

**DRAFT 1**

2/21/22

**KENNEBUNKPORT 2030**



# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2022-2030

# VOLUME 1



# KENNEBUNKPORT, MAINE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN VOLUME 1 2022-2030

## Acknowledgments

### Growth Planning Committee Members

Daniel Saunders, Chair  
James W. Fitzgerald, Jr., Vice-Chair  
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**TZM**



EF | Design & Planning, LLC

Photo of GPC to be inserted here

The project team would like to express its sincere gratitude to the residents, staff, board, commission, committee members and others who shared information and insights, and participated in the update process.

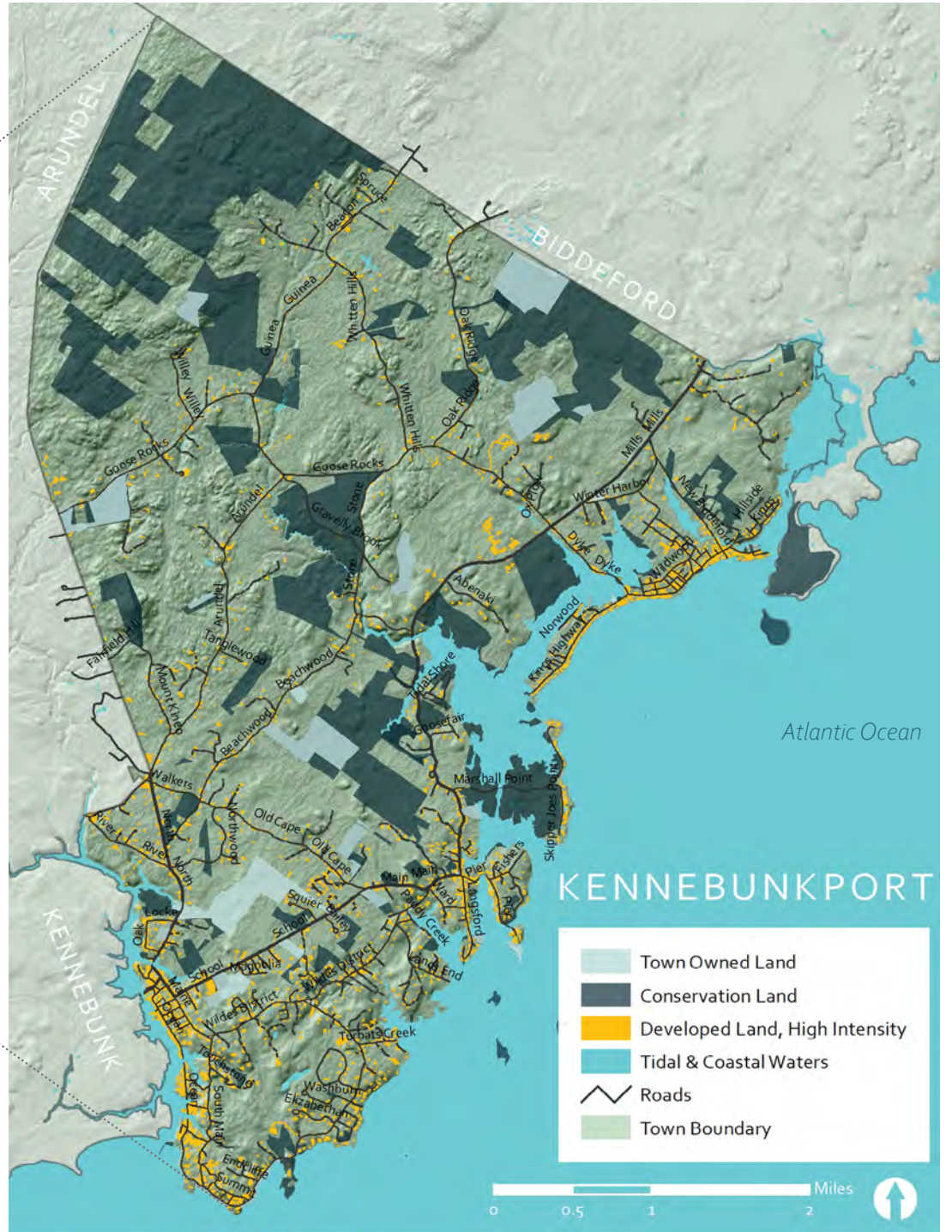
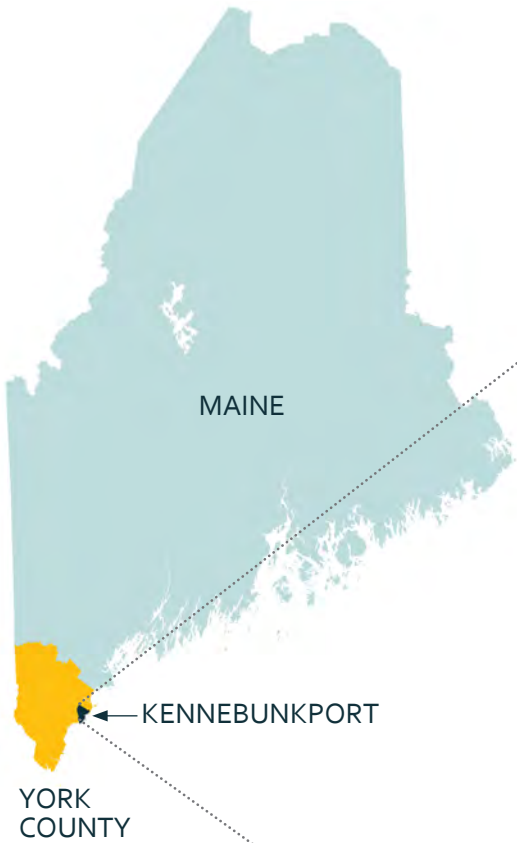




Image Credit: Tom Morgan

# CONTENTS



Kennebunkport's Comprehensive Plan was developed over a three-year span (2020 to 2022) under the guidance of the Growth Planning Committee and Planning Department.

Image Credit: Tom Morgan

# ABOUT THE PLAN

## Volume 1

A short, user-friendly document that summarizes information and key topics that are explored in detail in Volume 2. Volume 1 provides a high-level summary through the lens of 5 themes that reflect the character of the community and goals of the Plan.

## Volume 2

The full Comprehensive Plan: an introduction, vision chapter, 16 planning sector topic chapters, a compilation of goals, policies, and strategies, and an implementation table with action items for the Town.

