

TOWN OF OLD ORCHARD BEACH
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE
March 27, 2025 – 6:00 PM
(Draft)

In attendance

Win Winch
Mary Pat Donnellon
Peter Guidi
Marc Guimont
George Kerr
Planner Jeffrey Hinderliter
Jamel Torres – SMPDC
Malia Cordero – SMPDC

Open Meeting

Meeting opened at 6:05PM

Planner Hinderliter Comprehensive plan committee, March 27th, 2025. Tonight we are speaking, reviewing our first batch of the inventory sections, which are transportation, population and demographics, and historic and archaeological. Malia and Jamel from Southern Maine Regional Planning will be presenting this evening and it's like I'm just talking to this. I should be talking to all you. I'm like looking at this and talking to it. So here we go and it is 6pm.

Comprehensive Plan Inventory Sections Discussion:

Jamel Thank you. It's good to see you all again. If you don't remember, my name is Jamel.

Malia I'm Malia.

We work for Southern Maine Planning and Development and we're helping you all with your inventory chapters for your comprehensive plan update, which is super exciting. So yeah, we have made it to the first of three batches of inventory chapters that'll take up a good part of your comprehensive plan.

Again, the inventory chapters are a snapshot in time utilizing state, local, federal data to provide guidance for the recommendations portion of the plan. So, It's kind of a look backwards a little bit and some current conditions as well. So this evening, we're going to look at three chapters, draft chapters, they're not finalized obviously without your review. So we're going to look at transportation, population and demographics, and historic and archeological resources, and then we'll wrap up with a look at the upcoming schedule. That sound good? I assume it's good for Peter too.

Quick overview of the review guidelines for the maps and chapters. We'd like to spend time having a high-level discussion about the content. I'm sure there are grammatical errors in our work even though we're awesome but I'm sure there's bound to be some. So we'd prefer to spend time talking about highlights, themes, trends, data, that kind of stuff instead of there should be a comma there, we missed a parentheses.

George You're talking to the wrong people, we're not English teachers.

Jamel That sounds good, that's good to hear, George. So basically the question that we ask ourselves when we're drafting them is are they complete and accurate? That's what we strive to have. So I think there will be time for you all to go through the chapters and cross things out and find those grammatical errors that may exist and we'll happily fix those but we'd like for that to happen outside of the meeting just so we can really take advantage of our two hours. And if there is some missing information, it would be really helpful for you all to help us find organizations and other folks in town who are interested, and or experts in the content to help make them more robust and accurate.

So state requirements, do you guide the framework of the chapters we have a checklist that we went by that we're going through and making sure that we gather all of the required information so you all can have a state consistent and certified comprehensive plan at the end. State and census data won't always match up with maybe what you all know and live here at Old Orchard Beach, but again at a high level it's a good snapshot of in time and a good baseline for making those goals, policies, and strategies for the plan.

So the two questions that we'd like to focus on are what is important and valuable for the average Old Orchard Beach citizen to know on each of these topics, and what is important and valuable for current and future decision makers to know on each of these topic areas as they start to make important decisions in a year or two or five. Any questions about the reviews? We're pretty excited to share this. Our teams worked hard on it. We're continuing to work hard on a lot of different chapters but we're excited to be here and talk about the first three. So I think at this point, Malia is going to take us through the next few sections. Do you want this computer?

Malia No, it's okay. Yeah. So the first chapter that we're going to delve into is going to be the transportation chapter. I think this is a really good starting point since knowing the roads and sort of how they're laid out really gives you a good feel for the town geographically speaking. So the town is responsible for evaluating, maintaining and preserving 42 miles of local roads and nearly 10 miles of state aid roads within the DOT urban compact area. There's also a little bit over nine miles of sidewalk and four municipal parking lots in addition to the on-street parking that the town is also responsible for. Within the town there are 20 transit stops that are served by three year-round fixed bus routes. There are three seasonal trolleys and there's one seasonal Amtrak station. And the downtown area is really critical to the town's economic vitality. So main priorities would be pedestrian safety, bicycle safety, transit, and parking. And we're also aiming to reduce conflict between bicycles, pedestrians, and vehicles. And that's year-round.

Most recently, there's been an interstate 95 Ocean Park Road feasibility study. That's a joint effort between Saco and Old Orchard Beach, and I feel like there might be a third party involved. It's a mix of people, hands in the pot, but there's a feasibility study that just came out that's recommending a partial two-lane roundabout intersection, realignment, and signalization, as well as bicycle and pedestrian improvements with that intersection to help reduce traffic incidents. Next slide. I know these are tiny and hard to see when the actual plan will have them as full-page printouts for you. But these are just a couple of the maps that we have prepared for the transportation section. So the one on the left is going to be your average annual daily traffic. So those little call out bubbles, those just tell you different points in town what the traffic looked like for that year, with the most recent data year being, I think 2022 for that. And then on that same map, you can see that the darker roads or it's going to be green to red. The darkest road there along Route Five is where your most of your traffic is going to be. And that's your kind of main road coming into town from the highway. So that makes sense. And then on the right there, you have a map showing pavement condition with green being good and red being F, which is the worst condition, and then in the payment condition map, things look pretty good.

Marc Excuse me, where does the data come from?

Malia So the data for the average annual daily traffic, that's from the state of Maine. Maine DOT has different traffic points where they have sensors set up and they have specific stations that they count or they track on, I think, a three year basis so we can go pull up each of those data points and then put them on a map and track them over time.

Marc And the pavement condition?

Malia And the pavement condition, I believe on a high level that's done by the state, but we can up, if we have more localized knowledge, we can override it.

