

INTRODUCTION

The 2005 Comprehensive Plan Update has been prepared by fellow citizens of Harpswell, your neighbors. They hope that their work will help prepare Harpswell for the inevitable changes of the next decade. The plan is based upon their research, their many consultations with you, and the advice of experts.

Role of the Comprehensive Plan

This Comprehensive Plan serves many functions. It is an expression of the community's vision of its future. It is a guide to making the many public and private decisions that will determine the Town's future. It is a source of basic information about the Town's natural resources and its human environments. The Comprehensive Plan is not a zoning ordinance, nor is it a law. It is an advisory document setting out the community's goals for the future and the policies and programs necessary to move the Town in the direction of its goals. It is a foundation on which to build the Town's land use controls and a road map that can be used by the Town's elected and appointed officials to steer the Town on an agreed-upon course.

In addition to these compelling reasons for updating our Comprehensive Plan, the State of Maine mandates, through its Growth Management Program (Title 30-A §4312), that all communities update their comprehensive plan every ten years. Through the establishment of this law, the State effectively overrides a town's "home rule" authority and establishes the way in which communities engage in land use planning and regulation.

This Comprehensive Plan Update is an effort to balance anticipated growth with the community's natural and cultural values. It is an expression of the residents' values, as communicated to the Harpswell Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC).

Planning Process and Public Involvement

The essential key to any community-wide planning effort is involvement of the community. During a visioning session in the spring of 2002, the community developed the guiding principles for this Update¹. The CPC has continued to seek out and encourage involvement of Harpswell residents through a number of different avenues. As a result, the CPC has conducted nearly 100 public meetings and workshops. Additionally, the CPC and Town Planner have sponsored six public seminars and a field trip with invited experts in affordable housing, water quality, water pollution and wildlife planning. The public was also invited to several town-wide forums and a public hearing on the final draft plan; all of which aided in the development of this Comprehensive Plan Update.

¹ "A Vision for Harpswell" available in the Appendix

In addition to the numerous opportunities for direct public access to the planning process, the CPC utilized innovative methods for disseminating the ideas and concepts found in this Update. The town's web site proved to be a valuable source of communicating with the public and an avenue for residents to share their reactions to the Plan. Also, a number of the public forums were televised and taped by the local Harpswell Community Television station. Numerous articles about the Plan's progress have been published in the local newspaper and in several Harpswell Bulletins mailed to all residents. A thirty-question survey, mailed with one of the Harpswell Bulletins, was completed and returned to the Committee by over 700 residents.

In all our efforts we have tried to recognize the range of interest that Harpswell's diverse populations cherish, and to balance and respect the importance of different views. We recognize that all groups desire a bright future for the town and that although there may be deeply held different views on what is right for Harpswell, which future is best, there are many overlapping areas of agreement.

Each member of the committee came to it with a desire to preserve, as much as possible, the best in the community: its traditional character based upon agriculture and fishing, its respect for property rights, its generally flexible yet protective policies toward the environment, and its proven ability to work things out.

In their work, committee members have had to acknowledge the inevitability of change and certain resistances to it. In our proposals we hope to have identified and managed change with respect for both the private and public good and needs. As far as possible we have tried to make self-interest coincide with the public good. And since change will always happen, we have tried to envision a community in which economic, ecological, and social processes and activities work toward the maintenance and regeneration of shared values and culture.

Past Planning Activities

This Comprehensive Plan is the fifth generation of plans for the community. The first Plan was prepared in 1974 by the Planning Board in response to the State Shoreline Zoning Law. It was updated in 1981, 1987, and again in 1993. The 1981 update was prepared by the Comprehensive Plan Committee and the 1987 and 1993 updates were prepared by a new configuration of the same committee with the assistance of a consultant. Our 2005 Update was prepared by the Comprehensive Plan Committee with assistance from both the Town Planning Office and the Greater Portland Council of Governments.

Since the last Comprehensive Plan Update in 1993, a number of the major recommendations of that Plan have been implemented: retirement of waste incinerator; focus on recycling; introduction of several new land use ordinances; increased professional staff in codes enforcement; major study of water quality and quantity; and major study of the fishing industry in Town are several examples. This committee has

carefully reviewed the 1993 Plan ensuring that relevant recommendations have been brought forth to the present Plan.

Elements of this Plan

This plan has been organized by the Comprehensive Plan Committee in an effort to make it both a user friendly and informative document. To achieve this goal, the Plan is arranged in two distinct parts.

Part I is the active piece of the Plan, highlighting background information, trends and analysis that introduce and give context to the goals, policies and action recommendations.

Part I begins with the Projected Growth which provides a brief overview of the fundamental issues facing Harpswell in the next 10 years. This is followed by seven major planning elements: Community Character, Marine Environment, Groundwater Resources, Natural Habitat, Housing, Marine Economy, and Public Services. Each of these sections contains its own background, trends, analysis/issues, goals, policies, and action recommendations. The ideas in the planning elements chapters serve as the underpinnings for the Future Land Use Plan. The Implementation Plan provides a timeline for the actions the Town will take to achieve the goals set forth by this Plan. Part I concludes with the Capital Investments Plan that lists projected capital investment needs of the Town over the next 10 years that were identified in the comprehensive planning process.

Part II expands the background information in Part I, further delineating the information that guided the policy-making process. The Part II background materials correlate with the topics in Part I as indicated in the Table of Contents. The information in this section is designed to augment the background, trends and analysis/issues sections of Part I, and to meet certain State requirements. These materials should prove valuable to those who are charged with implementing the action recommendations of the Plan.

PLAN SUMMARY

2005 Harpswell Comprehensive Plan Update

Any summary of a comprehensive plan over 100 pages long, containing over 150 recommendations relating to the future of Harpswell can only present an overview of the Plan. The Comprehensive Plan Committee suggests that the public use the Summary to discover how a topic of interest is covered in broad terms. Then citizens may seek further detail by reading the related chapter in Part I and statistical background for that chapter in Part II.

In broad terms the Plan outlines the form and features of the face of Harpswell. It discusses how the face of Harpswell is changing, the challenges and opportunities that change presents to the Town, and how to manage change for the benefit of residents and the environment. In each of these respects, the Plan reflects the vision of Harpswell as stated by the residents of Harpswell. Throughout the planning process, public input and comment has been a key element in the identification and development of the concepts put forth in the Plan.

Harpswell residents face choices about Harpswell' s future. We may choose to let growth occur in an unplanned manner, letting change define our community. Or, residents may choose to guide growth thoughtfully, so that we define our town's future. Past events shown how important it is to plan for the future. Change, large or small, will come to Harpswell. We cannot stop it. Whether we benefit or not from this change depends on how well prepared we are to guide it in a way that enhances our community.

Projected Growth

In the coming ten years state planners expect Harpswell will grow by about 500 more people and up to 400 new homes. Based on past trends, these new homes and seasonal homes can reasonably be anticipated to consume 1000 acres of undeveloped land - nearly 7% of the total land area of the town. Our new residents will continue a trend of an aging population and fewer children. Results of these trends include more commuting workers, declining access to the water for fishing, development pressures on working waterfronts, increasing land costs, less affordable housing, and new demands on municipal services.

Community Character

Goal: Manage growth and development so as to maintain Harpswell's community character.

This broad topic covers social and physical characteristics of Harpswell, which best define the town. These include the town's fishing/farming heritage, its village settlement pattern, more recent settlement patterns, economic foundation, and visual appeal of its remaining rural areas. Impacts on these elements of community character result from

location, amount, type and cost of new development. As new large homes replace historic working waterfront homes, the character of fishing communities is lost. As new homes are built in wooded rural areas, habitat is lost and rural quality diminished. As traditional shared access to the ocean is lost to new housing development, fishing and shell fishing opportunities are lost. Recommendations include modifications to land use ordinances to encourage most new development to be built around historic villages as centers of community life. By contrast, limited development should be accommodated in rural areas. Preservation of working waterfronts, historic neighborhoods, and valuable natural resources is a priority.

Marine Environment

Goal: Maintain a high quality marine ecosystem.

Harpswell's identity stems from its connection to the sea. Marine resources vital to the health and future of the town include clean ocean water, unpolluted coastal marshes, shellfish beds, and wildlife habitat. The health of these resources is determined by the amount, location and quality control of new development. Factors such as faulty septic systems, pesticides and fertilizers, and overboard discharges of untreated sewage degrade marine resources. To achieve the goal of a high quality marine ecosystem, the Plan outlines ordinances and actions that control pollution, promotes regional cooperation and encourages ongoing educational efforts.

Groundwater Resources

Goal: Protect the Town's groundwater in order to provide safe, adequate water supply.

Perhaps the single natural resource on which residents most depend is clean groundwater, used for human consumption. The town has no public water supply or distribution system, so bedrock wells provide most groundwater supply. A recent study of the town's groundwater details extensive information and data about the condition of this resource, noting areas with existing and potential degradation, largely due to overly dense, older residential development. To protect the safety and adequacy of the town's groundwater, policies and actions suggest education, conservation, further research, and land use standards for future development.

Natural Habitat

Goal: Preserve and protect sufficient habitat to maintain current diversity and health of wildlife.

Harpswell's landform, consisting of islands and peninsula circumscribed by 216 miles of oceanfront, creates a rich and diverse marine-forest environment. Since most of the inland forested landscape is no more than half a mile from the ocean, alteration of this landscape also alters habitat. Freshwater and coastal wetlands, of principal concern,

support wildlife species on which we depend for harvesting, and which depend on us for preservation. Development jeopardizes habitat with intrusion and pollution. Preservation of habitat to maintain current diversity and health of wildlife will result from Plan proposals to accommodate new development, while balancing the value of habitat. To assist in systematic planning for habitat conservation, the Plan recommends that Harpswell develop a town-wide open space plan.

Housing

Goal: Provide a range of housing opportunities to meet the needs of Town residents.

In the past ten years about 500 new homes have been built, but the town's population increased by only 227 residents from 1990-2000. Because of Harpswell's extensive and desirable shoreline for residential development, the prices of land and new homes have risen rapidly. Although this phenomenon adds to the town's tax base and restrains the mill rate, higher assessed values adversely affect some long-time residents, seniors on fixed incomes, and young families. The eventual result of a lack of affordable housing is a loss of Harpswell's population diversity. In order to provide a full range of housing opportunities for town residents, the Plan encourages determining the extent of need and developing strategies to meet those needs. These strategies include education about the issue, researching funding sources, and joint public/private efforts to develop affordable housing. To promote a broader range of housing types, zoning regulations should be made more flexible.

Marine Economy

Goal: Encourage and promote the retention and growth of marine economic activities including, but not limited to fishing, shell fishing, boat building, tourism and marine supply and service.

Fishing has been the mainstay of the local economy for generations. Many fishing families still reside in town after five or six generations. Research indicates that 50-60% of local jobs are fishing-related. The value of the landed catch in Harpswell varies with conditions and regulations, but is estimated at \$10 million annually. Some fishermen state they represent the last generation to continue fishing because of regulation, risk, development pressures, and other options open to younger individuals. Pressures on the industry include loss of access to the ocean, increasing recreational use of waters, federal regulation, and closure of shellfish grounds due to pollution from development. To retain a sustainable marine economy, the town must limit conversion of working waterfronts to new residential uses, preserve access, manage lands abutting shellfish flats to reduce pollution, and diversify the marine economy by promoting nature-base tourism on town waters.

Public Services

Public services are provided in Harpswell by a responsive town government and a multitude of volunteers that embody the best of community life. As the town grows, levels and cost of services increase. Substantive improvements in the past ten years include a new recycling center, expanded code enforcement, town administrator, town planner, expanded town offices, acquisition of Mitchell Field and land around the town offices, a recreation director and new ball field. Policies to improve public services in administration, improve town landings, codes enforcement, waste disposal, recreation, fire, rescue, police, transportation system, libraries, and schools are included. Plans for Mitchell Field are outlined, and the fiscal capacity of the town to provide adequate facilities to meet future needs is discussed.

Future Land Use Plan

Comprehensive plans are required by the state to include a description of where and how to accommodate future growth. This chapter identifies areas in town suitable for new development in the next ten years, and those areas better maintained for their natural functions as wetlands, coastal marshes, and wildlife habitat. Strategies to manage growth include public incentives and modifications to land use ordinances that encourage growth where desired. These strategies include recommendations for intensity and type of land uses. The goals of the proceeding chapters are accomplished with the principles and mechanisms of the Future Land Use Plan. It, along with the balance of the Comprehensive Plan, becomes the foundation for future growth management and land use ordinances.

Planning Maps The Comprehensive Plan Committee developed with its consultant and the Town Planner a number of inventory and planning maps, which underpin the Future Land Use Plan. These identify and locate natural resources, habitat, existing land use, water resources, recent new house permits, developable land, and development constraints. This Comprehensive Plan includes an Existing Land Use Map, Development Constraints Map, and Future Land Use Map. Others are available for study at the town offices and are valuable for use by selectmen, planning board, real estate agents, builders, and residents.

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan is a systematic approach guiding the Town's efforts to employ the action recommendations as prescribed throughout the Comprehensive Plan. An oversight committee will be established by the Selectmen with the primary responsibility for reviewing the progress of the Plan's implementation. The materials in Part II of the Plan provide valuable background information to those who are charged with implementing the action recommendations of the Plan.

Capital Investment Plan

The Capital Investment Plan (CIP) identifies the Town's anticipated expenditures on public infrastructure and services in order to accommodate the project growth. This CIP explicitly recognizes the implicit costs associated with the Town's future needs as identified throughout the Comprehensive Plan.

PART I

PROJECTED GROWTH

Here is a brief overview of the range of trends and issues facing Harpswell in the next 10 years. These trends and issues are described in more detail in the Issue Summaries of Part I and the Background Chapters of Part II.

Population and Housing By 2015, Harpswell's 2000 population of 5,239 is projected to have increased by approximately 500 people. Taking into account the continued shrinking of the region's average household size and the growing retirement population, this growth is projected to add about 340 new year-round housing units and about 48 new seasonal housing units to the existing supply. This represents an increase of about 14% in year-round housing units, and an increase of about 4% in seasonal housing units since 2000.

Land Area Required How much land this new residential growth will occupy depends in part on what the minimum lot size requires, but also on what people prefer and how much land they can afford. If the minimum lot size remained the same as it is now and all new residential development took place on lots just meeting the minimum lot size, about 80%, or about 310 houses, would likely be developed on one-acre lots and about 20%, or 78 houses, would be built on two-acre lots or an alternate lot size, as currently allowed, within subdivisions. Together, both these types of new residential development may easily consume more than 500 to 800 additional acres of undeveloped land.

But because normal market forces include the sale of at least some building lots at a range of sizes in excess of the minimum lot size, the projected growth may realistically take place on about 1,000 acres of presently undeveloped land.

In addition to the amount of open land to be converted to residential land under either assumption above, some unknown portion of the new development, perhaps as much as 10%, will require new roads to serve it, that will consume additional land. Of the remaining undeveloped and unprotected land in Harpswell, it is reasonable to expect that the total acres to be developed will equal or exceed 1,100 acres.

Demographic Trends and Changes in Community Character Harpswell is in the midst of a trend begun perhaps as early as 20 years ago, of changing from primarily a fishing community to one where fishing and related marine industries still provide the largest source of local jobs and the largest number of small businesses, but the majority of people are retirees and upper middle class professionals who commute to work in other communities.

Access to the Water Traditional means of access to the water are declining and marine and fishing support industries, infrastructure and moorings are increasingly under pressure to serve recreational boating interests and/or sell to developers who will likely convert these essential, often water-dependent uses to more lucrative, non-marine or non-fishing related uses.

Agriculture and Forestry Agriculture has nearly disappeared as a full-time occupation as has forestry. The amount of land in Tree Growth has declined by 34% between 1993 and 2004.

The Prices of Land and Housing Meanwhile, the very high and still climbing median price of homes and land, as well as the shortage of rental housing in Harpswell, are pricing younger and less affluent households out of the housing market, even away from the waterfront. At this writing, Harpswell has the highest median home price of any town in Maine. Most of Harpswell's households could not afford to buy a new house at the 2002 median price of \$287,500 if they were to enter the housing market today, and younger households are in that market. The proportion of heads of households under 44 years of age has dropped from 43% in 1990 to 32% in 2000 and is projected to be 28% in 2007.

Schools Because of the high price of housing that results from the influx of retirees, pre-retirees and other older and/or more affluent working residents, enrollment in Harpswell's two elementary schools has been declining and threatens the long-term viability of continuing to provide education to elementary students in these two school locations.

Changing Service Needs for an Aging Population As the average age of a Harpswell resident continues to rise in the future due to the forces outlined above, the nature of some municipal and regional services may change in response. For instance, emergency medical services may need to become more responsive to the needs of an aging population in their equipment and training. Similarly, the menu of needed recreational programs and facilities may change to accommodate more older citizens while still serving all age groups. There will be increasing demand for in-home caregivers and for programs such as Meals on Wheels. Perhaps municipal trash and recyclables collection may become needed.

Open Space, Public Access, Water, Natural and Marine Resources As the Town grows, its historic and rural character, its groundwater resources, its marine resources, its marine economy, its forestry, its scenic and habitat values, and its public access to the sea, may all suffer significant losses in the next ten years if they are not recognized and protected through sound growth management and continuing private conservation efforts.

Added Demands on Municipal Lands and Volunteer Government Owning the several large parcels of land that it does, and having recently enlarged the Town Office in a major expansion, the Town is well positioned with land needed to meet a variety of community needs for the next ten years. The Town has always had a very active spirit of volunteerism and independence, and it has served the Town well in providing a range of community and municipal services and plans.

Even so, fire and rescue services, which continue to be supplied on an all-volunteer basis are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain available staffing levels that are needed, as

older volunteers retire and new ones are not replacing them as fast, and as more qualified volunteers work further from Harpswell.

