 16, 18) (W.S4) (FLU.S4)

2.13 Continue to build protections for Scenic Points and Scenic Routes, including, but not limited to the points and views identified in Appendix A3: Natural Resources, into existing ordinances and review processes. (Goals 4, 5, 6)

2.14 Evaluate and, if necessary, improve the Farm Enterprise Overlay District to make inclusion in the district easier and more attractive to new and existing York farmers. (Goals 5, 13)

2.15 Evaluate and, if necessary, amend Town ordinances to clearly define and permit land use activities that support agricultural operations, such as roadside stands, greenhouses, and pick-your-own operations. (Goals 5, 13) (AF.S6)

2.16 Evaluate and, if necessary, amend Town ordinances to include clear definitions for small-scale farming and community gardening and make it easier to conduct small-scale farming and community gardening on public and private land where appropriate. (Goals 5, 18)

2.17 Require that commercial or residential development applications identify areas with prime farmland soils, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources Conservation Service, and that they be maintained as open space to the greatest extent practicable. (Goal 5) (AF.S3)

2.18 Consult with the Maine Forest Service district forester when developing any land use regulations pertaining to forest management practices as required by the state's cooperative forestry management forest practices.¹⁵ (Goal 5) (AF.S1) 

2.19 Consult with Soil and Water Conservation District staff when developing any land use regulations pertaining to agricultural management practices. (Goal 5) (AF.S2) 

2.20 Protect and manage critical habitat and natural areas of town, state, and national significance, and seek to minimize impacts to ecologically fragile areas. This might include developing guidelines and/or restrictions for recreational uses such as sunbathing, picnicking, dog-walking and pet waste at areas such as the Wiggly Bridge, Strawberry Island, Seabury Gut, and Brave Boat Harbor. (Goals 3, 4, 6, 7, 16)

2.21 Support continued research and testing to identify specific sources of water pollution and pursue implementation of mitigation strategies, particularly in the Cape Neddick River Watershed and York's beaches. (Goals 3, 6, 7, 16, 18)

2.22 Pursue efforts to improve Cape Neddick River water quality. This may include, but not be limited to sewer expansion; establishing maintenance and upgrade standards of existing septic systems; review of stormwater management and low impact development standards; and landscape buffers and other forms of geese and pet deterrents. (Goals 3, 6)

2.23 Evaluate and, if needed, consider strengthening the standards for the upgrade, operation, and maintenance of onsite wastewater treatment systems (including septic systems). Investigate increasing Town capacity for enforcement of these standards. (Goals 3, 4, 6, 16, 18)

Low Impact Development

TERM TO KNOW

Low impact development (LID) is an approach to land development or re-development that works with nature to manage stormwater as close to its source as possible. LID employs principles such as preserving and recreating natural landscape features; minimizing solid, non-porous (impervious) surfaces such as asphalt; and creating functional and appealing site drainage that treat stormwater as a resource rather than a waste product. There are many practices that have been used to adhere to these principles such as bioretention facilities, rain gardens, vegetated rooftops, rain barrels and porous (permeable) pavements. By implementing LID principles and practices, water can be managed in a way that reduces the impact of built areas and promotes the natural movement of water within an ecosystem or watershed. Applied on a broad scale, LID can maintain or restore a watershed's hydrologic and ecological functions.

2.24 Identify priority areas for expanded public sewer service according to Chapter 6: Future Land Use Plan. Coordinate with local sewer authorities and neighboring communities on these priorities, as well as on regular upgrades to existing service infrastructure to minimize potential for pollution. (Goals 3, 4, 6, 16, 18)

2.25 Support ongoing Town and local efforts to improve management of stormwater runoff and other sources of pollution. (Goals 3, 6, 16, 18, 19)

2.26 Identify primary pollution sources and consider allocating resources for daily low-tide clean-up of beaches during peak tourist season. (Goals 6, 7)

2.27 Evaluate current development regulations and, if needed, enhance Low Impact Development (LID) requirements in existing regulations, or develop a separate LID Ordinance, to better manage and minimize impervious (non-porous) surfaces in new development and construction. This may include measures such as requiring pervious (porous) surfaces, such as pavement, and enhancing tree cover and vegetation below. Any regulations should include requirements for maintenance and should be accompanied by clarification in relevant Town building codes and standards around pervious pavers. (Goals 3, 4, 6, 16) (W.S2)

2.28 In consultation with the York Water District, consider adopting more stringent water quality protection practices and standards for construction and maintenance of public and private property, and require their implementation through enforceable ordinances. (Goals 3, 4, 5, 6, 16) (W.S6)

2.29 Promote agriculture and forestry best practices that protect environmental resources and preserve to the greatest extent possible areas identified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Natural Resources Conservation Service as prime farmland soils or farmland of statewide importance. (Goal 5)

2.30 Explore the feasibility of a crowd management system for access and use of coastal and other natural resources. (Goals 4, 6, 7)

2.31 Consider potential tax incentives and other benefits that might be available to convert existing subdivision open space into gardens, orchards, or native tree stands rather than unproductive landscaped or lawn areas. (Goals 3, 4, 5, 6, 17)

2.32 Encourage the development of a new cost model or delivery approach for water usage that supports operational costs while encouraging water conservation. Promote a new cost model that will help ensure high quality drinking water is equitably available to older adults, disabled, low-income residents, and group residences. (Goals 3, 16)

2.33 Consider development of water conservation policies and mechanisms for enforcement for times of drought. (Goals 3, 16, 18)

2.34 Consider surveying other communities' efforts to monitor, control, and regulate noise and lighting pollution and formulate a plan to take actions necessary to adopt new or strengthen existing ordinances as appropriate. (Goal 4)

2.35 Explore requiring the use of natural materials to stabilize erosion (i.e., vegetation to stabilize roads or slopes) where appropriate. (Goals 3, 4, 6)

2.36 Increase town-wide tree canopy through a tree planting program. (Goals 5, 16, 17, 18)

2.37 Explore the feasibility of instituting a ban on the commercial food service use and sale of plastics in York (plastic bags, bottles, eating utensils, cups, etc.). (Goals 6, 16)

2.38 Assess and periodically measure changes in tree and forest coverage. Use this information when establishing or guiding changes in land use policies to achieve the Town's goals to protect high conservation value forest and shrubland and increase tree canopy. (Goals 5, 16, 17)

2.39 Consider adopting a Fertilizer and Pesticide Ordinance or regulations to control and reduce the use of fertilizers and pesticides in York. (Goals 3, 4, 6)

2.40 Consider monitoring groundwater levels to develop outreach and education programs to well users to inform them about best management practices, saltwater incursion and other climate change impacts. (Goals 3, 16)

2.41 Support the development of natural resources outreach and education programs. Consider providing educational materials at appropriate locations throughout the town, through existing programs and school curriculum, and online. Update this information as best practices change over time. Consider outreach and education in the following areas:

- a. Encourage landowners to protect water quality.
- b. Provide education on water conservation measures related to commercial and residential water consumption, including landscape care, particularly during peak summer months and times of drought. Coordinate with lodging and other tourism industry businesses to reach the visitor population.
- c. Support programs, such as the town-wide Lawns to Lobsters initiative, to educate residents on lawn care, native plants and invasive species, and limit the use of pesticides, fertilizers, and herbicides. (W.S8)

- d. Provide landscaping companies with resources and information about sustainable landscaping practices.
- e. Provide training and information on maintenance of onsite wastewater treatment systems (including septic systems).
- f. Provide local contact information at the municipal office for water quality best management practices from resources such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Soil and Water Conservation District, Maine Forest Service, and/or Small Woodlot Association of Maine. (W.S5)
- g. Support initiatives that highlight importance and value of natural resources in York, including signage on major roads and in village areas to inform visitors and encourage their respect of the town's resources. Collaborate with tourism industry representatives to include outreach to visitors.
- h. Raise awareness about the impacts of littering and increase support for local clean-up efforts and other programs, such as adopt-a-road.
- i. Promote workshops, training, and resources that encourage landowners to utilize sustainable forestry and agricultural practices that enhance wildlife habitat and minimize negative impacts on natural resources.
- j. Distribute or make available information to those living in or near critical or important natural resources about current use tax reduction programs and applicable local, state, or federal regulations. (N.S7)

(Goals 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 16)

2.42 Encourage owners of productive farm and forest land to enroll in the State of Maine's "current-use taxation programs" by supporting public education and outreach efforts on the programs' advantages and the process for enrollment. (Goal 5) (AF.S5)

2.43 Continue to participate in local and regional efforts to monitor, protect and, where warranted, improve water quality. (Goals 3, 4, 6, 19) (W.S7) 

2.44 Continue to collaborate regionally and support the efforts of the numerous conservation organizations working in and around York to identify opportunities for protection, management, planning, and regulation of shared critical and important natural resources. Examples include MtA2C (Mt.A to the Sea) initiative. (Goals 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 19) (N.S5) (R.S3-partial) 

2.45 Coordinate with neighboring communities to implement the 2018 York River Watershed Stewardship Plan. This may include:

- a. Coordinating with the Wild & Scenic Partnership Committee regarding implementation steps and priorities, and develop a management plan that clearly delineates the actions the Town can take.
- b. Increasing Town capacity to pursue grant funding associated with implementation. 

(Goals 4, 5, 6, 19)

2.46 Include agriculture, commercial forestry operations, and land conservation that supports them in local or regional economic development plans. (Goals 5, 13) (AF.S7)

REGIONAL COORDINATION

Regional and state coordination strategies, as shown above, are 2.1, 2.3, 2.5, 2.11, 2.18, 2.19, 2.43, 2.44, and 2.45.

See Chapter 7: Implementation for a general statement of regional and state coordination across all topic areas and strategies of the Plan.



MARINE RESOURCES

Harbors • Beaches • Public Parks with Coastal Access
Rivers and Smaller Brooks and Streams • Docks and Moorings • Related Facilities

CURRENT CONDITIONS HIGHLIGHTS

For complete current conditions, including community feedback, see Appendix A4.

Impacts of Sea Level Rise

- High Astronomical Tide (HAT) plus 1.6 feet of sea level rise/storm surge, which could happen by 2050 or earlier, will lead to a loss of 29% of York County's undeveloped sand dunes, 84% of its developed dunes, and reduce dry beach area by 42%.¹⁶

Commercial Uses

- Commercial waterfront users include fishing, docking facilities, tour boats, seafood dealers, boat storage, repair and sales, and kayak and paddlecraft rental companies.
- Between 2008 and 2015, the total value of lobster landings in York has fluctuated between approximately \$2 million and \$4 million.¹⁷

Recreational Uses

- Recreational waterfront uses include restaurants, lodging facilities, seasonal/year-round housing, boating, paddlecraft and other non-motorized vessels, beach-going, swimming, surfing, diving, and tourist-oriented businesses.
- Recreational use of many marine resource areas has increased in recent years (with social media being a contributing factor in spreading the word about lesser-known sites).

Public Access

- Public access points include beaches, coastal parks, two Town docks in the York Harbor area, Strawberry Island, Scotland Bridge boat launch, and informal canoe/kayak launch options at Goodrich Park and U.S. Route 1.
- The 2018 *York River Watershed Stewardship Plan* identified 45 docks on record from the mouth of the York River to the Scotland Bridge area and 311 moorings and 198 slips managed by the Town.
- Most launching facilities direct users to York Harbor, where overcrowding has created safety concerns.
- Limited parking and years-long waiting lists for moorings have been described as limitations to public access.

Balancing Uses

- The 2019 *York Harbor & River Capacity Study* recommended effective management of varying uses as critical to address safety and capacity concerns, particularly at the area near the Route 103 bridge, and at the mouth of the harbor.

Dredging

- The Harbor Board anticipates the next dredging of York Harbor will not be necessary until 2030 to 2033.

Regulations

- Current local regulations in place include the following: Shoreland Overlay Zoning District, Floodplain Management Ordinance, Harbor Ordinance (Harbormaster and Harbor Board enforce rules and regulations and manage harbor planning), and the Shellfish Conservation Ordinance.

A SAMPLE OF WHAT THE COMMUNITY SAID¹⁸

Survey Results:

- Top priorities for planning for the York River and Harbor included protection of marine ecosystems (52%) and reduction of contamination and runoff from surrounding properties (50%). Only 14% said the current restrictions on use of the York River and Harbor are adequate.
- Survey respondents considered the most vulnerable natural resources to be York's beaches and ocean (69%), the York River and Harbor (60%), and waterfront areas such as the Cliff Walk and Fisherman's Walk (60%).
- According to survey respondents, York's most regularly used recreational resources are the beaches and ocean (90.5%), Cliff Walk and Fisherman's walk (54%), the York River and Harbor (52%), and waterfront parks (40%).
- 67% said they would support the Town purchasing riverfront property to expand recreation access to the York River.

Other Feedback:

- Capacity at marine resources is a major challenge, particularly parking and moorings. There is concern that expanding capacity could have negative impacts on safety and critical environmental resources.
- Impacts of sea level rise on Town infrastructure are already being seen, with water levels reaching the Wiggly Bridge causeway much more frequently in recent years.

Varied Feedback: Quotes from meetings, online engagement, and the Community Survey:

- "It is important for the Town of York to allow commercial fishermen to diversify their operations to build resiliency as the Gulf of Maine changes." (Fall 2021 Community Survey)
- "Provide better paddlecraft access at Goodrich Park." (Fall 2021 Community Survey)



STRATEGIES

Relevant goals are shown in parentheses at the end of the strategy. Strategies involving regional or state coordination/collaboration are indicated with a 

3.1 Plan for, develop, and manage opportunities for residents to access and enjoy the Town's limited marine resources.

- a. Work with local property owners, land trusts, and others to protect major points of physical access to water resources and Scenic Points and Routes, as identified in the Comprehensive Plan, especially along public ways and in public parks. Consider use- and view-easements, purchase, conservation trusts, etc. to accomplish goals. (M.S6) 
- b. Establish an interdisciplinary, ad hoc committee to study, plan for, and direct implementation of possible increased public access to the York River, especially at the Grant House and surrounding areas. The Committee should include two Selectboard members, two members of the Planning Board, two members of the Harbor Board, three Citizens-at-large, and three other interest group representatives, with each group to be selected by lottery. Committee responsibilities to include:
 - i. Identifying possible riverfront property for acquisition to provide for additional public access, while limiting impacts to environmentally sensitive resources. The Committee should consider defining access priorities for different areas of the York River, such as property for recreational uses above Sewall's Bridge and property for working waterfront and commercial uses below Sewall's Bridge.
 - ii. Conducting a separate legal review of the deed for the Grant House to establish what can be built for access that is consistent with the Grant House deed's restrictions and explore possible construction of a paddle craft launch or dock in this location.

iii. Evaluating and amending dock regulations, as necessary, with consideration to the following:

- Consider "neighborhood" or other shared dock situations eastward from the I-95 Bridge.
- Review dock restrictions and make recommendations for the area West of the I-95 Bridge.
- Consider developing dock standards that are consistent with current policy and are based on current sizes of the docks in the Cape Neddick and Brave Boat Harbor areas.

(Goals 4, 6, 7, 11, 12) (M.S1-partial)

3.2 Plan for and support commercial uses of York's marine resources.

- a. Encourage and give preference for access and facilities to traditional working waterfront and commercial fishing businesses, such as: lobstering, tuna fishing, aquaculture-designated areas, shrimping, fin fishing, and charter boat fishing.
- b. Remove the collection of Town of York "trap taxes" levied against commercial fishermen.
- c. Explore the feasibility and possible locations, for aquaculture in York. Develop a plan for same, if appropriate.
- d. Identify needs for additional commercial fishing access to marine resources, including parking, boat launches, docking space, and fish piers.
- e. Encourage owners of marine businesses and industries to participate in clean marina and boatyard programs. (M.S2)

(Goals 6, 13, 14) (M.S1-partial)

3.3 Plan for and take action to minimize erosion and the flow of sediment throughout the York River. (Goals 3, 4, 6)

3.4 Plan for and enact performance standards for marine infrastructure that adapt to, and minimize the effects of, sea level rise. (Goals 6, 16)

3.5 Actively pursue state and federal grants and funds to help maintain and improve marine resources. (Goal 6)

3.6 Explore the feasibility of partnering with local business or provide in some other way a water vessel pump-out facility, to develop a Town plan to manage watercraft waste. (Goals 3, 6)

3.7 Provide information about the “Working Waterfront Access Protection Program”¹⁹ and “Working Waterfront Current Use Taxation Program”²⁰ to owners of waterfront land used to provide access to or support the conduct of commercial fishing activities. (Goals 6, 13) (M.S3)

3.8 Support implementation of local studies and plans, including recommendations from the *York Harbor & River Capacity Study* (2019) and the *York River Watershed Stewardship Plan* (2018). (Goals 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 16) (M.S4) 

3.9 Establish an implementation committee to liaise with the York River Wild and Scenic Committee to provide recommendations to the York Harbor Board on management of the York River. A plan of management should be established to ensure a clear focus on priorities and meeting of goals. (Goals 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 16, 19) 

3.10 Establish a process by which concerned residents in the Cape Neddick and Brave Boat Harbor areas can give feedback to the Harbor Board for management of these areas and encourage their active participation. (Goal 6)

3.11 Periodically review the Harbor fee structure to explore strategies to manage access and capacity at Strawberry Island. (Goals 6, 7, 11, 12)

3.12 Periodically review and adjust Harbor Usage Fees to make sure they are sufficient to maintain marine infrastructure and set aside funds for future dredging. (Goals 3, 6)

3.13 Upgrade Harbor infrastructure to support demand. Explore expansions of Town Dock 2 for commercial loading and unloading and Town Dock 1 for greater dingy and tender tie-up for mooring holders. (Goals 6, 7, 11, 12, 18)

3.14 Provide sufficient funding and staffing of the Harbormaster position and the Harbor Board. (Goal 6) (M.S5)



REGIONAL COORDINATION

Regional and state coordination strategies, as shown above, are 3.1, 3.8, and 3.9.

See Chapter 7: Implementation for a general statement of regional and state coordination across all topic areas and strategies of the Plan.

York Job Base • Employed Labor Force • Employers and Business Types

CURRENT CONDITIONS HIGHLIGHTS

For complete current conditions, including community feedback, see Appendix A5.

- In 2019, York had 683 employers located within the town's borders, with 6,016 jobs. Many of these jobs are concentrated in the health and tourism sectors.²²
- 62.6% of York's employed residents work outside the town (4,274) in 2019 and 37.4% worked in the town (2,558).²³
- Tourism accounts for almost one quarter of York's job base and is quite seasonal. Peak summer employment for all York industries is 40% above the winter low, which affects job quality and impacts on town services.²⁴
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, overall employment in establishments within town declined by 1,055 jobs, or 16.5%, from 3rd Quarter 2019 to 3rd Quarter 2020, with the greatest declines occurring in the Accommodation & Food Services sector.
- Climate adaptation and protecting against future sea level rise is a key issue for York, given the scale of its tax base at risk.
- Health care is a core part of the town's economic base that has seen recent employment declines. York Hospital is the town's largest employer.
- Though York's business centers are largely built-out, York Village is currently in the midst of a Revitalization Project, which includes the 2015 *York Village Master Plan*, to improve its amenities, access, and infrastructure.
- In 2020, nearly 50% of York's employed residents worked in Management, Business, Science, and Arts occupations, much higher than the rates for all of York County and Maine.²⁵



A SAMPLE OF WHAT THE COMMUNITY SAID²⁶

Survey Results:

- 92% of survey respondents want year-round businesses such as restaurants, retail stores, and/or other businesses with goods and services for residents. Other business types that received strong interest on the survey included recreation businesses (81.1%); health care and related businesses (76%); contractors and small construction firms (69.8%); professional services, financial services and/or related businesses (65%); co-working space (61.9%); technology companies (56.4%); light manufacturing, such as food products, consumer products and/or parts suppliers to larger firms (53.1%).
- 88% do not want “big box” stores and 77% do not want formula or chain restaurants.

Other Feedback:

- Employers face challenges in attracting workers, in part because of the high cost of housing.
- There is a desire to attract a younger and more diverse population to sustain the economy and the Town’s fiscal well-being, but tensions exist between the goal of preserving the current “town character” and “small town feel” and efforts to increase town diversity and create a more sustainable economic and fiscal future.

- Town is supportive of economic development but needs more staffing and/or volunteer/committee capacity to focus on this.
- The process and technologies for development permitting can be daunting.
- Large up-front impact fees for water and sewer district can be barrier for new businesses.