Marc I don't think the state does local roads they only do what they are responsible for I believe.

Jamel They'll do state aid roads as well within urban compacts.

Marc So we don't have any local roads. It's all state.

Jamel Yeah.

Marc Something that the state is involved in, only.

Jamel Correct.

Malia Yeah, I think for sidewalks, we might have a... I can't remember if we have sidewalk condition data. We know where most of the sidewalks are and we have trail data and then we also know where the bridges and culverts are in town and split between the local roads and the state roads.

Planner Hinderliter And may I just bust in for a second? Okay, thank you. And that's a good question too, because if you look at the map on the right, you'll notice that the state aid roads are the ones that are highlighted. So when we get in what the inventory does is it brings things to light. It brings stuff to our awareness. and as we can see by that map, wow, we got the state roads, but we have 42 miles plus of roads here in town that we have no idea what their condition is. So how do we properly plan for expenditures, you know, capital type planning? So these sorts of things come out through the inventory work and when we get to the goals, policies, and strategies, we can then say, you know what, we need to do more work on understanding our own municipal infrastructures when it comes to roads, and in order to plan for it properly.

Win The point it made was those 42 miles are all local streets, as they described Old Orchard like a matrix, right? Yeah.

George Really, it's only Route 98 and 5, Route 9 East and West Grand Avenue. That's the bulk of the road coming off the spur. But we've never really had an overall plan in town, even when I was on the planning board many moons ago. And it's probably not for this discussion, overall plan, what roads, where's the sewer need go. You don't know we're all planning to where we want to go and how we're going to get there. I mean even when I was on the council many moons ago always stressed those things so that we could move them forward not create development and then worry about the infrastructure after the fact it's just crazy right you know. And we continually make the same mistake over and over and over.

Marc That's true and extremely frustrating because it's expensive to get the data and we're every time in my experience. While you're going through a budget process everybody wants to cut as soon as you pass the budget everybody wants services.

George I've never met a community state or federal and I served in the legislature, used to chair the appropriations. Nobody wants to cut. They all want to spend somebody else's money. What happened was just like the insurance, the risk for the federal government, the risk pool, they needed to increase it, right? Because they were spending so much money. What did they do? They take the resource protection line and they move it all towards East Grand Avenue, up and down the country. That was only for one reason. They needed more money to spend in the risk pool. They couldn't validate why they did that. Now you got condominiums that are paying a hundred and twenty thousand dollars for federal flood insurance because the elevation isn't above 16 feet. I mean it's crazy what they've done. They're going to price everybody out. But again I think that what they're doing, what we're doing now, with Jamel and Malia's help along with the southern Maine regional planning is to get us to a point, then we can discuss things locally. What's gonna impact, what's gonna impact the zoning ordinance? Because that's really what we need to address because the community is only so big and you gotta broaden the tax base and whether you like to hear it or not, the only way you can do that is going vertical.

Malia Did you wanna add something?

Mary Pat Yeah, yeah, okay, thank you. So I just have a question maybe, and you may get to it, so you can tell me to just table it for a second, but one of the maps is about the, on the prior slide, is about the traffic volume, and you do have a chart in the packet showing the change in traffic volume. And I guess what I'm wondering on, and this is maybe a theme I'll have on a couple of these is you can see that traffic volume has decreased so why, I guess it's the question like do we have do we answer why what are the implications of that? Do you know what I mean so like and I didn't see that necessarily addressed in here. Like paving roads if they're graded A to F, you can say, oh, obviously the F's, we would like them to be, at least to be. But for the volume, I'm not sure what that's telling us and what we want to do with it? So it's like, interesting information, but what is it,

why is it important here? That's, I guess, my question. And maybe to think about that, like what we want to do with it.

Jamel I can try and answer that. Yeah, I think just understanding like how much traffic over a course of time it uses your roads is important information for making investments in different streets or infrastructure.

Malia Emergency management and evacuation routes and that sort of work as well.

Jamel Yeah, just understanding like where people are traveling and looking at those trends and I'm not a public works director but I think understanding knowing the traffic volumes and where traffic's increasing or decreasing I think that must would be helpful to know about when planning for investments in different roadways.

Malia It's hard to see on that map too but there's also little triangle symbols that identify high crash locations so those are just. One of them is that roundabout that's everyone knows about, and then the other one is the intersection of Cascade Road and I think Ross Road. And that's kind of a downhill. That's a funky little spot, too.

Jamel I don't know if that answers your question, but that's-

Mary Pat Yeah, it does, and it does. Part of it is the chart highlights the change over time. Which is showing a decrease, which is a little different where you're saying is you can see your high level volume in traffic areas isn't really relevant to what happened in 2010. It's more of a now thing. So I didn't know if I was supposed to draw a different conclusion because the comparison was there.

Jamel I'm not sure if Jeffrey has any other ideas, not to put you on the spot.

Mary Pat You don't need to answer it. I guess maybe just thinking through this is like is there extra data that's just interesting or is there data here that, like, how do we, is it actionable, is it coming to a conclusion? Yeah. You know, some of it's just interesting, some of it may be actionable.

