

MEMORANDUM

To: Bowdoinham Selectboard
From: Yvette Meunier, Director of Planning & Development
Date: June 23, 2026
Re: Recommendation for Community Action Grant Contract

Recommendation:

In July 2025 the Comprehensive Planning Committee (CPC) was granted permission to apply for no-match Community Action Grant (CAG) through the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future's Community Resilience Partnership Program to hire a consultant to write a municipal Open Space Plan with the CPC using community input. The goal is to survey the public through events, websites, and other engagement activities to find out where the town should be focusing on conservation efforts and recreation opportunities, and where commercial and residential developments efforts should be directed. The Open Space Plan will act as a community-oriented guide to elected and appointed town leadership decision-making, that identifies high-priority properties to protect, acquire, or bridge connectivity between. To create an equitable future, all residents should have an opportunity to share their voice and influence planning efforts in the town they call home.

In February 2026 Bowdoinham was awarded a \$55,486.20 grant for this project and the Selectboard accepted the grant funds. Since this time, an RFP was advertised for the project and there were five submittals. Over the course of the last few months the CPC has scored all the applications, held interviews with their top firms and checked references. They are asking for permission to sign on with Viewshed/FB Environmental to complete the work.

On June 9, 2026, the Selectboard requested the contract be amended to remove project elements related to preparing ordinance revisions and instead reallocate the funding to increase public engagement opportunities.

The Committee is pleased to provide you with the updated proposal from Viewshed which has removed references to ordinance revisions and within the budget was able to increase the public engagement opportunities as follows:

1. Add developing "Meeting in a box" materials that the committee members can bring to community groups and other town meetings to gather feedback from residents who may not be able to attend workshops. These materials can be used to meet people where they are already meeting, for instance at Age Friendly luncheons, PTA, book clubs, etc.
2. Increase Focus Group meetings from 1 to 3. Exact groups this will target is TBD but would appreciate your feedback on this as we get into scheduling these in April – July 2027.
3. Created a \$1,800 budget to support the creation of additional public engagement opportunities between January and May 2027. This line item is flexible at this time as it will be influenced by the process as it plays out. Some of the options could include an additional workshop, incentives for attending meetings, walking tours, classroom experience for students, contests, and more.

**Proposal for
Professional Services**

OPEN SPACE PLAN

Town of Bowdoinham, Maine

June 16th, 2026

VIEWSHED

Landscape Architecture | GIS | Planning



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FIRM DESCRIPTIONS

VIEWSHED

Landscape Architecture | GIS | Planning

VIEWSHED is a leading landscape architecture, GIS, and planning firm based in Yarmouth, Maine. We are a diverse group of design professionals, specializing in both large-scale planning and detailed site design. Our staff is composed of professionals with backgrounds in landscape architecture, community planning, public engagement, GIS analysis, visual resource assessment, 3D modeling, graphic design, and land-use permitting. We also collaborate with other firms from a variety of disciplines to address complex challenges.

Our team works in collaboration with communities across Maine in the planning and design of public spaces. We have extensive experience with municipal and urban projects, open space and master planning, streetscape design, sidewalk and pathway planning, municipal parks, and similar facilities that demand careful attention to user needs, pedestrian scale and movement, and maintenance.

The cornerstone of our work is an emphasis on graphic communication to assure quality public understanding. We work with state of the art software to ensure our mapping and graphic work is accurate, effective, and visually impressive. We believe the most appropriate solutions come from thoughtful engagement with our clients as well as the innovative ways we facilitate the public outreach process.



FB Environmental (FBE) is a mission-driven consulting firm that specializes in directing environmental planning, assessment, monitoring, mapping, and restoration projects for a diverse array of clients. The company was founded by Forrest Bell in 2001 with a focus on incorporating forward-thinking natural resource planning into municipal planning projects. The FBE staff is composed of highly qualified water quality specialists, ecologists, biologists, and natural resource scientists with a breadth of experience facilitating municipal conversations around natural resource

protection and equitable open space access. Examples of FBE projects include assistance with planning documents such as Comprehensive Plans, Open Space Plans, and Climate Action Plans, as well as technical assessment projects such as water quality sampling and analysis, natural resource inventories, wetland delineations, and more. Since its beginning, FBE has become a regional leader in assisting municipalities with natural resource planning and has worked extensively across Maine.