Varied Feedback: Quotes from meetings, online engagement, and the Community Survey:

- “I would not want just any commercial development. These must be aesthetically pleasing and well planned out as far as traffic and setbacks and noise regulations are concerned.” (Fall 2021 Community Survey)
- “Prioritize small businesses such as cafes and restaurants moving in to the village area.” (Project Website Map Comment)
- “Create a better ‘sense of place’ for visitors coming off the highway to York.” (Project Website Map Comment)

STRATEGIES

Relevant goals are shown in parentheses at the end of the strategy. Strategies involving regional or state coordination/collaboration are indicated with a 

4.1 Establish an Economic Development Committee (EDC) to develop a vision for economic opportunities and a business recruitment plan. The EDC will promote the town and potential developable sites including the possibility of re-purposing existing vacant buildings, as well as help implement economic development strategies by recommending changes to zoning. (Goal 13) (E.S1-partial)

4.2 Form a Tourism Industry Committee to share information, address tourism impacts, coordinate marketing and branding of the town, and work on shared priorities and goals. Collaborate with the Chamber of Commerce when appropriate. (Goal 12, 13, 14) 

4.3 Advocate for state passage of a local option hotel/motel tax. (Goal 12, 13)

4.4 Conduct design charrettes (workshops) for the area surrounding Short Sands Road to determine the appropriate mix of uses for this site, incorporating business, residential, and recreational opportunities. Include possibilities for initiatives related to climate change and GHG mitigation/green energy. (Goals 11, 13, 15, 16, 17)

4.5 Conduct a study, led by the Economic Development Committee, to explore in greater detail what kinds of businesses and economic development residents would like to see in York, with particular attention to the density, use, and business types along U. S. Route 1 and in York's villages. (Goals 13, 14)

4.6 Explore changes to policies and zoning requirements to encourage the scale, design, intensity, and location of desired economic development, including:

- a. Reevaluate business types allowed under York zoning and consider expanding types of allowed businesses. Consider amending definitions of restaurant types to allow for more non-drive-through take-out opportunities, and updating business categories to better reflect current economy conditions. (E.S2)

(Goal 13)

4.7 Identify properties and existing vacant buildings, as appropriate, for business recruitment, and create a recruitment plan that aligns with the identified businesses and appropriate sites. Work with property owners interested in development or redevelopment to achieve goals:

- a. Conduct an inventory of vacant buildings, and identify potential opportunity sites for new business growth that have adequate infrastructure services and connectivity.
- b. Explore appropriate spaces for co-working/shared offices and tradespeople, including larger warehouse-style rental units.
- c. Identify spaces with potential for entrepreneurs, including micro-businesses, looking to test the York market for community-oriented goods and services.

(Goals 13, 14)

Micro-businesses

TERM TO KNOW

Micro-businesses definitions vary but these are usually small businesses that have a single owner and/or that employ fewer than ten people. They differ from small businesses in the number of employees and their revenue which is less than \$250,000 annually. They may be start-ups and part-time ventures.

4.8 Explore ways York can attract and support businesses and industries that are related to the “Maine Won’t Wait” State of Maine climate action planning initiatives (clean energy, solar, etc.). (Goals 13, 17, 19)

4.9 Partner with larger employers such as hospitality businesses and York Hospital to identify aligned interests and achieve goals regarding employee recruitment and attainment, workforce housing, and other issues. (Goals 1, 13, 14, 15, 19)

4.10 Produce a guide to locating or starting a business in York with profiles of successful firms, including arts and cultural businesses. (Goals 13, 14)

4.11 Work with the Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission (SMPDC) and York Region Chamber of Commerce to promote development sites and connect York to regional economic development initiatives. (Goals 13, 14, 19) (E.S4) 

4.12 Apply appropriate public finance mechanisms and town funding needed to implement economic development strategies. (Goal 13, 14) (E.S1-partial) (E.S4)

4.13 Establish a York Village Business Committee to incorporate the completion of infrastructure efforts and to promote a vibrant, walkable community for residents and visitors. Committee objectives should include business development in York Village and membership should include representatives of the Town, businesses, York Hospital, residents, and property owners. The new committee would be complementary to other organizations such as the York Region Chamber of Commerce and focus exclusively on York Village. Roles for the group would include:

- a. Address local business, non-profit, and public service development needs.
- b. Collaborate on marketing, events, and activities in the Village.
- c. Help recruit desired new businesses and non-profits as vacancies occur.
- d. Advocate for businesses and act as liaison with the Planning Board and Town on Village issues.

(Goals 14, 19)

4.14 Use the York Village Business Committee as a model, if appropriate, to create additional neighborhood business groups with similar roles for Cape Neddick Village, York Beach, and Short Sands Road area. (Goal 14)

4.15 Promote an inclusive and supportive environment to recruit, start, grow, and retain small businesses by providing technical and financial assistance, in partnership with state, regional and federal small business development programs. (Goals 13, 14)

4.16 Work with Southern Maine Finance Agency to market its loan programs to local businesses. (Goals 13, 14, 19)

4.17 Amend zoning to allow for, and designate, specific locations for pop-up and mobile business options (kiosks, booths, trucks) on town property. (Goals 13, 14)

4.18 Expand business/commercial zoning along U.S. Route 1 and in other areas in town while ensuring business growth supports the character of the town in terms of form and density. See Chapter 6: Future Land Use Plan. (Goals 13, 14)

4.19 Consider amending zoning to reduce the restrictions and encourage growth of marine-related ventures along U.S. Route 1 to support the character of York as a coastal community. (Goals 6, 13, 14)

4.20 Explore the possibility for form-based zoning and design guidelines along a portion of U.S. Route 1, the villages, and the Short Sands Road area. (Goals 13, 14)

Form-based Zoning

TERM TO KNOW

Form-based zoning is an alternative to conventional zoning that encourages predictable built results by setting clear standards for physical form, including scale and architectural features, to achieve the community's vision for an area. The regulations and standards in form-based codes are often presented in both words and clearly drawn diagrams and other visuals to aid in clarity and usability.²⁸

4.21 Review and update the allowed business, office, and industrial uses; consider switching the use list to indicate commercial uses expressly not allowed, instead of listing those that are allowed. (Goals 13, 14)

4.22 Ensure that existing non-conforming commercial uses in existence prior to 2022, particularly within residential zones, can continue to be allowed and may expand under certain conditions. (Goals 13, 14)

4.23 Explore opportunities to fund and create an Economic Development Director staff position at Town Hall. Job responsibilities should include acting as liaison to a newly formed Economic Development Committee and the Chamber of Commerce, assisting entrepreneurs and existing businesses in navigating town requirements, accessing resources to start and grow new business enterprises, grant writing and management, and recruiting desired businesses. (Goals 13, 14)

4.24 Create and sponsor events, activities, and marketing to support year-round tourism and activities highlighting all there is to do in York. Ensure, where possible, that these offerings appeal to town residents. (Goals 12, 13)

4.25 Install parking wayfinding signs as recommended in the *York Village Master Plan* and create and install similar signage for Cape Neddick Village and York Beach Village. Use a parking and transportation study to guide related wayfinding strategies. (Goals 10, 12, 14)

4.26 Continue implementation of the *York Village Master Plan*. (Goals 10, 14)

4.27 Explore with the York Water and Sewer Districts an option for businesses to pay water and/or sewer impact fees over time. (Goals 13, 14)

4.28 The Town of York should become a Maine Downtown Affiliate (MDA). The MDF's Maine Downtown Center²⁷ offers the MDA program to help communities build an appropriate organizational and funding base for commercial district support and revitalization. The program offers access to training by state and national downtown development experts and provides a network of peers around the state to learn from best practices. (Goals 14, 18, 19)



REGIONAL COORDINATION

Regional and state coordination strategies, as shown above, are 4.2 and 4.11.

See Chapter 7: Implementation for a general statement of regional and state coordination across all topic areas and strategies of the Plan.



HOUSING

Housing Units • Types of Housing • Affordability

CURRENT CONDITIONS HIGHLIGHTS²⁹

For complete current conditions, including community feedback, and for all data sources, see Appendix A6.

- York's year-round population is projected to increase from approximately 13,300 in 2021 to 14,697 in 2031 and to 15,422 in 2036. Largest percentage increases likely for those age 60 and over.³⁰
- Median single-family home price increased from \$437,000 to \$499,000 from 2019 to 2020 (14.2% increase).³¹
- There is some discrepancy between size of existing housing units and household sizes. Only 812 out of all 9,435 year-round and seasonal housing units in York have one bedroom or less. At the same time, there are 1,779 single-person households in York and 2,319 two-person households.
- In 2019, 44.9% of renters and 22.9% of homeowners in York were considered housing cost-burdened by their housing (spending more than 30% of income on housing).
- Likely need for 111 new owner-occupied homes and 199 new rental units in York by 2031, in addition to some conversion of seasonal housing to year-round.³²
- Average two-bedroom rent in 2017 was \$1,184, not affordable to 57.3% of York renters.³³
- Significant and increasing amount of housing is seasonal – from 2,310 in 2010 (24.8% of town's housing stock) to 3,187 in 2019 (33.8% of town's housing stock).³⁴
- Over 350 full-home³⁵ short-term rentals (STRs) are offered for rent at least some of the time. Average daily rate for these STRs is over \$350, average monthly revenue is close to \$4,000. With an annual occupancy rate of 65%³⁶—increasing to 95% in August—there is clearly a strong market for STRs in York. STRs represent over 3% of overall housing stock.³⁷
- York Housing is the only significant provider of deed-restricted below-market housing in town. They manage a portfolio of 181 housing units at a variety of income levels (3.15% of total year-round housing stock, 1.92% of the total housing stock).³⁸
- Existing base zoning regulations are largely restrictive of affordable and workforce housing because of large minimum lot size and parking requirements that make cost of developing affordable housing prohibitive.
- The Town has enacted zoning regulations to make the production of affordable housing easier, including the York Village Elderly Housing Overlay District and the Workforce Affordable Housing Overlay District.

A SAMPLE OF WHAT THE COMMUNITY SAID³⁹

Survey Results:

- Interest in improving housing diversity by providing a variety of housing types: 63% did not think existing housing supply adequately accommodates people of all ages and income levels.

Other Feedback:

- Desire for more housing diversity in type and costs in town. Specifically mentioned were affordable housing for older adults, low-income, and workforce housing.
- Desire for more choices for smaller housing units for older adults who wish to downsize and more entry-level homes in the community to attract young families.
- Desire for mixed-income and multigenerational housing.
- Concerns about the lack of housing for the service workers and York labor force who are essential for the businesses, services, and amenities that residents enjoy.
- York employers have challenges attracting talent: local housing costs and lack of affordable seasonal worker housing are key factors.

Varied Feedback: Quotes from meetings, online engagement, and the Community Survey:

- “Not enough housing options. We need affordable housing options. We need to change the density guidelines.” (Summer 2021 Blue Sky Survey)
- “Housing growth should be minimal – too much housing is leading to infrastructure quagmire.” (Fall 2021 Community Survey)

STRATEGIES⁴⁰

Relevant goals are shown in parentheses at the end of the strategy. Strategies involving regional or state coordination/collaboration are indicated with a .

5.1 Revise York’s land use policies to proactively support housing production for a variety of residents and needs that is consistent with town character, using Chapter 6: Future Land Use Plan to guide decisions. (H.S1-partial)

Address housing needs for:

- Older adults, retirees, empty-nesters
- Younger, more diverse families with school-age children
- Smaller households/young professionals (one and two-person households)
- Low- and moderate-income residents
- Disabled residents
- Seasonal workers

Town policies and zoning amendments should consider providing for a range of housing costs, sizes, and locations, as well as ownership and rental opportunities. To achieve housing goals, consider the following land use strategies:⁴¹

- a. Explore creating an inclusionary zoning ordinance that requires a minimum percentage of new housing units in any subdivision or multi-family housing development be affordable at 80% of area median income.⁴² Conduct an analysis to determine the appropriate requirement percentage (or “sweet spot”), at or above the state-required minimum of 10% of new residential development, that studies local housing market conditions and development costs and constraints. (H.S6)
- b. Revise zoning language to allow multi-family housing in more locations.

- c. Identify infill (vacant lots, creating new lots from larger properties, redevelopment and/or reuse of existing properties) opportunities for new and converted housing that reinforces and complements traditional walkable development patterns in York's villages, and amend zoning to incentivize this type of development.
- d. Within the Growth Area, consider zoning amendments that will allow and encourage development of existing vacant lots for desired housing types:
 - i. Modify lot size, setbacks, and lot coverage requirements to match neighborhood design and form, specifically in areas served by public water and sewer.
 - ii. Amend minimum lot size to allow housing on smaller lots in the Growth Area when those lots conform to surrounding existing neighborhood form.
 - iii. Allow "compact communities" or "pocket" neighborhood models.
 - iv. Consider allowing for two- and three-family buildings in Residential zones subject to the same dimensional requirements (e.g., the same size building could have one unit or three) and to design standards to ensure housing fits neighborhood character.
- e. Offer incentives (increase in density and height, reducing setbacks, reducing parking requirements) that are appropriate to neighborhood character and form, for low- and moderate-income, and workforce housing creation in the Growth Area, specifically in areas served by public water and sewer. (H.S1-partial)
- f. Provide incentives and zoning for smaller starter homes (ownership and rental). Amend minimum size requirements to allow smaller housing units when those housing units conform to surrounding neighborhood form in designated areas, or through Open Space Conservation Subdivision requirements.⁴³
- g. Amend the Town Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) rules to streamline requirements and provide incentives for use of ADUs for long-term housing, not short-term rentals (STRs) town-wide and especially within the Growth Area. (H.S2)
- h. Allow "tiny home" development in designated zones.
- i. Amend zoning to allow older, larger homes to be divided into smaller units.
- j. Continue to allow manufactured home parks, which include mobile homes, in specified areas within the Growth Area, and manufactured homes, as appropriate, in accordance with the State of Maine Regulation of Manufactured Housing (30-A M.R.S.A. §4358(2) and 30-A M.R.S.A. §4358(2)).⁴⁴ (H.S4)

(Goals 1, 2, 9, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17, 18)

Tiny Homes

TERM TO KNOW

Tiny Homes are simple living units that are typically 400–600 sq ft in size. Many multi-family housing units must be at least 600 square feet in size – however, a new state law permits "Tiny Homes" in every community. Removing the minimum size of 600 SF per unit could increase housing variety.

5.2 Consider modifying ordinances to address local concerns about community character and natural resource protection, while still permitting more economically feasible housing choices. (Goals 1, 2, 15)

5.3 Consider policies to track short-term rentals (STRs) and create a standard for allowable rentals (incidences per year in certain areas, registration, fees, etc.) to reflect the impacts of STRs on the community and STRs as business enterprises.⁴⁵ STRs remove much-needed housing stock from the town's supply and may also be considered businesses. Study the impact of STRs and use the results of the study to inform policies that will register and regulate STRs. (Goals 1, 2, 13, 15)

5.4 Create a Community Housing Committee to address the range of housing costs and types needed in York. The committee would inform affordable and workforce housing policies and identify funding sources for same. The committee would also support land use policies that allow and encourage a range of housing types for York's residents. This committee could be part of a regional affordable housing coalition, to include members of the Planning Board, Selectboard, YCSA, York Housing Authority, and others. (Goals 1, 2, 15) (H.S3)

5.5 Explore the use of the Affordable Housing Tax Increment Financing (TIF) tool to encourage additional affordable housing.⁴⁶ (Goals 1, 2, 15)

5.6 Consider direct Town support for low and moderate-income housing.

- a. Establish a fund dedicated to providing affordable housing.

(Goals 1, 2, 15)

5.7 Strengthen the Town's relationship with the York Housing Authority to increase communication and collaboration including identifying land acquisition opportunities for affordable housing. (Goals 1, 2, 15) (H.S5-partial)

5.8 Consider a number of tools to enhance support of affordable housing in York, including:

- a. Allocate land held by the Town through tax lien foreclosures to the YHA for new housing development.

- b. Establish a housing real estate transfer tax (RETT) on the sale price of private sector property sales within the town (perhaps on properties over a certain size or price point). The RETT would be established for affordable housing support with clear requirements (deed restrictions, eligibility, and other requirements of developers).
- c. Impose impact fees or payment-in-lieu requirements on private developers who do not construct or convert a certain percentage of affordable housing units to mitigate the impacts of development.

(Goals 1, 2, 15)

5.9 Collaborate with surrounding communities on regional housing solutions. (Goals 1, 2, 9, 12, 15, 16, 18, 19) (H.S5-partial) 

5.10 Commission a tourism workforce housing plan to expand housing supply to address the industry's seasonal housing needs. Partner with tourism businesses (through the proposed Tourism Industry Committee and possibly the Chamber of Commerce) to set goals for the study and to collaborate on implementation. (Goals 12, 15) 



REGIONAL COORDINATION

Regional and state coordination strategies, as shown above, are 5.9 and 5.10.

See Chapter 7: Implementation for a general statement of regional and state coordination across all topic areas and strategies of the Plan.

A NOTE ABOUT BALANCE: HOUSING, NATURAL RESOURCES, AND ECONOMY

This Comprehensive Plan attempts to address all town needs in such a way as to continue to improve upon the quality of life for all York residents. The community has prioritized natural resource protection and conservation as a core goal for the plan while also expressing a desire for a greater variety of housing choices (costs, sizes, types) to ensure York thrives as a community that provides housing throughout residents' lifespans and that people who work in York can afford to live in York.

Housing is linked to the economy, and York, like every other coastal town in Maine, suffers from a labor shortage. This shortage includes healthcare workers, teachers, policemen, fire fighters, grocery workers, restaurant staff, Town staff, and all service workers for the maintenance and improvement of homes. This issue has adversely impacted the quality of life in York. To attract service workers to live and work in York, there is a need for affordable, quality housing. The cost of doing nothing is great. New housing will be built; York will grow with or without Town influence and Comprehensive Plan strategies. Without clear policies and proactive strategies, current residents will find it increasingly difficult to find suitable housing to live in our community as we age, and families who help our school system thrive will settle elsewhere. Increasingly, the diversity of businesses and amenities that we want to see in York as part of our daily lives—local restaurants, independently owned and unique shops, the services that help us maintain and improve our homes, and the health care and activities we need throughout the year—will suffer from the labor shortage; what remains will be a shell of what we can and want to be.



Photo Credit:
Center for Active Living



Photo Credit: Robin Kerr
Parks & Recreation

While some view housing production and natural resource protection as conflicting goals, they can complement each other when implemented thoughtfully. For example, allowing multi-family housing instead of requiring single family homes can preserve more open space by clustering housing in the most appropriate areas. The Comprehensive Plan housing goal and strategies must be viewed within the larger context of all Plan goals and a careful consideration of overall land use policies. Each housing strategy has been viewed through a conservation, preservation, and climate impact filter. The overriding principle guiding Comprehensive Plan housing strategies is the desire to direct the purpose and growth of housing to full-time York residents who wish to age in our community, raise a family here, work in the service industries, and contribute to the things we love about York - people who make our community a real place full of variety, vibrancy, and activity- while minimizing the impact on York's natural resources so that all of us can continue to enjoy our beautiful town. These housing strategies embrace a belief that more housing choices enhance our community.

The aim is that at least 10% of new residential development in the next decade be affordable according to the definitions set forth below. This is not a quota to be grudgingly met, but an aspiration that will ensure that the people who serve on our boards and commissions, the teachers in our classrooms, the neighbors at our local business, and the people who work in our public buildings, hotels, and restaurants can afford to live in our Town now and in the future.

All of the housing strategies in this Plan are suggestions; however, these strategies can guide policies, ordinances, and public finance mechanisms to achieve this vision for housing. Ultimately, zoning amendments and other policy changes must go to the voters--the residents of York--for discussion and approval.

So...what is meant by 'affordable'? And what does "providing a variety of housing choices" actually look like?

DEFINING AFFORDABILITY

“Affordable” can mean a range of things. In general, “affordable housing” is not about the specific income of the residents who live in the housing, but instead indicates how much of that income they spend on housing. Housing is considered affordable when the residents pay 30% or less of their income on housing costs—rent or mortgage, heat, insurance, utilities, and other housing-related costs. When the term is used, it is generally meant to refer to housing that is affordable to households that make less than the area median. In York, there are specific definitions, in the Town Zoning Ordinance, for Low-income, Moderate Income, and Workforce Affordable Housing (Table 1).

