



TOWN OF YARMOUTH

1146 ROUTE 28, SOUTH YARMOUTH, MASSACHUSETTS 02664-4492
Telephone (508) 398-2231, Ext. 1276, Fax (508) 398-2365

Planning
Division

MEMORANDUM

To: Planning Board
From: Kathy Williams, Town Planner
Date: August 27, 2021
Subject: 2nd Visioning Survey Summary

The following provides a summary of the 2nd Visioning Survey, including the notable number of written comments on potential other goals. The purpose of this survey was to vet the goals and visions identified during the 1st Visioning Survey and use this information to create a draft Vision Plan for Yarmouth. As the Board reviews this information, please think about amendments that could be made to the draft vision/goals. Many of the comments provided were detailed suggestions which can also be considered during the Local Comprehensive Plan (LCP) process where we will look at more detailed action items and implementation of the vision/goals.

1. ENVIRONMENT (Water Resources & Open Space):

- a. **Survey Responses:** The following table outlines the weighted averages of the responses to the questions on the Environment.

Environment Questions	Average
1. Preserving drinking water and air quality, water resources, wetlands, marshlands and natural habitats	4.74
2. Preserving public open spaces, beaches, conservation areas, bogs and walking trails.	4.68
3. Promote actively seeking out land acquisitions that protect natural and water resources, and expands open spaces.	4.21
4. Promote development placement that protect water resources and open spaces.	4.42
5. Provide municipal wastewater system to safeguard and improve water quality, fisheries and shellfish habitat, recreational opportunities, and promote redevelopment.	4.46
6. Provide education on proper fertilizer use and management.	3.89
7. Provide well-maintained high quality open spaces, beaches and conservation areas.	4.54

1-Not at all important; 2-Not so important; 3-Somewhat important; 4-Very important; 5-Extremely important

- b. **Other Goals (256 comments):** The following summarizes the main responses in the survey regarding other Environmental Goals. Please note that some comments are addressed under different goals.
- 1) **Native Plantings & Landscape Management:** There were many comments about use of native plants and creating sustainable yards that do not rely on chemicals, fertilizers or excessive water usage. Many included an education component regarding proper lawn care, disposal of yard clippings and leaves, and reduction or elimination of fertilizer, pesticides, insecticides and other chemicals.
 - 2) **Wildlife Habitat:** There were several comments about maintaining and expanding wildlife habitat, increasing species diversity, and providing connected wildlife corridors.
 - 3) **Development:** There were several comments about limiting new construction and redeveloping or repurposing what we have in order to protect the environment and prevent overbuilding.

- 4) Noise: There were some comments about the negative impacts related to noise pollution from modified motorcycles, landscape equipment and the airport.
- 5) Taxes: Some comments expressed concerns about the impacts of environmental initiatives and other town projects on the tax payers.
- 6) Solar and Renewable Energy: There were many comments about promoting solar and renewable energy for residential, commercial and municipal uses, incentivize people to be green, and electric car charging stations.
- 7) Recycling and Litter: There were also many comments about promoting proper recycling, reductions in plastics, and addressing litter/trash.
- 8) Walking and Biking: There were a few comments promoting safe interconnected walking and biking trails that access each other, the CCRT, public beaches, conservation areas and town centers.

2. **COMMUNITY CHARACTER & DESIGN:**

- a. **Survey Responses**: The following table outlines the weighted averages of the responses to the questions on Community Character & Design.

Community Character & Design Questions	Average
1. Preserve Cape Cod charm, friendly small town feel and safe quiet neighborhoods.	4.39
2. Preserve cultural and historic areas and buildings.	4.12
3. Preserve traditions, community events, festivals, parades, and civic and social clubs that encourage social interactions	3.93
4. Promote inclusivity and diversity.	3.94
5. Promote attracting more young people and families.	3.89
6. Promote expansion of community events and festivals.	3.53
7. Promote the town’s history, historic buildings and sites.	3.70
8. Promote responsible residential and commercial growth that doesn’t overbuild or overcrowd the community.	4.37
9. Promote ways to eliminate or improve blighted, vacant or nuisance properties.	4.37
10. Provide places for people to gather, a focal point that creates a sense of identity via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a new town center • Creation of a village green or common • Enhancements to our existing villages 	3.26 3.30 3.60
11. Provide modified zoning and improved design standards and aesthetics along commercial corridors	3.94

1-Not at all important; 2-Not so important; 3-Somewhat important; 4-Very important; 5-Extremely important

