

# CHARTING OUR COURSE

.....

Town of Falmouth  
2024 Comprehensive Plan Update





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# Acknowledgements

## The Falmouth Community

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Board of Zoning Appeals  
Community Wellness Committee  
Conservation Commission  
Falmouth Historical Society  
Falmouth Land Trust  
Harbor / Waterfront Committee  
Highland Lake Leadership Team  
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



## Charting Our Path

This Comprehensive Plan is an update to the Town of Falmouth's (Town's) 2013 Comprehensive Plan and builds upon the goals and priorities established in 2013. Beginning with the Vision and Values process initiated in 2020, the Town and its residents took the opportunity to reflect on our community's core values and vision for the future. The results both confirmed many longstanding values and goals and reflected

the evolution of our community as we engage with an ever-changing world. The results of the Vision and Values process frame and guide this update to the Town's Comprehensive Plan. Based on Falmouth's Vision and Values, this Comprehensive Plan Update (Plan) supports priorities outlined in past planning work, including environmental protection, preserving the physical character of neighborhoods, carefully

managing residential growth and development, the development of mixed-use Town centers, and maintaining and expanding open space, recreation, and community facilities. All of these priorities were central to the 2013 Comprehensive Plan, and in many cases have been identified as priorities in Falmouth for decades.

This Plan also reflects values and goals that emerged as our evolving community grappled with the practical impacts of past planning initiatives and new opportunities and challenges. The Town began the Vision and Values process in 2020, in the midst of a strong local economy and new migration patterns that had spurred significant new development in Falmouth, both residential and commercial. Throughout the planning process, this growth and development polarized residents. Many residents shared the concern that the 2013 Comprehensive Plan's framework was inadequate, and many residents continued to desire more vibrant and attractive Town centers.

The Vision and Values process also kicked off mere weeks before COVID-19 reached our shores, and the process continued amid the pandemic. Among its many impacts, the pandemic turbocharged Falmouth's long-term challenges with housing affordability – identified as a critical issue going back to the Town's 2000 Comprehensive Plan. During the

pandemic, remote work opportunities exploded, and the State of Maine (State) became a prime destination for higher income professionals who were no longer tethered to an office in a major city. In 2021, Maine ranked first, nationally, as the state with the highest percentage of inbound moves, and the State ranked second in 2022. In 2023, Falmouth had the highest median home price in Cumberland County, at \$925,000.<sup>1</sup> While local incomes have increased, they have not kept pace with housing costs. Most new construction in Falmouth is unaffordable to most Falmouth residents, with a household income of more than \$320,000 needed to afford the median home price.

Additionally, Falmouth's community demographics are changing. Its population is aging, and residents want the Town to ensure that its housing stock, services, and facilities can accommodate the needs of an aging population. Falmouth's public schools have experienced a shrinking enrollment which has been a trend in communities regionally and statewide. That trend has accelerated in Falmouth since 2020.

In considering how to meet the needs of residents as the community changes, the Town is also mindful of the growing property tax burden and the impact on

<sup>1</sup>MaineHousing. 2023 Homeownership Housing Facts and Affordability Index for Maine. Accessed March 5, 2024. <https://www.mainehousing.org/data-research/housing-data/housing-affordability-indexes>





residents. New state requirements for municipalities and school districts, increased staffing to meet service needs, and rising municipal operating and capital costs all have significant impacts to property and school taxes.

Lastly, since 2020, Falmouth has experienced several extreme weather events that have focused our residents on the likelihood that this increased intensity and frequency of storms will be more commonplace as a result of climate change. In 2022 and 2023, severe storms damaged Town Landing. Several areas of Town have experienced unprecedented flooding. Falmouth's recent coastline erosion has also accelerated.

This Plan was developed in the context of these challenges, and it addresses these and other issues that have emerged since the 2013 Comprehensive Plan. Throughout the Vision and Values and comprehensive planning process, the community has come together to identify priorities, address challenges, and create opportunities to improve residents' quality of life.

The foundation for the Plan was the Town's Vision and Values process, which captured the values of community members in six pillars. From the six pillars, the Town established policies and action items that address community priorities and key challenges.

Background information collected and organized within an inventory and analysis of the Town's current conditions in accordance with the Maine Growth Management Act is included in the appendices. The Plan highlights essential information from the inventory in the following chapters that address key issues for Falmouth.

The following six pillars, established through the Vision and Values process, are the foundation for this Comprehensive Plan Update and are supported by policies and action items in this document:



## Pillar One

**Continue to pursue environmental protection and sustainable practices.**



## Pillar Two

**Respect the physical character of established residential areas.**



## Pillar Three

**Foster the development of village centers in core mixed-use areas.**



## Pillar Four

**Strengthen community fabric and commitment to life-long learning.**



## Pillar Five

**Encourage more diverse housing options to increase livability.**



## Pillar Six

**Enhance infrastructure for recreation, multimodal transportation, and connectivity.**

# INTRODUCTION



## What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A Comprehensive Plan is a long-term vision and road map that will guide the Town of Falmouth's future. This plan establishes a framework for land use planning and zoning policies and will guide decisions on managing growth, redevelopment, capital improvements, and addressing community concerns.

The State requires municipalities to create comprehensive plans to plan for and manage growth and development. A municipality must have a plan in place that is consistent with state requirements in order to legally impose a zoning ordinance (beyond the State's minimum shoreland

zoning requirements) or rate of growth ordinance. The State specifies the minimum requirements necessary for comprehensive plans in accordance with the Growth Management Act (30-A M.R.S.A. §§ 4312 – 4350). Through this law, the State requires any future land use, zoning, growth management, and impact fee ordinances to follow the Comprehensive Plan. The following are the State's minimum required components of a comprehensive plan:

Having a comprehensive plan consistent with the Growth Management Act also qualifies municipalities for state grant funds and loan programs. Falmouth's last comprehensive plan update was in 2013 and the State requires an update every 10 years to be consistent with the Growth Management Act.

### 1. Vision Statement



### 2. Public Participation Summary



### 3. Regional Coordination Program



### 4. Future Land Use Plan



### 5. Topic Areas, including goals, analysis, conditions and trends, policies and implementation strategies for each of the following areas:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| a. Historic and Archaeological Resources | h. Housing                                     |
| b. Water Resources                       | i. Recreation                                  |
| c. Natural Resources                     | j. Transportation                              |
| d. Agricultural and Forest Resources     | k. Public Facilities and Services              |
| e. Marine Resources                      | l. Fiscal Capacity and Capital Investment Plan |
| f. Population and Demographics           | m. Existing Land Use                           |
| g. Economy                               |  |



### 6. Applicability



### 7. Evaluation



### 8. Certification





# ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY



## Process

The Falmouth Town Council led the comprehensive planning effort by designating a newly formed Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC), composed of current and former members of the Town Council. The CPC served as the Town's planning committee, with support from Town staff and the consultant team. Falmouth's Long-Range Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC), made up of volunteer residents, guided policy recommendations. Feedback received during

the Vision and Values process, during engagement activities described below, and resident input directly informed CPC and LPAC throughout the process.

Building on the successful community outreach of the Vision and Values process, the CPC sought and obtained input from Falmouth community members and engaged in ongoing dialogue on issues relevant to the Plan. The CPC sought community input in an



inclusive, transparent process designed to identify the issues most important to the community and to give all community members an equal voice on those issues. The intent of such engagement was to build consensus on the community's goals and priorities and understand the most widely shared vision for the future to guide the Town in achieving that vision.

Substantively, the CPC built its public outreach on the foundation of the Vision and Values results, employing the structure of the six pillars (established in the Vision and Values process). The CPC's goal was to gain a deeper understanding of how the community would like the Town to apply the pillars and gain input on more specific policy areas.

#### Engagement activities included:

- Public kickoff meeting
- Three in-person workshops
- Community survey
- An online, virtual engagement Social Pinpoint website
- Public comment at CPC and LPAC meetings

In addition to engagement efforts specifically intended to support the development of the Plan, public feedback from other Town outreach initiatives (including the Climate Action Plan) were reviewed and taken into consideration as part of this process.



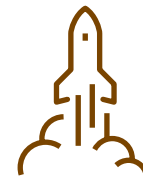


# Summary of Community Engagement



## VISION AND VALUES

The Town's Vision and Values initiative involved two surveys (1,739 respondents to Survey #1 and 1,010 respondents to Survey #2), focus group meetings (214 people attended), a future summit where residents provided input on their desired future scenario for the Town (130 people attended), discussion boards (153 respondents), and a think-tank (45 people attended). These engagement opportunities were conducted from November 2020 to January 2022. Feedback from these events and surveys informed the creation of the Vision and Values report, including the development of the six pillars which are the foundation for this Comprehensive Plan Update.



## PUBLIC KICKOFF MEETING

The comprehensive planning process began with a public kickoff meeting on April 11, 2023. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the comprehensive planning process, provide context on the history of planning in Falmouth, and gather initial feedback from the community. Topics discussed broadly focused on community building and the six pillars. Approximately 50 community members participated.

*Topics discussed broadly focused on community building and the six pillars.*





## WORKSHOP #1: COMMUNITY AND PEOPLE

The first workshop, held May 3, 2023, built upon themes of community and people from the public kickoff meeting. Approximately 30 people attended the workshop.

Prior to the workshop, the Social Pinpoint website hosted a pre-workshop survey, which asked respondents to identify top priorities for building a strong community. At the workshop, discussion focused on the five most selected answers: increasing walkability/bikeability, investing in parks and playgrounds, developing village centers in existing commercial areas, creating opportunities for more diverse housing, and enhancing and improving Town facilities.



## WORKSHOP #2: NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The second workshop, held May 24, 2023, focused on the natural environment. Approximately 30 people attended.

The workshop began with a review of the six pillars, with a focus on how the pillars relate to the natural environment.

The Town, Falmouth Land Trust (FLT), and Woodard and Curran gave brief presentations on open space conservation, acquisition, and land management; climate resiliency; energy, operations, and waste management; environmental health; and sustainable development and transportation.

Following the presentations, participants were invited to share ideas for policies and strategies and to share challenges related to each of the five topic areas, which corresponded to the earlier presentations.

Following the workshop, a budgeting activity was hosted on the Social Pinpoint website where community members were asked to prioritize capital investments and policies related to the natural environment.

*“I think there’s overwhelming support for relaxing zoning restrictions with an eye to maintain agriculture and open spaces.” - Community survey respondent*



### WORKSHOP #3: BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The third workshop, held June 7, 2023, focused on the built environment. Approximately 30 people attended.

Prior to the workshop, the Social Pinpoint site offered a pre-workshop survey. The Town, BerryDunn, and Woodard and Curran gave brief presentations on the history of development in Falmouth, housing challenges and potential strategies, environmental impacts of development, and fiscal impacts of development.

Following the presentations, workshop attendees participated in facilitated discussions on ideas for development along Route 1 South, Route 1 North, and Route 100. A series of renderings showed a variety of building types, development patterns, and densities in these three locations. Participants then shared what they liked and disliked about each development scenario, how each scenario could impact housing diversity, open space, and community integration, and additional ideas for housing and village center development.



### SOCIAL PINPOINT

Social Pinpoint is an online engagement tool used to share information and gather community feedback. The Falmouth Comprehensive Plan Update project site included the following five opportunities for residents to provide input on the planning effort:

- **Pre-workshop surveys**
- **Budgeting activity**
- **Ideas Wall with options to post comments regarding the Town's strengths, challenges, and suggestions for improvement**
- **Interactive Town Map with options to post comments regarding the Town's strengths, challenges, and suggestions for improvement**
- **Question of the Week and other discussion forum questions**

In total, the site attracted 328 unique participants who provided 160 comments and completed 260 surveys, and 90 budgeting activity responses.



### COMMUNITY SURVEY

In early September 2023, every Falmouth residence received a community survey by mail. Residents could respond to the survey digitally through a QR code in the mailing or submit paper

response. The survey was open from September 8 to October 10. The Town received 798 responses. The purpose of the survey was to gain more specific input on each of the six pillars and confirm feedback from community workshops, other engagement activities, current Town planning documents (e.g., Bike/Ped Plan, Open Space Plan, Climate Action Plan), and the Vision and Values effort.



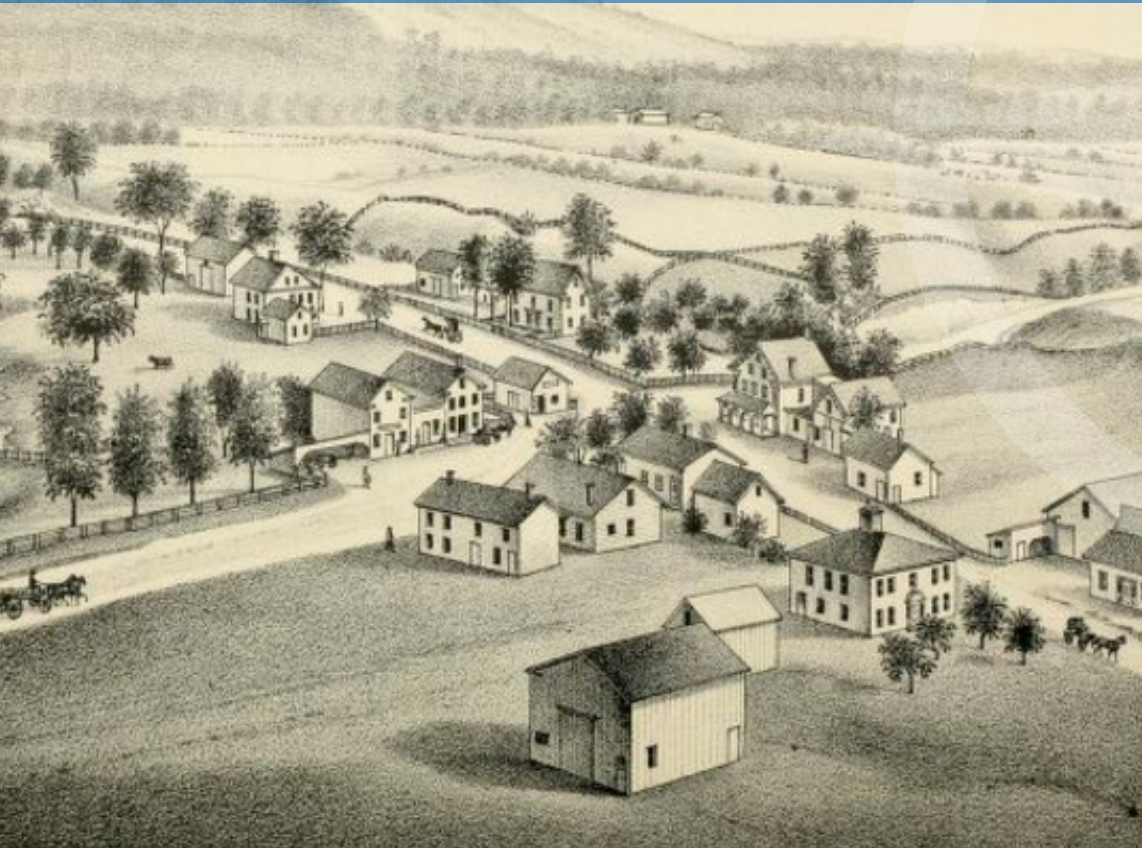
*“Falmouth is an ideally situated coastal town. But unlike many other New England towns, we have not developed an aesthetically pleasing downtown or waterfront area.”*  
- Community survey respondent

## KEY THEMES

- The community values the Town’s abundant open space, trails, parks, and recreation amenities.
- The community values the rural character of the Town.
- Improving connections among existing open spaces, trails, and sidewalks to improve connectivity, walkability, and bikeability, is a priority.
- The Town should continue to prioritize environmental protection and sustainability initiatives.
- The Town should prioritize capital investments to protect water quality.
- Residents expressed concern about rising property taxes.
- Education is a core value and supporting continued investment in high quality education is a priority.
- The community desires additional programming and events to meet the needs of residents of all ages and abilities.
- Residents mostly engage with the community at local shops and restaurants, within their neighborhood, and at parks, trails, and other public spaces.
- Residents’ housing needs are changing, and there is support for more diverse housing options including some support for affordable and workforce housing.
- The aesthetics of the built environment are important, and new development should reflect the physical character of rural and residential areas of the Town.
- Road safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists is a growing concern.
- Residents desire more transportation options to access services and connect with the community.
- The community values Falmouth’s geographic location, including its proximity to Portland and access to the water.



# LOOKING BACK



Source: W. W. Clayton, History of Cumberland Co., Maine (Philadelphia: Everts & Peck, 1880), 271.

## History of Planning and Development in Falmouth

Falmouth has long been a desirable place for development, attributable to its many assets such as open space, strong schools, waterfront, residential neighborhoods, and access to jobs and amenities. Historic development of the Town was not centered on a main street or economic center; rather, small villages developed along rural corridors extending from the City of Portland to connect to rural settlements. These historic village centers included gathering places such as a church and small store.

In the mid-20th century, these centers or nodes were largely replaced by much larger auto-oriented commercial areas along Route 1. Significant growth post-World War II followed the typical patterns of auto-oriented suburban development and resulted in the loss of the historic villages that dotted the Town's rural landscape. The development of the interstate highway system (I-95/Maine Turnpike and I-295) physically divided and transformed the character of the Town. Falmouth's proximity and accessibility

to Portland fueled growth in the Town as farmland was increasingly sold for suburban development.

In 1942, the Town passed its first zoning ordinance, and in 1948 the Town's Planning Board was established in an effort to control the pace of growth and development. One primary responsibility of the Planning Board was to create "a Master Plan for the future development of the Town." The goal of the plan was to relate "raw growth expectations to town plan actions which can protect Falmouth landscape and still permit measured, attractive growth in Falmouth." The plan further noted that given Falmouth's proximity to Portland a "continuation of steady growth can be expected."<sup>2</sup>

The 1963 Town Plan was a direct response to the dramatic changes initiated by the construction of the interstate highway system through the Town. The plan outlined four major issues: the importance of sewerage systems and their influence on future growth patterns, the need for business and commercial development, the opportunities of industrial land use, and the need to acquire public land.



Since the first Comprehensive Plan was written in 1981, the Town has engaged in several comprehensive planning efforts. The focus of these efforts and the resulting policies have often been reactive to prevailing development trends and the current economic climate. The 1988 plan focused on open space land acquisition and controlling growth in response to significant residential subdivision development in the western section of the Town. The 1994 plan focused on community character and the strain on public facilities and infrastructure after several years of significant growth with recommendations to implement design guidelines and encourage economic development to strengthen the tax base. Priorities of the 2000 plan included managing residential growth and preserving open space, focusing on the Town's rural character, and addressing the Town's increasing housing unaffordability.

Despite shifting priorities and changing growth trends, the core values of the community have largely remained the same over several decades. Residents value the abundance of open space and the Town's rural character and have worked to carefully manage growth with respect for community character.

<sup>2</sup> Atwood and Blackwell. "1963 Town Plan, Falmouth Maine", page 1. Falmouth Historical Society.





# Overview of Recent Planning Initiatives

In 2000, Falmouth adopted a rate of growth ordinance in response to continued residential development through the 1990s and concerns from residents about the rate of development and its impact on existing neighborhoods and natural areas. The rate of growth ordinance has been reviewed and amended periodically to address growth trends and housing needs of the community. These amendments included increasingly strict limits on growth, adjustments to housing type categories, and adding exemptions for affordable housing, housing for older people, and housing in the village center districts.

areas (defined in the future land use map of the 2013 plan). These growth areas largely coincided with existing residential areas of the Town, and key recommendations included changes to existing zoning to promote infill development and reduce existing zoning nonconformities. New village center standards and an analysis of compact development opportunities in Falmouth came about as a result of these recommendations.

At the onset of the current planning effort, the CPC noted the importance of understanding past planning initiatives and the implications of those decisions. As an update to the last comprehensive plan, this document is informed by and builds upon prior planning efforts with consideration for new trends and concerns.

As noted above, the rate of growth in Falmouth has been a concern of residents for several decades. Planning efforts have resulted in significant changes to address the rate, type, and location of growth, including open space acquisition, conservation subdivisions, Village Center zoning districts to allow mixed-use development, and additional housing for older adults. The 2013 plan more clearly identified specific commercial and residential growth areas in which to focus growth, away from rural areas of the Town. In response to these policies, residents have noted a concern with infill development and the impact of development on existing residential neighborhoods. This Plan, including the Future Land Use Map and supporting policies, addresses these concerns through significantly restricted growth areas while also identifying opportunities to allow growth in areas where development will have the least impact on existing residential neighborhoods.

## Town of Falmouth 2013 Comprehensive Plan

Volume I: The Plan  
Adopted by Town Council, February 24, 2014



The Town Council approved the most recent comprehensive plan in 2013. The three themes that gave shape to that plan's vision were commercial hubs and economic development; conservation, protection, and connectivity; and diverse residential opportunities. While the core values of conservation and protecting community

character were carried forward to the 2013 plan, other emerging issues had a greater role in the 2013 plan, indicative of broader economic and market shifts. In the 2013 plan, the community recognized economic growth and housing options as important priorities to support the Town's tax base and provide opportunities for existing residents to remain in the Town as housing costs continued to rise. In this way, the proposed change was intended to purposefully preserve Town assets including high-quality Town services and the sense of community among residents.

Recommendations of the 2013 plan aimed to guide future growth and development to designated growth

# LOOKING FORWARD



## A Changing Community

Several core values have endured in the community over many decades and will likely continue to be central to the Town's identity, most notably, the protection of open space and managing the rate and location of new development in the Town. These two themes have persisted and were evident in community discussions and feedback during the

Vision and Values process and through engagement for the Comprehensive Plan. While these and other values have remained consistent, some priorities have shifted as the Town's demographics and social and economic climate have changed. Strategies for addressing these core values and priorities have also evolved.



Demographic changes, including an aging population, a shifting composition of wealthier and higher income residents and related economic inequality, and decline in the youth population, are shifting the demand for programs and services. Over time, residents and Town staff have noted a decline in civic engagement and a weakening of social networks and involvement in social organizations. At the same time, the Town has observed greater divisiveness, often related to Town decisions around growth and development, but also reflecting broader societal divisions.

Despite divisions and varying opinions that often seem at odds with one another, this planning process has, through thoughtful discussion with community

members, identified some common values. Residents largely agree that protecting the Town's existing open space and conservation land is critical to quality of life and a key aspect of the Town's identity. In addition, the desire for a greater sense of community through a variety of platforms is important to residents. This Plan recognizes these values and also considers the fiscal and economic impact of proposed policies. Substantial input from community members has guided the development of this Plan to strategically address community needs and desires in ways that will have long-term benefits fiscally, environmentally, and socially.

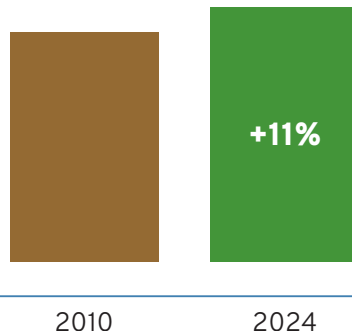
## Where We Are Today

For the past 100 years, Falmouth's population has been steadily increasing. Since 2010, the Town's population has grown by more than 11%. Falmouth's population is expected to continue to increase; however, the rate of population growth is expected to slow in the next decade.

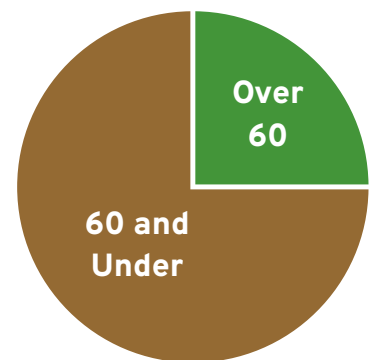
Falmouth's population is aging. More than one quarter of Town residents are over the age of 60. With the

largest age cohort in Falmouth being 50 – 59, the percentage of residents over age 60 is expected to increase. As Falmouth's population continues to age, the Town will examine what the changing demographics mean for demand for services, facilities, and development. An aging community will have different housing, transportation, recreation, and emergency service needs.

**Population Increase**



**Aging Population**

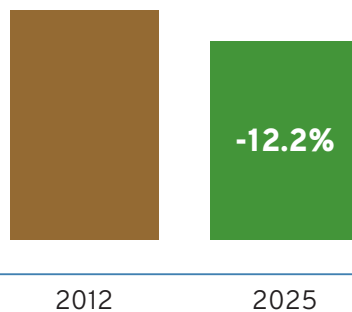




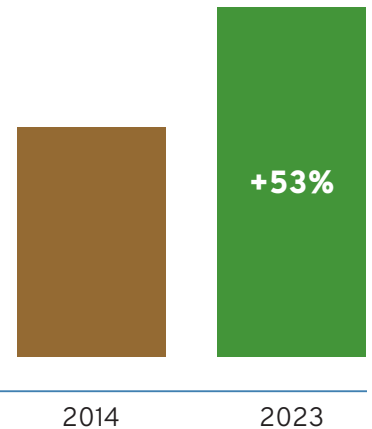
Even with increases in the Town's population, enrollment in Falmouth Public Schools has declined since the 2012 fiscal year after remaining largely steady since 2000. According to Falmouth Public School data, projected fiscal year 2025 K-12 enrollment will be 12.2% less than fiscal year 2012. At the same time, cost per pupil has increased, with a 53% increase from 2014 (\$14,145) to 2023 (\$21,692).<sup>3</sup>

There appear to be several reasons for this decline, including Falmouth's aging population, fewer children per family, and more families choosing not to send their children to public school.

#### Declining K-12 School Enrollment



#### Increasing Cost Per Pupil



<sup>3</sup> Maine Department of Education. "School District Expenditures by Budget Category." Maine Department of Education. Accessed March 19, 2024. <https://www.maine.gov/doe/funding/reports/expenditures>

More than 80% of housing units in Falmouth are single-family detached homes, and only 8.6% of units are in multi-family structures of three or more units. The range of housing options has not significantly shifted in response to changing demand for different housing types, in large part due to land use restrictions and cost challenges. There are few rental units, apartments, and condominiums within the Town, and the housing that is available is too expensive for most people, especially younger workers and seniors. Only 14.2% of the Town's housing are rental units (compared to 26.5% of all housing in Maine), and this percentage has declined since 2010.

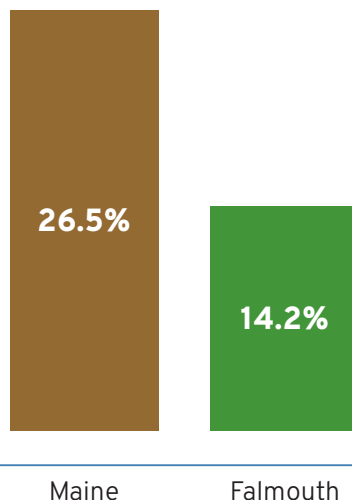
From 2013 to 2023, the median home price in Falmouth more than doubled, from \$384,500 to \$925,000, an increase of 140.6%. While median household income has increased as well, wages have not kept pace with housing costs. Also, the availability of diverse housing options and affordable housing has become an increasingly critical issue for employers in attracting and retaining employees.

Falmouth residents have varying opinions on issues of growth and housing development; however, most residents agree that preserving rural and open space

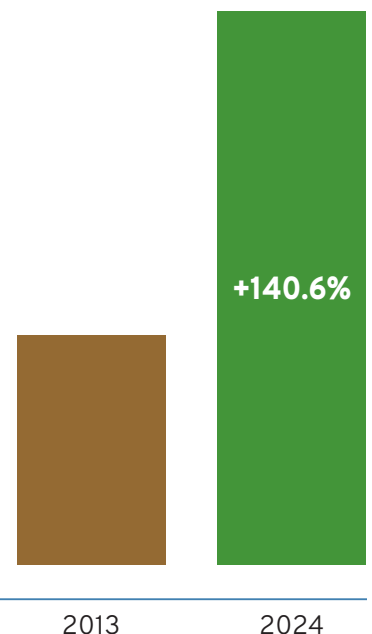


areas is a priority. The Town has struggled to find an acceptable balance between development and rural preservation with many residents asserting that recent development in West Falmouth has been changing the character of the Town from rural to suburban.

**Rental Units  
as a Percentage  
of Total Housing**



**Median Home  
Price Increase**

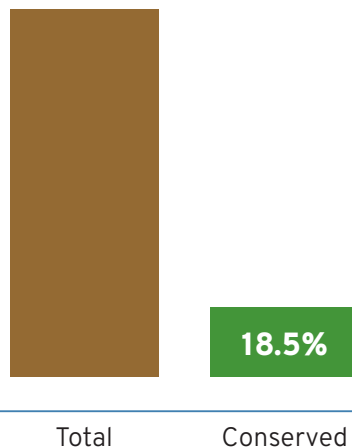






Falmouth has been proactive in conserving land and protecting natural resources for both ecological and recreational purposes, and residents have continued to support these efforts. Today, 18.5% of the Town's total land area is conserved land. The Town has also been a leader in the region on sustainability, prioritizing sustainability measures including energy efficiency, responsible land care, waste reduction, and, most recently, climate resiliency with the development of the Town's 2023 Climate Action Plan (CAP).

#### Conserved Land as a Percentage of Total Land



As the Town and region grow, coordination with neighboring communities is critical in relation to corridor development and improving transportation options. The Town has engaged in several projects to improve bicycle and pedestrian access and safety in Falmouth and will continue to support efforts to improve connectivity and access within and beyond the Town.

Through the Vision and Values and comprehensive planning processes, the community has identified priorities and needs. As operational costs continue to rise and residents look to the Town to provide additional services and amenities, including open space, community programs, and services for older adults, a strong and diverse tax base is needed to support Town operations without further burdening property owners.

# A VISION FOR THE FUTURE



## Purpose

The Town of Falmouth initiated the Vision and Values process in 2020. This process involved substantial community outreach over two years, with the process completed in early 2022. The engagement process was designed to understand the community's values and vision for the Town.

A vision statement expresses shared community values and motivates a community to a desired outcome. A vision statement depicts the desired future conditions and qualities of a community, including physical, environmental, and social attributes, and provides overall direction for goals, policies, and actions in the Comprehensive Plan Update.

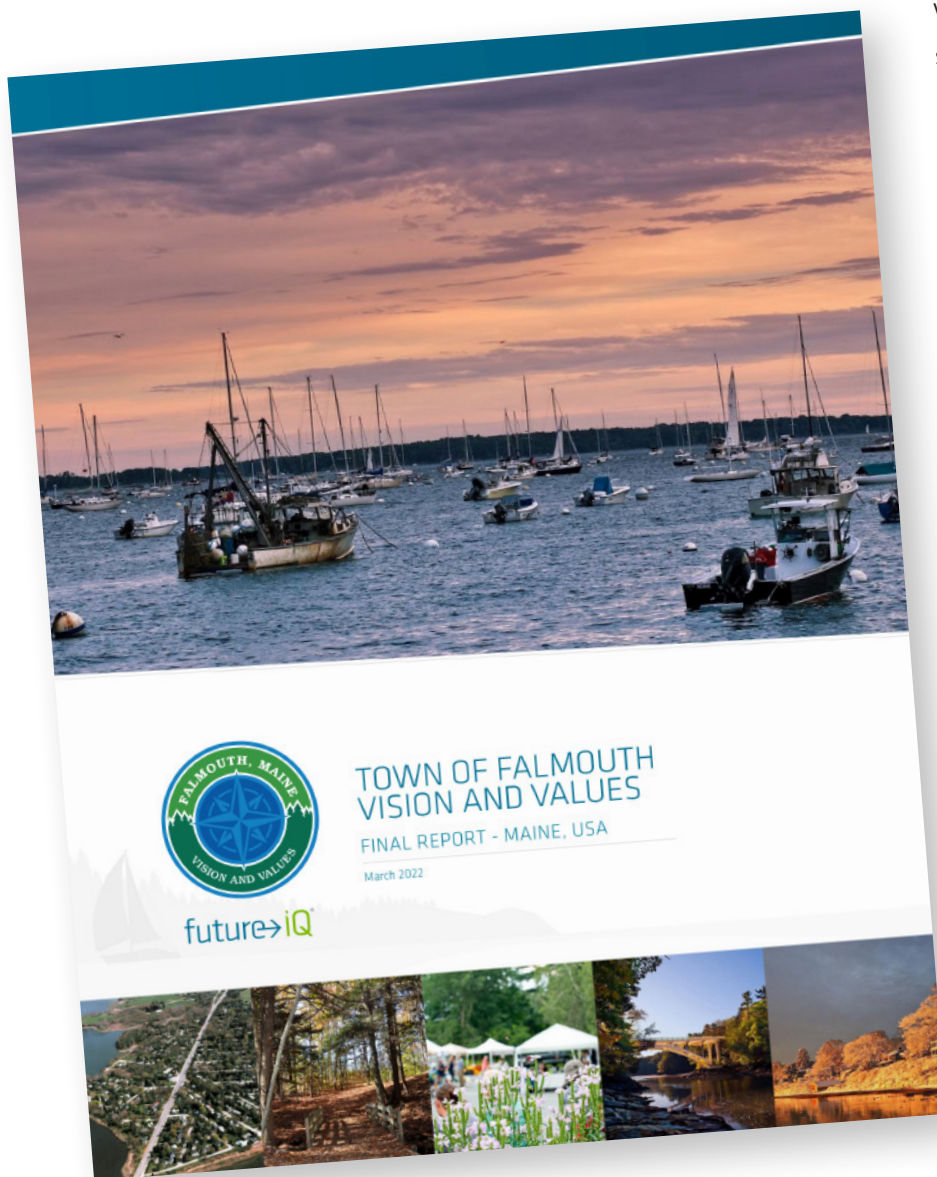


# Vision and Values

Identifying common community values and vision is important to the Town. Breaking out the Vision and Values process was intended to focus on understanding the community's values and priorities and finding common ground. Engagement for the comprehensive plan built upon work done during the Town's Vision and Values process. The engagement process involved over

2,000 community participants and included two community surveys, several public meetings, future summits, and a think tank workshop to develop preferred future scenarios. The Vision and Values report summarizes the engagement approach and feedback received.

The vision that emerged from the Vision and Values process included six key principles or pillars which incorporate the community's core values and were intended to guide the development of this Comprehensive Plan Update.