These are among the many issues and trends facing the Town and its people, which are addressed in the pages that follow.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Background A community's character can be divided into two major elements: physical character and cultural character.

Harpswell's physical character owes much to its seagoing and farming heritage. Moving around its islands and peninsulas reveals a pattern of rural areas alternating with villages oriented mostly around sheltered harbors. Rural areas offer views of field and forest with scattered houses along main roads. Scenic ocean vistas open up nearer to the sea. Closely settled villages surround working waterfronts and are peppered with historic structures. Waterfront neighborhoods, both old and new, seasonal and year-round, abound to take advantage of wonderful views and ready access to recreational boating. Within the villages and waterfront neighborhoods, buildings tend to be of similar scale, smaller in older areas and larger in newer areas. Throughout Town, boats and fishing gear stored in yards are constant reminders of our past and present maritime orientation. Mud flats, eel grass beds, wetlands, streams, forests and vernal pools provide critical habitat for the wildlife which enriches our lives.

Harpswell's cultural character also reflects our connection to the sea. An active and healthy marine economy underlies the fishing flavor of town. Summer cottages and colonies, boatyards and marinas, and shores dotted with pleasure boats speak to our heritage as a tourist, seasonal and recreational haven. Our town meeting form of government with its active volunteer committees and our volunteer-run community organizations providing everything from fire and emergency services to land conservation and historic preservation sustain our sense of living in a small and close knit community. Our numerous churches and meeting halls evidence our community spirit. Scattered small businesses serve local needs. Home occupations are a significant factor of our economy, and, along with other the small businesses, help to sustain our sense of self-reliance.

Trends Substantial population growth and second home development over the last 30 years have begun to change our community character. Farming and forestry have nearly disappeared from our economy although their traces contribute substantially to the scenic and rural character of Harpswell. While most new development has occurred along the shore, new homes along our main roads have begun to break up the fields and forest which underlie the Town's rural character. New shorefront development and seasonal home conversions have changed the views of Harpswell from the water and created new threats to the quality of the town's marine environment. The diversity and sustainability of the wildlife, which enrich our lives, are at risk from habitat fragmentation by new roads and other adverse impacts of new development. Some areas of town are becoming suburbanized with cookie cutter, two-acre subdivisions eating up open land, while new driveways and side roads increase traffic congestion and decrease safety. Increasing demands are put upon our limited groundwater supplies and upon the capacity of our soils to treat septic waste. Decreased groundwater recharge from development adds to stormwater run-off threats to our marine resources. While the marine economy remains a

mainstay of Harpswell's economy, recreational piers and moorings can conflict with commercial fishing activities.

Our active marine economy, historic villages and structures, coastal vistas and rural character, and our closeness to the employment opportunities available in larger cities and towns make Harpswell a very desirable as a place to live. Nearby well paying jobs in Portland, Brunswick, Bath and Augusta are transforming Harpswell from a primarily rural, fishing and tourism community into a bedroom community. Along with retirees, these commuters make up the majority of townspeople. Rising land prices have made affordable housing difficult to keep or to come by for many people of more modest means, even away from the water. Rising land values also threaten the sustainability of working waterfronts. The demolition of older small-scale waterfront homes and their replacement with much larger homes is changing the character of older waterfront neighborhoods. New owners sometimes close off traditional waterfront access over private lands while publicly owned water access is insufficient for the townspeople's needs. A diminishing younger population is leading to lower school enrollments and loss of diversity. An increasingly older population is creating new needs for services. Longer commutes reduce the ability of our volunteer emergency services to respond during the workday.

Business development in Harpswell, other than that associated with the marine economy, has been small in scale compared to commercial and industrial development in the neighboring towns of Bath, Brunswick, Freeport and Topsham, and serves mostly very local needs. Because Harpswell has a limited infrastructure and is on the way to nowhere but itself, that is likely to continue. Home occupations are expected to remain a significant part of the town's economic future.

The people of Harpswell have responded to these trends by strengthening its shoreland zoning, site plan and subdivision ordinances that regulate new development, and by supporting a growing number of private conservation measures by which individual landowners can commit their land to conservation. The Town has increased its knowledge of local groundwater conditions to learn more about how and where to direct new development in order to protect the groundwater from contamination and assure adequate quality and quantity in the future. The Town has expanded its government facilities and activities to meet the increasing needs of its people and requirements resulting from its growth.

Analysis/Issues If Harpswell is to sustain its present desirable community character in the face of inevitable population and second home growth, more needs to be done. As the Town grows, its historic and rural character, its groundwater resources, its marine resources, its marine economy, its forests, its scenic and habitat values, and its public access to the sea and open space, may all suffer significant losses in the next ten years, if they are not supported and protected through sound comprehensive planning and growth management. Although the Town's recent changes to ordinances have helped, as have local conservation efforts, still more needs to be done to achieve and protect Harpswell's community character.

The marine economy and our working waterfronts need to be further protected from residential development pressures and even given room to expand. Our marine environment and habitat essential to sustaining the diversity and abundance of our wildlife needs to be sheltered further from the adverse effects of poorly managed growth and development. Continuation of our pattern of rural sections alternating with villages needs to be sustained. The scale of traditional waterfront neighborhoods needs to be maintained. Suburbanization of rural areas needs to be slowed. The contribution of our scenic vistas, historic structures and one-time farms to our sense of community needs to be assured. Diversity of population needs to be maintained. A full range of housing opportunities needs to be available. Water access needs to be protected and improved. Our vital groundwater supplies need to be protected from further contamination and excessive drawdown. Our volunteer public services and organizations need to be further supported.

The Comprehensive Plan Committee conducted a public opinion survey and held a visioning session in 2002 to get a clear picture of the townspeople's priorities for responding to the many ways community character is changing in response to growth. These have been incorporated into the policies and action recommendations in this Plan. From an article on the May 2002 visioning session in the July 2002 issue of the *Harpswell Anchor*:

General qualities most often mentioned were:

- Closeness of the ocean
- Natural beauty, views, and recreational opportunities
- Neighborliness and a strong sense of community
- Diversity of people
- Rural nature of town
- Spirit of volunteerism, integrity of people, caring nature of community

What People Envision for Their Neighborhoods

Cundy's Harbor

- Maintain village character
- New homes clustered to preserve open space
- Maintain walkability
- Continue the community as a working fishing village
- Maintain a limited number of small shops
- Affordable housing for retired fishermen and seniors

Great Island/Route 24/Mountain Road

- Preserve and connect open space with trails and bike paths
- Town center on Mountain Road with Town Hall, a post office, library, teen center
- Public landings with parking
- Protect ocean from pollution, jet skis, fast boats
- Affordable housing

Orr's and Bailey Islands

- Limit growth due to limited groundwater and density of development
- Public access to ocean and beaches with parking
- Strengthen village quality around Orr's I. library and post office
- Preserve Mackerel Cove as working harbor
- Preserve remaining open space

South Harpswell

- Continue as multiple-use area with tourism, recreation, fishing
- Maintain/expand access to ocean
- Preserve historic quality of Pott's Point and Auburn Colony
- Plan for recreational, fishing and limited commercial use of fuel depot
- Control septic pollution of ocean

North Harpswell

- Create affordable housing
- Preserve mix of forest and field
- Limit size and number of commercial uses on Route 123
- Increase public access to ocean
- Connect open space with walking and bike paths

Future Development Preferences

Participants were asked finally to locate and identify where and what kind of future growth should occur. Given the choices of single-family homes, multifamily homes, and new business development, folks emphasized the following:

- More interest in new waterfront business was expressed than for single-family homes. Locations for new business development covered all neighborhoods with emphasis on the fuel depot, Cundy's Harbor and the south end of Bailey Island.
- Multi-family housing was favored over single-family with locations over most of the town.
- Elderly/special needs housing was also of particular interest with emphasis on locations near Town Hall, in Cundy's Harbor and in the Wood Landing Road area.
- The Community Drive area next to the Town Hall stood out as the single area in town where all forms of development were suggested: elderly/special needs housing, multifamily housing, business development and single family housing in that order of preference.
- Other clusters of mixed uses appeared in Cundy's Harbor, Route 123 between Hawthorne Lane and Spy Rock Road, Lookout Point and Allen Point Road along Route 123, and Route 123 south of the Brunswick line."

From these sources it is clear that there is support for further actions to better manage the tide of change in which the community finds itself. Because this topic area is so broad, and relates directly to other major goals, much of what is needed will be reflected in goals, policies and action recommendations listed under other topic areas as well as this section.

Goal: Manage growth and development so as to maintain Harpswell's community character.

❖ *Policies*

- To maintain our traditional pattern of alternating rural and village development and to minimize suburbanization and sprawl, encourage new growth to locate in villages and existing neighborhoods while directing new growth away from the most rural areas. Maintain the rural views from our roads. Direct new commercial and institutional development to the villages and the town center.
- To sustain our marine economy, protect the working waterfront from pressures for alternative development and maintain critical access to the water.
- To sustain our maritime commercial and recreational heritage, expand opportunities for new marine economic activity, protect our marine environment from pollution and manage our harbors to maximize available space and minimize conflicts.
- To maintain the diversity and abundance of our wildlife, protect essential habitat from the adverse effects of development.
- To sustain our traditional sense of connection to the land, preserve the rural character of our landscape, our farming and forestry environment, and our open spaces.
- To maintain our relationship to the sea, protect our scenic vistas, and protect and improve public access to the water.
- To maintain diversity of population, provide opportunities for affordable housing in the face of rising land values.
- To sustain our connection with the past, encourage protection of our historic structures and the scale of our traditional neighborhoods.
- Protect our groundwater from contamination and overuse to protect our health and meet our needs.
- To sustain our sense of self reliance and independence and our sense of community, continue support of home occupations and our volunteer public services and community organizations.

❖ *Action Recommendations*

- Amend land use ordinances to increase density of development in villages and decrease density of development in rural areas. Maintain present density in rural and waterfront neighborhoods.
- Amend land use ordinances to direct new commercial and institutional development to villages and the town center.
- Amend land use ordinances to maintain rural views from main roads and minimize new curb cuts.

- Amend land use ordinances to clarify essential working waterfronts and limit non-maritime uses in them.
- Amend land use ordinances to designate areas for expansion of marine economic activity.
- Amend land use ordinances to protect further the marine environment from pollution and other adverse impacts of development.
- Amend land use ordinances to protect essential wildlife habitat from the adverse effects of development.
- Upon development of a Town Open Space Plan, work to preserve and connect open spaces. Amend land use ordinances to support preservation and connection of open spaces.
- Identify critical scenic water vistas and adopt measures to preserve their contribution to our community character.
- Develop materials to educate and inform owners of large undeveloped lots of their options for preservation and conservation under state law and through land trusts.
- Encourage cooperative use of recreational wharves to minimize altering the natural appearance of our shoreline.
- Develop regulations to limit maximum speeds and sound of personal water-craft (jet skis) within Harpswell waters.
- Identify and inventory points of traditional public access to the water over private land. Work with landowners to perpetuate that access.
- In addition to increasing allowable density of development in village areas, continue to allow mobile and manufactured homes anywhere in town. Amend land use ordinances to encourage multifamily housing in village areas where septic treatment methods can protect groundwater quality and groundwater supplies are sufficient.
- Explore creation of a public program to provide for affordable housing.
- Undertake a program to identify and replace failed septic systems in villages.
- Identify and inventory historic structures in town and work with owners to protect their historic character.
- Develop a local plumbing code designed to reflect Harpswell's soil conditions and sewage treatment needs, take into account new septic technologies, and protect our groundwater quality.
- Continue and possibly expand town financial support for our volunteer emergency services.
- Conduct studies to determine available groundwater supply capacity in village areas.
- Undertake a program to acquire and develop new points of public water access.
- Survey the Town-owned land in the Town Center to determine its development constraints and develop a plan for its future use.

MARINE ENVIRONMENT

Background A close connection to the sea has always been at the base of the Harpswell economy and quality of life, and the sea will remain the heart and future of Harpswell. Fishing, shellfish production, boat building, boatyards and marinas, kayaking, restaurants, lodgings, even real estate and the resulting construction of new homes -- all of these businesses and others are rooted in our relationship with the sea and depend on a healthy marine environment. Much of the everyday quality of life in Harpswell also derives from our intimacy with the ocean. Among the important elements of Harpswell's marine environment are unpolluted water, a productive sea floor, coastal marshes, shellfish beds, coastal waterfowl and wading bird habitat, eelgrass beds, sea bird nesting islands, and essential habitat for federally listed endangered species.

Trends The growth of some of these activities threatens the well being of the marine environment. Development, whether on the waterfront or inland, increases the potential for erosion, sedimentation, and storm water runoff. In addition, waterfront development intrudes permanently into vegetation that previously buffered wildlife's use of the shoreline. Added sediment and boat traffic over eelgrass beds can limit their growth or cause them to die back. Pesticides and fertilizers on new lawns and gardens near the shore threaten the marine ecosystem and fishing. Septic systems near the shore and streams that drain into the ocean send the nutrient nitrogen to the sea. These and other sources contribute nutrients beyond natural levels, thus stimulating growth of marine algae and plankton, and lowering dissolved oxygen in marine waters. There are ongoing impacts from existing development that prevent the harvesting of shellfish in major portions of the Town. Failing septic systems contribute to coliform bacteria counts in adjacent coastal waters that trigger the prohibition of shellfish harvesting under federal regulations. Overboard discharge systems (OBDs) that were licensed by the State until the late-1980s result in closed shellfish areas. Marine toilets pollute marine waters when emptied at sea or in harbor. Marine littering can injure a variety of sea creatures.

Analysis/Issues Some of these trends are already being addressed. Over the past several years, with financial help from the Maine DEP, overboard discharge systems are being replaced and have decreased from a peak of 127 to 93 remaining systems. Some clam-flats have been reopened to harvest. Marine toilet pump-out stations have been set up at local marinas. New waterfront construction uses erosion and sedimentation controls. Shoreland zoning vegetation buffer requirements are being more strictly enforced and penalties for violations have been increased. The town is participating in two regional efforts to protect and improve the marine environment.

Much more needs to be done if Harpswell is to maintain and protect the high quality marine environment upon which our marine and tourist industries and our quality of life depend. Shoreland setbacks and vegetation buffering need to be extended to streams which drain into the sea. Existing homeowners and waterfront users need to be informed about and encouraged to create vegetative buffers wherever reasonable. Nitrogen loading from septic systems needs to be addressed. Commercial and recreational boaters need to

be encouraged to respect and protect the marine environment. New opportunities for coordination with neighboring towns and regional organizations working to address shared marine resource management issues must be explored.

Opening shellfish areas that are closed requires not just OBD removal, but correction of other problems that impede good water quality and contribute to closures. New septic system technology offers more options for treating wastewater adequately.

The Town must manage its growth in ways that best preserve and protect the marine environment and its dependent livelihoods and lifestyles.

Goal: Maintain a high quality marine ecosystem.

❖ *Policies*

- Ensure that Town ordinances have adequate provisions for review of any proposed activity that could adversely impact the marine environment.
- Establish Town performance standards to minimize the impact of new construction on streams that feed into the ocean.
- Ensure that Town ordinances are adequate to minimize and control septic, sediment, nutrient, and other non-point pollution sources.
- Cooperate with other towns on Casco Bay to monitor the marine ecosystem and create multi-jurisdictional policies that protect the marine environment.
- Encourage marine-related businesses to operate in a clean and responsible way and support their efforts through publicity and other means.
- Increase general public knowledge of how to protect the marine environment from harmful human activities.

❖ *Action Recommendations*

- Further restrict the use of herbicides, fertilizers, insecticides, growth regulators, and toxins near the shoreline to reduce their harmful effects on Harpswell's waters. As a general guideline, a 100-foot setback is recommended (the same distance the State requires for septic systems).
- Continue Town's grant program to eliminate overboard discharges.
- Maintain strong code enforcement efforts to protect the marine environment.
- Continue to participate in the New Meadows River Watershed Project and the Friends of Casco Bay. Explore possibilities for new regional efforts to monitor and improve the quality of the marine environment.
- Explore new septic system technologies which may reduce nitrogen nutrient loading of the marine environment.
- Support efforts to improve utilization of pump-out stations and trash disposal facilities.
- Commit resources to develop educational materials on the value to Harpswell of a high quality marine environment for use in schools and distribution to residents.

- Develop and distribute educational materials to encourage homeowners to adopt best management practices for minimizing pollution from run-off by maintaining good vegetative buffers along the shore and streams draining to the shore.

GROUNDWATER RESOURCES

Background Harpswell has 24.6 square miles of land area located on a long, narrow peninsula and three large islands, comprising 216 miles of shoreline. Harpswell's groundwater resources are limited to bodies (or lenses) of freshwater, supplied initially by rainfall and floating underground on the surface of heavier marine groundwater that surrounds and underlies all of the Town's land masses. This water largely resides in bedrock and moves through the fractures in that bedrock. There are no documented sand and gravel aquifers in Harpswell and no water bodies that either could or do serve as public reservoirs for the Town. The amount of water available at any given location depends upon the degree of bedrock fracturing at that point. Harpswell residents and businesses depend for their fresh water needs on this limited and vulnerable-to-contamination groundwater resource. There are a few mapped areas containing known high-yield bedrock wells, and some additional mapped locations of known moderate-yield bedrock wells. The precise boundaries of these high and moderate yield areas and of their recharge areas are not known. With the exception of 93 properties served by overboard discharge systems, all of Harpswell's residents and businesses also rely on individual septic systems to treat their wastewater before it is discharged to the groundwater.