Table 1. Town of York Housing Affordability Definitions

	Definition (Town of York Zoning Ordinance)	2021 Income Levels for a 4-person household (York Housing)
Low Income	Household income which is not more than 80% of the median family income for the York-Kittery-South Berwick HUD Metropolitan Finance Area.	Not more than \$79,900 (80% area median income). <i>A York police officer heading a family of 4, as the single breadwinner, qualifies as low income with an average salary of \$77,221 annually.¹</i>
Moderate Income	Household income which is between 50% and 120% of median family income for the York-Kittery-South Berwick HUD Metropolitan Finance Area.	\$52,650 (50% area median income) to \$126,360 (120% area median income). <i>York teachers make an average of about \$80,500/year.² A family of four with a teacher as the single breadwinner is a moderate-income family.</i>
Workforce Affordable Housing	Dwelling units that may be purchased or rented for year-round occupancy by a working household with moderate income . Workforce Affordable Housing may include single-family dwellings, two-family dwellings, multi-family dwellings, or a combination of these.	See above for moderate income. <i>Many of the critical jobs needed in the community to keep services, amenities, health care, restaurants, and other businesses open, are part time. Most workers, if working full time or a two-wage earner household of four with part time jobs, would fit into this category (see Table 2).</i>

Note: Definitions above are specific to the Town of York and may differ from definitions used elsewhere.

There is a labor shortage in York and many businesses, including York Hospital, restaurants, lodging, and the Town itself are having difficulty filling positions. Interviews with Town employers reveal that feedback during the employee recruitment process points to the lack of affordable housing in and near York (and added commuting time and costs) as a barrier for filling many service-level and critical jobs (Table 2).

HOUSING TYPES

Affordability may also simply be related to size; a choice of smaller housing that costs less because there is less square footage and smaller lots. Or affordability can indicate varied ownership and renter possibilities to meet median income and even above median incomes.

Aside from price, families and older adults with above median incomes need a range of housing types to address aging in community, disabilities, raising a family, and living alone or in smaller households. When there is a limited range of housing types people have to make choices. They may remain in a house that is larger than they need or they’re challenged by finances or physical limitations to repair and maintain their home. They may squeeze into a home with more roommates. Or they may simply move far away from their workplace and drive long distances to work, causing environmental impacts and additional commuting costs. For older adults, they may be forced to leave the community where they have resided for many years, unable to find suitable housing to match their needs and income.

Table 2. Salaries for Selected Advertised Job Openings and Reported Job Salaries in York, as of 2/11/2022 and 3/3/2022

Sector/Job Type	Job Description	Average annual salary (FT or PT). Assumed PT is half time (see notes)
Hospitality/Lodging <i>(Estimated number of open positions in lodging in York: 17)</i>	Assistant General Manager	\$65,000 (FT)
	Front Desk Associate/Clerk <i>Average \$14/hour PT</i>	\$14,560 (PT) or 2 jobs = \$29,120
	Housekeeper <i>Average \$16/hour PT</i>	\$16,640 (PT) or 2 jobs = \$33,280
Public/Town of York	Police Officer	\$77,221(FT) ³
	School Teacher	\$80,500 (FT) ⁴
	Center for Active Living Program Coordinator	\$64,000 (FT) ⁵
	School Lunch/Recess Monitor	\$28,000 (PT) or 2 jobs = \$56,000
Health Care/York Hospital <i>(Estimated number of open positions in the York Hospital: 37)</i>	Patient Screener, Patient Transportation Navigator, Support Staff	\$25,000 (PT) or 2 jobs = \$50,000
	Central Sterile Supply Technician, ER Unit Clerk, Laboratory Processor	\$32,000 - \$37,000 (FT)
	York Family Practice Nurse Practitioner	\$92,884 (FT) (not including bonuses)
Food Manufacturing/Stonewall Kitchen	Cost Accountant	\$55,000 (FT)
	Manufacturing Associate <i>up to \$22/hour</i>	\$45,760 (FT)
Services/Restaurants & Cafes <i>(Estimated number of open positions in York: 26)</i>	Chef	\$65,000 (FT)
	Barista, Cashier, Prep Cook <i>Average \$16/hour PT</i>	\$16,640 (PT) or 2 jobs = \$33,280
	Server <i>\$12.75/hour PT</i>	\$13,260 (PT) or 2 jobs = \$26,520
Miscellaneous	Seasonal Groundskeeper, Landscape Gardener, Grounds Crew <i>\$17/hour PT</i>	\$17,680 (PT) or 2 jobs = \$35,360
	In-home Caregiver <i>\$18/hour PT</i>	\$18,720 (PT) or 2 jobs = \$37,440

Notes:

1. This Table is not intended to be a full representation of all available jobs and salaries in York for early 2022. Rather, the Table represents information that was available online through the sources listed. Some employers, such as York Hospital, do not publicly post job salaries on their websites and require initial applications or inquiries as the first step in an application process. In addition, these salaries do not represent signing bonuses and recruitment incentives, which are common in the northeast at the time of this plan preparation. There is no evidence to suggest that the salary ranges above are not generally accurate.
2. For simplification, it was assumed that all PT jobs are 20 hours per week and a full time equivalent (40 hours per week) salary is provided in the table above. In reality, many of these jobs are available only at certain hours (school lunch monitor, custodian, prep cook) and it is unlikely that any worker may find two jobs to fit their skills to completely work full time hours.

Sources: all information from indeed.com job listings accessed on 2/11/22 and 3/3/22 and Glassdoor.com reported salaries, accessed on 3/3/22 except where otherwise noted.

While there is a variety of housing types in York, the most common is a two- to four-bedroom single family home. In 2019, 43%⁶ of housing units in York were 3-bedroom units. 67% of housing units were 3-bedroom or larger units (Table 3). Almost 90% of these housing units were owner-occupied.⁷

There is a concerning difference between the size of existing housing units and household sizes. Only 812 out of all 9,435 year-round and seasonal housing units in York have one bedroom or less. At the same time, there are 1,779 single-person households in York, and an additional 2,319 two-person households (Table 4).

While many of these residents live in larger homes and prefer to do so, it seems likely that at least some small households may end up paying more for housing by renting or buying a place that is larger than they require. Others may wish to downsize and have limited choices to do so.

WHO NEEDS HOUSING AND WHAT WOULD THAT HOUSING LOOK LIKE?

People are more than numbers or statistics, and needs vary. While each person and household is different, real estate trends across the U.S. give us indications of what various types of households may want and need (Table 5).

Table 3. Housing Unit Sizes in York, 2019

No bedroom (studio)	280
1 bedroom	532
2 bedrooms	2331
3 bedrooms	4075
4 bedrooms	1788
5 or more bedrooms	429
Total housing units	9435

Source: 2019 U.S. Census Five-Year American Community Survey

Table 4. Household Sizes in York, 2019

1-person household	1779
2-person household	2319
3-person household	681
4+ person household	967
Total households	5746

Source: 2019 U.S. Census Five-Year American Community Survey

Table 5. Housing Needs Not Currently Met in York*

Target Population	Ownership/ Rental	Characteristics*	Who in York...
By Lifecycle			
Older adults, retirees	Ownership and rental	Smaller units; single-floor living; adaptable for limited mobility; proximity to continuing care options. Walkable/bikeable; access to transportation; connected to community and social connections; proximity to services and amenities, entertainment, and recreation.	27% of York residents are age 65 and older. The median household income for householders age 65 and older in York is \$64,487 (2019).
Empty nesters	Ownership and rental	Smaller units with flexibility/room for family visits; single-floor living; amenity rich; low maintenance. Walkable/bikeable; access to transportation; proximity to services and amenities, entertainment, and recreation.	17% of York residents are age 55 -65. The median household income for householders age 45-64 is \$110,325 (2019).
Younger families	Ownership and rental	Smaller starter homes; smaller lots/ less yard care needs Proximity to schools and parks/ playgrounds; walkable/bikeable; safe routes to school.	30% of York residents are age 30-55. The median household income for householders age 25-44 is \$97,933 (2019).
By Household Size or Situational Need (may overlap with previous categories)			
Single and two-person households	Ownership and rental	Smaller units. Other characteristics of desired housing depend on age, income, and other circumstances.	4098 households in York (2019).
Disabled	Ownership and rental	Accessible/adaptable units and parking. Other characteristics of desired housing depend on income and household size.	Unknown unmet need.
Seasonal workers	Rental	Small units or communal living arrangements/dorm-type living; community space, amenities.	Unknown unmet need.

Note: *There is a wide variety of preferences for housing types. Not every empty nester wants smaller spaces and a walkable community. Some young families may prefer apartment living in the center of a bustling village. Information on characteristics is provided from real estate trends across the U.S.

ENDNOTES FOR A NOTE ABOUT BALANCE

- <https://www.yorkmaine.org/DocumentCenter/View/4403/2021-Full-Time-York-Recruitment-and-Application>.
- York School Department, FY23.
- <https://www.yorkmaine.org/DocumentCenter/View/4403/2021-Full-Time-York-Recruitment-and-Application>.
- York School Department, FY23.
- <https://bit.ly/3HMJpcz>.
- Percentages are rounded.
- 2019 U.S. Census American Community Survey.



RECREATION

Recreational Facilities and Programs • Land and Water Recreation Areas
Local and Regional Trail Systems • Local Parks and Open Spaces

CURRENT CONDITIONS HIGHLIGHTS

For complete current conditions, including community feedback, see Appendix A7.

- The York Parks & Recreation Department's responsibilities include operations and maintenance of public buildings, grounds, parks, beaches, and recreation facilities, as well as school and community athletic fields and green spaces.
- The Department offers a wide array of recreational programs for adults and children. The most popular include youth sports, summer camps, adult fitness programs, and older adult services.
- A long-term partnership with the York School Department allows the Parks & Recreation Department to run many programs at school facilities.
- York's population swells in the summer months and is additionally supplemented by thousands of day trippers, dramatically increasing demand on recreational services in the community.
- As the population in York continues to age (median age rose from 46.5 to 52.2 between 2010 and 2019), the requests and demand for a range of facilities and programs will need to evolve.⁴⁷
- The Town's 2017 *Recreational Needs Assessment* identified the following:
 - ◊ A multigenerational community recreation/ activity space in York with a diverse array of recreation activity spaces is needed to meet the needs of York residents.
 - ◊ Many facilities in York are up against capacity limits and are in need of upgrades or expansion to meet the community demand. Nearly half of Recreational Needs Assessment survey participants agreed or strongly agreed that the "facilities needed are not available" in York and that there were "better recreation opportunities elsewhere."
 - ◊ Preferences for dedicated space for older adult activities and dedicated space for youth/teen activities.



A SAMPLE OF WHAT THE COMMUNITY SAID⁴⁸

Survey Results:

- 77% view recreation as very important to quality of life in York, second only to Natural Resources (90%).
- 86% make use of York's recreational resources.
- 66% respondents want more recreational opportunities in York.
- Of those wanting more recreational opportunities, 53% would support a multi-purpose recreation space, 35% want a shared-age group 'center,' and 13% would support a designated-age group space.
- Most regularly used recreational resources include York's beaches and ocean (91%), Mt. Agamenticus trails (60%), Cliff Walk/ Fisherman's Walk (54%), and the York River and Harbor (52%).
- Top priorities for planning for the York River and Harbor were protection of marine ecosystems (52%), reduction of contamination and runoff from surrounding properties (50%), and access for recreational users such as paddlecraft, recreational boaters, clamming, etc. (30%).
- 67% support the Town purchasing riverfront property to expand recreation access to the York River.

Other Feedback:

- Capacity is a challenge and a hindrance to recreation in York, particularly in relation to Town-owned facilities for programs and staffing. Simultaneously, recreational users are developing higher expectations.
- Recreational needs include an indoor pool, fitness center, affordable gym for seniors, and an ice-skating rink.
- Desire for more community gathering spaces with flexible areas for programming for varied age groups, but concerns about older adults losing dedicated spaces. Disagreement about the need for additional facility spaces in York and concern about the potential cost to taxpayers.
- Not all spaces used for recreational activities in York are publicly owned or otherwise permanently protected, including the majority of York's beaches and traditional walking paths such as the Cliff Walk.
- Many recreational assets also serve valuable ecological or commercial functions, and balancing needs of different users at these sites can be challenging. Conflicts between recreational and commercial users of York's marine resources is a concern.
- While used by residents and visitors, many trails in York do not currently connect to each other and are not widely publicized.

Varied Feedback: Quotes from meetings, online engagement, and the Community Survey:

- "I love the Wiggly Bridge and Steedman Woods. Hiking with ocean views. This is a unique place." (Project Website Map Comment)
- "We need to have recreation facilities that are for all ages. It is a way to build a community." (Fall 2021 Community Survey)

STRATEGIES

Relevant goals are shown in parentheses at the end of the strategy. Strategies involving regional or state coordination/collaboration are indicated with a 

6.1 Establish an ad hoc committee to create a list of recreation needs and develop a recreation plan to meet those needs. This committee, or a Town department, will also explore ways of implementing the policies and strategies outlined in that plan.

- a. Create a comprehensive trail, open space, and recreational resources map. Ensure that map data is integrated in the Town's GIS system.
- b. Develop a plan for the monitoring and maintenance of existing trails, including additional enforcement resources to support partnerships with York Police, York Water District, York Land Trust, and other entities.
- c. Identify opportunities to increase trail accessibility. Prioritize development of universally accessible trails where possible.
- d. Identify opportunities to adjust or move trails to avoid sensitive areas and protect critical habitat and drinking water.
- e. Highlight opportunities to enhance connectivity and recreational access. Complete missing segments of bike and/or hiking trails without compromising the rights and privacy associated with private landownership and protect sensitive plant and animal habitats. (R.S1) 

(Goals 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 19)

6.2 Facilitate a strategic management and access plan involving all owners and managers of York's forest and water resources to balance recreational access with working uses and conservation. (Goals 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 19) 

6.3 Maintain access to the Cliff Walk for public use and continue to pursue easement opportunities with property owners. (Goals 7, 10, 12)

6.4 Provide educational materials regarding the benefits and protections for landowners allowing public recreational access on their property. At a minimum this will include information on Maine's landowner liability law regarding recreational or harvesting use.⁴⁹ (Goal 7) (R.S4)

6.5 Publicize and make available a coordinated map of recreational opportunities in York, including a visitor education summary that highlights the importance of natural resources in York, and provides guidelines for recreational use. (Goals 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 18)

6.6 Work with public and private partners to direct motorized uses, such as ATVs, to appropriate trails that can support these uses with minimal impacts to natural resources. Provide educational materials on trail-use best practices and connect with regional trail systems where possible. (Goals 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12) (R.S2) 

6.7 Strengthen partnerships with other towns and local and regional organizations to conserve land, complete trail segments, educate recreational users, enforce rules of use, and expand programming offerings. (Goals 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 12, 19) (R.S3) 



REGIONAL COORDINATION

Regional and state coordination strategies, as shown above, are 6.1, 6.2, 6.6, and 6.7.

See Chapter 7: Implementation for a general statement of regional and state coordination across all topic areas and strategies of the Plan.



TRANSPORTATION

Modes and Patterns of Transportation • Traffic Congestion
Parking • Transportation-related Infrastructure and Maintenance

CURRENT CONDITIONS HIGHLIGHTS

For complete current conditions, including community feedback, see Appendix A8

- York has not yet adopted a Complete Streets Policy for transportation planning including roadways and sidewalks. Complete Streets is an approach to road development, improvement, and maintenance that seeks to ensure that all roads are safe for all people regardless of their mode of travel (vehicles, bikes, pedestrians).⁵⁰
- Sidewalk networks have grown since the *York Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan* was completed in April 2017, offering an opportunity for it to be updated.
- Informal trails exist in the York Village area, but many are located on private land, are not connected, and are not currently widely publicized or used.
- In 2019, less than 1% of workers aged 16 and older living in York walked to work, compared to almost 4% for the state as a whole.⁵¹
- There are minimal public transportation services in York. Shuttle services are offered by York County Community Action (YCCA), York Hospital (for patients), and by Heart to Heart. Most services are for older adults with even fewer available for the rest of the community.
- Through-traffic and local traffic can conflict, particularly on U.S. Routes 1 and 1A which are regional connectors but also serve local destinations. The combination of local traffic, with its need to make turns on and off major roads, and heavy through-traffic can sometimes result in long queues.
- Across 24 locations in York where MaineDOT conducted Annual Average Daily Traffic counts (AADT), total traffic counts increased by 2.6% between 2016 and 2019. Traffic increases were most pronounced along Route 91 (between 9-10.5% at four locations) and Chases Pond Road (12.7% and 31.2% at two locations). This could be the result of increased local traffic or diversions by cut-through traffic to avoid congestion on more heavily trafficked routes, such as I-95 and U.S. Route 1.
- Seasonal traffic peaks can aggravate travel inefficiencies, resulting in congestion.
- Average travel-to-work times for York residents have increased from 23.7 minutes in 2010 to 25.7 minutes 2019.⁵²
- Contributing to local and regional congestion, the vast majority of York commuters who work outside of their home drive alone (93.3%) and many commute to places outside of York for employment (62.6% work outside of York, 39.3% work outside of York County, 37.1% work outside of Maine).⁵³

- Parking is a challenge in the summer due to an influx of seasonal residents, employees, and daytime visitors, particularly in the denser areas and tourist destinations such as York Village, York Beach, and York Harbor.
- York has a Permit Parking Program for year-round residents, non-residential property owners, active-duty military, and employees of the Town. Permits run from May 15 to October 15 of each year, which is intended to provide for residential parking needs in the summer season. Permits are valid in seven designated parking zones.
- The Town has established metered parking in higher traffic areas of town where permit parking is not allowed, such as the Short Sands and Long Sands Beach areas.



A SAMPLE OF WHAT THE COMMUNITY SAID⁵⁴

Survey Results:

- 59% said transportation options in York should be enhanced or improved.
- When asked how they travel in York, 91% said they drive themselves, 56% said they walk, 26% said they bicycle, and 12% said they carpool or ride-share.
- The most desired “very important” improvements in York identified were: 1) enhanced bicycle safety improvements (56%); 2) pedestrian safety near the beaches (54%); 3) more transportation options for those who don’t drive (52%); and 4) pedestrian safety near the schools (51%).

Other Feedback:

- There is a desire for more:
 - ◊ “Resident Permit Only” parking and parking enforcement.
 - ◊ Street amenities, trails, and paths for bicycles and pedestrians, especially around schools.
 - ◊ Public transportation, including to the beaches and for senior transport.
 - ◊ Electric vehicle charging stations.
- There is a need to reduce traffic congestion and better manage traffic, especially in the summer.
- York should more explicitly adopt a Complete Streets policy.

Varied Feedback: Quotes from meetings, online engagement, and the Community Survey:

- “[York needs] operation of Town-run transport May to October.” (Fall 2021 Open House)
- “Make it a safe place to walk and bike please.” (Fall 2021 Community Survey)
- [York needs] “better traffic management.” (Summer 2021 Blue Sky Survey)

STRATEGIES

Relevant goals are shown in parentheses at the end of the strategy. Strategies involving regional or state coordination/collaboration are indicated with a .

7.1 Commission a comprehensive transportation, traffic, and parking study for the town, to include:

- a. A more in depth understanding of transportation system user patterns, preferences, and needs of residents, employees/staff at town businesses, and tourists (via possible online and intercept surveys and other methods).
- b. Opportunities and potential locations for a transportation hub or center, (including possible off-site parking and shuttle services).
- c. Inventory and evaluation of public and private parking supply, peak parking demand (at beaches and other main destinations) during tourist season.
- d. Parking fee structure for public parking in main tourist and business areas, as well as recreational areas.
- e. Options for public transportation services (using renewable energy if possible) that connect people and places without requiring private vehicles. Consider public/private partnerships for integration with and expansion of the Shoreline Explorer network. Feasibility of providing a shuttle bus from remote parking to the beaches during peak tourist season, including potential parking sites and fee structure, as well as shuttle costs and considerations. Key connections to consider include:
 - Village to beaches
 - Village to Route 1 businesses
 - Affordable/workforce/seasonal employee/older adult housing to services and businesses in the Villages and along the Route 1 corridor.
 - Schools to nearby neighborhoods
 - Remote parking, as determined by study

- f. Potential for creation of a resident on-demand transportation system for York residents, focusing on older adults, those with mobility challenges, and those without access to vehicles (including students).
- g. Possible policies and opportunities for e-bikes, bike share, taxis/ride share, pedi-cabs, and micro-transportation options (e.g., skateboarding) in York.
- h. Plan, based on study findings, as appropriate, to revise building parking requirements in York Zoning Ordinance.