- b. **Other Goals (246 comments)**: The following summarizes the main responses in the survey regarding other Community Character & Design Goals.
- 1) There were a significant number of respondents who commented on poorly maintained properties, vacant buildings and the poor aesthetics along Route 28. Many also commented on the need for improved/expanded sidewalks and crosswalks along Route 6a and improvements in the Village Center.
 - 2) Others expressed concern about overcrowding and traffic, and noted the need for growth management and design standards. However, there were also many comments about OKH and their strict rules, especially for solar.
 - 3) Many commented on the difficulty of attracting families due to the lack of affordable housing.
 - 4) Many felt retaining the character of the cape is related to the type of businesses and the need to assist small businesses remaining here.

3. **HOUSING:**

- a. **Survey Responses:** The following table outlines the weighted averages of the responses to the questions on Housing.

Housing Questions	Average
1. Preserve existing year round housing stock.	4.06
2. Promote an increase in year round use of existing housing stock.	3.73
3. Provide more quality year-round affordable and workforce housing for rental and homeownership via the creation of:	
• Cluster subdivisions	3.31
• Apartments	3.24
• Condominium complexes	3.11

1-Not at all important; 2-Not so important; 3-Somewhat important; 4-Very important; 5-Extremely important

- b. **Other Goals (225 comments):** The following summarizes the main responses in the survey regarding other Housing Goals.

- 1) There were mixed opinions in the comments from those encouraging affordable, senior, veterans, workforce and seasonal housing, to those who feel we have enough housing, are overcrowded and lack infrastructure for more housing.
- 2) There were many who felt there was enough larger multi-family housing on Route 28, and affordable housing should be better integrated into existing neighborhoods.
- 3) Many expressed interest in accessory dwelling units, but others expressed concerns about water quality and density in residential neighborhoods. Top of shop housing and smaller homes were also mentioned.
- 4) Some questioned the “affordability” of Affordable housing and the low percentage of units which are actually designated as Affordable. The need for moderate income housing was also mentioned.
- 5) Some commented on the need to regulate/limit Airbnbs, and require more maintenance and standards for properties.

4. **TOWN SERVICES:**

- a. **Survey Responses:** The following table outlines the weighted averages of the responses to the questions on Town Services.

Town Services Questions	Average
1. Preserve a strong commitment to public safety.	4.52
2. Preserve existing services and facilities provided by the Town.	4.31
3. Promote reduction in waste and litter.	4.30
4. Promote more participation in local government and regional solutions.	3.99
5. Promote connecting those struggling with substance abuse with available social services and programs.	3.94
6. Provide resource connections with organizations that address food security.	3.99
7. Provide adequate maintenance of municipal buildings, infrastructure, and other assets.	4.12
8. Provide effective and efficient government with tax rates that balances services, facilities and infrastructure needs.	4.25
9. Provide opportunities for effective and transparent communication with the community.	4.29

1-Not at all important; 2-Not so important; 3-Somewhat important; 4-Very important; 5-Extremely important

- b. **Other Goals (174 comments):** The following summarizes the main responses in the survey regarding other Town Services Goals.

- 1) Many comments were similar to the goals outlined in the survey and are reflective of the weighted averages in the “very important” or higher range. Many commented on the difficulty of reaching these goals while maintaining low tax rates (especially for seniors on fixed incomes), highlighting the need to prioritize services, programs and infrastructure, and increase efficiencies.
- 2) Many commented on the need to improve the Town website to make it more intuitive to navigate with updated information, and development of a consolidated communication plan to let people know about what is going on in Town, which some felt may foster more interest and participation in local government.

5. **AGE-FRIENDLY:**

- a. **Survey Responses:** The following table outlines the weighted averages of the responses to the questions on Age-Friendly.

Age-Friendly Questions	Average
1. Preserve Senior Center offering programs, activities, education and socialization for seniors.	4.23
2. Promote enhanced accessibility and amenities for those with disabilities.	4.24
3. Promote more ways to counter community isolation for seniors and more senior transit options.	4.12
4. Provide investment in facilities and services for older residents.	3.94
5. Provide more multi-generational programs.	3.79

1-Not at all important; 2-Not so important; 3-Somewhat important; 4-Very important; 5-Extremely important

- b. **Other Goals (156 comments):** The following summarizes the main responses in the survey regarding other Age-Friendly Goals.
- 1) Many commented about the need to focus on people of all ages including families and young adults, and not just on the senior population (consider a different name for this goal?). There were those who would like the “senior” center incorporated into a community center for all ages which naturally fosters inter-generational interaction, along with programming with the schools. Some also suggested renaming the senior center to reflect a more active and lively place.
 - 2) Many commented on property taxes and impacts to seniors, with suggestions of tax abatements and free or reduced sticker/license fees for seniors, and identifying other ways to help seniors remain in their homes.
 - 3) There were several comments on promoting more physically active programming, and educational classes on technology which can then help to combat isolation.

