

REGIONAL COORDINATION

Economy

Our businesses and residents work across town boundaries so it is important that our town government does too. Currently, the Town participates in the regional efforts of Midcoast Economic Development District and Midcoast Council of Governments, as well as sits on their Board of Directors and Executive Committee. The Town is also a member of the Southern Midcoast Maine Chamber and has worked with them to advertise Bowdoinham's businesses.

Agriculture

The Town supports and works with regional organizations, such as Kennebec Estuary Land Trust, Merrymeeting Food Council, Bowdoinham Farmers' Market, Maine Farmland Trust, Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, and Maine Organic Farmers & Growers Association to protect farmland and promote agriculture.

Forest Resources

The Town has adopted the State's forestry rules so that our timber harvesting rules are consistent with others in our region. The Town would be willing to work with others, but at this time there are no regional projects planned.

Natural Resources

The Town supports and works with organizations, such as Kennebec Estuary Land Trust and Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife to preserve land and protect our natural resources. The Town has also participated in a regional sea-level project with Bowdoin College and a marsh migration project with the municipalities of Topsham and Bath.

Water Resources

The Town complies and enforces several State rules (Shoreland Zoning, Erosion Control, Stormwater, etc.) to preserve the quality of the water we all share. In addition, the Town works with and supports the Bowdoin & Bowdoinham Water District and Friends of Merrymeeting Bay.

Historic and Archaeological Resources

The Town supports the work of the Bowdoinham Historical Society in preserving our rich history. The Town would be willing to work with others, but at this time there are no regional projects planned.

Recreation

The Town works closely with the Ararat Youth Basketball League, Ararat Youth Baseball/Softball League, and Topsham Youth Soccer League to provide sport opportunities for our elementary school children. The Town also coordinates with Bowdoin College and Lost Valley to provide additional swim and ski opportunities for our residents. In addition, the Town is actively working with the municipalities of Topsham, Richmond and Gardiner and several other groups to plan for the Merrymeeting Trail.

Transportation

Our Bowdoinham Traffic Volume Counts extends outside of our Town boundaries, therefore the Town works with our neighbors and region on transportation issues. The Town coordinates plowing on several roads with the Town of Richmond. The Town participated in the process led by Midcoast Council of Governments to create a Management Plan for the Route 24 Corridor and is now supporting the implementation of the plan. In the future, we look forward to participating in Midcoast Council of Governments public transit study. Additionally, as stated above, the Town is actively working with the municipalities of Topsham, Richmond, and Gardiner and several other groups to plan for the Merrymeeting Trail.

Housing

In 2024 the Town began participating in the Midcoast Council of Government's Five Rivers Affordable Housing Working Group. The goal of the working group is to align existing housing assessments and agreements; work to consolidate zoning approaches and inform the development of common housing models; and facilitate collaboration on regionally focused housing projects. The subregion includes Harpswell, Brunswick in addition to Sagadahoc County.

Public Facilities and Services

The Town works with lots of other municipalities, regional organizations, and other groups to provide services for our residents. From our schools, Bowdoinham is part of MSAD 75 School District, which includes Bowdoin, Topsham, and Harpswell. To our emergency personnel, who plan, coordinate, train and work with our neighbors and our region. The Town participates in the regional efforts of Midcoast Economic Development District and Midcoast Council of Governments.

Fiscal Capacity and Capital Investment Plan

At this time, the Town has no shared resources. The Town would be willing to work with others, but at this time there are no regional projects planned.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SUMMARY

Comprehensive Planning Committee

Members

The Town formed a Comprehensive Planning Committee (CPC) to update the Town's Comprehensive Plan. The Town advertised for members through the Town's Bowdoinham News, Town's Website and existing Town Committee's, in order to form a well-rounded, diverse committee. The Comprehensive Planning Committee was formed in January of 2021 with the following members:

- Dave Asmussen – Served as the CPC Vice Chair until becoming Chair in 2023. David has a background in environmental biology and earth science and runs Blue Bell Farm, a MOFGA Certified Organic mixed vegetable farm on Carding Machine Road. During the summer he helps organize the Bowdoinham Farmers' Market which takes place at the waterfront park from June to October. He also has three children in the MSAD 75 school district.
- Jan Marks – Jan moved to Bowdoinham from western Maine in 2016. She has served on the Board of the Merrymeeting Arts Center for three years and joined the CPC in 2022.
- Jason Lamoreau - Jason is a lifelong resident of Bowdoinham. Born and raised on the Carding Machine Road, he now lives with his wife and four children on White Road. He is the Recreation & Community Services Director for Bowdoinham as well as a volunteer Fire Fighter and EMT.
- Joanne Joy, Served as Vice Chair for the 2014 Comp Plan Update and as Chair for the 2024 update until November 2023 when she started serving as a selectboard member. Joanne was the Executive Director of Healthy Communities of the Capital Area. Joanne is married, has 3 adult children and 2 young grandsons. She enjoys gardening, hiking, kayaking, and camping.
- Laura Arnold – Laura is a mostly retired lifestyle and family medicine physician. She has lived in Bowdoinham since 2018 with her husband. They have three grown children and two dogs. She enjoys hiking, boating, gardening, traveling, and pickleball.
- Peggy Christian - Peggy Christian has been in Bowdoinham since the year 2000. After several years of small-scale volunteering for local organizations she joined the CPC in 2018. She is currently serving as vice-chair of the committee.
- Robert Schott - Robert currently works as a Power and Controls Designer. He moved to Bowdoinham in 2008 and is married with two children. He enjoys whitewater boating and downhill skiing and snowboarding.
- William Stanton - Bill studied Architecture at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Civil Engineering at the University of Maine. He worked in various capacities as a licensed civil engineer for 42 years. His most noticeable project was the LL Bean Wing at the Maine Medical Center in Portland, where he was a member of the construction management team. Bill taught structural engineering at the college level and practiced as an engineering consultant and retired to Bowdoinham in 2005. He is also an artist and owner of the Cathance River Gallery in Bowdoinham.

Committee Meetings

The Comprehensive Planning Committee set regular monthly meeting with some exceptions and several extra meetings. All committee meetings are open to the public and have been advertised on the Town's website, newsletter, and periodically advertised in The Bowdoinham News.

While the CPC has been meeting monthly for several years the Comp Plan update work started in earnest on their December 20, 2020 meeting. The CPC held committee meetings on the following dates:

- December 20, 2020
- January 13, 2021
- February 17, 2021
- March 9, 2021
- April 13, 2021
- May 11, 2021
- June 8, 2021
- July 13, 2021
- August 10, 2021
- September 14, 2021
- October 12, 2021
- November 9, 2021
- November 30, 2021
- December 14, 2021
- January 11, 2022
- February 2, 2022
- March 8, 2022
- April 7, 2022
- April 12, 2022
- May 10, 2022
- June 14, 2022
- July 12, 2022
- August 9, 2022
- September 13, 2022
- October 11, 2022
- November 8, 2022
- December 13, 2022
- December 14, 2022
- January 10, 2023
- February 14, 2023
- March 14, 2023
- April 11, 2023
- May 9, 2023
- June 13, 2023
- July 11, 2023
- July 25, 2023
- August 8, 2023
- September 12, 2023
- October 10, 2023
- October 17, 2023
- November 14, 2023
- November 29, 2023
- December 12, 2023
- January 9, 2024
- February 13, 2024
- March 12, 2024
- April 9, 2024 (scheduled)
- May 14, 2024 (scheduled)
- June 1, 2024 (scheduled)

All meeting minutes are available at the Town Office.

Comprehensive Planning Process

The Committee created this Comprehensive Plan using the process outline below. Throughout this process, the Committee used the Town's website, Facebook page and newsletter to inform residents of their work, upcoming workshops, and surveys. All meeting minutes and survey results are available at the Town Office.

Committee Start-up - December 2020 - July 2021

The Committee's first order of business was to determine the process and timeline they would use for creating this comprehensive plan. The committee also secured external resources available for assistance including data collection help from Midcoast Council of Government, and other vendors for GIS mapping, and meeting facilitation. The committee also compiled a list of local community groups and committees to target for assistance with writing and promoting the plan.

Visioning - August 2021 – April 2022

The Committee began their comprehensive process by creating the Vision, of which the goals and strategies would be built on. To create the Vision Statement, the committee conducted the following:

Public Workshops

The Committee held two public workshops to create the Vision Statement. To ensure a fair, efficient, and productive process, Craig Freshley of Good Group Decisions was hired to facilitate the meetings. The agendas are as follows:

Visioning Workshop - November 16, 2021

- 6:15 Arrival and Refreshments
- 6:30 Welcome
Comprehensive Planning Committee Chair Joanne Joy will offer opening remarks.
Facilitator Craig Freshley will explain how the meeting will work.
- 6:40 What Do We Love About Our Town and Want To Keep? *Respect the Past*
Each person will get a chance to answer this question and we're going to put all our ideas on the wall. We will organize them, talk about them, and perhaps even prioritize them.
- 7:00 What About Our Town Would We Like to Change? *Plan for the Future*
With this question too, we'll write our answers, put them on the wall and talk about them.
- 7:20 Special Topics
Based on the most common themes that arise, we will organize 4-5 "special topic stations" around the room. Each station will be facilitated by a member of the Comprehensive Planning Committee. Each participant will have a chance to visit 2-3 stations and give input on these special topics.
- 7:50 Reports and Conclusions
We will hear brief reports from each of the station facilitators and Craig will report

overall themes heard throughout the session. We will clarify next steps. We will hear brief closing comments from members of the Comprehensive Planning Committee.