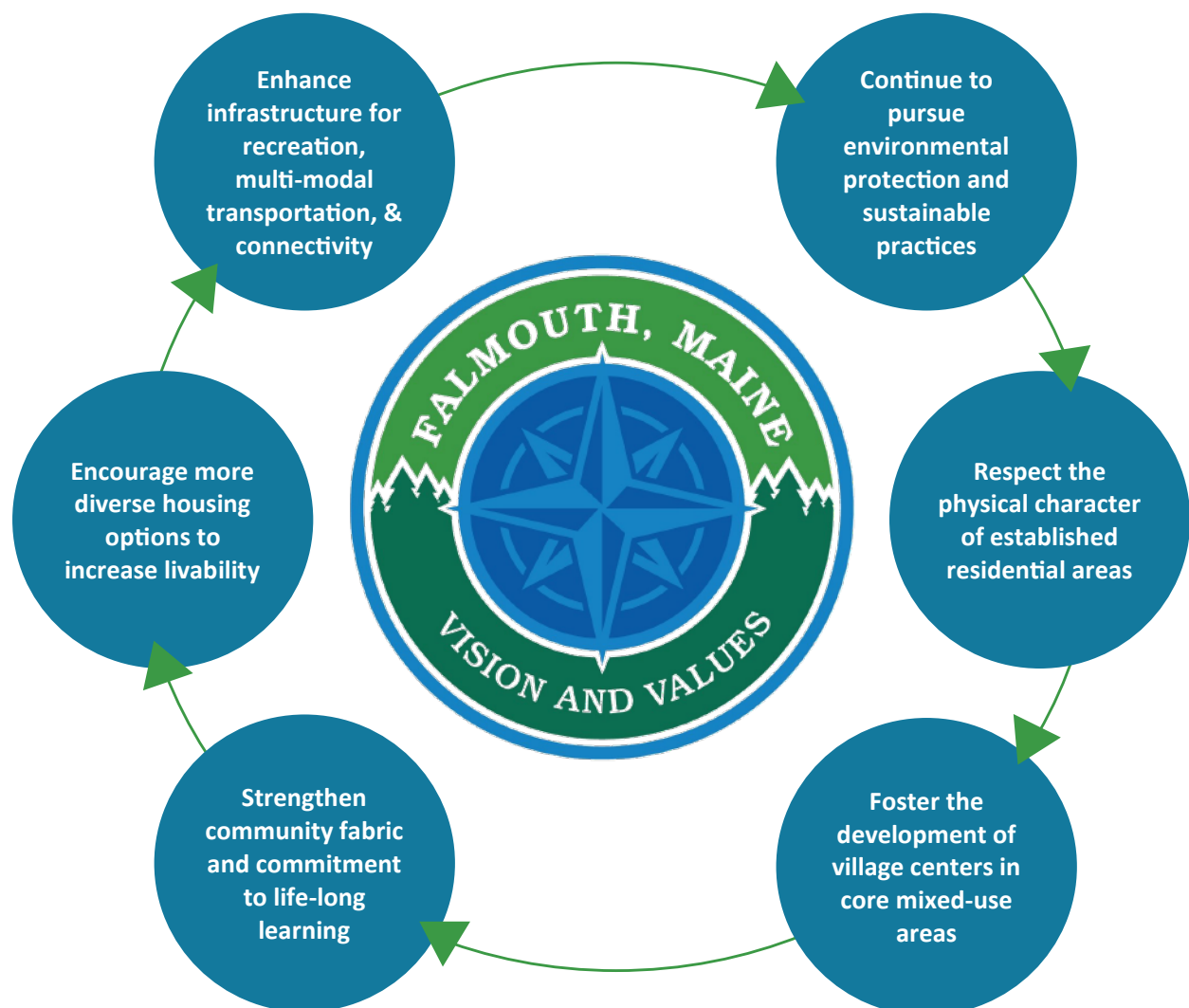




# The Six Pillars

Key themes from the Vision and Values community engagement process became six “strategic pillars.” The pillars build on the vision and values of the community and create a framework that draws together community input into actionable focus

areas to guide the Town’s Comprehensive Plan development. The pillars are not intended to address all short-term community needs, but to guide long-term decision-making that is reflective of the community’s shared vision and preferred future.





# Pillar One

## CONTINUE TO PURSUE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

- **Protect and maintain existing open spaces**
- **Enhance environmental health**
- **Strengthen Falmouth as a green and sustainable community**
- **Promote improvements and initiatives that enhance climate resiliency**

The Town of Falmouth has a long history of commitment to stewardship and protection of natural resources. Since the mid-1980s, residents' concern for the loss of open space has ranked among the most prevalent. There has continued to be public interest and support for protecting and acquiring open space for the protection of environmental health, biodiversity and wildlife habitat, and for recreational benefits. Residents value the role of open space in preserving the Town's rural character and creating a sense of place. In addition, protection of critical environmental areas related to climate adaptation has become a more urgent priority for many residents. Impacts of climate change have become more apparent as the Town experiences more intense weather, warmer winters, and coastal storm damage to Town Landing and other infrastructure. The Falmouth CAP, completed in 2023, identifies anticipated climate risks and recommends actions for the Town to take to mitigate these risks.

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## Pillar One (continued)

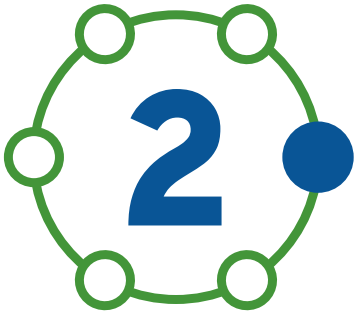
Throughout the Vision and Values and Comprehensive Plan engagement processes, Falmouth residents repeatedly emphasized the need for open space protection, increased environmental and habitat protection, and a variety of sustainability initiatives, including coastal resiliency measures and renewable energy. Survey responses indicated that Falmouth residents are increasingly aware of the impact of the built environment on the natural environment, and the individual responsibility to preserve and maintain the environment.

Falmouth has made significant progress in protecting open space and enhancing environmental protections. Through this plan, the Town will look to build upon previous initiatives and address emerging threats to the natural environment. Open space protection and preservation will focus on connecting wildlife habitat and recreation amenities and

minimizing impacts of growth. The Town will continue to implement water quality protection measures and apply best practices to help ensure safe and healthy water for recreation, habitats, and drinking. The Town will also prioritize climate resiliency aligned with Falmouth's CAP and climate action planning done at the regional and state level.

*"I love the trails and natural resources in Falmouth and the open space. That is why we moved here." - Community survey respondent*





## Pillar Two

### RESPECT THE PHYSICAL CHARACTER OF ESTABLISHED RESIDENTIAL AND RURAL AREAS

- Create and update distinctive commercial mixed-use areas that are physically separated from established residential and rural areas
- Require all new development in established residential areas to build upon existing neighborhood development patterns
- Develop strategies to preserve the character of rural areas

Maintaining the rural aesthetic of the Town, which is characterized by farmland, forested trails, open space, and quiet low-density residential neighborhoods, is essential to Falmouth residents in supporting a continued sense of place and community. The Town's desirable location, situated on Casco Bay and adjacent to the State's largest city, has attracted residents and resulted in increased development pressure, threatening the small-town character and quietness of rural areas. Through deliberate planning and thoughtful decision-making, the Town has the opportunity to guide growth and development that can positively impact the Town while also preserving the rural character and revitalizing a sense of community.

The use of the term "respect" rather than "preserve" in establishing Pillar Two is intentional, recognizing the potential to strengthen existing neighborhoods and reclaim a sense of place in areas where this

(continued next page)





## Pillar Two (continued)

has diminished. Not all changes to residential neighborhoods will have adverse impacts for residents; however, the type of growth that will support community values requires purposeful long-term planning.

Rural landscapes, small farms, woodlands, open fields, river trails, lakefront, and shoreline characterize Falmouth's physical environment. Continued development and suburbanization of rural areas has changed the community's character and identity from its former collection of rural neighborhoods and has impacted treasured natural resources. Striving to maintain the status quo will not serve the Town economically in the long-term. As municipal operating costs rise and community demographics and service needs change (including declining school enrollment), maintaining the current level of service in the Town will likely result in a growing burden on the Town's taxpayers. Encouraging development in growth areas will help expand the Town's tax base and improve fiscal stability while minimizing maintenance costs associated with expanding infrastructure. Pillar Two aims to protect the features residents value most about their neighborhoods, while also creating space for the type of compact, mixed-use, and walkable development that will strengthen the Town's fiscal capacity while prioritizing community values of environmental protection and climate resilience.

Strategies to protect the physical character are based on values and priorities identified through the Vision and Values process. First, preserving

open space and natural areas is a top priority. This includes further disincentivizing development in rural areas and, where appropriate, protecting natural resources, open spaces, scenic views, historic structures, and farmland. Correspondingly, the Town will condense growth areas, primarily along Route 1 and Route 100, and direct growth to these areas by allowing a diversity of uses and removing barriers to missing middle housing development. It is a priority of the Town to minimize impacts of development on residential areas while also allowing for necessary commercial and residential development in designated growth areas to maintain the fiscal sustainability of the community and support residents' needs for housing, services, amenities, and recreation.

*"Falmouth should stay Falmouth and not become an extension of Portland."*  
- Community survey respondent





# Pillar Three

## FOSTER THE DEVELOPMENT OF VILLAGE CENTERS IN CORE MIXED-USE AREAS

- Encourage a mix of business and residential development that fosters community interaction and identity
- Enhance community amenities and infrastructure

Falmouth residents have long noted the lack of a downtown or village center to serve as a focus for commerce and community. Falmouth's commercial centers, along Route 1 and Route 100, were developed in the mid-1900s as auto-oriented retail corridors rather than traditional village centers. These commercial areas offer convenience to residents and the region but lack walkability or a sense of place that is associated with a more traditional downtown or village main street.

Many residents also desire more opportunities for community interaction and more gathering spaces, including local shops, cafés, and restaurants. Looking to the built environment and private spaces to foster a sense of belonging and community identity has become especially important with the decline of institutions that were previously the foundation for community interaction. Falmouth does not currently have a strong local business climate like downtown areas in other communities, and there is a desire for village center development to integrate more public and private spaces, including small businesses, which allow informal interactions and community-building.

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## Pillar Three (continued)

The development of village centers should also benefit the Town economically. Village center-style development includes a mix of residential and non-residential uses in a walkable area, which would support the economic viability for many businesses. More businesses and a diversity of uses within a village center will support one another and help to diversify and expand the Town's commercial tax base. Specifically, encouraging commercial development in underutilized areas already served by Town infrastructure, such as the Route 1 corridor, will grow the tax base without creating a financial burden for the Town to develop and maintain new infrastructure or expand service areas.

Most residents agree that the current commercial corridors are lacking in aesthetic appeal and do not represent Falmouth's small-town identity. Concerns about excessive growth and the changing character of the Town will be carefully considered in how strategies are implemented to encourage village center development. In 2013, Village Center zoning districts were adopted to allow for a mix of commercial, residential, and civic uses and to encourage a greater intensity of uses while creating a more walkable center, as is still the Town's goal today. While the intended transformation to a vibrant village center has not been fully realized as a result of zoning changes, the Village Center districts provide a starting point to build upon regulations to support walkability and diversity of businesses and to enhance the small-town feel of Falmouth, both in style and scale. This type of change would be transformative compared

to current commercial centers in Falmouth and will require a concerted long-term planning effort to realize this vision.

Because historic development patterns have reduced walkability and connectivity, this Plan provides an opportunity to encourage new development patterns and build upon infrastructure improvements that support walkability and that will have positive impacts on public health, physical and social connectivity, and fiscal sustainability.

*"Keep open spaces open and  
prioritize making the village  
center into something Falmouth  
can really be proud of."  
- Community survey  
respondent*



# Pillar Four

## STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY FABRIC AND COMMITMENT TO LIFE-LONG LEARNING

- **Strengthen community fabric by further integrating schools and learning centers into community life**
- **Develop inclusive and welcoming spaces, programs, events, and other opportunities for engagement**

Falmouth residents are committed to their community and life-long learning through civic engagement, volunteerism, involvement in the public school system, and participation in social organizations. Falmouth has historically had strong civic involvement and volunteerism; however, both have declined in recent years.

Similarly, the school district, which is central to community-building among families with school-aged children, has experienced a decline in enrollment in recent years. Residents expressed an interest in fostering a greater connection between the school campus and the broader community. This connection could draw on the knowledge and expertise of residents to support school initiatives and leverage school facilities to support life-long learning opportunities for community members of all ages.

Recent decades have seen a shift away from more structured forms of community involvement and a growing demand for more informal public and private gathering spaces. This change in how people connect

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## Pillar Four (continued)

to the community reflects a decline in institutions that were formerly the foundation for community interaction, such as religious institutions, social clubs, and service organizations. Residents have expressed an interest in more “third places,” referring to informal social settings that are separate from the workplace and home environment. These include cafés, gyms, restaurants, theaters, bookstores, etc.

The needs of residents have shifted over time, as Falmouth’s population has changed. With fewer families with school-aged children, a growing older adult population, and more people working from home, strengthening community connections and informal networks of support and communication is more important than ever.

As it continues to be a challenge to find consensus within the Town on issues of growth, it is especially important to identify and verify community values and priorities through this planning process. Implementing this Plan provides an opportunity to examine how the built environment can foster social connections to strengthen the sense of community and support core values of residents.

Falmouth has a network of existing community institutions that provide a variety of services, programs, and activities for people of all ages. It will be important to continue to support and strengthen these institutions to maintain continuity in the community’s culture and traditions. In addition, new or expanded programs, activities, organizations, and community spaces may be necessary to meet the needs of new residents and to meet the changing needs of long-time residents and support life-long learning opportunities.

*“More emphasis should be centered around creating a walkable community. Sidewalks, trees, etc. This creates community hubs organically.”*  
- Community survey respondent





# Pillar Five

## ENCOURAGE MORE DIVERSE HOUSING OPTIONS TO INCREASE LIVABILITY

- **Create more diverse housing options that expand the spectrum of affordability and increase housing choices**
- **Accelerate development of aging in place housing options**

Housing and the cost of housing has been a topic of discussion in the Town's planning initiatives dating back to the 1980s. Over time, economic conditions and shifting demographics have contributed to changes in housing needs, including a growing demand for smaller housing units for young professionals and older adults and accessory dwelling units (ADUs) to support family transitions. These housing needs have not been sufficiently addressed in the current housing market, especially in Falmouth.

While many residents recognize the need for diverse and more affordable housing options, many are also concerned about the impact of new housing development on their neighborhoods and the potential cost to taxpayers.

The Town recognizes the real concerns of residents related to traffic congestion, loss of open space, and other development impacts. Falmouth is committed to encouraging development that will support housing needs while also respecting the physical character of existing neighborhoods. The Future Land Use Plan greatly reduces the Town's growth areas in an effort to minimize development impacts on existing neighborhoods. At the same time, growth areas

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## Pillar Five (continued)

will provide more opportunities for diverse types of housing in locations most suitable for development.

Diverse housing options are necessary to support the community's current needs and provide housing for those who work in Falmouth, including teachers and emergency responders, and current residents who may want to downsize. It is also critical to create a more resilient community by improving the Town's ability to adapt and accommodate a changing population and to support age diversity by creating places for people to live at all stages of life.

Understanding residents' concerns about growth and development, this planning process has provided an opportunity for the Town to reflect on past growth and its impact on the Town's existing neighborhoods. At the same time, the Town has considered the critical need for housing options and identified opportunities to encourage greater housing choice in a way that will respect existing neighborhoods and natural resources and support the Town's economic growth and fiscal capacity.

*"As a single person  
I don't need an expensive  
home, but that's pretty much  
all that's available in Falmouth.  
There are not enough rental or  
condo units available for  
people like me."  
- Community survey  
respondent*





# Pillar Six

## ENHANCE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR RECREATION, MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION, AND CONNECTIVITY

- Enhance parks, public recreation facilities, and open spaces
- Continue the development of a connected multimodal transportation network
- Improve connectivity to public spaces



The abundance and diversity of recreational opportunities and proximity to jobs, services, and amenities of the region are essential to quality of life in Falmouth. Recent and ongoing land acquisition, park improvements, and sidewalk projects demonstrate the Town's commitment to recreation and improved mobility. Residents have expressed the importance of access to recreation amenities and improved connectivity to support a healthy community. As the Town's demographics change, ensuring that parks and public spaces are inclusive and accessible to all residents is important to maintaining quality of life.

Residents have expressed the desire to improve connectivity of the open space trail network and to create and enhance pedestrian and bicycle connections to other facilities and amenities, such as the school campus, library, and community center. Recent and planned sidewalk projects will improve connectivity, and future land acquisition will prioritize opportunities for trail connectivity. In developing

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## Pillar Six (continued)

village centers and improving commercial corridors, this Plan focuses on pedestrian safety, traffic calming, and reducing vehicle trips by improving walkability.

Situated just north of Portland, tens of thousands of people drive through Falmouth every day. The Town aims to balance Falmouth's proximity to Portland and access to major transportation corridors with the community's desire for a mostly rural character. Although residents enjoy the convenience of access to Portland and the region, increased traffic has had a detrimental impact on the Town's rural environment. The Town will look to continue to build on initiatives to enhance safety at high-crash intersections.

Residents would also like more multimodal transportation options within the Town and region. Expanding transit and alternative transportation options is a regional challenge. Expanding existing transportation networks and systems offers an important opportunity to leverage regional assets to create options for residents who are unable to drive or who choose not to drive.

While expanding transit options, walkability, and bikeability will not wholly solve traffic challenges, providing other mobility options will relieve some

pressure on local roads while also expanding access for all residents and visitors. Enhancing the community's ability to access amenities and services can improve community health, and providing access to a variety of transportation options can help to support Falmouth residents who wish to age in place.

*"I'd like to see more funding for free family recreation like the outdoor ice skating rink, off-leash dog trails, and maybe even kayak/paddle board rentals off Town Landing."*  
- Community survey respondent



# POLICIES & ACTIONS

## Supporting the Six Pillars

The following chapters provide policies and action items identified by CPC in consultation with LPAC and Town staff and based on community input, to support the six pillars and guide the Town in a direction that aligns with community values. Policies and actions are also coordinated with the State's goals and requirements and address issues from both a local and regional perspective, where appropriate.

The chapters are organized by topic area as defined by the Maine Growth Management Act and are not in order of priority or importance. Many actions relate to multiple topic areas and reflect the values of more than one of the six pillars. Additional background information, data, and maps to support these policies and actions can be found in the Inventory and Analysis document, in Appendix D.



# Historic Resources

As Falmouth looks to strengthen community connections and sense of place, acknowledging and honoring historical and cultural sites and structures will help to establish a shared understanding of the Town's past. In addition to notable historic landmarks, such as The Falmouth House or Baxter Summer Home on Mackworth Island, lesser-known structures and sites provide insight into Falmouth's history as an indigenous fishing village, rural farming community, and summer destination.



## DATA HIGHLIGHT: **FALMOUTH'S HISTORIC RESOURCES**

- **8** properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places
- **13** documented historic archaeological sites
- **24** documented pre-historic archaeological sites





*Protect historic resources to strengthen Falmouth's cultural and historical fabric and promote connection through education and place-making.*

# POLICY 1

Historic resources provide tangible connections to Falmouth's past and ground the community in its history and identity. Residents value the Town's rural landscape, which was influenced by agricultural development patterns and farms of the past, some of which are preserved today. Historic sites like the River Point archaeological site provide insight to the culture and practices of the indigenous people who preceded European settlement. Historic buildings and sites contribute to Falmouth's sense of place and celebrate the Town's heritage.

Residents expressed the desire to have more opportunities to connect and engage with their community. Historic sites and events like the Falmouth Tercentennial connect residents to the Town's history and form connections over a shared identity. Evaluating opportunities to expand and preserve additional resources can continue to foster connections, create a sense of place, and provide residents with the opportunity to learn more about the Town's history.



**ACTION A:** Continue to protect historic resources through the Town's subdivision ordinance.



**ACTION B:** Continue to require the planning board to incorporate review and comment by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission for proposed development on or adjacent to a property that is on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.




**ACTION C:** Work with the Maine Historic Preservation Commission to evaluate the benefits of a nomination to the National Register of Historic Places for the archaeological site at River Point.



**ACTION D:** Work with the Falmouth Historical Society, Maine Historic Preservation Commission, and others to assess the need for a comprehensive survey of Falmouth's historic and archaeological resources.



**ACTION E:** Develop interpretive signage to educate the community about the historical and cultural significance of certain sites and landmarks. 

### Case Study: Museum in the Streets, Kennebunk, Maine

Museum in the Streets creates heritage discovery trails for the benefit of a community's inhabitants and tourists. The program uses panel signs to create a self-paced walking tour to promote preservation of historic sites and knowledge of stories, events, and traditions that are important to a community's identity. The Town of Kennebunk's Museum in the Streets includes a series of 25 panels that include rare photographs, documents, and records of the Town's history. A walking brochure was also created to support self-guided tours. Information about historic sites, events, and stories is also available digitally through an app, curated by the Brick Store Museum.

# Water Resources

Situated along Casco Bay at the mouth of the Presumpscot River and abutting Highland Lake, Falmouth's relationship to surface waters has played an important role in the Town's history. As the region has experienced continued development, the Town has increasingly focused on stormwater and water quality management, recognizing the importance of watershed health on the long-term health of the community.

Survey respondents identified protecting water quality and the environment as a top priority (61%), including pollution reduction measures, consideration for healthy ecosystems, and minimizing impervious surfaces.

Falmouth is a regional leader in addressing water quality and watershed health, going beyond the minimum requirements of shoreland zoning and planning for stormwater management. Recent efforts include education, outreach, and implementation of the Highland Lake Watershed Management Plan as part of the Highland Lake Leadership Team (HLLT); and development of the 2021 Falmouth Strategic Watershed Plan. Recommendations focus on additional data collection, further watershed management plans for specific watersheds, and continuing to identify and implement best management practices.



## DATA HIGHLIGHT:

- Threatened watersheds: **Webes Creek** and **Norton Brook**
- Impaired streams: **Hobbs Brook**

## Protect current and potential drinking water sources.

# POLICY 1

Falmouth has continued to be proactive in protecting the long-term health of its watersheds and drinking water resources. Continuing to plan for and address current and future changes, including increased volumes of stormwater runoff and higher average temperatures, will help ensure that the community has clean and adequate drinking water as the Town continues to grow.



**ACTION A:** Adopt or amend local land use ordinances as applicable to incorporate stormwater runoff performance standards consistent with the Maine Stormwater Management Law and Maine Stormwater regulations, Maine Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP's) allocations for allowable levels of phosphorus in lake/pond watersheds, and Maine Pollution Discharge Elimination System Stormwater Program.



**ACTION B:** Maintain, enact, or amend public wellhead and aquifer recharge area protection

## Protect water resources in growth areas to support sustainable development in those areas.

# POLICY 2

As the Town looks to direct development to growth areas surrounding Route 1 and Route 100, additional consideration should be given to how new development and redevelopment addresses climate resiliency, stormwater runoff and water quality. Growth areas contain critical water resources including Chenery Brook, Norton Brook, Mill Creek, and the Piscataqua River. These resources should continue to be protected with consideration for the overall environmental health of the community and water quality of Casco Bay.



**ACTION A:** Consider amending local land use ordinances, as applicable, to incorporate low-impact development standards.



**ACTION B:** Continue to implement recommendations of the 2021 Falmouth Strategic Watershed Plan and monitor watershed health through the establishment and annual review of watershed health metrics.



**ACTION C:** Review water quality protection standards and create a guide of best management practices for construction and maintenance of roads and public properties and require their implementation by contractors, owners, community officials, and employees.




*Cooperate with neighboring communities and regional and local advocacy groups to protect water resources.*

## POLICY 3


Lakes, rivers, streams, and oceans do not follow municipal boundaries, and a collaborative effort is required to protect these resources. Impacts from runoff and development have downstream effects. Many communities, both coastal and inland, have an impact on the water quality of Casco Bay. Supporting the existing structure of government and nonprofit entities that conduct research and monitoring of water quality and communicating and cooperating with neighboring municipalities is critical to the long-term protection of the Town and region's water resources.

Addressing degraded water quality in Highland Lake and watershed health through collaboration as part of the HLLT will continue to be a priority for the Town. In addition, HLLT's efforts to share and develop educational resources help support overall water quality for the region.




**ACTION A:** Conduct a public education campaign to educate landowners on protecting water quality, including providing local contact information at the municipal office for water quality best management practices from resources such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Soil and Water Conservation District, Maine Forest Service, Sebago Clean Waters, and/or Small Woodlot Association of Maine. 



**ACTION B:** Participate in local and regional efforts to monitor, protect, and, where warranted, improve water quality, including preparing and updating watershed management plans in coordination with neighboring municipalities, as appropriate. 



**ACTION C:** Provide educational materials at appropriate locations regarding aquatic invasive species. 


*Continue to promote and implement responsible stormwater management practices to protect the Town's rivers and streams, Highland Lake, and Casco Bay.*

## POLICY 4


Falmouth has shown commitment to and leadership in protecting water resources and proactively adopting and promoting best practices for stormwater management. The Town will continue to be a leader in environmental management. Action items in this plan align with recommendations of the Strategic Watershed Plan, Stormwater Management Plan, the 2023 CAP, and efforts of HLLT. These more detailed plans and initiatives provide the technical expertise and guidance to implement responsible stormwater management practices within the framework of the broader goals established in this Comprehensive Plan.

As growth and development have direct impacts on the environment, the Future Land Use Plan and growth management approach as outlined in this document take into consideration water quality and other environmental concerns. Significantly reducing growth areas, enhancing stormwater regulations, and reviewing how the Town manages stormwater and wastewater systems, are all important elements in further protecting the Town's surface waters.




**ACTION A:** Evaluate requirements for stormwater capture and consider increasing requirements to mitigate impacts from stormwater runoff. 




**ACTION B:** Create an educational campaign to support responsible stormwater management. 




**ACTION C:** Review standards on septic system requirements and revise as needed to enhance provisions to protect water resources. 



**ACTION D:** Review the standards for expanding wastewater service to new developments requiring public sewer service with consideration for system capacity. 



**ACTION E:** Provide for stormwater and wastewater infrastructure in designated growth areas, where appropriate. 

### Save the Rain – Onondaga County, New York

Onondaga County, New York's Save the Rain program is an award-winning stormwater management program that focuses on preventing rainwater from entering the combined sewer system. The program provides grants to local municipalities to install innovative green infrastructure in their communities to reduce stormwater flow into the sewer system that could ultimately pollute Onondaga Lake.

# Natural Resources

In 2013, the Town's Comprehensive Plan identified challenges and policies related to natural resources and open space. Since that time, the Town has made significant progress in conserving land and protecting natural resources. In 2013, the Town was resolving water quality issues from Highland Lake, improving water quality standards of the Presumpscot and Piscataqua Rivers, and examining enhanced requirements for septic systems. Additionally, clam flats were closed due to high levels of bacteria caused by runoff, the public had limited opportunities to access water recreation, and there were concerns about the impacts of sea level rise.

The Town has taken steps to improve stormwater quality, including creating a stormwater ordinance, providing resources to property owners to improve stormwater quality, and implementing infrastructure upgrades to better manage stormwater. Additionally, the Town has partnered with neighboring municipalities to improve water quality and reduce phosphorus levels in Highland Lake. The Town's Shellfish Conservation Committee surveys clam flats to assess their health, records shellfish harvest, and establishes the number of annual shellfish permits that the Town issues.

Today, approximately 18% of Falmouth's land area is conserved. Falmouth has been proactive about conserving land and protecting natural resources for both ecological and recreational purposes, and residents continue to support these efforts. The Town provides access to aquatic recreation through the boat launch at Highland Lake, the Blackstrap Canoe Launch, and hand-carry boat launches at Walton Park and Mussel Cove.



The 2013 plan proposed policies to steer development away from environmentally sensitive areas, protect soils and groundwater from older and poorly working septic systems, reduce nonpoint source pollution, and actively manage open spaces. While the Town has made significant progress on many environmental initiatives, controlling growth has been a challenge. According to the Falmouth Code Enforcement office, 179 new residential units were constructed in non-growth areas from 2014 to 2023, accounting for 24% of all new housing development in the Town. This Plan looks to further protect natural areas with a greater focus on guiding development to growth areas and restricting development in non-growth areas. While protection of natural resources through conservation has been beneficial to the Town, continued acquisition of open space at the same pace as the past decade may not be financially feasible. Rather, discouraging development through land use and zoning regulations and requiring developers to mitigate impacts, where appropriate, is a more practical approach. The Town's future open space acquisition efforts will prioritize connectivity of trails and open space and protection of Falmouth's most critical environmental areas.



Over half of the Comprehensive Plan community survey respondents ranked Pillar One as their first or second priority. Falmouth residents and community members are committed to environmental protection and sustainability efforts and have indicated they would like to see additional educational campaigns related to resource protection and sustainability practices that homeowners can adopt.

Residents have also expressed concern about the impacts of climate change related to the Town's natural resources. Impacts on the Town's ecosystems and wildlife, water quality, and mitigating coastal erosion and flood resiliency are all concerns related to climate change. In recent years, severe weather resulting in flooding in certain areas of the Town and damage to Town Landing have brought concerns about sea level rise to the forefront of Town discussions around climate and the environment.

*Conserve critical natural resources and expand protection of environmentally sensitive areas in rural and undeveloped areas.*

## POLICY 1

As Falmouth continues to experience development pressure, protecting natural areas, wetlands, habitats, and the coastline from the impacts of development and climate change are a major concern.

Despite the Town's strong support and investment in environmental protection, some of the community's natural resources have been classified by Maine DEP as impaired or are considered at risk of becoming impaired. The east side of Falmouth is a developed area with large areas of impervious surfaces, high traffic volume on corridors, and other potential pollutant sources. These factors have a significant impact on environmental health. Hobbs Brook has been identified as impaired and not meeting DEP standards. Falmouth also has two threatened watersheds, Webes Creek and Norton Brook, at risk of

being classified as Urban Impaired Streams. Falmouth has eight turnpike streams around I-95 and I-295 exits that have a risk of impact from development.

In addition to improving the health of impaired streams and water bodies, expanding protection of wetlands, coastlines, and other natural resources is important to protecting environmental health. This will require action by the Town, through land use regulations and partnerships with external agencies and organizations, and through efforts by private landowners utilizing sustainable land management.



**ACTION A:** *Ensure that land use ordinances are consistent with applicable state law regarding critical natural areas and work to develop model ordinance language.*








**ACTION B:** *Include as part of the development review process, consideration of pertinent information regarding critical natural areas, including Beginning with Habitat maps.*





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## POLICY 1

continued

-  **ACTION C:** Explore ways to encourage landowners to preserve and allow access to undeveloped parcels outside designated growth areas such as education on stewardship and climate resiliency, guidance on the legal implications of public access, and assistance with invasive species removal.  
-  **ACTION D:** Evaluate site assessment requirements, and revise as needed, to help ensure that environmentally sensitive areas are not adversely impacted by new construction. 

-  **ACTION E:** Evaluate zoning and consider revisions to help protect areas that are vulnerable to hazards caused by climate change. 
-  **ACTION F:** Provide for protection of stream corridors, including Chenery Brook, Mill Creek, Mussel Cove, and Hobbs Brook, where certain high intensity uses would contribute to pollutants in waterways. 
-  **ACTION G:** Collaborate with State testing programs to investigate sludge utilization sites to determine environmental, stormwater runoff, and water resource impacts and mitigation needs. 
-  **ACTION H:** Educate the community about the benefits of maintaining undeveloped land and critical natural resources for the health of the environment and Town residents. 

Coordinate with neighboring communities and regional and state agencies to protect shared critical resources.

## POLICY 2

Preserving natural resources, which often span municipal boundaries, requires coordination with other municipalities and local organizations to provide education, funding, and staff to lead initiatives and develop policy.

The Town has partnered with the Falmouth Land Trust (FLT) to maintain and protect existing open space and identify additional acquisition opportunities.

In addition to land management, the FLT also plays an important role in educating the public about the importance of responsible stewardship through events, programs, and promotional materials.

In 2019, the Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District and representatives from Falmouth, Westbrook, and Windham collaborated to create a Highland Lake Watershed-Based Management Plan. The plan was developed in response to picocyanobacterial blooms forming on the lake, indicating a decline in water quality. The plan establishes goals to reduce phosphorous loading into the lake over a 10-year span and maintain the

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## POLICY 2

### continued

lake's Class GPA status. HLLT collaborates on the implementation of the management plan.


Continued partnership is essential for maintaining and expanding the Town's conservation areas and protecting critical natural resources from the impacts of development and climate change.




#### DATA HIGHLIGHT:

- **9%** of land area is permanently protected as conservation land.
- **18%** of the Town's total land area is designated as open space (either permanently protected or designated for parks, open space, or recreational use).
- **737** acres were added as Town-owned open space since 2000.





**ACTION A:** Continue to support and participate in planning, management, and outreach efforts of HLLT to improve and maintain the water quality of Highland Lake. 



**ACTION B:** Distribute or make available information to those living in or near critical or important natural resources about current use tax programs and applicable local, State, or federal regulations. 



**ACTION C:** Work with Falmouth Land Trust and other public and private conservation partners to encourage the continued acquisition of open space, especially to improve trail and open space connectivity and to protect critical environmental areas.  

#### Portland, Oregon's Land Acquisition Strategy

The City of Portland, Oregon's Parks & Recreation Bureau maintains one of the largest urban park systems in the northwest. The City has continued to grow and acquire parkland. Portland's 2035 Comprehensive Plan identified addressing equity in responding to diverse and changing recreational needs as a major challenge. To adequately address this issue and meet the City's service provision standard, a land acquisition strategy was developed to provide guidance to staff and City officials in evaluating property acquisitions in relation to program areas and the Bureau's mission. The strategy provides preferred characteristics for property acquisition and easements, including specific recreation needs, connectivity, accommodation for wildlife, and safety, and provides ranking criteria for prioritizing potential land acquisitions.



# Agriculture & Forestry

Preserving and protecting the health of agricultural and forest resources can support a healthier environment, provide recreational opportunities, and contribute to the rural character of the Town. Falmouth residents have emphasized the desire to preserve rural areas to the greatest extent possible. This includes protecting natural resources, including farmland.

Historically, Falmouth's land was predominantly used for agricultural purposes. Today, only a small

percentage of land is actively farmed. Farmland provides food for both the community and wildlife, can help control flooding, protect wetlands and watersheds, and maintain air quality. Farmlands also filter and absorb wastewater and provide groundwater recharge.

Most of Falmouth is now forested, though the Town's forests are relatively young. Forests provide clean air and water, allow for wildlife habitat, and stabilize the soil. Falmouth residents also value the recreational opportunities forests provide.

The Town continues to maintain and promote forest health. The Town and FLT have worked together to preserve and protect forest resources and open space, and to connect trails and recreation networks. In April 2023, the Town entered into a contract agreement with FLT to manage and oversee open space properties. FLT is in the process of updating forest management plans for each of its properties and those under Town contract.