Introduction	Marine Resources	Regional Coordination
Vision & Community Character	Energy	Future Land Use
Historic Resources	Transportation	Goals, Policies & Strategies
Existing Land Use	Economy	Implementation Table
Demographics	Public Facilities	Appendix A Land Use Law
Housing	Fiscal Capacity	Appendix B Maine Healthy Beaches
Natural Resources	Recreational & Cultural Resources	Appendix C Public Input Documentation
Water Resources	Hazard Mitigation	

The full plan is available at [www.KennebunkportCP.info](http://www.KennebunkportCP.info)





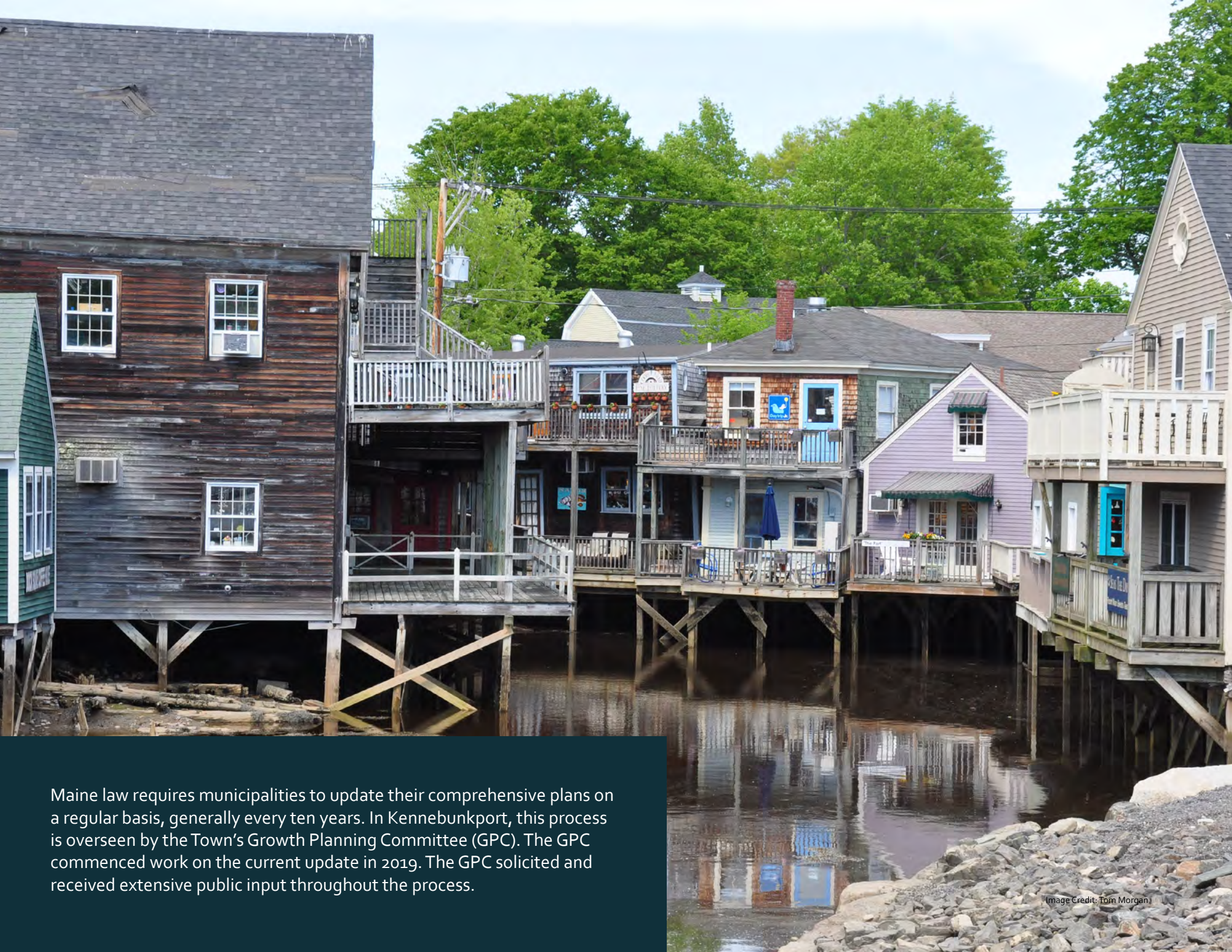


We envision the town of Kennebunkport as a coastal Maine community that is diverse and well balanced. The town will be recognized by residents, visitors and the State of Maine for its integrity and ability to set dynamic priorities and achieve them through comprehensive accountability.

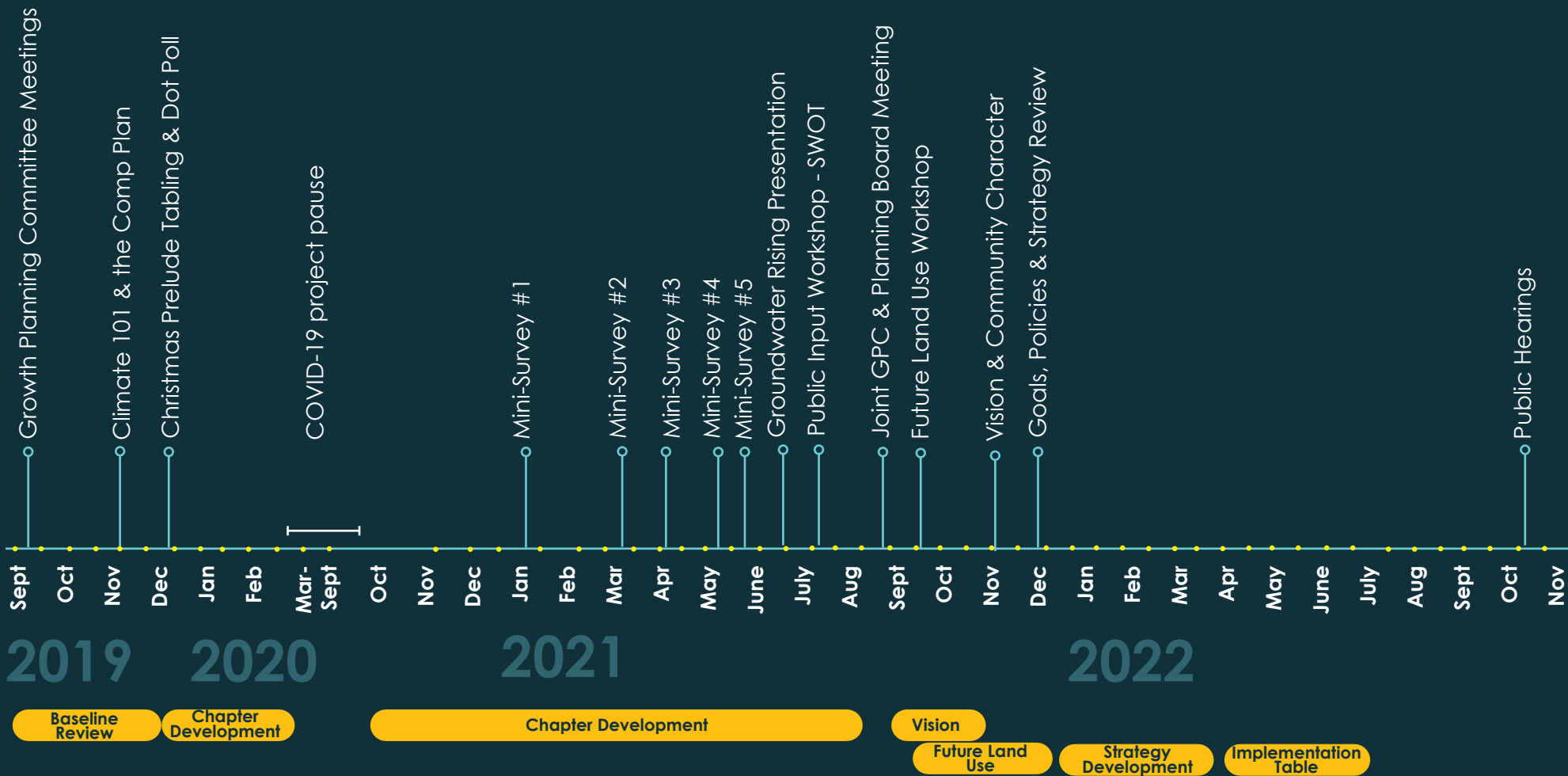
Our community will work collaboratively with residents, business owners and regional partners on challenges including sea level rise, diversity, housing, and others that we share in southern Maine. As we adapt, we will preserve Kennebunkport's historic integrity, protect our natural resources, strengthen our unique small-town character while improving economic vitality.

