

## **LICP2035: The Work Continues...**

The work on the Town of Long Island's Comprehensive Plan is well underway, and yet committee members still get questions about what we are doing. This seems to be a good time to give you a summary of the whole process: where we started, where we are now, and what you can expect to see from us in the future.

A town's comprehensive plan provides guiding principles for decisions the town makes about growth and development. It takes a long range look at priority topics that impact preservation,

growth, fiscal condition and character of the community. It provides a shared community vision and policy framework for the future. The State of Maine requires municipalities to create a comprehensive plan every 10-15 years, and that plan is valid for 12 years. The Town of Long Island created its first plan in 1996, and the current plan was adopted in 2008.

The Long Island Comprehensive Plan Citizen Committee (LICP2035) kicked off in Feb. 2021 and spent the first month or so developing a mission statement, establishing roles across the committee, understanding the scope of the project, establishing a timeline and milestones, and generally getting organized. Before undertaking the task of creating a plan for the town, committee members felt it was imperative that we collect data from our community. A series of community conversations were undertaken which gathered opinions from over 70 Long Island residents. We used that data to create a community survey which garnered 348 responses between mid-June and Labor Day. The survey topics generating the most responses (the hot topics) were addressed in public engagement sessions on housing, wellness, youth engagement, working waterfront access, natural resource management, and contractor/trade resources.

We have now moved on to the creation phase of the project. A series of workshops were conducted in October to engage the community in crafting the vision and values for the future of the town, applying what we have heard and learned so far. Committee members are also creating draft chapters for each topic required by the state and crafting recommended strategies and policies informed by the data/research completed, public input, and the vision and values we have established. We expect that work to last about 6 months, during which time committee members will seek input from community experts and interested parties in editing and refining the chapters. Then we will pull everything together into a final draft comprehensive plan. The goal is to have that final draft completed in April or May and then presented to the community at a town meeting for resident approval.

And now, a final call to action! We invite you all to visit the Town of Long Island website to read our forum reports and monthly meeting minutes and to keep an eye out for further opportunities to engage in the process. Please feel free to reach out to any of our committee members (Janice Avignon, Nancy Berges, Matt Byers, Peter Dolan, Nathan Johnson, Christian LaMontagne, Beth Marchak, Dennis McCann, Linda Ferguson McCann, Melanie Nash, Jane

Oldfield-Spearman, Erica Papkee, Patti Papkee, Matt Purington, Alanna Rich, Wes Wolfertz) with questions or comments. We are eager to add your input to our collection of data.

### **LICP2035: Vision Workshops**

In October, the Long Island community was invited to be part of two workshops to begin to craft a vision statement for what we would like our community to look like over the next 15 years. In person and later in a Zoom meeting, more than 50 community members were involved in the process. The workshops were facilitated by Tim Nichols, Jane Oldfield-Spearman, Melanie Nash, and Janice Avignon.

By analyzing the data gathered through previous community engagement (community conversations, community survey, community forums) the LICP2035 vision group identified five aspirational themes around which to build our vision statement. Then the participants broke out into small groups to create “we will” statements which quantified the aspirational goals residents would like to see addressed in each of the themes.

The identified themes and aspirational statements are listed below:

- **Resilient:** Long Island will plan and prepare to meet new and ongoing challenges in the future. Focusing on planful growth and climate change preparedness will enable us to prepare for risks to both our town’s assets (properties) and our valuable natural resources.
  - We will invest in environmental management and explore grant possibilities for the island.
  - We will invest in educating both residents and visitors on preserving the natural resources of our island.
  - We will address the issues that invasive plant and animal populations bring us.
  - We will educate our community about the importance of responsible use of water and other island resources
  - We will ensure that the town is prepared for catastrophic events like forest fires and storms in order to retain our sustainability
  - We will develop a plan to maintain town infrastructure so it is well managed and available when necessary.
  - We will plan and prepare for sea level rise and other climate change issues.
  - We will work to attract and retain young and working families to the island and enable them to build their lives here.
- **Equitable:** Long Island strives to be an inclusive community that feels like home to all those who live and visit here. Fairness to all people through actions such as the enforcement of ordinances or involvement in our community is necessary for our success.
  - We will be an inclusive and welcoming community who recognizes differences and works to build bridges between us.
  - We will reach out to all community members and engage them through volunteering and social activities.
  - We will be open and respectful to people of all age groups, genders, racial and ethnic groups, and the LGBTQ+ community.

- We will continue to enhance public access to natural resources.
- We will balance the demand for growth with the risks to our fragile water supply.
- We will strive to ensure equitable enforcement of town regulations and ordinances for all constituents and members of our community
- We will ensure newcomers feel welcome on the island and are encouraged to participate in the responsibilities of making the island what we want it to be in the future.
- **Livable:** For a remote island community to thrive, Long Island must ensure that people have the ability to live and work here full-time. Supporting young families and business owners through initiatives like accessible housing, wellness services, access to the working waterfront, and affordable taxes will allow our island to flourish
  - We will make the island desirable to young families.
  - We will strive to create year-round rental housing.
  - We will strive for more consistent law enforcement year round.
  - We will make lists available of vetted contractors/mechanics who are willing to come work on the island
  - We will ensure cost-effective resources and services are available to help people age on the island
  - We implement policies to ensure that the town is “livable” for all residents, young and old, of all socio-economic backgrounds
  - We will make sure the island is business friendly to attract and retain industrious entrepreneurs and businesses and will support and help local businesses thrive
  - We will nurture and sustain a viable working waterfront.
  - We will improve the island’s transportation infrastructure so that it meets the needs of those who rely upon it.
- **Resourceful:** Long Island is a community that depends upon the care that people take for one another and our town. Volunteers are key to any development on the island, and we must strive to support them while also seeking solutions for our needs.
  - We will employ emerging solutions from other islands and the organizations that support them.
  - We will have accessible housing for those who wish to live, work and learn here.
  - We will nurture a sense of stewardship and volunteerism in the younger generation of islanders and continue to encourage by example.
  - We will expand services and accessible housing to those who wish to age in place on the island.
  - We will enhance health, wellness, and emergency services.
  - We will strike a balance between utilizing our community expertise and professional services.
  - We will support and promote volunteerism by providing education, training, and succession planning.
  - We will implement a comprehensive data collection and management framework to help us better understand our community, enable better decision making and plan for the future.
  - We will have a town government that operates in a planful way and uses all resources and data available to enable better decision making.

- **Community Spirit:** The unique way of life that we have on Long Island means prizing our independence and cherishing our connections with one another at the same time. We aim to keep the values of simplicity, tradition, and authenticity a major part of the spirit of the island as we grow into our future.
  - We will celebrate the efforts of our community volunteers.
  - We will address challenges and explore solutions for our community recreation areas.
  - We will be welcoming to all who come, whether they are here for a day or a lifetime.
  - We will actively work to ensure that the voices and perspectives of young people are considered on the island.
  - We will continue to work together to solve new challenges while maintaining the community spirit unique to Long Island
  - While managing planful growth, we will sustain our rural character.
  - We will maintain the “for Long Islanders by Long Islanders” attitude.

The vision group is now using this community input to formulate vision and values statements that summarizes the community’s desired future character in terms of economic development, natural and cultural resource conservation, transportation systems, land use patterns, and its role in the region. The vision and value statements will be the foundation for strategy and policy recommendations throughout the Comprehensive Plan.