



Chapter 2

Vision & Community Character

KENNEBUNKPORT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2030 Volume 2

May 2022

Introduction

The required components in a comprehensive plan are specified by Maine law in Chapter 208. A vision statement is one of those requisite elements. The purpose of the vision statement is to:

"summarizes the community's desired future community character in terms of economic development, natural and cultural resource conservation, transportation systems, land use patterns and its role in the region."

The vision statement is aspirational and aims to capture the sentiment of what the community would like to look and feel like in the future.



This comprehensive plan's vision statement is seen to the right. The character of the community to which the community aspires is described in the pages that follow.

Our Vision

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.

Community Character

Kennebunkport will be a friendly, welcoming and inclusive town with a strong sense of community. We will balance our appeal to visitors with our commitment to protect the rights and needs of our permanent residents. Involved citizens will be key to the community's long-term success as a leader in resiliency, sustainability, and responding to climate change. We will continue to be rich in cultural and recreational opportunities.

Economic Opportunities

Our land use regulations will support and encourage small-scale entrepreneurial activity that is initiated by local residents and that observe our good neighbor policies. Locally owned establishments in the service industry will retain their status as community assets.

Our commercial fishing industry dates to the earliest era of European settlement in Maine. The industry is a critically important component of our heritage, our economy, and our community's unique character. We will continue to support the industry to help it thrive in the face of its many challenges. Our working waterfront will be protected and preserved. Water-dependent uses will not be dislodged by competing land uses or real estate development.

We will encourage sustainable tourism that generates less noise, consumes fewer resources, and leaves a lighter footprint on the community. Traffic congestion in Dock Square will be alleviated, as will the demand for parking. Tourism will showcase Kennebunkport's outstanding natural resources and the wildlife

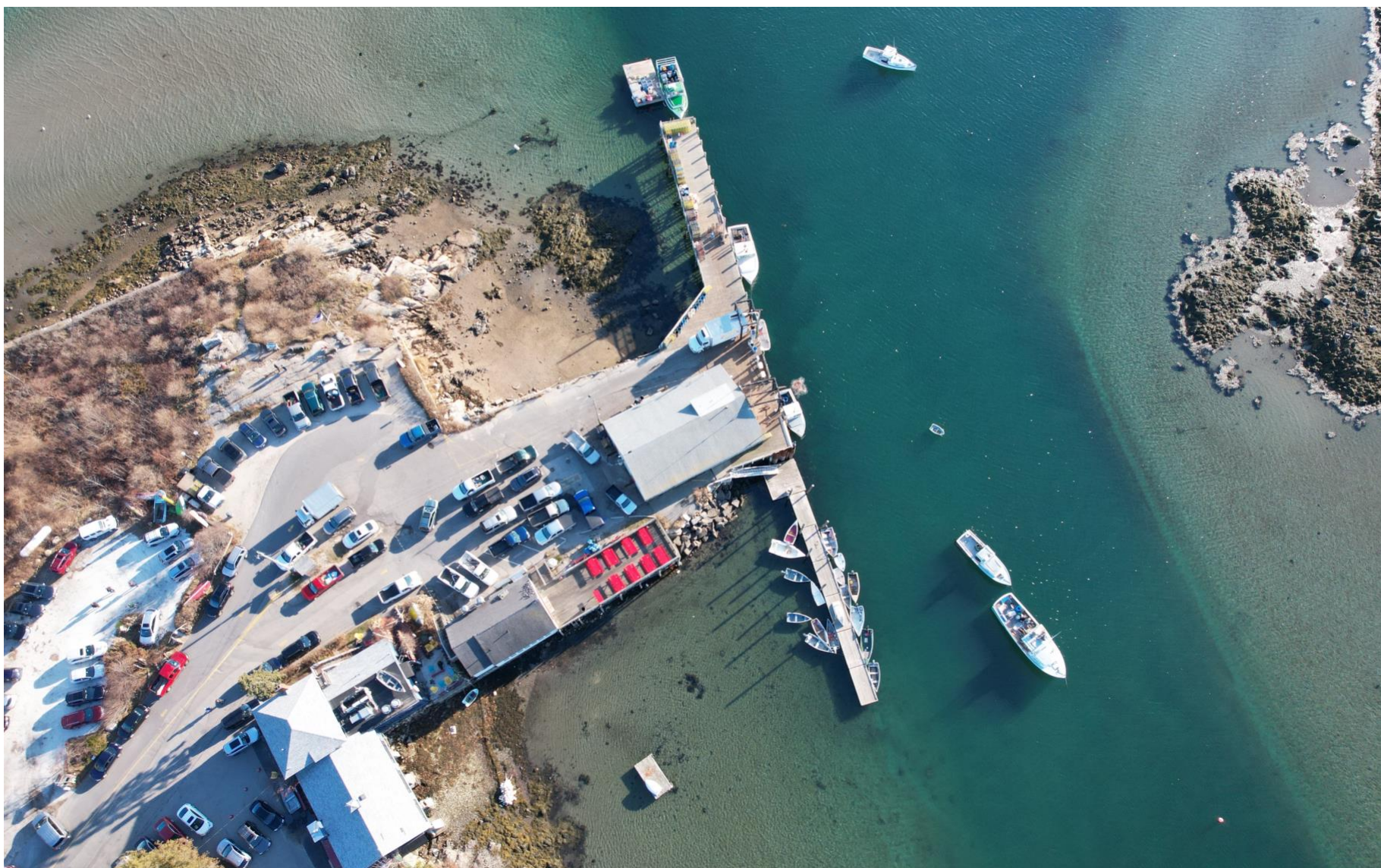
that frequents the preserved lands in KCT's inventory, along with those of the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge. These visitors will enjoy walking tours featuring Kennebunkport's abundant historic sites, our remarkable diversity of well documented shade trees, beautiful gardens, and exemplary natural habitats.