Our tree-shaded streets, scenic vistas, unspoiled coastline, classic architecture and beautiful landscapes will continue to inspire visitors and residents alike.

# OUR VISION



Maine law requires municipalities to update their comprehensive plans on a regular basis, generally every ten years. In Kennebunkport, this process is overseen by the Town's Growth Planning Committee (GPC). The GPC commenced work on the current update in 2019. The GPC solicited and received extensive public input throughout the process.



# PROCESS

warming huts for cross country skiing on the 27 acre parcel trails • Try to procure land that will allow public access to waterways and have parking • Make a community garden • Libraries are A+ • all denominations of churches • Recreational opportunities plentiful and varied and all seasons, land and water • Many habitats- shade tree commission, conservation commission • Inventory historical houses and buildings • Sustainability • Economic benefits • Maintain natural resources and protect the integrity by leading in ecotourism. Attractive trolley or shuttle (nominal charge, free for residents) • Change legislation to allow local tourism taxing, i.e. tourism tax with hotel stay • Continue to focus on history and attractions already here – don't add more. Again focus on ecotourism • Opportunity when re-surfacing roads add specific labeled bike lanes • We like residential opportunities in Dock Square • Short term rentals – limiting #s? • Overall favorable for tourists • Beautiful = beaches • Dock Square • Conservation Trust • Safety • Taxes from short term rentals do not stay in town • Year round tourism • Diverse – restaurants/activities • Promote from North to South • Lack of Parking • Public transportation • Diversity-affordable • More year round amenities – services for year round residents • Short term rentals so we don't run out of housing and locals can earn money • Local businesses - local tax base • Coastal community • Shade tree canopy - village • Vitality of local businesses - tourism • Warm & welcoming community • Opportunity for eco-tourism • Library sustained (in part) by tourism • Short term rentals • Enjoy KPT • Broad range housing • Beautiful classic residences • Limited growth • Sell available parcels of town owned land – a location – easy to Portland/Boston, trails, roads, airport, beautiful • Opportunity: public employee housing. Public/private venture • Residents in town • Goal of affordable housing – accessory apartments • Fund by tax benefit for residents • Provide a different tax rate for short term rentals based on minimum time of full time residency • Proximity to water • Location – coastline • Conservation areas – green space • Zoning ordinance to require developers to have a certain percentage of affordable housing, multi-unit, on town owned land • Allow homeowners to rent spare rooms to seasonal families to rent • Great walking trails • Conservation/recreation properties • Convert vacant lots for alternative purposes (senior residence) • Good start improving bike trails • Great access to trails/land/properties • New building at Parson's field for recreation • Rt 1 access 95 • Improved access to Biddeford Airport • School good but expensive • Hotels-amenities to attract younger people • Strong internet access • Work from home – be here • Opportunity – through zoning to create areas for families • Traffic flows • Keep cost low by not overdeveloping, especially the sewer system, as to not increase taxes • Would like to see a real public launch for water access that is independent from working waterfront piers • Docks – no need to expand • Preserve our historic buildings in original form • Historic buildings and architecture • If development continues we will need to require a percentage of (new builds) on green energy • Opportunity – solar fields • Forward thinking to have charging stations • Put solar panels on all public buildings • Do energy audits on all public buildings • Electric vehicle charging stations – more! Encourage electric cars = ecotourism • Green energy is an opportunity • Fire station and police are assets and are adequate as is • Spread out Fire Stations is an asset to access fire calls • Roads, bridges are adequate. Patching preferred • Bridges – good for the most part • Sidewalks and bike paths – good but need more • Roads and sidewalks – bumpy and small keeps people at a relative stop • Too many sidewalks so we don't look suburbanized • Good sidewalks and bike paths • Limited crosswalks needed • Drinking water is good • Water testing of wells • Playgrounds and equipment • Trust Properties, beaches • Outside space preserved adequately at this time • Ocean • Land