## Improve and enhance forests on Town-owned open spaces and tree canopy on growth area corridors.

### POLICY 1


Healthy forests are vital to creating a healthy environment. When properly managed, forests provide wildlife habitat, clean air and water, stabilize the soil, and provide recreational opportunities. Well-managed forests are also more resistant to insects and disease, which are becoming more prevalent in Maine's forests. When forests go unmanaged, tree diseases can spread more easily, forests can become a fire and safety risk, and soil health degrades. Thinning forests before trees decline and become hazards is also important to ensure the safety of recreators. For example, in 2022, the Town implemented a forest management plan for Pine Grove Preserve to remove dead and dying trees to increase safety for trail users and improve overall forest health.

During the planning process, residents expressed that they would like to protect the Town's forests and improve tree canopy in growth areas. Residents also expressed the desire to remove invasive species from public and private property and continue to work with the Falmouth Land Trust to acquire and manage forested areas.




**ACTION A:** Complete a street tree inventory within growth areas. 




**ACTION B:** Continue to update forest management and property management plans for Town forests and conservation lands as needed, considering the role of habitat diversity and leveraging the existing relationship with the Falmouth Land Trust. 



**ACTION C:** Identify key invasive species that threaten Falmouth's environment and develop strategies for stopping their spread and/or removing them. 



**ACTION D:** Continue to update the Town's inventory of significant or historic trees. 



### DATA HIGHLIGHT: LAND ENROLLED IN TREE GROWTH TAX PROGRAM

- **1,227 acres** (6.5% of the Town's land area)

#### What is a street tree inventory and why create one?

A street tree inventory involves collecting data on street trees and park trees by measuring, mapping, and identifying public trees. An inventory includes information on the age, species, size, and condition of trees and can serve as a benchmark in planning for maintenance and management of the community forest. Age and condition of trees, tree canopy, and diversity of species are important considerations for maintaining a healthy community forest and maximizing its benefits. Establishing a baseline allows the community to make informed decisions about where to plant new trees, what species are most appropriate in a particular location, and where maintenance is needed. It is recommended that street tree inventory data be updated every five years.

*Protect farms and prime farmland for agricultural use and for scenic, recreational, cultural, historical, and economic value to the community.*

## POLICY

# 2

The Town has a small number of active farms that contribute to the Town's economy, and provide recreational, historic, and cultural value to the community. The Town and Falmouth Land Trust have worked to conserve former farms, including the Zacharias Farm, which is now Falmouth Community Park. Falmouth Land Trust also owns Hurricane Valley Farm and coordinates with Cultivating Community to support local community gardeners and farmers. The farm is home to over 50 community gardeners. Other local farms host events and provide access to trails, offering opportunity for residents to engage with their community and recreate.


Looking forward, the Town will explore additional opportunities to protect agricultural land and prime farmland. The Town will continue to support existing agricultural operations and promote programs to protect land for agricultural use. In addition to economic and environmental benefits, protecting farms and farmland helps connect the Falmouth community to its agrarian past.




### DATA HIGHLIGHT: AGRICULTURAL LAND

- **1.8% (330 acres)** of Falmouth's land area is used as farmland.




**ACTION A:** Encourage the use of agricultural conservation easements. 




**ACTION B:** Consider using transfer of development rights (TDR) in certain growth areas in exchange for purchase of agricultural easements. 




**ACTION C:** Revise and update the conservation subdivision definition and process to maintain areas with prime farmland soils as open space or for agricultural use to the greatest extent practicable. 




**ACTION D:** Consult with the Maine Forest Service and Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District in developing or revising land use regulations pertaining to agricultural and forest management practices. 



**ACTION E:** Provide educational resources and encourage owners of productive farm and forest land to enroll in the current use taxation programs. 



**ACTION F:** Identify ways to include local agriculture operations in future economic development efforts, including promoting programs and events to support the economic viability of local farms. 

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## POLICY 2

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### **Voluntary Transfer of Development Rights Program – Scarborough, Maine**

The Town of Scarborough has initiated the TDR Program, a voluntary, incentive-based program to encourage preservation of rural areas and to direct development to growth areas. The program allows landowners in limited growth (or rural) areas to sell development rights to developers looking to build in designated growth areas. The seller's land is placed in a conservation easement that prevents future development. The program is intended to help the Town achieve its goal (as outlined in the Comprehensive Plan) to guide higher intensity development to existing developed areas, while protecting farmland, natural resources, and open space in more rural areas of Scarborough.

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# Marine Resources

Located along Casco Bay, Falmouth's marine resources have played a vital role in the Town's history. Falmouth's connection to Casco Bay allowed the Wabanaki Tribes to flourish and access the waters for food, trade, and transportation. Like many of Maine's coastal communities, Falmouth developed a reputation as an unspoiled scenic retreat, well-suited for visiting and summering. As Falmouth transitioned from destination to suburb, much of the coast became private with a small working waterfront and limited non-residential uses. Still, many residents feel a strong connection to Casco Bay through commercial and recreational marine activity and the scenic views and unspoiled coastline that characterize Falmouth.

In recent years, severe storms have impacted Town Landing and coastal erosion threatens existing waterfront uses. Casco Bay pH levels have dropped over the last 15 years, as seawater has become more acidic. Additionally, between 2004 and 2013, the Gulf of Maine warmed at a rate of 0.41°F per year—faster than 99% of the world's oceans. In 2022, the Gulf of Maine's average sea surface temperature was 53.66°F — more than 3.72°F above the long-term (1982 – 2011) average. The Gulf of Maine experienced its second-warmest year on record in 2022, with 2021 being the warmest.

The Town's coastline and harbor are comprised of critical habitats and scenic open space areas, support commercial and non-commercial fishing and harvesting activities, and provide access for boating and other recreational activities. These assets contribute to the economy and are vital to Falmouth's identity.



## DATA HIGHLIGHT: PUBLIC WATER ACCESS

- Town Landing
- Tidewater Farm
- Brickyard Point
- Gilsland Farm Audubon Center
- Clapboard East Preserve
- Mackworth Island
- Presumpscot Point Park
- Walton Park

## Foster water-dependent land uses and balance them with other complementary land uses.

# POLICY 1

The Town is committed to improving connection to the waterfront and is actively looking for opportunities to increase physical and visual access. Several key parks, open spaces, and island trailways provide public access to the coast. Waterfront access has been expanded and enhanced over the years. Waterfront parcels are considered for resiliency, protection, and access strategies for open space acquisition by the Parks and Community Programs Department and FLT.

Opportunities for commercial and non-commercial fishing and harvesting are currently limited. By expanding waterfront access, the Town hopes to further support the local fishing and harvesting community and foster a stronger working waterfront.



**ACTION A:** Continue to support management of waterfront land and the efforts of the Parks and Community Programs Department and FLT with consideration for climate resiliency, habitat protection, and public access to the waterfront.



**ACTION B:** Support and strengthen the local fishing community and working waterfront.

## Maintain and, where warranted, improve harbor management and facilities.


# POLICY 2

Town Landing is the largest recreational anchorage and mooring field north of Marblehead, Massachusetts. Falmouth's marine resources are overseen by the Harbor Master and Police Department's Marine Unit. The Harbor/Waterfront Committee provides oversight and guidance over the Town's harbor.

The Town has been committed to maintaining and enhancing facilities at Town Landing and has been

working to address capacity needs and resiliency. In 2022, the Town initiated a Falmouth Town Landing Resiliency Study to evaluate vulnerabilities and explore options for long-term resiliency. Since the study was completed, multiple storms have caused significant damage to Town Landing, bringing climate resiliency to the forefront of community discussions about the waterfront and harbor management. Moving forward with implementing climate resiliency measures is a priority for the Town.





**ACTION A:** Seek funding for and implement recommendations of the Town Landing Resiliency Study. 



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## POLICY 2

continued

-  **ACTION B:** Continue to enforce the Coastal Waters Ordinance and support efforts of the Harbor/Waterfront Committee, Harbormaster, and Marine Unit to maintain a safe and accessible facility. 

-  **ACTION C:** Continue to monitor and address capacity issues of harbor facilities including use of commercial floats, small craft storage, mooring access, and vehicle parking. 

-  **ACTION D:** Monitor and address impacts to harbor facilities due to climate change or other adverse actions. 



*Protect, maintain, and improve marine habitat, water quality, and access to the Town's marine resources for all appropriate uses, including fishing, recreation, and tourism.*



## POLICY 3



Residents have expressed the desire for improved access to Town Landing and additional opportunities for aquatic recreation. Outdoor recreation is an important part of community culture in Falmouth and residents would like to make best use of the Town's access to Casco Bay to support recreation and general enjoyment. In addition to swimming, fishing, boating, paddling, and other marine activities, the Town has trails and parks that offer scenic views of the ocean, including Mackworth Island and Gilsland Farm (Maine Audubon).



The Town will look to balance additional recreation and fishing opportunities with maintaining the health and quality of marine habitat. The Town has worked with the Maine DEP and Department of Marine

Resources (DMR) to evaluate and monitor marine water quality to benefit public use and to support the health of the Town's shellfish habitats.

-  **ACTION A:** Work with local property owners, Falmouth Land Trust, and others to maintain and expand major points of access to coastal waters, especially along public ways and in public parks. 

-  **ACTION B:** Continue to coordinate with Maine DEP and Maine DMR on water quality monitoring and assessing, protecting marine habitat, and monitoring and enforcing commercial and recreational fishing regulations. 

-  **ACTION C:** Support efforts of the Shellfish Conservation Committee to protect the Town's shellfish resources. 

-  **ACTION D:** Implement restoration and regenerative habitat projects to reestablish lost/impacted habitat in coordination with coastal resiliency efforts. 

# Economy

Falmouth's commercial uses are anchored by shopping centers along Route 1 and Route 100. Commercial uses along these corridors are largely retail, with some personal, professional, and healthcare services. These commercial areas offer convenience to residents and the region but lack a diversity of small businesses to serve residents at the local and neighborhood level. Most of the retail, restaurant, and café options represent larger chains or big box stores. Retail trade is the second largest employment sector in Falmouth, surpassed only by healthcare and social assistance, reflected by the Town's largest employer, OceanView Retirement Community (OceanView).

Prior to going on hiatus in 2022, the Falmouth Economic Improvement Committee noted some

community opposition to commercial and retail development proposals and efforts to support business growth in the Town. Similarly, the 2015 Economic Development Strategy identified community opposition to growth, including concern about the potential adverse impacts of commercial growth on the Town's character.

Recommendations of this Plan address economic development as it relates to expanding fiscal capacity and improving quality of life. While a later section of this document addresses fiscal capacity, the actions below focus on attracting businesses and amenities that residents desire (such as cafés, restaurants, private recreation facilities, and personal services) and supporting local entrepreneurship and small businesses.



*Coordinate with regional development corporations and surrounding towns as necessary to support desired economic development.*

## POLICY

# 1

While the Town is characterized by suburban single-family residential development, conservation areas, and agricultural land, it is located just north of the City of Portland, the State's largest municipality and the regional population and employment center. The Town's economy, employment opportunities, and commuting patterns are all closely linked to economic

conditions in Portland and the broader metro region. Supporting regional economic initiatives and leveraging regional partnerships and learning opportunities will benefit the Town and community.



**ACTION A:** *Participate in applicable regional initiatives, including attracting amenity businesses (e.g., restaurants, hair salons, retail shops) to meet the needs of residents.*



**ACTION B:** *Create opportunities for sharing across learning environments in the region, including secondary schools, colleges, research institutions, and other organizations, and develop partnerships for workforce development.*



*Attract and retain desirable businesses in village centers to increase the Town's tax base, provide jobs, and support quality of life by increasing the diversity of amenities and services available to residents and visitors of all ages.*

## POLICY

# 2

During the planning process, residents reported experiencing community connection through private spaces, including local shops, cafés, and restaurants, and would like to see village center amenities that foster additional connections. This does not simply reflect a need for more service businesses in the

Town, but a careful consideration of the types of businesses, how they are physically positioned, and the infrastructure that will stimulate meaningful community connections. Residents noted a desire for cafés and restaurants with outdoor dining, small retail shops, and more recreational amenities like Family Ice.

While the Town cannot dictate what specific types of businesses occupy commercial spaces, creating desirable spaces for businesses and supporting economic development initiatives targeting certain industries or business types can guide the development the Town would like to see.

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## POLICY 2

continued



### DATA HIGHLIGHTS:

- Taxable sales in Falmouth have increased **54%** from 2014 to 2023.
- **25%** of workers in Falmouth work from home.
- **5,400** people commute to Falmouth for work.



**ACTION A:** Evaluate the benefit of a resident committee to support economic growth and improve the economic climate in Falmouth.



**ACTION B:** Work with the Chamber of Commerce to support and partner with businesses through programs and events and promote the Town as a place to do business by actively marketing Falmouth to the Maine business and real estate community.



**ACTION C:** Update the Town's economic development strategy to define goals.



# Housing

The need for housing that is more affordable and includes more diverse housing types is a top concern for communities throughout Maine. As Maine struggles to address the ongoing housing crisis, employers across the State are finding it challenging to hire and retain employees due to lack of housing. Housing costs in Falmouth are among the highest in the State and have continued to increase substantially in recent years. Housing development and affordable housing is a top priority for the State. The Town may be subject to future State legislative efforts to encourage the construction of more housing and to require municipalities allow for more and different types of housing development. Falmouth will continue to monitor proposed legislation and comply with adopted statutes.

From 2013 to 2023, the median home price in Falmouth increased 160% from \$384,500 to \$925,000. While incomes have increased since 2013, they have not kept pace with rising housing costs. The median income in Falmouth is \$134,650 (per MaineHousing data), while the income needed to afford the median home price in Falmouth is \$320,377. Additionally, 36% of renters in Falmouth spend more than 35% of their income on rent, and nearly 42% of renter households spend more than 30% of their income on rent. The income needed to afford the median rent of \$1,973 is \$78,936 (based on 30% of gross income). For reference, the starting salary for a teacher in Falmouth for 2023 was approximately \$45,000 to \$50,000.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Maine Education Association, 2023 Salary Guide

Rapidly rising prices is strong evidence that demand for housing in Falmouth significantly outstrips supply. New and different types of housing are necessary to help ensure even minimal options for moderate income workers in Falmouth. In addition to more modestly priced housing, Falmouth's current population is aging, school enrollment is declining, and household size is shrinking, meaning that more housing units and a greater variety of housing types will be needed just to support Falmouth's existing population. The older adult population (over age 65) in Falmouth is expected to continue to grow over the next 10 years, and many residents expect to downsize or transition to senior housing. The Town's current housing stock, which is predominantly detached single-family homes (81%), does not accommodate these needs. In addition, increasing the amount of housing that is affordable to young families can help to mitigate impacts of the declining school enrollment.




*Encourage a variety of housing types and increased density in designated growth areas.*

# POLICY 1


Thoughtfully increasing housing density in certain areas can have a variety of benefits to the community. This can look different in different areas. For example, ADUs create housing opportunities in existing neighborhoods without drastically altering the physical character of the community. ADUs help meet the changing needs as families age and transition. They also provide an opportunity for another source of income for homeowners, making it financially feasible to stay in their homes as housing needs and financial situations change.

Increased density in growth areas could include townhomes, triplexes, cottage courts, or many other variations of missing middle housing. This medium-density housing provides opportunities for those who do not want or need a large single-family home or who cannot afford a single-family home. This type of housing development in growth areas will be proximate to amenities and services, in areas currently served by public water and wastewater, minimizing future infrastructure expenses for the Town.



**ACTION A:** Provide guidance on creating ADUs to support homeowners through the process, including examples of plans that comply with Town requirements. 



**ACTION B:** Revise zoning to allow residential development in certain commercial districts, such as the Business and Professional Zone along Route 1, and to encourage a variety of housing types in growth areas, including low-rise apartments, townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, cottage courts, etc. 

## City of South Portland, Maine – ADU Guidebook

In 2023, following updates to the ADU ordinance in 2022, the City of South Portland created a guidebook to share information about ADUs, the new ordinance updates, permit requirements and the process for developing an ADU, design and construction tips, and other resources. The guidebook summarizes ordinance requirements and explains the benefits of ADUs and potential challenges during the development process.



## DATA HIGHLIGHT: HOUSING UNITS

- **81%** of housing units in Falmouth are detached single-family homes.
- **54%** of new housing units completed from 2014 to 2023 were detached single-family homes.



*Encourage development that increases livability for people of all ages and abilities.*

## POLICY

# 2

Housing and lifestyle needs continue to change as people age and transition to different stages of life. In addition to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility needs of older adults and people with disabilities, younger people also have distinct needs that can be addressed, in part, through the built environment. Walkability to schools, parks, and recreation allows greater independence and improved social and physical health for youth. Access to transportation, restaurants, shops, recreation, and other activities is important for both younger and older adults who are not connected to the community through the school system or other formal settings.



**ACTION A:** Investigate initiatives and funding opportunities that will support aging in place and enhance livability for people of all ages.



**ACTION B:** Encourage the application of universal design practices and consider standards for accessible or adaptable design for new residential development to increase housing accessibility for people of all ages and abilities.



**ACTION C:** Encourage housing development that is walkable to transit locations and amenities like parks, healthcare, and shopping options.



### DATA HIGHLIGHT: LIVING ARRANGEMENT

- **8.8%** of Falmouth residents live alone.
- **35%** of households have children under 18.

*Allow and support the development of more affordable housing within the Town's growth areas.*

## POLICY

# 3

Residents expressed the desire to prioritize housing for those who work in Falmouth. Across Maine, there are ongoing shortages for police officers, firefighters, teachers, bus drivers, healthcare workers, and other

essential positions. While several factors impact employment, lack of housing that is more affordable in or within a reasonable commuting distance is an important one, especially in Falmouth, which has one of the most expensive housing markets in Maine. As Maine grapples with a limited housing supply, employers have struggled to hire and retain workers who have an increasingly difficult time finding

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## POLICY 3


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housing within their budget in Cumberland County and beyond.


Only 1.8% of Falmouth's housing units are affordable (income-restricted rental apartments) and 64% of these units are designated for adults over age 62. There are 35 income-restricted housing units for working-aged people or families in Falmouth and 18 low-income families receive rental assistance through the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program; however the demand for this continues to grow. Less than 10% of employees who work in Falmouth also live in the Town. Approximately 27% of those employees commute more than 25 miles. Yet, living in the community in which one works is not only beneficial for that employee's commute. When people live in the town in which they work or own a business, they build community and have a stronger sense of purpose and connectedness. In addition, residents spend less time driving and have more time to volunteer and to participate in civic engagement. All of these benefits support core values of Falmouth residents. While the challenges to develop affordable housing are significant, the following actions provide a starting point for the Town to address this critical issue while also supporting values of social connectedness, civic involvement, and emissions reduction, that are important to the community.

Looking forward, the Town's role in creating housing that is more affordable will not be to directly fund affordable housing development but instead create, primarily through zoning regulation, opportunities for private developers to build a greater diversity of housing options.





**ACTION A:** Investigate opportunities to reduce development costs by using vacant and underused public land for affordable housing development. 




**ACTION B:** Implement incentives for the development of housing that is more affordable, such as density bonuses, reduced parking requirements, reduced/waived fees, affordable housing development impact fee, use of Affordable Housing Tax Increment Financing, and use of Town-owned land for development. 



**ACTION C:** Create housing opportunities targeted to Town staff and community members.  



**ACTION D:** Support regional efforts to address housing supply, including working toward the Metro Regional Coalition's goal to expand housing choices. 



### DATA HIGHLIGHT: FALMOUTH HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

- Median home price (2023): **\$925,000**
- Income needed to afford the median home price: **\$320,000**
- Median monthly rent: **\$1,973**
- **73.8%** of households cannot afford the median home price.
- **47.2%** of renter households spend more than **30%** of their income on housing.

# Recreation

Falmouth is an active community recognized for its abundant recreational facilities, programs, and open space. Town-owned facilities and fields are heavily used by organized sports teams and leagues, and programs are often at capacity. Parks and open spaces provide a variety of active recreational opportunities, and the community recognizes the important physical and mental health benefits of outdoor recreation. Located between Highland Lake and Casco Bay, at the mouth of the Presumpscot River, Falmouth offers a broad range of aquatic recreational opportunities, including boating, paddling, fishing, ice fishing, and swimming. While maintaining recreational amenities is important to

residents, continuing to improve facilities with a focus on increasing inclusivity and accessibility for people of all ages and abilities is also a priority. Residents value these amenities, both natural areas and built facilities, and view recreation as an important aspect of health and well-being.

As noted in Pillar Four, Falmouth residents find community through local parks, recreation programs, and open spaces. Enhancing these assets is not only beneficial for individual quality of life and physical health, but also contributes to strengthening the social fabric of the community.






*Continue to invest in and maintain the Town's recreation facilities.*

# POLICY 1


The Town has been working to enhance Underwood Park and the adjacent Marion Brown property. In 2023, the Parks and Community Programs Advisory Committee (PACPAC) began prioritizing elements of the Underwood Park master plan, and the Town Council agreed to move forward with elements of this plan, with construction expected to begin in 2024. The Parks and Community Programs Department and PACPAC will continue to evaluate recreation needs at all Town facilities.

As the Town's demographics evolve, ensuring that public spaces, including parks, remain inclusive and accessible to all residents is important to maintaining residents' quality of life. The Town's 2018 Open Space Plan also recognizes the need to plan for the recreation and open space needs for a diverse population, including a range of spaces for different uses and improved accessibility. Community members have expressed the need for enhanced ADA accessibility at existing park facilities and the need for ADA accessible walking paths and trails. Creating accessible and inclusive park space ensures that all community members can recreate.




**ACTION A:** Support the work of PACPAC to identify recreation needs and develop strategies to meet future needs. 




**ACTION B:** Make improvements to enhance safety, accessibility, and usability of Town recreation facilities in coordination with planned upgrades and improvements with a focus on creating more visitor-friendly spaces, multi-generational spaces, and ADA accessible trails, parks, and playgrounds. 



**ACTION C:** Overlay sports fields/parks upgrades with flood mitigation infrastructure and other multi-benefit project opportunities (pollinators, education, resiliency, etc.). 



**ACTION D:** Support and explore private funding initiatives to upgrade or expand recreational facilities (e.g., a community pool). 

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# POLICY 1

continued



## DATA HIGHLIGHT: OPEN SPACE, CONSERVATION, AND RECREATION

- Since 2013, Falmouth has added over **500 acres** of open space and over **15 miles** of trails.
- **29% (6,497 acres)** of the Falmouth's land is for conservation, open space, and recreational uses.
- Falmouth Parks and Community Programs has roughly **815 programs** per year for people of all ages and abilities.

### Beverly Park, Knoxville, Tennessee – Intergenerational Playspace

The Legacy Parks Foundation pioneered Knoxville's first intergenerational playspace at Beverly Park. The objective of the space is grounded in research on the benefits on physical activity, social engagement, and intergenerational connections for people of all ages. Play equipment in the space has been intentionally designed for intergenerational play and therapeutic exercise. Features include a variety of physical, visual, audible, and cognitive experiences, including a walking trail with handrail and storywalk.


*Maintain the Town's public access to the waterfront and expand opportunities for waterfront recreation.*

# POLICY 2


Currently, the Town has boat, canoe, and kayak launch points, including the Blackstrap Canoe Launch and Highland Lake Boat Launch. Falmouth is also home to the largest mooring field north of Marblehead, Massachusetts, providing opportunities for boaters.

Community members indicated the desire for more waterfront access, including additional public access to the ocean and Highland Lake. Expanding access to aquatic-based recreation can provide opportunities to increase connections and diversify the Town's recreational offerings.



**ACTION A:** Consider opportunities for small craft storage (e.g., kayaks, dinghies, paddle boards) at Town Landing. 



**ACTION B:** Identify other areas for access to Casco Bay and other waters and investigate with appropriate Town committees. 

# Transportation

Falmouth is located just north of Portland with several of the region's major transportation corridors passing through the Town, including I-295, I-95, and Route 1. As a result, tens of thousands of people drive through Falmouth every day.

I-295 is the major regional connector with an average annual daily traffic of 26,410 vehicles. I-95 has an average annual daily traffic of 14,990 vehicles. Falmouth's position along I-95 and I-295

makes it a desirable location for those commuting throughout the Portland region. While Route 1 has a lower traffic volume (11,886 vehicles daily), it is still a key commuter corridor to Portland and communities to the north.<sup>6</sup> The Town has looked to balance Falmouth's proximity to Portland and access to major road arteries with the community's desire to maintain its small-town character. As Falmouth reimagines the future of this area as a walkable village center and heart of the community, the role of the Route 1 corridor is shifting, with a greater focus on the street as a place, rather than a means of vehicle transportation. Similar to other communities in Maine, Falmouth will continue to balance the various transportation functions of the Route 1 corridor with the added function of serving as a community space.

Falmouth sees a larger daily inflow of workers than outflow, meaning more people are commuting into Falmouth than out of it. Approximately 5,400 employees commute into Falmouth for work, while approximately 4,500 residents commute out of Falmouth for work.

Falmouth's commercial centers, along Route 1 and Route 100, were developed in the mid-1900s as auto-oriented retail corridors. As a result, the majority of residents own and drive their own vehicle to access jobs, services, and amenities. Many communities are seeing a movement away from a built environment designed around cars with an increased interest in and desire to walk, bike, and use transit.

Residents have changing transportation needs. As Falmouth's population ages, more residents will need



<sup>6</sup> Maine Department of Transportation, Traffic Data Website. Accessed March 16, 2023. <https://mainedottrafficdata.drakewell.com/publicmultinodemap.asp>



to use public transportation, ride sharing services, or live within walking distance of amenities and services. Approximately 80% of survey respondents said they would like more multimodal transportation options and increased connectivity in Falmouth to allow people to move through the community without having to travel on roadways.

The ability to drive is often a limiting factor to living independently as people age. Supporting access to a variety of transportation options can help support Falmouth residents in aging in place. Residents also expressed the desire to have the school campus more connected to the rest of the community in order for more school-aged children to be able to safely walk or bike to classes.

In addition to improving pedestrian and bike connectivity, improving road safety is a priority for residents. The Town is looking to build on initiatives to improve safety at high-crash intersections and improve trail and sidewalk connectivity to allow pedestrians and cyclists safe access across the community. Expanding transportation access and options is an important opportunity for Falmouth to create options for residents who are unable to drive due to physical or financial limitations or who choose not to drive. Transportation and connectivity are key to ensuring that all residents are able to connect to the community and access services.

*Improve safety and efficiency of the transportation system for all types of users.*

## POLICY

# 1

Falmouth residents have expressed concerns about pedestrian and bicyclist safety, as well as concerns about increased traffic. Once a more rural community, long-time Falmouth residents have noted increased traffic speeds and pedestrians and cyclists feeling less safe along many local roads.

The Town has prioritized ongoing improvements to existing roads. The Town conducted a Route 88 intersection study designed to look at possible

solutions to improve overall safety at the Johnson Road/Town Landing Road intersection and the Depot Road intersection. The Town has planned and ongoing sidewalk projects for Johnson Road and Route 88. In 2017, the Town worked with the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) to install a roundabout at Woods Road and Middle Road to address safety issues and the intersection's high crash rate.

In 2021, the Route 1 North Infrastructure Project was initiated to prepare a preliminary engineering plan and cost estimate for the infrastructure component of the 2017 Route 1 North Vision Plan. This project focused on the section of Route 1 between Bucknam Road and the Cumberland town line and the Johnson

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# POLICY 1

continued

Road section between Middle Road and Route 1. The work will include a shared use path and sidewalk along Route 1, modifications to Johnson Road/Route 1 intersections, with an option for a new roundabout, a sidewalk for the north side of Johnson Road between Middle Road and Route 1, bus shelter improvements, and wastewater force main improvements. The Town has also invested in streetscape improvements along Route 1 South and Route 100 and has installed wayfinding signage.

Approximately 56% of survey respondents are concerned about increased traffic, and 52% are concerned about bike/pedestrian safety. In 2022, 304 car crashes occurred within the Town on public roads. This is up from 266 crashes in 2021. The intersection of Blackstrap Road and Brook Road, the intersection of I-295 northbound on ramp from Bucknam Road, and the intersection of Falmouth Crossing Road and Gray Road each had 10 or more crashes in 2022. Looking forward, the Town will continue to invest in initiatives to improve the safety of all road users.

## The MOOver – Microtransit in Windsor, Vermont

In 2023, Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) completed a statewide microtransit study. The Town of Windsor was one of five towns selected for a three-year pilot program Microtransit Grant by VTrans. Microtransit is a small-scale, on-demand public transit service, typically offering flexible routing and scheduling using smaller vehicles (e.g., shuttles, vans). The service will be free to riders, and trips must be reserved in advance using the app or calling the transit office. Windsor was identified as a strong candidate for a microtransit pilot program based on a study considering demographic and socioeconomic factors, including older adult and youth populations, people living with a disability, and car-free households.



**ACTION A:** Establish Complete Streets design guidelines for street improvements in village centers and other areas with multimodal activity.



**ACTION B:** Develop a traffic-calming toolbox and implement traffic-calming and speed-reduction measures on local roadways, especially main arterials into and through town.



**ACTION C:** Limit new curb cuts within village centers and consolidate/reduce curb cuts where possible for new development and redevelopment projects.



**ACTION D:** Prioritize building safe pedestrian and bicycle crossings into new and redesigned intersections along main arterials.



**ACTION E:** Investigate new trends in transportation, including electric bikes and microtransit options, and explore strategies and amenities to support their use.



**ACTION F:** Maintain, enact, or amend local ordinances as appropriate to address or avoid conflicts with:

- Policy objectives of the Sensible Transportation Policy Act (23 M.R.S.A. §73);
- State access management regulations pursuant to 23 M.R.S.A. §704; and
- State traffic permitting regulations for large developments pursuant to 23 M.R.S.A. §704-A.



*Promote fiscal prudence by maximizing the efficiency of the State or State-aid highway network and leveraging State and federal funding and municipal financing tools to fund infrastructure improvements, transportation projects, and public facilities.*


## POLICY 2

Continuing to leverage State and regional partnerships and funding opportunities can help reduce overall costs for infrastructure projects. The Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS) directs the spending of over \$25 million in transportation funding each year across the region<sup>7</sup>. The 2022 – 2025 PACTS Transportation Improvement Program identifies 12 projects in Falmouth. These projects include a mill and fill project along Lunt Road, a highway striping project for interstate striping, an emergency response project along I-295, highway safety improvements along Route 26, Bucknam Road bridge replacement, Johnson Road bridge replacement, and bridge painting on the I-295 Presumpscot Bridge.


As the Town looks to invest in a variety of connectivity and transportation improvement projects, examining grant opportunities, federal and State funding opportunities, and municipal financing tools can help Falmouth achieve its goals while minimizing financial impact. Supporting regional priorities and

State goals will help to position the Town for funding opportunities. In addition, creating new streams of local funding for infrastructure will help to offset the cost of necessary improvements and maintenance as a result of new development without further burdening taxpayers.



**ACTION A:** Continue to partner with MaineDOT to fund transportation improvements that support multimodal transportation on the Town's major corridors. 



**ACTION B:** Seek State and federal grant funding for innovative public infrastructure projects, including rail trails. 

<sup>7</sup> PACTS is a federal metropolitan planning organization that coordinates transportation planning and investment decisions with the State, municipalities, and public transportation partners for the greater Portland region.



*Improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and safety with a focus on connecting existing public spaces and amenities, to enhance livability and public health.*

## POLICY 3

Residents expressed the need to connect residential areas to open spaces, parks, schools, and other amenities through trails or sidewalks and bike paths. Improving walkability and bikeability is a priority, with a focus on connectivity to key amenities, especially the school campus (36%). More than 51% of respondents would like the ability to walk or bike to services.

Connectivity was discussed in the context of increasing access to open space through connectivity of trails, increasing safety through improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure near the school campus, and generally to improve quality of life and access to Town facilities and amenities.


In 2016, the Town completed its third bicycle and pedestrian plan, outlining a 20-year vision and recommended actions. The proposed trails and sidewalks would connect all parts of Falmouth and provide individuals in rural parts of Town access to bicycle and trail infrastructure. The plan also identified amenities that Falmouth should look to connect, including connecting the school campus to Community Park.

The Town has worked with local and regional partners to help enhance connectivity. The 2018 Open Space Plan also prioritizes regional connectivity, recognizing


the Town's place as part of a larger network of trails and open space. The Falmouth Land Trust maintains trails locally, and groups like Portland Trails have built and maintained trails at Pine Grove Preserve, Tidewater Farm, and the East Coast Greenway. The Town has also been involved in a number of initiatives to improve regional connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists, including projects with the Casco Bay Trail Alliance to connect Portland to Brunswick and Lewiston.

The Town will continue to invest in initiatives to improve connectivity and safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.




**ACTION A:** Update the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan to determine the level of infrastructure required (e.g., shared use lanes, protected bike lanes, multi-use paths, signage). 



**ACTION B:** Consider establishing a Bicycle-Pedestrian Planning Committee to make recommendations regarding non-motor vehicle transportation. 



**ACTION C:** Work with public and private partners and property owners to extend and maintain a network of trails and establish permanent easements on properties to allow for connection of existing local and regional trail networks. 



**ACTION D:** Coordinate with Falmouth Schools to expand connections between campus and surrounding neighborhoods and parks, including a possible connection to Community Park.





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## POLICY 3

### continued





**ACTION E:** Prioritize expanding the Town's sidewalk network with a focus on connecting public facilities, schools, and parks and protecting pedestrians on main arterials and within designated growth areas.  



**ACTION F:** Explore increased bicycle infrastructure in new commercial, mixed-use, and multi-family residential development. 



**ACTION G:** Investigate alternative bicycle and pedestrian path construction types like boardwalks, pervious pavement, or other technologies in appropriate settings where water quality is a concern.  

Support efforts for regional coordination on transportation and connectivity to enhance safety, efficiency, and optimal use of the transportation system.

## POLICY 4

Falmouth's location just north of Portland provides opportunities to partner with regional and State agencies to improve regional connectivity.

Expanding transit and alternative transportation options is a regional challenge. Falmouth is served



### DATA HIGHLIGHT: TRAILS

- The Town has more than **55 miles** of existing trails.

#### Skowhegan Area Trails Concept Plan – Skowhegan, Maine

This plan was a collaborative effort by public, private, and nonprofit partners to develop a shared plan for trail development. Goals of the project include connecting the trail system to downtown to support community development, improving accessibility of trails for users of all ages and abilities, and bolstering Skowhegan as a recreation destination through increasing trail mileage and diversifying trail experiences. The planning effort included broad community outreach, and plan implementation will require coordination among several community partners.

by the Greater Portland METRO, which provides bus service to Walmart, Town Landing, and limited service to Oceanview. The Route 7 service is limited to 13 trips per day Monday – Saturday and 8 trips per day on Sundays to Walmart. Currently, the bus arrives and departs once per hour Monday – Saturday. Stops at Town Landing Market and OceanView are more infrequent, making it difficult to rely on transit for commuting or convenience trips. METRO serves 10 round trips to Town Landing Monday – Saturday and 5 trips on Sundays. The METRO stops three times daily at OceanView. In early summer 2024, METRO plans to extend Route 7, which currently runs between

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# POLICY 4


## continued

Falmouth Foreside and downtown Portland, south and west to the Jetport. Additionally, METRO plans to double weekday frequency on Route 7 for most of the day. In fall 2024, METRO will pilot a microtransit program, an on-demand transit option that can connect people to nearby amenities and neighbors within METRO's coverage area. The program is expected to replace the Route 7 loops serving Town Landing Market and OceanView. Approximately 25% of survey respondents indicated that they would like increased public transportation options.

