

Overview of the 2015 Update of the Boothbay Comprehensive Plan

For the past 2+ years, the Comprehensive Plan Committee has been working to update the Town's Comprehensive Plan. The Town's current comprehensive plan was adopted in 1989 following a period of somewhat rapid development and change in the community. The passage of time and changes in the Town and the Boothbay region have made much of the plan out-of-date and a less than useful guide in managing the future of Boothbay. Therefore the Town has prepared this update of the Comprehensive Plan to serve as a guide for the decisions the Town must make about growth, development, redevelopment, and change over the coming decade. The 2015 Plan is a complete review of the policy issues facing our community and addresses emerging issues as well as providing a fresh look at ongoing issues.

The 2015 Plan is divided into three parts. Section A presents background information about past plans, recent development, and existing conditions in the community. Section B sets out the Comprehensive Plan's vision, goals, and policy recommendations. Section C lays out the actions needed to achieve the goals and policies proposed in Section B. The appendices to the Plan include the full inventories for the various Plan elements, the Town's capital spending plan, and a summary of public participation in the development of the Plan. This overview summarizes Section B of the Plan.

Community Vision

A key element of the Town's Comprehensive Plan is the Community Vision. The Vision sets out a picture of what we want Boothbay to be in the future. The Vision is intended to set an overall direction for the future of the community. Chapter 4 of the Plan includes the following vision for Boothbay in 2025:

Boothbay is an integral part of the Boothbay Region, a group of separate communities that work together to develop and advance a shared vision for the region. While each of the various communities retains its own character, the four municipalities on the peninsula, together with the adjacent Route One towns collaborate with a goal of coordinated growth and development and shared-services.

Boothbay continues to be a true coastal Maine community that maintains its character by encouraging activities traditional to the Boothbay region as well as well-managed_new

development. Route 27 remains an attractive, safe, rural gateway to the community. We welcome growth and development and require that it be in keeping with the traditional character of Boothbay. Growth is balanced with the capacity of the natural resources to support additional development. Our local infrastructure supports development in designated areas of the community while our development regulations balance protection of the character and environment of our community with the desire for sustainable growth. These regulations are clear and understandable and foster development that is a long-term asset to the community.

Boothbay is a diverse community both socially and economically. The Town welcomes people from all walks of life. We are both a year-round and seasonal community in which people work in a variety of occupations and industries. To encourage this diversity, the community offers a range of housing both in terms of price and type. Our spectacular natural resources are an integral part of the community's economy and attract both residents and visitors to our community. Growing economic opportunities make it possible for more people to live and work in Boothbay. The Town works in partnership with businesses and non-profit organizations to support sustainable economic growth in the community and the Boothbay Region.

The Boothbay school system is a vibrant, innovative environment that allows all students to learn at the peak of their abilities. The schools inspire their students to excel and work to foster a relevant and meaningful education including vocational and experiential opportunities for all students.

Boothbay offers opportunities for a rewarding, engaging lifestyle. Boothbay offers a wide range of cultural, recreational, and volunteer opportunities for residents and visitors. Cultural activities and the arts flourish making Boothbay and the Boothbay Region a "cultural destination". The existing neighborhoods within the Town, as well as other areas, have evolved as "villages" that may be accessed by a variety of modes of transportation. Paths for walking and biking and expanded public transit link these villages and destinations throughout the entire peninsula.

Community Goals and Policies

The Comprehensive Plan is designed to be a guide in directing growth, development, and change in the Town of Boothbay over the coming decade and beyond. Chapter 5 addresses the issues facing the Town except for the area of land use. For each issue area, Chapter 5 establishes recommendations for the basic direction that the Town should achieve through its municipal programs, regulations, and expenditures. Local objectives and proposed actions to achieve those objectives are established for each of the topics listed below. In the following sections, the objectives for each topic are set forth together with a summary of the key recommended actions to address those objectives.

Population and Demographic Objectives

- *Maintain the diversity of Boothbay's population*
- *Increase the attractiveness of Boothbay as a place for younger people and households to live*

To achieve these objectives, the Plan includes a number of proposed actions including revising the land use regulations to allow the construction of multi-unit housing in designated areas and to allow smaller lots in areas that are or can be served by both the public sewer system and the year-round water system.