2

Climate Presentations

2

Workshops

5

Mini Surveys



35

Public GPC Meetings

2

Tabling Events

1

Website

# PUBLIC INPUT

flooding • More traffic • Sidewalk Access • Bike lanes • Lack of ordinances related to tree removal • More education about all regulations, use of pesticides and other chemicals • More environmental protection of our resources, beach H2O quality reported has been poor often • Need to adhere to strict impervious surface guideline • Do not lose zoning or space to maintain agricultural activities and have farm animals, backyard chickens • Lack of retail and services for full time residents • Use of our own resources...beaches • More bike/walk paths • Short term rentals – # of licenses issued for the whole community • With increase in tourists/children we need more police presence and enforcement of speed and traffic safety • Too much gentrification • Climate change and sustainability • Short term rentals • Economic development • Tourism • Retail goods and services for residents • Mixed use development with residential and commercial uses in the same building • Aging population – lack of suitable (single floor) options • Infrastructure does not support growth • In need of major upgrade • Too many transient rentals • Visitors do not contribute to local economy • Zoning limitations • Younger families – need path • Community challenge • Infrastructure cost demands of growth • Planning board • Financials such wetlands delineation • Overpricing • Threat to wildlife • Monopoly of short term rentals • Taxation/re-evaluation • We should think about that • Heritage housing creates unfair taxation to middle/moderate income local residents on high taxed land • Affordable housing • Taxation • Need for economic opportunity to increase \$ and consequent housing • Accommodation related with associated service • Land use ordinance • HUD improvement and requirement • Short term renters • Materials cost • Labor cost • Air pollution • No affordable housing to rent, not own • No affordable housing to own • Too many big developers pushing locals out • Do not ruin short term rentals - we will not have tourists to stimulate the local economy • Connectivity unreliable • Water access – for canoes – kayaks – small public docks • Need better bike/walking safety lanes, protected bike lanes • “Community Center” • Build year-round-winter-opportunities for places • Community transportation • Parking/congestion/traffic/emissions • Do not have too much increase in fire and police budget • Please maintain tennis courts • Create recreational areas before building new ones • Use existing building for needed storage of town records before building new building • Flooding of Roads – Dyke, Ocean Ave, Pier Rd Parking Lots – Dock square • Need better sidewalks • Culvert # increasing to prevent flooding • Broken windmill @ Police Station • Lack of historic preservation guidelines • Energy grid is at risk and could be improved to weather- go underground if possible • Need more electric vehicle charging stations for a fee \$ • No (public) boat launch or kayak launch area with enough parking • No public restroom or porta potty at Goose Rocks Beach or Colony Beach • Do not close neighborhood fire stations • Poor quality internet, no other choices but spectrum • Some roads are very low and flood (causeway to pier, Ward Rd) • Need a public shelter in case of storms, emergency with a stand alone generator and bathroom facilities • Secure our water supply, electric supply, cyber security, all public buildings • No public gathering in place • Do not close Porpoise square is a traffic nightmare • Dock Square 3 day construction • UV Parking • Make an indoor recreation area in village parcel • Is our water system an energy appropriate for continued growth • Need more bike paths • Chemical use (residential) toxifying the waters. More eco-friendly options • Sewer system needs major upgrade • Bridges need repair • Need stop line School St and Maine speed limits need to be enforced • Roads, surface need to be repaired regularly

WEAKNESSES & THREATS

**Public GPC Meetings** The GPC dedicated meeting time to review and discuss the Comprehensive Plan, including chapter content, outreach and engagement, and the process of developing the chapter twice a month from September 2019 through March 2020 and October 2020 through February 2022. All meetings were recorded and shown on the local public access channels. From October 2020 through February 2022 meetings were held over Zoom. Public comment was welcomed during GPC meetings.

**Website and Advertising** A project website ([www.kennebunkportcp.info](http://www.kennebunkportcp.info)) was developed and updated throughout the duration of the plan preparation. The website provided information about the plan and update process including public outreach events, draft chapters, and maps. Information and announcement about the plan were also posted on the Town's website. Public input events were advertised on the websites, via press releases in the Portland Press Herald and York Coast Star, through email distribution lists, flyers, announcements on public access channels and on social media. GPC members also advertised at a recycling event. The project website will be permanent so as to provide local residents to the plan and the wealth of documents and maps that support the plan's analyses, findings and recommendations.

**Climate 101 & the Comp Plan** The GPC hosted a presentation and Q&A session titled Climate 101 and the Comp Plan on November 19, 2021. Climatologist Dr. Cameron Wake presented on climate change projections for the region. This was followed by a discussion about the comprehensive plan and the implications of climate change on long term planning in the community. This event served as a preliminary strategy to inform the community of the plan update and process as well as to educate about climate change. Approximately 50 people attended.

**Christmas Prelude Tabling** GPC members and the project consultants were present at tables at the Christmas Prelude event in December 2019. This provided the opportunity to share information about the comprehensive plan and gather informal input through a sticky dot poll on topics including climate change and natural resources.

**Mini-Surveys** From January 2021-June 2021 five mini-surveys were conducted to engage the community and collect input on key issues. The surveys remained open until August 12, 2021. A total of 748 people responded to the surveys. The information collected in the surveys directly informed the Vision Chapter of the Plan, as well as the topics selected for the July 26, 2021 Public Input Workshop, as well as the workshop format, time, and location.

**Groundwater Rising** The GPC hosted a presentation and discussion on how sea level rise will cause groundwater rise and the challenges associated with this. The event featured a presentation and Q&A by Dr. Jayne Knott, a groundwater and water supply modeling expert. Approximately 20 people attended this event, which was held over Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Public Input Workshop** A public input workshop was held outside at the Nonantum Resort on July 26, 2021 to accommodate the seasonal population. A total of 58 people plus GPC members and Town staff attended. The workshop featured a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) activity during which attendees responded to questions on six topics. Participants were asked to consider sustainability and climate change during each session. Input was recorded on large worksheets and maps. Participants also had the opportunity to respond to a dot poll survey at the workshop. A set of chapter summary factsheets was developed for participants in advance of the workshop.

**Future Land Use Workshop** On September 27, 2021, the GPC hosted a virtual workshop to collect input on topics including zoning standards and permitted uses, residential development trends and needs, and implications of sea level rise. The workshop format allowed for educational presentations, live polling, and a question and answer session for each of the three overarching topics. The live polling survey results and discussion notes were summarized following the event. Approximately 40 people attended this event.





Image Credit: Liz Durfee

# PLAN SUMMARY

Kennebunkport offers a truly outstanding natural and cultural environment for both residents and visitors. The combination of its rocky coastline, beaches, harbors, restaurants, historic villages, cultural and social activities, and a vibrant, natural hinterland creates an extremely desirable place to live and to visit.

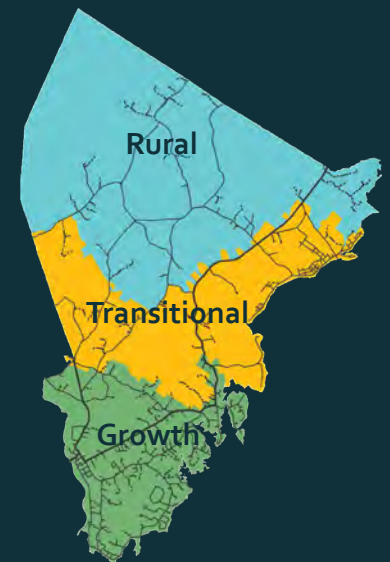
Sustainability is a fundamental concept in the Kennebunkport community that necessitates planning for wellbeing of future generations. The community will continue to work to reduce the impacts of development and human activities on water and natural resources and protect these valued assets. Climate resiliency is key to sustainability.

