

The Comprehensive Plan
For The
Town Of Old Orchard Beach

DRAFT

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Draft 1

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

During 2023, the Comprehensive Plan Committee resumed work on the previous decade worth of effort to create an entirely new Comprehensive Plan. This effort focused on developing a new vision for Old Orchard Beach by identifying priorities, challenges and opportunities OOB could be facing over the next 10 years, and articulating the values of people who live, work, and vacation in OOB.

A special thank you to all who participated in this project and the Town Manager, Diana Asanza, and Town Council for continued support and patience.

These Comprehensive Plan Committee members were appointed by the Town Council to guide drafting of the plan and support staff throughout the process:

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Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission, inventory section drafting and mapping assistance.

CAI Technologies, mapping assistance

Old Orchard Beach Department Heads, inventory and goals, policies, and strategies assistance

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INTRODUCTION

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan is a planning document intended to be a guide for communities when making policy and land use decisions over a 10 year period. The comprehensive planning process is an opportunity for a community to take inventory of past and current trends and data and plan for the future of the community. The process of comprehensive planning is often the start of further consideration of matters related to the well-being of a community such as land use, preservation of natural resources, economic development, housing, municipal department functions, how to serve residents, business owners and visitors, and other important topics. The comprehensive plan can help facilitate those discussions and offer a direction as well as recommendations for further planning and policy work.

Why is it important?

The comprehensive plan is an important planning document because it guides policy decisions, zoning decisions, municipal investments, and overall well-being of a community. The comprehensive plan consists of inventory chapters covering topics such as the economy, transportation, recreation, housing, and population. The inventory chapters provide a detailed overview of each topic which is important for long range planning decisions. A majority of the inventory chapters include associated goals, strategies, and policies that will dictate how the Plan is implemented. The inventory process is a critical foundation that sets the stage for the community's vision of the future. The goals, policies, and strategies provide the direction and action steps to achieve the vision.

Lastly, a Comprehensive Plan, approved as consistent by the State makes municipalities eligible for State grants and loans, and allows municipalities to legally enact a zoning ordinances.

MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

Mission Statement

The mission of the Old Orchard Beach Comprehensive Plan is to guide the town's growth and evolution toward a vibrant, resilient, and inclusive year-round community while preserving and celebrating what makes OOB unique — its coastal character, natural beauty, and welcoming spirit.

We commit to policies and strategies that increase **year-round residency**, support **diverse housing options**, and foster a strong, sustainable economy built on both **tourism and full-time living**. Central to this mission is creating the **density, infrastructure, and planning tools** necessary to welcome more people into our community — including modernizing height restrictions, aligning parking solutions with growth, and promoting mixed-use, infill development that strengthens our downtown core.

A central part of Old Orchard Beach's future vitality lies in maximizing the use of our existing assets — from our downtown businesses and eateries to our recreational and cultural facilities — in ways that support both residents and visitors. By fostering stronger connections between local enterprises and the community, we can build a year-round economy that benefits everyone.

Equally important is our commitment to **educational excellence**. A thriving school system is one of the most powerful incentives for families to settle here permanently. By investing in schools, attracting quality educators, and ensuring our students have the resources to succeed, we can reverse enrollment decline and establish OOB as a community where families want to live, work, and put down roots.

We recognize that **vibrancy is measured by people**: families who live here, businesses that thrive here, and a community that is active in all seasons. This plan sets a bold course for Old Orchard Beach to become not just a place people visit, but a place they choose to live, work, invest, and build their future.

Vision Statement

Old Orchard Beach envisions a thriving, connected, and inclusive seaside community that is alive in every season. We see a town that preserves the beauty of its coastline while embracing thoughtful growth — a place where year-round residents, families, and businesses form the heart of a vibrant local economy.

Our vision is to be a model coastal community that balances preservation with progress: maintaining our beaches and natural resources while fostering housing diversity, smart density, and modern infrastructure that supports both residents and visitors.

MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

We envision schools that inspire families to stay and invest in the future, a walkable and welcoming downtown that hums with activity, and local businesses that thrive through all seasons. Old Orchard Beach will be a community that measures success not only by how it looks, but by how it lives — in its people, its vitality, and its shared prosperity.

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