

## Factsheet Homework

10/8/25

Peggy:

The Vision Statement of the 2034 Comprehensive Plan states “In 2034, Bowdoinham is a quiet rural Maine community defined by agricultural landscapes, abundant woods and wetlands...” Pride and gratitude in and for our natural beauty was expressed often during the many public forums we held to develop the plan.

Following the community’s wishes to maintain our rural nature the CPC decided to create an Open Space Plan to facilitate protecting our environment. Developing this plan may take 2-3 years and involve writing, research and public outreach.

We are searching for members from many walks of life in Bowdoinham to help ensure that the plan will represent the community.

We meet monthly on the second Wednesday of the month at 6pm for approximately 1 ½ hours. Additional work outside of the meeting time will occasionally be required.

Buddy:

- What is a Comprehensive Plan?
  - Bowdoinham’s Comprehensive Plan is a long-term vision for the town laying out goals and ideas for the next 10 years while the plan is in effect.
- Why should a town write a Comprehensive Plan?
  - With the Comprehensive Plan outlining goals for a ten year period it is used to help guide policies for future growth and development, promote policy changes to protect areas and character that have been laid out and helps to open pathways for grant applications for projects associated with the Plan.
- Where are we with our Comprehensive Plan?
  - Our revised Plan was adopted at the Town Meeting in 2024 and now we are working on steps to achieve goals laid out in the Comprehensive Plan. Currently our focus is on developing an Open Space plan to work on preserving the towns Open Spaces for all to enjoy.

Bill:

### What is an open space plan?

It is a document a municipality uses for managing and conserving natural areas, parks, agricultural lands, and other undeveloped spaces within the community. It outlines a vision and provides policies for the improvement of quality of life by identifying areas for protection, setting goals, and proposing actions like zoning updates or acquisition of land.

In more detail, it serves the following purposes:

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- Protects natural resources and agricultural lands.
- Provides opportunities for outdoor activities.
- Enhances the aesthetic appeal and environmental sustainability of an area.
- Guides growth and development.
- Evaluates existing open spaces, including their types, condition, and value to the community.
- Defines objectives for open space protection and use.
- Details methods to achieve the goals, including: purchasing land to protect it permanently; implementing regulations to control development in sensitive areas; establishing specific areas for conservation; working with private landowners and other groups to achieve conservation goals.
- Ensures a balance between development and conservation.
- Provides opportunities for community interaction with nature.
- Contributes to a more livable and attractive community for current and future generations.

### Why write an open space plan?

An open space plan is written to create a long-term guide for protecting a community's natural resources. It provides a proactive framework for growth rather than a reactive one.

In more detail, the reasons are:

- Identify and prioritize the protection of important natural resources like forests, farmlands, scenic views, river corridors, and wetlands.
- Conserve undeveloped land to protect critical functions such as clean water, natural flood control, and groundwater recharge.
- Safeguard habitat for native plants and animals, particularly for species that need large, connected tracts of land.
- Identify and establish a network of public recreational spaces, including parks, trails, and athletic fields. This ensures residents have accessible outdoor areas for activities.
- Ensure community members have opportunities for exercise and relaxation.

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- Provide places for neighbors to meet and interact, helping to build a stronger sense of community.
- Increase the value of surrounding properties, creating a net fiscal benefit for the community.
- Direct new development away from sensitive lands and toward existing areas. This prevents piecemeal development and protects the community's overall character.

### Where are we in the project?

Making a plan involves a 3-step process: (1) gathering data on existing conditions, (2) analyzing the data to understand its environmental, recreational, and conservation value, and (3) developing strategies for protecting and enhancing open spaces. We haven't started work on any of the above.

The steps in more detail are:

- Facilitate public meetings, workshops, surveys, and focus groups to solicit input and build support for the plan.
- Establish a committee of community leaders and stakeholders to guide the planning process and ensure community priorities are addressed
- Determine the primary goals of the plan, such as conservation, recreation, environmental protection, or supporting community development.
- Delineate the geographic area that the open space plan will cover.
- Inventory and map existing open spaces, including environmental features, existing conservation lands, recreational areas, and potential threats or opportunities.
- Collect data on natural resources, land use and community needs.
- Based on the analysis, identify key areas for protection and conservation.
- Develop clear recommendations and actionable steps for managing, creating, and enhancing open spaces.

Allison:

Municipal Tree Committee

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Although the Municipal Tree Committee (MTC) is an advisory subcommittee of the Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC), the members are excused from the regular meetings and duties of the CPC. The goal of the MTC is to develop a plan that makes recommendations to the Select Board regarding the maintenance of municipal trees, including providing information on pest and disease mitigation, as well as necessary removal and replacement of municipal trees and woody shrubbery. Working with experts in forestry and tree care the MTC also provides informational seminars and materials for public education.

Jan:

### How to Apply To Be On the CPC

1. Attend a CPC meeting to get a sense of what is involved in serving on the committee.
2. Go to the town office and fill out an application to serve on the CPC.
3. Once the application is approved, get sworn in as a member of the committee at the town office.