(Goals 1, 2, 9, 10, 12, 17, 19)

7.2 Adopt Complete Streets policies to guide Town investments and policies.

- a. Firmly establish Complete Streets design elements consistent with Maine DoT requirements into Planning Board review policies, DPW paving and sidewalk planning, and the Capital Program (CP) for bonded major road projects that require significant new investment for widening or adding sidewalks, shoulders/bike lanes, crosswalks, and other changes.
- b. Apply Complete Streets philosophy and policies in a review of existing transportation infrastructure and assess necessary retrofits/rebuilds over time to meet new Complete Streets Town policy.

(Goals 9, 10, 11, 17, 18)

TERM TO KNOW

Complete Streets

Complete Streets⁵⁵ are streets that are designed for the safety and comfort of all people who use them, regardless of their mode of travel. Complete Streets policies can help the Town to approach road development, improvement, and maintenance with an aim of making the road better and safer for people walking, biking, driving, riding transit, and moving actively with assistive devices. Complete Streets improvements might include adding missing segments of sidewalks, creating more bike lanes or paved shoulders, providing for frequent and safe crossing opportunities, installing accessible pedestrian signals, exploring options for roundabouts, and more.

7.3 Promote pedestrian and bicyclist safety by advertising safe walking and biking routes around town. Coordinate with the schools, York Police Department, and other town entities to communicate information on safe biking and walking practices. (Goals 9, 10, 11, 17, 18)

7.4 Encourage bicycle and pedestrian use by providing amenities such as bike racks, repair stations, signage, and benches. (Goals 9, 10, 11, 17, 18)

7.5 Develop access management standards for development along roads such as U.S. Route 1, Short Sands Road, Ridge Road, York Street, Route 103 (Lilac Lane), and others as necessary to proactively manage vehicular access points to adjacent parcels. (Goals 9, 10, 12, 13, 14)

7.6 Prioritize and/or focus new development in areas that minimize the need for car dependence. Explore methods to do this such as offering density bonuses in these areas and ensuring mixed-use development can occur. (Goals 1, 2, 9, 10, 17)

7.7 Ensure that higher density, mixed-use areas such as York Village have adequate alternative mobility options (sidewalks, bike lanes, benches, pedestrian signage and crosswalks, etc.). (Goals 1, 2, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17)

7.8 Continue to perform regular road assessments, update paving plans, and update the Capital Program (CP) to meet identified needs. (Goals 9, 18) (T.S1)

7.9 Maintain, enact, or amend local ordinances as appropriate to address or avoid conflicts with:

- a. Policy objectives of the Sensible Transportation Policy Act, which include: minimizing harmful effects of transportation on public health and natural resources; evaluating reasonable transportation alternatives; providing a safe, efficient, and adequate transportation network; promoting reliance on energy-efficient forms of transportation; meeting the diverse needs of people; maintaining consistency with the Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act; and incorporating public participation processes into transportation planning, capital investments, and project decisions. (23 M.R.S.A. §73).
- b. State roadway entrance management regulations that guide the design, location and construction of driveways, entrances and approaches on state and state aid highways. (23 M.R.S.A. §704).
- c. State traffic permitting regulations that require evaluation and mitigation of traffic impacts for large developments. (23 M.R.S.A. §704-A). (T.S3)

(Goal 9)

7.10 Organize and support a community inventory and survey of all sidewalks, trails, and bicycle lanes in York and use this information to develop data layers in the Town GIS system. Create maps for public use that include “rules of use” and location of amenities (bike racks, fresh water, etc.). Develop protocols and a calendar for regular updates to this data and involve all organizations and Town departments involved in oversight and advocacy. (Goals 2, 7, 10, 12)

7.11 Create a plan for physical connectivity that identifies and prioritizes locations for sidewalk and trail connections and related pedestrian amenities (signage, crosswalks and traffic signals, benches), bicycle lanes and related amenities (bike racks, repair stations), and facilities to guide implementation as opportunities arise (i.e. new development, grant opportunities). Include recommendations to address high-use pedestrian/bicycle areas such as the beaches, the York Public Schools, and housing along U.S. Route 1. (Goals 7, 10, 12, 17, 18)

7.12 Work with local and regional non-profits and organizations that advocate for and maintain recreational trails and pathways to develop a plan to complete missing segments of trails and connect to town sidewalks, adjacent communities, and major destinations. (Goals 7, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, 19) (R.S3-partial) 

7.13 Maintain, enact, or amend ordinance standards for subdivisions and for public and private roads as appropriate to foster transportation-efficient growth patterns, protect natural resources, and provide for future street, transit, and pedestrian (i.e., sidewalks and trails) connections. (Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 15, 17, 18) (T.S4)

7.14 Review and update standards for private roads, public roads, and subdivisions to establish clear requirements and policies for roadway design that are appropriate to all areas of town. Design roads that are appropriate for the desired traffic speeds, and use traffic calming strategies where appropriate. (Goals 9, 10, 12)

7.15 Explore additional inter-city transit and trail options, including connections to the Wells and Portsmouth Transportation Centers, Portland, Boston, and trail systems such as the East Coast Greenway. (Goals 1, 2, 9, 10, 12, 19) 

7.16 Initiate or actively participate in regional and state transportation efforts, including the Kittery Area Comprehensive Transportation System (KACTS). (Goals 1, 2, 9, 10, 13, 17, 19) 

7.17 Actively recruit businesses that rent, sell, and/or service various modes of transportation including bicycles, electric bikes, and scooters. (Goals 1, 2, 9, 10, 13, 17, 19)

7.18 Institute a no-idling policy in public areas and provide signage as appropriate. Consider instituting fines for violations of the no-idling policy. (Goals 9, 17)

7.19 Adopt policies to facilitate the expansion of electric vehicle (EV) ownership and use. (Goals 9, 17)

7.20 Implement strategies and programs to educate residents about the availability of alternative transportation options, including active transportation (walking, bicycling, skate-boarding), public transportation, and electric vehicles. (Goals 9, 10, 17)



REGIONAL COORDINATION

Regional and state coordination strategies, as shown above, are 7.12, 7.15, and 7.16.

See Chapter 7: Implementation for a general statement of regional and state coordination across all topic areas and strategies of the Plan.



TOWN, PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

Town Facilities • Infrastructure • Services • Programs
Schools • Utilities • Town Capacity and Staff

CURRENT CONDITIONS HIGHLIGHTS

For complete current conditions, including community feedback, see Appendix A9.

The Town's public facilities include resources such as: Town Hall, two Fire Departments, one Police Station, four Public Works Facilities, one Recycling/Composting Facility, two Elementary Schools, one Middle School, one High School, one School Superintendent's Office, two Town Docks, and 14 Recreation Facilities.

Public Safety

- Police Department services including traffic, parking, mental health, and public safety.
- There are two Fire Departments covering different geographic areas – York Village Fire Department and York Beach Fire Department.

Department of Public Works (DPW)

- DPW services include roadway maintenance and repair, overseeing trash and recycling, facility maintenance, and stormwater infrastructure maintenance.

Parks and Recreation Department

- Wide range of programs for York residents, all run at decentralized locations, including the schools.
- Significant amount of maintenance for its facilities as well as other usable green spaces in town, including the school athletic fields and parks.

- The Center for Active Living serves adults over age of 50 with a dining room meal program, plus a wide range of educational, recreational, and social events and activities. As the portion of the Town's aging population continues to grow, the Center has been looking to address the physical space limitations of its current facility. Renovation of 36 Main Street is on the Capital Program for FY24 to include improved and additional Center for Active Living space, as well as other community spaces.

York School Department

- Projected total school enrollment for the 2022-2023 school year is an estimated 1,618 students. From 2011-2023, that would be a decrease of 258 students or 13.75%.

Water & Sewer Facilities and Services

- The York Water District (YWD) includes 82 miles of water mains, 17 miles of seasonal mains, and two water storage tanks and is the principal water utility in York. YWD has interconnections with Kittery Water District (KWD), and Kennebunk, Kennebunkport & Wells Water District (KKWWD). Chases Pond is YWD's primary source of water.
- The York Sewer District (YSD), Kittery Sewer Department (KSD), and Ogunquit Sewer District (OSD) each provide sewer services to York. York Sewer District (YSD) provides public sewer only to a portion of York and is undergoing a Master Plan Update at the time of this Plan. The sewer pipe network is adequate for the current service areas. There is no tie-in requirement presently.

Utilities

- Central Maine Power Company is the sole distributor of electric power in York. As the Town moves towards infrastructure and building improvements to meet new sustainability and energy conservation goals and requirements, there are concerns about the overall capacity of the energy grid at a local, regional, and statewide level.
- York has a few wired broadband providers. Serious gaps and stability issues with internet, cell phone and wireless service coverage have been identified anecdotally by Town staff, Steering Committee members, and community members.

Health Services

- York Hospital offers a range of in-patient and out-patient services.
- York Ambulance Association is a non-profit that provides pre-hospital care and offers Wheelchair Van Service for medical and non-medical transportation for a fee.
- York County Community Action Corporation (Nasson Health Care) offers programs and services ranging from Head Start and Early Head Start to home ownership programs to heating and fuel assistance to health care.

Social Services and Programs

- York Community Service Association (YCSA) is the major service provider in York, providing a range of services including fuel assistance, emergency funds, a food pantry, clothing assistance, camp scholarships, and a Thrift Shop. YCSA contracts with the Town to administer the General Assistance Program (assistance for housing, electricity, personal care & household supplies, prescription medications, fuel assistance), and receives some Town funding for this purpose.
- York Public Library offers access to computers, internet, books/periodicals, classes, workshops, and events. There is a new teen section and during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Library strengthened its online resources and increased its book delivery system.

Municipal Staffing

- The Town has been able to maintain a high-quality level of service through a combination of Town staffing, contractors, and outsourcing. Similar to other municipalities in the county and throughout the state, there have been staffing challenges that began pre-COVID-19 pandemic that have continued.



A SAMPLE OF WHAT THE COMMUNITY SAID⁵⁶

Survey Results:

- Public Facilities and Services as very important to quality of life in York (42%); 46% view these as somewhat important.
- Top three Town services that need improvement are: roadway and sidewalk maintenance/improvements (29%), Code enforcement (18%), recreation and social programs and activities (17%).
- Top public service priorities for investment/expansion: roadway and sidewalk maintenance/investment (39%), recreational and social programs/activities (26%), and schools (23%).
- Of the 506 who said they use the Town's social services/older adult services: 27% said these services need improvement, 56% said these services are adequate, and 16% said they are highly satisfied with these services.
- When asked what additional recreational opportunities they wanted in York, 53% would support a multi-purpose recreation space, 35% want a shared-age group 'center,' and 13% would support a designated-age group space.
- Of the 664 who said they use York's schools, 25% said these services need improvement, 42% said these services are adequate, and 33% said they are highly satisfied with these services.

- Increasing internet and cable access in York is a priority for majority: 58% very important and 27% somewhat important.
- Increasing cell coverage in York is a priority for the majority: 69% very important and 21% somewhat important.

Other Feedback:

- Development of services and facilities for older adults desired.
- Explore water and sewer systems expansion and improvements to support and enable specialized housing projects for older adults and modest income families.
- Seasonal staffing for Town services and programs, such as summer recreation programs and winter snow removal, has become more difficult (i.e., from pre- to post-pandemic).

Varied Feedback: Quotes from meetings, online engagement, and the Community Survey:

- "Hire more people in Town Hall." (Fall 2021 Community Survey)
- "Better broadband, internet service." (Fall 2021 Community Survey)
- "Expansion of sewage or at least stronger septic enforcement." (Fall 2021 Community Survey)

STRATEGIES

Relevant goals are shown in parentheses at the end of the strategy. Strategies involving regional or state coordination/collaboration are indicated with a 

8.1 Perform a complete re-evaluation and re-writing of the existing Zoning Ordinance to ensure that York's zoning clearly matches the goals for each Future Land Use area and is easy to understand, streamlined, and modernized. Consider actions such as:

- a. Review designations of current zoning and update for definitions, locations, allowed uses, and consistency. Use descriptions provided in the Future Land Use Plan narrative and in the goals and land use strategies of this Plan to guide updates to better define the desired scale, intensity, and location of development as well as protective measures for natural resources.
- b. Without limiting opportunities for mixed-use and walkable areas, consider simplifying zoning designations according to the predominant allowable uses, such as Residential, Commercial, Municipal, and Rural or Conservation within and outside the Growth Area.
- c. Consider adoption of a unified land use ordinance, in which regulations such as traditional zoning, subdivision regulations, and design guidelines are combined into a single document.
- d. Review current allowable uses, particularly in residential areas, to determine appropriateness or changes to zoning.
- e. Correct and reconcile Site Plan and Subdivision Regulations with the Zoning Ordinance for compatibility, consistency, and ease of use. This should include reviewing, reconciling, and clarifying alignment between the Future Land Use Plan and policies, regulations, and development review processes required through the Town's multiple ordinances and regulations by the Planning Board, Planning Department, Appeals Board, and Code Enforcement.
- f. Review and strengthen private subdivision standards town-wide. In particular, consider updates to standards for lot size, roads, general

site design, and open space requirements.

Consider different standards for areas with high-value natural resources.

- g. Create a user-friendly guide and flow chart for zoning and other planning, development, and conservations-related ordinances and regulations, approvals and permitting processes.
- h. Consider amending land use codes to provide for priority or streamlined review, if possible, for projects in the Growth Area. (FLU.S2)

(Goals 1 through 18)

8.2 Amend the Zoning Ordinance to align with York's need to mitigate and adapt to climate change:

- a. Adopt new coastal resiliency overlay zoning to address SLR impacts and protect natural resources and public infrastructure. Regulate development in areas vulnerable to SLR and protect ability of natural areas (dunes, cliffs, marsh migration areas, unstable bluffs, etc.) to withstand and absorb impacts of SLR and storm surge.
 - i. Encourage conservation actions and adoption of policies and regulations that account for and accommodate marsh migration.
- b. Encourage renewable energy infrastructure and the installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations.
- c. Ensure that local codes and standards do not discourage small-scale renewable energy generation, including solar systems and battery backups.
- d. Explore changes to zoning to provide flexibility and/or incentives for new housing that is energy efficient and designed to be resilient in the face of climate change, severe weather events, and storm surges, especially in vulnerable low-lying areas.
- e. Adopt new zoning regulations for areas subject to inland precipitation-based flooding areas as identified through the Town's climate planning efforts.
- f. Consider new standards for resource protection and building for areas subject to inland precipitation-based flooding.

(Goals 4, 7, 16, 17, 18)

8.3 Adopt new policies and regulations to align with York's need to mitigate and adapt to climate change:

- a. Adopt State of Maine sea level rise/storm surge projections, recognizing at least a three-foot sea level rise projection for planning purposes, and revise as necessary to align with state projections as they are updated.
- b. Adopt the Maine Energy Stretch Code (IECC 2021) to improve energy efficiency in new homes and buildings, lower monthly utility costs, and improve indoor air quality and comfort.
- c. Develop a plan to phase in energy building codes to reach net-zero carbon emissions for new construction.
- d. Provide flexibility and/or incentives for new housing that is net zero and designed to be resilient. Establish requirements for energy efficiency that exceed current standards in order to meet the Town's greenhouse gas emissions reduction commitments.
- e. Consider incentives for projects and development that include solar power or other renewable energy systems.
- f. Adopt temperature and flood resilience standards for all new and heavily renovated structures.
- g. Evaluate current Town policies regarding the removal of healthy trees and explore the possibility of requiring underground utility lines to reduce tree damage and protect growth. Require tree replacements and new plantings in public rights of way and around parking lots that will produce enough tree canopy to provide shade to reduce temperatures, promote cleaner air, and help slow the progress of climate change within the town.

(Goals 3, 4, 5, 15, 16, 17, 18)

Net Zero House

TERM TO KNOW

A net zero house balances the power it needs with the amount of renewable energy that is generated on site or used from off-site sources to meet that need. The net result is that there are no carbon emissions from the use of fossil fuels.

8.4 Explore creating a tourism impact fund to which large employers contribute to address industry impacts and fund affordable workforce housing and community projects. (Goals 1, 2, 9, 10, 12, 15, 18)

8.5 Make use of performance standards and other tools, including Universal Design standards, to ensure development creates walkable and accessible areas for families and older adults. (Goals 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 15, 18)

Universal Design

TERM TO KNOW

Universal design is the process of creating products and spaces that are accessible to people with a wide range of abilities, disabilities, and other characteristics. Universally designed products and spaces accommodate individual preferences and abilities; communicate necessary information effectively; and can be approached, reached, manipulated, and used regardless of the individual's body size, posture, or mobility.

8.6 Consider establishing a system of impact fees that are higher in the Rural Areas to acknowledge higher local costs for infrastructure and services. Fees could be allocated for specific needs, including emergency response services or land conservation. (Goals 3, 4, 5, 7, 16, 18)

The Green Enterprise Recreational Overlay District

TERM TO KNOW

The Green Enterprise Recreational Overlay District (Zone GEZ) is an area of 250 acres that was targeted for potential development of "green" business and recreation opportunities for townspeople. Short Sands Road now traverses the district, including Town-owned land, and provides opportunities to revisit the goals of the district to refine the vision for this area and re-create an overlay district that accomplishes community goals.

8.7 Consider a strategic planning process to review, update and modify the Green Enterprise Recreational Overlay District. Determine an overall concept for the area and the desired uses and locations relative to what is allowed through the underlying base zones, and incorporate the Short Sands Beach and York Beach Village areas. Through the strategic planning process, examine which types of zoning options and policies could best encourage the types of uses desired, including recreation and form-based zoning or Planned Unit Development. Consider renaming the overlay district based on results of community charettes to reflect the desired mix of uses. (Goals 1, 2, 7, 9, 10, 13, 4, 15, 16, 17, 18)

8.8 Assign responsibility for implementing the Future Land Use Plan to the appropriate committee, board, or official. (Goal 18) (FLU.S1)

8.9 Include in the Capital Plan anticipated municipal capital investments needed to support proposed land uses. (Goal 18) (FLU.S3)

8.10 Track new development in the community by type and location through a regularly updated database maintained collaboratively by relevant Town departments. (Goal 18) (FLU.S8)

8.11 Take steps to protect critical assets and infrastructure that will be impacted by flooding and temperature change by 2030 and 2050, as identified by the Town's climate planning efforts. (Goals 6, 16, 18, 19)

8.12 Facilitate the transition of all municipal, quasi-municipal, and commercial fleets operating in York to battery electric vehicles or other zero-emission technologies as appropriate, including school buses and public transportation. (Goals 9, 17, 18)

8.13 Facilitate, promote, and document the installation of publicly accessible EV charging infrastructure for York residents, employees, and visitors. Mandate signage and safety standards for public EV charging stations. (Goals 9, 17, 18)

8.14 Publicize and promote programs such as Efficiency Maine that aid businesses and residents to achieve reductions in energy usage and/or generation of clean on-site energy, including in existing homes. (Goals 17, 19) 

8.15 Facilitate the installation and improvement of high-speed wired or wireless internet service in York to improve emergency communications and to enable remote work and learning, and other communications that could reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT). (Goals 16, 17, 18, 19, 20) 

8.16 Ensure that public facilities and services promote and support growth and development in the town's Growth Area. (Goals 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 16, 17, 18) (PFS. S2)

8.17 Locate new public facilities and direct a minimum of 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments into the designated Growth Area. (Goals 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 16, 17, 18)

8.18 Coordinate with the York Water and Sewer Districts to ensure that service extensions are in agreement with the Future Land Use Plan. (Goals 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 16, 17, 18) (PFS.S3)

8.19 Conduct a feasibility assessment for the creation of a Town-affiliated stormwater utility, which would collect fees related to the control and treatment of stormwater and would be used to fund a stormwater management program. Responsibilities would include regulatory compliance and planning, upgrades, and maintenance of stormwater infrastructure. Service fees could be a flat rate or proportional to the amount of impervious (non-porous) surface on a parcel.⁵⁷ (Goals 3, 4, 6, 16, 18)

8.20 Support ongoing efforts to ensure adequate water supply during periods of drought or other water supply stressors, including but not limited to regional cooperation among water suppliers. (Goals 3, 16, 18, 19)

8.21 Increase staffing capacity for enforcement of existing Town Ordinances and standards. (Goals 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 16, 18)

8.22 Provide excellence in the curriculum and public school experience:

- a. Prepare students to be informed and civically engaged citizens.
- b. Expand and support academic, social, and cultural diversity .Include forums for open dialogue for students, staff, and community.
- c. Provide sufficient staffing and facilities for students through 12th grade.