Collectively, FBE's staff have more than 200 years of combined experience working on land and water resource projects in New England. As FBE is a small business with low overhead, we can provide a high-quality professional product at reasonable hourly labor rates. References have indicated that the firm's greatest asset is the staff's ability to work with great attention to detail to meet the specific needs of project partners and the public. FBE takes great pride in our ability to communicate complex scientific details with the public. Through an evaluation conducted by an independent research firm for the US Government, we were given an overall performance score of 95 (out of a possible 100) by our current and past clients. Our staff professionalism and expertise ranking scored a perfect 100.

OUR TEAM

We have assembled a highly qualified team to lead the development of this Open Space Plan. VIEWSHED and FBE have worked together on many projects in the past and have an excellent working relationship. This project will be a team effort with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. See the team members that will be part of this project below.

Judy Colby-George (VIEWSHED), Project Manager



Judy is the owner and principal of VIEWSHED. She has over 30 years of experience helping clients to implement GIS and engage in complex spatial issues. Judy has extensive experience helping communities build resilience, including land use planning, suitability analysis, and public participation. Judy believes that GIS is a tool that can help engage the public in the messy problems that face our world today, and work with clients to tell their stories, represent data in an understandable format, and invite a variety of people to the

decision-making process. Judy's depth of experience working with Maine communities to solve complex planning questions positions her to be an effective project manager for this open space planning process. A few relevant examples of projects Judy has led include the Scarborough Open Space Plan and the Topsham Natural Areas Plan.

Hilary Oat-Judge (VIEWSHED)



Hilary Oat-Judge, PLA, LEED AP, has twenty years of experience in Landscape Architecture, designing projects of varied scales in the public and private realm. Some of her signature projects are the redesign of the Native Plant Garden at the New York Botanical Garden and the design of the Trellis Bridge at the Chicago Botanic Gardens. Hilary has extensive experience in planning, site analysis, streetscape design, and managing complex projects. Her deep knowledge of native planting design, stormwater management, and sustainable

design honed through decades of practice gives her invaluable expertise for all types of projects.

Madeline Tripp (VIEWSHED)



Madeline is a GIS & Public Engagement Specialist at VIEWSHED. She is passionate about developing online maps & interactive tools that make data approachable & help communities build resilience. Madeline has experience collaborating with a wide range of stakeholders and creating maps that help people solve problems and plan for the future. She contributed to the GIS analysis, public engagement, and plan development for the Scarborough and Bridgton Open Space Plans, as well as the Augusta Parks and Recreation Master

Plan. She develops interactive, online maps, dynamic surveys, and digital mapping activities to increase access and participation for planning projects.

Bina Skordas (FBE)



Bina brings nearly 15 years of experience leading municipal and environmental planning projects throughout the Northeast and Western United States. Her expertise spans climate action planning, climate vulnerability assessments, open space planning, stakeholder engagement, and public facilitation. Working alongside municipalities in Utah and Maine, she has served as project manager on a wide variety of planning initiatives, conducting complex research, authoring technical reports, and helping communities set ambitious sustainability goals.

Bina is particularly skilled at facilitating difficult conversations that bring competing community priorities into alignment. Recent work includes a completed Open Space Plan for Stratham, NH and an ongoing Open Space Plan for Durham, ME, making her well positioned to lead Bowdoinham's first Open Space Plan.

Maggie Mills (FBE)



With over a decade of experience at FBE, Maggie serves as a Senior Project Manager and Hydrologist, overseeing projects related to natural resource management and planning. She has played a key role in supporting community master plans, open space plans, and recreation plans, ensuring natural resources remain central to community development decisions. Her deep familiarity with the New England landscape informs her practical, grounded approach to environmental stewardship. Maggie has previously led open space planning efforts in South Portland and Bar Harbor, ME and Burlington, VT.