Trends Over the years, Harpswell's groundwater resources have been studied – once in a 1982 town wide study, again via well surveys in the 1990s, and again in a town wide study completed in 2001. Documented problems include septic system failures contaminating nearby wells, salt water intrusion due to overuse of local groundwater, various types of petroleum product spills, road salt showing up in well water, and high sodium and chloride levels in well water from water softeners in nearby septic system effluent. Not surprisingly these problems have been concentrated in smaller, narrow land masses and areas with the highest density of development. Harpswell's 2001 Drinking Water and Sanitary Septic Study – Phase I by Wright-Pierce, mapped 6 multiple groundwater impact areas, including the north end of Bailey Island and south end of Orr's Island, Cundy's Harbor, Potts Point, Long Point and Merriman Cove. The percentage of wells whose water exceeded water quality standards for nitrate and bacteria grew substantially between 1982 and 2000. Bacteria exceedances rose from 2% (19 in 939 wells tested) in 1982 to 38.6% (128 of 332 wells tested) in 2000. Nitrate exceedances rose from 0.7% (7 in 939 wells) to 14% (34 of 242 wells tested).

Analysis/Issues It is clear that new growth in Harpswell can pose significant threats to the quantity and available quality of Harpswell's groundwater unless carefully managed. The trends and existing multiple impact areas noted above and many other documented single or dual impact locations already pose health hazards that need to be addressed. Density of development is an important element in causing existing groundwater quantity and quality problems, and properly managing future development will be essential to preventing additional problems. Areas with the right soils can accommodate development better than those with less desirable soils, although few areas of Harpswell have what are considered "good" soils. Yet, basing the Town's future density limitations solely on soil types would conflict with other desirable outcomes, especially strengthening the Town's historic villages, maintaining the Town's overall community

character and preventing the suburbanization of Harpswell. The solution is to encourage growth that would sustain these desirable features of Harpswell while establishing carefully applied performance standards to minimize the adverse impacts of septic disposal and other threats to the Town's groundwater quality and to ensure sufficient groundwater recharge, all despite the Town's widespread soil limitations.

Harpswell's groundwater concerns can be divided into quantity issues and quality issues.

Groundwater Quantity Available groundwater recharge varies according to soil types. Some soils are better than other soils at absorbing rainfall and discharge from septic systems and transmitting them to the groundwater. The Drainage Basin Analysis Map prepared for this plan shows the percentage of available recharge presently in use in each watershed and identifies watersheds where an adequate supply of groundwater is at risk from further development. Groundwater use is considered excessive when it exceeds 15% of available recharge. The use of available recharge in Harpswell's drainage basins varies from under 10% to a maximum of 30% (Cundy's Harbor). In addition, the Town's groundwater studies have identified some localized instances of wells going dry and instances of salt intrusion. In at least some instances these may reflect small sub-areas within individual drainage basins where use exceeds recharge due to demand for water from existing development, relative to the ability of the local soils to facilitate adequate recharge. With the exception of these localized instances and a portion of Cundy's Harbor, Harpswell's overall use of groundwater does not exceed available recharge and there generally appears to be sufficient available groundwater to support well-managed growth for the foreseeable future.

Salt water intrusion into wells is a related groundwater quantity problem. It occurs where the groundwater lens is shallow along the shoreline. If too much water is drawn, the bottom of the lens rises enough for the salt water below to reach a well. Shared, communal wells, already in use in some places in Town, can help make sufficient water available to development on smaller land masses and points and in more densely developed areas where salt water intrusion is, or threatens to be, a problem. Requiring new wells to be located farther from the shoreline would also reduce the potential for salt water intrusion.

Other measures can also help assure adequate supplies of groundwater. Water conservation techniques can reduce demands on the groundwater. While impervious surfaces associated with development can diminish groundwater recharge, managing the run-off from the impervious surfaces to facilitate its absorption into the ground can minimize this problem.

Groundwater Quality The major man-made groundwater quality problems Harpswell faces are excessive nitrate-nitrite contamination from septic systems, bacterial and other pathogenic contamination, petroleum product and other toxic spills, use of sodium chloride type water softeners, and contamination by road salt. Nitrate-nitrite concentrations, in fact, are likely to show up as problems long before new impervious surfaces limit recharge enough to cause groundwater quantity problems. Use of new septic systems technologies can substantially reduce nitrate-nitrite discharge to the

groundwater. Threats from bacterial and other pathogens can be reduced by assuring proper location, construction and maintenance of septic systems, as well as identifying and replacing failed and inadequate systems. Soil types also play an important role here with some types better at treating waste and preventing groundwater contamination than others, although new septic system designs and technologies can greatly reduce the adverse impacts of the less effective soil types. Petroleum product spills can be reduced with better installation and inspection of home heating oil storage and piping, especially with regard to underground and outdoor tanks. Other petroleum and toxic spills resulting from certain commercial activities or individual acts can be reduced through education. Changing to potassium based water softeners can eliminate salting problems from sodium chloride softeners. Careful management and the use of alternative de-icers can help avoid contamination from road salt.

Goal: Protect the Town's groundwater in order to provide a safe, adequate water supply.

❖ *Policies:*

- Reduce or eliminate groundwater contamination, and threats of contamination, from existing development.
- Protect groundwater quality from potential threats from future growth and development.
- Assure that future groundwater use does not exceed available supply.
- Improve general public knowledge of how to protect groundwater quality and assure sufficient groundwater quantity.

❖ *Action Recommendations*

- Continue to rigorously enforce the requirements of Maine's Subsurface Wastewater Disposal Rules. Develop materials to advise subdivision developers and plumbing permit applicants of the septic designs and technologies that will best protect groundwater quality.
- Develop and adopt a Town Plumbing Code that takes into account the limitations of Harpswell's soil types and its unique geology and geography. Utilize septic system designs and technologies that maximize treatment of bacteria and other pathogens and minimize discharge of nitrates and nitrites to the groundwater.
- Undertake detailed analysis and mapping of soil types and groundwater flow in villages where growth will be encouraged. Design density determinations, plumbing code requirements, and other land use performance standards designed for the local conditions in order to avoid groundwater contamination and assure sufficient groundwater supply. Identify possible sites for community wells and explore feasibility of small scale water supply and sewage treatment systems for villages.
- Review adequacy of existing land use performance standards to manage run-off for new development and redevelopment projects to protect groundwater supply from contamination and to maintain sufficient groundwater recharge.

- Identify and map moderate and high yield aquifers and their recharge areas. Adopt measures to assure future quality of groundwater in these areas.
- Develop better incentives to encourage the use of communal wells and septic systems in problem areas and subdivisions that propose cluster or open space development.
- Develop and distribute to the public, and incorporate into the school curriculum, materials regarding the nature and limitations of the Town' s groundwater resources. Stress the importance of protecting groundwater quality and assuring adequate quantity, and the types of activities that can jeopardize groundwater quality and quantity.
- Develop and distribute materials regarding conservation practices that residents can employ to help assure adequate supplies of groundwater, especially in areas subject to salt water intrusion.
- In areas of groundwater contamination, work with owners of the contaminated properties to effect cleanup and prevent additional contamination.
- Adopt Town standards or other programs, if necessary, to assure proper installation and maintenance of petroleum product storage tanks and piping.
- Examine the Town's use of road salt to avoid excessive use. Explore whether alternative de-icers would meet safety and budget needs while reducing threats to groundwater quality.
- Establish shoreline setbacks for wells in the Shoreland Zone.
- Develop a program to assure regular septic system pumping and maintenance.
- Explore whether considerations of groundwater quality and quantity in older, small scale neighborhoods require limitations on seasonal conversions and the scale of redevelopment.
- Develop a program for replacement of failed and obsolete septic systems.

NATURAL HABITAT

Background The Town of Harpswell has a uniquely diverse natural and marine environment, due in large part to its distinctive geography as a town with long narrow peninsulas and over 40 offshore islands. With 216 miles of shoreline encompassing 24.6 square miles of land, one is never very far from the sea in Harpswell. The topography is varied with many areas of steep slopes and spectacular scenic views from both the water and the land. Outside of densely developed areas, most of the land is forested. The forest sometimes reaches directly to the sea or tidal flats, and less often to coastal marshes. Within the forest are many freshwater wetlands (swamp, marsh or bog) of varying size and ecological importance.

Freshwater and coastal wetlands serve several important functions, including but not limited to groundwater recharge, sediment retention, floodwater retention, plant and animal habitat, fisheries habitat, educational and cultural values and cleansing of water that drains across the land to adjacent shellfish areas. Coastal wetlands are also one of the foundations of the marine food chain. The Harpswell Conservation Commission, Town committees and the State have developed detailed wetland information that now allows the Town to make informed judgments and policy decisions based on the relative functional values of wetlands and their vulnerability to development.

Occasionally, open fields that are still used for hay production or grazing break the forest cover. Other fields are unused and are in the process of reverting to forest. Offshore there are multiple small islands, many of which are designated as seabird nesting islands by the State. Many of Harpswell's intertidal areas are important feeding and staging areas for shorebirds, wading birds and migrating waterfowl, as are some inland wetlands. Eelgrass beds provide vital habitat for a number of important marine species. Bald eagles also nest and feed in Harpswell. In the spring as snow melts, vernal pools, important to rare amphibian, reptile and insect species, are formed for a few weeks. These intermittent wet areas provide critical reproductive cycle assistance to these species. These pools are often invisible except in spring which often leaves them susceptible to development.

Trends From 1998–2003, the Town issued over 300 building permits for new residential construction. Assuming an average two acres of land for each new residential unit, over 600 acres of undeveloped land, most of it in forest and a small proportion in wetlands, has been converted to residential use. Where new roads have been built to accommodate new units, additional acreage in forest has been lost and streams and wetlands have been crossed which increases the problems of runoff. Sometimes such roads fragment large remaining undeveloped areas of wildlife habitat into smaller pieces which reduces the diversity and/or abundance of wildlife species.

Analysis/Issues Wetlands, streams, vernal pools, mud flats, eelgrass beds, the sea and off-shore islands are the most important wildlife habitats in Harpswell; and wetlands and streams in particular are in short supply when Harpswell is compared to Maine as a whole. One critical natural resource policy issue is the need to extend selected shoreland

zoning protections to forested wetlands and wetlands of less than 10 acres. Another issue is managing new road locations to minimize habitat fragmentation. A related issue is the need to limit development impacts on upland wildlife habitat and the remaining travel corridors which are used by various species to find food and mates. Other issues involve erosion and sedimentation controls, runoff pollution of marine waters, and identification and protection of vernal pools.

Goal: Preserve and protect sufficient habitat to maintain current diversity and health of wildlife.

❖ *Policies*

- Ensure that new development does not encroach upon critical natural areas or essential wildlife habitats.
- Require setbacks from all five+ acre wetlands and streams that drain into the ocean sufficient to protect their ecological value and functions, and their integrity as wildlife habitat.
- Encourage the owners of wetlands, vernal pools and other essential wildlife habitats to use their property in a manner which does not jeopardize the habitat value of their land.

❖ *Action Recommendations*

- Identify and map critical natural areas and essential wildlife habitats and travel corridors.
- Create and adopt a Town Open Space Plan.
- Develop ways for critical natural areas and essential wildlife habitats to be preserved while allowing the landowner beneficial use of his or her property.
- Revise land use ordinances to protect the functions and values of the town's larger wetlands and its streams that drain into the ocean.
- Develop and implement a plan for protecting critical upland habitat, wildlife travel corridors and vernal pools. Explore the use of conservation easements, land acquisition, transfer of development rights and managing the location of new roads to help accomplish this.

HOUSING

Background Harpswell has benefited from a demographic mix, both economic and cultural, of residents who enhance the community's quality of life. However, market forces and demographic trends threaten to change the composition of Harpswell. Harpswell is the least affordable community in the Bath-Brunswick housing market, and possibly in the entire State of Maine. Nearly all the town's year-round housing is single-family housing and most of it is owner-occupied. Year-round rental housing is in short supply, and there are very few duplex or multifamily buildings available. There are some renter and owner-occupied mobile homes on individual lots in Harpswell. As of 2000, about 22% of the year round owner-occupied housing stock dates from 1939 or earlier, about 19% from 1940 – 1969, and about 59% from 1970 through 2000. For year-round renter-occupied housing, these percentages are about 28%, 22% and 50% respectively.

Trends Harpswell is in the midst of a profound change from being primarily a fishing and marine industries town to becoming a predominantly bedroom community and retirement community. This is reflected in the rapidly increasing price of land and property. The median sale price of a single-family home in Harpswell has increased from \$167,000 in 1995, to \$251,000 in 2000, to an estimated \$495,000 in 2004. A family would have to earn over \$155,000 -- more than three times Harpswell's median family income of \$46,000 -- to afford the median-priced home. The State's land valuation for Harpswell is now doubling every 4 years. By contrast, the median sale price for a home in Brunswick in 2000 was \$129,000. The median home price in Harpswell among all Maine towns has gone from 6th highest in 2002 to 4th highest in 2003, and preliminary statistics indicate it may be the highest in Maine for 2004⁴. Clearly, wages and salaries of people in Harpswell and surrounding towns are not rising at nearly the same rate as land, home prices and rents. There is already a chronic shortage of housing affordable for renters, first-time homebuyers, elderly households and individuals in need of assistance with mobility and day-to-day living. Land prices away from the waterfront may be driven upward by the limited supply of inland house lots in Harpswell. The teardown phenomenon also contributes to rapidly rising property values, fueling the increase of insurance costs and property taxes on surrounding properties. Mobile homes are allowed throughout Harpswell, but the rising price of land makes it increasingly limited as an affordable housing option.

Analysis/Issues All of these statewide, regional, and local trends add up to an increasing shortage of affordable housing in Harpswell. Although such a shortage is common to the region and the state, it is more acute here. In addition, national market forces are compounding the issue: the proportion of real estate transfers to out-of-state buyers continues to increase. In the past 3 years, out-of-state homebuyers paid an average of 1.5 times as much for a home in Maine as Maine residents. As the price of a home on Harpswell's shorefront continues to rise the assessed value of nearby properties increases.

⁴ Statistics from Maine State Housing Authority.

Our community character, in part, is based upon our diverse population. Lack of affordable housing reduces our community's diversity. If recent trends continue, Harpswell will become a community of small households headed by an increasingly older population. With rising housing prices and no new multi-unit development, young individuals and families just starting out, even those with average incomes, will not be able to call Harpswell their home. A lack of diversity of population may slowly erode the vibrancy of life in Harpswell. Young families and their children become involved in local schools, sports and recreation. Some citizens become active in local government, social clubs and other community-based organization. Still other residents help to keep the fishing industry important to the local economy. To preserve this demographic mix, Harpswell must manage new development in order to provide a range of housing opportunities.

The Town has little control over most factors contributing to rising housing costs. Even the cost of maintaining some Town services at present levels is rising, and local taxes may reflect this increase in the future. However, the Town can influence the availability of housing by how it manages new development. Currently, Harpswell ordinances do not prevent any form of housing from being developed almost anywhere that new residential structures are allowed.

According to the federal government, an affordable house, including insurance and taxes, must not cost more than 30% of the household's total income. In Harpswell, two in five renters and one in five homeowners are paying over a third of their household income in housing costs. A higher proportion of Harpswell households are burdened with higher housing costs than is true for nearby towns or Maine as a whole. Almost 85% of residents surveyed in 2002 said that some form of affordable housing is needed, particularly for seniors, people who work in Harpswell, and young people starting out.

The goal of the State of Maine is that each municipality should seek to assure that at least 10% of all new housing is affordable to low and moderate income households (those earning less than 80% of median household income for Cumberland County). Since the price of housing will likely continue to rise faster than the median household income, the need for affordable housing in Harpswell will be well above 10%. If Harpswell is to provide for a housing supply that can meet the needs of a full range of household types, diverse ages, and income and workforce skills, the Town will need to take proactive steps.

Housing as related to Land Use

Background Land use regulations can have a significant effect on the cost of housing development. They have a strong influence on the supply of land for housing development within a municipality. They can determine where housing is allowed and is not allowed, as well as what types of housing can be developed, and at what density. Subdivision regulations that set minimum construction standards for roads, a major element of development expense, also influence the cost of development. On the one hand, land use regulations of residential uses can help protect neighborhood values,

individual property values, public safety, environmental quality, and other amenities. On the other hand, they may add cost to housing development that must be passed on to homebuyers if developers and landowners are to make a profit on their land and construction. Every community tries to balance these competing community values.

In Harpswell, with few exceptions, local land use regulations do not prohibit housing development of any kind in any location. All forms of year-round and seasonal housing are permitted nearly everywhere. Only within the 75' minimum setback from the shore and from wetlands subject to shoreland zoning is year-round housing development prohibited, although some critical areas, such as Resource Protection District, severely limit new housing construction. Seasonal housing is allowed everywhere except in Commercial Fisheries I Zone. The minimum lot size in Harpswell is 40,000 sq. ft. in or out of the shoreland zone, unless a subdivision is being created, in which case, 80,000 sq. ft. minimum lot size is required. In response to private roadway maintenance issues in recent years, the Town has adopted a Roads Ordinance that sets minimum construction standards for roads in subdivisions.

Analysis/Issues The Town of Harpswell is less restrictive than most coastal towns in southern Maine concerning the range of housing types and allowable density that are permitted. Unlike many towns, Harpswell has not chosen limited areas within which to allow mobile homes; under law they are allowed wherever they can meet state licensing requirements and local subdivision approval. Conversely the Town's ordinances are stringent in regards to the construction of multifamily homes by requiring, at a minimum, 40,000 sq. ft per dwelling unit. This is evident by the fact that no new multifamily housing has been built in Harpswell since the 1980s.

| If land use regulations are to provide for affordable housing, they will need to be adjusted. One such adjustment may be to require or to provide incentives for subdividers to create and sell some minimum proportion of new housing units at prices that are affordable to households that are now priced out of the market. Some communities have done this effectively by requiring that a set percentage of the units in a subdivision will be marketed at affordable prices. Another effective method may be to provide a density bonus to subdividers who agree to create affordable units. Regulations that allow smaller minimum road frontages per unit can facilitate creation of affordable housing units. Smaller minimum road length can lead to lower per unit development costs. It is likely, however, that Harpswell's high land prices will work against developers utilizing optional affordable housing incentives without other measures, such as partnering with a non-profit housing development agency, a land trust interested in reserving land for affordable housing, or State or federal housing programs. One such program is Maine's new tax increment financing program for affordable housing. Another form of financial assistance that could work well with affordable housing-friendly land use regulations is the dedication of municipal land for development of affordable housing. However it is accomplished, development of affordable housing units will require a combination of land use regulation and other non-regulatory institutional support.