## Growth Management

The Town issues growth management permits for residential development in three designated growth areas: growth, transitional, and rural areas. In recent years, 40 permits have been available annually, with 50% allocated to the growth area, 30% allocated to the transitional area, and 20% available in rural areas.

The growth management permit process helps direct residential growth to areas that are served by infrastructure and away from areas where maintaining rural character is desired. The growth areas were first developed in 2012 and are based primarily on the availability of Town sewer.

The GPC assessed natural resources, current and proposed infrastructure, development trends, and sea level rise when reviewing the existing boundaries of the growth management areas during the Comprehensive Plan update. The existing growth management areas were deemed appropriate and no changes to the boundaries have been proposed at this time.



# WELCOMING

A community that welcomes residents and visitors of all ages, backgrounds and economic levels, and that supports a variety of local business enterprises.

It is important to the community that it is welcoming to seasonal residents and visitors while also meeting the needs of year-round residents and safeguarding the character of the community, including its treasured natural, cultural, and historic resources, and its rural character. This includes balancing the needs of residents and visitors, supporting diverse businesses, and working to understand the long term implications for municipal services and revenue, infrastructure, and housing of a dynamic and diverse population.

Over the last decade, the town's population has increased by approximately 7.5% to 3,629 year-round residents, but has not yet returned to where it was 20 years ago. One notable characteristic of the population is the high median age of residents, which at 53.4 years of age, is significantly higher than the national median age of 38.1, and higher than Maine's statewide median of 44.7.

Many residents have expressed an interest in diverse housing options that accommodate individuals and families of all sizes, ages, and incomes. Such options are important in attracting new families and first time homeowners, as well ensuring that long-time residents can find suitable homes to age in place in Kennebunkport.

Kennebunkport has undertaken two housing studies, the Housing Needs Analysis & Assessment and the Village Parcel Market Analysis, to learn more about housing needs and opportunities, as well as a visioning process to identify opportunities at the 87-acre Village Parcel, a centrally-located tract of land acquired by the Town in 2018. These studies will inform the Town's planning efforts for housing and the Village Parcel. Exploring opportunities to reduce regulatory barriers to affordable housing through amendments to the land use regulations will be key step for the Town.

The growing prevalence of seasonal rentals contributes to the lack of housing options, and the lack of year-round rentals, in particular. Approximately half of all residences in Kennebunkport have a permanent mailing address that is outside of the Town. The seasonal population spikes to an estimated 12,000 people in the summer. The hospitality industry is a major part of the town's economy, contributing employment opportunities, tax revenue for the Town, and supplemental income for property owners who provide short term rentals. The Town will continue to work with residents and businesses to address the challenges of a high seasonal population, while also recognizing the economic, civic, and societal contributions of visitors and part-time residents.

**Challenge:** The high cost of housing in Kennebunkport will continue to be a challenge that shapes the composition of the community. In recent years, affordability has trended downward. The median assessed value of owner-occupied dwellings in town is 65% higher than that of York County. Nearly one quarter of households spend over 30% - the standard benchmark for unaffordability - of their household income on housing.

# RESPONSIBLE STEWARDS

**A community that treasures, protects, responsibly manages, and celebrates its unique character, natural and historic resources, commercial fishing industry, and heritage that it has been entrusted with.**

Special places, events and activities, and people contribute to sense of place in Kennebunkport. In addition to its coastline, the Town's small, quaint downtown and traditional neighborhoods, forested vistas dotted by scattered farms, and low density residential development define Kennebunkport's landscape. Places like Dock Square, the Pier, and Goose Rocks Beach are iconic Kennebunkport locations. Preserved land and historic architecture shape the look and feel of the community, while events like Christmas Prelude, year-round recreational opportunities, and the active commercial waterfront contribute significantly to the character of the community. These amenities and attributes play a role in making this coastal Maine town a great place to call home.

Safeguarding and wisely managing historic, natural, and cultural resources is critical to maintaining Kennebunkport's character. Natural resources are a draw for residents and visitors alike. Situated at the mouth of the Kennebunk River and home to coastal marshes, beaches, rivers, and forested uplands, Kennebunkport has diverse ecosystems that provide habitat for wildlife and a number of ecosystem services, or benefits for people. Protecting the quality of these ecosystems is not only critical to local flora and fauna, but to residents and visitors who depend on clean air and water, soil, and shade and seek open space, recreation, and leisure opportunities.

Historic Resources are plentiful and varied. Dock Square and the early 19th century village district are evidence of considerable prosperity owing to the ship building industry and overseas trade. The Cape Arundel historic district boasts one of New England's largest concentrations of late 19th century summer homes in the Shingle Style. There are 80+ historic graveyards in Kennebunkport.

The Town is rooted in its connection to the coastline. Water-dependent industry has long been a part of the community and its economy. Today, the Kennebunk River's working waterfront includes two dozen commercial fishing boats, a party fishing boat, a whale watch boat, a whale watch/eco-excursion boat, two boats dedicated to lobster cruises, and multiple charter fishing boats. Rising ocean temperatures, ocean acidification, and sea level rise impacts to marshes are a threat to the local fishing industry.

**Challenge:** Improving access points for recreational watercraft and balancing the availability of commercial and recreational moorings.

**Challenge:** Minimizing the impact of human activity and development on water resources in order to improve water quality.



# RESILIENT

**A community that values the long term health of its natural and built environment and is able to withstand and recover quickly from change. Proactive planning for the future will strengthen the community's resilience.**

This Comprehensive Plan integrates climate across all planning sectors and explores climate change, impacts, and opportunities to increase resilience. Alignment with the Maine Climate Council's recommended sea level rise planning scenarios makes the plan particularly relevant. Sea level rise threatens to inundate between 1.3 and 18.8 miles of roadway in Kennebunkport by 2100 depending on the scenario. Several of Kennebunkport's 16 sewer pump stations are vulnerable to sea level rise and will have to be reconfigured or fortified.