(Goals 18, 20)

8.23 Provide lifelong learning opportunities for learners of all ages and backgrounds through the Schools, Center for Active Living, Parks and Recreation, and other educational resources in town. (Goals 1, 2, 10, 11, 18, 19, 20)

8.24 Engage the broader community in school community events, policies, and outcomes. (Goals 1, 2, 10, 11, 18, 19, 20)

8.25 Evaluate current policies for community use of public-school facilities and other town properties and implement changes, if necessary, to achieve the following:

- a. Identify town properties that are underutilized for specific time periods and develop strategies to make better use of spaces and allow community use with clear guidelines and policies.
- b. Optimize use of school spaces after school hours and simplify the reservation process for the community and organizations, including designated points of contact and more transparent information on availability.
- c. Support broader opportunities for community involvement in school life, including consideration of use of school spaces, where possible, for meetings, educational programs, forums, and other services.
- d. Consider, for future planning, the possible conversion of one of the elementary schools into another Town or community use (such as a multi-generational community center) if space becomes available because of changing demographics.

(Goals 1, 2, 10, 11, 18, 19, 20)

8.26 Commission a feasibility study for a multi-generational community center in York that includes a survey of resident needs and desires, potential locations, and cost. Consider flexibility in use to allow for changing needs and demographics in the future. (Goals 2, 7, 11)

8.27 Support the Center for Active Living to make sure its facilities are safe, clean, and updated, and that services meet the needs of residents and changing demographics. (Goals 2, 7, 11, 18, 19)

8.28 Support the design and development /or retrofit of outdoor park and civic spaces using Universal Design principles, which would improve accessibility, including for older adults with compromised mobility and sight. Adopt Universal Design principles for renovations to existing parks, trails, and other civic spaces. (Goals 1, 2, 7, 11, 18, 19)

8.29 Maintain and upgrade buildings and equipment as needed, to continue delivery of quality services to keep up with demand. (Goals 11, 18) (PFS.S1-partial)

8.30 Consider conducting a full Town facility study, including existing conditions, capacity, and anticipated future needs. This would include information from recent studies performed by separate departments incorporated into one study with similar baseline information for all facilities. (Goal 18) (PFS.S1-partial)

8.31 Hire or contract for a Facilities Manager for all Town facilities to:

- a. Oversee day-to-day facilities management.
- b. Prepare or manage the process to produce a master plan for all facilities.

- c. Collaborate and coordinate with the York Public Schools.
- d. Ensure equipment and facility needs are met in a timely fashion through the Town's capital improvements plan.

(Goals 18, 20)

8.32 When and where feasible, install sustainable, high-efficiency heating and cooling systems in existing and new Town facilities. (Goals 11, 17, 19, 18, 20)

8.33 Support the York Recycling and Composting Committee in completing a financial feasibility study for town-wide compost pick-up. (Goals 17, 18)

8.34 Expand social connectivity in York by supporting existing events and the creation of new community activities aimed at building community connections and celebrating arts and culture, including events and programs in York Village, Cape Neddick Village, and York Beach. Consider collaboration with, and support of arts and cultural, historical, and recreational non-profits and businesses to expand activities and events. (Goals 1, 2, 10, 11, 14, 18, 19, 20)

8.35 Increase efficient use of Town-owned facilities. Encourage and expand the reach and use of facilities such as the York Community Auditorium, school gymnasiums, and athletic fields for larger community events and gatherings. Consider televising events. Explore space reservation and oversight systems that streamline the process for identifying and booking available spaces. (Goals 1, 2, 10, 11, 14, 18, 19, 20)

8.36 Support expanded reach of local communications, such as the Town of York Parks & Recreation newsletter, Center for Active Living communications, York Public Library newsletters, and other means to engage more members of the York community. (Goals 1, 2, 10, 11, 14, 18, 19, 20)

8.37 Encourage the creation of social and civic gathering places. Encourage temporary uses of public spaces for arts, culture, and gathering where appropriate. (Goals 1, 2, 10, 11, 14, 18, 19, 20)

8.38 Provide funding and/or staffing support to increase community educational opportunities, recreational programming, and other enrichment programs through the York Schools, Parks & Recreation, Center for Active Living, and other Town departments and partner entities as applicable. (Goals 7, 11, 18, 19, 20)

8.39 Consider encouraging and supporting more diverse population of residents, entrepreneurs, and businesses in town. Consider the following supports and programs:

- a. Outreach.
- b. Advocacy and support (housing choices, food, cultural).
- c. Collaboration among Town commissions and boards, initiatives, and community groups.
- d. Foreign and cultural exchange programs.
- e. Language education and translation services.
- f. Housing choices and assistance.
- g. Support for seasonal workers.

(Goals 1, 10, 13, 15, 18, 19)

8.40 Support service programs for people of limited means. (Goals 1, 2, 10, 19)

8.41 Identify the needs and desires of older adults and those with disabilities by conducting surveys, and through sharing knowledge with local and regional organizations. (Goal 2, 19)

8.42 Amend policies, programs, tools, and services to meet the identified needs of a growing older adult population and those with disabilities. (Goals 2, 10, 11, 18, 19)

8.43 Develop partnerships with local businesses, non-profits, and health care providers to enhance services to older adults:

- a. Encourage local medical practices and York Hospital partnerships with the Center for Active Living to share knowledge and develop a system for referrals for social needs of older adults.
- b. Work with the York Hospital system and providers, EMTs/York Fire Department, and the York Public Library to identify trends and challenges of providing support for older adults.
- c. Collaborate with local organizations and businesses to conduct a study of transportation needs of older adults or to incorporate this study within a larger town-wide study. Focus on identifying specific needs that traditional transportation strategies may not meet.

(Goals 1, 2, 9, 10, 18, 19)

8.44 Consider the Town becoming a member of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities. (Goals 2, 18, 19)

8.45 Explore the mission statement of the current Senior Citizens Advisory Board to identify potential changes to meet ongoing needs of older residents and support the board, including needed expansion to meet these needs and achieve the goals. (Goals 2, 10, 11, 18, 19)

8.46 Streamline and simplify Town customer-facing processes and licensing and permitting requirements. (Goal 18)

8.47 Work towards implementing on-line licensing and permitting applications. (Goal 18)

8.48 Consider consolidation of business licensing and building permit processes to align Town and York Sewer and Water Districts' requirements. (Goal 18)

8.49 Provide an annual report on implementation progress of the Comprehensive Plan with assessments on changing priorities, challenges, etc.⁵⁸ (All Goals) (FLU.S8)

8.50 Consider conducting a Town staffing and volunteer board needs assessment to understand capacity and resources needed to address increasing needs and expectations for services:

- a. Conducting an organization or staffing study of Town departments, including existing capacity and anticipated future needs.
- b. Conducting a needs assessment for volunteer Town Boards, Commissions, and Committees.

(All Goals)

8.51 Increase Town capacity and resources to address identified increasing needs and expectations for services, including:

- a. Providing sufficient Town staff for Town operations and implementation of Comprehensive Plan.

- b. Providing sufficient Town staff support for volunteer Boards, Commissions, and Committees.
- c. Providing training and development opportunities to Town staff to maintain and expand skills to meet current and future needs.
- d. Providing resources as needed to the Code Enforcement Department to support enforcement of Town ordinances, municipal codes and municipal building permit approvals, such as conservation, subdivision approvals, land use, and others. Ensure the Code Enforcement Officer is provided training and support to become or remain certified in accordance with 30-A M.R.S.A §4451 ("Training and Certification for Code Enforcement Officers"). (FLU.S5)
 - Consider code enforcement enhancement such as a dedicated environmental conservation officer.

(All Goals)

8.52 Allocate funding to ensure that the Town, or a contracted entity, has sufficient staff, expertise, and other resources for the implementation of climate change adaptation and greenhouse gas mitigation strategies, including:

- a. Collection of necessary data to understand impacts of climate change.
- b. Support for regional collaboration. 
- c. Pursuit of funding and financing opportunities for mitigation and adaptation, including state and federal grants.
- d. Provide education to the public about climate change and available measures to lessen impacts.
- e. Track progress toward climate change adaptation via ongoing data collection and mapping.

(Goals 16, 17, 18, 19)

8.53 Consider creating and funding a Director of Grants and Strategic Partnerships (or similar) position with the responsibilities of:

- a. Monitoring the availability of and pursuing grants (federal and state) for infrastructure, preparation for climate adaptation and greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction improvements, affordable housing, as well as other initiatives.
- b. Overseeing grant implementation and compliance.
- c. Identifying best practices in other communities.
- d. Identifying collaborations and partnerships. 

(All Goals)

**8.54 Maintain, expand, and improve partnerships among Town staff, schools, boards, commissions, committees, quasi-public (e.g., sewer and water), and non-profit groups. (All Goals) **

8.55 Conduct annual Selectboard progress reviews for chartered boards and committees to align with and enable these groups to carry out their charter. (Goal 18, 19)

**8.56 Document existing coordination and collaboration occurring within town and also with regional entities to allow for formalized and continued future relationships. Commit to participating in more partnerships with non-profits, or other entities, as appropriate to achieve Town goals. (Goals 18, 19) **

8.57 Support collaborative efforts among the Select Board, School Committee, and Budget Committee to:

- a. Maximize opportunities for cost savings.
- b. Create long range operating plans that reflect trends and the community's needs.

- c. Coordinate and maximize use of Town buildings.
- d. Share resources, when appropriate.
- e. Ensure effective maintenance of Town property.
- f. Effectively plan for new infrastructure and capital expenditures.

(Goals 18, 19)

8.58 Evaluate the cost of municipal resources directly related to tourism and determine if the charges and fees to visitors need to be adjusted to cover these costs. (Goals 12, 18)

**8.59 Explore hiring or sharing a regional Sustainability Coordinator to implement climate adaptation and mitigation strategies. (Goals 16, 17, 18, 19) **

**8.60 Pursue state, regional, and federal funding and financing opportunities that support climate adaptation and mitigation initiatives, and work in concert with regional efforts to share best practices. (Goals 16, 17, 18, 19) **

8.61 Work regionally to develop and implement climate adaptation solutions, coordinate efforts, pursue funding, and pool expertise.

- a. Support and expand regional collaboration among water and sewer districts, public works departments, and other public services entities, to prepare for threats from sea level rise.
- b. Protect access to and within York in the face of increasing risks from sea level rise (SLR) and storm surge (such as bridge and road connections at I-95, U.S. Route 1, Scotland Bridge, Sewell's Bridge and Shore Road over Cape Neddick River).
- c. Continue to work collaboratively with Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission on climate resilience studies and projects. 

(Goals 16, 17, 18, 19)

8.62 Support and expand regional collaboration for facilities and services and explore cost sharing and saving opportunities, including:

- a. Initiate or actively participate in regional and state transportation efforts. Determine which Town departments should be involved for the best outcomes.
- b. Promote and participate in regional coordination regarding public infrastructure, sewer, and water services.
- c. Participate in regional and statewide initiatives regarding housing, economic development, natural resource preservation, social services, recreation, energy conservation, transportation, emergency response initiatives, and other efforts. Determine which Town departments should be involved for each category of initiatives. (H.S5-partial) (E.S4) 

(All Goals) (T.S2) (PFS.S5) (F.S1)

**8.63 Meet and collaborate with neighboring communities to coordinate land use designations and regulatory and non-regulatory strategies. (All Goals) (FLU.S4) **



REGIONAL COORDINATION

Regional and state coordination strategies, as shown above, are 8.14, 8.15, 8.52 8.53, 8.54, 8.56, 8.59, 8.60, 8.61, 8.62, and 8.63.

See Chapter 7: Implementation for a general statement of regional and state coordination across all topic areas and strategies of the Plan.

ENDNOTES

- 1 These highlights are taken from public meetings and events, as well as other outreach. Survey results are rounded and are from the Fall 2021 Comprehensive Plan Community Survey. There were 1163 responses to the survey; not every question had a 100% response rate. Details can be found in Appendix A Current Conditions.
- 2 State Historic Tax Credits offer a 20% tax credit to the developers of income-producing buildings on the National Register of Historic Places that undergo renovation and reuse.
- 3 Supply and capacity issues for drinking water are in 5-8 Town, Public Facilities & Services.
- 4 Beginning with Habitat (BwH) is a program within Maine's Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife that helps to collect and consolidate habitat information produced by separate federal, state, and local agencies and other organizations.
- 5 The town tracks unfragmented blocks as small as 350 acres.
- 6 These highlights are taken from public meetings and events, as well as other outreach. Survey results are rounded and are from the Fall 2021 Comprehensive Plan Community Survey. There were 1163 responses to the survey; not every question had a 100% response rate. Details can be found in Appendix A Current Conditions.
- 7 Beginning with Habitat (BwH) is a program within Maine's Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife that collects and consolidates habitat information produced by separate federal, state, and local agencies and other organizations.
- 8 These are natural areas that store carbon and help offset greenhouse gas emissions which contribute to global warming. See Appendix A3: Natural Resources for detailed descriptions and maps.
- 9 See Chapter 6 Future Land Use Plan and Appendix A3: Natural Resources Current Conditions.
- 10 SS reg 6.3.16. BwH maps can be found in Appendix A3: Natural Resources Current Conditions.
- 11 <https://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/38/title38sec420-D.html>.
- 12 <https://www.maine.gov/dep/water/nutrient-criteria/index.html>.
- 13 <https://www.maine.gov/dep/water/wd/general.html>.
- 14 <https://bit.ly/3vLXG6n>.
- 15 <https://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/12/title12sec8869.html>.
- 16 State of Maine, Assessing the Impacts Climate Change May Have on the State's Economy, Revenues, and Investment Decisions: Volume 2: Cost of Doing Nothing Analysis Final.
- 17 Maine Department of Marine Resources, Landings Program, 2021.
- 18 These highlights are taken from public meetings and events, as well as other outreach. Survey results are rounded and are from the Fall 2021 Comprehensive Plan Community Survey. There were 1163 responses to the survey; not every question had a 100% response rate. Details can be found in Appendix A Current Conditions.
- 19 <https://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/12/title12sec6042.html>.
- 20 <https://www.maine.gov/revenue/taxes/tax-relief-credits-programs/property-tax-relief-programs/land-use-programs>.
- 21 "York employment" and "York job base" mean jobs at private and public sector employers (including large and small businesses, government units, and non-profit organizations) within the town's borders whose workers may live anywhere. York's "employed labor force" means all York residents 16 or older who are working at a job in any location.
- 22 Maine Department of Labor Quarterly and Annual Industry Employment and Wages Dataset, <https://www.maine.gov/labor/cwri/qcew1.html>.
- 23 York's employed labor force includes residents of the town 16 or older who are working at a job in any location. Data from 2019 Five-Year American Community Survey, US Census Bureau.
- 24 Maine Department of Labor Quarterly and Annual Industry Employment and Wages Dataset, <https://www.maine.gov/labor/cwri/qcew1.html>.
- 25 Maine Department of Labor Quarterly and Annual Industry Employment and Wages Dataset, <https://www.maine.gov/labor/cwri/qcew1.html>.
- 26 These highlights are taken from public meetings and events, as well as other outreach. Survey results are rounded and are from the Fall 2021 Comprehensive Plan Community Survey. There were 1163 responses to the survey; not every question had a 100% response rate. Details can be found in Appendix A Current Conditions.
- 27 The Maine Development Foundation's Maine Downtown Center (MDC) program serves as a statewide resource for preservation-based downtown revitalization and serves as the state coordinator for the National Main Street Center's Main Street Program. Established in 1999, MDC's mission is to advance economic development in Maine downtowns using the 40-year-old Main Street Four-Point Approach®. For more info: <https://www.mdf.org/program-partnerships/maine-downtown-center/>.
- 28 <https://formbasedcodes.org/definition/>.
- 29 Data is from the 2019 and Five-Year American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau unless noted otherwise.
- 30 American Community Survey, Southern Maine Planning & Development Commission, and Levine Planning Strategies.
- 31 The Vitalius Group.
- 32 Projected future need is derived from data from the American Community Survey and Levine Planning Strategies.
- 33 MaineHousing.
- 34 "Seasonal" means housing units that could be converted to year-round use but not hotels, cottages, and other housing that is clearly for transient use.
- 35 Full-home describes a rental that is not a room or series of rooms shared within a larger housing unit.
- 36 Percentages are rounded.
- 37 American Community Survey and AirDNA.
- 38 YorkHousing.
- 39 These highlights are taken from public meetings and events, as well as other outreach. Survey results are rounded and are from the Fall 2021 Comprehensive Plan Community Survey. There were 1163 responses to the survey; not every question had a 100% response rate. Details can be found in Appendix A Current Conditions.
- 40 Chapter 6: Future Land Use Plan should be used as a guide for housing strategies.
- 41 This list is menu of possibilities for consideration and is not meant to apply in all places or be treated as a complete package.
- 42 A density bonus is offered by current zoning if a minimum of 10% of new housing is affordable at 80% of the area median income as part of the Town's Open Space Conservation Subdivision Ordinance but this doesn't apply to multi-family dwellings or other situations.
- 43 Formerly known as Cluster Housing, Open Space Conservation Subdivisions are an alternative to conventional residential subdivision design that allows for reduced individual lot sizes and dimensional standards, with the balance of land set aside as protected open space. This process is intended to protect important components of the natural and cultural environment and encourage quality residential design (York Zoning Ordinance 1.3.12).
- 44 <https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/30-A/title30-Asec4358.html>.

- 45 As of February 2022, there was a state bill pending at the legislature that may give communities an option to collect revenue from STRs to fund year-round housing development.
- 46 Affordable Housing Tax Increment Financing is a state program under 30-A M.R.S.A. §§5245-5250-G administered by MaineHousing. The program allows communities to use the incremental tax revenues from an affordable housing district or development to help make the housing affordable and to pay for related costs.
- 47 2019 Five-Year American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau.
- 48 These highlights are taken from public meetings and events, as well as other outreach. Survey results are rounded and are from the Fall 2021 Comprehensive Plan Community Survey. There were 1163 responses to the survey; not every question had a 100% response rate. Details can be found in Appendix A Current Conditions.
- 49 Title 14, M.R.S.A. §159-A, <https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/14/title14sec159-A.html>.
- 50 The Complete Streets philosophy has been applied to recent infrastructure projects in York, including DPW operations, the York Village Revitalization Project, Short Sands Road, Scotland Bridge Road, and Phase 1 of the Nubble Road reconstruction.
- 51 U.S. Census Bureau 2019 American Community Survey.
- 52 U.S. Census Bureau 2010 and 2019 American Community Survey.
- 53 U.S. Census Bureau 2019 American Community Survey.
- 54 These highlights are taken from public meetings and events, as well as other outreach. Survey results are rounded and are from the Fall 2021 Comprehensive Plan Community Survey. There were 1163 responses to the survey; not every question had a 100% response rate. Details can be found in Appendix A Current Conditions.
- 55 <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/completestreets/>.
- 56 These highlights are taken from public meetings and events, as well as other outreach. Survey results are rounded and are from the Fall 2021 Comprehensive Plan Community Survey. There were 1163 responses to the survey; not every question had a 100% response rate. Details can be found in Appendix A Current Conditions.
- 57 The stormwater utility applies to all properties in the stormwater utility district as this is a town-wide or area wide issue. "If the municipality decides after the feasibility study to develop a stormwater utility, it will then collect user and parcel area data (such as ownership and impervious area for each parcel) and develop a system to bill property owners." – EPA.
- 58 Reviews for implementation progress should be performed in accordance with the State of Maine Comprehensive Plan Review Criteria Rule requirements, Chapter 208 Section 2.7.

Photo Credit: Geneve Hoffman and Williams Realty Partners



6

Future Land Use Plan

STATE OF MAINE GOAL

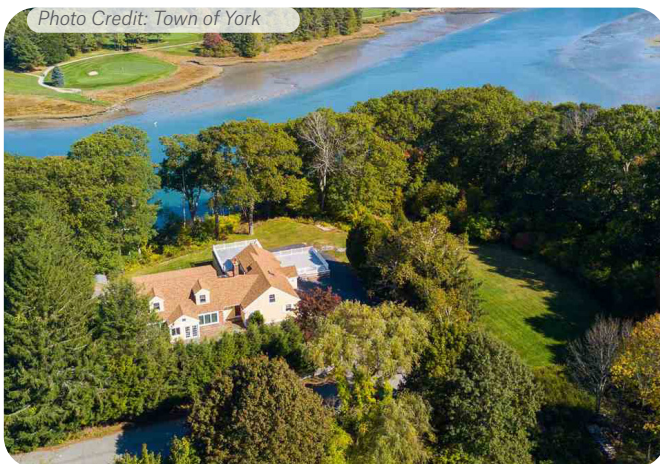


- To encourage orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of each community, while protecting the state's rural character, making efficient use of public services, and preventing development sprawl.