Goal: Provide a range of housing opportunities to meet the needs of Town residents.

❖ *Policies:*

- Encourage housing development and affordable housing, including multifamily buildings, at appropriate sites in village districts and town district.
- Encourage less housing density and use of clustering and design that is sensitive to scenic, open space and habitat values in rural areas.
- Generally maintain current density and scale of housing development in waterfront and rural neighborhoods and settled villages.
- Pursue the development of 5-10 new affordable housing units annually over the next ten years.

❖ *Action Recommendations*

- Amend land use ordinances to enable creation of more affordable housing lots and multifamily housing in the village districts and, possibly, in the town district.
- Amend land use ordinances to encourage clustering, to protect scenic, open space and habitat values, and to prevent sprawl and suburbanization in rural areas.
- Revise “in law” apartment provisions of land use ordinances to accommodate family needs while protecting quality and quantity of groundwater.
- Require and/or enable larger subdivisions to provide some affordable housing lots or contribute toward affordable housing elsewhere in Town.
- Create a Housing Committee to pursue development of affordable housing; to identify programs, mechanisms and possible Town approaches to developing affordable housing; and to investigate funding and possible sponsors or public/private partnerships for affordable housing, such as Habitat for Humanity.
- Provide support and referrals to programs such as meals-on-wheels, health care, transportation and personal services to residents to assure that they can remain in their homes as long as possible.
- Sponsor educational sessions on credit, home ownership, and other issues related to housing to help first time buyers and others obtain and keep affordable housing.

MARINE ECONOMY

Background Activities related to the sea have always been the backbone of Harpswell's economy as well as contributing a great deal to Harpswell's community character. Harpswell's marine economy has two major aspects: (1) commercial fishing and its related services and suppliers, and (2) recreational boating and its associated tourism, services and suppliers.

According to a 1999 Harpswell Fishing Industry Profile⁵, commissioned by the Town, Harpswell had one of the highest concentrations of commercial fishing on the Maine coast. The report estimated that there were about 200-250 active licensed commercial fishermen and about an equal number of full and part time crew. The core of the local commercial fleet was estimated then at 236 fishing boats, of which 201 were lobster boats. There are 15-20 commercial fishing wharves scattered about Harpswell.

The 1999 report estimated that commercial fishing based in Harpswell provides full or part time employment for between 400 to 500 persons locally. Another 60-80 Harpswell jobs were in related local services and suppliers. Local restaurants and seafood sellers also depend directly on marine resource harvesters. Overall, the report estimated that fishing related occupations probably represent 50% to 60% of local full and part time jobs.

Shellfish harvesting is also important to the Town's marine economy with about 85 commercial shellfish harvesters in Town. The Town operates a strong shellfish conservation and enforcement program.

Harpswell also has two marina/boatyards, at least two additional boatyards, at least one boat builder and a commercial kayaking outfit, all of which generate demand for additional services and supplies. Many summer and year-round residents own recreational boats and spend money locally operating and maintaining them. Food and lodging facilities around Harpswell depend for part of their business on Harpswell's attraction for recreational boaters and waterfront users.

While there are no specific job numbers available for tourist businesses, second home construction and recreational boating businesses, it is clear those jobs added to commercial fishing jobs make up the lion's share of local employment.

Trends Commercial fishing and shellfishing in Harpswell remains strong. In 2004, the total number of commercial marine harvester licenses in Harpswell was 630, of which 85 are for commercial shellfish harvesting. Excluding the commercial shellfish harvesting licenses, there are 545 licenses that are held by 375 commercial fishermen giving Harpswell as their principal port. In 1999, there were at least 419 boats used in connection with commercial marine harvesting licenses in Harpswell. In 2004, there

⁵ Report available at Town Office

were 436 boats of which 224 were lobster boats. The number of commercial fishing wharves has increased somewhat in recent years.

In 1993, 50% of Harpswell's shellfish areas were closed to harvesting although that figure was a substantial improvement over past peak closure such as the closure of 89% of Harpswell's shoreline to clamming for part of 1989. Since the inception of the State's overboard discharge removal program in 1994, the number of licensed overboard discharges has been reduced from 127 to 93 (27%) reduction. Nonetheless, a significant portion of the town's shellfish areas remain closed due to pollution or the existence of the remaining licensed overboard discharges.

Recreational activity on and along the waterfront continues to grow as Harpswell's year-round and seasonal residents increase in number. In 2004, the Town approved a rezoning to enable a local marina to expand to meet increasing demand. The pace of second home development, and the jobs it supports, is strongly related to the attraction of Harpswell's seashore. The demand for mooring in Harpswell has increased substantially as harbors elsewhere have filled to capacity. Nature-based tourism is a growing business locally and statewide.

Analysis/Issues Increasingly, Harpswell's fishermen find themselves in conflict with the growth in recreational and residential development over continued access to the water, living on the waterfront, use of marine facilities, mooring space, and damage to and limitations on setting fishing gear. Among the issues discussed by those who were interviewed for the 1999 Harpswell Fishing Industry Profile, "there were several topics that were common to all of the interviews and focus groups. These included the following concerns:

1. There is a potential for future losses of commercial fishing uses under real estate pressure for sale or conversion to non-fishing uses.
2. The Town will face increasing pressure to deal with issues of harbor management, moorings control, and enforcement as recreational and transient boating use continues to expand in Harpswell.
3. Ultimately, the continuity of the fishing industry depends on adequate waterfront access. Existing public access points owned by the Town do not provide parking. As real estate values escalate and development pressures increase at the waterfront, the availability of privately owned access points may diminish.
4. The heritage and community character of Harpswell are defined by the presence of a commercial fishing industry. As the Town attracts more growth and investment in waterfront property, the future land uses that are allowed in the shorefront zones could determine how that character changes or is retained."

While the recent increase in commercial fishing wharves indicates that this vital access is being maintained, the future threat of working waterfront loss to residential development remains.

Some 20 publicly owned (Town and State) points of access in Town provide some assurance of continued access to the water and flats for shellfish harvesters. However, the lack of parking and other facilities at some of these access points limits their usefulness to shellfish harvesters.

All of these issues need to be addressed by the Town.

Goal: Encourage and promote the retention and growth of marine economic activities including but not limited to fishing, shell fishing, boat building, tourism and marine supply and service.

❖ *Policies*

- Preserve and protect vital water access for commercial fishermen and other economic activities that support the Town's working waterfronts and strengthen the Town's marine economy.
- Pursue actions consistent with the protection, conservation, maintenance, and restoration of shellfish habitat and other fishing resources.
- Manage harbors and mooring placement to meet the needs of both commercial fishermen and recreational boaters.
- Allow marine related activities such as boat and gear storage and maintenance throughout the Town.
- Undertake actions to improve usefulness of existing public water access points and maintain traditional private access points for commercial fishing.
- Support further development of boat building, recreational boating and related activities.
- Support measures to strengthen tourism development that will complement the growth of the marine economy

❖ *Action Recommendations*

- Adopt zoning and land use measures to protect working waterfronts from the pressure to convert them to residential use. Review the current Shoreland Zoning boundaries for the Commercial Fishing Districts to protect areas in Town that are critical to commercial fishing. Consider having more restrictive land uses in Commercial Fishing Zones. Consider other land use ordinance changes to encourage boat building and economic activity related to recreational boating
- Hold public forums to identify and establish working waterfronts in Harpswell.
- Consider an increase in marine related fees to support additional Town services provided for marine related issues.
- Continue to provide funding for effective shellfish conservation and enforcement.
- Develop harbor management plans for crowded mooring areas.
- Resolve title issues of public access points and develop adequate parking and maneuvering space at them.

- Publicize the importance of marine related activities to Harpswell' local economy and potential threats to the vitality of the industry.
- Create an informational database to monitor the health and well being of commercial fishing and tourism in Town.

PUBLIC SERVICES

Background Harpswell's community facilities and services include general government, schools, recycling, recreation, police, fire and emergency response, libraries, and transportation infrastructure. The Town depends on various committees, boards, and commissions, to advise the Selectmen. Harpswell has a high level of volunteer participation on these committees. The experience and special knowledge these volunteers offer are invaluable.

Trends Facilities and services necessary to support the Town's growth and development have increased in quantity, quality and cost over the past ten years. The Town has eliminated its solid waste incinerator and landfill and established a new recycling center. Harpswell has recently completed a major expansion of the Town office building. It serves to accommodate a broader range of municipal services. The Town has received the former Fuel Depot property on Harpswell Neck from the Navy and designated the 118.5-acre property as George J. Mitchell Field. As demand for Town services has been triggered by increased population, the population's age profile also is changing. According to the 2000 Census, older adult and senior age groups increasingly represent a larger portion of the population while population in school age children and young adult age groups has been declining.

Analysis/Issues A major challenge facing the Town is how to respond to the changing service demands that come with a growing and changing population. These challenges include maintaining neighborhood schools in a period of declining enrollment, and anticipating and determining how best to respond to changing municipal service needs that come with these shifts. Concurrently, the Town's ownership of land has greatly expanded, thereby providing new opportunities for a variety of municipal, housing, and/or economic development uses. These trends may further strain the ability of volunteers and existing Town staff to continue providing services at current levels. Accordingly, questions for the Town in coming years concern how to more effectively coordinate volunteer, staff and elected officials' activities, and consideration of new forms of Town governance, administration and public safety / emergency response.

Town Administration

Background Harpswell governs itself through a Town Meeting – Selectmen – Town Administrator form of government. There are three Selectmen, an elected Town Clerk, an elected Tax Collector, an elected Town Treasurer, and an elected Road Commissioner. The Town Administrator oversees the activities of the several Town departments, including Assessing, Codes Enforcement, Planning, the Recycling Center and Transfer Station, and Recreation.

Trends Since 1993, the Town has increased its staff as needed to address growing service demands that have accompanied the Town's growth and development. These have included the addition of the Town Administrator position, more codes enforcement

staff, a full-time town planner, staff changes appropriate to switching from a Town incinerator to a recycling center and transfer station, a recreation director, and additional clerical and support staff. In addition to the Planning Board, Board of Appeals, Budget Advisory Committee, Conservation Commission, Solid Waste Committee and Marine Resources Committee, there are also a Harbor & Waterfront Committee, Fire and Rescue Committee, Recreation Committee, Library Committee, a Comprehensive Plan Committee, and a Town Lands Committee.

Analysis/Issues As Town Committees have grown in number, their respective roles have sometimes been unclear or apparently duplicative. With assistance of Town committees and others, the Selectmen will clarify roles of Town committees and boards by creating specific descriptions of the responsibilities for each. These descriptions will prescribe the respective authority of each committee, and to whom each reports. Annual work agendas should be cooperatively developed with priorities, reporting requirements, timelines, and possible funding requirements.

Goal: Provide services and facilities to meet the Town's needs, now and in the future.

❖ *Policies*

- Continue the tradition of volunteer service through boards and committees to provide Town government with broad public participation in determining the Town's future and how services are best provided.
- Ensure the Town is providing information, referral and services to maintain and meet the needs of a diverse population including health care, transportation, social services, recreation, and others.

❖ *Action Recommendations*

- A Governance Committee will study the capacity of town services and explore possible regional and state resources to ensure that the needs of residents are met. This would include, but not be limited to, services such as Town administration, recreation, police, fire & rescue, education and waste disposal.
- Form a volunteer advisory group of residents to conduct a comprehensive inventory of quality of life concerns of senior population. Identify basic needs of food, shelter, and health; determine deficits and identify means to solve problems (including regional efforts and grant monies). Additional concerns about transportation and recreation should be addressed.

Codes Enforcement Office

Background Proper codes enforcement is the front line of land use protection in town. Without it, land use ordinances and conditions of approval are not effective. The Codes Enforcement Office receives and reviews applications for building permits, plumbing permits, and other local permits required under the Town's land use ordinances and the

State Plumbing Code. The Office also helps landowners and contractors to navigate these ordinances, alerting them to any need for approval from the Planning Board or Board of Appeals, and/or state or federal permits that they also may need. Codes Enforcement Officers, including the local plumbing inspector, are responsible to inspect for compliance with such codes and conditions as construction proceeds, as staff time allows. When violations occur, the Codes Enforcement Office is responsible for enforcing the ordinance standards.

Trends Over the past several years the Town has experienced a heavy burden of applications for new construction of homes, additions and wharves. Applications for new homes alone have averaged 50 per year. Until the late 1990's, the Town attempted to meet its codes enforcement needs with one part-time codes enforcement officer. The volume of activity was such that the Town ultimately expanded its codes enforcement staff to two full time codes officers and a secretary. Subsequently, Town permit records have been better organized to keep them updated. In addition, the burden on codes enforcement staff from assisting the Planning Board with development review has been reduced with the hiring of a Town Planner and a Planning Assistant.

Analysis/Issues While a significant progress has been made, the Town still has codes enforcement issues to be addressed. Given Town growth, review times for applications may now be longer as they compete with on-going enforcement duties. Applications for land use permits that are approved by the Planning Board or the Board of Appeals are often approved with conditions. In some cases, applicants or their contractors do not adhere to these conditions. Land use ordinances in their current form are published in several individual documents – the Basic Land Use Ordinance, Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, Site Plan Review Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, and a Definitions Addendum. Organized with the intent of enabling applicants to obtain one ordinance that pertains to their particular application, in fact, the ordinances often have overlapping application, requiring more than one ordinance to properly address all code requirements. There is no broadly published notice of building or land use permits issued. Public knowledge of permits issued contributes to an informed citizenry, thereby assisting codes enforcement through their awareness of properly permitted activities. The Codes Enforcement Officers must balance land use concerns with private property rights. Since the Town's valuable groundwater and ocean resources are shared, responsibility for their protection must be shared by all residents.

Goal: Assure that State and local regulations governing land use, plumbing, sewage disposal, and development are administered in a fair, conscientious, and even-handed manner.

❖ *Policies*

- Create awareness that Harpswell's land use regulations are designed to protect the public interest on behalf of the town residents.
- Develop a system for reviewing applications that ensures adequacy of the fee schedule to cover the costs, the ability of the Codes Office to review each application

in a timely manner, and allows for the necessary time for the Codes Officers to follow up on permits.

❖ ***Action Recommendations***

- The Codes Office should develop a systematic approach for ensuring that decisions by the Planning Board and Board of Appeals are complied with.
- Maintain a sufficient number of qualified Codes Enforcement Officers to handle the workload.
- Monitor all development and construction to assure that it is carried out in accordance with the applicable codes, regulations, and requirements of the project approval.
- Provide ongoing oversight of sewage disposal systems that are malfunctioning or illegal to assure that violations are addressed, and the resulting systems are functioning according to design, permit requirements, and local codes.
- Institute a public information program on septic system maintenance to assure that the public understands how these systems work and what actions are necessary to ensure their long-term operation.
- On a monthly basis the Codes Office will publish all building permits and certificates of completion at the Town Office and the Town website.

Waste Disposal

Background The Town's Recycling Center and Transfer Station is open most days during the week to receive a wide variety of recyclable materials. These materials are thereby removed from the waste stream and sold, in an effort to offset the expense of managing the Town's municipal solid waste. Materials presently being recycled include paper products, certain plastics, waste metals, glass, batteries, electronic goods, oil and paint cans. Bulk materials collected include construction & demolition debris, furniture, white goods, large metal items, propane tanks, tires, large batteries, ashes, brush, wood, leaves and yard wastes.

Trends In its implementation of the major recommendations of the '93 Plan, the Town's principal accomplishment has been the abandonment of its aged incinerator (dismantled in 1999) and the creation of a new transfer facility. A major function of the Harpswell Recycling Center continues to be the management and promotion of the Town's recycling efforts. Household waste is now collected at the center, compacted, and shipped to out-of-town landfills. In recent years the Recycling Center has raised the percentage of recycled materials to more than 50% of the waste material deposited. In 2002 the Town's reached a record 56.6% which is above State recycling goals. Substantial increases in total materials deposited have also been observed in recent years, due in part to extensive construction activity. All of these changes have been accomplished with only a modest increase in staff. Certification training has enhanced staff efficiency.

Analysis/Issues The sale of recyclable material assets offsets operational costs to some degree, but this revenue varies with changes in market demand and price. It therefore

remains to be seen whether increased usage will lead to higher operational costs, raising questions as to whether the Town should encourage residents to contract privately for trash hauling service. Such services transport waste-to-waste management facilities out of Town, thus reducing local trash recycling and cost. However, whether these services recycle as extensively as Harpswell raises the question of their impact on the Town's ability to continue to meet or surpass state recycling goals.

Goal: Continue to plan for the Town's waste management needs to meet anticipated growth.

❖ *Policies*

- Maximize the revenues generated by recycling efforts and use them to offset the operating cost.
- Consider regional waste disposal efforts.
- Emphasize the use of incentives rather than penalties to stimulate more recycling.
- The town should commit resources to continuing the residential composting program.

❖ *Action Recommendations*

- Study the methods used by other towns to achieve higher rates of recycling.
- Continue and expand the Town's recycling program.
- Provide periodic opportunities for disposal of items not currently accepted at the recycling center, including but not limited to automobiles and household hazardous materials.
- Budget annually for public outreach programs to educate the Town's residents about the value of recycling.
- Recycling Committee and others will publish informational guides that explain the costs associated with waste disposal and the potential savings associated with waste-reduction and increased recycling. Particular emphasis will be placed on the environmental and personal benefits of reducing purchases of non-recyclable goods.
- Recycling Committee and others will consider methods for monitoring the improper disposal of waste that should be recycled.
- Research the merits of creating a Town composting program.