George I think it's a good point that you brought up, because if you look at East of West Grand Avenue, I know 30 years ago there was more traffic in town because there was a lot of rooming houses, a lot more motels and people didn't have Airbnb's. So when they came to the beach they were here for a longer period of time because remember the factories in Canada used to close July 15th and then reopening August 15th so they'd be here for two to three weeks. And on each and I think the number of housing I think this my own personal there's about 5,000 less rooms on the beach than what there were 20-25 years ago and that what is that because the condominiums have come in. And so I know on East and West Grand Avenue when I was growing up the traffic used to be backed up to the Clambake in the summer bumper to bumper. And I live on East Grand Avenue. I'm sure you remember that. So the traffic today when they get back to Walnut, people say wow, it's busy. They don't know what busy is. But I think the bike trails I do want to address that because I've been fighting for that for a long time. But anyway, I just wanted to say but air B&B and condominiums affected the traffic in in certain areas. A lot of them only have one parking spot when new ordinance calls for two but they circumvent, well I shouldn't say circumvent, they go to the town and they get a waiver or they get the contract zone and sometimes it helps the community, sometimes that hurts the community.

Win the other factor I think is in the square. They used to direct traffic and I know it was personal experience. Oh, yeah, there was a policeman there and they helped pedestrians there. That ceased so like myself I never attempted to go across, whereas historically, I used to ride right through right to you know the peak of the season so that's a big factor for me.

George They used to stand and be in the square. I remember being knee-high to a jidbug, got to be elevated, and the officer would direct traffic. His name was Bob. Deceased now.

Jamel I also wonder, this is just a guess or an idea, but I think the use of GPS and Google Maps has really like changed traffic patterns because you can look at your phone or whatever you're using and you can see where the red is and you just, people do avoid them And maybe people are going around town because they just don't want to deal with it. There's another idea. I know we do that when we're in places. We don't know

Planner Hinderliter Well, I Think that the point just so we can continue the point that that I wanted to make and I think Mary Pat really hit on it is you know what's actionable, what's information that's interesting. But the interest, but the piece when you're looking at this this data, it may look interesting but you may find when you really look at it may be something in there that could be actionable for the goals, policies, and strategies. So you know, maybe there's a question you have, we're not getting answers, so that then can translate to something in the goals, policies, and strategies. So when you're reviewing any of these inventory sections, I just wanted to use that one map right there to kind of point it out to you. That's a whole other discussion we'll get into in the future, but just when you're looking after this, just to kind of keep that in your mind.

Jamel Awesome discussion. You're going to keep going?

Malia Did anyone else have want to chime in on the transportation chapter? Any questions come up as you were reading through?

Win Yeah, well, one thing was you mentioned the Amtrak and the work they're doing, I happen to get their newsletter and that they're widening the platform, we're putting a second track into Wells. The plan was to have two commuter trains a day in the morning. The train has to go from Wells to all the way to Portland, to Brunswick and back. So there's plans to have a commuter rail.

Jamel To Portland.

Win You want to just verify that with him, but it was in one of the newsletters I got from them. Yeah.

Jamel Do you think people would use it?

Win Well, I mean, people do it now a little bit. I've taken the train to Portland and come back. Historically, you know, I've used it three or four times to go to Boston, but yeah.

Jamel It does seem that every time I hear or read data in the Downeaster, right? It does seem like ridership is either steady or going up.

Win Now it's recovered, it's going up again.

Mary Pat Yeah, that's what this is saying, it's going up. And also, you shared that 21 % of residents commute to Portland, so that's kind of interesting too. And I think it's interesting when we get to the population section, thinking about that.

Jamel That's a significant chunk.

Mary Pat Yeah, so it's just worth considering. Yeah, to Wins point.

Malia Yeah, that transitions us nicely to the population and demographics chapter. So that's next up. The high level of things that we pulled from this chapter, we just put on the slide here in a few different bullets. So the first one is that the population of the town is projected to increase at about 3.4% between 2020 and 2040. So that's within the next 15 years, consistent with the projected growth rate for the state overall. The town's seasonal nighttime population nearly triples during the summer months, growing from a year-round population of about 9,000 to over 27,000. And we also found that the town's median age is about 57 years old, and that's 10 years older than the median age of the county and the state, comparatively speaking. Old Orchard has consistently had the highest median age among communities in the area. And just again, median age is a few lined up all the different numbers. That's the one that's in the middle, right?

Jamel Yep.

Malia Old Orchard Beach has seen the larger decreases in school enrollment compared with other communities nearby. And between 2015 and 2023, the town's school that fell by almost 16%, which is nearly three times more than the county and the state.

Marc Does it mean that as we, if we're 10 years old, the county or the state, and we are the oldest state in the union, that maybe we need to be looking at, what are we gonna need as we age? Do we need larger signs? Do we need more accessibility? And I think there's a definite consequence to what's happening. More handicapped parking, whatever.

Mary Pat And then the corollary question is why are there not more young people here and is that important and should we be trying to attract them?

Marc That's a great question.

Peter Yeah, excuse me.

Malia Yeah, Peter?

Peter Yes, I'd like to ask if everybody had an opportunity to read my responses.

Win Yes, it was excellent, Peter.

Peter Thank you. So I would just, you know, like to say that I don't agree with the methodology that's been used to arrive at the population projections. I think it's, Old Orchard Beach is growing as a bedroom community. And particularly as the economics in places like Portland and Saco continue to change. It was more expensive to live there. Old Orchard Beach can expect to peel off a significant portion of Portland's expected growth and I do not think that projecting our growth based on a linear projection on corresponding percentages from state growth numbers adequately reflects the opportunity that the town has for growth. And I would, if I were projecting numbers I would have handled it much differently and I do think that the limiting factor will be availability of housing. It's hard to move people into tents. As long as it's going to rain outdoors and snow, people are going to want to live indoors. And so the real challenge for Old Orchard is figuring out how to bring density and bring more housing units in. And if we do that, we can expect a significantly larger population growth because we will be stealing part of the growth in places like Portland, Saco, Candidly Biddeford at this point, and maybe even Boston. So I have a fundamental difference in the way folks have arrived at population and so I just want to lay that out there.

