

# Highlights Of The Kennebunkport Visioning Process

The following excerpts are based on the opinions of those citizens attending the town visioning sessions on October 19 and 20, 2001, as compiled by Planning Decisions, Inc.

## Character of the Community

Kennebunkport has a small-town charm derived from the distinct areas that comprise the Town as a whole: Cape Porpoise, Dock Square, Goose Rocks, Turbats Creek, Cape Arundel, the Village, Wildes District, and Town House. Each area evokes a distinct feeling. Yet each also shares a common Kennebunkport heritage of historic New England colonial and shingle-style homes, sidewalks and shade trees, views of the shore and the forest, working waterfronts and farms, proud churches and locally-owned stores.

The Town is peaceful and safe, with excellent municipal services. Kennebunkport is a good place to raise children. Its people are friendly, caring, and involved in community life.

Kennebunkport also has a lively cultural life. From its diverse and talented citizens, Kennebunkport has created good schools, fine libraries, a historical society, conservation groups, service clubs, and an array of interesting art galleries, restaurants, and stores.

When people need more, they can take an easy drive from Kennebunkport to Portland or Portsmouth, or to Boston, or to several major airports for points further away.

## Distinctive Features

The identity of Kennebunkport is captured in its well-known places such as the historic homes in the Village, Dock Square, and the village at Cape Porpoise. But there are many other smaller places that are also special to Kennebunkport's identity.



## Villages and Areas

Here is the vision that emerged from the participants at the visioning process for how Kennebunkport's distinctive villages and areas might look several years in the future.

Cape Porpoise will remain an unpretentious, livable community. Its homes will reflect its diverse year-round population – including fishermen – and will be modest in scale and affordable. The harbor will be home for fishing and lobster boats as well as pleasure craft. The village stores will be oriented towards basic goods, such as groceries and hardware.

The village itself will be walkable, with maintained and extended sidewalks. For those seeking a longer walk, there will be bike paths and walking paths. Streets will remain narrow, and automobile traffic will be minimized. The area's 19<sup>th</sup> Century feel will be preserved.

Goose Rocks Beach will retain its flavor as a family-oriented village with cottage-style houses. The beach will remain uncrowded and walkable, with public bathrooms and public access. The beach patrol will manage boat and jet-ski use, and dogs will be controlled. Wildlife areas and the piping plover will be actively protected; more land will be in conservation easements.

New houses and stores will be in scale with the buildings already there. The Route 9 area is one where new village-scale residential development may be considered for the future. If more parking is needed, it will be away from the beach and village area.

Dock Square will remain primarily a retail center. Its stores will include day-to-day convenience items as well as high quality, locally owned galleries and shops. The historic architecture of the area will be strictly maintained, and buildings will stay in scale with the surrounding Town.

The commercial area will cover the same area it does now – it will not expand. The appearance of Dock Square will be improved by burying utility lines and screening dumpsters. Parking will be provided off-site, with connecting shuttles. There will be public restrooms.

The Main Street/Village Residential area will remain the center for municipal services in town – with the Town Hall, fire station, and library. Improved sidewalks and bike paths will make it easier to get around. The tree canopy overhead will be encouraged and maintained.

Historic homes and structures will be maintained; none will be torn down. Traffic will flow smoothly and all-day parking restricted. Bed and breakfast establishments will be encouraged in historic buildings.

The Farm/forest area will have an expanded Town forest, continuing farmland uses, free-range and domestic animals, hiking trails and picnic/recreation areas, wildlife refuges, watershed protection areas, and wilderness and open space. The character of the area will remain rural,

with few public improvements. *(Note: This is an area needing intensive planning attention in the immediate future).*

Cape Arundel will retain its nineteenth century resort character, with the Colony Hotel, the Cape Arundel Inn, Walker's Point, St. Anne's, and the shingle-style houses. Parson's Way will remain open, the Colony Beach Road will remain unpaved, Wandby Beach will remain public.

Better ways of moving tourists and visitors through the area will be found. New homes, as well as the reconstruction and modification of existing homes, will be in the same scale and style, and use the same materials as the older homes.

The Riverfront area will have a town dock and public access to the water. There will be visitor slips for those who want to come to Kennebunkport by boat. An improved sidewalk system will make walking in the area more convenient and safer. Government Wharf and fishing activities, as well as other marinas and yacht clubs, will be maintained.

Buildings will be mixed in their use, and small in scale, as now. The river will be kept clean from pollution and protected from degradation. A maritime museum will be a place for teaching about the town's long maritime history.