The Greater Portland Council of Governments' (GPCOG's) PACTS coordinates planning and investment decisions with the State, municipalities, and public transportation partners. Additionally, the Town has been collaborating with Yarmouth, Cumberland, and Freeport to upgrade the Route 1 corridor to improve walkability, bikeability, and vehicle traffic.

Supporting regional coordination on transportation initiatives will help meet the needs of Falmouth residents. Additionally, recent transportation innovations have improved the ability of individuals to access services without owning a vehicle. The growth of rideshare services and micromobility systems have expanded access to services, reduced travel costs, and reduced vehicle miles traveled. Expanding access to a variety of public transportation options can support residents who do not drive in accessing services in Falmouth and throughout the region.




**ACTION A:** Continue to update a prioritized improvement, maintenance, and repair plan for Falmouth's transportation network. 




**ACTION B:** Work with GPCOG to improve regional transportation efficiency. 




**ACTION C:** Identify opportunities for enhanced connectivity between neighboring communities, including coordination with the Town of Cumberland on improvements to Route 1, Route 100, and Route 88 and continuing to implement the recommendations of the North of Portland Route One Complete Streets Corridor Plan. 




**ACTION D:** Coordinate with MDOT on plans for access management to I-95, I-295, and the Falmouth Spur. 




**ACTION E:** Support efforts to expand METRO transit service, including service enhancements to and within growth corridors. 




**ACTION F:** Improve connections to regional transportation and consider establishing a ride share program. 



**ACTION G:** Consider the potential for a Downeaster train station at West Falmouth Shopping Center. 



**ACTION H:** Coordinate with communities along the St. Lawrence and Atlantic rail line to explore building out a trail until rail. 



# Public Facilities & Community Services

Falmouth has strategically invested in municipal services and facilities to maintain a high level of service for residents, including excellent schools, a variety of parks and recreation programs, and well-maintained facilities. Recent major capital investments include a new elementary school and extensive renovations to Falmouth Memorial Library.

Providing services and facilities in an efficient and cost-effective manner can improve the lives and safety of the community. In addition to police, fire, and emergency medical services (EMS), the Town's recreational facilities and programming, utilities, schools, and infrastructure heavily contribute to the well-being and operations of the Town.

In addition to maintaining its current services, the Town will identify opportunities to upgrade necessary facilities and infrastructure to ensure that operations meet the needs of the community.



## DATA HIGHLIGHT: CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

- Total population increased **12%** from 2010 to 2022.
- The number of residents age 65+ increased **50%** from 2010 to 2022.
- School enrollment has declined **8%** since 2019.



*Review the anticipated staffing and facility needs for police, fire, emergency services, and other public facilities and services to continue to efficiently provide a high level of service to all residents.*

# POLICY 1

Ensuring the Town is adequately staffed and has proper facilities is important to providing quality services to the community.

The police and fire departments, like many across the region and the State, have struggled to hire and retain staff members. At the same time, the types of calls the departments receive have been changing. The Police Department has seen an increase in mental health related calls. The Town's Fire and EMS Department has seen an additional call volume dispatched to senior housing facilities and to older adults living in private homes. Fire and EMS staff respond to medical emergencies, help older adults who have fallen, and conduct wellness checks. The Fire Department has received an increased call volume from neighboring towns and is often challenged to help due to staffing limitations and a general shortage of EMS providers in neighboring communities.



## DATA HIGHLIGHT: ANNUAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE CALLS

- Falmouth Police Department: **15,000 to 17,000**
- Falmouth Fire Department: **2,300** (including 1,400 EMS calls)

Additionally, demand for programming and recreational amenities has increased in Falmouth. The Town will look to ensure staffing levels and facilities can meet the community's recreational needs.

As Falmouth's demographics change, the Town will consider how best to staff departments to support residents and attract and retain staff members.



The Town's fire stations and public works facility are in need of replacement or renovation, and these future capital investments are part of the Town's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The Town is currently undertaking significant upgrades to Underwood Park. Planning for future needs and identifying opportunities to increase efficiency in operations will be critical for the Town to maintain a high level of service in all areas while minimizing the impact on taxpayers.

### Elon, North Carolina – ADA Transition Plan

In an effort to make the Town of Elon's public facilities and services accessible to all, the Town developed an ADA Self-Assessment and Transition Plan which identifies physical obstacles and barriers that limit the accessibility of facilities to individuals with disabilities. The plan includes strategies to improve accessibility and a schedule for making modifications. In addition to public buildings, the plan also evaluates public parks, open spaces, parking areas, pedestrian facilities, communications, and the Town's website.

# POLICY 1

continued

-  **ACTION A:** Define “level of service” for municipal functional areas, to establish a benchmark for service and allow for assessment of anticipated need.
-  **ACTION B:** Identify any capital improvements needed to maintain or upgrade public services and evaluate the need for additional staffing to accommodate the community’s anticipated growth and changing demographics.







-  **ACTION C:** Consider cost-saving opportunities for regional collaboration to share resources and knowledge and to provide services. 
-  **ACTION D:** Support efforts for recruiting, retaining, and training for Town emergency services and other Town staff to help ensure adequate staffing and continued high level of service. 
-  **ACTION F:** Evaluate the accessibility of Town facilities and services and continue to make accessibility improvements for people of all ages and abilities. 

Support continued transition to carbon neutral energy sources for public services and facilities.

# POLICY 2

In May 2020, the Town Council approved the Tangent Energy landfill solar array Power Purchase Agreement. The solar array was completed in summer 2022 and is located on the 4.2-acre capped landfill on Woods Road. The solar array offsets approximately 70% of all municipal electric use and is estimated to save the Town nearly \$2 million over the array’s 20-year life span. The Town has also upgraded its fleet to include electric vehicles (EVs) at the Police Department and other municipal locations. Heat pumps were also installed at municipal buildings, replacing propane and heating oil systems.

Moving forward, the Town will look to further increase its EV charging infrastructure. Currently there are charging stations at the Town Hall and the Police Station. The Town will also look to expand its EV fleet and transition away from gas-powered vehicles.

-  **ACTION A:** Conduct an energy audit and continue to monitor and report on energy use at Town facilities to optimize efficiency through implementation of upgrades where appropriate to minimize energy cost and consumption. 
-  **ACTION B:** Continue to develop public EV charging infrastructure where appropriate and encourage private development of EV charging infrastructure. 
-  **ACTION C:** Continue to transition to zero-emission fleet vehicles. 



*Support maintenance of and investment in Town facilities, infrastructure, and services to improve resiliency and environmental protection and to support economic growth in a fiscally responsible manner.*


## POLICY 3

In addition to supporting the Town's climate action goals, implementing climate resilient infrastructure upgrades can help reduce long-term costs, including energy costs and facility repairs due to extreme weather events. There are currently a variety of grant and funding opportunities to assist the Town in funding capital investments.


Planning for necessary upgrades to Town facilities and infrastructure can ensure that the community's needs are met, even as the population changes. The Town's CIP provides a mechanism to allocate funding and resources to projects in the annual budget.

As noted in Pillar Six, improving multimodal transportation infrastructure, like sidewalks and bike paths, is a community priority. Ensuring that infrastructure improvements support the use of village centers, public spaces, and other Town amenities can help the community foster connections and support economic growth.




**ACTION A:** Invest in infrastructure that is climate resilient. 




**ACTION B:** Identify and plan for necessary upgrades to Town buildings and facilities and for water, wastewater, and transportation infrastructure, as community needs change. 




**ACTION C:** Update the Town's Emergency Operations Plan to reflect the current personnel, resources, and potential hazards. 



**ACTION D:** Invest in infrastructure improvements and beautification to support business growth and enjoyment of public spaces in village centers, such as by incorporating playgrounds, bicycle storage and access, pedestrian lighting, sidewalks, or street furniture. 



**ACTION E:** Explore grants available to assist in funding capital investments within the community and seek funding especially for the installation of renewable infrastructure and energy efficiency upgrades. 


Create gathering spaces and program opportunities that promote community interaction and learning.

# POLICY 4


As noted in Pillar Four, residents would like to strengthen the Town's community fabric and foster a sense of community through learning. Respondents indicated they would like opportunities to informally connect with neighbors (48%), attend Townwide events (34%), and participate in adult education programs (32%). Residents desire more public areas and informal gathering spaces within neighborhoods (48% of respondents would like more opportunities to informally connect with neighbors).

Currently, the Parks and Community Programs Department, Falmouth Public Library, and Falmouth Public Schools offer opportunities for programming. Looking forward, residents expressed the need to continue existing programs, and also focus on adding programs for teenagers and young and middle-aged adults. Considering programming for demographics that may not be represented at current events can ensure that residents of all ages have access to engaging events and programs.




**ACTION A:** Identify Town-owned parcels that could be considered for community uses (such as community gardens, playgrounds, or for passive recreation) and develop those that have potential in a fiscally responsible manner. 




**ACTION B:** Identify opportunities for an outdoor Town green or community gathering space suitable for both larger events and daily interactions among residents to serve as an anchor for a village center. 




**ACTION C:** Support the development of a community center or enhancement of the existing community center to support multi-generational programming needs and foster intergenerational connections. 



**ACTION D:** Support the school district in developing a master plan, including establishing the school campus as a community-wide facility with resources and programs for all community members. 



**ACTION E:** Continue to support the Parks and Recreation Department, Falmouth Public Library, and other Town departments in programming and facility needs. 

*Continue to support opportunities for community engagement.*


## POLICY 5

Throughout the planning process, residents have expressed a desire for more opportunities to connect with their community; however, the types of engagement opportunities that appeal to residents has shifted from more structured civic engagement toward more informal social opportunities.


Working with local non-profits and other private organizations can help supplement programming currently provided by the Town. The University of Maine Cooperative Extension in Falmouth and Falmouth Land Trust provide a variety of educational programming. Events like Very Merry Falmouth provide opportunities for residents to informally connect.

Additionally, fostering communication between the Town and residents can increase transparency and share opportunities for community engagement. Use of social media and the *Falmouth Focus* newsletter have provided opportunities for the Town to share information and events. Improving communication and supporting partnerships can help expand the reach of various programs and events, especially to new residents and to those residents not already connected to the community through the schools or ongoing civic engagement.




**ACTION A:** Investigate the need and demand for expanded programming for community members of all ages and opportunities for intergenerational connectivity. 




**ACTION B:** Work with local businesses and community organizations to host seasonal events and support programming that provide social and cultural opportunities for the community and encourage public-private collaborations regarding community spaces and programs. 



**ACTION C:** Continue to improve and expand Townwide communication and use of technology to increase awareness of opportunities for community engagement and evaluate the effectiveness of current communication strategies. 



**ACTION D:** Facilitate partnerships with nonprofit organizations to increase involvement, provide learning opportunities for young people, and support cross cultural engagement. 



# Fiscal Capacity



The Town of Falmouth is currently in a stable financial position to continue to provide a high level of service to residents. The Town has experienced steady population growth and growth of the taxable base and tax increment finance (TIF) district values in the last decade. The Town maintains strong fiscal policies and engages in comprehensive long-term capital planning. Falmouth's AAA bond rating will help ensure the Town's ability to make necessary capital investments to support Town operations and meet the community's needs.

Despite Falmouth's strong financial position, the Town should continue to strategically identify opportunities to expand and diversify the commercial tax base. The Town currently provides a very high level of services

and amenities to residents. As operational costs continue to rise and residents look to the Town to provide additional services and amenities, including open space, community programs, and services for older adults, a strong and diverse tax base is needed to help support Town operations without further burdening property owners.

The majority of the Comprehensive Plan community survey respondents indicated that they supported some new spending to implement the Town's vision, but support for new spending varied by policy, and respondents widely agreed that the Town should approach spending and new projects in a cost-effective manner.

The Town has been engaged in long-range planning for capital improvements through the CIP. The CIP is a 10-year plan that is reviewed annually as part of the Town's budget process. Following the budget process, the CIP is revised and updated for the next annual budget process. The CIP addresses the maintenance and replacement of existing assets and looks ahead to future needs, projects, and mandates. The Comprehensive Plan will guide the CIP process and help inform budgeting for future facility and service needs.



## DATA HIGHLIGHT:

- Average assessed property value increased **67.3%** (2022 – 2023)
- FY24 annual budget: **\$18,933,379**

*Finance existing and future facilities and services in a cost-effective manner that supports growth and development in identified growth areas.*


# POLICY 1

The Town will look to explore opportunities to leverage grant funding, public-private partnerships, and regional coordination to support future projects in a cost-effective manner. The Town will plan for future needs in coordination with the Future Land Use Map. The new Future Land Use Map will further limit growth outside the Town's existing commercial corridors, and accordingly, will limit expansion of infrastructure for which the Town would be financially responsible.




**ACTION A:** Explore opportunities to work with neighboring communities to plan for and finance shared or adjacent capital investments to increase cost savings and efficiencies.



**ACTION B:** Provide for adequate public facilities primarily in existing growth areas in proximity to existing infrastructure, transportation systems, housing, and other amenities. 



**ACTION C:** Direct development to growth areas with existing utilities and infrastructure. 



**ACTION D:** Continue to evaluate sewer connection charges to ensure that fees are scaled consistent with the cost of system maintenance and improvements.



**ACTION E:** Limit extensions of sewer and water service and coordinate any extensions with the Future Land Use Plan.




**ACTION F:** Continue to seek alternate funding sources to supplement Town revenues and reduce dependence on property tax revenue for annual operating and capital expenses.

*Promote development that is fiscally responsible.*


## POLICY 2

The Town will look at future and existing land uses to plan for development in areas that are already served by public utilities and restrict development in areas that would require infrastructure expansion, in coordination with the Future Land Use Map. The Town will also examine additional opportunities, like TIF districts and public-private partnerships, to implement Comprehensive Plan policies.




**ACTION A:** Incorporate fiscal impact analysis into the development review process to help the Town make fiscally responsible development decisions that align with the Town's goals. 



**ACTION B:** Consider a public/private partnership to develop a master plan for a village center to support the community's goals and benefit the Town's fiscal capacity. 



**ACTION C:** Evaluate the Town's current use of TIF districts to encourage development in commercial growth areas and finance infrastructure improvements that support walkability and the development of village centers. 

### Smart Growth America – Rationale for Smart Growth Fiscal Impact Analysis and Model Fiscal Impact Assessment Ordinance

Fiscal impact analysis is a tool used to assess the costs and revenues associated with development. This report provides findings of fiscal impacts that may be associated with different growth patterns, including impacts on property values and long-term life cycle costs and maintenance obligations. The report also provides a framework for implementing fiscal impact analysis as part of the development review process to realize smart growth goals.



# Sustainability

Climate hazards reflect the effects of climate change that can impact Falmouth's people, infrastructure, economy, and/or ecosystems. There are several climate hazards facing Falmouth and neighboring communities today. Increasing storm intensity, rising sea level, and increasing temperatures have impacted the State, and are expected to continue.

Comprehensive Plan community survey respondents' greatest climate change-related concerns include increasing weather intensity (47%), strain on critical infrastructure (42%), and impacts on ecosystems and wildlife (39%). To help mitigate the impacts of climate change, respondents indicated the Town should prioritize protecting water quality (61%), expand bike and pedestrian infrastructure (50%), mitigate coastal erosion and improve flood resiliency (46%), and fund energy efficiency upgrades (46%).

In recent decades, the Town has taken steps to prioritize sustainability and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Most recently, in July 2022, Falmouth's Town Council voted to update the Town's emission reduction goals to align with the Paris Agreement's mandate to keep global temperature increases below 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit). The Town pledged to reduce community-wide emissions by 65% by 2030 and by 85% by 2040. The Town strives to maintain net zero emissions by 2050.

To accomplish these goals, the Town coordinated with GPCOG to create a Climate Action Plan (CAP). The Falmouth CAP contains strategies and actions to guide decisions and development in the Town to prepare for localized climate effects. The Town has



implemented several sustainability initiatives to reduce municipal emissions, including EV upgrades, heat pump installations, and the Tangent Energy landfill solar array project completed in 2022.

The Town will look to secure State and federal grants to help meet climate goals. Survey respondents indicated the Town should prioritize new spending on environmental initiatives but focus on cost-effective solutions (54%).



## DATA HIGHLIGHT: FALMOUTH'S ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- Buildings account for **46.9%** of Town-wide emissions.
- Transportation accounts for **46.7%** of Town-wide emissions.
- In 2019, Falmouth generated **2,234** tons of waste, **1,305** tons of recycling, **125** tons of compost, and **1,139** tons of specialty waste.


## Encourage sustainable development and building practices.

### POLICY 1


Implementing and encouraging sustainable development practices can help ensure that structures are built using practices that protect the environment. Such practices can also ensure that buildings are constructed in areas that are not susceptible to flooding, or erosion, and do not damage natural resources.

As noted in Pillar One, residents value Falmouth's open spaces and would like to preserve open space and protect natural resources from the impacts of development. Survey respondents supported increased requirements or incentives for green building, low-impact development, and sustainable design, including additional open space requirements, tree planting, and bicycle facilities.



**ACTION A:** Investigate additional energy standards beyond the minimum required standards of the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code. 



**ACTION B:** Provide guidance, support, and incentives to builders interested in adopting sustainable development practices, including the use of alternative building materials and technologies for new and existing buildings and paved surfaces. 




**ACTION C:** Develop green infrastructure design guidelines for new development and public infrastructure projects. 



**ACTION D:** Review current open and public space requirements to ensure that requirements result in quality open and public space for the community. 



**ACTION E:** Review requirements for designing for flood levels and consider increasing floodplain building elevation standards and implementing other climate resiliency standards to minimize impacts to property as a result of climate change and sea level rise. 

*Support residents in creating a more sustainable and resilient community.*

## POLICY

# 2

The Town has done a significant amount of work to reduce municipal emissions and remove invasive species from Town-owned property. While reducing municipal emissions and creating a healthier environment on Town-owned property is important, the majority of land in Falmouth is privately owned. Providing opportunities for residents to adopt more sustainable practices and create healthier environments on privately owned property will ultimately help the Town reach its climate goals.

Throughout the engagement process, residents expressed the desire for educational campaigns related to environmental and sustainability issues to help homeowners adopt more sustainable practices. Residents cited the need for resources on natural lawns, stormwater management, and invasive plant removal. Residents also cited the desire for Townwide initiatives like “No Mow May” on public and private properties. Additionally, sharing the Town’s progress toward achieving CAP goals can provide transparency into the community’s progress and highlight the impact of efforts taken by the Town and private property owners.



**ACTION A:** *Develop a comprehensive education plan in consultation with the Falmouth Land Trust, homeowners’ associations, and other partners, that provides residents materials on local issues, such as guidance on energy and water saving measures and subsidies, natural hazard preparedness, and strategies to increase resiliency.*



**ACTION B:** *Promote Town initiatives like the composting program and monthly challenges like “No Mow May,” to include Town facilities and operations.*



**ACTION C:** *Review current recycling initiatives and determine best practices for future solid waste diversion.*



**ACTION D:** *Provide educational support for removing invasive species on private property.*



**ACTION E:** *Implement the policies established in Falmouth’s 2023 Climate Action Plan (CAP) and establish metrics and tools to monitor progress on CAP initiatives.*




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## POLICY 2

### continued



**ACTION F:** *Work with neighboring municipalities and regional organizations on climate resiliency initiatives.* 



**ACTION G:** *Enhance the online dashboard of the Town's energy efficiency metrics to include climate action progress and other energy usage to build awareness, foster transparency, and provide data that can be used for educational initiatives.* 

#### Falmouth Climate Action Plan (CAP)

The Falmouth CAP was completed in September 2023 through collaboration with GPCOG. As part of the climate planning process, the Town developed a Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory and Vulnerability Assessment to understand current conditions, evaluate past progress in addressing climate resiliency and emissions reductions, and assess potential climate hazards related to the Town's specific social and physical vulnerabilities. The CAP includes climate action strategies for emissions reductions for municipal operations and buildings, transportation and land use (including development patterns, electric vehicles, and transit access), waste reduction, and social resilience. Climate resiliency, sustainability, and environmental protection are central to this Comprehensive Plan Update. The CAP effort was aligned with the values expressed in the Six Pillars and in this Comprehensive Plan Update, and actions in this Plan reflect the findings and goals of the CAP.

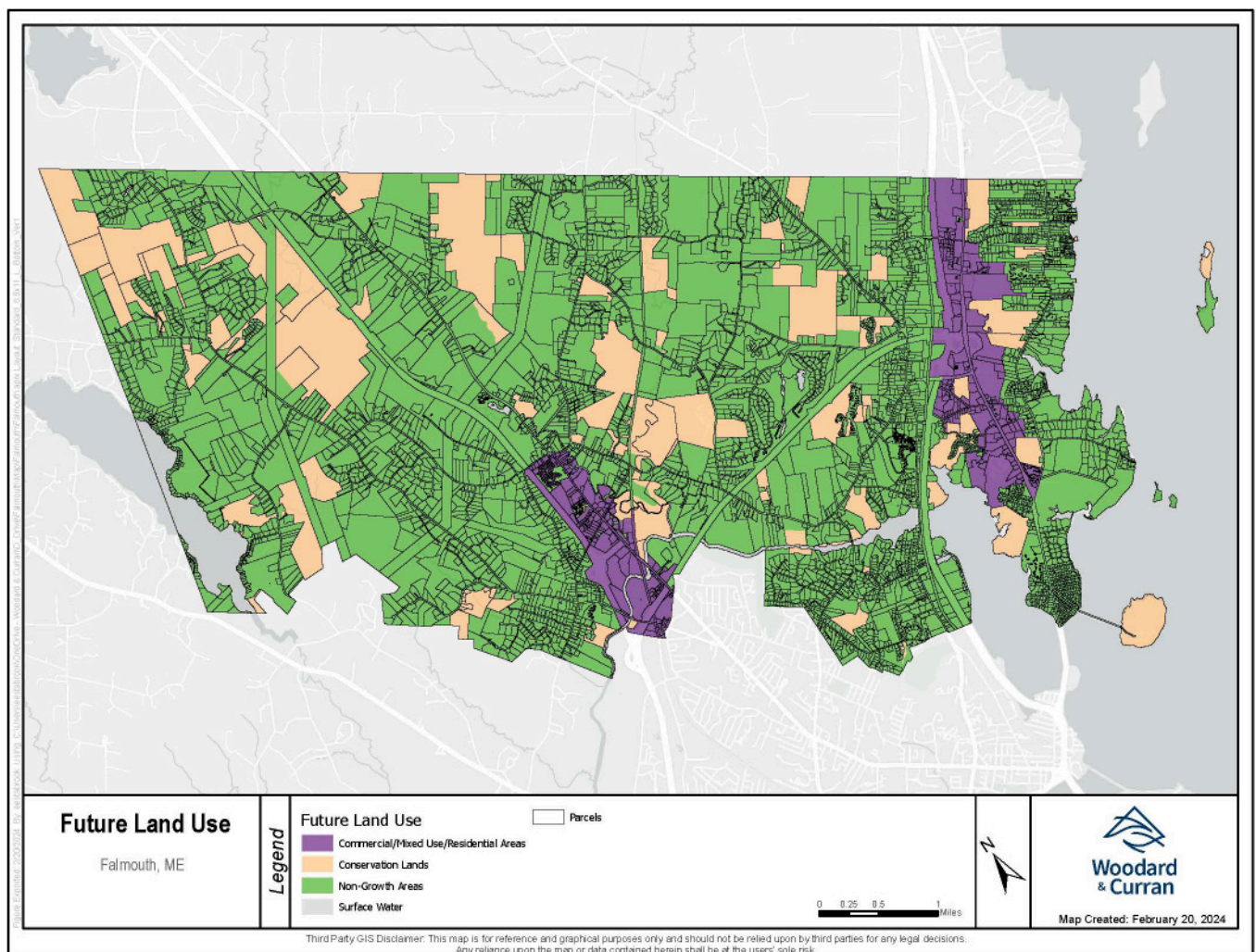
# Future Land Use

Throughout the Vision and Values and Comprehensive Plan processes, residents strongly expressed their desire to protect the physical character and small-town, rural aesthetic of Falmouth. In response to concerns about growth and development and changes to existing neighborhoods, the 2024 Future Land Use Plan significantly reduces the Town's designated growth areas.

## GROWTH AREAS

This land use plan concentrates growth in and around the Town's existing commercial corridors (Route 1 and Route 100) where there are existing infrastructure, transportation facilities, amenities, and commercial activity.

To address future growth needs, growth areas will accommodate a mix of uses including multi-family residential, retail, office, entertainment, personal





and professional services, and other non-residential uses. A shift to encouraging more medium-density residential development, including three- to four-story multi-family structures and townhomes, is in response to the Town's changing housing needs.

As noted in Pillar Three, residents recognize that additional controlled growth within the Town's existing commercial growth areas could have multiple benefits for the Town and community. This plan aims to concentrate new development in these areas in a pattern and style that will support vibrant community centers. Directing growth in a way that allows greater walkability, additional housing opportunities, and more amenity businesses, would support the Town's tax base while also enhancing quality of life.

Growth areas are largely served by existing services, including water, wastewater, and transportation.

New infrastructure development will be prioritized for growth areas, including sidewalk expansions, bicycle infrastructure, and improvements to the transportation system.

### NON-GROWTH AREAS

Reducing the size of the Town's growth areas and expanding non-growth areas is intended to discourage further development in residential neighborhoods and rural areas that would alter neighborhood character and have adverse impacts on traffic, noise, open space, or other aspects impacting quality of life. Protecting neighborhood character and limiting new development in residential areas is the top priority for Falmouth residents.

In addition, the impacts of development on the Town's open space, water quality, and other natural



resources is an important and growing concern for the community. Permanently conserved lands are identified on the Future Land Use Map to identify areas that are intended to remain in conservation in perpetuity.

Non-growth areas include developed and undeveloped land outside the Route 1 and Route 100 corridors. Development in these areas consists predominantly of medium- and low-density


residential development, agricultural and forestry uses, and open space. Development in these areas should be limited and should be in keeping with the rural and residential character of the Town. Focusing growth where it will have the least impact on critical environmental areas and further limiting development in non-growth areas will help the Town protect water resources, preserve habitat areas, and conserve land for recreation.

*Protect the physical character of existing residential neighborhoods.*


## POLICY 1

Zoning and site development standards have a substantial impact on the physical character of a place. In addition to discouraging growth in non-growth areas, land use regulations can also help minimize potential impacts of new development.



**ACTION A:** Review zoning standards to ensure that new development is consistent with and minimizes impacts (e.g., visual, traffic, noise) to established residential neighborhoods within and outside growth areas. 



**ACTION B:** Require a tree preservation plan for new developments to prevent unnecessary clear-cutting of large areas of open space. 



**ACTION C:** Revise site design standards for residential development to minimize the impact of new and infill development on existing neighborhoods through landscaping, screening, building orientation, buffer areas, lighting, and other requirements. 


*Protect the physical character of rural and undeveloped areas.*

## POLICY


# 2

Large areas of Falmouth that were formerly rural agricultural land have given way to more suburban development in recent decades. In addition to limiting new residential development, encouraging and prioritizing agricultural and other appropriate uses is a way to help to preserve the rural character of Falmouth.




**ACTION A:** Consider revising the rate of growth ordinance to further limit new development outside designated growth areas and direct growth to designated growth areas. 




**ACTION B:** Revise zoning to prioritize existing low-density development patterns in the Farm and Forest District and direct growth to designated growth areas. 



**ACTION C:** Limit non-residential development in rural areas to natural resource-based businesses and services, agricultural uses, nature tourism/ outdoor recreation businesses, farmers' markets, and home occupations. 



**ACTION D:** Review and revise, as needed, street lighting requirements to minimize light pollution. 



### DATA HIGHLIGHT: DEVELOPMENT

- **24.3%** of new dwelling units approved since 2014 are in the Farm and Forest District.

*Revise the Town's land use and zoning regulations to direct growth to designated growth areas and to support the type of development and uses that will enhance village centers.*

## POLICY 3

The existing development patterns within the Town's commercial areas are not conducive to walkability or social connection that the community has indicated are needed in Falmouth. Revising regulations to allow and encourage the scale, density, and style of development typical of a traditional New England main street will support the transformation of the Town's commercial corridors to village centers, as desired by the community.

-  **ACTION A:** Allow and encourage shared parking in commercial areas and consider implementing flexible parking requirements to be based on availability of shared parking, access to transit, and other factors. 
-  **ACTION B:** Update building orientation and active building frontage requirements to support active streets. 
-  **ACTION C:** Allow higher-density development in strategically designated areas where density will support a vibrant village center by enhancing walkability and minimizing vehicle trips. 

-  **ACTION D:** Research establishing a maximum building footprint and further limiting the size of commercial tenant spaces for new buildings in village centers. 
-  **ACTION E:** Revise design standards for mixed-use and commercial areas to provide guidance on style, scale, site design, landscaping, connectivity, lighting, and public amenities. 
-  **ACTION F:** Work with developers and property owners to encourage redevelopment of existing underutilized commercial parcels to enhance the village character and livability and consider performance incentives that would encourage property owners to redevelop underutilized properties. 
-  **ACTION G:** Require a master plan for larger parcels where development is proposed. 
-  **ACTION H:** Conduct an analysis of connectivity as a part of site plan review for development in village centers to help ensure that development does not adversely impact pedestrian, cyclist, public transportation, or vehicular traffic patterns and safety.  




*Revise the Town's site design requirements to promote walkability and vibrant village centers.*



## POLICY 4

Building upon the Town's recent sidewalk and streetscape improvements and focusing on incrementally improving pedestrian and bicycle connectivity within and to the Route 1 and Route 100 commercial centers will enhance accessibility and create vibrant places for community interaction. Residents noted safety concerns for pedestrians throughout the Town. Creating safe and inviting spaces for walking and gathering requires deliberate planning. In addition to the pedestrian infrastructure (sidewalks, lighting, crosswalks, etc.), the physical environment around which infrastructure is built is equally important. Adding active uses to first floors of commercial structures and building to a scale that is appropriate to pedestrians are also important to creating an inviting environment for people to gather.





**ACTION A:** Establish minimum sidewalk widths in village center districts. 





**ACTION B:** Require commercial uses on first floor of mixed-use buildings where applicable, and promote outdoor dining and retail uses that enliven sidewalks and storefronts.  





**ACTION C:** Incorporate review of community amenities and access to amenities, such as playgrounds, bicycle storage and access, pedestrian lighting, sidewalks, and street furniture, in the site plan review process.  



**ACTION D:** Revise zoning to allow limited neighborhood retail uses (cafés, small markets, bookstore, hardware store) within existing residential neighborhoods at key intersections or along suitable corridors.  



**ACTION E:** Review and revise off-street parking requirements to support a more walkable environment and to reduce impervious surface areas and encourage developers to build on-street parking where appropriate.  

# REGIONAL COORDINATION



Implementing the policies and action items in this plan will require regional coordination. Working collaboratively with State and regional partners can provide access to financial and technical support to meet the Town's needs and plan for future investments.

Key challenges addressed in this plan are regional issues that require coordination among municipalities, local organizations, and different levels of government. The Town has looked to existing State and regional plans, like the Maine Won't Wait Climate

Action Plan, when developing policies and action items. The Town has worked with State partners on transportation projects. Regional partners, like GPCOG, have helped coordinate regional approaches to transportation and have supported the Town's climate action planning effort.

The Town will continue to leverage State and regional expertise and seek funding for initiatives like sustainability, transportation, and open space planning.

## TRANSPORTATION

Falmouth will continue to work with GPCOG and MaineDOT on ongoing transportation and infrastructure planning and improvement projects. Expanding access to regional transportation options like the Greater Portland METRO in coordination with neighboring municipalities can provide more efficient and connected services for residents. In addition, the Town's goals to improve connectivity include connectivity to surrounding communities. Falmouth, Cumberland, and Yarmouth have begun work on a Route 1 corridor project to improve safety for all users. Working with nearby municipalities to expand, connect, and maintain paths, greenways, and trails will be mutually beneficial. Regional connectivity improvements will require significant coordination among municipalities and other agencies.

## CLIMATE ACTION PLANNING

Climate change is a global issue being addressed at the regional level. Falmouth worked with GPCOG to develop the Town's climate action plan. GPCOG is working to develop climate action plans for communities in the greater Portland region and has helped evaluate local options for climate mitigation and sustainability planning. Falmouth has taken steps to reduce municipal carbon emissions and provide resources to residents to take more sustainable actions. The Town strives to be a leader on climate action and sustainability. As such, the Town will continue to look toward regional partners to support climate action planning and sustainability regionally.

## OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

The Town has worked closely with organizations like Falmouth Land Trust to preserve open space. Some open space conservation has not required regional coordination; however future efforts to expand trail networks and improve connectivity will require coordination with regional groups and neighboring communities.

## NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION

Impacts to natural systems are not limited by municipal borders. Falmouth has shared resources and will need to continue to collaborate with surrounding communities to address water quality issues and protect natural areas. Coordinating efforts and resources to address challenges on shared natural resources, like Highland Lake, will ensure that resources are considered in municipal planning efforts. Coordinating natural area stewardship, public education campaigns, and sharing policy, programs, tools, and techniques will help ensure the long-term health of natural resources.

## HOUSING

Housing affordability and availability is a regional issue, impacted by market conditions and economic challenges. Regional affordable housing agencies and developers will play a key role in implementing the housing policies of this plan and will support the creation of housing options throughout the region. Falmouth will continue to collaborate with other municipalities in the region through efforts of the Metro Regional Coalition and through other opportunities to coordinate efforts on policy and programs to address regional housing challenges.



# IMPLEMENTATION PLAN



## Why is this important?

A Comprehensive Plan is intended to be a tool for all decision-makers in guiding policy development and future planning efforts. The success of this Plan requires all responsible agencies and collaborators to actively participate in implementation and coordinate on action items. Using this tool as intended, will help ensure that funds are used to meet the community's future needs and that the Plan continues to stay relevant over time.

While the implementation matrix is intended to function as a framework for prioritizing and planning for implementation of action items, it also provides users a better understanding of the interrelatedness of policy issues and their relationship to broader regional and State initiatives. Ideally, this context for each action item will support the coordination and collaboration among various stakeholders whose divergent interests may be addressed by common policy actions.