Local Economy Objectives

- *Create an environment that allows private businesses to increase the number of good-quality, year-round jobs in the community and larger region*
- *Accommodate home occupations and home businesses while minimizing their impacts on neighboring properties*
- *Promote traditional and emerging marine-related uses*
- *Support the continued economic health and evolution of the tourist industry*

To achieve these objectives, the Plan includes a number of proposed actions including assuring that there is adequate land zoned to accommodate commercial and industrial development, exploring creating a small business assistance program, and enhancing access to the water for commercial and recreational users.

Housing Objectives

- *Create an environment in which the private sector can expand the range of housing opportunities available in Boothbay*
- *Increase the supply of housing in the Boothbay Region that is affordable to people who work on the peninsula*

To achieve these objectives, the Plan includes a number of proposed actions including playing a leadership role in developing a regional strategy for addressing housing affordability in addition to the zoning changes discussed above in the population section.

Municipal Facilities Objectives

- *Maintain the Town's public buildings and facilities in good condition*
- *Increase the energy efficiency of the Town's public buildings and facilities*

To achieve these objectives, the Plan includes a number of proposed actions including planning for the maintenance of Town facilities, continuing to look for ways to share services and facilities, and improving the energy efficiency of Town

buildings.

Recreation and Open Space Objectives

- *Develop a comprehensive Town policy on the protection of open space*
- *Expand the existing pedestrian network and establish links between the existing pedestrian facilities and trails to increase the extent of the interconnected pedestrian network*
- *Maintain and expand opportunities for public access to the water*

To achieve these objectives, the Plan includes a number of proposed actions including developing a comprehensive open space plan, developing both a peninsula-wide and a local trail and pedestrian facility plan, and working with the water district to maintain the public access to Knickerbocker Lake.

Infrastructure Objectives

- *Increase protection for the Boothbay region's public water supply*
- *Protect the quality and quantity of the groundwater that is the supply for private wells*

To achieve these objectives, the Plan includes a number of proposed actions including working with the water district to update the protection of Adams Pond and Knickerbocker Lake, undertaking a comprehensive groundwater study to guide long-term protection of the quality and quantity of the groundwater, and putting in place interim measures to protect the groundwater until the groundwater study can be done.

Transportation Objectives

- *Improve the accessibility of the Boothbay peninsula*
- *Improve traffic flow and safety in Route 27 corridor*
- *Expand the existing pedestrian network and establish links between existing pedestrian facilities and trails to increase the extent of the interconnected pedestrian network*
- *Maintain and expand the sidewalk and pedestrian facility network*
- *Improve the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists using the major roads through the community*
- *Increase the opportunities for residents, visitors, and tourists to move about the peninsula without using a car*

To achieve these objectives, the Plan includes a number of proposed actions including supporting efforts to improve vehicular access to the Boothbay peninsula by reducing the impact of the Wiscasset bottleneck, improving traffic flow around the Common and along Route 27, regularly funding pedestrian improvements, making improvements to the pedestrian and bicycle networks in areas such as the

Common, East Boothbay village, and Ocean Point, and exploring the feasibility of establishing a trolley or shuttle service.

Historic and Archeological Objective

- *Ensure that identified historic and archeological resources are considered in development proposals*

To achieve this objective, the Plan includes a number of proposed actions including requiring applicants for development permits and approvals to show and consider known resources and to work with the Historical Society to identify additional historic resources.

Natural and Marine Resources Objectives

- *Ensure that state and locally important natural resources are considered in development proposals and negative impacts minimized*
- *Maintain the outstanding scenic quality of the community*
- *Protect the quality and quantity of the groundwater that is used to supply private wells*
- *Improve the quality of the Town's surface waters*
- *Maintain and enhance access to coastal waters for both commercial marine interests and recreational boaters*
- *Minimize the impact of flooding and possible sea level rise on the community*

To achieve these objectives, the Plan includes a number of proposed actions including updating the ordinances to assure that these resources are addressed in development proposals, requiring the use of Low Impact Development (LID) approaches for managing stormwater, and developing a plan for mitigating the impacts of sea level rise.