POLICIES

- To coordinate the community's land use strategies with other local and regional land use planning efforts.
- To support the locations, types, scales, and intensities of land uses the community desires as stated in its vision.
- To support the level of financial commitment necessary to provide needed infrastructure in growth areas.
- To establish efficient permitting procedures, especially in growth areas.
- To protect critical rural and critical waterfront areas from the impacts of development.

Local policies and strategies for land use can be found in Chapter 5 in relevant topic areas.



PURPOSE

The State of Maine requires municipalities to develop a growth management program¹ that includes defined Growth and Rural areas. York's 2022 Future Land Use Map (Fig. 1) illustrates how the town should grow over the next ten to fifteen years to achieve the community's vision. Growth and change will continue to occur in York, with or without this Comprehensive Plan. This Future Land Use Plan reflects the 20 goals of the Comprehensive Plan and will guide York's land use regulations and policies. It will also inform investment decisions for infrastructure, facilities, and services to proactively shape the future of the town to best meet the community's needs and desires. Further details on Future Land Use can be found in Appendix C: Future Land Use Background.

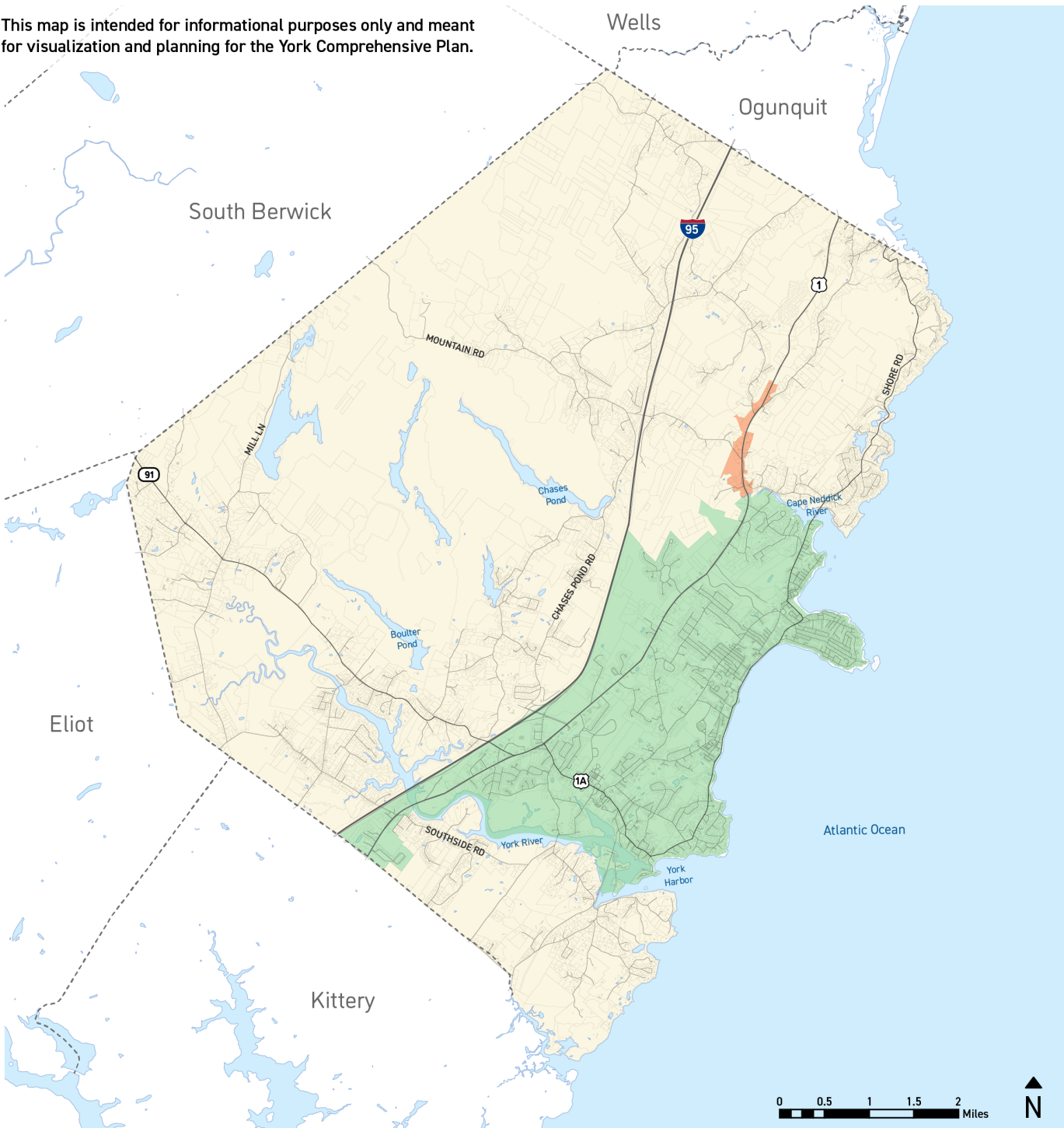
THE VISION FOR FUTURE LAND USE: ACHIEVING BALANCE

The community has prioritized natural resource protection and conservation as a core goal for the Comprehensive Plan while also expressing a desire for a greater variety of housing choices (costs, sizes, types) and additional year-round businesses serving residents to ensure York thrives as a community. Five key drivers that shape this Future Land Use Plan emerged during the planning process:

1. Preserve and protect **natural resources**.
2. Support and incentivize a variety of **housing** types and price points.
3. Encourage **economic development** with a focus on year-round availability of goods, services, and recreation opportunities for residents.
4. **Manage the impacts of tourism** (traffic congestion, access to amenities), while supporting physical and social connectivity.
5. **Prepare for climate change**.

Figure 1. 2022 Future Land Use Map

This map is intended for informational purposes only and meant for visualization and planning for the York Comprehensive Plan.



Data Sources: Town of York GIS, Town of York OpenData, Maine Geolibrary, USGS National Hydrography Dataset. Map created by CivicMoxie. The data shown here is for planning purposes only and is not intended for making legal or zoning boundary determinations.

 Growth Area (2022)

 Transitional Area (2022)

 Rural Area (2022)

“Growth Area” is an area suitable for orderly residential, commercial, industrial, or any combination of those types of development over the next 10 years.

“Transitional Area” means an area that is suitable for a share of projected residential, commercial or industrial development at an amount or density less than a growth area but not protected for rural resources at the same level for a rural area.

“Rural Area” is a geographic area that is deserving of some level of regulatory protection from unrestricted development to support agriculture, forestry, mining, open space, wildlife habitat, fisheries habitat and scenic lands, and should have development diverted away from it over the next 10 years.

Each of these drivers is interrelated and necessary for a vibrant and relevant community; there is no simple “either/or” solution to land use in York. The overall intent is to focus development, including housing, in the areas served by public infrastructure that are the traditional village centers of the town and contribute to community connectivity and walkability. Development patterns should also be planned to protect York’s unique natural areas that contribute to the town’s extraordinary biodiversity, support residents’ quality of life, and help prepare York for the effects of climate change.

YORK’S GROWTH FROM 2010 – 2021: INFORMING FUTURE LAND USE

Approximately 95% of structures built between 2010 and July 2021 were for residential use, followed by 3% for commercial uses (Table 1). In that time period, the number of structures built in a single year peaked in 2016, with 260. Not including partial data for 2021, on average 122 structures were built every year from 2010 to 2020.

The Town’s 2006 Growth Area Boundary (Fig. 2) generally follows the physical constraints of I-95 to the west, the Cape Neddick River to the north, the York River to the south, and the Atlantic Ocean on the east with all other areas designated Rural.

While the 2006 Growth Area boundaries attempted to focus all types of development towards the town’s villages and existing infrastructure and services—following the historical patterns of settlement—development in the last decade appears to have been more dispersed throughout the town. From January 2010–July 2021, less than 50% of new construction² was located within the boundaries of the 2006 Growth Area. New residential construction, specifically, remains consistent with the overall trend, with less than half of new development located within the 2006 Growth Area. The estimations also indicate about half of new commercial development occurred inside the 2006 Growth Area, as well as the vast majority of civic and institutional new development. While there were few new industrial developments, over half were located outside of the 2006 Growth Area.³

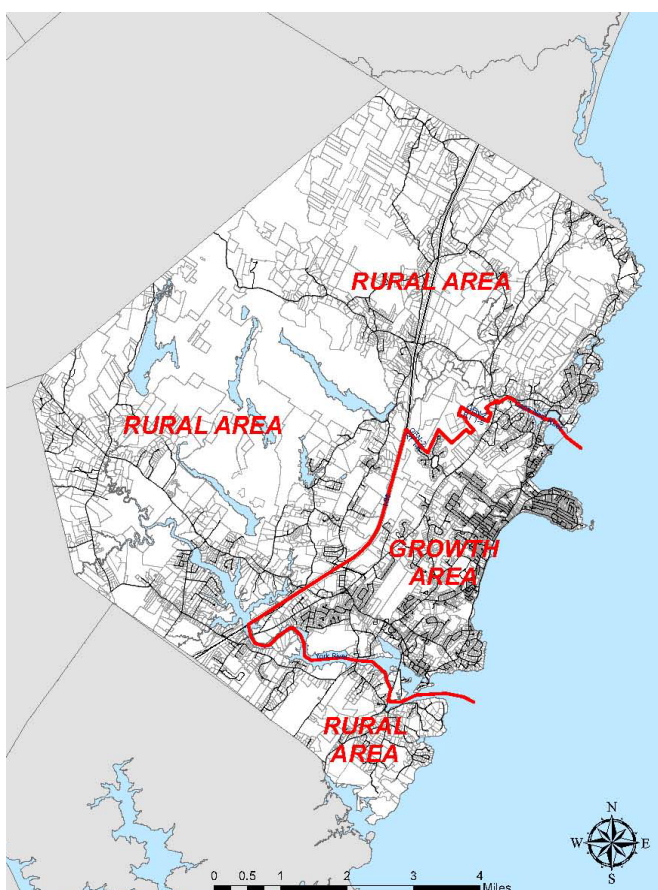
Table 1. Structures Built from 2010 to 2021* by Land Use Category from Town of York Assessor

Land Use	Number of Parcels with Structure Built	Percentage
Residential	1,353	95%
Commercial	45	3%
Industrial	8	1%
Government/ Institutional/ Charitable/ Non-Taxed	16	1%
Total	1,422	100%

Source: Town of York Assessors. Based on parcels with “Year Built” listed as 2010 or newer. This data did not indicate whether a new structure was built on a vacant parcel or if it was a new building replacing a previously existing one (tear-down). Data was sorted to require a minimum living area of at least 200 SF, as required by Assessor.

*2021 data is for partial year, through July 2021.

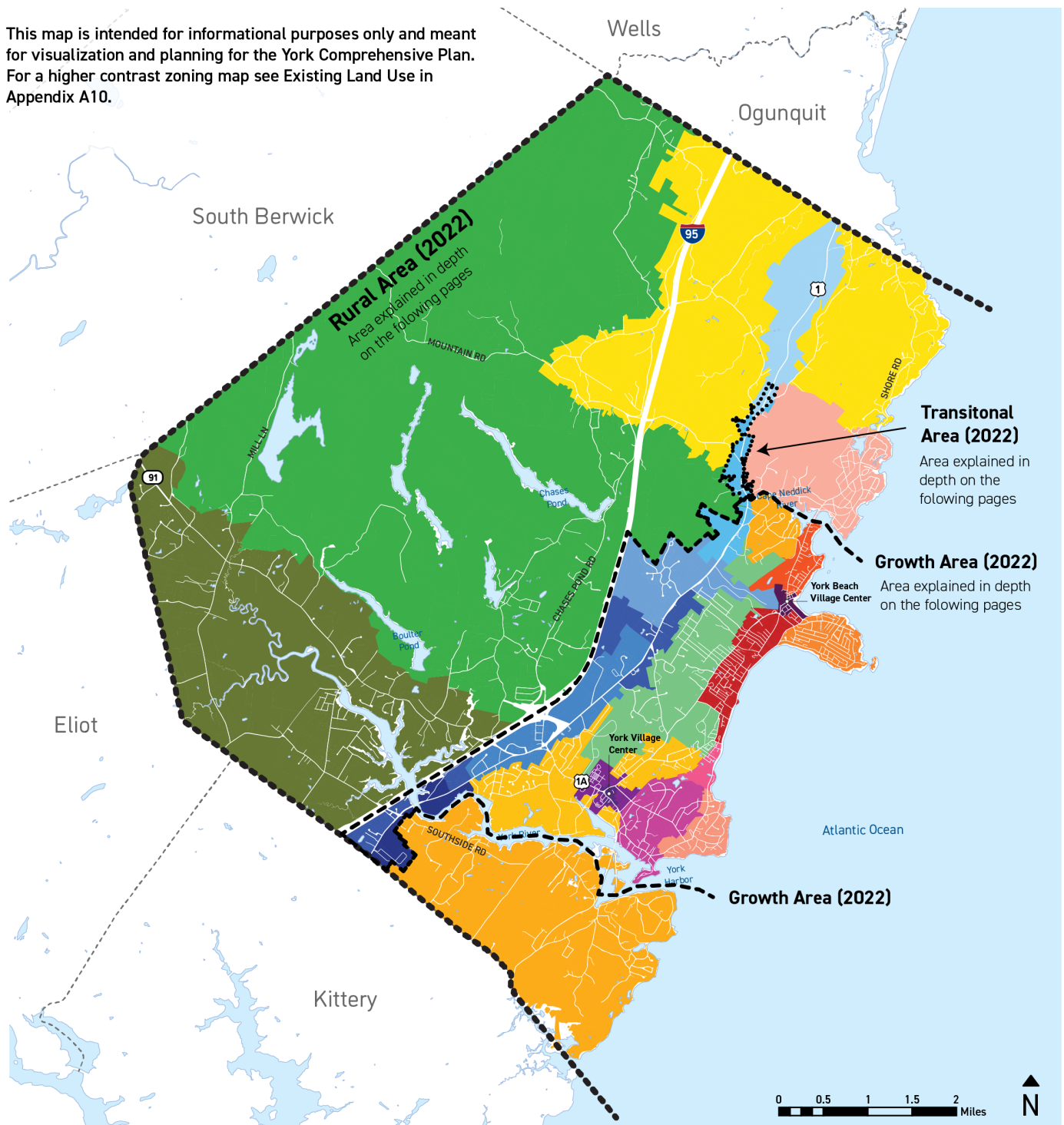
Figure 2. Town of York 2006 Growth Area Map



Source: York Planning Department, York Comprehensive Plan Policy Chapter 7/11/06

Figure 3. 2022 Future Land Use Areas over Base Zoning

This map is intended for informational purposes only and meant for visualization and planning for the York Comprehensive Plan. For a higher contrast zoning map see Existing Land Use in Appendix A10.



Data Sources: 2019 Town of York OpenData, Town of York OpenData, Maine Geolibary, USGS National Hydrography Dataset. Map created by CivicMoxie. The data shown here is for planning purposes only and is not intended for making legal or zoning boundary determinations.

GEN-1	YVC-1	RT 1-3	RES-1B	RES-6
GEN-2	YVC-2	RT 1-4	RES-2	RES-7
GEN-3	YBVC	RT 1-5	RES-3	
BUS-1	RT 1-1	RT 1-6	RES-4	
BUS-2	RT 1-2	RES-1A	RES-5	

FUTURE LAND USE – AREA DESCRIPTIONS⁴

Descriptions are color keyed to Fig. 4.

GROWTH AREA

The 2022 Growth Area contains approximately 5,000 parcels (about 5,300 acres of land) of which about 220 were vacant in 2020.⁵ The Growth Area includes a vast majority of York's public water and sewer infrastructure. The state requires municipalities to direct 75% or more of their infrastructure and facilities investments towards Growth Areas.⁶ All but three of the Town's facilities are located within the Growth Area, including all four public schools and Town Hall. There is broad public water (both year-round and seasonal) and sewer access available to support the higher intensity of uses. The Growth Area includes 16 of the Town's 22 zoning districts (Fig. 3). A majority of the town's commercial uses, highest intensity residential neighborhoods, mixed-uses, civic, and institutional uses are allowed and encouraged to grow within the boundary.

Residential – Higher Intensity (Concentration of Homes)

Residential Zones

The denser residential neighborhoods are found within the Growth Area along the coast and the York and Cape Neddick Rivers. Five of the eight Residential Zones (RES-1B, RES-4, RES-5, RES-6, and RES-7) are completely within the Growth Area, with higher intensities of housing, as is a small portion of RES-1A.

The most intense residential zones are RES-5, RES-6, and RES-7, whose corresponding neighborhoods have largely been built out on small lots, many of which may not meet the minimum lot size and setback requirements of current zoning, as of 2022. RES-1A, RES-1B, and RES-4 are less intense with larger minimum lot size requirements. These areas are also more restrictive in allowed uses, including residential types, and tend to have fewer pre-existing non-conforming commercial uses than the previously mentioned residential zones.

With the southern addition (Fig. 5), the Growth Area now includes the entire Workforce Affordable Housing Overlay District. The continuity down U.S. Route 1 and I-95 supports the extension or linking of public infrastructure in this part of town that would allow for more intense residential and possibly mixed-use.

Commercial and Mixed-Uses

Village Centers

Three of the four village centers, which have historically and traditionally been the centers of

commercial, social, and civic activity and life in York, are located within the Growth Area, including York Village Center, York Harbor Village, and York Beach Village Center. These mixed-use, walkable hubs of activity are reflected in specific zoning districts, particularly the Village Center Zones (YVC-1, YVC-2, and YBVC) and Business Zones (B-1 and B-2). While there are fewer vacant parcels for new development in these areas, there is continued opportunity for redevelopment, renovation, and adaptive reuse to encourage more mixing of commercial and residential uses. This Comprehensive Plan supports the Town's efforts to implement its 2015 *York Village Master Plan* as the first of the village revitalization efforts.

Route 1 Zones - Varied Mix of Uses and Differing Intensities

The Town's Route 1 zones cover the entire length of U.S. Route 1 in York from the Kittery to Ogunquit borders. The intent for these zones (RT 1-1 through RT 1-6) is to capture the different land uses and intensities appropriate for their sections of town. All of the RT 1 zones, except for RT 1-1, which was zoned with York River protection in mind, allow for a variety of uses.

There is potential for residential or mixed-use in the extended Growth Area that now encompasses the U.S. Route 1 corridor south to the Kittery border, due in part to public water access and potential for sewer through Kittery's sewer service.⁷

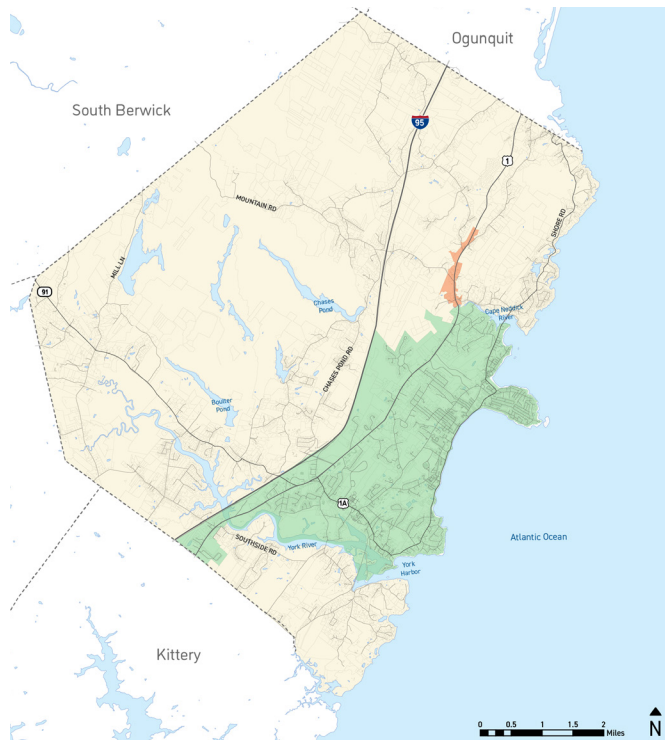
There are also commercial development opportunities in the village centers as well as the Route 1 zones, particularly RT 1-3 with clusters of larger commercial uses, RT 1-4 with potential for recreational uses, and RT 1-5 for smaller village-like mixed uses.