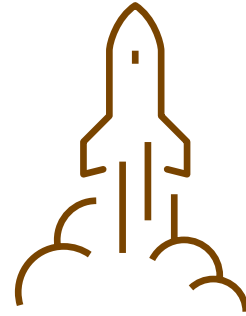
# Implementation Matrix Overview

The implementation matrix on the following pages, is intended to provide practical guidance for all stakeholders involved with Plan implementation to determine an appropriate sequence for implementing actions and to facilitate coordination among stakeholders. The implementation matrix outlines key stakeholders responsible for executing each action item, establishes an approximate timeline, determines the ease of implementation, and identifies potential resources for each action item. The matrix references the Pillar or Pillars that an action item relates to. Additionally, the matrix references related plans that the Town is currently working on or has adopted to provide additional context for each action item and demonstrate how the Comprehensive Plan aligns with prior planning activities in Falmouth.

The implementation matrix is intended to support the Town in developing annual budgets and with capital improvement planning. The matrix can be used as a reference to assign tasks and determine funding needs related to each action item. This information is designed to assist Town staff, Town Council, boards and committees, and the Falmouth community in the implementation of the Plan. The timeline, responsible agency, and costs are contingent on the assignment of annual goals by Town Council each year, the guidance of tasks by the administration or committees, and the cumulative impact to costs of other actions taken.

The implementation matrix designates ease of implementation, relative cost, and a reasonable timeline for each action. Determining priority will involve reviewing all three factors, as well as the availability of funding, whether that is through the Town's budget process, State or federal funding, or grants. Prioritization of actions should consider grant

funding program timelines and the availability of State and federal resources, which will change over time.



## PUTTING THE PLAN INTO ACTION

This Plan was created with significant input from the Falmouth community, and implementation of this Plan will also require community effort and stakeholder support. The success of this Plan is dependent on thoughtful and intentional collaboration among residents and stakeholders, Town departments, and other agencies, organizations, and government entities.

The Town Council will monitor and evaluate progress in implementing the recommendations of this Plan. It is intended that LPAC will advise and assist the Town Council and be delegated responsibility for regular monitoring and evaluation. LPAC will also advise the various departments, committees, and organizations responsible for implementing action items of the Plan, and LPAC will support implementation in working with all responsible agencies to help ensure that the intent of the Plan is followed and to provide updates on progress to the Town Council.

The implementation matrix laid out on the following pages provides a guide for the Town Council, LPAC, Town staff, and other responsible agencies to follow in implementing the Plan with regard to the following:

- Aligning efforts with other plans and studies
- Identifying responsible parties and collaborators
- Assessing cost
- Identifying priority projects
- Determining ease of implementation
- Setting a timeline for implementation
- Identifying best practices to reference for guidance

This structure is intended to be a guide, with the understanding that external factors influencing some elements may change over time, including structural or organizational changes impacting partners and responsible parties or new funding opportunities that could influence resources and priority. The Town will continue to update this matrix over time and use it to track implementation progress.



## EVALUATION

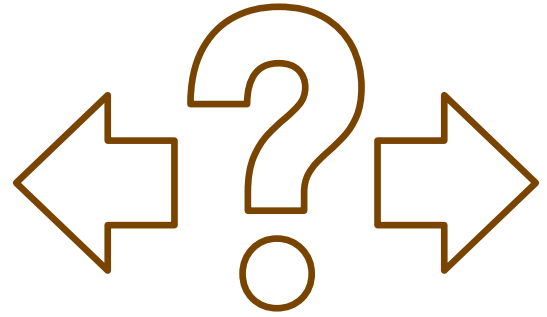
Progress on implementation of the Plan will be reviewed on an ongoing basis by LPAC. It is recommended LPAC provide annual reports to the Town Council with detail on the status of each action item, resource and funding needs to for implementation, and any other factors impacting implementation progress. It is recommended that the Town identify key metrics (e.g., energy usage, transit ridership, pedestrian traffic accidents) to track as part of the implementation process, in order to measure progress and support continued funding for successful initiatives. The annual report should include an overview of zoning and policy changes, capital projects, and new development. The report should consider development trends and evaluate consistency with the Plan and goals for development within the growth boundary and preservation of critical environmental areas.

In addition to understanding and measuring progress on implementation, annual evaluation will allow an opportunity to consider how well the Plan's policies reflect the current needs of Falmouth. As the Town has experienced in recent years, major economic, environmental, and social changes can have a significant impact on the Town's policy priorities and immediate funding needs. These factors should be considered in each annual review to ensure that the



Town is moving forward on the most appropriate path. The Town may consider amendments to the Plan to address major changes and respond to new trends. At a minimum, the evaluation should address the following:

- What land use and zoning measures have been implemented?
- How much new development has occurred in the designated growth area compared to growth outside the growth boundary?
- How much significant environmental land area has been preserved and how much has been developed?
- What changes do key performance metrics indicate?
- What progress has been made in implementing the Climate Action Plan?
- In considering long-term planned capital investments, how is the capital investment anticipated to impact property tax rates?
- How well have strategies supported small business development in the Town's growth areas?
- What percentage of new housing units are affordable for the median household in Falmouth (with a minimum goal of 10% of all new housing development)?
- Have there been significant environmental, economic, social, public health, or other changes that may necessitate changes to the goals, policies, or actions in this Plan?



The Town should conduct a broader evaluation of the Plan and implementation progress three to five years after Plan approval, in order to ensure that the Plan is addressing current needs and to identify any significant changes since Plan approval that could impact priorities and implementation progress.



# Implementation Matrix Key

Action Type
Plan
Regulation
Guideline
Program/Policy
Capital Projects
Partnership/Coordination
Communication/Engagement
Resource Allocation

Related Plan / Study	
<b>CAP</b>	Climate Action Plan
<b>Bike/Ped Plan</b>	2016 Falmouth Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
<b>CIP</b>	Capital Improvement Plan
<b>Watershed Plan</b>	Strategic Watershed Plan (2021)
<b>SWMP</b>	Stormwater Management Plan (2022-2027)
<b>Forest Management</b>	Cruise Report and Forest Management Plans (2009 and 2011)
<b>Resiliency Study</b>	Town Landing Resiliency Study
<b>FPS Master Plan</b>	Falmouth Public Schools Master Plan
<b>Route 1 Corridor Plan</b>	North of Portland Route One Complete Streets Corridor Plan
<b>PACTS TIP</b>	PACTS Transportation Improvement Program (2023-2026)
<b>MRC Housing Report</b>	Metro Regional Coalition 2022 Housing Choice Progress Report
<b>Open Space Plan</b>	2018 Falmouth Open Space Plan

Responsible Agency / Collaborators Name	
Community Development Department	<b>CDD</b>
Community Development Committee	<b>CDC</b>
Community Wellness Committee	<b>CWC</b>
Conservation Commission	<b>CC</b>
Falmouth Chamber of Commerce	<b>FCC</b>
Falmouth Historical Society	<b>FHS</b>
Falmouth Land Trust	<b>FLT</b>
Falmouth Memorial Library	<b>FML</b>
Falmouth Public Schools	<b>FPS</b>
Finance Committee	<b>FC</b>
Finance Division	<b>FD</b>
Fire and EMS Department	<b>FFD</b>
Greater Portland Council of Governments	<b>GPCOG</b>
Harbor/Waterfront Committee	<b>HWC</b>
Highland Lake Leadership Team	<b>HLLT</b>
Long-Range Planning Advisory Committee	<b>LPAC</b>
Long-Range Planning/Economic Development Department	<b>LRP</b>
Maine Historic Preservation Commission	<b>MHPC</b>
Ordinance Committee	<b>OC</b>
Parks and Community Programs Advisory Committee	<b>PACPAC</b>
Parks and Community Programs Department	<b>PCP</b>
Planning Board	<b>PB</b>
Police Department	<b>FPD</b>
Public Works Department	<b>PWD</b>
Shellfish Conservation Committee	<b>SCC</b>
Sustainability Committee	<b>SC</b>
Sustainability Department	<b>SD</b>
Town Council	<b>FTC</b>
Town Manager's Office	<b>TM</b>
Wastewater Department	<b>FWD</b>

Cost	
\$	Can be achieved substantially with current operating and/or capital budgets.
\$\$	Some new or increased funding/staffing required for implementation.
\$\$\$	Substantial new funding or grant support needed for implementation.



Ease of Implementation	
Easy	Relatively low level of funding, inter-departmental or cross-organizational coordination, approvals, and time required for implementation.
Medium	Some coordination of partners, funding sources, approvals will be required.
Hard	A high level of coordination among multiple partners to secure funding, approvals, and staff resources will be required.

Timeline*	
Short	0-2 years
Medium	3-5 years
Long	6-10 years
Ongoing	

\*Timelines are an approximate timeframe within which responsible agencies should start and complete or make substantial progress on an action item. Ongoing actions are meant to be a continuous effort without a defined end point, and these items should be evaluated periodically.







# Historic Resources

[Web link](#)












Actions	Pillar	Related Plans/ Studies	Action Type	Responsible Agency/ Collaborators	Cost/ Resources	Ease of Implementation	Timeline	Best Practices
<b>POLICY 1:</b> Protect historic resources to strengthen Falmouth's cultural and historic fabric and promote connection through education and place-making.								
<b>A.</b> Continue to protect historic resources through the Town's subdivision ordinance.			Regulation	PB	\$	Easy	Short	
<b>B.</b> Continue to require the planning board to incorporate review and comment by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission for proposed development on or adjacent to a property that is on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.			Regulation	PB, CDD	\$	Easy	Short	
<b>C.</b> Work with the Maine Historic Preservation Commission to evaluate the benefits of a nomination to National Register of Historic Places for the archaeological site at River Point.			Partnership/ Coordination	TM, MHPC	\$	Easy	Short	
<b>D.</b> Work with the Falmouth Historical Society, Maine Historic Preservation Commission, and others to assess the need for a comprehensive survey of Falmouth's historic and archaeological resources.			Partnership/ Coordination	FHS, MHPC, TM	\$	Easy	Medium	
<b>E.</b> Develop interpretive signage to educate the community about the historical and cultural significance of certain sites and landmarks.			Resource Allocation	FHS, PWD	\$	Medium	Medium	

# Water Resources

[Web link](#)











Actions	Pillar	Related Plans/ Studies	Action Type	Responsible Agency/ Collaborators	Cost/ Resources	Ease of Implemen- tation	Timeline	Best Practices
<b>POLICY 1: Protect current and potential drinking water sources.</b>								
<b>A.</b> Adopt or amend local land use ordinances as applicable to incorporate stormwater runoff performance standards consistent with the Maine Stormwater Management Law and Maine Stormwater regulations, Maine Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP's) allocations for allowable levels of phosphorus in lake/pond watersheds, and Maine Pollution Discharge Elimination System Stormwater Program.		SWMP	Regulation	FTC, FWD	\$	Medium	Medium	
<b>B.</b> Maintain, enact, or amend public wellhead and aquifer recharge area protection mechanisms, as necessary.			Regulation	PWD, FWD	\$	Medium	Medium, Ongoing	
<b>POLICY 2: Protect water resources in growth areas to support sustainable development in those areas.</b>								
<b>A.</b> Consider amending local land use ordinances, as applicable, to incorporate low impact development standards.			Regulation	PWD, LRP, FTC, FWD	\$	Easy	Short	
<b>B.</b> Continue to implement recommendations of the 2021 Falmouth Strategic Watershed Plan and monitor watershed health through the establishment and annual review of watershed health metrics.		Watershed Plan	Capital Projects, Program/ Policy	HLLT, SD, TM, LRP	\$\$	Medium	Ongoing	
<b>C.</b> Review water quality protection standards and create a guide of best management practices (BMPs) for construction and maintenance of roads and public properties and require their implementation by contractors, owners, and community officials and employees.			Guideline	PWD, CDD, FWD	\$	Easy	Short	








Actions	Pillar	Related Plans/ Studies	Action Type	Responsible Agency/ Collaborators	Cost/ Resources	Ease of Implemen- tation	Timeline	Best Practices
<b>POLICY 3: Cooperate with neighboring communities and regional and local advocacy groups to protect water resources.</b>								
<b>A.</b> Conduct a public education campaign to educate landowners on protecting water quality, including providing local contact information at the municipal office for water quality best management practices from resources such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Soil and Water Conservation District, Maine Forest Service, Sebago Clean Waters, and/or Small Woodlot Association of Maine.			Communi- cation/ Engagement	SC, FLT, PCP, FWD	\$	Easy	Ongoing	
<b>B.</b> Participate in local and regional efforts to monitor, protect, and, where warranted, improve water quality, including preparing and updating watershed management plans in coordination with neighboring municipalities as appropriate.		Watershed Plan	Partnership/ Coordination	SC, TM, FWD	\$	Easy	Ongoing	
<b>C.</b> Provide educational materials at appropriate locations regarding aquatic invasive species.			Communi- cation/ Engagement	SC, FLT, PCP, PWD	\$	Easy	Short	
<b>POLICY 4: Continue to promote and implement responsible stormwater management practices to protect the Town's rivers and streams, Highland Lake, and Casco Bay.</b>								
<b>A.</b> Evaluate requirements for stormwater capture and consider increasing requirements to mitigate impacts from stormwater runoff.			Resource Allocation, Capital Projects	CDD, PB	\$	Easy	Short	
<b>B.</b> Create an educational campaign to support responsible stormwater management.			Communi- cation/ Engagement	SD, FTC	\$	Easy	Ongoing	
<b>C.</b> Review septic system requirements and revise as needed to enhance provisions to protect water resources.			Regulation	FTC, CDD, SD	\$	Easy	Short	
<b>D.</b> Review the standards for expanding wastewater service to new developments requiring public sewer service with consideration for system capacity.			Regulation	FWD, FTC	\$	Easy	Short	
<b>E.</b> Provide for stormwater and wastewater infrastructure in designated growth areas, where appropriate.			Capital Projects	PWD, FWD, FTC, LRP	\$\$\$	Medium	Medium	

# Natural Resources

[Web link](#)











Actions	Pillar	Related Plans/ Studies	Action Type	Responsible Agency/ Collaborators	Cost/ Resources	Ease of Implemen- tation	Timeline	Best Practices
<b>POLICY 1:</b> Conserve critical natural resources and expand protection of environmentally sensitive areas in rural and undeveloped areas.								
<b>A.</b> Ensure that land use ordinances are consistent with applicable State law regarding critical natural areas and work to develop model ordinance language.			Regulation	CDD	\$	Easy	Ongoing	
<b>B.</b> Include as part of the development review process, consideration of pertinent information regarding critical natural areas, including Beginning with Habitat maps.			Regulation	CDD	\$	Easy	Short	
<b>C.</b> Explore ways to encourage landowners to preserve and allow access to undeveloped parcels outside designated growth areas such as education on stewardship and climate resiliency, guidance on the legal implications of public access, and assistance with invasive species removal.	 	Open Space Plan	Partnership/ Coordination	PCP, FLT, CC	\$	Medium	Medium	
<b>D.</b> Evaluate site assessment requirements, and revise as needed, to help ensure that environmentally sensitive areas are not adversely impacted by new construction.		CAP	Regulation	CDD	\$	Easy	Short	
<b>E.</b> Evaluate zoning and consider revisions to help protect areas that are vulnerable to hazards caused by climate change.		CAP	Regulation	CDD, LRP, SD	\$	Easy	Short	
<b>F.</b> Provide for protection of stream corridors, including Chenery Brook, Mill Creek, Mussel Cove, and Hobbs Brook, where certain high-intensity uses would contribute to pollutants in waterways.		CAP	Resource Allocation	CDD, LRP, SD, FWD	\$\$	Medium	Medium	
<b>G.</b> Collaborate with State testing programs to investigate sludge utilization sites to determine environmental, stormwater runoff, and water resource impacts and mitigation needs.			Partnership/ Coordination	PWD, SD	\$	Easy	Ongoing	
<b>H.</b> Educate the community about the benefits of maintaining undeveloped land and critical natural resources for the health of the environment and Town residents.		Open Space Plan	Communica- tion/ Engagement	CC, SC, FLT	\$	Easy	Ongoing	

 Web link

Actions	Pillar	Related Plans/ Studies	Action Type	Responsible Agency/ Collaborators	Cost/ Resources	Ease of Implementation	Timeline	Best Practices
<b>POLICY 2:</b> Coordinate with neighboring communities and regional and state resource agencies to protect shared critical resources.								
<b>A.</b> Continue to support and participate in planning, management, and outreach efforts of HLLT to improve and maintain the water quality of Highland Lake.			Partnership/ Coordination	TM, FTC, HLLT, SC, FWD	\$	Easy	Ongoing	
<b>B.</b> Distribute or make available information to those living in or near critical or important natural resources about current use tax programs and applicable local, State, or federal regulations.			Communication/ Engagement	CC, SC	\$	Easy	Short	
<b>C.</b> Work with Falmouth Land Trust and other public and private conservation partners to encourage the continued acquisition of open space, especially to improve trail and open space connectivity and to protect critical environmental areas.		Open Space Plan	Partnership/ Coordination	FLT, PCP, FTC	\$\$, \$	Medium	Ongoing	

# Agriculture and Forestry













[Web link](#)

Actions	Pillar	Related Plans/ Studies	Action Type	Responsible Agency/ Collaborators	Cost/ Resources	Ease of Implemen- tation	Timeline	Best Practices
<b>POLICY 1: Improve and enhance forests on Town-owned open spaces and tree canopy on growth area corridors.</b>								
<b>A.</b> Complete a street tree inventory within growth areas.			Plan	CC, PWD	\$\$	Easy	Medium	<a href="#">Web link</a>
<b>B.</b> Continue to update forest management and property management plans for Town forests and conservation lands as needed, considering the role of habitat diversity and leveraging the existing relationship with the Falmouth Land Trust.		Forest Management, Open Space Plan	Plan	PCP, FLT, CC	\$\$	Easy	Ongoing	<a href="#">Web link</a>
<b>C.</b> Identify key invasive species that threaten Falmouth's environment and develop strategies for stopping their spread and/or removing them.			Program/ Policy	SC	\$\$	Medium		<a href="#">Web link</a>
<b>D.</b> Continue to update the Town's inventory of significant or historic trees.			Program/ Policy	TM, SC, PCP	\$	Easy	Ongoing	<a href="#">Web link</a>
<b>POLICY 2: Protect farms and prime farmland for agricultural use and for scenic, recreational, cultural, historical, and economic value to the community.</b>								
<b>A.</b> Encourage the use of agricultural conservation easements.			Communi- cation/ Engagement	CC	\$	Easy	Ongoing	<a href="#">Web link</a>
<b>B.</b> Consider using transfer of development rights (TDR) in certain growth areas in exchange for purchase of agricultural easements.			Program/ Policy	CC, CDD, FTC	\$	Easy	Medium	<a href="#">Web link</a>
<b>C.</b> Revise and update the conservation subdivision definition and process to maintain areas with prime farmland soils as open space or for agricultural use to the greatest extent practicable.			Regulation	CDD	\$	Medium	Medium	
<b>D.</b> Consult with the Maine Forest Service and Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District in developing or revising land use regulations pertaining to agricultural and forest management practices.			Regulation	CDD, OC	\$	Easy	Medium	
<b>E.</b> Provide educational resources and encourage owners of productive farm and forest land to enroll in the current use taxation programs.			Communi- cation/ Engagement	TM, LRP	\$	Easy	Ongoing	<a href="#">Web link</a>
<b>F.</b> Identify ways to include local agriculture operations in future economic development efforts, including promoting programs and events to support the economic viability of local farms.			Partnership/ Coordination	TM, LRP	\$	Easy	Ongoing	<a href="#">Web link</a>








# Marine Resources

[Web link](#)

Actions	Pillar	Related Plans/ Studies	Action Type	Responsible Agency/ Collaborators	Cost/ Resources	Ease of Implementation	Timeline	Best Practices
<b>POLICY 1: Foster water-dependent land uses and balance them with other complementary land uses.</b>								
<b>A.</b> Continue to support management of waterfront land and the efforts of the Parks and Community Programs and FLT with consideration for climate resiliency, habitat protection, and public access to the waterfront.		Open Space Plan	Resource Allocation	FTC, PCP, FLT	\$\$	Medium	Ongoing	
<b>B.</b> Support and strengthen the local fishing community and working waterfront.			Resource Allocation	FTC, TM	\$	Medium	Ongoing	
<b>POLICY 2: Maintain and, where warranted, improve harbor management and facilities.</b>								
<b>A.</b> Seek funding for and implement recommendations of the Town Landing Resiliency Study.			Resource Allocation, Capital Projects	FTC, TM	\$\$	Medium	Medium	
<b>B.</b> Continue to enforce the Coastal Waters Ordinance and support efforts of the Harbor/Waterfront Committee, Harbormaster, and Marine Unit to maintain a safe and accessible facility.			Regulation	FPD, HWC	\$	Medium	Ongoing	
<b>C.</b> Continue to monitor and improve resident access to water resources, such as harbor facilities, including use of commercial floats, small craft storage, mooring access, and vehicle parking.			Resource Allocation	FPD, HWC	\$	Easy	Ongoing	
<b>D.</b> Monitor and address impacts to harbor facilities due to climate change or other adverse actions.			Capital Projects	FPD, HWC	\$	Medium	Ongoing	
<b>POLICY 3: Protect, maintain and improve marine habitat, water quality, and access to the Town's marine resources for all appropriate uses including fishing, recreation, and tourism.</b>								
<b>A.</b> Work with local property owners, land trusts, and others to maintain and expand major points of access to coastal waters, especially along public ways and in public parks.			Partnership/ Coordination	FLT, PWD, FTC	\$	Medium	Ongoing	
<b>B.</b> Continue to coordinate with Maine DEP and Maine DMR on water quality monitoring and assessment, assessing, protecting marine habitat protection, and monitoring and enforcement of commercial and recreational fishing regulations.		CAP	Partnership/ Coordination	PWD, FPD, FWD	\$	Easy	Ongoing	
<b>C.</b> Support efforts of the Shellfish Conservation Committee to protect the Town's shellfish resources.			Partnership/ Coordination	FTC, SCC	\$	Easy	Ongoing	
<b>D.</b> Implement restoration and regenerative habitat projects to reestablish lost/impacted habitat in coordination with coastal resiliency efforts.		CAP	Resource Allocation	HWC, LRP	\$\$	Medium	Medium	








# Economy






[Web link](#)

Actions	Pillar	Related Plans/ Studies	Action Type	Responsible Agency/ Collaborators	Cost/ Resources	Ease of Implementation	Timeline	Best Practices
<b>POLICY 1:</b> Coordinate with regional development corporations and surrounding towns as necessary to support desired economic development.								
<b>A.</b> Participate in applicable regional initiatives, including attracting amenity businesses to meet the needs of residents.			Partnership/ Coordination	LRP, TM	\$	Medium	Ongoing	<a href="#">Web link</a>
<b>B.</b> Create opportunities for sharing across learning environments in the region, including secondary schools, colleges, research institutions, and other organizations, and develop partnerships for workforce development.			Partnership/ Coordination	LRP, TM, GPCOG	\$	Medium	Ongoing	
<b>POLICY 2:</b> Attract and retain businesses in village centers to increase the Town's tax base, provide jobs, and support quality of life by increasing the diversity of amenities and services available to residents and visitors of all ages.								
<b>A.</b> Evaluate the benefit of a resident committee to support economic growth and improve the economic climate in Falmouth.			Resource Allocation	FTC	\$	Easy	Short	<a href="#">Web link</a>
<b>B.</b> Work with the Chamber of Commerce to support and partner with businesses through programs and events and promote the Town as a place to do business by actively marketing Falmouth to the Maine business and real estate community.			Partnership/ Coordination	LRP, TM, FCC	\$	Medium	Ongoing	<a href="#">Web link</a>
<b>C.</b> Update the Town's economic development strategy to define goals.			Plan	LRP, FTC	\$\$	Medium	Medium	<a href="#">Web link</a>

# Housing

[Web link](#)







Actions	Pillar	Related Plans/ Studies	Action Type	Responsible Agency/ Collaborators	Cost/ Resources	Ease of Implementation	Timeline	Best Practices
<b>POLICY 1: Encourage a variety of housing types and increased density in designated growth areas.</b>								
<b>A.</b> Provide guidance on creating ADUs to support homeowners through the process, including examples of plans that comply with Town requirements.			Guideline	CDD, LRP	\$	Medium	Short	<a href="#">Web link</a>
<b>B.</b> Revise zoning to allow residential development in certain commercial districts, such as the Business and Professional Zone along Route 1, and to encourage a variety of housing types in growth areas, including low-rise apartments, townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, cottage courts, etc.			Regulation	CDD, LRP	\$	Medium	Short	<a href="#">Web link</a>
<b>POLICY 2: Encourage development that increases livability for people of all ages and abilities.</b>								
<b>A.</b> Investigate initiatives and funding opportunities that support aging in place and enhance livability for people of all ages.	 			FTC, TM, LRP	\$	Easy	Ongoing	<a href="#">Web link</a>
<b>B.</b> Encourage the application of universal design practices and consider standards for accessible or adaptable design for new residential development to increase housing accessibility for people of all ages and abilities.			Guideline	CDD, LRP	\$	Medium	Short	<a href="#">Web link</a>
<b>C.</b> Encourage housing development that is walkable to transit locations and amenities like parks, healthcare, and shopping options.	 			CDD, LRP, FTC	\$	Medium	Medium	

Actions	Pillar	Related Plans/ Studies	Action Type	Responsible Agency/ Collaborators	Cost/ Resources	Ease of Implementation	Timeline	Best Practices
<b>POLICY 3:</b> Allow and support the development of affordable and workforce housing within the Town's growth areas.								
<b>A.</b> Investigate opportunities to reduce development costs by using vacant and underused public land for affordable housing development.			Partnership/ Coordination	TM, FTC, LRP	\$\$\$	Medium	Short	
<b>B.</b> Implement incentives for the development of affordable or workforce housing units, such as density bonuses, reduced parking requirements, reduced/waived fees, affordable housing development impact fee, use of Affordable Housing Tax Increment Financing, and use of Town-owned land for development.				TM, FTC, LRP, CDD	\$	Medium	Medium	
<b>C.</b> Create housing opportunities targeted to Town staff and community members.	 			TM, FTC, LRP	\$	Medium	Medium	
<b>D.</b> Support regional efforts to address affordable and workforce housing, including working toward the Metro Regional Coalition's goal to expand housing choices.				FTC, TM	\$\$	Medium	Ongoing	












# Recreation

[Web link](#)












Actions	Pillar	Related Plans/ Studies	Action Type	Responsible Agency/ Collaborators	Cost/ Resources	Ease of Implementation	Timeline	Best Practices
<b>POLICY 1: Continue to invest in and maintain the Town's recreational facilities.</b>								
<b>A.</b> Support the work of PACPAC to identify recreation needs and develop strategies to meet future needs.			Partnership/ Coordination	PACPAC, FTC, PCP	\$	Easy	Ongoing	
<b>B.</b> Make improvements to enhance safety, accessibility, and usability of Town recreation facilities in coordination with planned upgrades and improvements with a focus on creating more visitor-friendly spaces, multi-generational spaces, and ADA accessible trails, parks, and playgrounds.		Bike/Ped Plan	Capital Projects	PCP, PACPAC, CWC, FTC	\$\$\$	Hard	Medium	<a href="#">Web link</a>
<b>C.</b> Overlay sports fields/parks upgrades with flood mitigation infrastructure and other multi-benefit project opportunities (pollinators, education, resiliency, etc.).			Capital Projects	PCP, PWD, PACPAC	\$\$	Hard	Medium	
<b>D.</b> Support and explore private funding initiatives to upgrade or expand recreational facilities (e.g., a community pool).			Partnership/ Coordination	FTC, TM	\$	Medium	Ongoing	
<b>POLICY 2: Maintain the Town's public access to the waterfront and expand opportunities for waterfront recreation.</b>								
<b>A.</b> Consider opportunities for small craft storage (e.g., kayaks, dinghies, paddle boards) at Town Landing.			Capital Projects	HWC, FPD, FTC	\$\$	Medium	Medium	<a href="#">Web link</a>
<b>B.</b> Identify other areas for access to Casco Bay and other waters and investigate with appropriate Town committees.			Resource Allocation	PACPAC, PCP, FLT, CWC	\$	Medium	Medium	


# Transportation









[Web link](#)

Actions	Pillar	Related Plans/ Studies	Action Type	Responsible Agency/ Collaborators	Cost/ Resources	Ease of Implemen- tation	Timeline	Best Practices
<b>POLICY 1: Improve safety and efficiency of the transportation system for all types of users.</b>								
<b>A.</b> Establish Complete Streets design guidelines for street improvements in village centers and other areas with multimodal activity.			Guideline	LRP, PWD	\$\$	Medium	Short	<a href="#">Web link</a>
<b>B.</b> Develop a traffic-calming toolbox and implement traffic-calming and speed-reduction measures on local roadways, especially main arterials into and through town.			Program/ Policy	LRP	\$	Easy	Medium	<a href="#">Web link</a>
<b>C.</b> Limit new curb cuts within village centers and consolidate or reduce curb cuts where possible for new development and redevelopment projects.	 		Capital Projects	PWD	\$	Medium	Medium	<a href="#">Web link</a>
<b>D.</b> Prioritize building safe pedestrian and bicycle crossings into new and redesigned intersections along main arterials.			Capital Projects	PWD	\$\$	Medium	Ongoing	<a href="#">Web link</a>
<b>E.</b> Investigate new trends in transportation, including electric bikes and microtransit options, and explore strategies and amenities to support their use.			Plan	LRP	\$	Easy	Ongoing	<a href="#">Web link</a>
<b>F.</b> Maintain, enact or amend local ordinances as appropriate to address or avoid conflicts with: a. Policy objectives of the Sensible Transportation Policy Act (23 M.R.S.A. §73); b. State access management regulations pursuant to 23 M.R.S.A. §704; and c. State traffic permitting regulations for large developments pursuant to 23 M.R.S.A. §704-A.			Regulation	OC	\$	Easy	Ongoing	
<b>POLICY 2: Promote fiscal prudence by maximizing the efficiency of the State or State-aid highway network and leveraging State and federal funding and municipal financing tools to fund infrastructure improvements, transportation projects, and public facilities.</b>								
<b>A.</b> Continue to partner with MaineDOT to fund transportation improvements that support multimodal transportation on the Town's major corridors.			Partnership/ Coordination	PWD	\$\$\$	Medium	Ongoing	<a href="#">Web link</a>
<b>B.</b> Seek State and federal grant funding for innovative public infrastructure projects, including rail trails.			Partnership/ Coordination	PWD, LRP, PCP	\$	Easy	Ongoing	

 Web link

Actions	Pillar	Related Plans/ Studies	Action Type	Responsible Agency/ Collaborators	Cost/ Resources	Ease of Implementation	Timeline	Best Practices
<b>POLICY 3:</b> Improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and safety with a focus on connecting existing public spaces and amenities, to enhance livability and public health.								
<b>A.</b> Update the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan to evaluate infrastructure and determine the level of infrastructure required (e.g., shared-use lanes, protected bike lanes, multi-use paths, signage).			Plan	PWD, LRP	\$\$	Medium	Short	
<b>B.</b> Establish a Bicycle-Pedestrian Planning Committee to make recommendations regarding non-motor vehicle transportation.		Bike/Ped Plan	Resource Allocation	FTC	\$	Easy	Short	
<b>C.</b> Work with public and private partners and property owners to extend and maintain a network of trails and establish permanent easements on properties to allow for connection of existing local and regional trail networks.		Bike/Ped Plan	Partnership/ Coordination	PCP, PACPAC, FLT	\$	Medium	Short	
<b>D.</b> Coordinate with Falmouth Public Schools to expand connections between campus and surrounding neighborhoods and parks, including a possible connection to Community Park.		Bike/Ped Plan	Partnership/ Coordination	FPS, PCP	\$\$	Hard	Medium	
<b>E.</b> Prioritize expanding the Town's sidewalk network with a focus on connecting public facilities, schools, and parks and protecting pedestrians on main arterials and within designated growth areas.		Bike/Ped Plan	Capital Projects	PWD, LRP	\$\$\$	Medium	Medium	
<b>F.</b> Explore increased bicycle infrastructure in new commercial, mixed use, and multi-family residential development.			Capital Projects	PWD, LRP	\$\$	Medium	Medium	
<b>G.</b> Investigate alternative bicycle and pedestrian path construction types like boardwalks, pervious pavement, or other technologies in appropriate settings where water quality is a concern.			Resource Allocation	PWD	\$	Easy	Medium	










 Web link










Actions	Pillar	Related Plans/ Studies	Action Type	Responsible Agency/ Collaborators	Cost/ Resources	Ease of Implementation	Timeline	Best Practices
<b>POLICY 4:</b> Support efforts for regional coordination on transportation and connectivity to enhance safety, efficiency, and optimal use of the transportation system.								
<b>A.</b> Continue to update a prioritized improvement, maintenance, and repair plan for Falmouth's transportation network.			Plan	PWD	\$	Easy	Ongoing	
<b>B.</b> Work with GPCOG to improve regional transportation efficiency.		PACTS TIP	Partnership/ Coordination	GPCOG, LRP, TM	\$	Easy	Ongoing	
<b>C.</b> Identify opportunities for enhanced connectivity between neighboring communities, including coordination with the Town of Cumberland on improvements to Route 1, Route 100, and Route 88 and continuing to implement the recommendations of the North of Portland Route One Complete Streets Corridor Plan.		Route 1 Corridor Plan	Capital Projects, Partnership/ Coordination	LRP, TM	\$\$	Medium	Ongoing	
<b>D.</b> Coordinate with MDOT on plans for access management to I-95, I-295, and the Falmouth Spur.			Partnership/ Coordination	PWD, TM	\$	Medium	Ongoing	
<b>E.</b> Support efforts to expand METRO transit service, including service enhancements to and within growth corridors.			Partnership/ Coordination	LRP, TM	\$	Medium	Ongoing	
<b>F.</b> Improve connections to regional transportation and consider establishing a ride share program.			Partnership/ Coordination	LRP	\$\$	Medium	Short	
<b>G.</b> Consider the potential for a Downeaster train station at West Falmouth Shopping Center.			Partnership/ Coordination	LRP	\$	Medium	Ongoing	
<b>H.</b> Coordinate with communities along the St. Lawrence and Atlantic rail line to explore building out a trail until rail.			Partnership/ Coordination	PCP	\$	Medium	Short	



# Public Facilities and Services








[Web link](#)