Fiscal Objectives

- *Maintain a reasonable tax burden while continuing to provide high-quality services*
- *Provide funding for maintaining the Town's facilities and implementing the Comprehensive Plan*

To achieve these objectives, the Plan includes a number of proposed actions including improving the Town's process of planning for and funding major capital investments and creating an environment that encourages private investments that expand the tax base without creating additional costs for the Town.

Education Objectives

- *Encourage broader involvement of the Town's elected officials and general public in the operation of the Town's schools*
- *Enhance the performance of the students in the local school system*

- *Enhance the academic reputation of the district throughout the Mid-Coast region*

To achieve these objectives, the Plan includes a number of proposed actions including improving communications between the school district and the Town and promoting awareness of the Boothbay Region Student Aid Fund.

Land Use Goals and Policies

Chapter 6 addresses land use policies and how Boothbay should grow and develop in the future. The chapter establishes a set of land use objectives to guide the Town's land use policies:

1. *Encourage the preservation of designated resource conservation areas to retain the natural resource and scenic values of these areas.*
2. *Preserve the rural nature of the designated rural areas of the community where there are large contiguous areas of undeveloped land while accommodating traditional rural uses and small-scale nonresidential uses.*
3. *Encourage the preservation of significant open space throughout the community in accordance with a community-wide open space plan.*
4. *Encourage the development of a range of types and prices of housing to meet the needs of a diverse population.*
5. *Encourage the majority of new development to occur in designated growth areas, and to a lesser extent, in limited growth areas as identified in the Future Land Use Plan (See Figure 6.1).*
6. *Carefully manage and limit use and development of land in the watersheds of Adams Pond and Knickerbocker Lake and in the vicinity of the former water supply wells for East Boothbay to protect the sources of supply for the public water system.*
7. *Carefully manage development especially in coastal residential areas and in former gravel pits to protect both the quality and quantity of the groundwater.*
8. *Reinforce the role of the area surrounding the Common as the community and service center for the Town and encourage its evolution to a pedestrian focused town center with additional residential activity.*
9. *Manage development in the Route 27 corridor to improve the visual environment of the corridor while accommodating good quality development and improving vehicular safety and flow in this area.*
10. *Promote light manufacturing and business-park development in the industrial park area.*
11. *Maintain the scenic character of the northern end of the Route 27 corridor from Hardwick Road to the town line and the portion of the Route 96 corridor from the town line to East Boothbay village while allowing well planned development.*
12. *Reinforce the character of East Boothbay as a mixed-use, marine village while*

accommodating limited expansion of traditional marine industries.

13. Accommodate a wide range of traditional rural and small-scale nonresidential activities in identified rural areas while maintaining the rural, open character of these areas.

14. Protect the ability of nonresidential uses that were established prior to the Town having zoning or that have been legally established to expand and modernize as the Town's land use regulations are updated.

To carry out these objectives, the Future Land Use Plan (see Figure 1) proposes a number of changes to improve the Town's land use and zoning regulations including:

- Revising the requirements in the Village Center around the Common to promote more of a village character.
- Creating a Village Fringe district for the area around the Village Center and extending up Country Club Road to encourage development that is served by the public sewer system.
- Improving the commercial districts along Route 27 to enhance the appearance of new development and better manage access and curbs cuts.
- Updating the requirements in East Boothbay village to maintain the "village character" while allowing expansion of marine uses.
- Establishing "Gateway" districts along portions of Routes 27 and 96 to maintain the scenic, rural character of these areas while allowing appropriate development.
- Creating a "Coastal Residential" district to manage development adjacent to the shoreline.
- Establishing a "Rural Mixed-Use" area in outlying areas that allows a range of smaller non-residential uses.
- Updating the protection districts for Adams Pond and Knickerbocker Lake based upon a detailed study of the watersheds.
- Improving the Town's process and standards for reviewing larger development projects.