6. **CLIMATE RESILIENCY & SUSTAINABILITY:**

- a. **Survey Responses:** The following table outlines the weighted averages of the responses to the questions on Climate Resiliency & Sustainability.

Climate Resiliency & Sustainability Questions	Average
1. Promote planning and mitigation to address impacts related to a changing climate including sea level rise, flooding and coastal erosion.	4.14
2. Promote waste reduction, reuse and recycling.	4.20
3. Promote reduction in energy consumption and vehicle emissions.	3.84
4. Promote energy efficiencies and renewable sources of energy.	3.97
5. Provide public outreach and education on energy conservation and opportunities.	3.73
6. Provide more electric charging stations throughout Town.	3.19
7. Provide continued application for grants for energy and climate resiliency projects.	3.91

1-Not at all important; 2-Not so important; 3-Somewhat important; 4-Very important; 5-Extremely important

b. **Other Goals:** The following summarizes the main responses in the survey regarding other Climate Resiliency and Sustainability Goals.

- 1) There were some mixed opinions in the comments on how much Yarmouth can do to address climate change and sea level rise on the local level, opposing opinions on how important this should be as a goal for the Town, and some concerns that climate related initiatives may be expensive.
- 2) Similar to some of the responses included under other goals, there were comments regarding promoting solar with an emphasis on roof mounted solar to avoid deforestation, incentivizing people to be green, and electric car charging stations; as well as promoting recycling, reductions in plastics and addressing litter/trash, with an emphasis on banning nip bottles.

7. **ECONOMY:**

a. **Survey Responses:** The following table outlines the weighted averages of the responses to the questions on Economy.

Economy Questions	Average
1. Preserve strong seasonal tourism.	4.13
2. Promote economic growth and employment diversification to generate quality year-round jobs.	4.33
3. Promote support for existing businesses and attract new businesses.	4.25
4. Promote support for attracting and retaining year-round seasonal employees.	4.18
5. Promote opportunities that incentivize business growth and redevelopment.	3.94
6. Promote redevelopment of commercial corridors to grow our economy, improve the aesthetics of commercial corridors and protect open space.	4.13
7. Promote existing strengths to encourage business development.	3.91
8. Promote family friendly activities to brand the Town as a premier vacation destination.	3.80
9. Promote better working relationship between municipal government and the business community.	3.96
10. Provide streamlined regulations/permitting/licensing to make it more efficient to do business in Yarmouth.	4.08
11. Provide municipal wastewater system starting with the main commercial corridors to promote quality redevelopment.	4.15
12. Provide expansion of broadband alternatives to improve internet access and facilitate people working at home and for business attraction and retention.	4.29

1-Not at all important; 2-Not so important; 3-Somewhat important; 4-Very important; 5-Extremely important

b. **Other Goals (162 Comments):** The following summarizes the main responses in the survey regarding other Economy Goals.

- 1) Many respondents promoted the expansion of access to the internet and improved cell service, with many specifically noting a need for a competitor to Comcast along with increased broadband options.
- 2) There were numerous comments about streamlining permitting/licensing, although some suggested careful consideration prior to implementation. Numerous responders noted the need to have adequate town staff in order to avoid delays in projects due to permitting or required inspections.
- 3) Many respondents also commented on the need for wastewater solutions in town to spur economic development.
- 4) Although there were many comments about encouraging more year-round business and employment, others commented on the need to consider impacts of business expansions and growth on infrastructure and the environment.
- 5) Building and design standards were noted by some as a priority in order to preserve Cape Cod's charm, with many respondents commenting on the need for aesthetic improvements along Rte 28.

8. **CONNECTIVITY & MOBILITY:**

- a. **Survey Responses:** The following table outlines the weighted averages of the responses to the questions on Connectivity & Mobility.