Schools and Education

Background Harpswell is a member, along with Bowdoin, Bowdoinham, and Topsham in S.A.D 75. There are four S.A.D 75 Board members elected from Harpswell. Harpswell students attend the West Harpswell and Harpswell Island elementary schools, and Mt. Ararat Middle School and Mt. Ararat High School in Topsham. In April 2004 total school enrollment in all grades for students from Harpswell was 598.

Trends The Town's elementary school age population has fallen by 36% over ten years, down from 359 students in 1990 to 255 in 2000. This loss is partly due to the move of grade 6 to Mt. Ararat Middle School. Prior to the move of grade 6, enrollment was 21%

less, due to population losses. In 2003-4, the total elementary school enrollment in Harpswell was 248 students, with 173 enrolled at Harpswell Island School and 75 at West Harpswell School.

Analysis/Issues The viability of the West Harpswell School is an ongoing concern due to shrinking enrollment. Board members are concerned about the lack of citizen involvement in Town education affairs. The Town's share of the 2003-04 S.A.D. budget was approximately \$5.8 million, nearly twice the Town's budget for all other services. This is comparable to Topsham's contribution although Topsham has nearly three times as many students as Harpswell. The disparity in local financial aid to the S.A.D. system reveals an unfair formula for allocating costs among towns in the district.

Goal: Assure that the regional school system recognizes the changes in Harpswell's school-age population, and continues to provide a high level of education for the Town's children.

❖ *Policies*

- Maintain neighborhood stability with neighborhood schools.
- Seek equity in regional school funding formulas.

❖ *Action Recommendations*

- Work with the Town's legislative representatives to alter regional funding formulas to treat towns like Harpswell more fairly.
- To ensure the continued viability of Harpswell schools, develop affordable housing to attract families with children to live in Harpswell.
- Selectmen and S.A.D. 75 will develop incentives such as seminars, workshops, and conferences to attract citizens to assume a more active role in educational policy.
- Study ways to maintain the viability of local schools.

Public Access

Background There are about 216 miles of shore frontage in Harpswell, the most of any town in Maine. Harpswell also has a long tradition of open and easy access to the shoreline and to the water. Boating, fishing, camping, picnicking, swimming, and duck hunting are just a few of the activities that take place on or near the water. There are approximately 20 publicly owned (Town and State) points of access to landings, docks, beaches, scenic waterfront, islands and waterways scattered throughout town. Generous individuals have allowed residents access to traditional shellfish beds and beaches over private property. There are also a number of points of water access available for a fee through private marinas, wharves, and docks. In recent years the work of the Harpswell Heritage Land Trust has protected even more of the traditional points of access through easements and purchases.

Trends In spite of this, the Town of Harpswell faces many challenges in maintaining access to the water. As the number of residents and summer visitors grows, Town landings have often become congested with vehicles and trailers due to limited parking space. This situation is frustrating to abutters, fishermen, and residents, and it poses a traffic safety concern. Many town landings are difficult to use because they need maintenance or repair. Others have been encroached upon by private development. Increasing development is also beginning to impact traditional access points through private property and on offshore islands.

Analysis/Issues The Town must re-examine the present situation, identify problems, and take appropriate action in guaranteeing access to the shore. This can be accomplished through a comprehensive approach that links access to open space and recreation, involves cooperation with groups like the Harpswell Heritage Land Trust, and educates and involves the public.

Goal: Provide safe and convenient access to the ocean including landings, docks, beaches, scenic waterfront areas, islands, and waterways with access points distributed throughout Harpswell.

❖ *Policy*

- Provide adequate access throughout Harpswell to the ocean including landings, docks, beaches, scenic waterfront areas, islands, and waterways.

❖ *Action Recommendations*

- Develop a plan to improve condition and function of existing access points.
- Determine where new access points are needed and develop a plan to establish them.
- Inventory and map types of existing public access including landings, docks, beaches, scenic waterfront areas, islands, and waterways.
- Identify access points most threatened by development and prioritize them for protection.

Recreation

Background In 1995, the Town established a Recreation Department, recognizing the role of the Town in providing local recreational opportunity. Prior to that time, the Town, at the request of the Recreation Committee, appropriated funds annually for out-of-town recreational activities for Harpswell children such as swimming and skiing lessons, Little League ball and youth hockey. The recreation program continues to depend heavily on volunteer participation.

Trends With the opening of the Trufant-Summerton Field on Route 24 in 1995, many new recreational opportunities in town were instituted. In 2002, the Town hired a part-time recreation director to plan and carry out a program of sports, exercise, arts, and life-long learning and leisure activities for citizens of all ages. These programs benefit the

community by contributing to the good health and well being of its citizens, and by building community cohesiveness as people come together from our geographically dispersed villages. National recognition of the need for increased physical activity, coupled with the pressures of development, has led the Town to continue developing lands for public use. Examples include the Cliff Trail behind the Town House and the planned Mountain Road walking path. The Town also recognizes the need to clarify and possibly increase protection of existing locations of public access to the water for swimming and boating.

Analysis/Issues Population growth and the increase in the average age of the population pose challenges where provision of recreation facilities and services are concerned. There is a shortage of local facilities for programs such as arts, music, crafts and pre-school and senior citizen offerings. Concurrently, the dispersal of the population among islands and peninsulas results in insufficient density to support such offerings in all three Town centers. The State Planning Office projects that school age population will drop from 638 students in 2002, to 447 in 2017. There also are challenges in communicating available programs and activities to all those who could take advantage of them. Contributing further to the problem is a shortage of usable open space that is accessible by the public at a time when remaining open space is subject to rapid development and subdivision pressures in the market place.

Goal: To enhance the quality of life and well-being of Harpswell's citizens both by continuing to preserve and develop its natural environment for outdoor recreation and by offering a well-planned recreation program of leisure, educational, arts and sports opportunities for all ages.

❖ *Policies*

- Ensure the Recreation Department has adequate staffing and resources to meet the demands of the department.
- Provide sufficient facilities, both indoor and outdoors, to meet current and future recreational and community uses.
- Continue to develop partnerships with surrounding towns and communities.
- Encourage availability of and access to traditional inland recreation opportunities such as hunting, hiking and cross-country skiing.

❖ *Actions Recommendations*

- Evaluate the need for further professional staffing for this rapidly growing department.
- Determine how long existing indoor town spaces can accommodate recreation activities, and examine the feasibility of constructing a centrally located recreation building.
- Evaluate outdoor spaces throughout the town for future recreational uses, including outdoor ice skating rinks, ball fields, walking routes, and playgrounds.

Mitchell Field

Background The former Fuel Depot site has been returned to the Town and named George J. Mitchell Field. The Town, in agreement with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection and the U.S. Department of Defense, has determined that the Field may be used as a multipurpose site for the benefit of Harpswell residents.

Mitchell Field is an asset for the Town of Harpswell. The site is 118.5 acres of field and forest with 2,600+/- feet of water frontage on Middle Bay. Such a large undeveloped parcel presents the Town with both exciting potential and legitimate challenges to be considered.

The geographic location, on the southern portion of Harpswell Neck, of the site is such that it is isolated from major transportation routes and population densities. To avoid contamination from residual fuel in the ground, any pumping of ground water is limited to 450 gallons per day for the foreseeable future. This is barely more than enough to support a single household. Such factors suggest severely limited capabilities of the land to support business or residential activity. They do not seriously restrict recreational, educational or conservation uses.

Consideration should also be given to the water access of the site and the opportunities this may present for certain water dependent activities. The site provides ample opportunity for scenic vistas out over deep waters. However water dependent uses may be limited due to the exposed nature of the anchorage. The considerable cost anticipated to renovate (or demolish) the existing pier (estimated at \$1,000,000+) may limit the Town's ability to use the field for boating or fishing activities. While the land seemingly provides the Town a large undeveloped parcel on which it can shape future uses, these potential problems need to be recognized in any planning efforts the Town may undertake.

Goal: Within the site's limitations, utilize Mitchell Field to best serve the interests of Harpswell's people.

❖ *Policies*

- The initial primary use of Mitchell Field should be recreation, education and conservation.
- Resolve the future of the pier, water tower and existing buildings.

❖ *Action Recommendations*

- The portion of the Field, south of the paved roadway that is wooded and largely undisturbed should be set aside for conservation and low impact recreation.
- Designate and develop the level area near the gate for active recreation, including the construction of playing fields to expand the recreational opportunities available to Harpswellians.

- Reserve the remainder of the field in its present condition pending exploration of potential future uses.
- Conduct a study to determine the costs and benefits of renovating or demolishing the pier or pursuing other alternatives.
- Develop a plan for use of the two dwellings and their land when they are finally given over to the Town. Among the possibilities are sale to provide funds to develop the rest of the field, rental to provide income for the operation of the field, and low income housing.
- Determine whether to remove or continue to use the water tower.

Police Services

Background Harpswell continues to contract with Cumberland County for policing through the Sheriff's office. Three deputy sheriffs maintain an office at the Town Office throughout the year. During the summer months, a fourth sheriff's deputy joins them. The County Sheriff's Office has been providing services under contract to Harpswell for about 30 years. The Cumberland County Sheriff's office, under contract with the Town, has also provided two marine patrol officers to serve as shellfish wardens in Harpswell.

Trends In 2001, the monthly number of calls received by the sheriff's deputies ranged from 160 to 270. In 2002, this number ranged from approximately 120 to 270. In 2003, the range was 140 to 270 calls per month. In each year the calls were highest in the summer months. In 2002, 25% of calls concerned crime, 31% concerned traffic, and 44% were for other reasons according to the Town Report. In 2003, these numbers were relatively unchanged, with 22% of calls concerning crime, 32% concerned with traffic, and 46% for other reasons. In 2004 crimes against people have increased in frequency in Harpswell, such as domestic violence (up 5.5 %), home invasions (up 6%), and assaults (up 15%). Calls in response to burglaries, are less frequent than in 2003.

Analysis/Issues Demand for police services in Harpswell is reasonably stable, and there seems little reason to anticipate major changes in that demand as the Town continues to develop. Contracting with the County Sheriff's office currently appears to be the most cost effective and responsive way to meet the Town's needs for the foreseeable future. For the Town to undertake this function on its own would require significant capital outlay and personnel cost.

Goal: Provide timely, cost-effective policing to all parts of Town.

❖ *Policy*

- Continue to rely on this regional form of policing as a cost-effective and reliable service.

❖ *Action Recommendations*

- Determine with the County how best to continue policing as the Town grows. Affordable housing may encourage deputies to live locally to enhance this service. This form of policing is a good example of provision of local services by a regional government.
- Expand the data obtained from Sheriff's Department to include information on items such as response times to calls, investigations conducted and closure rates.

Fire and Rescue

Background Townspeople have long maintained volunteer fire and rescue departments on Harpswell Neck and on each of the three large islands. The Town contributes a portion of their annual operating costs and between \$20,000 and \$25,000 for capital costs to each of these volunteer companies. The Cundy's Harbor Fire Department serves Great Island, the Orr's & Bailey Island Fire Department serves both of those islands with a station on each, and the Harpswell Neck Fire Department serves Harpswell Neck from a station in South Harpswell. Ambulance service is run as a part of each of the three departments. Ambulance service is provided free of charge by the Cundy's Harbor and Orr's & Bailey Departments. Harpswell Neck has recently begun charging for service. There are no paid staff in any of the departments, which are all volunteer.

Trends During the past several years, major plant investments include a new station for Bailey Island, expansion of the Cundy's Harbor station, and a new tank truck for Harpswell Neck. As technology advances, there are growing demands for specialized training and equipment to better protect Harpswell with its increased population and growing number of structures. Older volunteers are more common, and often better trained as well as more experienced than younger volunteers. The cost of equipment replacement and new equipment has risen steeply in the last several years and is projected to continue to rise. While the Department Chiefs all say they are currently well equipped, there are some pieces of equipment that will need replacement during the next 10 years.

Analysis/Issues It appears that Harpswell is best served with this decentralized system because of its geography. A concern is the aging of the fire and rescue volunteers whose capacities are reduced with age. Not enough younger recruits are volunteering to replace and assist older volunteers.

Goal: Provide timely and appropriate levels of emergency service to all parts of Town.

❖ *Policies*

- Provide emergency fire and rescue services on the current decentralized basis until growth and development patterns change.

- The Town should consider some paid fire and rescue personnel at a time in the future when it is apparent that the all-volunteer service is no longer sufficient to meet the demands.

❖ *Action Recommendations*

- Consider strategies to attract citizens to volunteer for emergency services. This would be less costly in the long run than creating a central paid emergency service.
- Monitor the provision of these services as the Town grows to ensure adequate coverage in the future.

Transportation System

Background Harpswell's roads and bridges constitute its primary transport network, linking it to the mainland. Routes 123 and 24 connect Harpswell with the mainland and Brunswick. The Mountain Road is the principal east-west route, and it connects these two state-aid highways with each other. The Cundy's Harbor Road connects Cundy's Harbor with Route 24. All other roads in Harpswell are local side roads leading to coastal development or, more recently, inland development with a low-density suburban layout. Traffic on these roads is generally much lower than on the main routes, but these roads sometimes slope steeply to the shore and are subject to erosion and/or grade changes that can make winter travel treacherous and emergency access difficult. Nearly all of such roads are private roads. The property owners are responsible for their maintenance.

Trends In 1990, 79.5% of Harpswell's workforce, or some 1,801 residents, commuted out of Town to work. Only 20.5% of Harpswell's workforce lived and worked in Harpswell. By 2000, the percentage of Harpswell's workforce that commuted outside of Town had decreased to 74.5%, but the number of such workers had nevertheless increased to 1,850 people. Also in 2000, the number of workers living and working in Harpswell had increased to 634, or 25.5% of Harpswell's resident workforce. An additional 228 workers in Harpswell commuted to Harpswell from other locations. Coupling these changes with the growing population it becomes clear that there are ever-increasing demands placed upon Harpswell's roads by automobiles, trucks, bicyclists and pedestrians. At the same time, private roads serving multiple subdivisions often are poorly maintained, causing safety concerns in provision of emergency services. In recent years, the Town has adopted and amended a roads ordinance that requires minimum standards for private road construction and maintenance. Even though the Town is not generally asked to accept new subdivision roads and the costs thereof, poor road construction leads to high maintenance costs for existing and future homeowners who live along them.

Analysis/Issues Of particular concern is the condition of Routes 123, 24, and Cundy's Harbor Road. Parts of these require fundamental reconstruction. Cosmetic, periodic repaving and filling of potholes by the state are inadequate maintenance of these roads. Whether to include paved shoulders and bicycle/pedestrian usage along Routes 123, 24 &

Cundy's Harbor Road is being considered by the Highway Safety Committee. A Special Town Meeting in May 2004 approved bonding \$600,000 for a capital roads project to take place over a 1-2 year timeframe for seven Town roads – Aucocisco, Eggmoggin, Field, Pinkham Point, Stevens Corner, South Dyer's and Ocean Street. The Selectmen and the Town's consulting engineer will oversee the work to maintain cost controls and oversight of this major capital improvement project. As development has increased, so have the number of entrances onto the major highways in Harpswell. These entrances increase safety hazards. The Maine DOT, on state-aid highways, and the Site Plan Review Ordinance now regulate access from new commercial uses to help limit any increased traffic hazard.

Goal: Provide a system of transportation which offers all users safe, reliable access that is in keeping with the character of the Town.

❖ *Policies*

- The Town will provide experienced oversight to ensure continuity of capital planning, road improvements, snow removal and road maintenance among other functions.
- An annual review process to analyze the condition of the Town roads and projections of cost for upgrades to the roads should be developed. Professional engineering review maybe necessary to develop proper specifications and bid procedures.
- The Town will work with neighboring towns and employers to create regional commuter park and ride lots in conjunction with commuter transportation programs.

❖ *Action Recommendations*

- The Town will work with State DOT and regional committees to ensure timely and appropriate State highway improvements to Routes 123, 24 and Cundy's Harbor Rd.
- The Town will refine standards for road size and construction and periodically update the roads ordinance to reflect changes deemed useful. One concern is the requirement that roads be a fixed minimum width even for small subdivisions.
- The Town will explore solutions to resolve problems of substandard road construction and maintenance of old subdivision roads.
- Advocate with the State for the reconstruction of Routes 123, 24 and Cundy's Harbor Road to current roadbed engineering standards to avoid the inefficient use of public monies spent in the past on temporary repaving of these highways.
- Develop a clear policy as to the width, speeds, and addition of paved shoulders along State and Town roads.
- The Town should undertake a study of the merits of a bike path system that links with similar proposals for Brunswick.
- The Town will study needs, value, and possible locations for future bicycle paths. A long-range system could connect large reserves of open space using bike-ways on land privately acquired, as well as on available road rights-of-way. Such efforts should be dovetailed with the proposed Open Space Plan.

Libraries

Background Libraries are an essential element of a community's infrastructure, providing cultural resources and opportunities for lifelong learning. Harpswell is served by Curtis Memorial Library -- a private, full service facility making its resources and opportunities available to Brunswick and Harpswell residents and governed by a Board of Harpswell and Brunswick citizens. Portions of Harpswell are also served by two local libraries in Cundy's Harbor and Orr's Island. These libraries are also private but limited in their hours, facilities and catalogues compared to Curtis Library. Historically, Harpswell has provided about 6-7% of the budget for Curtis Library -- with the Town of Brunswick paying the remainder -- and partial funding for its two local libraries. Harpswell residents account for about 13% of the Curtis Library card holders and about the same amount of its borrowing activity. Cundy's Harbor, Orr's Island and Bailey Island residents, summer and year round, account for nearly all patronage and use of the local libraries. At present, the Cundy's Harbor Library is considering an expansion. The Orr's Island Library expanded somewhat a few years ago.