Bridging between the village center zones and the Route 1 zones is the GEN-3 zone, which allows for a mix of uses at intensities similar to the adjacent zones.

Civic and Institutional Uses

Along with the significant Town Hall improvement project in York Village, the vast majority of York's pending capital improvements are for Town-owned facilities, which are primarily east of I-95 in the Growth Area. York Hospital, the largest institutional use and employer in town, has been working with the Town to plan for any future development of its main campus within the York Village Hospital Overlay District.

Figure 4. 2022 Future Land Use Areas



Data Sources: Town of York GIS, Town of York OpenData, Maine Geolibary, USGS National Hydrography Dataset. Map created by CivicMoxie. The data shown here is for planning purposes only and is not intended for making legal or zoning boundary determinations.

- Growth Area (2022)
- Transitional Area (2022)
- Rural Area (2022)

TRANSITIONAL AREA

The Transitional Area (Fig. 3) is an additional portion of RT 1-5 and a small portion of RT 1-6 along U.S. Route 1 not in the Growth Area, and is comprised of approximately 50 parcels that total about 200 acres. This area is intended to support medium-intensity growth. Route 1-5 is already a mixed-use zone that is intended to encourage a range of small-scale uses such as retail, restaurants, services, and residential. The Transitional Area includes Cape Neddick Village Center⁹ and the U.S. Route 1 area just north of Logging Road with a cluster of existing small, local businesses that are similar in scale to Cape Neddick Village. This section of the U.S. Route 1 corridor mostly has public water service access but not sewer service; any medium- to longer-term plans for extension of York Sewer service to this area would improve the area's capacity for growth.

RURAL AREAS

The Rural Areas contain most of the town's natural resources such as forests, wetlands, and waterbodies. A vast majority of the watershed surface water protection areas are in the Rural Areas and include portions of the York River Watershed, Cape Neddick River Watershed, and Josias's Brook Watershed. Rural Areas are designated as areas where the Town would prefer slow growth and low levels of change over time. These areas are not suitable for indiscriminate development due to environmental concerns and existing development constraints. High priority goals for York's Rural Areas include water quality protection, conservation of important natural features and wildlife habitats, and continuing agricultural and forestry-related uses. The rural designation does not forbid residential development or restrict the existing uses.⁸ Regulations such as large minimum lot sizes and increased requirements to protect natural resources and limit environmental impacts may be warranted and the Plan strategies reflect these priorities. The 2022 Rural Area includes all GEN-1, GEN-2, RES-2, RES-3, a few parcels of RT 1-5, and a large portion of RT 1-6 and RES-1A (south of York River).

Residential - Lower Intensity

The RES-1A, RES-2, and RES-3 zones are the most restrictive of the residential zones with the largest minimum lot requirements and the prohibition of most non-residential uses.

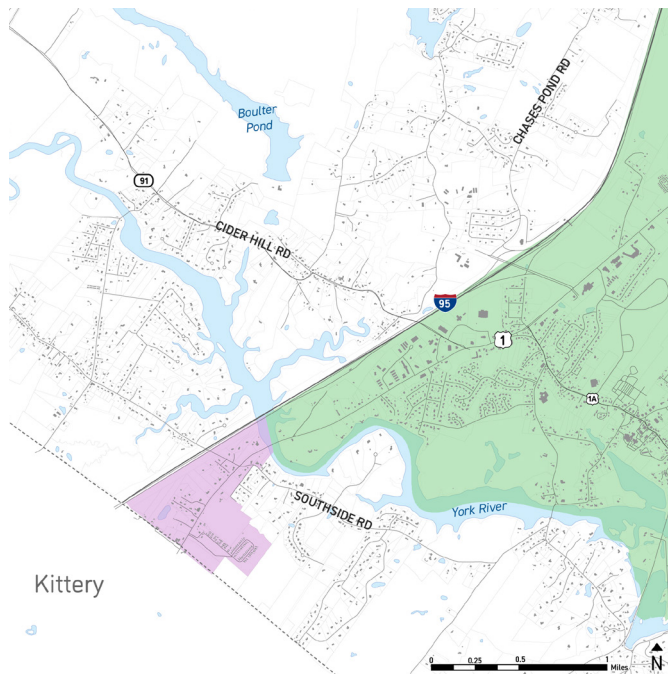
General

The General zone districts allow a wide range of uses, though not at significant intensities. While overlay districts, including the Shoreland Overlay District and Watershed Protection Overlay District, limit certain uses and development that would impact water quality, enforcement throughout these areas can be challenging, in part due to the large geographic area and underlying ground conditions.

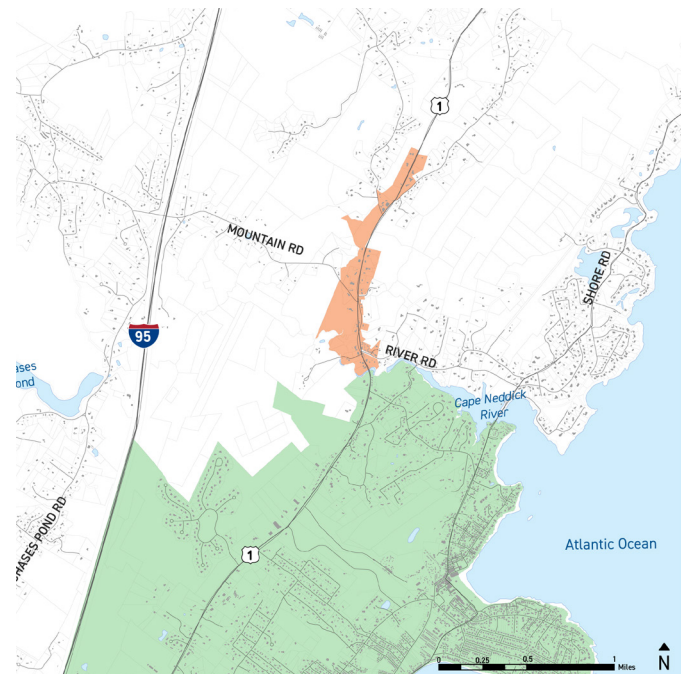
Figure 5. 2022 Future Land Use Plan Areas Changed from the 2006 Plan

These maps are intended for informational purposes only and meant for visualization and planning for the York Comprehensive Plan.

To the South on Rte 1: Workforce Housing Overlay District that is now Part of 2022 Growth Area



To the North on Rte 1: New 2022 Transitional Area in Parts of RT 1-5 and RT 1-6 Zones



Data Sources: Town of York GIS, Town of York OpenData, Maine Geolibary, USGS National Hydrography Dataset. Map created by CivicMoxie. The data shown here is for planning purposes only and is not intended for making legal or zoning boundary determinations.



CONSTRAINTS AFFECTING LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Beyond zoning, there are a number of important factors that constrain development in York.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Physical soils and water-related constraints, including wetlands and hydric soils (permanently or seasonally saturated by water), vernal pools, conserved lands, and erodible soils on steep slopes are major environmental features that impact development potential and desirability. A majority of the town's lands with these environmental constraints are located in the Rural Area.

HIGH-VALUE NATURAL AREAS

There are critical and important natural resources¹⁰ that should be factored into development viability and many of them are most valuable because of the interconnected attributes of multiple high-value resources over large areas of undeveloped, unfragmented land. The Beginning with Habitat (BwH) program has compiled and mapped data from state agencies on locations of important habitats and water resources and rated these locations based on the degree of overlap to highlight a given area's relative conservation value (Fig. 6). While the more than 9,000 acres of conservation land in public or private ownership in York, as well as the Town's regulatory tools, help to minimize impacts of development, recent construction trends show significant development over the past ten years has occurred in York's Rural Areas. Without any additional policy or regulatory efforts to encourage or require conservation of critical natural resources, it is likely that recent trends will continue. The land use strategies in this Comprehensive Plan seek to strengthen protections for these Rural Areas.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND CLIMATE

WATER AND SEWER SERVICE

The York Water District (YWD) and York Sewer District (YSD) are the primary water and sewer providers in York. Generally, service expansions happen based on areas of existing density or an understanding of how future growth will occur. Currently, public water and sewer services generally are within the Growth Area boundaries.¹¹

SEA LEVEL RISE AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The Town's climate planning work of 2021-22 highlighted the risks York faces from climate change, now and in future decades. Since land use decisions and infrastructure investments are long-term—with some effects lasting for 30 to 100 years or more—perhaps nowhere is it more important to think of the future than when considering climate change impacts. Key considerations for future land use planning include protecting critical assets of property and natural resources from sea level rise (SLR), conserving natural areas that can help mitigate climate change impacts, conserving natural areas that are high-value for their carbon storage potential to mitigate the town's greenhouse gas emissions, and containing sprawl to reduce vehicle miles traveled (and greenhouse gas emissions).

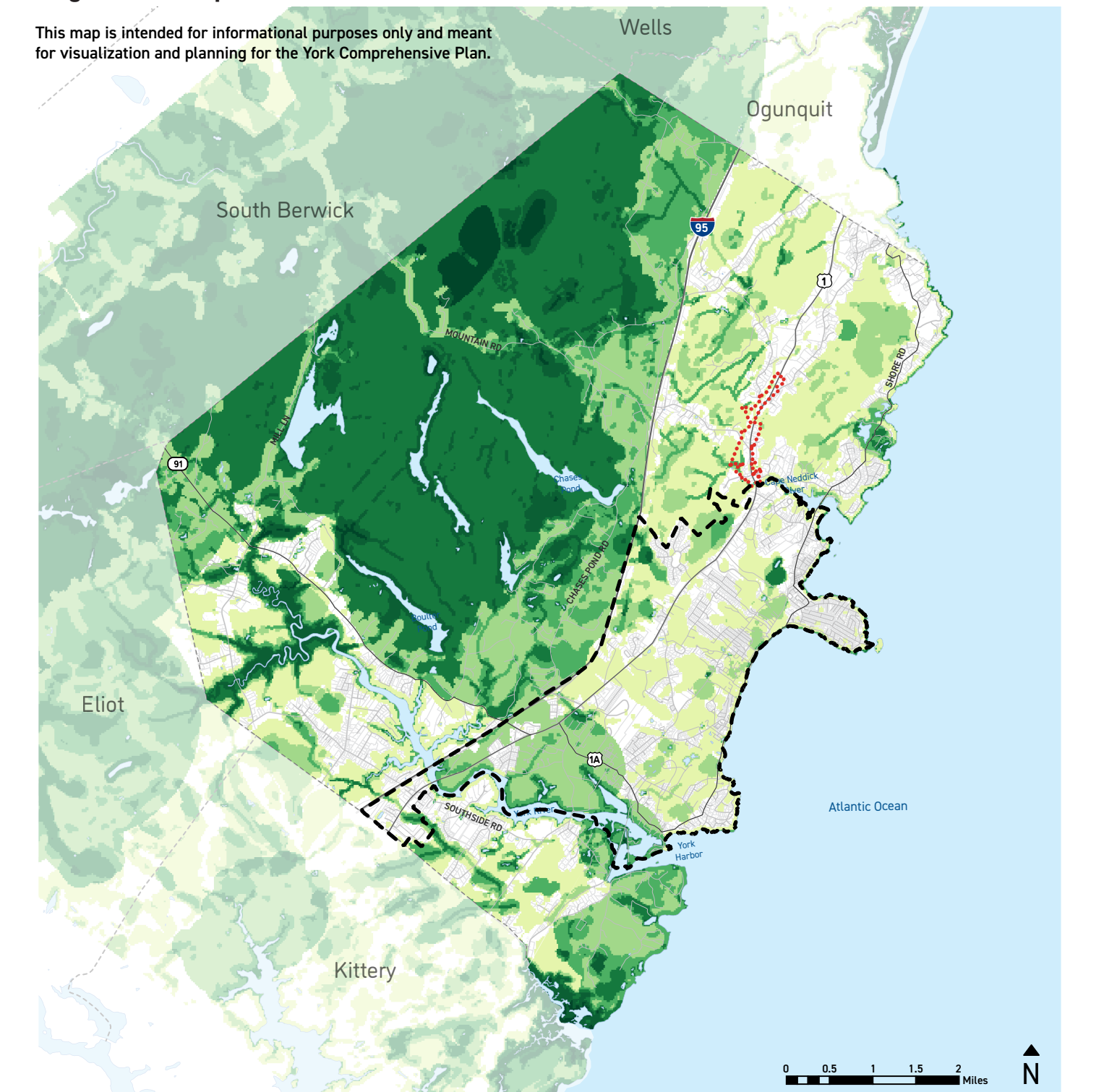
The Maine Climate Council recommends managing and planning for specific SLR scenarios while acknowledging that looking at historical trends cannot help us fully understand future acceleration of SLR. The Council recommends the following scenarios should guide the Town's land use planning and development regulations:

- Manage to an intermediate SLR scenario of 1.5 feet by 2050¹²
- Manage to an intermediate SLR scenario of 3.9 feet by 2100
- Consider managing to 3 feet SLR by 2050
- Consider managing to 8.8 feet SLR by 2100

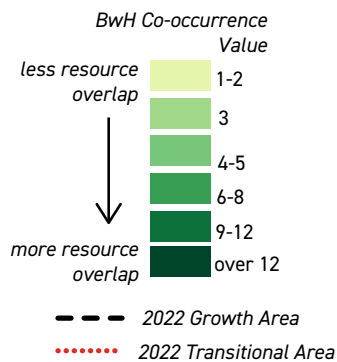
SLR maps and additional information on climate change constraints can be found in Appendix A3: Natural Resources. The goals, policies, and strategies of this Plan include recommendations for developing a Coastal Overlay Zone with additional considerations and requirements for buildings and infrastructure development in these areas. Considerations for preserving natural areas that are high-value for their carbon storage potential are also included.

Figure 6. Overlap of Natural Resources

This map is intended for informational purposes only and meant for visualization and planning for the York Comprehensive Plan.



Data Sources: Beginning with Habitat Program, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, received from Town of York August 30, 2021; Town of York OpenData, Maine Geolibary, USGS National Hydrography Dataset. Map created by CivicMoxie.



The Beginning with Habitat Program (BwH) has compiled and mapped data from State agencies on locations of important habitats and water resources and rated these locations based on the degree of overlap to highlight a given area's relative conservation value. It offers a generalized and subjective view to aid in planning and should be considered as a starting point for discussion. Data factored into this map with methodology is listed below (some of the layers listed may not be present on this map).

Rare and Exemplary Natural Communities

S1 (Critically Imperiled). Value of 4
S2 (Imperiled). Value of 4
S3 (Rare). Value of 3
S4 and S5 with A or B viability (Exemplary). Value of 3

Rare plants

S1 (Endangered). Value of 3
S1S2-S2 (Threatened). Value of 2
S2S3 - S3 (Special Concern). Value of 1

Listed Animals

Endangered Species (with buffer). Value of 3
Threatened Species (with buffer). Value of 2
Species of Special Concern (with buffer). Value of 1

Significant Wildlife Habitats

Shoreland Habitat. Value of 3
Seabird Nesting Islands. Value of 3
Essential Wildlife Habitat. Value of 3
Wading Bird and Waterfowl Habitats (inland and tidal). Value of 2
Deer Wintering Areas. Value of 1
Significant Vernal Pools (with 500' buffer). Value of 1
Atlantic Salmon Habitat. Value of 2
Heritage Brook Trout Waters. Value of 2
Shellfish Beds. Value of 1

Riparian Zones and Water Resources

Tidal waters 250' buffer. Value of 2
Great Ponds 250' buffer. Value of 1
Rivers 250' buffer. Value of 1
Streams 75' buffer. Value of 1
Wetlands greater than 10 acres plus 250' buffer. Value of 1
Wetlands less than 10 acres plus 75' buffer. Value of 1
Groundwater aquifers. Value of 1
Undeveloped Habitat Blocks
Areas over 1200 acres. Value of 3
Areas of 600 to 1200 acres. Value of 2
Areas of 200 to 600 acres. Value of 1

A FUTURE LAND USE PLAN THAT ACCOMMODATES PROJECTED GROWTH

PROJECTED POPULATION GROWTH IN YORK

The year-round population of York is estimated to increase from 13,247 in 2021 to 14,697 in 2031.¹³ This population increase estimate is based on state projections adjusted to include an anticipated conversion of 25 seasonal units per year to year-round housing units.¹⁴ The median age of the town is expected to increase, and the average household size will continue to decrease.

HOUSING

The estimated 1,450 new residents through 2031 will need a total of approximately 560 units of year-round housing (361 owner-occupied and 199 rental). Of these 560 units, as mentioned above, it is assumed that 250 units will be seasonal homes converted to year-round use, leaving a demand for 310 new units (111 owner-occupied and 199 rental).¹⁵ This projected demand for housing is conservative, as it is based on state projections; the assumed household size in these projections is slightly larger than the current York household size of 2.3 people per household. It is possible that demand for housing may be more than these 310 units.¹⁶ A number of these smaller households may be existing York households looking to relocate or downsize in the community. Important to remember is that the Town's preparation for this projected housing need is not a mandate. The market will determine how many units are built; this Plan seeks to encourage new housing units that meet the needs of the current community, which is growing older and will quite likely have increased need for different housing (smaller units, walkable location, accessible, less maintenance, more affordable) than the current housing stock.

The 2006 Growth Area includes approximately 5,100 acres of land. Town Assessor 2020 data indicates there were over 200 parcels totaling just under 650 acres categorized as 'Vacant'¹⁷ within the 2006 Growth Area boundary.¹⁸ A series of high-level exercises evaluating development potential

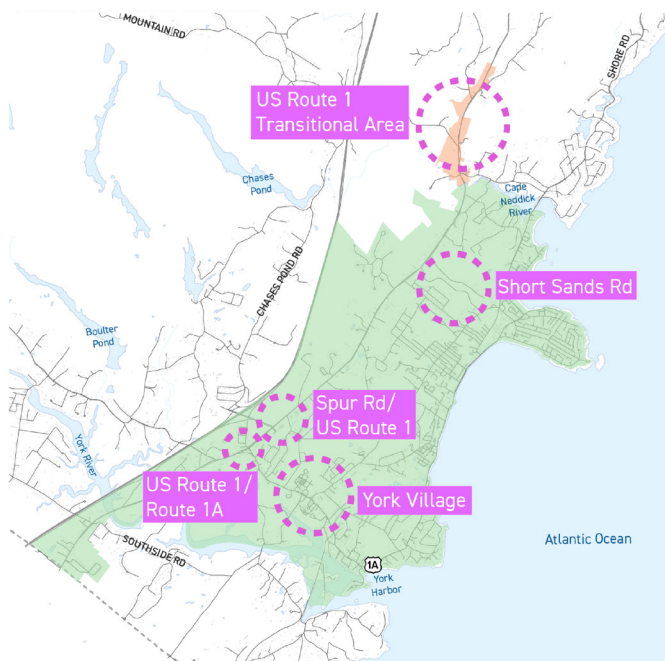
of vacant land, along with several multi-family or multi-parcel developments that have already been permitted, indicates that the 2006 Growth Area can accommodate approximately 300 additional new housing units.¹⁹ With the extension of the Growth Area to encompass the southern end of the Workforce Affordable Housing Overlay District, it is reasonable to assume that the 2022 Growth Area could accommodate most of the new housing demand for the next decade. As some new housing will be built outside of the Growth Area, the town will be able to meet its overall housing demand in terms of number of units. However, in order to achieve the desired range of housing types and costs, the Town will need to implement strategies in this Comprehensive Plan.²⁰

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/COMMUNITY-BASED BUSINESSES

The potential for commercial development, particularly within the village centers, should not be confined to new construction on vacant parcels but can also include renovation and adaptive reuse of existing buildings. While York's existing business centers are largely developed, there are five areas that may be appropriate for additional business development (Fig. 7).²¹

- **Short Sands Road Area:** May be suitable for mixed-use development to include housing, recreation, retail, and restaurants. Zoning: RT 1-4, GEN-3, and RES-7.
- **Spur Road and U.S. Route 1:** Due to its proximity to the Maine Turnpike, the one vacant lot here is a highly desirable location for a variety of business uses. Zoning: Both areas are generally within RT 1-3.

Figure 7. Commercial Focus Areas



Data Sources: Town of York GIS, Town of York OpenData, Maine Geolibrary, USGS National Hydrography Dataset. Map created by CivicMoxie. The data shown here is for planning purposes only and is not intended for making legal or zoning boundary determinations.