Actions	Pillar	Related Plans/ Studies	Action Type	Responsible Agency/ Collaborators	Cost/ Resources	Ease of Implementation	Timeline	Best Practices
<b>POLICY 1:</b> Review the anticipated staffing and facility needs for police, fire, emergency services, and other public facilities and services to continue to efficiently provide a high level of service to all residents.								
<b>A.</b> Define "level of service" for each functional area, to allow for assessment of anticipated need.			Resource Allocation	TM, FTC	\$	Easy	Short	
<b>B.</b> Identify any capital improvements needed to maintain or upgrade public services and evaluate the need for additional staffing to accommodate the community's anticipated growth and changing demographics.		CIP	Plan	PWD, PCP, LRP, FPD, FFD, SD, FWD, TM, FD	\$	Easy	Short	
<b>C.</b> Consider cost-saving opportunities for regional collaboration to share resources and knowledge and to provide services.			Partnership/ Coordination	PWD, PCP, LRP, FPD, FFD, SD, FWD, TM, FD	\$	Medium	Ongoing	
<b>D.</b> Support efforts for recruiting, retention, and training for Town emergency services and other Town staff to help ensure adequate staffing and continued high level of service.			Communication/ Engagement	PWD, PCP, LRP, FPD, FFD, SD, FWD, TM, FD	\$	Easy	Ongoing	
<b>E.</b> Evaluate the accessibility of Town facilities and services and continue to make accessibility improvements for people of all ages and abilities.			Capital Projects	PWD, PCP, LRP, FPD, FFD, SD, FWD, TM, FD	\$\$	Medium	Ongoing	
<b>POLICY 2:</b> Support continued transition to carbon neutral energy sources for public services and facilities.								
<b>A.</b> Conduct an energy audit and continue to monitor and report on energy use at Town facilities to optimize efficiency through implementation of upgrades where appropriate to minimize energy cost and consumption.		CAP	Resource Allocation	SD, TM	\$\$	Medium	Short	
<b>B.</b> Continue to develop public EV charging infrastructure where appropriate and encourage private development of EV charging infrastructure.		CAP	Capital Projects	SD, CDD, PB, FTC	\$\$	Medium	Ongoing	
<b>C.</b> Continue to transition to zero-emission fleet vehicles.		CAP	Capital Projects	SD, FTC, PWD, FPD, PCP	\$\$\$	Medium	Ongoing	

Actions	Pillar	Related Plans/ Studies	Action Type	Responsible Agency/ Collaborators	Cost/ Resources	Ease of Implementation	Timeline	Best Practices
<b>POLICY 3:</b> Support maintenance of and investment in Town facilities, infrastructure, and services to improve resiliency and environmental protection and to support economic growth in a fiscally responsible manner.								
<b>A.</b> Invest in infrastructure that is climate resilient.		CAP	Capital Projects	PWD, PCP, LRP, FPD, FFD, SD, FWD, TM, FD	\$\$\$	Medium	Ongoing	
<b>B.</b> Identify and plan for necessary upgrades to Town buildings and facilities and for water, wastewater, and transportation infrastructure, as community needs change.		CIP	Capital Projects	PWD, PCP, LRP, FPD, FFD, SD, FWD, TM, FD	\$\$\$	Medium	Ongoing	
<b>C.</b> Update the Town's Emergency Operations Plan to reflect the current personnel, resources, and potential hazards.		CAP	Plan	PWD, FPD, FFD, TM	\$	Easy	Short	
<b>D.</b> Invest in infrastructure improvements and beautification to support business growth and enjoyment of public spaces in village centers, such as by incorporating playgrounds, bicycle storage and access, pedestrian lighting, sidewalks, or street furniture.		CAP	Capital Projects	PCP, PWD	\$\$\$	Medium	Medium	
<b>E.</b> Explore grants available to assist in funding capital investments within the community and seek funding especially for the installation of renewable infrastructure and energy efficiency upgrades.			Resource Allocation	SD, TM	\$	Easy	Short	
<b>POLICY 4:</b> Create gathering spaces and program opportunities that promote community interaction and learning.								
<b>A.</b> Identify Town-owned parcels that could be considered for community uses (such as community gardens, playgrounds, dog parks, or for passive recreation) and develop those that have potential in a fiscally responsible manner.			Capital Projects	PCP, LRP	\$\$	Medium	Medium	
<b>B.</b> Identify opportunities for an outdoor Town green or community gathering space suitable for both larger events and daily interactions among residents to serve as an anchor for a village center.			Capital Projects	PCP, LRP	\$\$	Hard	Long	
<b>C.</b> Support the development of a community center or enhancement of the existing community center to support multi-generational programming needs and foster intergenerational connections.			Capital Projects	PCP, LRP	\$\$\$	Hard	Long	









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 Web link

Actions	Pillar	Related Plans/ Studies	Action Type	Responsible Agency/ Collaborators	Cost/ Resources	Ease of Implementation	Timeline	Best Practices
<b>D.</b> Support the school district in developing a master plan, including establishing the school campus as a community-wide facility with resources and programs for all community members.			Partnership/ Coordination	FPS	\$	Easy	Ongoing	
<b>E.</b> Continue to support the Parks and Recreation Department, Falmouth Public Library, Falmouth Land Trust, and other Town departments in programming and facility needs.			Partnership/ Coordination	PCP, FLT, FML	\$	Easy	Ongoing	
<b>POLICY 5:</b> Continue to support opportunities for community engagement.								
<b>A.</b> Investigate the need and demand for expanded programming for community members of all ages and opportunities for intergenerational connectivity.			Resource Allocation	PCP, FLT, FML	\$	Easy	Short	
<b>B.</b> Work with local businesses and community organizations to host seasonal events and support programming that provide social and cultural opportunities for the community and encourage public-private collaborations regarding community spaces and programs.			Partnership/ Coordination	FCC, TM	\$	Medium	Ongoing	
<b>C.</b> Continue to improve and expand Townwide communication and use of technology to increase awareness of opportunities for community engagement and evaluate the effectiveness of current communication strategies..			Communi- cation/ Engagement	TM, FTC	\$	Easy	Ongoing	
<b>D.</b> Facilitate partnerships with nonprofit organizations to increase involvement, provide learning opportunities for young people, and support cross cultural engagement.			Partnership/ Coordination	PCP, TM, FML	\$	Medium	Ongoing	

# Fiscal Capacity








[Web link](#)

Actions	Pillar	Related Plans/ Studies	Action Type	Responsible Agency/ Collaborators	Cost/ Resources	Ease of Implementation	Timeline	Best Practices
<b>POLICY 1:</b> Finance existing and future facilities and services in a cost effective manner that supports growth and development in identified growth areas.								
<b>A.</b> Explore opportunities to work with neighboring communities to plan for and finance shared or adjacent capital investments to increase cost savings and efficiencies.		CIP	Partnership/ Coordination	PWD, PCP, LRP, FPD, FFD, SD, FWD, TM, FD	\$	Medium	Ongoing	
<b>B.</b> Provide for adequate public facilities primarily in existing growth areas in proximity to existing infrastructure, transportation systems, housing, and other amenities.		CIP	Capital Projects	PWD, PCP, LRP, FPD, FFD, SD, FWD, TM, FD	\$\$\$	Hard	Medium	
<b>C.</b> Direct development to growth areas with existing utilities and infrastructure.			Regulation	LRP, CDD, PB	\$	Easy	Ongoing	
<b>D.</b> Continue to evaluate sewer connection charges to ensure that fees are scaled consistent with the cost of system maintenance and improvements.			Program/ Policy	FWD, PWD, FTC	\$	Medium	Ongoing	
<b>E.</b> Limit extensions of sewer and water service and coordinate any extensions with the Future Land Use Plan.			Program/ Policy	FWD, PWD, LRP	\$	Easy	Ongoing	
<b>F.</b> Continue to seek alternate funding sources to supplement Town revenues and reduce dependence on property tax revenue for annual operating and capital expenses, such as impact fees and public/private partnerships.			Resource Allocation	TM, FTC, FD	\$	Medium	Ongoing	
<b>POLICY 2:</b> Promote development that is fiscally responsible.								
<b>A.</b> Incorporate fiscal impact analysis into the development review process to help the Town make fiscally responsible development decisions that align with the Town's goals.			Guideline	CDD, FD	\$	Medium	Short	
<b>B.</b> Consider a public/private partnership to develop a master plan for a village center to support the community's goals and benefit the Town's fiscal capacity.			Partnership/ Coordination	LRP, PCP, TM, FTC	\$	Hard	Medium	
<b>C.</b> Evaluate the Town's current use of TIF districts to encourage development in commercial growth areas and finance infrastructure improvements that support walkability and the development of village centers.			Resource Allocation	FD, LRP, FTC	\$	Easy	Short	













# Sustainability

[Web link](#)









Actions	Pillar	Related Plans/ Studies	Action Type	Responsible Agency/ Collaborators	Cost/ Resources	Ease of Implemen- tation	Timeline	Best Practices
<b>POLICY 1:</b> Encourage sustainable development and building practices.								
<b>A.</b> Investigate additional energy standards beyond the minimum required standards of the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code.		CAP	Resource Allocation	CDD, SD	\$	Easy	Short	
<b>B.</b> Provide guidance, support, and incentives to builders interested in adopting sustainable development practices, including the use of alternative building materials and technologies for new and existing buildings and paved surfaces.			Guideline	CDD, SD	\$	Medium	Medium	
<b>C.</b> Develop green infrastructure design guidelines for new development and public infrastructure projects.		CAP	Guideline	CDD, SD, PWD	\$	Easy	Medium	
<b>D.</b> Review current open and public space requirements for developments to ensure that requirements result in quality open and public space for the community.		Open Space Plan	Regulation	CDD, LRP, PB	\$	Easy	Short	
<b>E.</b> Review requirements for designing for flood levels and consider increasing floodplain building elevation standards and implementing other climate resiliency standards to minimize impacts to property as a result of climate change and sea level rise.		CAP	Regulation	CDD, SD	\$	Medium	Short	









 Web link

Actions	Pillar	Related Plans/ Studies	Action Type	Responsible Agency/ Collaborators	Cost/ Resources	Ease of Implementation	Timeline	Best Practices
<b>POLICY 2:</b> Support residents in creating a more sustainable and resilient community.								
<b>A.</b> Develop a comprehensive education plan in consultation with the Falmouth Land Trust, homeowners associations, and other partners, that provides residents materials on local issues, such as guidance on energy and water saving measures and subsidies, natural hazard preparedness, and strategies to increase resiliency.			Communication/ Engagement	FLT, SD, SC	\$\$	Medium	Ongoing	
<b>B.</b> Promote Town initiatives like the composting program and monthly challenges like No-Mow-May, to include Town facilities and operations.			Communication/ Engagement	SD, TM, SC	\$	Easy	Ongoing	
<b>C.</b> Review current recycling initiatives and determine best practices for future solid waste diversion.			Resource Allocation	PWD, SD, FTC	\$	Medium	Short	
<b>D.</b> Provide educational support for removing invasive species on private property.			Communication/ Engagement	FLT, PCP, SD, TM	\$	Medium	Short	
<b>E.</b> Implement the policies established in Falmouth's 2023 Climate Action Plan (CAP) and establish metrics and tools to monitor progress on CAP initiatives.			Capital Projects	SD, SC, FTC, TM, LRP, PWD	\$\$\$	Hard	Ongoing	
<b>F.</b> Work with neighboring municipalities and regional organizations on climate resiliency initiatives.			Partnership/ Coordination	SD, TM	\$\$	Medium	Ongoing	
<b>G.</b> Enhance the online dashboard of the Town's energy efficiency metrics to include climate action progress and other energy usage to build awareness, foster transparency, and provide data that can be used for educational initiatives.			Resource Allocation	SD, TM	\$	Easy	Ongoing	

# Future Land Use






[Web link](#)

Actions	Pillar	Related Plans/ Studies	Action Type	Responsible Agency/ Collaborators	Cost/ Resources	Ease of Implementation	Timeline	Best Practices
<b>POLICY 1: Protect the physical character of developed residential neighborhoods.</b>								
<b>A.</b> Review zoning standards to ensure that new development is consistent with and minimizes impacts (e.g., visual, traffic, noise) to established residential neighborhoods within and outside residential growth areas.			Regulation	LRP, CDD, FTC	\$	Easy	Short	
<b>B.</b> Require a tree preservation plan for new developments to prevent unnecessary clear-cutting of large areas of open space.			Regulation	CDD, PB	\$	Easy	Short	
<b>C.</b> Revise site design standards for residential development to minimize the impact of new and infill development on existing neighborhoods through landscaping, screening, building orientation, buffer areas, lighting, and other requirements.			Regulation	CDD, FTC, CDC, PB	\$	Medium	Short	
<b>POLICY 2: Protect the physical character of rural and undeveloped areas.</b>								
<b>A.</b> Consider revising the rate of growth ordinance to further limit new development outside designated growth areas and direct growth to designated growth areas.			Regulation	LRP, CDD, FTC	\$	Easy	Short	
<b>B.</b> Revise zoning to prioritize existing low-density development patterns in the Farm and Forest District and direct growth to designated growth areas.			Regulation	LRP, CDD, FTC	\$	Easy	Short	
<b>C.</b> Limit non-residential development in rural areas to natural resource-based businesses and services, agricultural uses, nature tourism/outdoor recreation businesses, farmers' markets, and home occupations.			Regulation	LRP, CDD, FTC	\$	Easy	Short	Medium
<b>D.</b> Review and revise, as needed, street lighting requirements to minimize light pollution.			Regulation	CDD, SD	\$	Easy	Short	

Actions	Pillar	Related Plans/ Studies	Action Type	Responsible Agency/ Collaborators	Cost/ Resources	Ease of Implementation	Timeline	Best Practices
<b>POLICY 3:</b> Revise the Town's land use and zoning regulations to direct growth to designated growth areas and to support the type of development and uses that will enhance village centers.								
<b>A.</b> Allow and encourage shared parking in commercial areas and consider implementing flexible parking requirements to be based on availability of shared parking, access to transit, and other factors.			Guideline	CDD, LRP	\$	Medium	Short	
<b>B.</b> Update building orientation and active building frontage requirements to support active streets.			Guideline	CDD, LRP	\$	Medium	Short	
<b>C.</b> Allow higher-density development in strategically designated areas where density will support a vibrant village center by enhancing walkability and minimizing vehicle trips.			Guideline	CDD, LRP	\$	Easy	Short	
<b>D.</b> Research establishing a maximum building footprint and further limiting the size of commercial tenant spaces for new buildings in village centers.			Resource Allocation	CDD, LRP	\$	Easy	Short	
<b>E.</b> Revise design standards for mixed-use and commercial areas to provide guidance on style, scale, site design, landscaping, connectivity, lighting, and public amenities.			Regulation	LRP, CDD, OC, FTC	\$	Medium	Short	<a href="#">Web link</a>
<b>F.</b> Work with developers and property owners to encourage redevelopment of existing underutilized commercial parcels to enhance the village character and livability and consider performance incentives that would encourage property owners to redevelop underutilized properties.			Partnership/ Coordination	CDD, LRP	\$	Medium	Medium	<a href="#">Web link</a>
<b>G.</b> Require a master plan for larger parcels where development is proposed.			Regulation	CDD	\$	Easy	Short	<a href="#">Web link</a>
<b>H.</b> Conduct an analysis of connectivity as a part of site plan review for development in village centers to help ensure that development does not adversely impact pedestrian, cyclist, public transportation, or vehicular traffic patterns and safety.			Regulation	CDD	\$	Medium	Short	



[Web link](#)

Actions	Pillar	Related Plans/ Studies	Action Type	Responsible Agency/ Collaborators	Cost/ Resources	Ease of Implementation	Timeline	Best Practices
<b>POLICY 4:</b> Revise the Town's site design requirements to promote walkability and vibrant village centers.								
<b>A.</b> Establish minimum sidewalk widths in village center districts.			Regulation	CDD	\$	Easy	Short	
<b>B.</b> Require commercial uses on the first floor of mixed use buildings where applicable, and promote outdoor dining and retail uses that enliven sidewalks and storefronts.			Regulation	CDD	\$	Easy	Short	
<b>C.</b> Incorporate review of community amenities and access to amenities, such as playgrounds, bicycle storage and access, pedestrian lighting, sidewalks, and street furniture, in the site plan review process.			Regulation	CDD, LRP	\$	Medium	Short	
<b>D.</b> Revise zoning to allow limited neighborhood retail uses (cafés, small markets, bookstore, hardware store) within existing residential neighborhoods at key intersections or along suitable corridors.			Regulation	CDD, LRP	\$	Medium	Short	
<b>E.</b> Review and revise off-street parking requirements to support a more walkable environment and to reduce impervious surface areas and encourage developers to build on-street parking where appropriate.			Regulation	CDD, LRP	\$	Medium	Short	

# Appendix A: Engagement Summary



# TOWN OF FALMOUTH

## ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY



**PREPARED FOR**  
Town of Falmouth  
**PREPARED BY**  
BerryDunn

2024



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## INTRODUCTION

As part of the Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Falmouth, a robust public engagement effort was conducted to obtain input from Falmouth residents and stakeholders. The engagement effort was designed to build off the Vision and Values process, which was previously conducted to develop a vision for the future of Falmouth and guide plan development and policy recommendations. The engagement process was designed to look deeper at the six pillars developed during the visioning process and gain input on more specific development topics. Engagement activities included:

- Public kickoff meeting
- Three in-person workshops
- An online, virtual engagement Social Pinpoint site

This high-level summary includes an overview of each of these engagement components and what was learned about community desires for Falmouth.

In addition to engagement efforts specifically intended to support the development of the Comprehensive Plan, public feedback from other Town outreach initiatives (including the Climate Action Plan) were reviewed and taken into consideration as part of this process.



## PUBLIC KICKOFF MEETING

The kickoff meeting was held on April 11, 2023. The goal of the meeting was to introduce the community to the comprehensive planning process, share the history of planning in Falmouth, and begin to gather initial feedback from the community. Approximately 50 community members participated.

Town Councilor Ted Asherman introduced the event and presented a history of the Town of Falmouth. Following the presentation, meeting participants engaged in an activity. Participants were asked to identify one or two moments in their time as a resident when they felt the most connected to the community. In small groups, participants shared their comments and identified common themes or values. Participants also discussed what makes a strong community and were asked to identify qualities of Falmouth that are missing, should be restored, or should be preserved to build a strong community. A summary of responses is below:

### When do you feel most connected to your community?

- At the Library
- At youth and high school sporting events and practices
- Casually meeting neighbors for sidewalk chats, walks, or at the grocery store
- At the Town Landing
- At parks and trails
- Town parades and events
- At school events
- Farmers market
- Town board and commission meetings or groups like the Falmouth Land Trust
- Volunteering

### What is missing, should be restored, or should be preserved to build a strong community?

- There is a gap in the community between little kids and middle-aged adults
- Missing connected paths for walking or commuting
- Missing outdoor concerts, fairs, or annual Town-wide events that cater to a variety of ages (e.g., retirees, empty nesters, children)
- Missing common spaces that bring people together
- Missing bike lanes
- Missing a Town Center
- Missing economic and racial diversity



Following the first activity, Town Councilor Jay Trickett presented on the history of planning in Falmouth, including what was in the Town's 2013 Comprehensive Plan, what deliberate actions were taken because of the plan, outcomes, and unintended consequences of previous planning initiatives. Town Councilor Amy Kuhn presented the six pillars that were developed through the Vision and Values process to set the stage for Comprehensive Plan update. Following the two presentations, participants were asked to respond to two questions: What are positive implications (or what are you most excited about) regarding the realization of the six pillars? What are possible negative implications (or concerns) regarding the realization of the six pillars? After writing down their responses, participants met in small groups to share their thoughts. A summary of responses is below:

### Positive implications

- Environmental protection
- Respect for established residential and rural areas
- Village centers or Town Center
- Affordable housing and diverse housing
- Open space and recreation opportunities
- Connecting existing open spaces
- Repairs to aging infrastructure, roads, and utilities
- Gathering places and events
- Improving on the 'small-town feel'
- Improved design of commercial spaces
- Mixed-use development enhanced by public transportation
- Stronger community fabric and life-long learning opportunities
- Building community across multiple generations
- Economic and racial diversity

### Negative implications or concerns

- Concern about children not being able to afford to come back to Falmouth
- Concern for preserving natural resources
- The rising cost of infrastructure and bonds
- Concern about declining school enrollment
- Concern about the high cost of living
- Concern about safety for bike riders and pedestrians
- Concern about housing costs for young families and individuals
- Lack of access to the waterfront



- Lack of understanding of what diversity in housing means
- Community will not be willing to do what it takes to create housing diversity
- Town will not create an attractive space for diverse age groups and income levels
- Concern about the rate of tax increases
- Concern about the slowing acquisition of open spaces
- Costs of life-long learning opportunities
- Neighborhoods being disconnected from each other



## WORKSHOPS

Three public workshops were held in May and June 2023. Approximately 90 attendees participated in the sessions. Each workshop focused on a different topic: community and people, the natural environment, and the built environment. Below is a summary of workshop events and comments and feedback received at each workshop:

### WORKSHOP 1: COMMUNITY AND PEOPLE

The first workshop was on May 3, 2023, which built off the themes of community and people from the kickoff meeting. Approximately 30 people attended the workshop.

Prior to the workshop, a preworkshop survey was hosted on the Social Pinpoint website. A summary of the survey is in section 4.1. At the workshop, participants were asked to participate in a visual preference activity. Participants placed stickers on photos of places or concepts that they would like to see in Falmouth. Categories included community centers, parks and open space, downtowns and village centers, and neighborhood markets. The most favored locations in each category are listed below:

#### Community Centers:

- Riverton Pool, Portland, ME (13)
- Nasson Community Center, Springvale, ME (2)
- Colchester Track, Colchester VT (2)

#### Parks and Open Space:

- Falmouth Nature Preserve (12)
- Kayaker (9)
- Eastern Promenade outdoor concert (7)

#### Downtowns and Village Centers:

- Brunswick, ME (15)
- Salem, MA (9)
- New Town, Williamsburg, VA (3)

#### Neighborhood Markets:

- Town Landing, Falmouth, ME (16)
- Willard Square, South Portland, ME (7)
- River Ducks Ice Cream, Camden, ME (3)

To begin the workshop, the Town presented an overview of the planning process and discussed the six pillars and specific pillar concepts around community. Workshop participants were



asked to respond to three questions using an interactive polling tool. A summary of responses is below:

#### What features or amenities contribute to the community fabric of Falmouth?

- Trails and open space
- Library
- Schools
- Age diversity
- Urban proximity
- Neighborhoods
- Town Landing and beach
- Religious institutions
- Small businesses

#### What do you think the Town should focus on to build a stronger community?

- Open Space and recreation
- Bikeability and walkability
- Village centers
- Affordable housing
- Schools
- Community pool
- Community programs
- Environmental protection
- Neighborhood markets

#### Why do you choose to live (or work or spend time) in Falmouth?

- Access to nature, open spaces, and recreation
- Proximity to Portland
- School quality
- Proximity to the ocean
- Rural character
- Welcoming neighborhoods
- Friends and Family nearby
- Family has lived in Falmouth for generations



BerryDunn shared the results of the preworkshop survey. In the survey, respondents were asked what they think the Town's top priorities should be to build a strong community. The workshop discussion focused on the five most selected answers. Workshop participants were able to walk around to five different tables and share if they agreed or disagreed with the initiative, how the Town could move forward with implementing these ideas, and what impact these ideas would have on their experience in the community. A summary of responses is below:

### Increasing walkability/bikeability

#### ✓ Ideas

- Improve walkability and bikeability
- Increase and improve sidewalks and bike lanes
- Focus on connecting trails
- Give the most attention to the most used trails
- Lower speed limits on roads that are heavily used by bikers and pedestrians

#### ✓ Challenges

- Enhancing bike lanes and pedestrian crossings on Rt. 1 and Rt. 88
- The slow pace of sidewalk development
- Bike and car conflicts
- Costs associated with sidewalk and bike lane creation
- Challenge for private landowners whose property is damaged from bikes
- Improving walkability and bikeability near the schools

### Investing in parks and playgrounds

#### ✓ Ideas

- Community pool or splash park
- Dog parks
- Pump track for skateboards and bikes at Underwood Park
- Improved access to Highland Lake
- Trash receptacles and potable water at trail heads
- ADA compliant trail access
- Transportation options from parking lots to Town Landing or the beach
- Event spaces
- Cross country ski trails
- Improved seating at existing parks



### ✓ Challenges

- Cost
- Existing municipal codes
- Challenges between the natural and built environment
- Ensuring all users have access to Town-sponsored activities and places

## Developing village centers in existing commercial areas

### ✓ Ideas

- Promoting a village-like feel over an urban feel
- Village centers in both West Falmouth and East Falmouth
- Mixed-use buildings with commercial and residential uses
- 2-3 story buildings with parking in the rear of the building
- Create an accessible Town center using the businesses established on Route 1
- Create a community center near Route 1 that can be accessed by trails
- Gathering spaces like coffee shops and restaurants
- Consider multi-cultural uses

### ✓ Challenges

- Walkability, parking, and signage
- Connecting all of Falmouth to village centers
- Attracting developers and businesses
- Losing the rural nature of Falmouth
- Adding design standards for new buildings
- Fewer big-box stores

## Creating opportunities for more diverse housing options

### ✓ Ideas

- Workforce housing
- Options for well-maintained, lower rent apartments
- Housing options for lower income families
- More options for residents 55 and older to downsize while staying in Falmouth
- Development impact fees
- Strong design components
- Increasing diversity in Falmouth





- Keep trees and open spaces in Town

#### ✓ Challenges

- Affordability of housing
- Aging in place
- Limiting tax increases
- Impact on schools
- Growth affecting rural character
- Lack of requirements for developers to build affordable housing
- Lack of design standards
- Changing public perception of affordable housing

### Enhancing and improving Town facilities (e.g., Town Landing, library, Mason-Motz Center)

#### ✓ Ideas

- Build a community center
- Pool
- Pickleball and basketball courts at Underwood Park
- Community gym
- Adding spaces for the community to gather

#### ✓ Challenges

- Another beach or Town Landing
- Cost associated with improvements
- Parking access
- Additional areas to access the ocean

## WORKSHOP 2: THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The second workshop was on May 24, 2023, which focused on the natural environment. Approximately 30 people attended the workshop.

The workshop began with a review of the six pillars, and the Town highlighted the pillars related to the natural environment. The Town, Falmouth Land Trust, and Woodard and Curran gave brief presentations on open space conservation, acquisition, and land management; climate resiliency; energy, operations, and waste management; environmental health; and sustainable development and transportation.



Following the presentations, participants were able to provide ideas for policies and strategies and share challenges related to each of the five topic areas, which corresponded to the earlier presentations. A summary of responses can be found below:

### Open space conservation, acquisition, and management

#### ✓ Ideas

- Consider creating corridors for wildlife
- Explore the possibility of connecting open spaces through easements
- Prioritize ecosystem health, including habitat for insects and fungi and leaving leaves and decaying wood
- Education materials on natural lawns, invasive plants, and other environmental initiatives
- Assess species and ecosystem health in existing open spaces

#### ✓ Challenges

- Cost and labor involve in maintaining and purchasing open spaces, including invasive species removal
- Consider how much open space the Town needs
- Look into how much of Falmouth is forested instead of using open space as a metric. Also look at what percent of land is covered by impervious materials.
- Continuing to purchase fragmented open spaces instead of creating corridors

### Climate resiliency

#### ✓ Ideas

- Zoning ordinances should incentivize green features, including roofs, minimal lights, reduced impervious surfaces, and stormwater management
- Continue public education to help residents understand the costs and benefits of resiliency
- Find ways to limit sediment runoff
- Create a specific plan to address climate-related issues on the waterfront
- Promote initiatives like “no mow may” and natural lawns
- Test for PFAs in areas where sludge is deposited
- Reduce the use of pesticides

#### ✓ Challenges

- Prioritizing mitigation needs
- Erosion on the public beach and on ocean-front properties



- Consider how lights impact insect populations in Town
- Homeowner's Associations not allowing for natural lawns, no mow may, clothes lines, etc.
- Having open conversations about climate change
- Invasive species removal

## Energy, operations, and waste management

### ✓ Ideas

- Better energy transition rebates
- Update the meter at the transfer station to share how much waste is being generated
- Look for ways to leverage and expand the solar array
- Level 3 EV chargers
- Incentives for lower energy use, including walking, biking or taking public transportation over cars
- Create an idling policy at school pick up and drop off
- Update zoning to allow for EV chargers at commercial locations
- Micro mobility (non-car) electrification support

### ✓ Challenges

- Worried that the existing infrastructure cannot keep up with electrification demand
- Cost associated with implementing renewable energy
- Cost to change fuel types for heating and cooling
- Range anxiety for electric vehicles
- Improving public transportation ridership
- Concern about location of solar arrays

## Environmental health

### ✓ Ideas

- Convert large parking lots to green infrastructure
- Education on septic systems, water conservation, lawn alternatives, etc.
- Organized neighborhood invasive species eradication
- Establish requirements for lawn alternatives



- Have the Town provide grass seed mix with clover or other plants for homeowners to use on their lawns

#### ✓ Challenges

- PFAs
- Pesticides for ticks and mosquitos
- Wells drying up in the summer
- Maintenance and enforcement of environmentally friendly infrastructure
- Grants to fund projects instead of taxes

### Sustainable development and transportation

#### ✓ Ideas

- Diversity in tree planting
- Connect new development to funds for conservation
- Keep a continuous woodlands buffer and wildlife travel way
- Minimize building footprint
- Higher density and cluster development to protect open space
- Explore taller structures to limit building footprint
- Green building codes
- Upgrading transportation systems to meet electrification needs
- Rehabilitate or retrofit vacant buildings
- New open space requirements

#### ✓ Challenges

- Diversity of housing options for working families
- Plan to examine school capacity as new developments are built
- Cost to sustainably maintain open space
- How will Falmouth engage with neighboring communities?
- Include considerations for unhoused and asylum seekers in the plan to support Portland
- Develop an architectural review board to review new development
- Ability to adapt to recent technologies and sustainability practices

### WORKSHOP 3: THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The third workshop was on June 7, 2023, which focused on the built environment. Approximately 30 people attended the workshop.





Prior to the workshop, a preworkshop survey was hosted on the Social Pinpoint website. A summary of the survey is in section 4.1. The Town, BerryDunn, and Woodard and Curran gave brief presentations on the history of development in Falmouth, housing challenges and potential strategies, environmental impacts of development, and fiscal impacts of development.

Following the presentations, workshop attendees participated in facilitated discussions on ideas for development along Route 1 South, Route 1 North, and Route 100. A series of renderings were used to show what future development could look on Route 1 and 100. Participants were asked what they liked and disliked about the development scenarios, how each scenario could impact housing diversity, open space, and community integration, among others. Following the discussion, each group shared the highlights of their discussion with the larger group. A Summary of responses can be found below:

### Route 1 South

- Like that parking is behind the buildings
- Prefer more greenery in front of the buildings
- Wide sidewalks
- Limit buildings to 2-4 stories
- Allow height bonuses for green roofs
- Encourage small businesses over big-box stores
- Improve landscaping, flowers, and green spaces
- Do not like the flat roofs
- Use the footprint of existing buildings instead of developing on new land
- Like the mixed-use development
- The area could support more public transportation opportunities
- Offers places for the community to gather
- Have guidelines in place to discourage sprawl outside of the proposed development area
- Consider adding a park or place for children to play
- EV chargers and bike racks
- Concern about development changing the Town's character
- Concern about the impacts on the rural nature of the Town

### Route 1 North

- Prefer the colonial look for single and multifamily homes
- Would like to see work force housing



- Agreed that condos could go in this location
- Prefer the architecture to the renderings on Route 1 South and Route 100
- It makes sense for housing to be here
- Less traffic impact on the Town, with access to 295
- Would prefer more greenspace
- Connect to trails and continue to make the area more walkable

### Route 100

- Implement Form-Based Code to expand use beyond strip malls
- Good existing public transportation in the area
- Establish greenspace requirements
- Improve walkability
- More restaurants, childcare, and stores in the area
- Mixed use makes sense here
- Prefer the size compared to Route 1 South rendering
- Concern about the housing density
- Would prefer to add somewhere where kids can play



## SOCIAL PINPOINT SUMMARY

Social Pinpoint is an online engagement tool used to gather community feedback. The Falmouth Comprehensive Plan project site included five opportunities for residents to provide input on the master planning effort including:

- Preworkshop surveys
- Budgeting activity
- Ideas Wall with options to post comments regarding the Town's strengths, challenges, and suggestions for improvement
- Interactive Town Map with options to post comments regarding the Town's strengths, challenges, and suggestions for improvement
- Forum questions on specific topic areas

In total, the site attracted 328 unique stakeholders who provided 160 comments, submitted 260 surveys, and submitted 90 budgeting activity responses.

### PRE-WORKSHOP SURVEYS

Prior to Workshop 1 and Workshop 3, surveys were released to gather public feedback prior to each workshop to better inform discussion.