Beaches, Dock Square, and even locations like the Consolidated School may be impacted by sea level rise in the future. Flooding and storm surge already cause occasional road closures in Town. Due to its low elevation, Dock Square is vulnerable to inundation, and is considered one of the most vulnerable in Maine in the near term. Some buildings are already experiencing flooding two to three times annually. Efforts like the US Army Corps of Engineers Silver Jacket vulnerability assessment in Dock Square and the Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission's Regional Sustainability & Resilience Program will increase the community's resilience to climate change.

Kennebunkport is home to nearly 800 acres of tidal marsh and is home to portions of the Rachel Carson Wildlife Refuge. Maintaining marshes - which provide flood protection and habitat for a number of species and are critically important for ocean fisheries - is one strategy to reduce vulnerability in coastal areas. Scientists believe that some portions of the marsh are capable of migrating inland as the sea rises if man-made obstacles are not situated in the migratory path. It is incumbent upon Town officials to work to minimize the number of such obstacles.

In addition to changes in sea level, the community will also face impacts such as increase precipitation and storm events. Although much of the community is rural with low imperviousness, areas with more development and those within and near floodplains will be vulnerable to changes. Land use regulations that minimize development in flood-prone locations and minimize the allowable area of imperviousness are ways that the Town reduces risk of damage and loss due to flooding. Through the hazard mitigation planning process, the Town plans for and reduces impacts of multiple hazards. Enhancing planning for evacuation is a strategy to increase resilience.

Reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions is a critical to minimizing the magnitude of climate change. Reducing the energy consumed by Town facilities and vehicles, encouraging green building, and supporting and regulating solar farms are examples of ways to reduce emissions locally.



**Challenge:** Dock Square is one of the lowest lying historic villages on the Maine Coast. Property owners will eventually face some difficult choices: fortify, elevate, or abandon the buildings as sea level rises.

**Challenge:** In 2019, the Maine Legislature expanded its emissions goals to reduce gross emissions to no more than 45% of 1990 levels by 2030 and to no more than 80% of 1990 levels by 2050.

**Challenge:** A rising sea will have impacts on groundwater, pushing it to the surface at locations as far inland as three miles. Rising groundwater could carry the contents of septic systems and underground toxics into nearby drinking wells, or toward the surface. The rising groundwater can also undermine Town roads at considerable expense to tax payers.



# CONNECTED

**A community that has extensive and integrated infrastructure networks, expansive trail systems, and wildlife corridors that link internal and external destinations and resources.**

The interconnected street network that characterizes Kennebunkport's Village neighborhood is beneficial in several respects. This 19th century street network offers multiple options for getting from here to there, thus minimizing traffic congestion. The absence of motor vehicle traffic congestion is conducive to quiet walks and bicycling. In contrast, the bridge to Kennebunk Lower Village illustrates a phenomenon where the absence of alternative routes results in traffic congestion.

The Town's land use regulations will determine the character of new development. Regulations that encourage an interconnected street network increase walkability and other forms of non-motorized transport. An interconnected network is usually maintained more efficiently, and at less cost to local taxpayers. Additionally, such networks are well suited for emergency evacuation. Roadway corridor design plays an important role in ensuring safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Kennebunkport benefits from close proximity to regional trail networks such as the East Coast Greenway. Residents and visitors are also served by the InTown Trolley and the Shoreline Explorer.

The Kennebunkport Conservation Trust has done an exemplary job at preserving open space and providing local residents with numerous educational and recreational opportunities. Trust properties are interconnected by trail systems that are accessible from roadway trailheads and crisscross pristine landscapes. Open space and greenways, along with stream and wetland buffers, create corridors that connect habitat for wildlife.

Widely available broadband infrastructure is critical to connecting residents and businesses with the world and allowing residents to work remotely. Digital communications systems also that provides first responders with a reliable means to communicate with each other and with nearby communities.

It bears noting that until the mid-19th century local waterways served as a vital connection between Kennebunkport and the larger world. Today, there are many waterfront access points along the Kennebunk River, Goose Rocks Beach, and other locations along the coast. Admittedly, parking can be a challenge. Residents have also commented on the need for more places to launch recreational watercraft.

**Challenge:** Maine's transportation sector discharges substantially more emissions than the national average (54% vs. 37%), likely due to the rural character of the state. Rural drivers make 45% more trips and drive twice as far as urban drivers.

# COLLABORATIVE

**A community that works cooperatively with other communities and entities to accomplish common goals.**

Kennebunkport has a lengthy history of working cooperatively with other municipalities in the region in the areas of emergency response, the delivery of public services, the protection of natural resources, transportation, and economic development. In the recent past, Kennebunkport embraced a collaborative strategy with nearby coastal communities to prepare for the challenges posed by a changing climate. Yet another climate-related instance of Kennebunkport's collaborative approach is reflected in this Comprehensive Plan where a conscious effort was made to align the municipal plan with the goals and policies advocated by Maine's bold new climate action plan, published in December 2020.

Kennebunkport's police department has a mutual aid agreement with Kennebunk, participates with the Regional Tactical Team, and initiated a cooperative agreement with nearby police agencies to address staffing issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Kennebunkport's emergency management team works closely with its counterparts in other York County communities, and with Maine's Emergency Management Agency. Kennebunkport's Fire Department has a mutual aid agreement with nearby towns, as does Kennebunkport Emergency Services (ambulance).

Approximately 40% of Kennebunkport is served by the Kennebunk, Kennebunkport & Wells Water District. The water is supplied from Branch Brook in Wells, Chase's Pond in York, and the Saco River in Biddeford.

Kennebunkport takes a collaborative approach to public education, solid waste disposal, the recycling of oversized items, and the safe disposal of household hazardous waste. The Town's sharing of these responsibilities with nearby communities results in efficiencies that ultimately work to the benefit of local taxpayers.

Natural resource protection is another area where Kennebunkport works collaboratively with adjoining communities. For example, the Kennebunk River has been managed jointly with the Town of Kennebunk since 1995.

Undeveloped habitat blocks (large tracts of land that have not been fragmented by roads and buildings) extend into Biddeford and Arundel. The Town recognizes that preserving wildlife corridors in these areas will be especially important in helping wildlife respond to changes in climate. The State has identified two areas of statewide ecological significance that span Kennebunkport's municipal boundaries: the Biddeford/Kennebunkport Vernal Pool Complex, and the Wells/Ogunquit marsh. This comprehensive plan recommends formalizing an inter-municipal strategy for protecting these valuable resources. Kennebunkport works jointly with the US Fish & Wildlife Service to protect tidal salt marsh and coastal meadows. The marsh is a critical habitat for migratory birds, and serves as a spawning ground for marine life that is necessary to sustain coastal fisheries.