Mindee Goodrum (FBE)



Mindee leads watershed and community planning projects spanning municipal and climate resiliency planning, stakeholder engagement, watershed management, and water quality monitoring and analysis. She also brings a background in ecology, regularly conducting vegetation monitoring, wetland delineations, and invasive plant surveys. Her year of service as an AmeriCorps member at a land trust gave her hands-on experience in conservation strategies and land management, directly relevant to Bowdoinham's open space and agricultural protection goals. This combination of ecology, conservation, and community planning gives Mindee a unique skillset to support this project. She previously worked on the Scarborough, ME Open Space Plan and is currently assisting Durham, ME with an Open Space Plan.

Julia Maine (FBE)



Julia leads climate resilience, spatial analytics, environmental monitoring, and community planning projects at FBE. She conducts GIS mapping and spatial analyses for climate vulnerability assessments and works with clients to integrate climate impacts into planning, evaluate adaptation options, and develop actionable priorities, skills directly applicable to Bowdoinham's open space inventory and analysis tasks. Julia is knowledgeable about New England climate policies with a particular focus on municipal action in Maine and is an experienced science communicator who facilitates informed planning and decision-making with diverse stakeholders. Prior to joining FBE, she supported the Climate Ready Coast - Southern Maine and the Southern Maine Climate Action Planning Cohort at the Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission and has conducted greenhouse gas emission inventories and sustainability strategy development.

PROJECT APPROACH

Our team understands that the development of an Open Space Plan for Bowdoinham is a vital next step in implementing some of the community's highest priorities that emerged from the Comprehensive Plan. We envision creating a plan that builds on these goals by engaging and educating the community, clarifying the community's vision and goals for its open space, and identifying actionable ways to implement these goals.

An open space plan can be an effective tool to help a community preserve spaces that are valuable to them (such as agricultural lands, areas of cultural/historic significance, recreational areas, or habitat) while also equipping the community for future needs and risks. We understand that how a community decides to use its land can impact people's livelihoods, quality of life, and the health and character of the community. The combined VIEWSHED and FB Environmental team offers the skills and technical expertise to facilitate a data-driven, community centered planning process.

Task 1: Open Space Plan Administration

VIEWSHED will serve as the Town's primary point of contact and will manage day-to-day coordination, meeting facilitation, and deliverable production. Our project management style is grounded in clear and proactive communication with the Town to ensure that we meet project objectives, while staying within the schedule and budget. We will use calls or brief emails to resolve project needs and keep the project on schedule.

We propose meeting with the Comprehensive Plan Committee three times in person, including the kickoff meeting, and three times online. These meetings would precede the public engagement opportunities and the beginning and end of the process. FB will meet with the committee for the kickoff, before the 2nd & 3rd Public Workshops, and the final meeting.

At the beginning of the project, we will coordinate with Town staff to review and adjust the proposed schedule and objectives. VIEWSHED will also coordinate with the Town to ensure that all the documentation needs for the quarterly and final CRP reports are met, including sending written updates of project progress.



Deliverables:

- Signed contract with the Town
- Emails and meeting notes
- Attend Comprehensive Plan Committee Meetings (3 in-person and 3 virtual)
- Summary of project activities for CRP reports (quarterly and final)