With regard to short term rentals, we will strike a balance between competing interests to retain the industry's economic benefits for those local families who rely on this revenue stream, while working to curtail the occasional nuisances and increase its community-wide benefits.

Housing

We will host a range of housing types that offer options for everyone. There will be housing to support the needs of local residents and businesses, ample opportunities for downsizing and aging in place, senior housing within walking distance to amenities and public spaces, assisted living facilities to allow those in need of such assistance to stay in town, plentiful starter homes for young families, and year-round rental units in sufficient numbers to meet the needs of Kennebunkport citizens. Our public health professionals will continue to provide a superb level of home-based services that help residents (who are in need of assistance) to age comfortably in their own homes.

New home construction will be encouraged to meet the highest standards of energy efficiency. Use of renewable energy for residential heat and electricity will substantially increase, replacing our dependency on fossil fuels. Most building materials will be sourced from Maine's vast reserve of renewable resources.



Maintaining waterfront access is critical for the commercial fishing industry, an integral part of the community's economy, heritage, and character.
Photo: Tom Morgan

Infrastructure

Public and private infrastructure will be efficient, well-maintained, innovative, technologically advanced, and resilient to the threats posed by sea level rise, groundwater rise, and severe weather events. Electrical generation will be decentralized, reliable, and fueled by renewable resources. Fast chargers for electric vehicles will be ubiquitous, serving the needs of residents and visitors alike. Solar arrays will be commonplace.

Our streets and public ways will be designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, so that pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transportation users of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across the streets. Bicycle and pedestrian paths will crisscross the town, and they will be hugely popular among local residents. Seasonal traffic congestion will be reduced.

Competition will be encouraged in the broadband industry to assure the delivery of the best service at competitive prices. Broadband is key to enabling much of the community's professional workforce to forgo commutes to distant workplaces. It also provides the flexibility families often require in order to balance the dual demands of career and childcare. We will continue to support and deploy innovative technology that benefits the community.

Climate Resilience

The community will continue to pursue a resilient and sustainable path for the foreseeable future. We will reduce our collective carbon footprint, take the lead in recycling and energy efficiency, and strive to be a net zero community. We will be responsive to the challenges posed by a changing climate. We will be playing a supportive role in helping our fellow Mainers to implement the state's bold new climate action plan.

Environmental Protection

Our drinking water will be clean and exceed potable water quality standards. Failing septic systems will be replaced. Connections to municipal sewer will be encouraged. The extent of impervious surfaces will be minimized. The use of herbicides and pesticides will be substantially reduced. Sustainable landscapes will reduce water consumption, develop wildlife habitats, and provide plantings for pollination. Wildlife, particularly birds, will thrive. Protection of shellfish beds and lobster populations will support recreational and commercial harvesting. We will prioritize keeping our walkways and beaches free of debris, including plastic waste.

Open Space Preservation

The expansion of Kennebunkport's inventory of preserved open spaces will continue apace. Land development will be less intrusive than in times past. Marshes, wetlands, ponds, streams, vernal pools, and aquifers will be protected.



Looking north toward Biddeford Pool. The Little River runs across the center of the photo toward Goosefare Bay. In collaboration with the City of Biddeford, Kennebunkport will strive to eliminate pollution in the Little River. Photo: Tom Morgan

Education

The Consolidated School will continue to provide a high-quality educational environment where young scholars thrive, prepare for middle school and beyond, and become lifelong learners. The school will continue to serve as an important community institution and a vital social hub. Residents will take advantage of the educational opportunities afforded by the access to the University of New England and York County Community College to continue their learning throughout their years.

Municipal Staff, Services, Facilities & Finances

We will continue to recruit and retain high caliber professionals to manage our municipal departments and will provide them with the resources that are necessary to deliver top notch services. The delivery of emergency services will continue to be efficient and cost effective. Our town will be a safe community. The municipal debt will be low so as to enable the flexibility to respond to unanticipated challenges. The Town's fleet of small vehicles will be powered by electricity. New municipal venues will be well designed and accommodate community events and multi purposes.

Fresh & Local

Ours will be a community where everyday necessities are affordable, accessible, and available from local merchants and regional service providers, most of whom will be situated in close proximity to our neighborhoods. The emphasis will be on fresh and local products. Creativity and connectivity will be celebrated. Small scale agriculture will be encouraged.

Waterfront Access

Local residents will enjoy ample year-round access to Kennebunkport's waterfront, including Goose Rocks Beach. The town will remain diligent in exploring those rare opportunities when waterfront land becomes available to determine its potential for public access.

Regional Cooperation

Our exceptional record in cooperating with nearby communities will continue unabated. Regional cooperation offers many advantages, not least of which is the opportunity to address regional challenges in a cost-effective manner. Resiliency, emergency response, sustainable economic development, and water quality are but four areas where a regional approach is beneficial.

Dark Skies

Kennebunkport has one of the oldest municipal Dark Sky policies in the United States. We will ensure that our night skies remain dark with an appropriate ordinance, public education and enforcement.

Scenic Vistas

Our community enjoys a remarkable wealth and diversity of scenic views. They will be preserved, to be enjoyed by all, in perpetuity.



Goat Island Light has guided mariners in the vicinity of Cape Porpoise since 1859. Photo: Tom Morgan



Dock Square has served as Kennebunkport's commercial center since the 18th Century. Photo: Tom Morgan