#### Survey 1: Community and People

Survey 1 focused on community building and the people of Falmouth and was released prior to Workshop 1. Questions broadly related to where in Falmouth people feel connected to their community, how well the Town is doing at fostering community engagement, and priorities for building stronger community. A total of 141 people responded to the survey. Key survey findings are summarized below:

- People feel more connected to their neighborhoods than they do to the Town as a whole.
- Respondents feel the greatest sense of community among neighbors and within their neighborhoods, at parks and open spaces, and patronizing local businesses.
- Respondents felt the least sense of community through religious institutions, participating in non-municipal clubs or organizations, and by engaging in civic life.
- When asked how they would rate Falmouth as a welcoming community on a scale from 1 to 10, respondents rated Falmouth an average of 5.67.
- Respondents rated the Town fair to good in helping residents feel connected to their community.
- Respondents rated the Town on a scale from poor to excellent (poor, fair, good, excellent) in the following categories:



- ✓ Respondents rated the Town poor to fair in attracting residents from diverse backgrounds.
  - ✓ Respondents rated the Town good in demonstrating a respect for residents of all cultures and beliefs.
  - ✓ Respondents rated the Town good in providing a safe and secure environment for residents of all backgrounds.
  - ✓ Respondents rated the Town poor in providing equal access to housing for people of all backgrounds.
  - ✓ Respondents rated the Town good in making all people feel welcome in business establishments.
  - ✓ Respondents rated the Town good in making community programs, activities, and events inclusive to all residents.
  - ✓ Respondents rated the Town good in providing services and amenities to residents of all ages and abilities.
- When asked how well Falmouth meets their expectations as a great community or great place to live, respondents rated Falmouth a 6.6 out of 10.
  - Respondents selected the following five options as the top priorities that the Town should pursue to build a strong community: increasing walkability and bikeability; investing in parks and playgrounds; developing village centers in existing commercial areas; creating opportunities for more diverse housing options; and enhancing and improving Town facilities.
  - 62 respondents answered an open-ended question: Are there other strategies for community building that you think the Town should prioritize? If yes, please describe. Common themes from responses are listed below:
    - ✓ Town celebrations, festivals, and events for people of all ages and abilities
    - ✓ A community pool
    - ✓ More gathering spaces and access to Town amenities
    - ✓ Additional open spaces, green spaces, parks, and trails
    - ✓ Supporting small, local businesses
    - ✓ Improving transportation and mobility throughout Town
    - ✓ Reduce taxes

## Survey 2: The Built Environment

The second survey focused on the built environment and was released prior to Workshop 3, which focused on the built environment. Questions gauged respondents' thoughts on future development, housing, and commercial growth. The survey received 91 responses. A summary of responses is below:





- Thirty-eight respondents indicated that they would like to see growth and development in Falmouth that is controlled and incremental. Thirty-one respondents indicated that they do not want Falmouth to change and would like the Town to resist new development within the confines of the law. Twenty respondents indicated that they think significant new development in Falmouth would be good for the community, and they are open to higher density development and more housing in areas that can best support growth.
- When asked about future development, respondents selected from the following options:
  - ✓ Direct future development along Route 1 (60)
  - ✓ Direct future development along Route 100 (49)
  - ✓ Direct future development toward existing residential neighborhoods (21)
  - ✓ Allow market forces to dictate where future development occurs (18)
  - ✓ Direct future development toward undeveloped and rural areas (9)
- Respondents were divided over whether Falmouth should allow and encourage greater density in designated growth areas. Forty-one respondents favored greater density (selected a 4 or 5), while 30 respondents did not favor greater density (selected a 1 or 2).
- Respondents indicated that the Town should not allow greater density in rural and undeveloped areas.
- Respondents were divided over whether Falmouth should limit development in designated growth areas.
- Respondents slightly preferred that the Town encourage multiple housing types within designated growth areas.
- Respondents indicated that multiple housing types should not be encouraged in rural and undeveloped areas.
- Respondents indicated that Falmouth should encourage mixed-use development in established commercial areas.
- Respondents were divided over whether the Town should encourage infill development in growth areas and existing residential neighborhoods.
- Respondents indicated that the Town should not encourage infill development in rural and undeveloped areas.
- Respondents indicated that the Town should encourage affordable/workforce housing units in designated growth areas.
- Respondents indicated that the Town should not encourage affordable/workforce housing in rural and undeveloped areas.



- Respondents were divided over whether they wanted to see significant new growth and development and would like the Town to limit amenities and services to maintain property tax rates.
- Respondents indicated that they would like to see more commercial development to increase the Town's tax base.
- Respondents indicated that they would not like to see more residential development to increase the Town's tax base.
- Respondents indicated that they disagree with the following statement: "I do not want to see significant new development in Falmouth, and I am okay with tax increases to maintain current levels to Town services and amenities."
- Respondents indicated that mixed-use, low-density single-family, affordable housing, medium-density single-family housing, and attached townhomes were the types of housing development that they would like to see in the future.
- Respondents indicated that Falmouth should focus on improving walkability and bikeability.
- Respondents indicated that the Town should focus on traffic-reducing initiatives.
- Respondents indicated that the Town should focus on improving vehicular safety.
- Respondents were divided on whether the Town should focus on improving its electrical vehicle charging infrastructure.
- Respondents indicated that the Town should focus on improving regional transportation options and connectivity to the greater Portland region.
- Respondents were asked to share concerns about development in growth areas in an open-ended format. The most common responses are summarized below:
  - ✓ Future development will not include affordable or workforce housing.
  - ✓ Increase in congestion, traffic, and sprawl.
  - ✓ Losing the village-feel.
  - ✓ Increase in building height.
  - ✓ Would like to see more local businesses instead of big-box stores.
  - ✓ Development should follow design or architectural standards.
  - ✓ Growth will be unmanaged.
- Respondents were asked to share concerns about development in rural or undeveloped areas in an open-ended format. The most common responses are summarized below:
  - ✓ Development will change the character of the Town.
  - ✓ Loss of open space and habitat.
  - ✓ Development should conform with design and style of existing homes.
  - ✓ Reliance on septic systems.

- ✓ Lack of affordable/workforce housing options.
- Respondents were asked to share concerns about transportation in an open-ended format. The most common responses are summarized below:
  - ✓ The Town should work to improve walkability and bikeability.
  - ✓ Cost of improving transportation services.
  - ✓ Increased traffic.

## Budgeting Activity

At Workshop 2, participants were asked to share policy ideas and potential challenges related to open space conservation, acquisition, and management; climate resiliency; energy, operations, and waste management; environmental health; and sustainable development and transportation. Ideas from this workshop were categorized into policy priorities and capital investments. On Social Pinpoint, the community was asked to rank their top policy properties for the future and budget \$100 toward capital investments. Forty-five people participated in the budgeting activity.

The top six policy priorities are:

- Require new developments to maintain a woodland buffer (39)
- Establish open space requirements for new developments (35)
- Limit growth outside of growth areas (28)
- Incentivize green building and green infrastructure practices (27)
- Encourage higher density in growth areas (22)
- Promote education on climate resiliency (22)

The six capital investments that received the most funding are:

- Improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity to the school campus (\$710)
- Acquire more open space (\$694)
- Improve connectivity of open spaces (\$646)
- Invest in the mitigation of coastal erosion and storm surge impact (\$267)
- Enhance management and assessment of open spaces (\$266)
- Support invasive species eradication and planting of native species (\$264)

## Ideas Wall and Map

The Ideas Wall and Map of the Social Pinpoint site allowed stakeholders to comment on strengths, challenges, and to provide suggestions. Sixteen people provided feedback on the ideas wall.



Challenges noted by respondents included increases in traffic, housing affordability, a lack of different housing types, and challenges related to existing zoning.

Suggestions noted by respondents included parks upgrades, pickleball court additions, and open space preservation. Responses also included suggestions about commercial development providing workforce housing as part of redevelopment projects, promoting a variety of housing types in Falmouth, and improving sidewalks and multimodal transportation.

Additionally, respondents were interested to know the cost of capital investments as well as the impacts that new state-level policies would have on development and growth.

## Forum Questions

To receive feedback on specific topics, three questions were posed to the community.

Question 1: Why do you choose to live (or work or spend time) in Falmouth? There were 52 responses to the question. A summary of common responses is below:

- Falmouth has great schools.
- My family has lived in Falmouth for decades or generations.
- Falmouth is a safe community with proximity to the ocean and greater Portland area.
- There is access to open space, trails, and other Town amenities.
- Neighbors and the community were welcoming.
- Quality housing that fit respondents needs.

Question 2: What investment (infrastructure, program, open space acquisition, development project, etc.) could the Town make that would have the greatest positive impact on your life? There were 85 responses to the question. A summary of common responses is below:

- Sidewalk expansion, increased trail access, and improved walkability and bikeability.
- Community center, pool, dog park, or other shared amenities.
- Increase access to childcare, afterschool care, or pre-k.
- Events and programming for those who are not involved with the schools.
- Acquire more open spaces and conserve undeveloped land.
- Create a town or village center.
- Invest in sustainability initiatives and climate resiliency.
- Support commercial development and prioritize small businesses.
- Reduce the tax burden on residents.
- Falmouth should not invest in additional amenities or infrastructure improvements, and the Town should limit or restrict growth.



Question 3: What suggestions do you have for improving community connections in Falmouth?  
There were two responses to the question. A summary of responses is below:

- Improve Town communication.
- Increase the number of places where community members could gather or meet, including benches throughout the Town.



## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

The survey was designed to build on the Vision and Values process and get feedback from the community on more specific topics related to the Comprehensive Plan update. A total of 798 people responded to the survey. Survey results were made public through a Tableau dashboard. Some key statistics from the survey, by pillar, include:

### Pillar One

- 34% of survey respondents ranked Pillar One as most important (53% ranked first or second).
- Survey respondents' greatest concerns related to climate change are: increasing weather intensity (47%), strain on critical infrastructure (42%), and impacts on ecosystems and wildlife (39%).
- The Town should prioritize the following capital investments: protecting water quality (61%), bike and pedestrian infrastructure (50%), mitigation of coastal erosion and flood resiliency (46%), and funding energy efficiency upgrades (46%).
- Cost should be considered for sustainability initiatives and prioritize pursuing grant funding should be prioritized. Survey respondents indicated that the Town should prioritize new spending on environmental initiatives but focus on cost-effective solutions (54%).
- 61% of survey respondents would like the Town to prioritize protecting water quality.
- There is support for incentives and investment in renewable energy; however, there is also concern about cost of implementation, practicality of energy transition, and grid capacity (27% of respondents prefer to cut or limit spending on environmental initiatives).

### Pillar Two:

- 27% of survey respondents ranked Pillar Two as most important (46% ranked first or second).
- 65% of respondents noted that open space and undeveloped land is a significant feature that contributes to the character of the neighborhood and 63% selected pattern/density of development as a defining characteristic.
- 69% of respondents support open space or tree canopy requirements for new development.
- While the respondents recognize the need for a diversity of housing types, community response is mixed on what type of housing should occur in developed residential neighborhoods with 35% in support of senior housing; 34% in support of ADUs, townhomes, and low-rise apartment buildings; and 30% in support of two-family homes.



- There are a variety of perspectives on growth with considerable support for limiting growth in residential areas (52%) as well as some support for higher density development in these areas (45% support up to 4 stories along Route 1 North).

#### Pillar Three:

- 15% of survey respondents ranked Pillar Three as most important (34% ranked first or second).
- Of survey respondents who support new development, 55% would like to allow housing development along Route 1 North and would like to see a mix of housing types on Route 1 North (63%) and Route 100 (55%).
- Respondents who support new development in growth areas would like to see a variety of non-residential uses along Route 1 North (72%), Route 1 South (63%), and Route 100 (60%).
- New development should address parking challenges (only 21% of respondents support reducing parking requirements in commercial areas).
- 73% of respondents indicated that the Town should encourage development in village centers that positively impacts the Town's budget.

#### Pillar Four:

- 5% of survey respondents ranked Pillar Four as most important (16% ranked first or second).
- Residents are primarily engaged in the community through informal avenues, such as at local shops, cafes, or restaurants (78%); through use of parks, trails, and public spaces (70%); and within their neighborhoods (67%).
- Respondents indicated that the following amenities and programs would encourage them to be more engaged with the community: opportunities to informally connect with neighbors (48%), Town-wide events (34%), and adult education programs (32%).
- There is a desire for more public areas and informal gathering spaces within neighborhoods (48% of respondents would like more opportunities to informally connect with neighbors).
- 32% of respondents would like more adult education programs.
- Maintaining high quality schools is a priority with 67% of respondents indicated that the school system is very important to the well-being of the community (rank of 90 or higher out of 100).

#### Pillar Five:

- 9% of survey respondents ranked Pillar Five as most important (21% ranked first or second).



- Community members identified a need for a variety of housing types, with 61% of survey respondents anticipating their housing needs changing in the next 10 years.
- 61% of respondents support some type of action to promote affordable housing.
- Most residents expressed a concern about the cost of housing initiatives (56% would like to cut or limit spending on housing initiatives).

#### Pillar Six:

- 9% of survey respondents ranked Pillar Six as most important (31% ranked first or second).
- 51% of respondents would like the ability to walk or bike to services.
- 56% of respondents are concerned about more traffic and 52% are concerned about bike/pedestrian safety.
- 58% of respondents strongly support more open space trails.
- 70% of respondents are engaged in the community through use of parks and trails and 35% through recreation programs.
- 25% of respondents would like increased public transportation options.
- 29% of survey respondents ranked protection and maintenance of open spaces as top priority and 21% supported working with Falmouth Land Trust to purchase new open space.



## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PUBLIC UPDATE MEETING

On February 28, 2024, the Town, Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC), and Long-Range Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC) hosted a public meeting up update the public on the Comprehensive Plan process and get feedback on the new Future Land Use Map and policies and action items.

Town Councilor Jay Trickett presented on the history of comprehensive planning in Falmouth and accomplishments and challenges that the Town has faced since the 2013 Comprehensive Plan update. Jean Gulliver, LPAC chair, shared the process that LPAC went through to identify and create policies and actions. Adam Causey, Long-Range Planning Director, presented the new Future Land Use Map and policies and action items.

Following the presentation, participants were put into breakout discussions to discuss the new Future Land Use Map and policies and action items. Discussions were centered around environment, climate, and natural resources; recreation, connectivity, and Town facilities; and growth and non-growth areas. Feedback focused on a variety of areas including the following:

- Groups largely supported the new Future Land Use Map. Participants noted that Route 1 and Route 100 offer opportunities to increase housing and commercial opportunities. Participants also noted that the existing infrastructure for sidewalks, water, and sewer would allow for development with limited impacts to the Town's fiscal capacity. Participants also supported restricting further development in non-growth areas.
- Participants raised concerns about traffic and a lack of walkability in Falmouth currently. Groups were supportive of efforts to improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Participants are concerned about the impacts of rising sea levels, flooding, erosion, and increased storm intensity. Participants are concerned about protecting Town Landing.
- Participants emphasized the need to connect trails and sidewalks to allow for more mobility throughout the Town, especially near the schools.
- Participants shared the need for more diverse housing types in growth areas to allow for young professionals and Falmouth's aging population to affordably live or downsize while staying in Falmouth.
- Participants noted a need for additional access to recreation in Casco Bay and other water bodies.



## COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Over the course of the Comprehensive Planning process, the CPC and LPAC met and offered opportunities for public comment. The CPC was made up of Town Councilors to provide oversight and direction throughout the planning process and met over 30 times throughout the project. LPAC members were identified and began meeting after the community engagement process ended. LPAC provided input and developed policies and actions based on community feedback. LPAC met over 13 times and will continue to meet as a recommending body to the Town Council to assist in implementing the Comprehensive Plan.



# Appendix B: Glossary

**Accessibility:** The practice of making information, activities, and/or environments sensible, meaningful, and usable for as many people as possible.

**Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU):** A self-contained dwelling unit located within, attached, or detached from a single-family dwelling unit located on the same parcel of land as a primary dwelling unit.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessible:** A site, facility, work environment, service, or program that is easy to approach, enter, operate, participate in, and/or use safely and with dignity by a person with a disability.

**Affordable housing:** Decent, safe, and sanitary dwellings, apartments or other living accommodations for households making at or below 80% of the median household income as determined by the U.S. Department for Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD income limits are informed by U.S. Census Bureau and American Community Survey data.

**Affordable housing development:** A development meeting the requirements of Sec. 19-73 of the Falmouth Zoning Ordinance, and meeting the following requirements:

- A. For rental housing, a development in which a household whose income does not exceed 80% of the median income for the area as defined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development under the United States Housing Act of 1937, Public Law 75-412, 50 Stat. 888, Section 8, as amended, can afford 51% or more of the units in the development without spending more than 30% of the household's monthly income on housing costs;
- B. For owned housing, a development in which a household whose income does not exceed 120% of the median income for the area as defined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development under the United States Housing Act of 1937, Public Law 75-412, 50 Stat. 888, Section 8, as amended, can afford 51% or more of the units in the development without spending more than 30% of the household's monthly income on housing costs.

For the purpose of this definition, "housing costs" include, but are not limited to:

- A. For a rental unit, the cost of rent and any utilities (electric, heat, water, sewer, and/or trash) that the household pays separately from the rent; and
- B. For an ownership unit, the cost of mortgage principal and interest, real estate taxes (including assessments), private mortgage insurance, homeowner's insurance, condominium fees, and homeowners' association fees.

**Aging in Place:** The ability to live in one's own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level.

**Agricultural easement:** A legally enforceable restriction that landowners voluntarily place on their property to protect croplands and grasslands on working farms and ranches by restricting non-agricultural uses.

**Class GPA waters:** Class GPA is the sole classification both of great ponds and of natural lakes and ponds less than 10 acres in size. Class GPA waters must be of such quality that they are suitable for the designated uses of drinking water after disinfection, recreation in and on the water, fishing, agriculture, industrial process and cooling water supply, hydroelectric power generation, navigation, and as habitat for fish and other aquatic life. The habitat must be characterized as natural.

**Climate resiliency:** The ability of a community, business, or the natural environment to prepare for, withstand, respond to, and recover from a hazardous event.

**Conservation easement:** A legally enforceable restriction on the future uses of a property granted in the form of a deed to a governmental entity or qualified conservation land trust. Conservation easements can be designed to keep a property in an essentially wild state or to allow limited residential uses, farming, and forestry. Some conservation easements grant public access on or over the private lands.

**Conservation land:** Land that is owned by, controlled by, or deeded to a nonprofit entity whose sole purpose is to conserve land. Conservation land also includes publicly-owned land that is permanently conserved.

**Cottage court:** A group of small (one- to 1.5-story), detached structures arranged around a shared court visible from the street.

**Critical environmental areas:** Any natural area documented by the Natural Areas Program that is conserved or protected in its natural condition through voluntary action.

**Cross cultural:** Involving two or more different cultures and their ideas and customs.

**Current use tax program:** The State of Maine has four current tax use programs that offer property owners a reduction in their properties' assessed value. Properties used for farmland, open space, tree growth, and working waterfront are eligible to enroll in one of the four current tax use programs.

**Duplex:** A structure containing two dwelling units, each of which has direct access to the outside.

**Dwelling unit:** A room or group of rooms designed and equipped exclusively for use as permanent, seasonal, or temporary living quarters for only one family at a time, and containing cooking, sleeping and toilet facilities. The term includes mobile homes and rental units that contain cooking, sleeping, and toilet facilities regardless of the period rented. Recreational vehicles are not residential dwelling units.

**Fourplex:** A multi-family home, similar to a duplex or a triplex, with four dwelling units in one structure with shared or individual entries from the street.

**Growth area:** An area designated in a municipality's or multi-municipal region's comprehensive plan as suitable for orderly residential, commercial or industrial development, or any combinations of those types of development, and into which most development projected over 10 years is directed.

**Intergenerational:** Interactions including or involving people of different generations or age groups.

**Livability:** The sum of various elements that add up to a community's quality of life – including the built and natural environments, social stability and equity, economic prosperity, educational and cultural opportunity.

**Low-impact development (LID):** LID begins at the design phase of a new development, incorporating planning techniques that minimize site clearing and impervious surfaces to reduce impact and stormwater runoff generated from the site. By reducing the volume of water leaving a site, the pollutant loading is also reduced. Other techniques that will reduce the volume and peak flow rates of runoff from the development are then incorporated throughout the site. LID is an effective tool that reduces pollutant loading, thermal impacts, stream flows, and minimizes stream channel erosion. More information is available in Volume I of this manual on LID measures.

**Low-rise apartment building:** A building or structure featuring one to four stories that contains three or more dwelling units used, intended, or designed to be built, used, rented, leased, let or hired out to be occupied, or that are occupied for living purposes.

**Micromobility:** Any small, low-speed, human- or electric-powered transportation device, including bicycles, scooters, electric-assist bicycles, electric scooters (e-scooters), and other small, lightweight, wheeled conveyances.

**Missing middle housing:** Medium-density housing types that fall somewhere between single-family detached dwellings and mid-rise apartment buildings, to include duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, courtyard apartments, townhouses, and more.

**Multi-family dwelling:** A building designed or intended to be used or used exclusively for residential occupancy by three or more families living independently of one another and containing three or more dwelling units.

**Multi-generational:** Consisting of, relating to, or involving more than one generation.

**Multimodal:** Multimodal planning refers to planning that considers various modes of transportation (walking, cycling, automobile, public transit, etc.) and connections between those modes.

**Natural areas:** Any area of land or water, or both land and water, whether publicly or privately owned, that retains or has reestablished its natural character, though it need not be completely natural and undisturbed, and that supports, harbors, or otherwise contains endangered, threatened, or rare plants, animals and native ecological systems, or rare or unique geological, hydrological, natural historical, scenic, or other similar features of scientific and educational value.

**Non-growth areas:** An area identified and designated in a municipality's comprehensive plan as an area that is designated to have some level of regulatory protection from unrestricted development for purposes that may include, but are not limited to, supporting agriculture, forestry, open space, erosion mitigation, water retention, wildlife habitat, fisheries habitat, scenic lands, and protection of neighborhood character, and away from which most development projected over 10 years is diverted.

**Open space:** Open space includes all unbuilt areas, whether publicly or privately owned, protected, or unprotected. Open space lands include forests and grasslands, farms and ranches, streams and rivers, and parks. Open space lands provide ecosystem services, support agricultural and forest production, and offer opportunities for recreation.

**Public-private collaboration:** A partnership between the public sector and the private sector for the purpose of delivering a project or a service.

**Passive recreation:** Recreational activities that do not require prepared facilities like sports fields or pavilions.

**Rail trail:** Multipurpose public paths created from former railroad corridors.

**Single-family detached dwelling:** A free-standing residential structure intended for use by one owner as a single-dwelling unit. It is a stand-alone, detached property with no common walls, land, entrance, exit, or utilities shared with any other dwelling.

**Surface water:** Any body of water above ground, including streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands, reservoirs, and creeks. The ocean, despite being salt water, is also considered surface water.

**Tax increment financing (TIF):** Municipal Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a flexible finance tool used by municipalities, plantations, and unorganized territories to leverage new property taxes generated by a specific project or projects within a defined geographic district. Any portion of the new taxes may be used to finance public or private projects for a defined statutorily allowable period. The municipality or plantation defines the district size, determines the amount of new taxes to be captured, identifies allowable public and private projects along with the term, with the whole proposal requiring local political approval.

**Town of Falmouth (Town):** "the Town" as used in this document may refer to the administrative entity, including the Town Council; Town boards, committees, and commissions; Town staff; or other representatives of the Town government. In some instances, "the Town" refers to the geographic boundaries or physical characteristics within the geographic boundaries of the administrative entity of the Town of Falmouth.

**Townhouse:** A one-family dwelling unit separated from neighboring units by a ground-to-roof wall and has a private entrance. Dwelling units are attached horizontally in a linear arrangement and having a totally exposed front and rear wall to be used for access, light, and ventilation. These units do not share heating and air-conditioning systems or utilities.

**Trail until rail:** An unused rail corridor transformed into a multi-use trail until the rail company or government agency has use for the rail lines.

**Transfer of development rights (TDR):** The conveyance of development rights by deed, easement, or other legal instrument authorized by local law to another parcel of land and the recordation of that conveyance among the land records of the municipality.

**Triplex:** A building containing three individual dwellings. ADUs are not included in this definition.

**Universal design:** Universal design is the design and composition of different products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. Some examples of universal design features include at-grade entrances, light switches aligned with door handle height, lever door handles, doorway widths of 32 inches or greater, or a walk-in shower.

**Village center:** A land use area that serves as the commercial and institutional focal point of surrounding rural residential and farming establishments.

**Workforce housing:** Housing targeted at households that earn too much to qualify for traditional affordable housing subsidies, commonly aimed at those earning between 80% and 120% of the area median income.

# Appendix C: Related Plans and Studies

The following plans and studies were reviewed and referenced in the development of this document and are hereby incorporated, by reference, as part of the Town of Falmouth's Comprehensive Plan Update:

- **Falmouth Climate Action Plan (2023)**
- **Town of Falmouth Vision and Values (2022)**
- **Strategic Watershed Plan (2021)**
- **2022 – 2027 Stormwater Management Plan for the Town of Falmouth (2021)**
- **Falmouth Open Space Plan (2018)**

# Appendix D: Inventory and Analysis





# TOWN OF FALMOUTH

## INVENTORY & ANALYSIS



**PREPARED FOR**  
Town of Falmouth  
**PREPARED BY**  
BerryDunn  
Woodard & Curran

2024



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## INTRODUCTION

This document provides a snapshot of existing conditions in Falmouth (the Town) in 2023. This analysis, as well as the Town's values and priorities established in the Vision and Values effort completed in 2022, will serve as the basis for the development of policies and actions of the Comprehensive Plan Update (Plan). The purpose of the Plan is to guide future growth and development in the Town for the next decade. Recommendations in the Plan will provide direction for the Town Council, staff, boards, committees, and other responsible agencies in updating land use ordinances and regulations, directing capital investments, and making policy decisions.

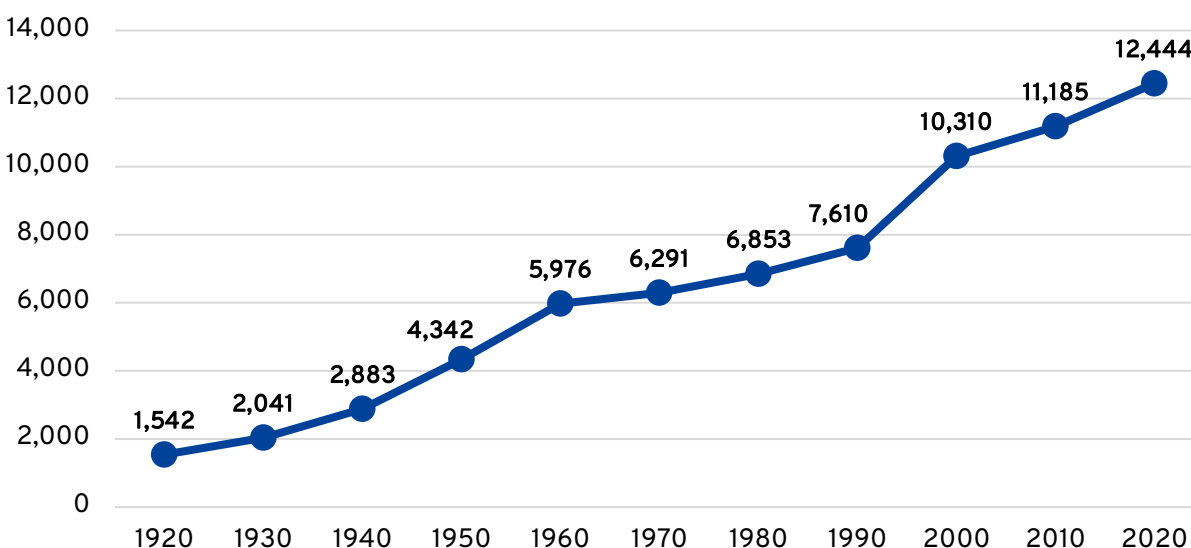
This Inventory and Analysis includes an assessment of current conditions, an overview of recent trends, and also identifies key issues that will be further explored in the next phase of the planning process. An understanding of the Town's current state of affairs as it relates to the concerns of residents and other community members will inform the direction of the Plan. Understanding current conditions and how the Town has developed and evolved is critical to creating an actionable plan that will support the Town in achieving its vision.

# DEMOGRAPHICS

## POPULATION CHANGE

The Town of Falmouth is a suburban municipality located in Cumberland County, Maine to the immediate north of the City of Portland. The Town consists of 30 square miles of land and seven square miles of water. Casco Bay borders the Town to the east. Falmouth is the eighth largest municipality in Cumberland County with a population of 12,444 in 2020. From 2010 to 2020, Falmouth's population grew 11%, faster than the County, which grew by 8%. Of the County's 28 municipalities, Falmouth was the ninth fastest growing community from 2010 to 2020.

Figure 1.1: Population Change, 1920 – 2020



Source: U.S. Census

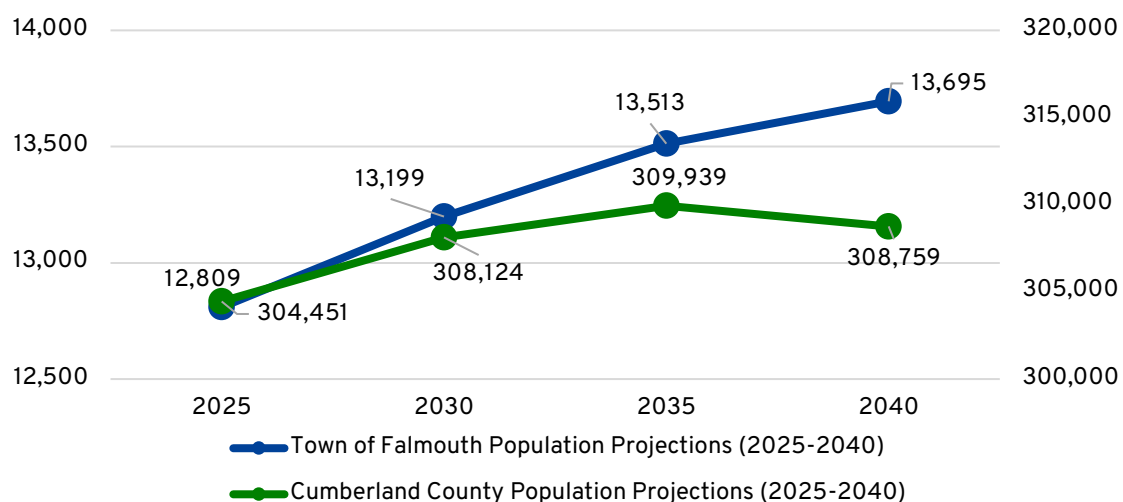
For the past 100 years, Falmouth's population has been steadily increasing. Some decades experienced more significant population growth than others with the Town's growth following broader national economic and development growth trends. The Town's population increased significantly (288%) from 1920 to 1960 from 1,542 to 5,976 people. The decade that experienced the highest growth rate was from 1940 to 1950, during which the Town grew by nearly 51% from 2,883 to 4,342 residents. The decade of 1990 to 2000 also marked another significant increase in population (35%), increasing from 7,610 to 10,310. Since 2010, the population increase has been steady. There was an 8.5% change in population from 2000 to 2010 and an 11.3% growth from 2010 to 2020.

Falmouth's population is projected to increase through the year 2040. From 2025 to 2040, the rate of increase is expected to decline from 2.9% to 1.3%; however, Falmouth is expected to

continue to grow faster than Cumberland County through 2030. After an increase from 2025 to 2035, the County's population is projected to decline through 2040.

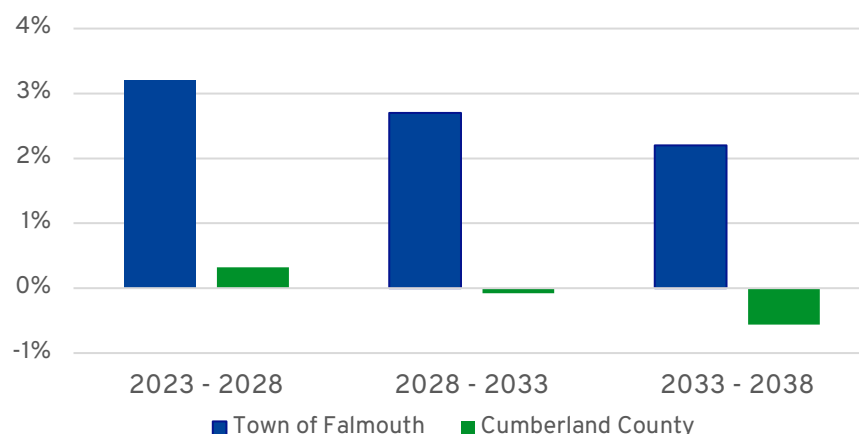
Population projections were established by the Maine State Economist and released in 2023. These projections, while useful in understanding broader population trends, do not consider recent (since 2020) population changes across the state that are divergent (for some geographies) from the projected population as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, economic shifts, social changes, and other impacts like an increase in people working from home. The Town will continue to evaluate local and regional population changes and will consider these emerging factors impacting growth and migration.

**Figure 1.2: Population Projections, 2025 – 2040**



Source: Maine State Economist, City and Town Population Projections 2040

**Figure 1.3: Population Projections, Percent Change 2023 – 2038**

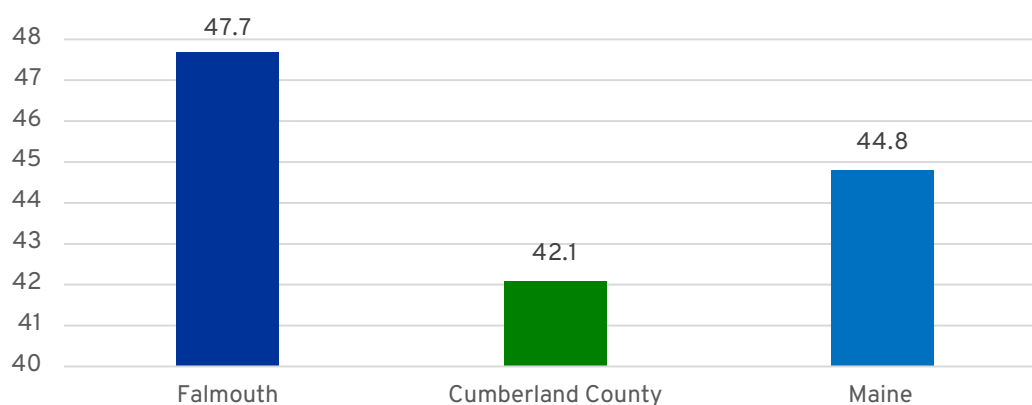


Source: Maine State Economist, City and Town Population Projections 2038

## AGE

Maine is the oldest state in the nation with a median age of 44.8. Falmouth is older than the County and the State with a median age of 47.7. Falmouth, like other similar sized rural and suburban communities in Cumberland County has a much older median age and greater percentage of older residents compared to more urban areas of the County.

Figure 1.4: Median Age Comparison



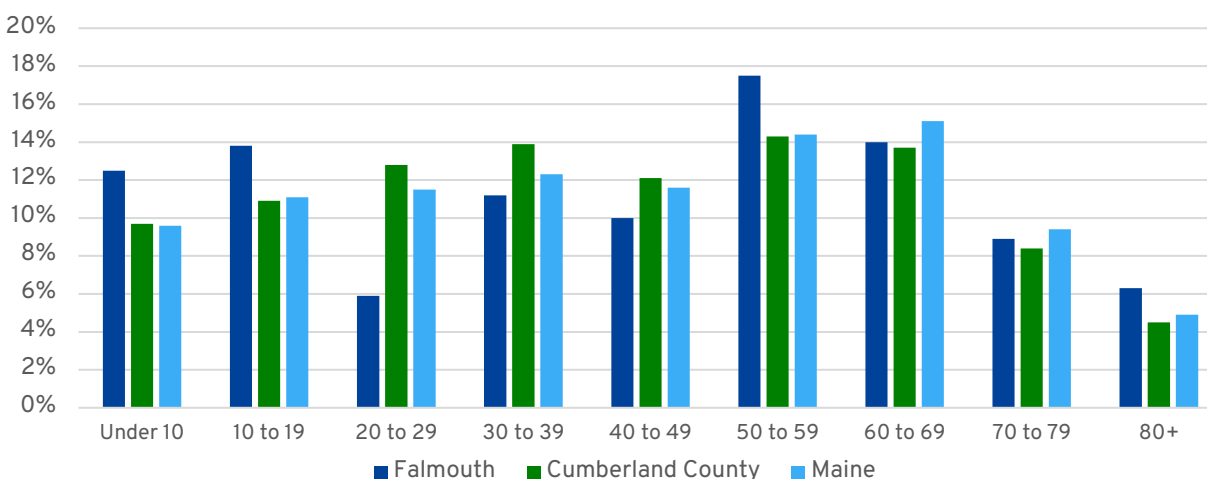
Source: U.S. American Community Survey (ACS) 2018-2022 5-year estimates

Falmouth's median age is supported by the age distribution analysis in Figure 5. The largest age group is adults 50 – 59 years of age. Age cohorts 50 – 84 all experienced a significant increase from 2010 to 2022.