Task 2: Open Space Plan

Task 2A: Inventory & Analysis

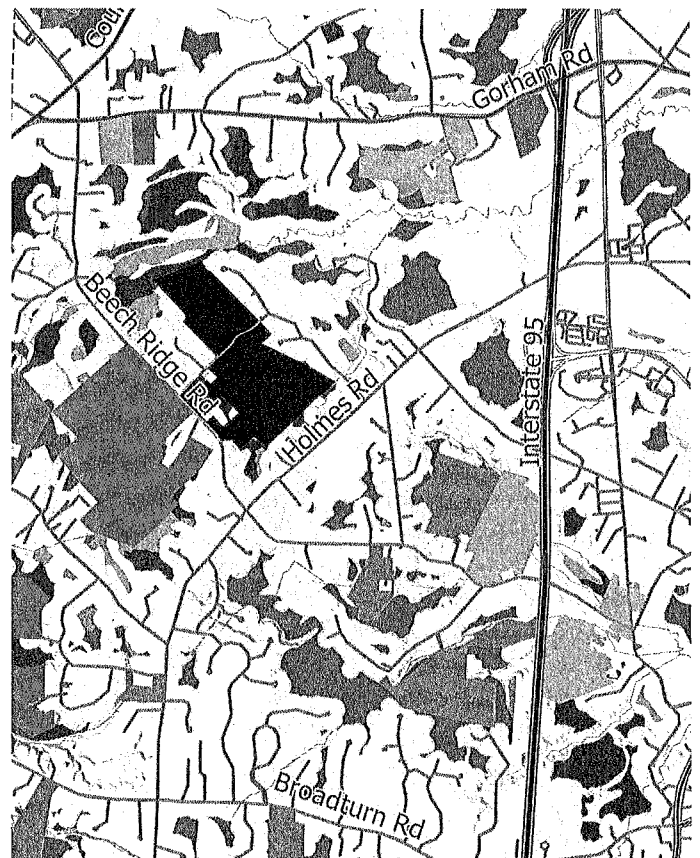
The foundation of this project is developing a deep understanding of the Town's existing open space and any existing goals or policies the Town can build on.

VIEWSHED and FBE will use GIS analysis to develop an inventory of existing open space resources within the Town. Our team will use existing data from multiple sources, including the Maine State GeoLibrary Data Catalog, Beginning with Habitat maps from Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, FEMA floodplain mapping, state aquifer data, municipal GIS layers, and any data available from partners like the Kennebec Estuary Land Trust and Maine Farmland Trust. The Team will analyze critical natural resources (such as groundwater and surface water resources, wells and wellhead protection areas, soils and prime farmland, undeveloped habitat blocks, critical habitats, and wildlife corridors) as well as community resources (including trails, parks, recreation areas, historic sites, and scenic vistas). This data will be used to identify high priority open space for conservation. A tally of existing open space can also be calculated to serve as the baseline for Bowdoinham's goal to conserve 30% of its land area by 2030. This inventory will inform the plan and be used to develop printed and interactive online maps for the public to explore.

Additionally, FBE will conduct a high-level vulnerability assessment using climate projection data sources including the Maine Stream Habitat Viewer, The Nature Conservancy Future Habitat Explorer, and regional climate data trends to analyze how climate change impacts may affect Bowdoinham's ecosystems and open spaces. The results of this comprehensive analysis will be synthesized into a series of publicly engaging maps and technical datasets that will inform the conservation strategy development.

Deliverables:

- Maps and geodatabase from Existing Conditions Analysis
- Maps and geodatabase from the Vulnerability Assessment



Task 2B: Public Engagement

The Open Space Plan should reflect the vision and values of the Bowdoinham community. Providing a variety of public engagement opportunities at multiple points throughout the process is key to the success of the plan. We strive to create informative and interactive activities, both online and in-person, that will allow as many people as possible to participate. At the outset of this project, we will set up a public website that will provide a place for community members to see progress updates, review interactive maps and information, and find opportunities to participate.