- **U.S. Route 1 and Route 1A:** Infill development (constructing a new building between existing buildings where there is either sufficient space or a vacant lot in a built-up area) could be possible within the area north and south of the Route 1 and Route 1A interchange zoned as Route 1-3, which has a concentration of retail and consumer-oriented businesses along with some lodging. This area could be appropriate for a range of uses including office development, retail, restaurants, and lodging.
- **York Village:** The Village could accommodate new smaller-scale retail, restaurants, services, and arts/entertainment uses through reuse of existing buildings and new development on sites previously owned by York Hospital. Zoning: primarily YVC-1 and YVC-2.

- **Transitional Area:** This area is an extension of the Growth Area boundary north along U.S. Route 1 in the area described as Cape Neddick Village and just beyond. There are well-established small-scale commercial uses clustered within the area that could benefit from some additional local commercial and mixed-uses; currently, there is no access to public sewer in this area. Zoning: RT 1-5, Cape Neddick Village, and RT 1-6, Rural Mixed Use.

INSTITUTIONAL USES

York Hospital is the town's largest institutional use. As York's major health and community service provider and the largest employer, York Hospital has unique needs regarding its site development. Its main campus in York Village Center falls within the York Village Hospital Overlay District (Article 10-B), which includes specific design guidelines and performance standards for this zone.

INDUSTRIAL USES

While there may be demand for specific types of light manufacturing or industrial uses within the 2022 Growth Area, particularly along U.S. Route 1, most future industrial uses will likely continue to grow along the larger roadways for highway access.

SUMMARY OF FUTURE LAND USE

SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY VISION FOR YORK'S FUTURE

The community has expressed the desire to encourage walkable development close to village services and businesses which will also help limit the impacts of new development by reducing car-dependence and the number and distance of vehicular trips needed to access goods, services, and amenities. However, other strategies are needed to address the congestion problem. This Comprehensive Plan prioritizes an extensive town-wide transportation, traffic, and parking study to identify peak season challenges, as well as alternative forms of transportation to address these concerns, and the diverse mobility needs of residents.

HOW THE FUTURE LAND USE PLAN ENCOURAGES DEVELOPMENT IN THE DESIRED PLACES

The Growth Area in the Future Land Use Plan contains the vast majority of the Town's facilities, infrastructure, services, and programs. The Rural Areas are host to significant natural resources that are a priority for protection. The associated land use strategies found in this Plan support varied housing types in walkable communities in the Growth Area and increased land conservation and protection measures in the Rural Areas. Plan land use strategies also support the business and community activities in the village centers and nodes (connecting points with a mix of buildings and uses) along U.S. Route 1, including in the Transitional Area on U.S. Route 1 just north of the Growth Area.

HOW THE FUTURE LAND USE PLAN RECONCILES WITH DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

The Future Land Use Plan is one part of a multi-pronged approach to encourage and direct desired development. Without any changes, the town will continue to see significant development outside the Growth Area. Addressing concerns of sea level rise will include the consideration of the creation of a coastal zone overlay district to acknowledge that the eastern edge of the current Growth Area boundary along the coast is, and will be, impacted by sea level rise/storm surge. By continuing to focus on public infrastructure enhancements and services within the Growth Area and reconciling zoning and other regulations to more easily allow and incentivize the varied types of housing needed by the community, the Town will be proactively working to guide growth where it is desired. In tandem, the Town will need to more actively discourage development in the Rural Areas and consciously guide development that does occur to maximize natural resource protection.

See Chapter 5 for the recommended policies and strategies to achieve York's Future Land Use goals.

Chapter 7 offers information on priorities and roles to guide the Town in moving forward to accomplish the goals outlined in this Future Land Use Plan.

Endnotes

- 1 Title 30-A, §4326. Growth Management Program Elements.
- 2 Estimate from Town Assessor "year-built" data. For the purposes of determining the structures built (by land use type) Town Assessor's data was used, sorting by "Year Built." The 2021 data is only for a partial year since it was pulled mid-year (July 2021). This data set did not specify if a structure was removed and replaced on the same parcel or if it was a structure built on a previously vacant parcel. The data was also sorted to require a minimum of 200 SF of living area in order to be counted.
- 3 See Appendix A10: Existing Land Use Current Conditions, Fig. 13.
- 4 The 2006 Future Land Use Plan contained four general categories of zoning districts including the village center zones; residential zones; Route 1 zones; and Rural zones. Not all of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan zoning recommendations have been enacted, but the characteristics of the zoning districts remain, as do the overall intentions of the Town.
- 5 For a full description of Town of York Assessor Land Use types in the town and in the Growth Area, see Appendix C: Future Land Use Background.
- 6 York has consistently met this requirement since the Town adopted the 2006 Growth Area Boundary as part of the 2006 York Comprehensive Plan Policy Chapter.
- 7 The 2006 Growth Area included all of RT 1-3 and RT 1-4 and portions of RT 1-1, RT 1-2, RT 1-5. With the 2022 update, the revised Growth Area now includes all of RT 1-1 and RT 1-2 south of York River.
- 8 The 2011 Future Land Use chapter of York's amended 1999 Comprehensive Plan recommended several "Rural" zones that would correspond with different levels of allowed, lower-intensity uses and natural resource protection.
- 9 The 2006 Growth Area only included a portion of the Cape Neddick Village RT 1-5 Zoning District.
- 10 These resources include wildlife habitats; rare and exemplary natural communities; rare and endangered plants; habitats of endangered species, threatened species, and species of special concern; riparian zones and water resources; and undeveloped habitat blocks. Maps containing each of these layers can be found in Appendix A3: Natural Resources Current Conditions.
- 11 See maps of water and sewer service in Appendix A9: Town, Public Facilities & Services Current Conditions.
- 12 Over baseline year of 2000.
- 13 American Community Survey and Levine Planning Strategies.
- 14 Levine Planning Strategies.
- 15 See Appendix A6: Housing Current Conditions for more information on projected housing demand.
- 16 Note: Just as important as the projected number of needed units is the anticipated size and type of units needed. The projected minimum need of 310 units may work according to the population numbers projected for York but may not match consumer preference because of a likely desire for smaller housing units by smaller households in the future.
- 17 "Vacant" or "Developable" as defined by York Tax Assessor's office applies to any parcel that is not currently developed and does not have a specific constraint that would move it into the "Undevelopable" category. There may be other unknown constraints on parcels in this "Vacant" category that would make them difficult or not possible to develop but whose parcel owners have not requested a change in status with the Tax Assessor. Map is for general planning purposes only.
- 18 See Appendix C: Future Land Use Background for more detailed information on the analysis of vacant parcels and potential for growth in the 2006 Growth Area.
- 19 The assumption is single-family housing except for units counted from three multi-family development projects permitted but not yet built as of January 2022 that are part of this overall 300 unit count.
- 20 See Appendix C: Future Land Use Background for additional information on types of housing in York.
- 21 These are described in more detail in Appendix A5: Economy Current Conditions and in Appendix C: Future Land Use Background.



7

Implementation

INTRODUCTION

This York Comprehensive Plan reflects a multi-year planning process focused on using community values and priorities to set a vision for the future. The Plan offers 203 strategies organized in eight topic areas to address the 20 community goals developed through an extensive community outreach process. The benefits of planning comprehensively are numerous. By addressing goals across topic areas, York will be able to make the best use of its resources by encouraging boards and commissions, Town departments, non-profits, residents, and others to seek and coordinate mutually beneficial solutions across disciplines and interests. In the spirit of this approach, this section outlines both the actions (the “what”) and the processes (the “how”) of Plan implementation by providing information on the following:

- **The Implementation Chart in Appendix D**
- **Immediate action strategies and next steps**
- **Regional coordination and collaboration**
- **Town capacity**
- **Fiscal capacity and Capital Program information**

As this Comprehensive Plan looks at a ten-year time span for implementation, exact timing of all strategy recommendations is not detailed in this chapter. Suggestions, based on feedback from the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and Town staff, are made for near-term and longer-term action items. However, the implementation of many strategies will be dependent on funding and Town priorities, as well as staff and partner capacity. These factors will change over time, and the Town should prepare an annual report documenting implementation progress on the Comprehensive Plan with notes on key factors enabling progress, or deterrents to action, as applicable. This yearly assessment will be a helpful tool in ensuring the Plan is put to good use as the Town moves towards a collective vision for the future.

IMPLEMENTATION CHART

The Implementation Chart found in Appendix D presents the Plan’s recommended strategies organized by topic areas. The chart offers an overall view of the Plan and makes it easy to assess the scope of strategies in any one topic area. These strategies, explained and listed in Chapter 5: Goals, Policies & Strategies, are gathered in one place in the Appendix D chart and listed along with other information helpful to implementation such as suggested lead implementers, estimated costs (where known), potential funding sources, and action timelines. The Town can use this chart to plan ahead, assign tasks, and pursue funding. This chart can become an annual “report card” to track and report progress on Plan implementation. This information is also intended to assist departments, as well as boards, commissions, and committees, to anticipate the work under their purview. **It is important to note that the strategy descriptions in Appendix D have been condensed and abbreviated for readability and that Chapter 5 is the location for the full text of all of the Plan strategies.**

IMMEDIATE ACTION STRATEGIES AND NEXT STEPS

The 203 strategies presented in this chapter are intended to be implemented over the course of the next ten years and have been assigned action timelines of immediate, near-term, medium-term, long-term, and on-going. While some are required regulatory mandates, the vast majority of strategies are based on direct feedback from the York community and will involve further study and input. While every one of the 203 strategies is important, listed here are eleven strategies¹ the Steering Committee identified as immediate action items to build a firm foundation for implementing

the full Comprehensive Plan and to address pressing needs. Some of these strategies, such as forming a volunteer committee, can be accomplished in very little time, while others, such as a re-write of the Town's Zoning Ordinance and conducting a comprehensive transportation and traffic study, should be started soon but will take longer to complete.

The list of these immediate action strategies below includes an overview of the strategy, the page number in Chapter 5 where the full strategy description can be found, and the lead party responsible for implementation:

- **Work with local and regional conservation organizations to identify high priority natural resources, open space, and recreational land to be conserved or protected. (2.1; pg. 29) (Conservation Commission)**
- **Evaluate the Town's existing Open Space Conservation Subdivision (OSCS) Zoning Development Ordinance to better serve preservation of natural resources. (2.6; pg. 30) (Planning Department, Planning Board)**
- **Plan for, develop, and manage opportunities for residents to access and enjoy the Town's limited marine resources. (3.1; pg. 38) (Harbor Board)**
- **Establish an Economic Development Committee (EDC) to develop a vision for economic opportunities and a business recruitment plan. (4.1; pg. 42) (Selectboard)**
- **Conduct design charettes (workshops) for the area surrounding Short Sands Road to determine the appropriate mix of uses for this site, incorporating business, residential, and recreational opportunities. (4.4; pg. 42) (Planning Department, Planning Board)**
- **Create a Community Housing Committee to address the range of housing costs and types needed in York. (5.4; pg. 48) (Selectboard)**
- **Commission a comprehensive transportation, traffic, and parking study for the town. (7.1; pg. 58) (Planning Department)**
- **Perform a complete re-evaluation and re-writing of the existing Zoning Ordinance to ensure that York's zoning clearly matches the goals for each Future Land Use area and is easy to understand, streamlined, and modernized. (8.1; pg. 64) (Planning Department, Planning Board)**
- **Assign responsibility for implementing the Future Land Use Plan to the appropriate committee, board, or official. (8.8; pg. 66) (Planning Department)**
- **Consider conducting a needs assessment for Town staffing and volunteer boards to understand capacity and resources needed to address increasing resident needs and expectations for services. (8.50; pg. 70) (Selectboard)**
- **Explore hiring or sharing a regional Sustainability Coordinator to implement climate adaptation and mitigation strategies. (8.59; pg. 71) (Selectboard)**



REGIONAL COORDINATION PROGRAM

Each topic area in Chapter 5 indicates the strategies that involve regional and/or statewide coordination and collaboration. In addition, pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A. §4326(4), the Town of York is committed to continuing and expanding regional coordination efforts, including the following:

- **Ponds, rivers, drinking water, forests, and other natural resources:** York participates in partnerships for conservation and resource protection, including working with the Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea (MtA2C) initiative, the Mt. A Steering Committee, the York Land Trust, and the York River Wild & Scenic Committee. The York Water District and the Kittery Water District control much of the land surrounding drinking water supplies and work collaboratively with the Town on water quality protection efforts.
- **Transportation:** York partners with neighboring communities through the Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission and the Kittery Area Comprehensive Transportation System. The DPW coordinates with MaineDOT for roadway and stormwater related infrastructure construction and maintenance.
- **Public safety:** The York Emergency Communications Center is the regional Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) for the communities of York, Kittery, Eliot, Ogunquit, Wells, and Kennebunkport. The York Police Department and both fire departments work collaboratively with neighboring communities and regional and state emergency services. The York Police Department works closely with the York Water District to patrol areas that have limited recreational use.
- **Public facilities and infrastructure:** Town Departments have actively been involved with many regional organizations and neighboring communities for infrastructure planning and maintenance, emergency services, and programs and services. York is a member of the Southern Maine Stormwater Working Group (SMSWG), which includes the communities of York, Kittery, Eliot, Berwick, and South Berwick, working collaboratively to manage stormwater and to protect water resources and infrastructure from pollution. Town departments, such as Parks & Recreation, have actively partnered with neighboring communities for recreational programming as well as with private recreational facilities. The York Water District (YWD) maintains interconnections with both the Kittery Water District (KWD) and the Kennebunk, Kennebunkport, and Wells Water District (KKWWD) which can be used to transfer water between districts in an emergency or as part of more routine operations. There are specific areas in York where residents receive public water service from KWD and KKWWD. The YWD, KWD, and KKWWD are all members of the Southern Maine Regional Water Council (SMRWC). The York Sewer District maintains cooperative purchasing with other districts and with the Town. There are several properties in York that are served by Kittery Sewer Department and Ogunquit Sewer District.
- **Regional planning:** The Town is a member of the Southern Maine Planning & Development Commission, which actively plans for transportation, climate change and resiliency, emergency preparedness, economic development, and other planning issues better addressed at a regional or inter-community level.

Strategies that involve regional coordination and collaboration are marked with an icon:  in Chapter 5.

A NOTE ABOUT ONGOING COLLABORATION:

The Town will continue to appropriately assign staff liaisons to regional boards and committees. No conflicts are apparent with regards to neighboring communities' policies and strategies pertaining to shared resources and facilities. Should any conflicts surface during implementation of this Plan, York will coordinate with neighboring communities to reach a resolution. Regional cooperation may provide opportunities to magnify the impact of York's efforts and allow for access to regional funding opportunities.

TOWN CAPACITY

The Town must ensure adequate funds, resources, and staff are available to implement new or expanded programs and regulations the citizens say they want. As an example, the Planning Board has often advocated, and York voters have subsequently adopted, more stringent or complex zoning ordinances to regulate new development, but funds have often been lacking for Code Enforcement and the Planning Department to provide the required services to implement and enforce these ordinances. Similarly, taxpayers have asked for more maintenance of the Town's beaches but have reduced the budget to provide these services. The Town should consider a practice of attaching a fiscal note for all new programs and regulations that are subject to a public vote. In short, the program or regulation does not take effect until the monies needed to provide the serviced are also authorized.²

In addition, existing Town staff are working at capacity,³ and a careful assessment of necessary resources will be needed to ensure the Town has the capacity to implement this Plan. In the Plan Implementation Chart presented in Appendix D, over two-thirds of the 203 strategies require "nothing more" than Town staff and volunteer time. However, expecting existing staff to take on Plan implementation without additional resources (other staff assistance, updated online or software programs, etc.) is unrealistic. In addition, many of the volunteer boards and commissions are stretched in terms of capacity, and the need for Town staff assistance to support their work is significant. Considering the limits of volunteer efforts, providing support for the thousands of hours of volunteer time given in civic service to Town efforts each year will be critical to ensuring implementation success.



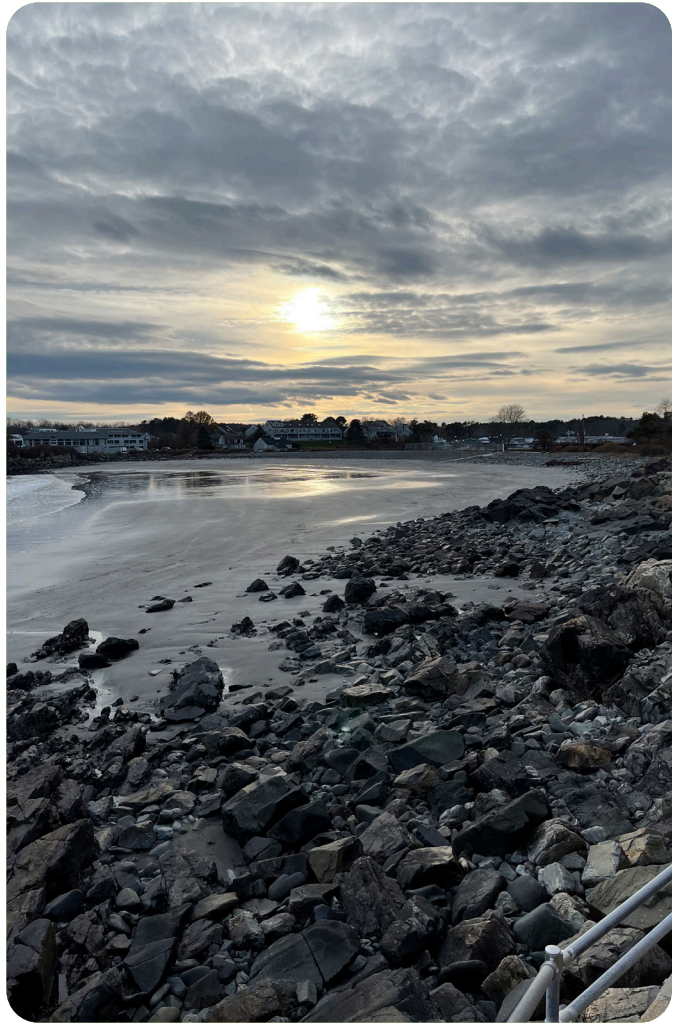
FISCAL CAPACITY AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM

York is in good financial standing, and the community has historically played an active role in making informed decisions about how to allocate funding. The Town's Standard and Poor's bond rating has historically been very good and remains at AAA as of 2021.⁴ The Comprehensive Plan does not commit to funding specific individual items but estimated costs per strategy, where known, are listed in the Implementation Chart in Appendix D. Appendix B offers information on the overall Fiscal Capacity and Capital Program of the Town, as well as on possible funding mechanisms. The Plan is structured to allow for flexibility as unexpected needs arise or priorities shift. Thinking about the cost of future improvements will require consideration of the full range of lifecycle costs and associated staffing to support capital improvements.

The Town should consider Fund Balance Policies for both the Selectboard and the School Committee. The fund balance is the municipal equivalent of a savings plan. When the Town exceeds the recommended fund balance, the Selectboard can expend unassigned fund balance to fund capital⁵ projects, with voter approval. In addition, the School Committee can do the same, with voter approval, to fund their capital projects. York has long used fund balances to aid in the purchase of equipment and other capital improvements that have a known service life. This practice can greatly benefit from an overall facilities maintenance and improvements plan and schedule to help the Town manage its tax rate.

CONCLUSION

Taken together, the Implementation Chart in Appendix D, Town Capacity, and Fiscal Capacity/Capital Program components are meant to help set immediate actions, encourage cross-disciplinary coordination and collaboration, and ensure that implementation of the Plan makes the best use of resources while embodying the values and goals of Town residents. The Town of York, like all municipalities, has limited resources. The strategies and action items outlined in this Comprehensive Plan require the collaboration of many parties—private, public, non-profit and entities not affiliated with Town government. Together we can successfully implement them to realize the community's vision.



ENDNOTES

- 1 These eleven immediate action strategies are listed in the order they appear in Chapter 5 and are highlighted in yellow in the implementation chart in Appendix D.
- 2 Language adapted from amended 1999 Town of York Comprehensive Plan.
- 3 Information from meetings with Department Heads and staff during the planning process 2021-22.
- 4 Town of York
- 5 Information from meetings with Department Heads and staff during the planning process 2021-22. The Selectboard definition of "Capital" in relation to the Town Capital Improvements Program, is the following: "land of any size or cost; any equipment, building, facility, or infrastructure that costs more than \$20,000, and provides a useful life of 3 or more years or is built into a building or facility; and all licensed motor vehicles."