8:15 Adjourn

Visioning Workshop - March 15, 2022

6:15 Arrival and Refreshments

6:30 Welcome

Comprehensive Planning Committee Vice-Chair David Asmussen will offer opening remarks. Facilitator Craig Freshley will explain how the meeting will work.

6:35 What We've Heard So Far

- Craig Freshley will present a brief overview of what we learned in the November 16 Forum.
- Peggy Christian will present a brief overview of what we learned in the January/February Surveys.
- There will be an opportunity for questions and discussion.

6:55 Where and How to Protect what we Love?

Based on what we've heard so far, we thought it prudent to collect additional public input on the following key topics:

- Where to proactively protect things like natural resources, view corridors, recreational access, rural character, etc.
 - Town Planner Jenn Curtis will facilitate a map-based discussion with drawings and notes encouraged.
- How should the town institute such protections? What's our appetite for zoning and other tools? How should we balance individual freedom with common good?
 - Facilitator Craig Freshley will facilitate a discussion on this topic and try to find some common ground.

We will divide into two groups to discuss these two topics. If most people want to do both topics, we will run them twice.

7:35 How to Prepare for Climate Change?

- How should our community adapt to climate change? What should we do to prepare? How should we do things differently?
- We will each share answers to these questions and actually put them up on the wall.
- We will discuss and organize them and see what themes emerge.

8:00 Closing Comments

- Craig will present any themes and/or conclusions that might have emerged.
- There will be an opportunity for anyone to raise last questions and comments.
- Each member of the Comprehensive Planning Committee will have a last word.

8:15 Adjourn

Visioning Survey

The Committee conducted a Vision Survey, which was created in partnership with Craig Freshley of Good Group Decisions to gather input on the draft Vision Statement during the month of February 2022. The survey was informed by the questions that came up at the first public visioning on November 16, 2022 workshop. The survey had 126 respondents.

Public Outreach

An effort was made from committee members to engage with our community and civic groups at the following events.

- Celebrate Bowdoinham - September 11, 2021
- Farming Community – Abby document?

Goals & Recommendations - May 2023 - July 2023

Using the State's list of Goals and the feedback the Committee gathered through the visioning process, the Committee created a draft list of goals and recommendations. The Committee then used the feedback gathered from public outreach and a goals survey to create the goals for this Plan.

Public Outreach

The committee engaged with the following local groups to provide feedback on the Goals and Recommendations sections most pertinent to their organizations:

- Community Development Advisory Committee – December 16, 2022
- Table at Celebrate Bowdoinham - September 10, 2022
- Age Friendly – February 14, 2023
- Cemetery Committee – November 2022 noted in 10/22 minutes to invite them.
- Bowdoinham Water District – December 13, 2022
- Table at Celebrate Bowdoinham - September 15, 2023

Inventory & Analysis - March 2021 - February 2024

Using the State's list of policies and strategies and the feedback the Committee gathered through the public workshops and outreach, the Committee created the recommendations for this Plan. It is noted that much of the data was originally gathered in 2021 prior to the 2020 Census Data being published. As a result, these sections were updated again throughout 2023 and into 2024 to ensure the most recent data was included. This effort included staff from GrowSmart Maine, Midcoast Council of Governments and LatLong Logic, LLC.

Public Outreach

The committee engaged with the following local groups to provide feedback on the Inventory & Analysis sections most pertinent to their organizations:

- Community Development Advisory Committee – December 16, 2022
- Bowdoinham Water District – December 13, 2022
- Select Board - March 28, 2023

Future Land Use - September 2023 - December 2023

The Committee began their comprehensive process on developing the land use section of the plan by conducting the following:

Housing Forum

The Committee began a public feedback process on this section by first cohosting housing forums with the Bowdoinham Community Development Initiative at the Bowdoinham Community School to facilitate a public conversations about the housing needs of the community as informed by the findings of the demographics and housing data analysis sections of the draft plan. The agendas are as follows:

Housing Forum - October 26, 2022

- 6:00 Welcome and Introductions
- 6:10 Information Presentations
 - Data and Information on Housing
 - Affordable Housing Development Options
 - Ordinances related to housing supply and affordability
- 6:30 What is Attainable Housing?
 - Break into groups of 6-10. Identify Facilitator, Scribe/Reporter, Time Keeper
 - Three Discussion Questions - Each followed with brief report-outs
 - How does the current housing situation impact you and those around you?
 - What are your thoughts and feelings about current housing?
 - How do you envision housing in Bowdoinham in the future?
 - Think outside the box – here are two guiding thoughts – there are many others
 - Density
 - How does housing fit into your larger vision of Bowdoinham
 - How do we get there?
- 7:30 Check for Consensus
- 7:45 Next Steps, Final Comments, Thank you
- 8:00 Adjourn