Connectivity & Mobility Questions	Average
1. Preserve existing nature paths and trails.	4.42
2. Promote traffic safety, and congestion and speed reduction.	4.18
3. Promote traffic safety improvements, and pedestrian and bicycle accommodations for MassDOT projects along Route 28 and Route 6a.	4.09
4. Promote easier and expanded access to the regional bus services and ride share programs.	3.82
5. Provide more pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure (i.e. sidewalks, bike lanes and shared use pathways)	3.91
6. Provide connections between existing bike trails and destination locations and infilling sidewalk gaps.	3.89
7. Provide adequate funding for road maintenance and drainage programs.	4.24

1-Not at all important; 2-Not so important; 3-Somewhat important; 4-Very important; 5-Extremely important

- b. **Other Goals (141 comments):** The following summarizes the main responses in the survey regarding other Connectivity & Mobility Goals.

- 1) Many noted a need for increased cyclist education to ensure riders are following safety rules.
- 2) Many expressed concerns regarding safety of cycling along Route 6a due to its narrowness, volume of traffic and speeds. Similar concerns were noted for cycling safety on Route 28 which currently does not have bike lanes or a shared use path.
- 3) There were several comments related to reducing speeds in neighborhoods, reduction of speed limits in certain areas of town, and more enforcement. There were also some comments regarding problematic intersections (i.e. Union/Rte 6a, old Exit 8/Station Ave and Seaview/Rte 28).
- 4) In addition to comments under this goal, there were similar comments included under other goals about safely interconnecting walking and biking trails with each other and destination locations, and providing more sidewalks, bike lanes and crosswalks, with several suggested locations included. Concerns about the ability to maintain new pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure were also noted.

9. **RECREATION:**

- a. **Survey Responses:** The following table outlines the weighted averages of the responses to the questions on Recreation.

Recreation Questions	Average
1. Preserve existing recreational programs and camps.	4.07
2. Preserve existing parks, playgrounds, beach facilities, public golf courses and conservation areas that offer walking, hiking and mountain biking trails.	4.44
3. Preserve existing access to water through public boat launches, fishing piers, beaches, and town ways to water.	4.36
4. Promote expansion of year round recreational opportunities including exploring support for a central community center with possible indoor swimming pool.	3.51
5. Promote entertainment options for young people (for example outdoor music festivals, dog shows, food trucks and nightlife).	3.65
6. Promote expansion and protection of conservation areas and trails.	4.24
7. Provide well-maintained recreational facilities and conservation trails.	4.28
8. Provide improved water quality to maintain our recreational swimming, boating, fishing and shellfishing.	4.51
9. Provide expanded recreational facilities.	3.60

1-Not at all important; 2-Not so important; 3-Somewhat important; 4-Very important; 5-Extremely important

b. **Other Goals (157 comments):** The following summarizes the main responses in the survey regarding other Recreation Goals.

- 1) Many respondents noted their desire to have a community center in Town that could provide programming for all ages, while others noted concerns regarding the cost for this potential project.
- 2) Increased recreational opportunities was another priority frequently noted by respondents. Examples of these potential opportunities are more boat, kayak, and fishing access points from town owned parcels, outdoor movie night and more concerts on the beach.
- 3) Social programming for the younger population was also highlighted as a goal, with outdoor events, live music, and art events commonly noted as examples.
- 4) Others commented on the Town’s need to better maintain current recreational properties before attempting to expand recreational amenities.
- 5) Another recurring comment was the need for more places in Town for dog walking.

10. EDUCATION & LEARNING:

a. **Survey Responses:** The following table outlines the weighted averages of the responses to the questions on Education & Learning.

Education & Learning Questions	Average
1. Preserve the availability of a variety of educational opportunities provided by public, private and religious institutions.	3.89
2. Preserve high quality vocational training at the Cape Cod Regional Technical High School.	4.35
3. Promote a balanced working relationship with our educational partners.	4.08
4. Promote expansion of educational opportunities for all ages.	3.91
5. Promote educational vacations (arts, marine, eco-tourism)	3.57
6. Promote better integration of the schools into the overall community with after school programs and adult education.	3.85
7. Provide continued educational programming for seniors through the Senior Center.	3.82
8. Provide continued arts and educational programs at the Cultural Center of Cape Cod, Historical Society of Old Yarmouth and similar institutions.	3.86
9. Provide improved educational standards and quality infrastructure in our K-12 public schools in an effective, efficient and affordable way.	4.32

1-Not at all important; 2-Not so important; 3-Somewhat important; 4-Very important; 5-Extremely important

b. **Other Goals (113 comments):** The following summarizes the main responses in the survey regarding other Education & Learning Goals.