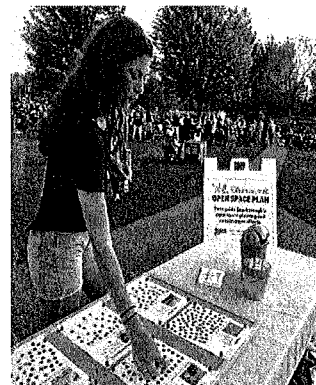
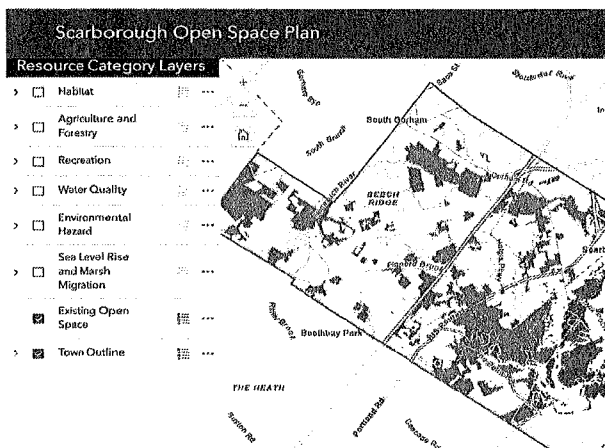
We will also coordinate with Town staff to develop an outreach plan tailored to reach Bowdoinham residents. Our team will develop outreach materials (such as flyers) that can be used by the Town to advertise public meetings via social media, email, mailers, newsletters, or other channels of communication.

To kick off public engagement, our team will plan a single public workshop in **early October 2026** to share initial findings from the existing conditions analysis, introduce the community to open space planning, and develop a shared definition of open space, which will be used to guide the rest of the plan. We will develop an online version of this workshop to gather input from community members who cannot attend the public meeting.

Throughout the process, the VIEWSHED team will encourage and support the Committee members to show up at town events and have table opportunities for people to learn about the plan.

VIEWSHED will develop a community mailer to be delivered to all households prior to the

We recommend holding a focus group for farmers because we have had greater success reaching the farming community with in-person engagement. VIEWSHED will work with Maine Farmland Trust (MFT) to develop questions and activities for the farm focus group. We will discuss and gather feedback on how producers can best be supported through the recommendations



of this plan. The focus group would be held in **March 2027**, but the **timing is flexible** to ensure we accommodate the growing season. We will rely on the expertise of partners at the MFT and the town to determine timing and to invite key individuals to participate.

VIEWSHED will hold two additional focus group meetings: one with non-agricultural large landowners and one with another group identified by the committee. We will develop "meeting-in-a-box" materials that committee members will bring out to community groups and other town meetings to gather feedback from residents who may not attend public workshops. VIEWSHED will hold training for the committee in using the materials and attend at least one meeting to help model the presentation of materials.

In **mid-May 2027**, the VIEWSHED Team will plan an open house followed by a public workshop. The open house will give the public a chance to become familiar with the plan, review information and maps, ask one-on-one questions, discuss ideas with other community members, and make suggestions. This will be followed by a public workshop which will include a presentation and interactive activities focused on reviewing the resilience mapping and the open space mapping, prioritizing types of open space, general needs throughout the community, and recreational opportunities. We will develop an online version of this public engagement opportunity to gather input from community members who cannot attend the meeting.

In **late-September 2027**, a final public meeting will be held to present the draft plan to the public and solicit feedback. This meeting will include activities for the public to prioritize the draft goals and policies envisioned in the plan. After this meeting, the draft plan and an online comment card will be published on the project website to gather any additional feedback through the end of **December 2027**. The comment card and a shared version of the draft will also allow

feedback from town boards/committees. Our Team will also publish a survey similar to the prioritization activity to capture priorities from anyone not able to attend the meeting.

VIEWSHED will provide \$100 Hannaford gift cards to be raffled off to attendees present at the conclusion of each of the public meetings and focus groups.

Deliverables:

- Website
- Workshop #1 Materials
- Workshop #1 Online Engagement
- Open House / Workshop #2 Materials
- Workshop #2 Survey / Online Engagement
- Ag Focus Group Materials & Results Summary
- Large Landowner Focus Group & Results Summary
- Additional Focus Group
- "Meeting in a Box" Materials
- Attendance at Select meetings
- Workshop #3 Materials
- Workshop #3 Survey / Online Engagement & Comment Card



Task 2C: Additional Public Engagement

Between **January and May 2027**, the team will provide additional public engagement opportunities with the remaining \$1,800. The committee will work with VIEWSHED to identify the most effective ways to reach the community. VIEWHSED has prepared a few options that could take place:

- Prepare materials and coordinate with the Town and school department to provide a classroom experience for students related to open space.
- Prepare an Open Space Walking Tour
- Develop a Photo Contest/Website to Display Photos
- Individual Storytelling Session where the VIEWSHED team records interviews with own
- Purchase Gift Cards to Raffle off at Public Meetings
- Repeat of Workshop #2 to gather more input. This would have to take place in April or May.

