

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.