Trends Three years ago, in recognition of the disparity between Harpswell's funding support and its patronage, Curtis Library asked the Town to increase its funding support to 10% of the library's budget or about \$100,000 at present, phased in over several years. Consequently, the Town's appropriation for Curtis Memorial Library has risen from \$64,900 in 2000 to \$85,260 in 2003, an increase of 31% and bringing the level of Harpswell's support to about 8.5% of the library's total budget. Over the same period, the Town also increased its funding support for its local libraries from \$14,000 to \$19,000, an increase of 36%.

Analysis/Issues Harpswell has a perennial debate over how it should provide library services to its residents. Should the Town continue to provide a portion of Curtis Memorial Library's budget in return for which the Town gets general access to the library for all Harpswell residents and a voice in how the library is run? Or should Harpswell just buy library cards for those residents who wish to avail themselves of Curtis Library services? Or should the town build its own library in a central location, incorporating the two existing local libraries?

Taking the latter question first, it would seem that the cost of building and operating a central Harpswell library to provide services equivalent to those of Curtis Library would be more expensive than continuing the Town's present relationship with Curtis Library. Addressing the first two questions, at the current rate of \$65 per card, providing Curtis Library cards to the approximately 1500 current card holders would cost \$97,500. This is about what the Town would spend to continue the present relationship and Harpswell would lose its voice on the Curtis Library Board. The per card cost is projected to increase over the next few years. At the present level of use, any rate over \$66 would probably cost the Town more than the current system, again without participation in the Library's governance. In 2004, the per capita cost for Harpswell residents for having access to Curtis Library was \$15.50 compared to \$40.81 per capita for Brunswick residents.

Goal: Provide comprehensive library reference, research and recreational reading opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities in a cost-effective, efficient manner.

❖ *Policy*

- The Town should continue to provide both the local and regional library services that are currently available to Harpswell residents.

❖ *Action Recommendations*

- Continue the present relationship with Curtis Memorial Library. Regularly seek advice from the local library boards, the Town Library Committee and others to discuss with Curtis Memorial Library an appropriate level of cost and service for Harpswell support of the library.
- Increase financial support for its two local libraries to assist in their expansion and use of member interlibrary loan services. Regularly seek advice from the local library boards, the Town Library Committee and others to discuss the appropriate level of Town support for the libraries.

Fiscal Capacity

Background Fiscal capacity refers to the Town's ability, through taxation and fees, to provide an adequate level of community services and facilities. The term, as used in the comprehensive plan, also refers to the Town's ratio of bonded indebtedness to its property valuation as defined by the State. As property values have risen over the past several years, the State has required the Town to revalue its real estate to reflect current market values. The State's concern is twofold: first, to assure that all communities are meeting a constitutional obligation to assess property at fair market value; and second, to base state educational funding assistance to communities on frequently updated valuation data.

Trends In 1992, the Town's outstanding bonding obligation, including its share of Cumberland County debt, was \$1,711,415, or 0.34% of the Town's valuation as defined by the State. Today, the Town's valuation is \$831,970,262. The Town's current bond obligations, excluding any for Cumberland County, total \$2,207,500, which amounts to 0.27% of its valuation. This is well within the recommended limit of 5% of State valuation for bonding, and the legal limit of 15% of valuation.

Analysis/Issues The need to fund capital projects such as new community facilities and infrastructure (roads, plant and equipment) must be balanced by the Town's ability to pay for these projects. The Town has sufficient capacity to fund such projects within recommended limits. However, residents also must determine the level of taxation they are willing to accept. In the near term, the Town is presently undergoing revaluation by a private consultant retained for that purpose. Concurrently, the Maine Legislature and the

Governor have pledged to develop major property tax reform in the wake of the November 2004 election's defeat of the Palesky Tax Cap Initiative. Regardless of how these uncertainties are resolved, a planned system of capital expenditures is a prudent and responsible process that allows for potential long-term cost savings. Needed capital improvements can be anticipated and coordinated in a multi-year schedule that spreads the burden over time to minimize the need for borrowing, maximize eligibility for assistance from outside public funding sources, and reduce unpredictable fluctuations in the tax burden.

Goal: Promote ongoing community discussion of the Long-term Capital Projects Plan contained herein, in order to review and revise projected capital proposals, expenditures, and priorities annually in light of periodic change.

❖ *Policies*

- As the Town grows, we must monitor the costs of delivering services to Town residents to ensure the maximization of resources and, as necessary, modify the delivery of those services to maintain their cost effectiveness.

❖ *Action Recommendations*

- The Town will initiate an annual Capital Projects Review by meeting with all boards and committees for their capital project recommendations. A Plan will be developed and presented for public discussion and review by the Budget Advisory Committee and Selectmen. This process should begin early enough in the fall to enable adequate review by all involved.
- The Town will consider the fiscal impact of capital projects on the Town's mil rate, its credit rating and its fiscal capacity to fund such projects in its annual review.
- Continue the development of Five- and Ten Year Capital Projects Plans.

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

Introduction

Ten years from now, in 2015, Harpswell residents will look back and answer two questions:

- Have we made prudent choices in managing growth to retain the Town's character?
- Have we fairly balanced the needs of the community with the desires of individual property owners?

The Future Land Use Plan offers a framework to guide the community's land use options in a manner that will allow a strong "YES" to both questions. Fundamental to the Plan, as the preceding chapters state, is a concern that Harpswell's community character and quality of life may be eroded unless managed carefully. Such growth is changing the face and population of other coastal communities in Maine in a way that many believe is detrimental to the environment and residents. The Future Land Use Plan is an effort to preserve the best of Harpswell while accommodating growth responsibly.

Plan Objectives

The Future Land Use Plan designates areas of Town suitable and appropriate for types of general uses. The Plan also designates intensity of use within these areas. These uses are based on extensive research and study of natural and man-made characteristics of the Town. Evaluation of these characteristics has identified problems, opportunities and successful examples of land use.

The Future Land Use Plan is a requirement of the State, which recommends categories of land uses that include "growth" and "rural" areas, as well as "transitional" areas. Harpswell's Future Land Use Plan establishes categories that meet the State's requirements as follows:

- Village Districts
- Settled Villages
- Rural Areas
- Rural Neighborhoods
- Town District
- Waterfront Neighborhoods and Islands

These land use categories achieve State and Town objectives as further described.

Village Districts

These areas recognize traditional historical settlements that have grown over the years to include typical characteristics such as churches, libraries, schools, general stores, post

offices, cemeteries, fire departments and community halls. They also include homes near each other on small lots, allowing residents to walk easily from place to place. They have served as core communities for an island town spread far over land and water. This Plan respects the community values and settlement patterns of Harpswell's villages by encouraging expansion around them on adjacent larger tracts of land. Village Districts are designated for Cundy's Harbor, South, West, and East Harpswell, and Harpswell Center. They generally propose a continuation of the traditional mix of uses and intensity of land use found in the existing villages. Preservation of historic structures and homes is encouraged as a means of maintaining community identity and quality of life.

The goal of the Village Districts is to promote pedestrian movement and street life by placing homes, shops, workplaces and public buildings in close proximity; to reduce vehicular traffic; to provide locations for town life such as greens, parks, natural lands and civic buildings; to promote living opportunities for residents of all ages and financial means; and to promote a pattern of development that provides for cost effective public investment for required public services. It is the intent of the Plan to guide most new growth to these areas.

Harpswell Center In the geographic center of Harpswell Neck, Harpswell Center boasts a collection of historic buildings that includes Kellogg Church, the old Town House, a cattle pound, Centennial Hall, several period homes, and a working waterfront at Lookout Point. Several office buildings, a scout hall and the Harpswell Historical Society's building are also located in this cluster. Around this constellation of period structures a number of larger parcels of land are located, which eventually will likely be subdivided. A fine expanded village district may grow here with a mix of types of homes. It does not appear that much commercial development will grow here, but the presence of several small office buildings suggests the possibility of additional mixed office/business uses. This area is some 300 acres in size, with half potentially developable over time.

South and West Harpswell With over 500 acres of developed and undeveloped land, this area consists of fine period homes on Pott's Point, Ash Cove Road and West Harpswell along Route 123. West Harpswell School, a church and several businesses and artisans' galleries are located here as well as working waterfronts in Pott's Harbor. This attractive neighborhood has distant views of the ocean from higher elevations and a number of larger parcels that may be subdivided over time. Though 10 miles down Harpswell Neck from Brunswick, the great beauty of the area suggests it will continue to be developed with new homes. It has the potential for new, small retail shops and businesses to be included. Some 200 acres appear to be developable over time.

East Harpswell Located at the north end of Great Island and only five miles to Cook's Corner, this neighborhood has been actively developed in the past twenty years with a variety of old and new subdivisions. Its substantial population and relatively built-up nature suggests the possibility of some new business services to complement those along Cundy's Harbor Road. Care should be taken to avoid what appears to be the beginning of a commercial strip in this area, and any new businesses should be clustered in one location. With a church, cemetery and existing businesses, this area may be thought of as

a neighborhood waiting to become a village. Careful provision of amenities such as public park space and new commercial activity in a centralized location could offer an attractive village center. There appear to be less than 100 acres of developable land.

Cundy's Harbor A traditional New England fishing village, this neighborhood has grown over the past twenty years to include a number of vacation homes along the waterfront. The village core has a number of period homes of modest architectural style, suggesting the nature of a fishing center. The harbor itself is still home to many lobster boats and several trawlers for ground fishing, and some captains still live in the village.

A recent study of the village, Cundy's Harbor Working Waterfront Study, was commissioned by the town. It focused on concerns that this working waterfront community, among others in Harpswell, may be gradually overcome by new residential development along the waterfront. In addition, various other concerns, such as loss of access to the water, lack of storage and parking space, and high-assessed values of working waterfront properties were covered. The report is referred to elsewhere in this Plan and is available for study at the Town Planner's office. A fine opportunity exists for this village to accommodate likely new growth on some 100 acres of land northwest of the village center, creating new population support for the local restaurants, general store, library, church, and industrial park. Harpswell's only industrial park might also expand to accommodate operations similar to those existing now.

Settled Villages

In this category are the villages of southern Orr's Island and Bailey Island, originally fishing communities, now known as well for their vacation character. These villages have many of the same fine community features described above but have little land left for expansion. In some locations both islands reveal environmental impacts that jeopardize groundwater and natural resources, suggesting need for caution and care with regard to size and location of new development.

The goal of these districts is to foster the same attributes of village life described previously by maintaining the distinctive character of these island communities without accommodating significant new development. Market pressures in these areas will expand the "tear-down" phenomenon by which older homes are replaced with new, often substantially larger homes. To maintain community character, scale, and quality of groundwater and ocean water, the size and location of such new homes must be managed carefully.

Bailey Island With very little vacant land left for development, Bailey Island is a mature village, which is nearly fully settled or built up. Famous as a vacation tourist destination, the island is perhaps best known for its photogenic Mackerel Cove. This sheltered body of water is still home to a fleet of lobster and fishing boats. Garrison Cove is also a working waterfront. With fewer young men and women entering the fishing industry and pressure on the working waterfront from new residential development, the island faces the same potential changes that other waterfront communities are experiencing in Maine.

Though there is little room for expansion, the island is witnessing the loss of smaller cottages and camps on the waterfront, as new large homes are built in their place. In cases where such homes are planned for non-conforming lots, or in places with documented environmental degradation, the town should manage new growth for location and scale. The island still maintains a village-like pace of activity and neighborhood character, even during peak vacation season.

Southern Orr's Island About the size of Bailey Island, southern Orr's Island is also a mature village with little land left for expansion. The village area from Tower Hill to the Cribstone Bridge contains a library, churches, post office, small shops and galleries, and some working waterfront, all of which provide a sense of village life amidst many period historic homes. The same pressures for new waterfront homes, replacing older, smaller cottages, exist here, as on Bailey Island. Multiple environmental constraints, often resulting from overly dense development and outdated septic systems, also exist on southern Orr's Island, and should serve to limit number and scale of new homes.

Waterfront Neighborhoods

These areas have grown over the history of Harpswell, initially as mostly vacation home districts and more recently as year round home locations. These neighborhoods are located throughout town in various forms. There are places where camps and cottage colonies, dating to the late 1800s still exist. In other areas, such as Indian Rest on Great Island, summer cottages were developed in speculative subdivisions during the early 1900s on lots as small as a tenth of an acre. Some locations, such as Stover's Cove in South Harpswell have a mixture of seasonal cottages that have been converted to year-round homes and more recently built homes. Neighborhoods such as High Head have been developed as subdivisions with wooded appeal and well-built, larger homes. Many of these neighborhoods have serious problems with groundwater quality. Gun Point and Long Point are two of many locations with salt-water intrusion in wells, whereas the Dyer Cove area on the west side of Quahog Bay has periodically been closed to shellfish harvesting due to run-off from dense development and septic systems. Quahog Bay and the New Meadows River are also vulnerable to nutrient loading from the many septic systems in their waterfront neighborhoods. Nevertheless, these neighborhoods experience demand for conversion of older cottages to new large homes on small, non conforming lots. The town must use great care to protect existing homes from further groundwater degradation due to new development. Limits to growth in these areas also are necessary to prevent further resource degradation and to encourage resource restoration.

Some waterfront neighborhoods also contain working waterfronts. These include Pott's Harbor, Orr's Cove, Dyer Cove, Harpswell Harbor, Clark Shore, Merriman Cove, Bethel Point, Pinkham Point, Long Cove, and scattered individual fishing wharves.

Rural Areas

Rural Areas reflect Harpswell's natural landscape of forest, field and water. These features are prized for their contrast to the built environment and for their beauty. For many, they are the essence of Harpswell's rural identity. Within Harpswell's rural landscape are essential natural features such as wetlands, flood plains, steep hillsides, high-yield groundwater wells, large habitat blocks and critical habitat areas. Rural Areas acknowledge the intrinsic value and ecological contribution of these and are intended to protect and preserve these districts and features, accommodating only limited new development. Where these lands include farms, hayfields, wood lots, lots in tree growth, and large natural habitat blocks, the intent of the Plan is to preserve these features and accommodate only limited new development. Very low densities and substantial setbacks from main roads of 75 feet where possible, will guide development away from main roads. Wooded buffer areas between main roads and new homes will maintain rural character.

Rural Areas on Harpswell Neck are identified in two locations along Route 123. These begin at the north end of Harpswell offering an attractive gateway to the town and extend to Harpswell Center, then beyond Harpswell Center to West Harpswell. These establish the character of rural wooded lands that provide a sense of separation between settled areas on Harpswell Neck. On Great Island, a Rural Area stretches from Long Reach to the Cundy's Harbor Road where the combination of these natural features creates distinctive marine-forest ecology. Another is located between East Harpswell and Cundy's Harbor and takes in Bethel Point to maintain a sense of separation between more heavily developed neighborhoods. This area will help prevent further pollution of Quahog Bay from development and preserve some of the last undeveloped waterfront in Harpswell. As noted earlier, most of the waterfront in town is built-up. Retention of some undeveloped waterfront areas not only reduces impacts on the ocean, but also maintains some of the exquisite natural marine-forest character of the community. On Orr's Island, two Rural Areas incorporate the remaining blocks of natural landscape and are valued as the last forested preserves on heavily developed Orr's and Bailey Islands.

Also within this category are most of the offshore islands. With little existing development and little developable land, these islands sometimes harbor rare birds, waterfowl and plants, and should not be intensively developed

Rural Neighborhoods

Areas identified as Rural Neighborhoods include Doughty Point, parts of East Harpswell and northern Orr's Island. They have experienced extensive residential development over the past twenty years, and have relatively little land left for development. These areas are expected to be built out at prevailing neighborhood densities.

Town District

Harpswell's far-flung settlement pattern over island, peninsula and water has created difficulty in communication and transportation in the past. Consequently, villages have required multiple services – post offices, churches, schools, libraries, fire stations, and community halls. As the Town grows in coming years, the Plan suggests it build on the wise decision made twenty years ago to locate the Town Offices in the geographic center of Harpswell. Several years ago the Town purchased about 70 acres of forest land abutting about 100 acres already owned around the Town Offices. The Town District recognizes the possibility of new public and private development in a central location, convenient to all residents, as the town grows. New, or expanded public services (town offices, recycling center, post office, recreation center, for instance) and possible new business services (bank branch, convenience foods, professional offices, restaurant, coffee shop, bakery, laundromat, service station, for instance) might be developed along Mountain Road. The Town District will complement Village Districts and Settled Villages by offering services the villages don't have enough population to support. It should serve to unify and bring together remote parts of town.

Land Use Inventory Maps

The Town Planner and the Town's Comprehensive Plan consultant, Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG), have developed with the Comprehensive Plan Committee, six informational maps illustrating a number of land use features. These maps have assisted in preparing the Future Land Use Plan, and have a wide range of information that may be useful to the public, builders, developers, the Planning Board, Codes Office, Selectmen, and others. Not all the maps are included in the published Comprehensive Plan but are on file in the Town Planner's office. A brief description of each of these maps follows:

Existing Land Use Map This map inventories nearly all land uses in the town and their approximate extent. Major categories include: Agriculture, Commercial, Institutional, Recreation, Residential, Land Cover, and Conservation. Within these categories are subcategories providing further refinement of information. Parcel lines, buildings and an average assumed residential lot coverage are depicted. The map is revealing in illustrating where development has and has not occurred.