The Town House area will develop as a small village, with a neighborhood of affordable housing and small convenience stores nearby. Since much of this area is in Arundel, the area's future will be cooperatively planned with the Town of Arundel.

Farms will remain in the area. This may be a location for parking for a shuttle or trolley to Dock Square. There will be converted hiking and biking trails.

## Principles for Managing Future Growth

The Town of Kennebunkport will need to accommodate more residents and visitors in its future. The goal is to do so in ways consistent with the character of the Town, in ways that preserve the distinctive landmarks of the Town, and in ways that enhance the villages and areas of the Town. With this in mind, here are some key principles to guide future growth.

1. **Preserve existing village identities.** Kennebunkport's unique villages and districts are part of its identity. New development should take place in a way that respects and even enhances the differences among the various areas, rather than homogenizing the Town and blurring differences. At the same time, new development within the villages should maintain the character of that area and be compatible with the existing scale and style of construction.
2. **Encourage new housing growth in new village centers.** In the visioning

sessions, citizens suggested that, as the population increases, the Town consider new village centers at Town House and in the Route 9 area of Goose Rocks Beach. The area between North Street and School Street will absorb the expanding village residential growth.

The wisdom of these alternatives require technical study from the Growth Planning Committee, since any new village center will require innovative zoning policies and utility expansions. In general, new housing clustered in village centers is the preferred pattern of development.

**3. Encourage alternative means of transportation.** Preserving the character of the Town and its villages will require reducing both the volume of automobile traffic and the need for on-site automobile parking.

Affordable alternative transportation, a network of bike trails, sidewalks, and walking trails throughout the town for year-round residents, and a strategy for tourist/visitor management involving off-site parking lots and shuttles or trolleys, are all essential for the future quality of life in Kennebunkport. The Town should require new development to address alternative transportation issues.

**4. Maintain the diversity of the population.** Part of the quality of the community in Kennebunkport is its diversity, the fact that it includes young as well as old, fishermen as well as software consultants, old-timers as well as newcomers, and all income groups.

To maintain a diversity of people, a diversity of housing types and costs must be maintained as well. This goal was strongly endorsed by participants in the visioning session.

**5. Maintain good communications.** Kennebunkport is distinguished by its friendly atmosphere and extensive participation by volunteers in community and civic functions. The way to keep involvement high, and to avoid "us vs. them" confrontations, is to maintain good communications through meetings, newsletters, web sites, and the like.

**6. Keep the local elementary school.** This is part of the small scale and personal feel of Kennebunkport and should be maintained.

**7. Promote the performing arts.** Culture and the arts are important components of the quality of life in Kennebunkport and the community needs to find ways to foster them.

**8. Protect natural and scenic resources.** The most frequently mentioned special places from the visioning session include beach and coastal areas, islands,

brooks and rivers, open fields, and forests. These are important habitats for wildlife and plants as well as being valued by residents for their natural and scenic qualities. They are part of the essential and enduring character of Kennebunkport, and they must not be compromised by future development.

# Kennebunkport Community Survey

## Townwide Survey Results

Note: Data shown below includes all taxpayer's responses to questionnaires. More detailed information breaks this group into a number of categories (e.g. voter, non-resident, etc.) and is available at Town Hall.

Question	Not at all important	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important	Total Response	Mean Response
Q1a. Please rate the level of importance of the attractiveness of the town.	17	17	85	247	524	890	4.40
Q1b. Please rate the level of importance of a low crime rate.	16	22	110	204	527	879	4.37
Q1c. Please rate the level of importance of character of housing and villages.	27	18	118	248	465	876	4.26
Q1d. Please rate the level of importance of proximity to employment.	341	119	202	84	103	849	2.40
Q1e. Please rate the level of importance of access to the coast and recreational/cultural opportunities.	27	20	116	220	502	885	4.30
Q1f. Please rate the level of importance of family.	217	71	141	127	299	855	3.26
Q1g. Please rate the level of importance of the quality of the school system.	270	95	135	143	208	851	2.91
Q1h. Please rate the level of importance of a low tax rate.	56	49	240	196	295	836	3.75
Q1i. Please rate the level of importance of a sense of community in town.	56	33	209	232	317	847	3.85

\* Rating System: (1) not at all important, (2) not important, (3) somewhat important, (4) important, (5) very important