**Challenge:** The solution to the fecal contamination that threatens water quality at Goose Rocks Beach will require a joint effort with Biddeford, as will the protection of the aquifer that spans the Kennebunkport/Biddeford municipal boundary. In both instances, this Comprehensive Plan recommends inter-municipal cooperation.

Image Credit: Tom Morgan



Image Credit: Tom Morgan

Chapter

## 3 Historic Resources

- 11+ Distinctive architectural styles in Kennebunkport
- 2 National Register Historic Districts (306 buildings)
- 8 Sites listed individually on the National Register
- 1 District declared eligible for listing on Register
- 0 Local Historic Districts
- 4 Structures on Historic American Buildings Survey
- 80 # of 18th & 19th century family graveyards
- 4 Prehistoric archaeological sites
- 20 Historic archaeological sites
- 23 Near-shore shipwreck sites (19th century)

## 4 Land Use

- 21 Total land area in square miles
- 31 Miles of coastline
- 7% Total land area that is developed
- 60% Area of forested land cover
- 542 Acres of land area owned by Town
- 2,500 Acres conserved by KPT Conservation Trust
- 20% % of town conserved by the Conservation Trust
- 803 Acres of land in Rachel Carson Wildlife Refuge
- 860 Acres of land and in a current use program (27 parcels)
- 707 Acres of land in Tree Growth Current Use Program
  - 1 # parcels in Working Waterfront Current Use Program
- 40 Growth management permits available per year
- 20% % of town within the growth area

# KENNEBUNKPORT BY THE NUMBERS

## 5 Demographics

- 3,629 Year-round population (2020 Census)
- +255 (7%) Population change from 2000 to 2020
- 12,000+ Estimated seasonal population
- 53.6 Median age
- 12% Disability
- 3% Poverty
- 13% Veterans
- 365 School population
- 15% School population change from 2010 - 2019
- 27% Consolidated School enrollment 2010 - 2019
- \$79,295 Median household income
- 99% High school graduates
- 58% College graduates

## 7 Natural Resources

- 82% Area located in the coastal drainage subwatershed
- 37% Soil classified as poorly drained and wetlands
- Zone 5b Current USDA plant hardiness zone
- 34% Area of the town as Central Oak-Pine habitat
- 22% Provides habitat, water storage, and filtration
- 11 Confirmed rare species
- 245 Conserved parcels of land
- 9% Land designated farmland of Statewide Importance
- 2 Rare or exemplary natural communities

## 6 Housing

- 3,086 Dwellings in Kennebunkport
- 20 Average # of new dwellings annually since 2000
- 0.8% Annual percent growth in dwellings since 2000
- 87% Percent of dwellings that are owner-occupied
- 90% Percent of dwellings single-family detached
- 60% Dwellings built prior to lead paint ban
- 25% Paying a mortgage more than 30% of income
- 44% Paying rent that is more than 30% of income
- \$675,000 Median home price in Kennebunkport
- \$317,000 Home affordable to a median income family
- 25% Percent of Town employees who live in town
- 10% State goal for new affordable housing in KPT
- 248 Dwellings utilized for short term rentals
- 25 Heritage Housing Trust's target # of new units by 2025

## 8 Water Resources

- 5.2 Miles of Kennebunk River within KPT
- 3,309 Acres of wetlands
- 60% Drinking water in Maine that is from groundwater
- 40% Parcels in town that are served by the Kennebunk, Kennebunkport Wells Water District
- 142 Million gallons provided by KKWWD to KPT annually on average
- 118 Acres of high yield sand and gravel aquifers
- 2,040 Acres within the 100-year floodplain
- 3.5 Average # flood insurance claims per year (total 159 since 1975)

## 9 Marine Resources

- 68 Moorings in the Kennebunk River
- 225 Moorings in Cape Porpoise and other locations
- 40 to 45 Commercial fishing vessels at Cape Porpoise
- 80 to 100 Local residents in Cape Porpoise fishing industry
- 84 Non-commercial shellfish permits issued
- 300-1,000 Size (lbs) of bluefin tuna caught off of Kennebunkport
- 6/0 Shrimp boats based in KPT in 2000/2020
- 3.7 Million pounds/year lobster landings in York County
- 84% Maine lobster exports to China since 2018
- 6% Percent of Town that is tidal marsh

## 10 Energy

- 3 Average annual # of power outages in Maine
- Maine State with highest # of power outages in nation
- 1 in 10 Maine households that heat with wood
- 1 in 13 Maine households that heat with natural gas
- 58% Percent of KPT dwellings heated by fuel oil
- 6th highest Maine's rank in the US in wind power generation
- 2nd lowest Maine's rank in US in electricity use per capita
- 5 Acres of land required for a 1 megawatt solar farm 2.5??
- 1.2 GW Capacity of New England's largest nuclear power plant
- 156 GW Capacity of Maine's off-shore wind potential

## 11 Transportation

- 84 Total miles of roadways
- 21 Miles of private roads
- 6.6 Miles of sidewalks
- 2 Private airfields
- 0 Park & Rides
- 0 Designated Scenic Byways
- 2.9 Miles of Rt 9 with an "F" safety score
- 530 # crashes from 2000-2020
- 57 # crosswalks
- 225 # parking spaces in municipal lots

## 12 Economy

- 1,916 Residents age 16+ participating in the workforce
- 10% Residents worked from home before pandemic
- <2% Unemployment rate in Kennebunkport
- 8 - 12 hr Time to charge vehicle with Level 2 charger
- 8 Level 2 electric vehicle charging stations in KPT
- 25 minutes Time to charge with an EV Fast Charger
- 0 # of EV Fast Chargers in KPT

# KENNEBUNKPORT BY THE NUMBERS

## 13 Public Facilities & Services

- 192-210 Annual calls to Fire Department for assistance
  - 77 Volunteer firefighters
  - 55 Median age of volunteer firefighters
- 3, 2 & 2 # of fire engines, ladder trucks & rescue boats
  - 13 Full time officers in the Police Department
- 3 - 4 yrs Life cycle for a Kennebunkport police cruiser
  - 309 Calls for ambulance service in 2020
  - 1974 Year wastewater treatment plant constructed
- 313,346 Average daily gallons of wastewater processed since 2012 (Licensed to treat 700,000 gallons/day)
  - 16 Major pump stations in public sewer system
  - 50% Buildings connected to the sewer system
- 1,292 Home visits by Public Health Department in 2019
- 33,000 # volumes at Graves Library
- 1,300 Trees in the Shade Tree Committee's GIS system
- 280 Central Maine Power streetlights purchased by Town in 2020