Win My comment on that is that the big surprise to me was, I read your figures, Portland, I would have always thought it was Biddeford, Saco. Portland by far was number one, I think it was like over a thousand trips, a thousand people, who identified, commuting to Portland. I think Saco, Biddeford was only 250 or something like that, magnitude, and ask anybody, anybody would have thought everybody was commuting to Biddeford Saco, and I've always felt that they were going Portland and sure enough you know over a thousand people identified with going to Portland.

Peter Yeah you know my, I'm from Portland originally, I grew up there. My mother and father grew up on Munjoy Hill of all places. Today it's a thousand dollars a square foot to live on Munjoy Hill and so that you know that the nature of housing in Portland and candidly the surrounding area has changed radically. And if you're a, you know, middle class, lower middle class, even upper middle class, finding housing in Portland has become all but possible. And if we just take a look at the growth around the racetrack in terms of housing, you know, we can see that there's a significant demand for housing and it's going to continue to go up and Old Orchard Beach can count on attracting far more residents.

We have a school system. We have the best beach in the state. We have a dynamic area to live in. And if we're going to add vitality and prosperity to the community, it's going to depend on our ability to bring housing to the town. Number one.

Mary Pat I concur on that as well. That's what my take was like in reading this is like we're not growing at all when everyone around us is growing or we're growing at 3% when everyone else around us is growing double digits and I get that we're the oldest in the state but should we be okay with that?

Jamel yeah there's a few things um we use the Maine state Economist for these projections, so we didn't do the actual projections. We're just citing the data from the state and I do wonder if the lack of geographic size of the community is adding to this, to low projection. That's something that I would ask them. I wonder why is the projection so, low, I don't know if anybody locally understands that.

Marc We don't have that much developable land.

George That's why, for instance, when I made remarks in the very beginning, the only way to do it is vertical expansion.

Marc Yeah, I agree.

George And you're gonna need that to broaden the tax base. So, only a couple of things that matter in this community. I mean, let's be real. The ocean is the most valuable resource we have. The other things we need to have is trails, parks, and plenty of parking. You need a parking garage, that's what you really need too.

Peter I totally agree with that, George, a parking garage.

George And you need year round restaurants. They go to Portland to eat, to get out. You know, but I don't mean to divert from what, I think we're all the same sheet of paper and what it's going to come down to is we've got to make some changes in the zoning ordinance to reflect what I think we all want. You got to have young people, you know, we started off, I remember so eagerly, I was young and naive, we brought in all the elderly housing, and we were probably had more elderly housing in our community than anywhere in the state. But it was a good thing, it was, it is a good thing. That's when we brought in Ocean Pines and Pleasantwood Estates, Joe Mocows, and all them, he's deceased now, one of these people I'm talking about. But they presented it to a planning board, we all supported it. But, you know Centennial Plaza, where the original school was, housing for the elderly. So I mean, we're a really diverse community. But young people find it hard to get jobs here or be able to find a house here. We're only seven square miles. If you take out all the wetlands and everything else, you're probably left with 60%, 65% growth area.

Jamel That's pretty highly developed too, which is great.

George It's nice to have that. It's nice to have a golf course. We brought AAA baseball in here. The stadium was there and it did very well. We just had a foul ball for an owner. You know you wouldn't let the little kids collect money to pay for a jersey. Hey, you know me, Jeffrey, I'm gonna tell it just the way it is.

Planner Hinderliter That was an interesting way to say it, yeah.

George But anyway, I think that what I think this information is good and I like the debate, Peter, but we all know where it's going. It's going to come down to zoning and people working together. And some of our sidewalks are deplorable. Most communities I work in or that I develop in, first thing I do is I put down a sidewalk. I go to Scarborough. What do they want me to do? Put down a—cover the cost of the sidewalk and the development that I was doing. But they want to relocate it somewhere else. I said, "Why am I going to pay for sidewalks going to somebody else's project? I want it in front of mine." And then gradually you'll create those sidewalks. But I think sidewalks are important. You know, we in this community, you talk about bike paths. East to West Grand Avenue, what do they do? They put meters on. They decrease the width of the street. Now people going to walk out in the street. I mean what for meters? There shouldn't be parking on the street. That was originally a bike path when we worked on a bike path 25 years ago. So they have a little bike path three feet wide and then put parking out like they need more you know meter parking. But anyway that's just me. But I think we're all on the same sheet of paper I guess. The data that they have, that they're using may not be accurate, but we can work with that. And the school system is decreasing substantially. Let's budget for them. If we got to put out a bond, we'll put out a bond and the people will speak.

Marc Yeah and in some cases the width matters because you got to have at least four and a half, five feet to be able to maintain them. And so it does matter that we not decrease the width. I think the people need it, and we've got to make sure that they're accessible. 'Cause that's going to become more important as we...

George I think we're all on the same sheet of paper, and I know how to say that.

Jeffrey Peter had his hand up.

George Go ahead, Peter.