Housing Forum – February 1, 2023

- 6:00 Welcome and Introductions
- 6:05 Brief summary of the first meeting
- 6:20 “Keeping things the same won’t keep things the same”
 - Review 2014 Comp Plan recommendations, changes since and potential changes and how they will impact the nature of Bowdoinham
 - Housing statistics summary
- 6:35 What does increased housing look like in
- 6:40 Introduction and review of breakout group discussion topics
- 6:50 Breakout groups discussion
- 7:20 Check for Consensus
- 7:50 Presentation of groups’ thoughts and next steps
- 8:00 Adjourn

Following up with the feedback received at these housing forums the Committee hosted two Land Use Forums focused on possible Future Land Use strategies that would allow for more housing. This included revisiting the Future Land Use Map created in the previous comprehensive plan. The committee gathered feedback on the list of possible strategies from the public workshops to create the recommendations in this plan.

Land Use Forums

The Committee hired Craig Freshley of Good Group Decisions to facilitate two workshops. The agendas are as follows:

Land Use Forum – October 11, 2023

Participants were provided with the Future Land Use Map, copies of the existing comprehensive plan, and the Vision Statement.

6:00 Arrival and Refreshments

6:15 Welcome

Comprehensive Planning Committee Chair Joanne Joy of the will offer opening remarks and facilitator Craig Freshley will explain how the meeting will work.

6:25 Context and Ideas

Members of the Comprehensive Planning Committee will present:

- The Comprehensive Planning Process – where we are and what’s next
- Our current policies and statements about housing – what we’ve said so far
- The need for changes in land use ordinances to support additional housing – why it’s critical and what benefits we can expect
- Overview of maps
- Keeping the rural nature of Bowdoinham
- A few ways to increase density and incentivize housing – just ideas

There will be a chance for questions and clarifications.

6:45 The Village District I & II

If we wanted to increase housing in the Village, how might we adjust land use ordinances to increase density while following septic and set back rules?

7:05 Route 24 (Near Richmond)

Should we establish a Village District along Route 24 at the north end of town where new dwellings could tap into existing sewer and water infrastructure? What might be the district boundaries and what might be the maximum densities and lot sizes?

7:25 Residential Agricultural District

Should we specify maximum lot sizes in the rural areas to increase density and simultaneously preserve large tracts for agriculture and open space? If so, how?

7:45 Closing Comments

This is a chance for any last words from participants and committee members.

8:00 Adjourn

Land Use Forum - November 1, 2023

Participants were provided with the Future Land Use Map, copies of the existing comprehensive plan, and the Vision Statement. It is noted that mailed meeting invitations were sent to the fifty largest landowners in Bowdoinham to boost attendance of those potentially most impacted by

the suggested changes.

6:00 Welcome

- Opening Remarks: Joanne Joy, Comprehensive Planning Committee Chair
 - Overview of Forum: Facilitator Craig Freshley will explain how the Forum will work.
- #### 6:05 Preserving Open Space in the Residential / Agriculture District
- Background: There seemed to be consensus in our first forum that we should preserve our open spaces and rural character, and that we should reserve our best soils for agriculture. But how?
 - Brief presentation of some tools used in other Maine towns to protect agricultural land
 - Discussion and attempt to get consensus on the most promising approaches.

6:55 Potential New Village District Near Richmond

- Background: Also at our first forum, there seemed to be considerable interest in establishing a village district in the vicinity of Route 24 near the Richmond border; an area currently served by municipal sewer and water. Is there indeed favor for this idea?
- Brief Presentation
- Discussion with goal to get to consensus on most promising approaches. Should commercial and/or industrial activity be allowed in this district?
 - Should septic systems be allowed, or should we require that new development use municipal sewer and water infrastructure?

7:15 Increasing Density in the Village Districts I and II

- Background: At the first Forum there seemed to be consensus to standardize the residential requirements of Village District 1 and 2, expand the districts to match availability of municipal water, and increase housing density.
- Brief Presentation: Some tools used in other Maine towns to protect agricultural land.
- Discussion and attempt to get consensus on the most promising approaches.
 - How best to increase housing density

7:45 Closing Comments

This is a chance for any last words from participants and committee members.

8:00 Adjourn

Finalize Comprehensive Plan - February - May 2024

A public hearing on Wednesday, February 28 from 6-8pm was held to review the Plan with the public and take public comment at the Community School.

The Selectboard held a hearing on the Comprehensive Plan on **April 9 or 23 of 2024.**

An educational session was scheduled to be held on May 22 from 6-8 pm at the Community School to inform the residents about the Plan and answer any questions.