Potential Deliverables:

- Classroom Materials & Results of Engagement with Students
- More Focus Groups & Results
- Individual Resident Listening Sessions
- Photo Competition
- Open Space Walking Tour
- Workshop #2 Held Again
- Developing New Public Workshop

Task 2D: Plan Drafting & Review

Following completion of the inventory analysis and initial community engagement, all findings will be synthesized into a comprehensive, actionable Open Space Plan for Bowdoinham. The team will work collaboratively with the Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC) to develop a written plan with clear goals, vision, and implementation strategies that balance conservation and climate priorities with Bowdoinham's rural character, economic needs, and development pressures. VIEWSHED will create compelling visual materials including maps, infographics, and data visualizations that make the findings accessible to diverse audiences.



The final plan will include a short executive summary and implementation plan as an Adobe PDF format and an interactive Story Map of the entire plan with linked PDF appendices of the public engagement activities. These formats will incorporate the existing conditions data, climate vulnerability findings, community input, and prioritization framework into a cohesive strategy document. FBE will lead preparation of a draft version of the plan, with support from VIEWSHED, for thorough review by the CPC, Town staff, other boards and committees, and the public. During the drafting process, the public workshop in September will allow the public to provide input on proposed strategies and recommendations, which will be incorporated into the draft.

Deliverables:

- Draft Open Space Plan (Early September 2027)

Task 2E: Plan Revision & Adoption

The draft plan will be presented to the public at the public meeting in September Workshop and will be posted on the project website with an online comment card to gather feedback through December (as described in Task 2B). This open comment period is also an opportunity to gather feedback from municipal boards and communities. It is expected that all comments from town staff and other municipal boards and committees will be collected into one document. FBE will incorporate feedback and comments into the final version of the plan by the end of **February 2028** to provide a review period before the town meeting in June. The final plan will serve as both a policy document and a practical tool for guiding Bowdoinham’s conservation decisions over the next decade and beyond.

Deliverables:

- Final Open Space Plan (February 2028)

FEE PROPOSAL

Task	Fee
Task 1: Open Space Plan Administration	\$8,717
Task 2A: Inventory & Analysis	\$8,562
Task 2B: Public Engagement	\$21,049
Task 2C: Additional Public Engagement	\$1,800
Task 2D: Plan Drafting & Review	\$7,317
Task 2E: Plan Revision & Adoption	\$3,390
Expenses (travel)	\$492
Expenses (townwide mailing)	\$1,500
Total Cost	\$52,827

Meeting Costs:

Additional Public Workshops	\$4,500
Repeating Existing Workshop	\$1,800
Focus Groups	\$1,750
Creating Meeting in a Box Materials	\$1,500
Attending Community Meeting	\$400 - \$500
Prep Meeting Materials/Summarize Responses	
Open Space Walking Tour	\$1,200
Education Materials	\$600
Storytelling Session	\$600
Photo Contest	\$1,200

SCHEDULE

Our Team developed the following schedule to optimize the timing of public engagement and to ensure the completion of deliverables to align with the Town meeting and the Community Resilience Partnership grant timeline.

Task	2026						2027						2028											
	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Task 1	Project Management																							
	Meeting with Committee																							
	CRP Quarterly & Final Reports																							
Task 2	Inventory & Analysis																							
	Public Workshops (3)																							
	Three Focus Groups																							
	Extra Public Engagement																							
	Plan Drafting & Review																							
	Plan Revision & Adoption																							
Committee Tabling at Town Events																								
Town Meeting																								