Peter Yeah, I wanted to just say that I think it's the way the data was managed and the results that were reached. I'm not questioning the underlying data that the state has delivered. What I'm questioning okay is the use of the straight line 3.5% okay growth and applying that to Old Orchard. I think it fails to account for the opportunity to peel off population growth that you're going to see in places like Portland and Saco, Biddeford area. As those places continue to grow, as those places continue to become more expensive, Old Orchard has the opportunity to compete with those places for housing. The road system is great. It's a quick commute these days. It's not like

the 60s when Route 1 would flood out in front of Anjon's and you couldn't get to Portland. Okay, those days are gone. And so today Old Orchard Beach is close in living. It's not Hollis. Okay, it's not Denmark. It's not Bridgeton. And all those places, all those places are growing because of the expansion of the metropolitan Portland area. And so I think that when we look at our growth, I think you could say that there's a baseline three and a half percent growth rate, and that's probably a fair statement. But if we make assumptions, okay, that we can grow housing, okay, we can easily add two or three percent growth by competing, okay, with those other areas for residents. We just have to present a better story and the first thing that has to happen is there has to be a product available for them to buy. You can't sell it to them unless there's a product for them to buy and that means that and so my point being that if you if you change those numbers around and you assume okay that you can or you calculate that we're gonna peel off a half percent of growth from Portland and a half a percent of growth from Saco all of a sudden those population numbers change radically.

George Peter, I think, and I shouldn't speak for everybody, I see people nodding their head in agreement. I think everybody agrees, but if you don't change the ordinance to allow more housing and do vertical expansion, you're not going to have any growth.

Peter That's exactly correct. That's exactly correct. Okay, the limiting factor is not the growth of the metropolitan area the limiting factor okay is our ability to develop and build that's what's limiting growth. That's exactly correct.

Jamel Do you think that the town generally wants growth like what's.

Peter I think that when you read the surveys that we put out there people don't know what they what they want, okay? There's a theory and there's a reality, okay? In theory, okay, everybody would like their tax bills to remain low and nothing to change. In reality, services aren't getting any cheaper and everybody's tax bills are gonna get significantly more expensive, we're gonna lose our school system if we don't change something.

Mary Pat I don't think we want to be the oldest state in the, like what happens, like it's not a good answer. Like what happens when the 70 to 80s die off like is there do you know what I mean like? It's not really, I think we have to do it It's like an existential question.

Malia Especially if your birth rates low and no one's are getting replaced.

Mar Pat Yeah, like we've got to think forward and how do we make this vibrant, and everything depends on having.

George The only good thing about Portland is restaurants. No, but I'm just saying that's what attracts everybody to go there. You know what I mean? It's very, very diverse. You know, we've got a beautiful ocean, we've got everything here. It's just we're not year-round. You know, if we could have a few restaurants and we used to have the White Hall that used to be open. It was a dance club. This place was packed on weekends. You know what I mean? It was a three-story nightclub, you know, right here in downtown, I mean, it was, weekends were just crazy. You remember that, Peter, when Rob Groucher had that? But I think that..

Peter I remember it very fondly.

George But I think that, again, these changes to bring young people in, they have to have a reason. Everybody runs to Portland to go eat, do this, do that, but we have a beautiful park. We're spending a lot of money in improving that park, making it really family oriented. This beach has changed substantially. You know, there was like 50 different night clubs around, now there's not. I just think if we could drop anchor and get a, year-round restaurants, and I've had my restaurant for 52 years, Surf Six, but it can't stay open year-round, there's not enough support. That's why a lot of the motels are closed. Doesn't work, just like the Myst, all those places.

Peter I'd just like to add one more point, and then I'll shut up until we move on to the next section. At the very beginning of this process, my feeling was that when it relates to population and how we think about zoning moving forward. It's not a passive goal, it needs to be more of like a sales target. That's what I am. I'm a sales guy. I've always been a sales guy. And In my world, the company president came to me and said, look, we did \$20 million in sales last year. I want you to do \$35 million next year, figure it out. Okay, and I think we should

put our finger on a number. We want a year-round residency of 20,000 people. How do we get there in 10 years? I'm not interested in a year-round population of eight or nine or 10,000. How do we build a community with 20,000 year-round people in it inside of this Comprehensive Plan. That's a goal. That's a target. That's what we should shoot for. Thank you.

Marc Why do we want more population? Is it because we want to decrease our age? Is it that we will become more vibrant if we have younger people? I think bringing people in is going to depend on affordability, but what's our goal?

George There are a lot of things, I think the simple goal is, just with this data, if you read it, we've got a substantial amount of money that needs to be expended in this community that's been delayed.

Marc Oh yeah, deferred maintenance.

George Absolutely, Absolutely. And the only way you're going to pay for that is not by raising everybody's taxes because people are at the brink now. People that I know that used to live here and raise their families, they had to move out. It's not cheap. That's why I say the only thing in my opinion, and again I'm just one person, is that I've been here in this community, I've served on every board and enjoyed it. Is you've got to look at the zoning ordinance to reflect what we're putting together here and if it's to bring young people in they have to have a purpose to come here. We got to make sure the school is still here. You know some people want to shut the school down because it's not enough people. They got a valid argument if you look at the data. Do you want to stay as is? That's fine leave the ordinances and leave all these committees, you've discouraged people from coming in here. You know, we work so hard to try to get apartments and stuff and housing on Main Street because we thought that would help the community, you know, similar to what they do in New Orleans but it just never happened. You know it's tough timing during the 80s when we change those ordinance to permit you know apartments and housing and condos, you know above businesses, but it just didn't work. I mean we got to work harder. I guess.

Jamel Yeah, and I think in the next month when we look at the housing chapter, there'll be some really interesting data because I just had a good overview of that one and there were some very interesting points made in that one about household size and structure size. So definitely more to come about housing. And obviously statewide, nationwide, housing is like one of the number one issues right now.

Marc But as we develop housing, it's not just developing housing and it's not just the zoning, it's the infrastructure. And we kind of just go along with what we've got. We've got a plan for that. Where are we going to put sewer and water? Because you don't get development unless you direct where your utilities are going to and that's going to be interesting.

Planner Hinderliter which is you know a good point. When you look at there's 12-13 inventory sections, and you can see how each one has a bit of relation to each other.