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Response	Mean Response
Q2. Important open space and natural areas have been lost to development.	88	92	204	193	284	861	3.57
Q3. There is a lack of affordable housing.	52	76	164	160	303	755	3.78
Q4. The traditional character of the town and the villages are being threatened by new development.	88	115	157	184	347	891	3.66
Q5. The current rate of residential growth is too high.	92	110	221	164	286	873	3.51
Q6. The town's ability to pay for needed capital improvements in the next 5-10 years (such as roads, sewers, schools) is an issue of concern.	42	56	178	205	375	856	3.95
Q7. Increased traffic is one of the most important issues facing the town today.	75	67	134	167	467	910	3.97
Q9. The town should concentrate growth in areas with public water and sewer that are adjacent to the village centers.	91	90	161	226	229	797	3.52
Q10. The preferable land use pattern is higher density development near and adjacent to villages and lower density development in rural areas.	90	84	147	239	235	795	3.56
Q12. The town should consider limiting the # of annual residential building permits.	147	75	130	161	378	891	3.62
Q14. The municipality should institute a system of impact fees on new development to help pay for needed public infrastructure (roads, recreation/open space, parking, etc)	68	33	99	176	513	889	4.16

Q15.	The municipality should expand the use of user fees (building permits, beach stickers, parking fees) to cover the cost of additional services and facilities.	149	101	146	190	299	885	3.44
Q16.	The town should encourage a broad mix and diversity of housing types, including multi-family and affordable housing.	179	110	169	158	237	853	3.19
Q17.	The town should allow more flexible development standards to enhance diversity and affordability.	206	133	163	151	202	855	3.01
Q18.	The town should work with the Kennebunkport Conservation Trust to ensure that important open spaces and environmentally important areas remain undeveloped.	33	17	60	88	711	909	4.57
Q19.	The town should play a more active role in guiding development away from sensitive environmental areas and preventing sprawl by purchasing property in the rural parts of town.	99	68	105	145	473	890	3.93
Q20.	I would be willing to support a town land acquisition program using town tax dollars (such as an annual set aside of 3% or approximately \$300,000) to purchase areas of critical environmental importance as well as public access to water bodies and other natural features.	116	52	94	160	464	886	3.91
Q21.	The municipality is doing an adequate job of protecting its wetlands, waterways and other areas of environmental significance.	70	82	257	217	154	780	3.39
Q22a.	The town should develop a system of bikeways, trails and pedestrian paths.	86	49	120	177	454	886	3.98
Q22b.	The town should improve and construct new sidewalks.	100	90	190	170	312	862	3.58
Q22c.	The town should provide for public access to the water for small recreational water craft.	170	109	165	155	257	856	3.26
Q23.	The town should work more actively to encourage small home based businesses and home occupations in the town.	85	78	224	211	215	813	3.48
Q24.	The town should seek to diversify the tax base by encouraging more commercial and industrial growth.	287	174	191	115	121	888	2.56
Q25.	The town should work to explore regional transportation alternatives during high traffic months (such as coordinated trolley systems similar to Ogunquit and Wells).	53	47	103	278	412	893	4.06
Q26.	The town should continue to support and preserve the fishing and lobstering industries within the town.	6	6	35	126	745	918	4.74
Q27.	A zone should be established which encourages the development of essential services such as small hardware stores, grocery stores, and professional offices.	100	82	153	210	324	869	3.66
Q28.	It is important to support town efforts to preserve our community's historical character.	21	11	62	139	678	911	4.58
Q29.	It is important to maintain and preserve a K-6 school in Kennebunkport.	30	23	103	133	508	797	4.34
Q30.	A K-6 school should be within walking distance of the library and other cultural features.	77	58	191	137	309	772	3.70

^ Rating System: (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree

	30 homes each with a 3 acre lot	30 homes on 60 acres w/ the remaining 30 acres preserved as open space	30 homes on 30 acres with the remaining 60 acres preserved as open space	Uncertain
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Q11.	Assume that a developer has purchased a 90+ acre parcel of land in an undeveloped portion of Kennebunkport where there is a 3 acre minimum lot size requirement. The developer plans to build single-family houses on the site. Which of the following development patterns would you prefer to see?	123	304	389	65	
		Strongly Disagree	So-so	Strongly Agree	Total Response	Mean Response
Q13.	The town should require that new residential developments be clustered where appropriate (as described in Q-11, options 2 and 3 above) so a part of the site remains open space.	57	92	451	874	4.12
Q8.	Please check the one description that best describes your preference for future residential development in Kennebunkport.	76	143	267	223	
		Subdivisions dispersed throughout town	Neighborhoods with a mix of housing sizes	Small village and community centers with a mix of housing and commercial businesses	Developments on large 2-3 acre lots spread throughout town	