## 14 Fiscal Capacity

- \$9.45 Property tax rate
  - 5% Increase in KPT valuation 2016-2020
  - 76% Assessed valuation compared to market value
- \$2.61 billion KPT valuation if calculated at full market value
  - 60% % of 2020 tax rate dedicated to education
  - 6% Percent of 2020 tax rate driven by York County
- 15% of value Maine's limit on municipal debt



Image Credit: Tom Morgan

## 15 Recreational & Cultural Resources

- 4 Town parks
- 3 Beaches
- 4 Clubs and associations
- 25 Miles of Kennebunkport Conservation Trust trails
- 9 Public access points to Goose Rocks Beach
- 9 Cultural facilities
- 9 Halls and/or meeting rooms
- 26 Regularly offered sports teams, classes & programs

## 16 Hazard Mitigation

- 3,582 Parcels in FEMA Zone VE (in the 100-year floodplain and vulnerable to storm waves)
- 260 Acres inundated inland of highest astronomical tide (HAT) under 1.6 ft sea level rise (SLR)
- 601 Acres inundated inland of HAT under 3.9 ft SLR
- 1,116 Acres inundated inland of HAT under 8.8 ft SLR
  - 1 Designated emergency shelter (Kennebunk Middle School)
- 8.8 ft SLR Maine planning guidelines for "low-risk tolerant infrastructure" in 2100
- 1.6 ft Recommended SLR scenario to commit to managing for by 2050



Image Credit: Tom Marjan

# STRATEGIES

This section includes a subset of the Comprehensive Plan Strategies. The full list of Goals, Policies, and Strategies is included in Volume 2.

Chapter 19  
Goals, Policies & Strategies

## Welcoming

- Preserve Goose Rocks Beach as a safe, limited use, and family-oriented beach.
- Consider amending the LUO to reduce minimum lot size requirements and increase allowable density within Growth Areas.
- Encourage the construction of accessory dwelling units for year-round use.
- Encourage the development of assisted living and independent living facilities.
- Support the Kennebunkport Heritage Housing Trust.
- Amend the LUO to permit farmers' markets.
- Explore innovative approaches to housing the tourist industry's seasonal workforce.
- Create a public boat launch.
- Channel growth to areas where public infrastructure exists.

## A Steward

- Undertake a detailed, town wide survey of historic structures. Identify historic buildings that are threatened by sea level rise and extreme weather events.
- Develop audio recordings of self-guided walking tours of Kennebunkport's historically and architecturally significant sites. Erect interpretive signs.
- Advise property owners on improving a building's energy efficiency while preserving its historic character.
- Research and document all cemeteries and burial plots.
- Within the rural growth area, require that subdivisions and commercial developments maintain open space to the greatest extent practicable.
- Support the Kennebunkport Conservation Trust to protect critical and important natural resources through purchase of land or easements from willing sellers.

- Support forestry and agricultural uses and activities such as agritourism, backyard chickens, farm stands, and firewood sales.
- Periodically review the use of the Town Forest and seek input from residents on permanent protection of Town Forest properties.
- Continue invasive species management and prepare to manage new invasive species.
- Continue to assign priority status to commercial fishermen for mooring spaces.
- Develop the Village Parcel in a manner that is consistent with Kennebunkport's small town character.
- Encourage developers to install street trees in order to enhance wildlife habitat and provide shade.





# Resilient

- Work with the Silver Jackets and other experts to devise a plan to protect Dock Square buildings from sea level rise.
- Educate property owners about impacts of climate change, such as extreme heat, drought, flood vulnerability, and changes in precipitation on habitats and species.
- Investigate the vulnerability of public and private wells to sea level rise induced groundwater rise and to drought.
- Identify and monitor buried hazards that may be impacted by rising groundwater.
- Adhere to the Maine Climate Council's recommendation to locate critical infrastructure such as pump stations and other wastewater infrastructure away from the area that is at risk under an 8.8 foot of sea level rise scenario in the year 2100.
- Develop a program to assist commercial properties to actively participate in recycling programs.
- Plan for the possibility that some town roads or segments of town roads may require elevation to avoid inundation due to sea level rise.
- Avoid developing new facilities in areas that are vulnerable to sea level rise and inland flooding.
- Acquire land in strategic locations to act as a buffer from sea level rise and inland flooding.
- Revise the LUO to discourage new development in areas that are likely to be impacted by sea level rise (SLR) and ground water rise that is induced by SLR.
- Identify opportunities to lead, participate, and build from regional climate adaptation efforts.
- Facilitate and incentivize the installation of electric vehicle (EV) chargers throughout town.
- Amend the LUO to incentivize residential development that is energy efficient and that does not rely on fossil fuels.
- Measure & monitor GHG emissions from municipal operations, and community wide.
- Develop a climate action plan.
- Educate community members about steps they can take to reduce emissions and become more resilient.
- Budget and plan for long-term energy efficiency equipment upgrades.
- Install and operate renewable energy systems at municipal facilities.
- Adopt codes and permitting practices that support renewable energy systems in the community.
- Facilitate the adoption of renewable energy technologies (i.e. solar, geothermal) by adapting building and zoning codes, as needed.





- Encourage connecting streets, a pedestrian-friendly environment, and small-scale, neighborhood commercial services that are geared toward serving local residents.
- Conduct a comprehensive traffic study to identify opportunities to reduce congestion in Dock Square.
- Identify locations to enhance wildlife corridors to help create places for species to migrate and shift north as temperature increases.
- Adopt stream smart road crossing policy to reduce the impact of road crossings on fish and other aquatic species and habitat.

- Partner with other local governments to plan and achieve sustainability.
- Collaborate with conservation partners to create and compile a publicly accessible database of educational resources and information about critical habitat (including salt marshes), vulnerable species, and the impacts of development and human activity on natural resources.

## Connected

- Achieve LEED certification for public building projects.
- Update fleet purchasing practices to prioritize electric vehicles.
- Develop a town-wide network of bicycle and pedestrian paths to lessen dependence on conventional motor vehicles.
- Develop and adopt a complete streets policy.
- Discourage cul-de sacs and limit length of dead end streets to encourage connectivity and reduce vehicle miles traveled and commute times.

## Collaborative

- Partner with regional entities and communities to enhance evacuation route planning and community education on evacuation routes.
- Coordinate with the City of Biddeford to map and develop a management plan for vernal pools in the Biddeford/Kennebunkport Vernal Pool Complex.
- Collaborate with the City of Biddeford on an aquifer protection ordinance.
- Work with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection to monitor and eliminate fecal coliform levels found in coastal waters.
- Continue the partnership with Maine's Healthy Beaches Program.