George A good thing that we did we built a sewage treatment plant at Ocean Park. But at least we built it so it holds up to 40,000 people because we had to oversize it because of these summer tourists. So that portion is okay.

Malia Some of the mapping work that we're doing now at the office is looking at infrastructure where infrastructure exists and where housing can be put and where housing would be most suitable based on where there is existing infrastructure. So more to come on that.

Jamel I think one of the last things that we'll do too is to look at all of the 13, I think, 12 or 13 chapters together and look at those overlaps and like start to make some connections for the plan.

Mary Pat Maybe like you could do, even think about like what if we were to grow it the rate the 10% or the 13% of Saco and Scarborough, what would they need to do to accommodate that? Because it would seem like the demand is there, if it's all around us, why wouldn't it be here too? Right.

Jamel So we do have some, well this is your slide.

Malia On the right there, that actually is the growth of Old Orchard Beach in the dark blue color and that's compared with Saco and Scarborough overlaid on the top of those on that graph. And then let's see on our next slide here we've got some more population projection info and then we also have some population info about Old Orchard in comparison to Saco, Scarborough and the county. Again with that information coming from the state economist.

Marc Why are we picking at 2035?

Jamel I don't know. I was thinking that might be an age thing, but it's a good question.

Malia And then on the left we have a graph showing the different in the ages of different towns in the county. You can see that for all of the different areas that's increased over time from 2020. You can see the Old Orchard Beach has the highest at 54.9. And then on the right, we have a graph showing educational attainment. It looks like Old Orchard Beach actually has a little bit of a higher attainment compared to some of the county in Maine with a kind of a good chunk getting master degrees and graduate professional degrees. That's the spread there.

Jamel So I think that's what we have on population demographics before we move on to the last chapter. It's a big chapter. There's a lot of information in there. Move on.

Malia Sounds good to me.

Jamel Last but not least this evening is historic and archaeological resources. So I'll just go through some of the data highlights. The Abenaki inhabited the area obviously taking advantage to the abundant natural resources particularly the Saco river. It was also an important transportation connection between the regions, interior resources, and the coastal plain. Obviously, I mean, I don't need to say this, but I'm going to anyway. It's a popular retreat, and vacation destination, has been for many years, beginning in the early 1800s. It became more popular in the late 1800s when it was connected to the rest of New England and the rest of the country via train. There are four properties listed on the National Register of historic places. The Town Design Review Board does help to conserve the cultural and architectural heritage of the downtown districts in historic overlay, playing an important role in improvements in the community. And then the Historical Society maintains the Harmon Museum, which contains several exhibits highlighting the community's rich history. I actually did this chapter and I was pretty fascinated by the history. I always find that to be really interesting. Just growing up in Maine you have this like idea of a place and then you read the history and it's a lot different so I thought I always find it to be pretty fascinating. There are a few maps. The map on the left is the sites on the National Register of Historic Places. Like I said, there are four. The Cummings Guest House, Staples Inn, Ocean Park Temple, and then Ocean Park Historic Buildings. And then on the right are some local locally historic sites that we mapped based on town staff's knowledge and resources. So we were able to map those as well that aren't listed on the National Register of historic places, which obviously there's opportunity for more if folks are interested.

That's the only maps that we have for that. I'm not sure if there are any questions or comments on historic.

Mary Pat I have a question or comment, so if I had a beef on the one, it's not a beef fight, that's stronger than I mean, but I'm sure all these people here can educate me because this is one that I'm missing the boat on. The fourth bullet down in your highlights, the town's design of the important health can serve the cultural and architectural heritage of the downtown district and the historic overlay district. It plays an important role in the aesthetic improvements in the community. I'm missing that, like who are they? Well, I'm just looking, I guess I have a different thing. I live in downtown district and I go by five blocks of blight every single day of my life. It's complete blight on part of East Grand Avenue. So I don't understand what, maybe this committee's very active, what the role is, but I'm missing the boat on that. And I think when we did the survey, aesthetics was something that came out that people favor. And I think this report is very favorable on this committee, but I don't know what they do. I don't know who they are and what they do, but I'm just saying every day I have, I'm looking at things that I'm like, what is happening here? Does anyone care?

Planner Hinderliter A little background on, yes.

Mary Pat I know I need to be educated, so I'll just say that.

Planner Hinderliter So design review committees actually a standing committee and they're appointed by the council they meet right up here. And their primary role is to review improvements to the exterior of structures if the improvements are over 1,000 square feet and it gets a little weird when you get into the linear feet because that's usually the aesthetic part, you know, the facade of a building. And the design review committees only triggered if you reach certain thresholds and you're in certain areas in town. That those certain areas are the DD1 and DD2 zoning districts. What they do is they review proposals and they make a recommendation for a what's called a certificate of appropriateness, and then it goes on to the planning board for final review. So they have their own ordinance the ordinance has, includes design standards, but the interesting piece about the design standards is there's a lot of may's or should's. There's not shall's. So that gets into interpretation. That gets into should you do it or not. And if you ever worked with a historic preservation committee, think of a design review committee similar to that, but they just don't have the authority that a historic preservation commission, I should say, does because usually the historic preservation can make binding decisions when the design review committee only makes recommendations.

I suspect when we get to this, that this is going to be a very interesting discussion with all of us because this will relate directly to our future land use plan in our land use section and the whole aesthetic matter, what should we do? As we've seen in the public comment, there's a lot of favorable views for aesthetics but then there are folks who believe in aesthetics but think, it's just like you Mary, what are they actually, where do we see the improvement. You know what what's actually going on so this is going to be an interesting future discussion with us.