Remaining Sub-dividable Parcels Map These parcels are divided in three categories: 0-1.99 acres; 2-19.99 acres; and 20-200 acres. Protected lands in conservation, resource protection, or owned by government, are also identified. Of note is that 40% of the undeveloped area falls in the 20-200 acre category. Another 53% falls in the 2-19.99 acre category. The two combined represent 10,555 acres, or about two-thirds of the town's total acreage. These categories do not take into account the presence of wetlands, steep slopes and other constraints, which reduce their actual buildable area.

Drainage Basin Analysis Map GPCOG has mapped all drainage basins in town, enabling calculations of precipitation absorption and groundwater consumption by local

land uses. The result is the identification of areas that consume more groundwater than is safely replenished. When consumption exceeds 15% of precipitation recharge, it is possible that groundwater quality is reduced due to inadequate dilution of storm water runoff and septic system discharge. These areas have been ‘red flagged’ on the maps, indicating where the town should carefully limit new development. In addition, locations of known high and moderate yield wells are noted, as well as areas in town where there exist reductions in groundwater quality, due largely to dense residential development, inadequate septic system quality, or too little separation of septic systems from wells.

Natural Resources Map The Natural Resources Map includes many wildlife and plant life areas of significance. These have been inventoried by the Maine Department of Natural Resources and include wetlands, ponds, streams, steep slopes, habitat blocks, shellfish areas, shellfish closures, significant bird habitat and nesting areas, eel grass and rare plants. In some cases these features are protected from development and human activity by town land use regulation, and in other cases by state regulation. Some resources are not protected at all and represent a challenge to the town in balancing their value with future land development.

New Residential Units Map From 1998-2003 some 345 new homes, seasonal cottages, mobile homes and apartments were constructed, and are mapped by location on this map. Of interest is the fact that these were quite evenly distributed through town, and that a majority were waterfront lots.

Development Constraints Map This map combines information from the previously described maps to illustrate significant land features and other information to indicate where new development can safely and appropriately occur, and conversely, where not to build. Principal categories of constraints include Moderate Constraints, where some development can occur with careful review by the town; Severe Constraints, where development generally should not occur; and Protected Areas where development can't occur due to protected status or regulation. Note that designated areas around high yield groundwater wells are both a possible water source for new development, as well as areas that require careful management to avoid pollution from development.

Land Use Management Policies

From analysis and evaluation of the extensive information developed and inventoried on maps, as previously described, policies to guide the town in planning for land use and managing growth over the next ten years follow:

Protect and Preserve Natural Landscape Features These are valuable land characteristics that should be recognized for their contribution as natural resources and features that limit development. If development is allowed to occur on, or near these areas, human safety, the natural environment, and development are compromised. Features include: wetlands and water, flood plains, aquifer recharge areas, steep slopes, wildlife habitat areas.

Preserve the Character of the Waterfront Much new residential development has occurred on waterfront lots over the past twenty years, altering the visual character of the forested waterfront, and causing pollution and nutrient loading from storm water runoff and septic systems built too close to the ocean. Development should be limited in areas where the ocean and groundwater are polluted or vulnerable to nutrient loading. The majority of new development should be directed inland into the Village Districts. Development on lots under the one acre minimum lot size should be managed to reflect the scale of neighboring buildings and to minimize ground and ocean water pollution.

Maintain and Expand Historic Villages Our traditional New England villages were the core of community on Orr's and Bailey Islands, Great Island and Harpswell Neck. The character and form of these, as described previously in Village Districts and Settled Villages, offer models by which Harpswell can continue to accommodate growth in the future. Harpswell can continue to house a diversity of new residents affordably and attractively by preserving historic homes and buildings, providing for single-family homes, attached homes, "cluster" development, and apartments. By allowing expansion on larger parcels of land around villages such as South and West Harpswell, Harpswell Center, East Harpswell and Cundy's Harbor, the town can avoid overcrowding the waterfront and reinforce the sense of community in these traditional communities. Permitting retail and business uses, as well as public facilities, parks and open space will enrich life there.

On Bailey and Orr's Islands there continues to be vital village life. There is limited land for new development on either island, so the challenge for the town will be to manage change of the built environment in a way to minimize loss of the historic architecture and settlement patterns of these communities.

Retain Distinctive Rural Features That Define Community Character Much of Harpswell's rural identity stems from the forest and fields that separate its village from each other. To preserve this special character, development should be limited outside of the villages to lower residential densities than in the villages. New homes along major roads, including Routes 123 and 24, Mountain Road and Cundy's Harbor Road, should be set back at least 75' beyond a wooded buffer where lot depths permit. An important part of the rural landscape is the view from the road. Many scenic vistas are identified on the maps described previously. These should be inventoried further and researched to determine how they can be permanently preserved.

Limit Growth in Areas With Identified Environmental Problems A number of neighborhoods and places have experienced environmental degradation due to overcrowding of homes, poor water quality, salt-water intrusion, overboard discharges, hazardous waste contamination, and well contamination from winter road salt usage. Special care is needed to assist existing homeowners and limit new home development in these areas until environmental deficits are overcome.

Cluster New Commercial Development New business development should be encouraged to locate in the Village and Town Districts and Settled Villages. Land use

regulations to complement Site Plan Review regulations will be developed for businesses to guide commercial development from spreading along major roads with multiple curb cuts. Rather, incentives can be created to enable business to co-locate with others in small, landscaped centers. Set back from main roads and buffered from nearby homes with landscaping, these small business centers can offer needed goods, services and employment to village residents.

Land Use Management Action Recommendations

An assortment of tested and productive management strategies exists to guide community development. Harpswell has used some of these for some time, including Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, a Basic Land Use Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations, Road Ordinance, and Site Plan Review Ordinance for businesses. The Comprehensive Plan recommends changes to some of these to accomplish the Plan's goals.

Density and Lot Size A key recommendation of the Plan is to guide most new development toward Village Districts, while directing new development away from Rural Areas and Waterfront Neighborhoods. One way to accommodate this development goal is by encouraging higher density development around existing villages and lower density development in rural and waterfront areas. Density of development simply means the number of dwelling units per number of acres of parcel size. Traditional residential development patterns in our villages have resulted in a range of densities from one dwelling per acre to four dwellings per acre. These densities account for the compact, walkable, interesting character of villages. Current land use regulations result in approximate densities of one dwelling unit per acre. The town's current subdivision regulations permit a density of two dwellings per acre in cluster developments. The Plan encourages new development at densities up to those existing in villages now, subject to environmental constraints and planning board site plan layout review.

Current densities in rural areas range from one dwelling per four acres to one dwelling per twenty acres, or more. Densities of one dwelling per twenty or more acres define the wooded character of these areas. It is possible, however, to accommodate a new subdivision of homes clustered on small lots within a large parcel of land, suitably set back from main roads, leaving most of the land in open space. Small lots do not necessarily mean higher density. A low density of development in Rural Areas accommodating a modest amount of the town's overall projected growth could be achieved in several ways:

- In subdivisions with minimum lot sizes of half an acre but a great majority of the subdivision land in open space
- in subdivisions with maximum lot sizes of perhaps an acre or an acre and a half with the great majority of the land in open space
- in subdivisions with a maximum density over the entire subdivision of perhaps one dwelling per ten acres, or more, of land

In addition, the Plan recommends use of public incentives to accomplish desired land use goals. These are described below.

Subdivision Regulations Much of remaining developable land consists of larger parcels some 10 – 200 acres in size. It is likely that as these parcels are sold for development, they will require subdivision review. Current subdivision regulations should be modified to enable more flexible application and regulation. The goal is to allow housing types that can be “clustered,” and to permit apartments, duplex homes and attached homes. Cluster subdivisions enable better protection of open space, scenic and habitat values and consume less land for roads and utility lines. Though the current subdivision regulations permit cluster, or open space developments, none have been proposed since the ordinance was approved by voters two years ago. The following recommendations will help accomplish this Plan’s goals:

- Tailor subdivision regulations to help accomplish the Town’s goals for each land use category.
- Require all major subdivisions (more than five lots) to utilize cluster lot design.
- Require some percentage of land in all subdivisions to be dedicated open space.
- Amend land use ordinances to assure that phased subdivisions meet the requirements of major subdivisions.
- Plan proposed open space in subdivisions to preserve desirable natural features and coincide with town-wide open space needs as identified on a town-wide open space plan.
- Plan for lower overall residential densities in subdivisions within Rural Areas, and higher overall densities of development in Village Districts to encourage new growth to locate inland, away from the waterfront, and generally outside of rural areas.
- Permit the use of dedicated open space for location of advanced community wastewater systems and community wells.
- Research possible use of dedicated open space for location of individual residential wastewater systems and wells, subject to state standards for soils, construction, and setback requirements.
- Moderately reduce the amount of required open space in the current cluster subdivision regulations to make this development alternative more viable.
- Permit mixed residential and business uses within Village Districts.
- Devise “planned development” regulations to provide more flexibility in the design and planning of developments containing a mix of housing types and mixed residential/commercial uses, which do not fit the typical definition of a subdivision.
- To encourage affordable housing in new subdivisions, provide flexibility for Planning Board to reasonably alter some regulations such as road frontage, density, and open space.
- Require preliminary meetings with Town Planner and Planning Board prior to subdivision application to communicate town land use objectives for development proposals.

- Devise standards that minimize road length in new subdivisions to reduce impervious cover, storm water runoff, disturbance of habitat, and response time for emergency vehicles.
- Devise ways of reducing the rate subdivision in Rural Areas in an effort to reduce impacts on natural and community resources.
- To preserve remaining undeveloped water frontage, require a common shared waterfront of at least two hundred feet and docking facilities for some portion of new subdivisions.
- Devise a standard to preserve open space along waterfronts in new subdivisions.
- Devise standards for landscape buffers between new subdivisions and adjacent uses.
- Assure that phased subdivisions are reviewed under major subdivision standards.

Site Plan Review Ordinance This ordinance provides for Planning Board review of business and commercial development. Following are proposed modifications:

- Develop standards for review of location and size of area required for various business uses in order to prevent conflicts with adjacent residential uses and traffic hazards.
- Develop standards for landscape architectural screens where buffering is necessary between adjacent properties.
- Develop setback standards to assure adjacent properties of appropriate distance from various types of business uses.

Performance Standards These are minimum measurable standards that can be applied to certain land uses that should be managed within the various districts of the town. An example would be minimum bacteria and mineral concentrations that the state allows in drinking water.

- Create performance standards for new residential groundwater wells proposed for districts that have been identified as potentially contaminated on the Water Resources Map of this Plan.
- Create standards that manage the number of new homes that can be developed in potentially contaminated areas until contamination is reduced to acceptable levels in Waterfront Neighborhoods and other areas.
- Create standards for the amount of discharge of water used in business or manufacturing operations, laundromats, and the like.
- Create a local plumbing code to permit more careful regulation of location, size and setback requirements for sanitary wastewater disposal systems on non-conforming waterfront lots and other environmentally sensitive areas identified on the Water Resources and Development Constraints maps of this Plan.

Shoreland Zoning and Basic Land Use Ordinances

- Modify tables of permitted uses to direct commercial uses to Village Districts, the Town District and Settled Villages and restrict land uses incompatible with the growing residential character of the community. Examples include firing ranges, ATV trails and racetracks, and dirt bike trails.
- Devise ordinance changes to maintain scale of waterfront neighborhoods with non-conforming lots and limit development in areas with documented environmental deficits (for example, over-consumption of groundwater, polluted groundwater, hazardous waste spills).
- Devise ordinance changes to incorporate recommendations for working waterfronts made in this Plan and in the Cundy's Harbor Working Waterfront Study to preserve these areas.
- Locate new, or expanded, public facilities in Village Districts over time as population and demand grow, while discouraging their location in Rural Areas.

Public Incentives To encourage development to locate where designated in this Plan, the town will provide incentives as follows:

- Seek grant funds from state and federal agencies for assistance in developing local public water supplies for existing and new neighborhoods. These water supplies may be created by local nonprofit water companies, or simply take the form of community wells in new planned developments.
- Seek grant funds for community advanced wastewater disposal systems
- Invest local funds in new public water supplies and advanced wastewater disposal systems through a revolving loan fund that would be repaid over time by user fees.
- Seek grants for and invest in acquisition and development of public open space and parks, as proposed in a town-wide open space plan, that enhance new residential development and preserve rural areas.
- Accept new public roads only in village areas.
- Promote enrollment in current use taxation programs (Tree Growth, Open Space and Farmland) in Rural Areas.

Open Space Plan

- Create a town-wide Open Space Plan based around open space and natural resources and their interconnection.
- Develop protection mechanisms, funding sources and priorities for implementation of the open space plan.
- Develop a capital investment program with periodic funding into a sinking fund to be used for purchase of critical open space as identified by the open space plan.

Application of the Future Land Use Plan

This section describes the legal intent and content of the Future Land Use Plan. The Future Land Use Plan (FLUP) is required of Comprehensive Plans and updates by state law. The FLUP designates districts by land use and general intensity of use, that is, density of development in terms of number of homes per number of acres, and size of commercial development. Designation of growth and rural areas is required and may be described with various terms.

Implementation of the Future Land Use Plan and its proposed districts will require adoption of the implementation strategies described in this Plan, including land use ordinances changes, guided by the FLUP and the Future Land Use Map, and the uses and intensities of land use prescribed therein.

Place holder for FLUP map

Place Holder for Constraints Map

Place holder for Existing Land Use

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

In the preceding chapters this Comprehensive Plan has set forth numerous action recommendations designed to shape the future of Harpswell in such a way as to balance the anticipated growth with the cultural and natural values of the Town. The Implementation Plan is a timeline devised to guide the Town toward the future it has envisioned. The Selectmen shall have final responsibility for delegating the action recommendation tasks to appropriate committees and/or staff persons.

An oversight committee will be established by the Selectmen with the primary responsibility for reviewing the progress of the Plan's implementation. The oversight committee will prepare an annual evaluation of the progress of the Plan's implementation to be included in the Annual Town Report. The oversight committee may also provide assistance to the Selectmen in identifying groups that will be responsible for implementing the various phases of the Plan.

The Town should recognize that those responsible for implementing the Comprehensive Plan will need financial assistance for certain actions, such as new studies, and should appropriate funds accordingly.

The following is the implementation timeline for the action recommendations found in the Community Character, Marine Environment, Groundwater, Natural Habitat, Housing, Marine Economy, Public Services, and the Future Land Use Plan chapters.

Community Character

Ongoing

- Continue and possibly expand town financial support for our volunteer emergency services.
- Undertake a program to identify and replace failed septic systems in villages.
- Identify and inventory historic structures in town and work with owners to protect their historic character.

Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- Amend land use ordinances to increase density of development in villages and decrease density of development in rural areas. Maintain present density in rural and waterfront neighborhoods.
- Amend land use ordinances to direct new commercial and institutional development to villages and the town center.
- Amend land use ordinances to maintain rural views from main roads and minimize new curb cuts.
- Amend land use ordinances to clarify essential working waterfronts and limit non-maritime uses in them.
- Amend land use ordinances to designate areas for expansion of marine economic activity.

- Amend land use ordinances to protect further the marine environment from pollution and other adverse impacts of development.
- Amend land use ordinances to protect essential wildlife habitat from the adverse effects of development.
- Upon development of a Town Open Space Plan, work to preserve and connect open spaces. Amend land use ordinances to support preservation and connection of open spaces.
- Identify critical scenic water vistas and adopt measures to preserve their contribution to our community character.
- Develop materials to educate and inform owners of large undeveloped lots of their options for preservation and conservation under state law and through land trusts.
- Encourage cooperative use of recreational wharves to minimize altering the natural appearance of our shoreline.
- Develop regulations to limit maximum speeds and sound of personal water craft (jet skis) within Harpswell waters.
- Identify and inventory points of traditional public access to the water over private land. Work with landowners to perpetuate that access.
- In addition to increasing allowable density of development in village areas, continue to allow mobile and manufactured homes anywhere in town. Amend land use ordinances to encourage multifamily housing in village areas where septic treatment methods can protect groundwater quality and groundwater supplies are sufficient.
- Explore creation of a public program to provide for affordable housing.
- Develop a local plumbing code designed to reflect Harpswell's soil conditions and sewage treatment needs, take into account new septic technologies, and protect our groundwater quality.
- Conduct studies to determine available groundwater supply capacity in village areas.
- Undertake a program to acquire and develop new points of public water access.

Long Term (4+ years)

- Survey the Town-owned land in the Town Center to determine its development constraints and develop a plan for its future use.

Marine Environment

Ongoing

- Continue to participate in the New Meadows River Watershed Project and the Friends of Casco Bay. Explore possibilities for new regional efforts to monitor and improve the quality of the marine environment.
- Continue Town's grant program to eliminate overboard discharges.
- Maintain strong code enforcement efforts to protect the marine environment.

Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- Further restrict the use of herbicides, fertilizers, insecticides, growth regulators, and toxins near the shoreline to reduce their harmful effects on Harpswell's waters. As a general guideline, a 100-foot setback is recommended (the same distance the State requires for septic systems).

- Explore new septic system technologies which may reduce nitrogen nutrient loading of the marine environment.
- Support efforts to improve utilization of pump-out stations and trash disposal facilities.
- Commit resources to develop educational materials on the value to Harpswell of a high quality marine environment for use in schools and distribution to residents.
- Develop and distribute educational materials to encourage homeowners to adopt best management practices for minimizing pollution from run-off by maintaining good vegetative buffers along the shore and streams draining to the shore.

Groundwater Resources

Ongoing

- Continue to rigorously enforce the requirements of Maine's Subsurface Wastewater Disposal Rules. Develop materials to advise subdivision developers and plumbing permit applicants of the septic designs and technologies that will best protect groundwater quality.

Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- Undertake detailed analysis and mapping of soil types and groundwater flow in villages where growth will be encouraged. Design density determinations, plumbing code requirements, and other land use performance standards designed for the local conditions in order to avoid groundwater contamination and assure sufficient groundwater supply. Identify possible sites for community wells and explore feasibility of small scale water supply and sewage treatment systems for villages.
- Review adequacy of existing land use performance standards to manage run-off for new development and redevelopment projects to protect groundwater supply from contamination and to maintain sufficient groundwater recharge.
- Identify and map moderate and high yield aquifers and their recharge areas. Adopt measures to assure future quality of groundwater in these areas.
- Develop better incentives to encourage the use of communal wells and septic systems in problem areas and subdivisions that propose cluster or open space development.
- Develop and distribute to the public, and incorporate into the school curriculum, materials regarding the nature and limitations of the Town's groundwater resources. Stress the importance of protecting groundwater quality and assuring adequate quantity, and the types of activities that can jeopardize groundwater quality and quantity.
- Develop and distribute materials regarding conservation practices that residents can employ to help assure adequate supplies of groundwater, especially in areas subject to salt water intrusion.
- In areas of groundwater contamination, work with owners of the contaminated properties to effect cleanup and prevent additional contamination.
- Adopt Town standards or other programs, if necessary, to assure proper installation and maintenance of petroleum product storage tanks and piping.
- Examine the Town's use of road salt to avoid excessive use. Explore whether alternative de-icers would meet safety and budget needs while reducing threats to groundwater quality.

- Establish shoreline setbacks for wells in the Shoreland Zone.
- Develop a program to assure regular septic system pumping and maintenance.
- Explore whether considerations of groundwater quality and quantity in older, small scale neighborhoods require limitations on seasonal conversions and the scale of redevelopment.
- Develop a program for replacement of failed and obsolete septic systems.

Long Term (4+ years)

- Develop and adopt a Town Plumbing Code that takes into account the limitations of Harpswell's soil types and its unique geology and geography. Utilize septic system designs and technologies that maximize treatment of bacteria and other pathogens and minimize discharge of nitrates and nitrites to the groundwater.

Natural Habitat

Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- Identify and map critical natural areas and essential wildlife habitats and travel corridors.
- Create and adopt a Town Open Space Plan.
- Develop ways for critical natural areas and essential wildlife habitats to be preserved while allowing the landowner beneficial use of his or her property.
- Revise land use ordinances to protect the functions and values of the town's larger wetlands and its streams that drain into the ocean.
- Develop and implement a plan for protecting critical upland habitat, wildlife travel corridors and vernal pools. Explore the use of conservation easements, land acquisition, transfer of development rights and managing the location of new roads to help accomplish this.

Housing

Ongoing

- Revise "in law" apartment provisions of land use ordinances to accommodate family needs while protecting quality and quantity of groundwater.

Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- Amend land use ordinances to enable creation of more affordable housing lots and multifamily housing in the village districts and, possibly, in the town district.
- Amend land use ordinances to encourage clustering, to protect scenic, open space and habitat values, and to prevent sprawl and suburbanization in rural areas.
- Create a Housing Committee to pursue development of affordable housing; to identify programs, mechanisms and possible Town approaches to developing affordable housing; and to investigate funding and possible sponsors or public/private partnerships for affordable housing, such as Habitat for Humanity.
- Provide support and referrals to programs such as meals-on-wheels, health care, transportation and personal services to residents to assure that they can remain in their homes as long as possible.

- Require and/or enable larger subdivisions to provide some affordable housing lots or contribute toward affordable housing elsewhere in Town.
- Sponsor educational sessions on credit, home ownership, and other issues related to housing to help first time buyers and others obtain and keep affordable housing.

Marine Economy

Ongoing

- Hold public forums to identify and establish working waterfronts in Harpswell.
- Continue to provide funding for effective shellfish conservation and enforcement.
- Develop harbor management plans for crowded mooring areas.

Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- Adopt zoning and land use measures to protect working waterfronts from the pressure to convert them to residential use. Review the current Shoreland Zoning boundaries for the Commercial Fishing Districts to protect areas in Town that are critical to commercial fishing. Consider having more restrictive land uses in Commercial Fishing Zones. Consider other land use ordinance changes to encourage boat building and economic activity related to recreational boating
- Consider an increase in marine related fees to support additional Town services provided for marine related issues.
- Resolve title issues of public access points and develop adequate parking and maneuvering space at them.
- Publicize the importance of marine related activities to Harpswell' s local economy and potential threats to the vitality of the industry.
- Create an informational database to monitor the health and well being of commercial fishing and tourism in Town.

Public Services

Town Governance

Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- A Governance Committee will study the capacity of town services and explore possible regional and state resources to ensure that the needs of residents are met. This would include, but not be limited to, services such as Town administration, recreation, police, fire & rescue, education and waste disposal.
- Form a volunteer advisory group of residents to conduct a comprehensive inventory of quality of life concerns of the senior population. Identify basic needs of food, shelter, and health; determine deficits and identify means to solve problems (including regional efforts and grant monies). Additional concerns about transportation and recreation should be addressed.

Codes Enforcement Office

Ongoing

- The Codes Office should develop a systematic approach for ensuring that decisions by the Planning Board and Board of Appeals are complied with.
- Maintain a sufficient number of qualified Codes Enforcement Officers to handle the workload.
- Monitor all development and construction to assure that it is carried out in accordance with the applicable codes, regulations, and requirements of the project approval.
- Provide ongoing oversight of sewage disposal systems that are malfunctioning or illegal to assure that violations are addressed, and the resulting systems are functioning according to design, permit requirements, and local codes.

Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- Institute a public information program on septic system maintenance to assure that the public understands how these systems work and what actions are necessary to ensure their long-term operation.
- On a monthly basis the Codes Office will publish all building permits and certificates of completion at the Town Office and on the Town website.

Waste Disposal

Ongoing

- Study the methods used by other towns to achieve higher rates of recycling.
- Continue and expand the Town's recycling program.
- Provide periodic opportunities for disposal of items not currently accepted at the recycling center, including but not limited to automobiles and household hazardous materials.

Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- Budget annually for public outreach programs to educate the Town's residents about the value of recycling.
- Recycling Committee and others will publish informational guides that explain the costs associated with waste disposal and the potential savings associated with waste-reduction and increased recycling. Particular emphasis will be placed on the environmental and personal benefits of reducing purchases of non-recyclable goods.
- Recycling Committee and others will consider methods for monitoring the improper disposal of waste that should be recycled.
- Research the merits of creating a Town composting program.

Schools

Ongoing

- Work with the Town's legislative representatives to alter regional funding formulas to treat towns like Harpswell more fairly.

Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- To ensure the continued viability of Harpswell schools, develop affordable housing to attract families with children to live in Harpswell.
- Study ways to maintain the viability of local schools.

Long Term (4+ years)

- Selectmen and S.A.D. 75 will develop incentives such as seminars, workshops and conferences to attract citizens to assume a more active role in educational policy.

Public Access

Ongoing

- Develop a plan to improve the condition and function of existing access points.
- Inventory and map types of existing public access including landings, docks, beaches, scenic waterfront areas, islands, and waterways.
- Identify access points most threatened by development and prioritize them for protection.

Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- Determine where new access points are needed and develop a plan to establish them.

Recreation

Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- Evaluate the need for further professional staffing for this rapidly growing department.
- Determine how long existing indoor town spaces can accommodate recreation activities, and examine the feasibility of constructing a centrally located recreation building.
- Evaluate outdoor spaces throughout the town for future recreational uses, including walking routes, outdoor ice skating rinks, ball fields, walking routes, and playgrounds.

Mitchell Field

Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- The portion of the Field, south of the paved roadway that is wooded and largely undisturbed should be set aside for conservation and low impact recreation.
- Designate and develop the level area near the gate for active recreation, including the construction of playing fields to expand the recreational opportunities available to Harpswellians.
- Reserve the remainder of the field in its present condition pending exploration of potential future uses.
- Conduct a study to determine the costs and benefits of renovating or demolishing the pier or pursuing other alternatives.
- Develop a plan for use of the two dwellings and their land when they are finally given over to the Town. Among the possibilities are sale to provide funds to develop the rest of the field, rental to provide income for the operation of the field, and low income housing.

- Determine whether to remove or continue to use the water tower

Police Services

Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- Determine with the County how best to continue policing as the Town grows. Affordable housing may encourage deputies to live locally to enhance this service. This form of policing is a good example of provision of local services by a regional government.
- Expand the data obtained from the Sheriff's Department to include information on items such as response times to calls, investigations conducted and closure rates.

Fire and Rescue

Ongoing

- Monitor the provision of these services as the Town grows, to ensure adequate coverage in the future.

Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- Consider strategies to attract citizens to volunteer for emergency services. This would be less costly in the long run than creating a central paid emergency service.

Transportation System

Ongoing

- Advocate with the State for the reconstruction of Routes 123, 24 and Cundy's Harbor Road to current roadbed engineering standards to avoid the inefficient use of public monies spent in the past on temporary repaving of these highways.
- The Town will work with State DOT and regional committees to ensure timely and appropriate State highway improvements to Routes 123, 24 and Cundy's Harbor Road.
- The Town will refine standards for road size and construction and periodically update the roads ordinance to reflect changes deemed useful. One concern is the requirement that roads be a fixed minimum width even for small subdivisions.
- The Town should undertake a study of the merits of a bike path system that links with similar proposals for Brunswick.

Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- Develop a clear policy as to the width, speeds, and addition of paved shoulders along State and Town roads.

Long Term (4+ years)

- The Town will explore solutions to resolve problems of substandard road construction and maintenance of old subdivision roads.
- The Town will study needs, value, and possible locations for future bicycle paths. A long-range system could connect large reserves of open space using bike-ways on land privately acquired, as well as on available road rights-of-way. Such efforts should be dovetailed with the proposed Open Space Plan.

Libraries

Ongoing

- Continue the present relationship with Curtis Memorial Library. Regularly seek advice from the local library boards, the Town Library Committee and others to discuss with Curtis Memorial Library an appropriate level of cost and service for Harpswell support of the library.

Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- Increase financial support for its two local libraries to assist in their expansion and use of member interlibrary loan services. Regularly seek advice from the local library boards, the Town Library Committee and others to discuss the appropriate level of Town support for the libraries.

Fiscal Capacity

Ongoing

- The Town will initiate an annual Capital Projects Review by meeting with all boards and committees for their capital project recommendations. A Plan will be developed and presented for public discussion and review by the Budget Advisory Committee and Selectmen. This process should begin early enough in the fall to enable adequate review by all involved.
- The Town will consider the fiscal impact of capital projects on the Town's mill rate, its credit rating and its fiscal capacity to fund such projects in its annual review.
- Continue the development of Five- and Ten-Year Capital Projects Plans.

Future Land Use Plan

Ongoing

- Permit mixed residential and business uses within Village Districts.
- Require preliminary meetings with Town Planner and Planning Board prior to subdivision application to communicate town land use objectives for development proposals.
- Develop standards for review of location and size of area required for various business uses in order to prevent conflicts with adjacent residential uses and traffic hazards.
- Develop buffer standards to assure adjacent properties of appropriate distance from various types of business uses.
- Promote enrollment in current use taxation programs (Tree Growth, Open Space and Farmland) in Rural Areas.

Short Term (1-2years)

- Tailor subdivision regulations to help accomplish the Town's goals for each land use category.
- Amend land use ordinances to assure that phased subdivisions meet the requirements of major subdivisions.
- Require some percentage of land in all subdivisions to be dedicated open space.

- Plan proposed open space in subdivisions to preserve desirable natural features and coincide with town-wide open space needs as identified on a town-wide open space plan.
- Plan for lower overall residential densities in subdivisions within Rural Areas, and higher overall densities of development in Village Districts to encourage new growth to locate inland, away from the waterfront, and generally outside of rural areas.
- Permit the use of dedicated open space for the location of advanced community wastewater systems and community wells.
- Research possible use of dedicated open space for location of individual residential wastewater systems and wells, subject to state standard for soils, construction, and setback requirements.
- Moderately reduce the amount of required open space in the current cluster subdivision regulations to make this development alternative more viable.
- To encourage affordable housing in new subdivisions, provide flexibility for Planning Board to reasonably alter some regulations such as road frontage, density, and open space.
- To preserve remaining undeveloped water frontage, require a common shared waterfront of at least two hundred feet and docking facilities for some portion of new subdivisions.
- Devise standards that minimize road length in new subdivisions to reduce impervious cover, storm water runoff, disturbance of habitat, and response time for emergency vehicles.
- Devise ways of reducing the rate subdivision in Rural Areas in an effort to reduce impacts on natural and community resources.
- Devise ordinance changes to incorporate recommendations for working waterfronts made in this Plan and in the Cundy's Harbor Working Waterfront Study to preserve these areas.
- Devise a density standard of one dwelling for every 300 feet of shore frontage, while accommodating lots with 150 feet of frontage, to preserve some open space along waterfronts in new subdivisions.
- Seek grants for and invest in acquisition and development of public open space and parks, as proposed in a town-wide open space plan, that enhance new residential development, and preserve rural areas.
- Devise standards for landscape buffers between new subdivisions and adjacent uses.
- Create a town-wide Open Space Plan based around open space and natural resources and their interconnection.
- Develop protection mechanisms, funding sources and priorities for implementation of the Open Space Plan.
- Develop a capital investment program with periodic funding into a sinking fund to be used for purchase of critical open space as identified by the open space plan.

Mid Term (3-6 years)

- Devise ordinance changes to maintain scale of waterfront neighborhoods with non-conforming lots and limit development in areas with documented environmental

deficits (for example, over-consumption of groundwater, polluted groundwater, hazardous waste spills).

- Devise “planned development” regulations to provide more flexibility in the design and planning of developments containing a mix of housing types and mixed residential/commercial uses, which do not fit the typical definition of a subdivision.
- Require all major subdivisions (more than five lots) to utilize cluster lot design.
- Create performance standards for new residential groundwater wells proposed for districts that have been identified as potentially contaminated on the Water Resources Map of this Plan.
- Create standards that manage the number of new homes that can be developed in potentially contaminated areas until contamination is reduced to acceptable levels in Waterfront Neighborhoods and other areas.
- Create standards for the amount of discharge of water used in business or manufacturing operations, laundromats, and the like.
- Create a local plumbing code to permit more careful regulation of location, size and setback requirements for sanitary wastewater disposal systems on non-conforming waterfront lots and other environmentally sensitive areas identified on the Water Resources and Development Constraints maps of this Plan.
- Seek grant funds from state and federal agencies for assistance in developing local public water supplies for existing and new neighborhoods. These water supplies may be created by local non-profit water companies, or simply take the form of community wells in new planned developments.
- Seek grant funds for community advanced wastewater disposal systems .
- Modify tables of permitted uses to direct commercial uses to Village Districts, the Town District and Settled Villages and restrict land uses incompatible with the growing residential character of the community. Examples include firing ranges, ATV trails and racetracks, and dirt bike trails.
- Accept new public roads only in village areas.

Long Term (7+ years)

- Invest local funds in new public water supplies and advanced wastewater disposal systems through a revolving loan fund that would be repaid over time by user fees.
- Locate new or expanded public facilities in Village Districts over time as population and demand grow, while discouraging their location in Rural Areas.

Harpswell Capital Investment Plan, 2005-2015

Departments	Items	Estimated Costs	When	Town Costs	Other Funding
Sheriff's Deputies, Marine Patrol	Squad Car Replacements	\$25,000	Each Year	\$25,000/yr. Annual Appropriation	Grants, Sinking Fund
	Subtotal	\$25,000		\$250,000	
Cundy's Harbor Fire Department	Tank Truck Replacement	\$200,000	2010-2012	\$20,000 - \$25000/yr. Annual Appropriation	Private Contributions, Grants (in addition to Town Contribution)
	Ambulance	\$120,000	2011		
	New Station Roof	\$8,000 - \$10,000	2005		
	New Station Furnace	\$10,000	2005		
	Subtotal	\$338,000 - \$340,000		\$200,000 - \$250,000	\$88,000 - \$140,000
Orr's & Bailey Islands Fire Dept.	Tank 1 Replacement	\$180,000	2013	\$20,000 - \$25000/yr. Annual Appropriation	Private Contributions, Grants (in addition to Town Contribution)
	Mini Pumper	\$50,000 - \$80,000	2006		
	Engine 1, Paint Refurbishment	\$10,000	2005		
	Ambulance	\$150,000	2008		
	AED Defibrillators	\$6,000	2006		
	Storage Building	\$75,000	2007		
	O.I. Station Roof Replacement	\$20,000	2005		
	O.I. Station Heating Sys. Replacemnt	\$5,000	2009		
	Outside B.I. Station Maintenance	\$9,000	2009		
Subtotal	\$505,000 - \$535,000		\$200,000 - \$250,000	\$255,000 - \$335,000	
Harpswell Neck Fire Dept.	Station Fire/Freeze Alarms	\$8,000	2005	\$20,000 - \$25000/yr. Annual Appropriation	Private Contributions, Grants (in addition to Town Contribution)
	Class A Engine 1, Re-chassis	\$120,000	2008-2009		
	Class A Engine 4, Re-chassis	\$50,000	2008-2009		
	Ambulance	\$120,000-\$150,000	2015		
	Subtotal	\$298,000 - \$328,000		\$200,000 - \$250,000	\$48,000 - \$128,000
Recycling Center	Backhoe	\$80,000	2010	\$80,000	Grants, Sinking Fund, Annual Appropriations
	Forklift	\$20,000	2010	\$20,000	
	Skid Steer	\$20,000	2010	\$20,000	
	Other capital items	\$180,000	2010	\$180,000	
	Subtotal			\$300,000	
Roads	Road paving and reconstruction	\$5-7 million	2005-2013	\$5-7 million Sinking Fund, Annual Appropriations, Bonding	
Subtotal		\$5,000,000 - \$7,000,000		\$5,000,000 - \$7,000,000	
Totals		\$6,166,000 - \$8,228,000	2005 - 2015	\$5,850,000 - \$8,000,000	\$391,000 - \$603,000

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