- 1) Many commented on the benefits the Cultural Center provides to the community, but some also noted that the cost of their programming can make it unaffordable for some residents.
- 2) Some commented on the schools being used more outside of school hours for night classes, recreation, and after school care.
- 3) Several commented on the need to maintain the school buildings, noting the condition of ME Small Elementary School and the DY High School. Many also expressed opposition to future school overrides.
- 4) There were several comments related to the administration and performance of the public schools and families choosing to send their children to charter schools. There were many responses related to the school curriculum with some critical of specific programs being taught and others who had suggestions such as more arts, music, and culture, and more hands on educational experiences including the environment and history.

11. **LIBRARIES:**

- a. **Survey Responses:** The following table outlines the weighted averages of the responses to the questions on the Libraries. All responses hover at the very important mark.

Library Questions	Average
1. Preserve public library facilities offering programs, materials and activities.	4.14
2. Promote libraries as education centers.	3.96
3. Provide modernized library facilities to accommodate future needs and to serve as a multi-generational meeting place for a variety of activities with increased hours, materials and services.	3.95

1-Not at all important; 2-Not so important; 3-Somewhat important; 4-Very important; 5-Extremely important

- b. **Other Goals:** The following summarizes the main responses in the survey regarding other Library Goals.
- 1) 3 libraries vs 1: There were a variety of comments talking about a new central library, those looking to update the existing facilities to retain the quaintness of neighborhood libraries, to those looking for more support for the Yarmouth Port library and making it publicly funded.
 - 2) Library Evolution: Although there were some comments about libraries being obsolete in the internet age, there were far more who value what libraries have to offer and encourage the libraries to adapt and broaden their programs and services to function as meeting, event and gathering spaces, to broaden their appeal to young people, and improve technology and automation.
 - 3) Programs: There were many suggestions related to expanding programs and events at the libraries (some of which the library already do), such as book festivals, book clubs, paint nights, adult education classes, music/art lessons, lectures, storytelling for all ages, community improv, poetry slams, open mic night, services for at home learners, activities to get young people into the library, and delivery/outreach to the homebound.

12. **DEMOGRAPHICS:** The following provides a brief overview of the demographics of those taking the 2nd Visioning Survey.

- Vast majority live full time in Yarmouth (79%) with 16.6% part-time and 4.4% not living in Yarmouth.
- Fairly even distribution among the villages (34.6% YP, 32.3% W Yarmouth, and 33.1% S. Yarmouth).
- Vast majority own their own homes (95%) with 5% renting.
- Many people have lived here more than 20 years (43.6%), with 21.3% 11-20 years, 16.7% 5-10 years, and 18.4% less than 5 years.
- Vast majority do not own or manage a business in Yarmouth (88%) with 12% that do.
- Length of ownership/management of a business was fairly evenly distributed with 25% over 20 year, 26% 11-20 year, 21.9% 5-10 years and 27.1% less than 5 years.
- Majority experience Yarmouth through work (58.7%) with 41.3% as visitors. There were also many comments from people on the specific ways they experience Yarmouth.
- Slightly over half of the respondents were in the 60-74 year age group (51.3%) with 19% 75 and older, resulting in over 70% of the respondents being over 65. The remaining breakdown includes 19.4% 45-69, 6.9% 35-44, 2.6% 25-34, 0.6% 18-24 and 0.1% under 18.
- Vast majority did not have children under 18 at home (87%) while 13% did.
- Majority of the respondents were female (54.8%) with 36.9% male, and the remainder being other or preferring not to answer.
- Vast majority of respondents were white or Caucasian (85.2%), with less than 1% for the remaining categories, and 12.3% preferring not to answer.
- Vast majority of respondents do not participate in a local organization or sit on a board (79.4%) compared with 20.6% that do. There were significant comments about the various volunteer

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organizations and boards/committees that people participate in (SCORE, HSOY, Scouts, Rotary, churches, etc.).

- Respondents found out about this survey in a wide variety of ways with the community visioning webpage, direct e-mails, and social media playing a major role. A total of 20.9% found out about the survey in other ways including in water bill inserts, robo-call, and radio.
- Vast majority did not attend a previous Workshop or Roundtable (90%). However, 81 of the respondents noted they had attended a Workshop or Roundtable.
- Majority did not take the initial survey (57.2%) which makes sense as we have significantly more responses. However, 344 people indicated they had taken the first survey, capturing a high percentage of the original responders.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Draft Vision/Goals, dated May 20, 2021 (for reference)
- 2nd Visioning Survey Results