George Jeffery, that should be done in house. It's not like 10, 15 years ago where people don't have architects and design review internally, and they bring it to you and then to the planning board. It's just a layer of bureaucracy that, like you said, shall, you know, let's get real. Nothing, there, I agree with Mary, I'm not in favor of the board. That's it.

Peter Could I make a couple of points here, please?

George Yeah, go ahead Pete.

Peter Okay. So I find this conversation a little bit curious and I think about Old Orchard Beach in the historical context and I wonder what the design review committee would think of the Noah's Ark today or perhaps the Jack and Jill slide. It seems to me the things that made Old Orchard Beach great have mostly burned down and there are some buildings like my motel which is you know definitely one of maybe the older hotels and that probably ought to be torn down. But you know it just seems to me that that taste is in the eye of the beholder and that what made Old Orchard Beach great was the uniqueness of its entrepreneurs and their willingness to take risks and to be bold and to build things that amaze and dazzle. It's one of the reasons Walt Disney when he took over Buena Vista made sure he controlled all of the zoning so he didn't have to deal with anybody other than the company when he decided to build a new attraction. Like you know Pandora display and we are a tourist town and we should be very careful that we don't try to strangle ingenuity and creativity particularly as people take risks building new and exciting attractions hopefully to bring more people to our town.

Win Peter when you read the history and like I did today it brought change me a hundred you know a hundred eighty. I understand where the amusements came from I appreciate it much more. So I can tell who read the history here, right? Is that right? It was, it was, I got reading it this morning. I spent over an hour and a half reading the thing. I mean, it was totally, it was wonderful, so.

Peter Yeah, and we can, we're gonna need that, you know, for the town to grow. And to be an exciting place to live, work, and play. We're gonna need adventuresome and daring entrepreneurs to take big risks. And sometimes we're not all gonna agree on what they think, but you know what, it's gonna be their money.

Mary Pat Well, I think there's that and then there's other things. So that's a great thing, but what I'm talking about is not an exciting entrepreneur that's building great things. It's things falling down and it's just falling down in front of your face.

Jamel It's just like private property?

Mary Pat Yeah. Just a shambles in the historic, you know, in the areas that you're saying are preserved well. It's just not the case. I'll take you on a little walk.

Jamel That sounds sketchy.

Mary Pat Yeah. I'm all for what Peter's saying, but that's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about neglect.

Malia I was going to just say, I wonder if there's a blight statement in the ordinance.

Jamel Yeah, I don't know.

Planner Hinderliter Yeah, that's, there's a property maintenance code and I've discussed this with the code enforcement department the blight before. What can we do? I mean, just I see that damn place on 90 Union Ave every day that's been burnt down for four or five years. And, you know, isn't there something we can do to remove this blight? And, you know, according to them, our hands are tied. And what that tells me with the comp plan is that we gotta untie our hands.

Jamel Yeah, that's the least, nobody really wants to see that, right? Like a property rundown or obviously, and when there's so much potential.

Mary Pat There's a ton of buyers for something to fix it up, let some of the people Peter are talking about come in to fix it up Let's do something, I don't know, but...

Peter that particular circumstance is a whole 'nother can of worms, Jeffrey, as we both know.

Planner Hinderliter You know, true. Yeah, but it still gets to the blight that what Mary Pat's saying the blight of the town.

Jamel Does the DRC meet regularly?

Planner Hinderliter They have a regular standing meeting date. And one of the problems that the DRC says is well, we can require something but there's no enforcement for what we're actually requiring and we hear that a lot.

George There's never any follow-up, not just in this community.

Marc I am concerned. I'm excited about what we are doing and where we are going. But I've been concerned for a very long time. Will people read the document, will people follow the document? The council basically has said, "Yeah, we got it. "Yeah, it's 25 years old and it's not relevant, "but we got it." Unless this document is alive and people use it, we're wasting our time.

George I think you gotta, no, I don't think you're wasting your time at all. There's gotta be a purpose behind this.

Marc I agree.

George I think that dialogue has taken place. Now we just can have a document to reflect it. So when people, people, oh, go ahead.

Jamel No, I was laughing at Peter. Sorry. His camera stopped.

George Oh, just so that that'll be our job when people in the community see what's taking place and the purpose of this, hopefully it'll energize them too.

Marc I hope you're right.

George It's always worked that way in this community. I'm just telling you, I've been here a long time. And people gravitate.

Marc Well, but I also see... ignoring the plan and then asking for forgiveness. And they get it.

Mary Pat That's true.

George Let me say, when the state of Maine, when Town of Old Orchard Beach and God rest his soul, Jerry Plant was a town manager at the time who just passed away, when he tried to increase the tax base we took a vote and we raised the height to 70 feet so we could have condominiums along the waterfront. Everybody else had it at the 35 feet I wanted to go 100 feet didn't matter to me because I looked at it the building would be taller and take up less ground. But anyway, so we were we were at 70 feet then the town state comes around and reduce everything to 35 feet. They're crippling, for us to be able to broaden our tax base. They're hamstringing us and I think we've got to look at that also because that has to change. But I think that if we present a document, I think it will energize people. The community really sticks together. People do the work and they see it, they'll run with it, trust me. And the rules got applied to everybody the same.

Marc Yes, and that's gonna be a tough one.

George Well, you know, it just has to.

Marc And I hope we achieve that, we have to achieve that.

George We owe it to the community.

Win This has been great. Thank you. Yeah.

Jamel Good stuff. Good first discussion. I'm going to move on from historic unless we want to keep talking about it.

Win you got to read it you know. I had the time to read it but I urge everybody to read it for gosh sakes. I mean it was tremendous it really changed my mind a lot of things.

Jamel I know I almost want to give it to like all of my friends who grew up with me and be like this is old Orchard Beach.

George we are a unique community we stand alone, we have it all. We just haven't marketed it well over the past 10, 15, 20 years. You know we designated, we did things to preserve the amusement park because it's a great part of our community. We failed with the ballpark, you know we had triple A here, we just couldn't maintain it and stuff like that and kind of neglected that and we become stagnant. There's been no real development on Main Street for years. You know, the Grand Victorian, okay, that was one 15 years ago. But I mean, if you look, people aren't investing, goes back to what Peter said, they're not investing. They're not investing for a reason. You know, I mean, I'm building outside our communities, you know, but it's just hard. It's hard until you get comprehensive plan and the zoning ordinance to reflect that so you can have growth. And if it isn't, if you don't do vertical expansions, you're wasting your time.

That's your only place. You're only seven square miles. And of that, probably 40% of it is in resource protection or, you know, you get setbacks and everything else, so that's all you can build on. It's reality.

Marc The amusement section of our community. Will that, it's been around for a lot of years. Will it survive or will it be supplanted by Funtown?

George I think that our amusement park, I know the owner very well I think it will survive longer than Funtown. In my opinion. I think it's been in our community people come from all over just to go on the roller coaster and the rides because it is on the ocean front. One of the few. He's made a substantial investment. The town worked with him the past few years with Staple Street so that he could kind of control it a little bit better, so there's no crime over there. But you know the town has to get more summer specials and you know you can't operate with eight when we used to have 35 and 40.

Planner Hinderliter You know and I think one thing to think about is how much can the municipality do and how much can other entities like the Chamber of Commerce or people, ground roots effort do? Is this all dependent upon town staff, the town manager, the recreation department to implement all of our visions. Peter its all on you Jeffrey.

Mary Pat It does start with the town a little bit, to set the tone, and like, is this a place to do it?

George And I think the town is setting the tone with the park. It may not sound like a big thing, but that park is gonna be spectacular. It's good, people are gonna gravitate to that, and if we can raise enough money, and do like you did there in Ocean Park with the gazebo, and you know, we need a bigger, better gazebo here and you know have bands come in. I mean the ballpark when we had concerts, I mean this place was swamped. Some of them were good, some of them were bad, but it's still brought people and people go where people are and those were young people. Yeah, and I tried to get the Salvation Army to buy the ballpark so they could have a larger venue. But now I'm against that because I want the town building to do something with it because we got limited land that we own as a community. But again, I mean, I just think that Jeffrey, I think that you hire somebody independent to go out and bring people in once we get the comprehensive plan done in the zoning to reflect our comprehensive plan. You hire somebody independent. Don't depend on the chamber because it's never worked. Don't depend on people in the community. Get somebody outside the community. Jamel said, "Hey, look, I read this. "I'm really impressed with it." Those were his words online. I've always been impressed

in the community. That's why I live here. But you go out and you hire somebody, you pay them to bring in people, to see what we see.

Planner Hinderliter So one of the things that Jamel and Malia mentioned at the beginning.

George I apologize, Malia, I should have said you too when I, I apologize.

Planner Hinderliter Yeah, and why I say that is when we're looking at these things, you're thinking about them, also think of the stakeholders, because when we write the goals, policies, and strategies and the implementation strategy, which is the big one for you, identifying the stakeholders will help those who actually implement the plan.

George I think we've got a mix of everything in our community, I really do.

Jamel All right, that was a pretty good first discussion about content. We'll be back in a month with four other topics. And we were pretty efficient with our time, so I think we could actually get through it before.

Mary Pat Are you gonna redo these then? What do you do with the feedback that you got tonight?

Jamel I think what we can do is if you can, sorry Jeffrey, but if you can provide your comments to Jeffrey and then he can give them to us just so we don't miss anything. We wrote down a bunch of notes. A lot of this is inventory and data so I'm not sure that, seems like a lot of this is more like future oriented than data oriented, but if you do have feedback for the chapters please pass them along to Jeffrey and he'll send it along to us and we'll make the changes.

George After you go through, we'll be able to have a discussion and say this is what we think we should change 'cause I've been taking notes too, but I think we're, so we'll have that dialogue.

-Jamel That sounds good. Our contract goes through September, so we're not going anywhere, and even if we were, the office is 10 minutes away, and Jeffrey knows where we work, so and we're local and we want to help you guys so we're here.

Planner Hinderliter Yeah I'm currently working on a goals, policies, and strategies exercise and how we're going to work through that and that that will complement this. And we'll tackle that and we'll tackle these inventories once we're through with all these batches.

Jamel Two more meetings, and then we'll be done with the inventories. At least the first ones. So thank you guys.

Planner Hinderliter Thank you very good.

George Thank you too, I mean, I feel very, it's very helpful.

Planner Hinderliter Thank you, Peter.

Win Excellent.

Peter Thank you, take care, Jeffrey.

Planner Hinderliter Yeah, Peter, will you be back next month?

Peter Turn your camera around.

Planner Hinderliter Peter, will you be back next month?

Peter I may get home. I may get, if the meeting was like the 27th or the 28th, then I'd probably, I'd try to get back in time for it personally. You know, there's some issues. We have some personal issues that could drive us back a little bit earlier as well. But, you know, other than that, you know, I'll be back at least by May 1. I'll try to get back in time for the meeting the 27th I'll try to get back then.

Planner Hinderliter Okay. All right 28 would give me an extra day

Planner Hinderliter Thanks Peter. I look like a ghost compared to him, he's in Florida all friggin' tan.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 7:15PM