Youth under the age of 20 are another significant age cohort in Falmouth. The population of children under 10 grew slightly from 2010 to 2022; however, the population of children ages 10-19 experienced a slight decline. Approximately 36% of Falmouth households have children under 18. Falmouth's young to middle-aged adults have a smaller population overall compared to adults over 50 and youth under 19. Adults ages 20-29 are the smallest age group in Falmouth. Adults that are 80 years of age and over are the second smallest age group in Falmouth. The population of adults ages 30-39 grew from 2010 to 2022; however, the population of 40 – 49-year-olds declined significantly, experiencing the biggest drop in population during this period.

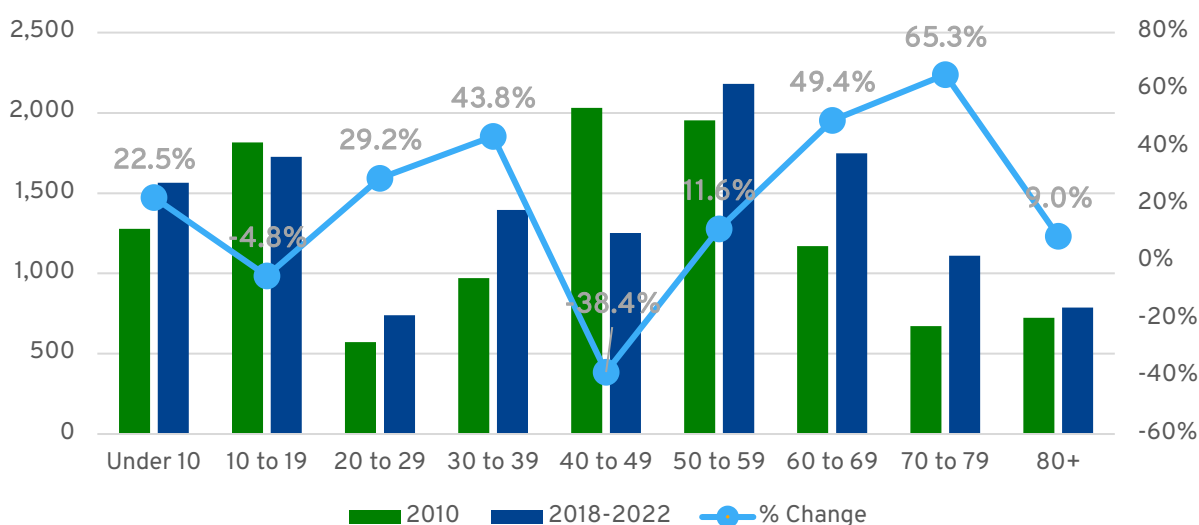


Figure 1.5: Age Distribution Comparison



Source: ACS 2018-2022 5-year estimates

Figure 1.6: Population Change by Age Group, 2010 to 2018-2022

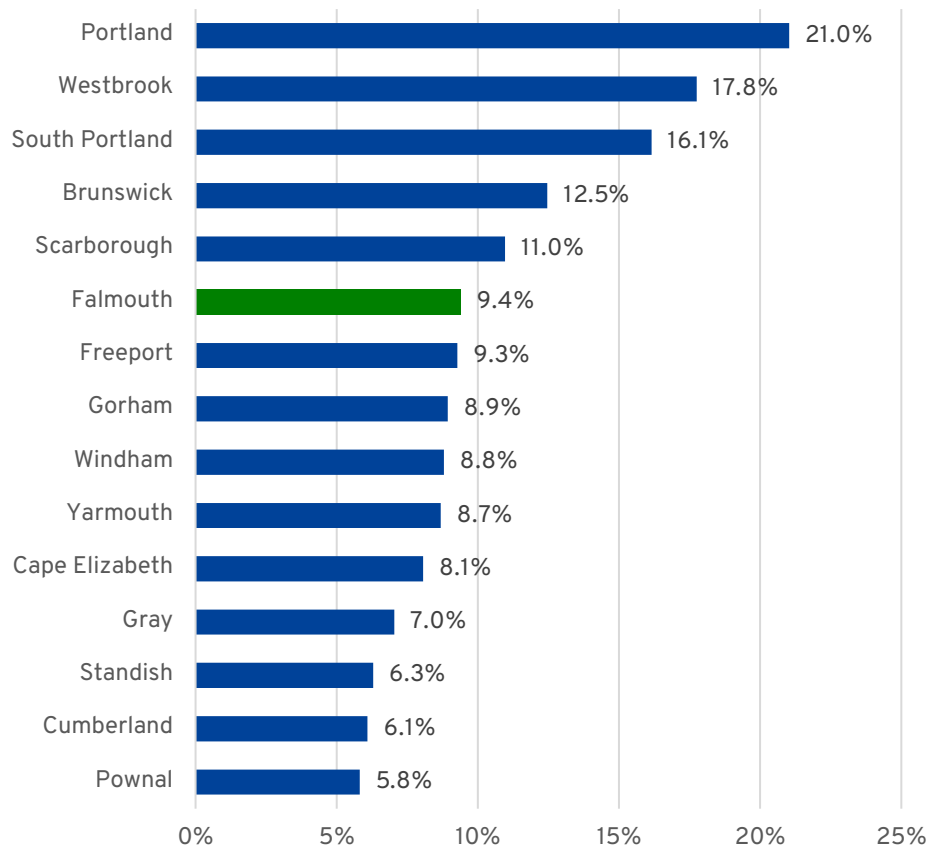


Source: ACS 2018-2022 5-year estimates

## DIVERSITY

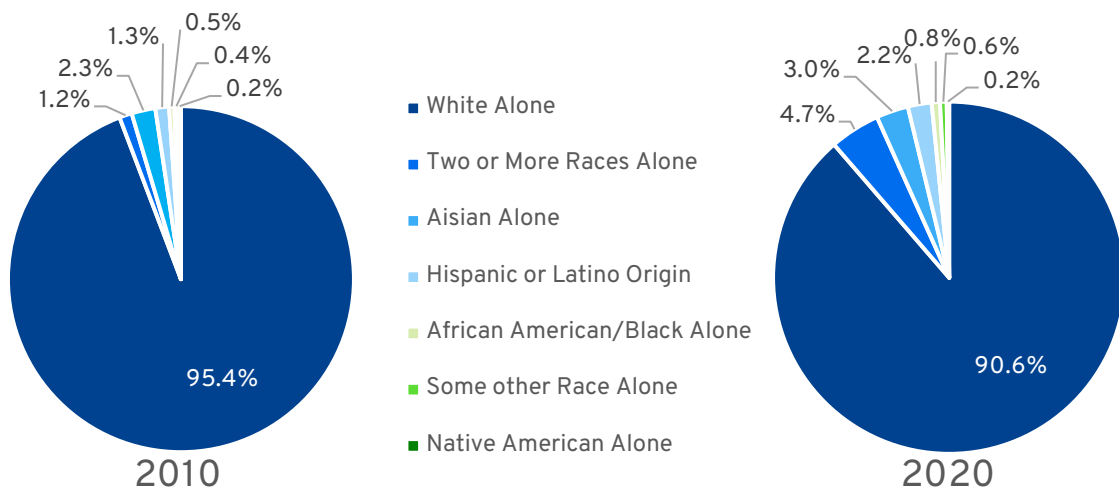
While the Falmouth is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse, the Town remains much more homogenous than Cumberland County as a whole. Falmouth's racial composition is mostly white, consisting of 90.6% of the population, compared to 87.2% of the County. Between 2010 and 2020, there was a slight increase in Falmouth's non-white population, which grew by 4.8%. In terms of ethnicity, Falmouth's Hispanic and Latino population increased between 2010 and 2020. Like its non-white population, the Hispanic and Latino populations remain less than the County, consisting of only 2.2% of the total population.

Figure 1.7: Non-White Population Comparison



Source: 2020 U.S. Census

Figure 1.8: Falmouth Racial Composition Change, 2010-2020

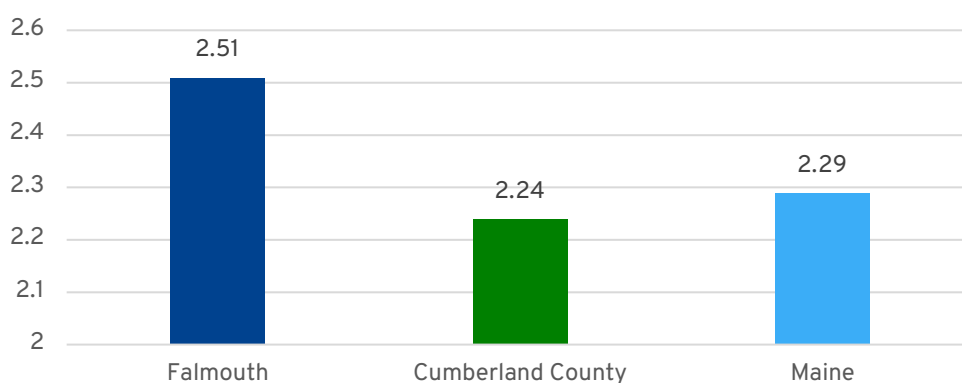


Source: U.S. Census 2010-2020

## HOUSEHOLD SIZE

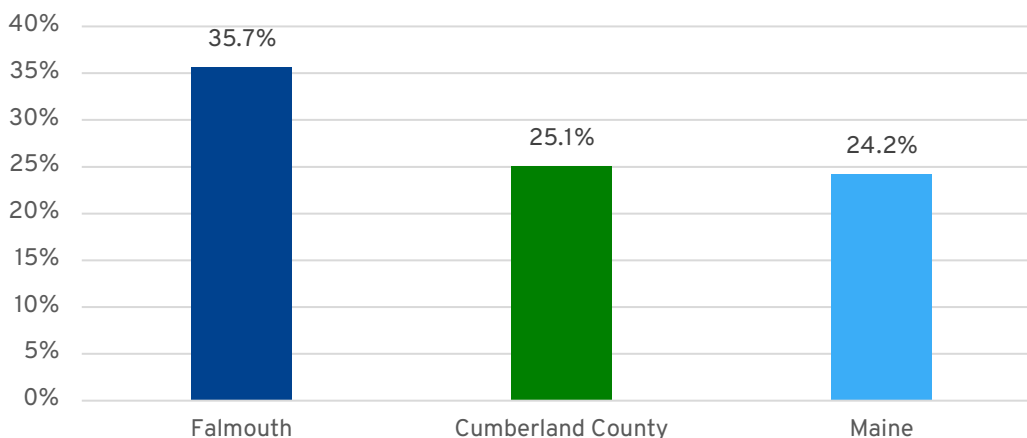
Falmouth has 4,930 households and an average household size of 2.51. This is a higher average household size than the State and the County. Falmouth's average family size is 2.96, which is also higher than Cumberland County's and Maine's average family size. This is correlated with the higher percentage of households with children under 18 (36%) compared to the County (25%) and State (24%). While this number is significantly higher than the County and State, this is a slight decrease from 2010 (38%). The prevalence of households with children alludes to the Town's strong public school system which attracts families with children to live in Falmouth.

Figure 1.9: Average Household Size



Source: ACS 2018-2022 5-year estimates

Figure 1.10: Percent of Households with Children Under 18



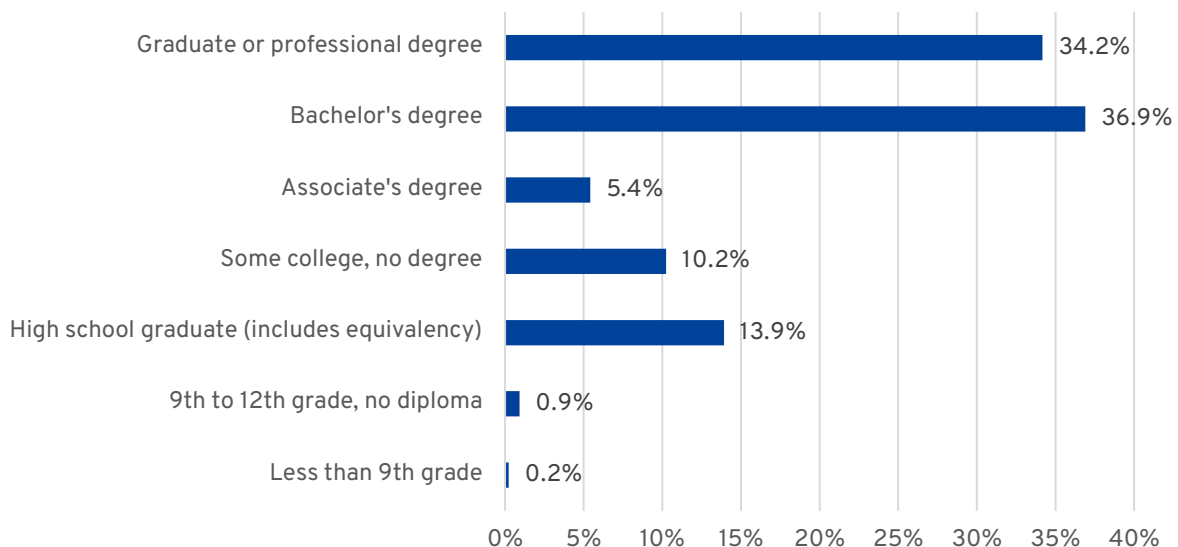
Source: ACS 2018-2022 5-year estimates

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The Falmouth community values and prioritizes education, and the educational attainment of Town residents is indicative of this value. In Falmouth, 99% of the population has a high school diploma or higher. In terms of advanced degrees, Falmouth has a higher percentage of residents (71.0%) who have completed college and received bachelor's degrees than both the

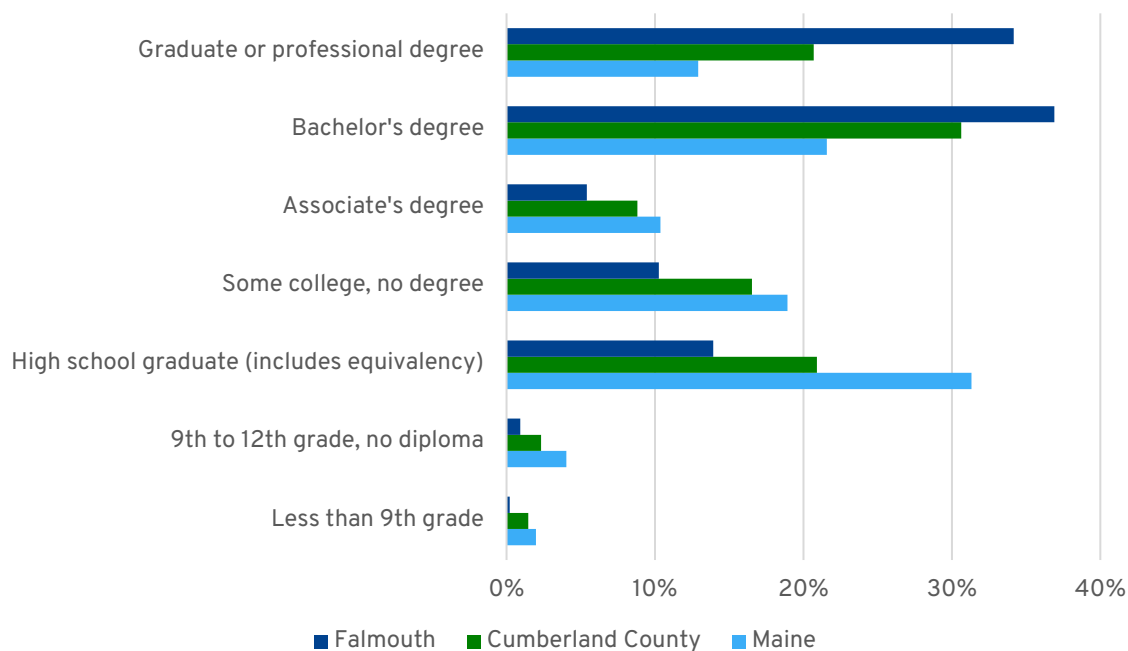
County and the State. The same is true for post-graduate degrees, with 34.17% of residents over the age of 25 holding graduate or professional degrees.

**Figure 1.11: Falmouth Education Attainment**



Source: ACS 2018-2022 5-year estimates

**Figure 1.12: Education Attainment Comparison**

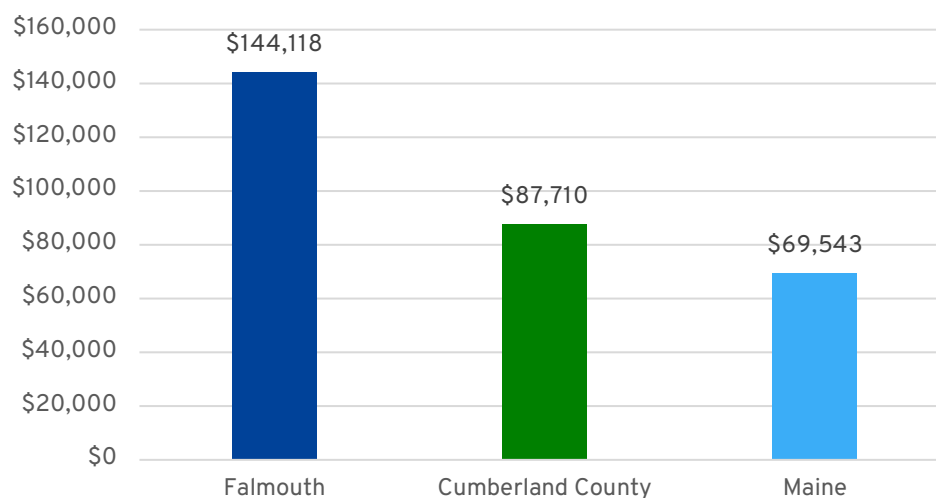


Source: ACS 2018-2022 5-year estimates

## INCOME AND POVERTY

In terms of household income, Falmouth is wealthier than the State and the County. Falmouth's median household income is \$144,118, which is 64% higher than the County (\$87,710) and 107% higher than the State (\$69,543).

**Figure 1.13: Median Household Income**

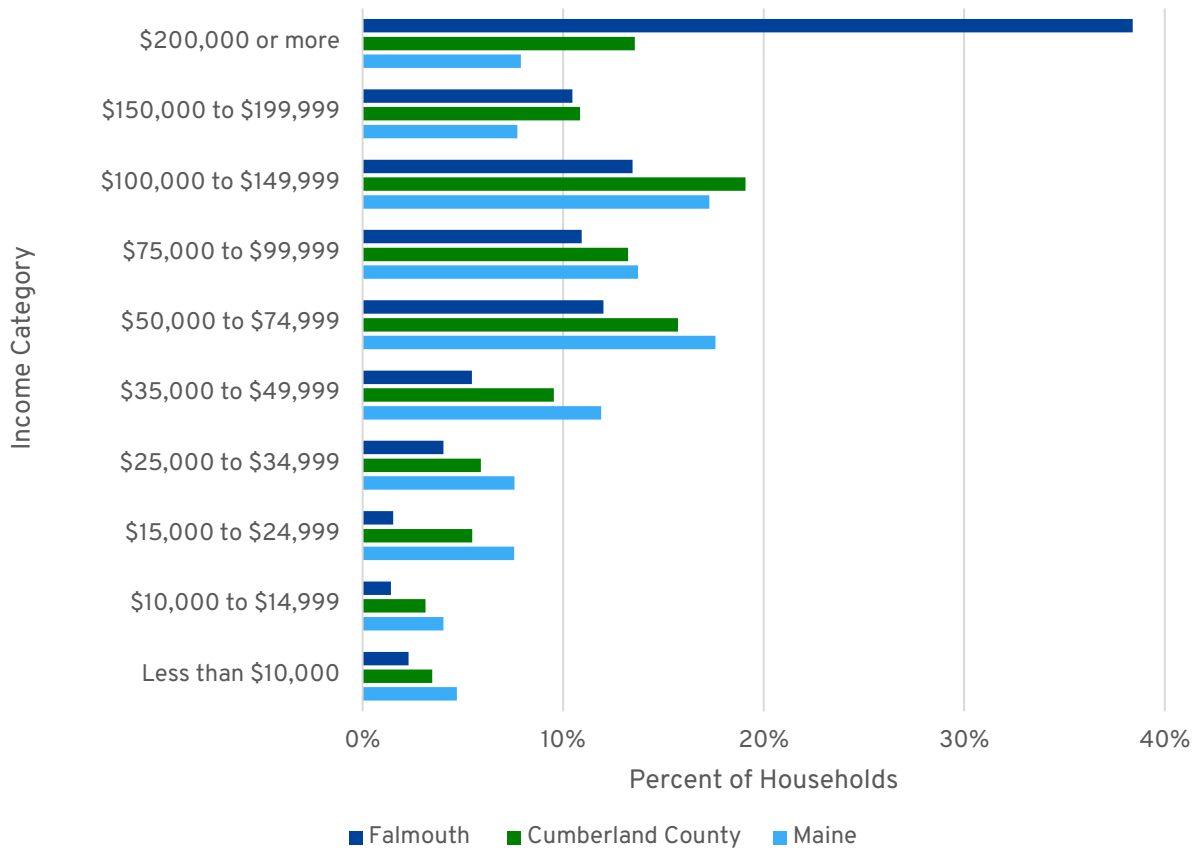


Source: ACS 2018-2022 5-year estimates

In terms of wealth distribution, Falmouth has a higher percentage of households with incomes above \$150,000 than the State and the County. Just over 50% of Falmouth households have an income over \$150,000 compared to only 24.4% of County households and 15.6% of households in the State. Conversely, Falmouth has fewer households in lower income categories and a lower percentage of households in each of the income categories below \$150,000 compared to both the County and the State. Falmouth also has fewer households with incomes below the poverty level. The percentage of households below the poverty level in Falmouth is 2.0% compared to 6.2% of the County and 10.8% of the State.



Figure 1.14: Median Household Income Comparison



Source: ACS 2018-2022 5-year estimates

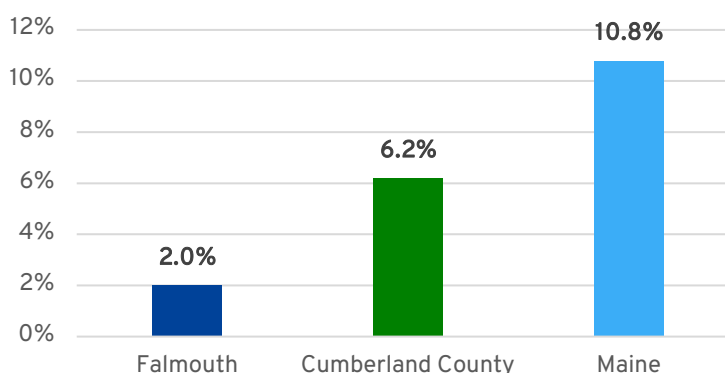
Falmouth also has a higher median income than any of the surrounding communities except Cape Elizabeth, which has a similar median income (\$144,250). Median household income across the region has risen as housing costs have increased, requiring a higher household income to be able to afford to purchase or rent a home. From 2010 to 2022, Falmouth's median household income increased more than 64% (\$87,455 in 2010 to \$144,118 in 2022). Other communities in Cumberland County have experienced a similar increase.

**Table 1.1: Median Household Income Regional Comparison**

Municipality	Median Income
Cape Elizabeth	\$144,250
Falmouth	\$144,188
Cumberland	\$116,891
Scarborough	\$113,289
North Yarmouth	\$118,304
Yarmouth	\$108,063
Gorham	\$103,152
Gray	\$91,386
Freeport	\$95,398
Windham	\$92,475
South Portland	\$82,489
Westbrook	\$81,198
Portland	\$69,046

Source: ACS 2018-2022 5-year estimates

**Figure 1.15: Percentage of Households Below the Poverty Level**



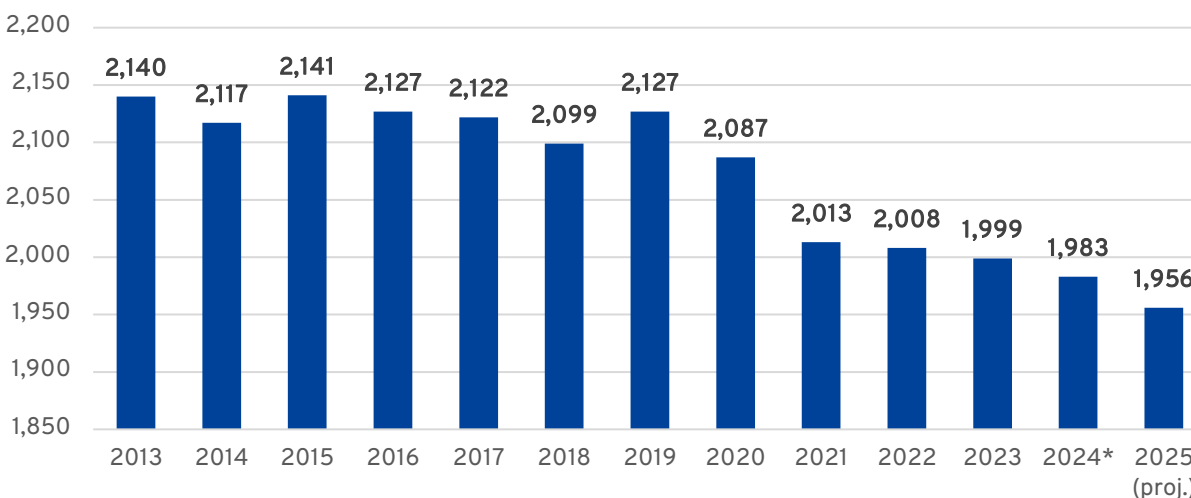
Source: ACS 2018-2022 5-year estimates

## IMPACT ON SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Falmouth's population is projected to grow gradually through 2038. Even with increases in the Town's population, school enrollment into Falmouth Public Schools has remained steady over the years with slight enrollment declines since the 2020 fiscal year. According to Falmouth Public School data, current fiscal year (2024) enrollment is 6.3% less than fiscal year 2014. Data for FY24 includes 48 pre-K students. Incoming kindergarten classes also continue to be smaller than the existing senior high school classes. From 2020 to 2021, the number of homeschooled students increased from 15 to 43. The number of homeschooled students has declined year-to-year since 2021.

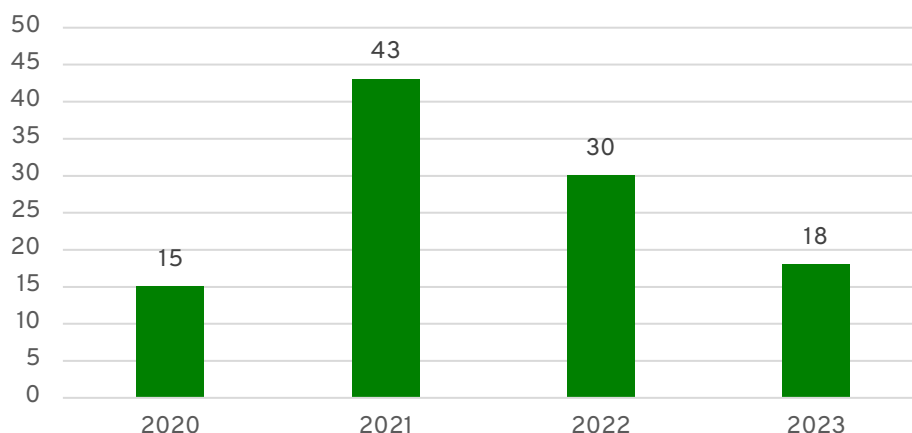
With only gradual increases in the Town’s population expected, in addition to the current school enrollment trends, it is not anticipated that school enrollment will experience any substantial increases into the foreseeable future.

**Figure 1.16: Falmouth Public Schools Student Enrollment by Fiscal Year (FY)**



Source: Falmouth Public Schools  
 \*2024 and 2025 FY data include pre-K students

**Figure 1.17: Home Instruction Students in Falmouth**



Source: Maine Department of Education

Falmouth’s population is aging, and roughly 30% of the Town’s residents are over the age of 60. Future resource planning should consider building in capacity to provide support services for the aging population. Fire and Police Departments currently provide support to senior citizens; with a large population of adults ages 50 – 59, the need for these support services is anticipated to grow as the population ages.

Falmouth has smaller populations of young to middle-aged adults. Adults 20 – 34 remains one of the smallest age groups in Falmouth. Providing diverse housing types and housing options



may help to support younger adults to live in Falmouth. More diverse housing types would also help to provide the aging population with housing options that meet their changing needs. As the Town continues to experience economic and commercial growth, housing options can also help to address housing for the Town's economically diverse workforce, including Town and school employees.

Falmouth is also gradually becoming more diverse. As the Town plans for future activities and programming, consideration could be given to ways that future programming in arts and culture can address changing demographics, including multi-lingual services and programs and a broader range of cultural activities.

## NATURAL AND WATER RESOURCES

A comprehensive understanding of Falmouth's natural environment and its relationships with the built environment are essential for making land use decisions and meeting community goals. Falmouth has a rich diversity of natural and water resources and is committed to protecting the quality and managing the quantity of these resources. Falmouth's natural and water resources include marine habitats, fresh and saltwater wetlands, lakes, aquifers, ponds, and estuaries. Accommodating growth and redevelopment with the preservation and protection of Falmouth's natural and water resources continues to be a priority.

### GEOLOGY

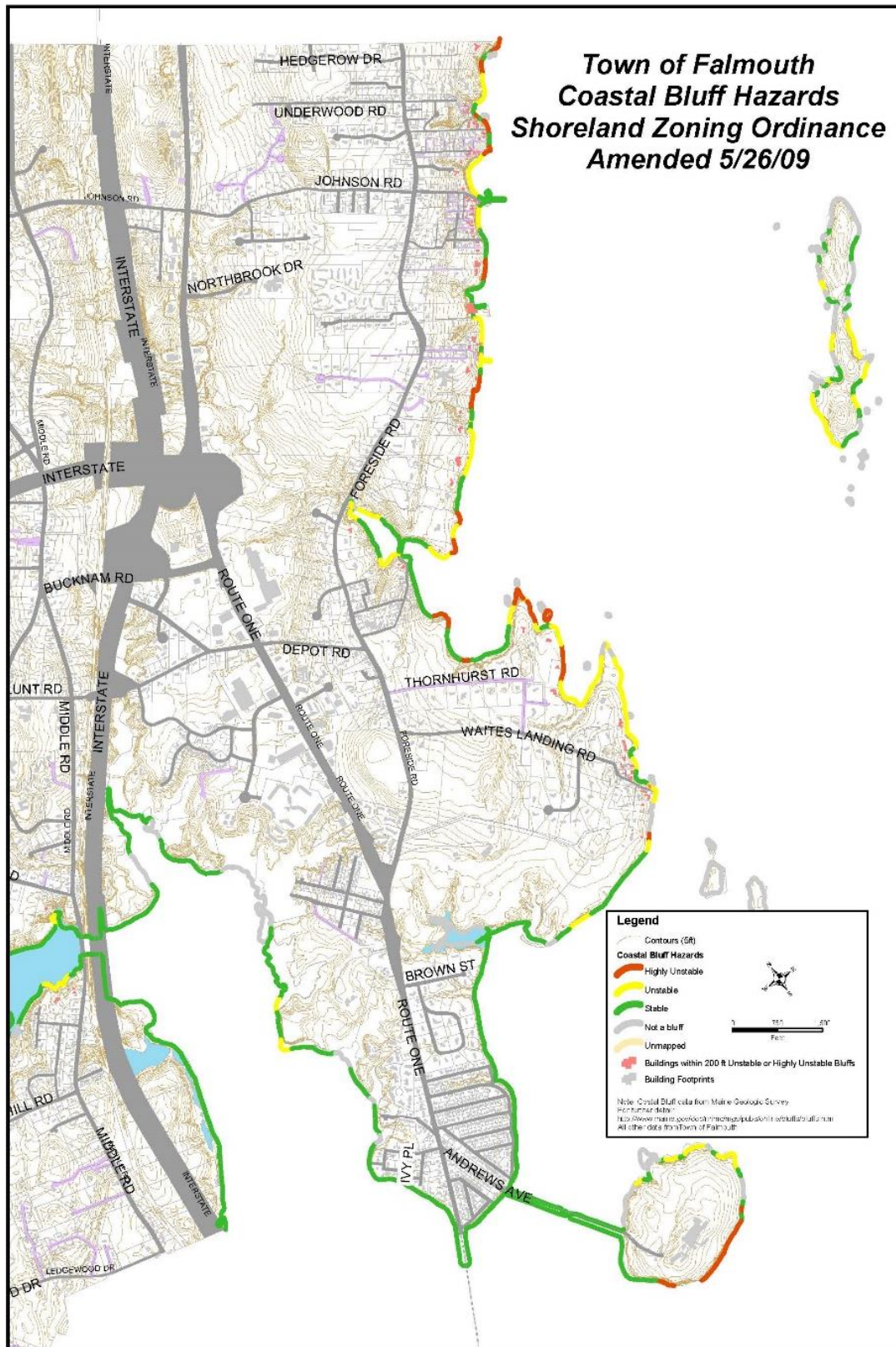
The geology of Falmouth consists generally of stratified rocks from the Central Maine Sequence and the Falmouth-Brunswick Sequence. The majority of Falmouth is within the Central Maine Sequence and is made up of the Hutchins Corner Formation, Richmond Corner Formation and Terry Hill Formation. Closer to the coast, north of Mill Creek, is the Falmouth-Brunswick Sequence which is made up of the Nehumkeag Pond Formation. The Coastal Islands fall within the Merrimack Group and consist of the Eliot Formation. The stratified, or layered, rocks of the area are all metamorphic rocks, including schist, phyllite, gneiss, granofels, and amphibolite. Bedrock is well exposed along most of the shorelines. The coastline of Falmouth are coastal bluffs, and the Maine Department of Agriculture Conservation and Forestry (DACF) has identified a range of stability classifications ranging from highly unstable to stable.

### LANDFORMS AND WATERSHEDS

A watershed is a defined land area that directs and channels water, both rain and snowmelt, to creeks, streams, rivers, and eventually to discharges, like the ocean or a bay. As the water flows, it impacts people, land, and wildlife in many ways and is critical to the overall health and wellbeing of communities. Rain and snow that runs off the land often picks up pollutants, which have adverse effects on the ecology of the watershed and, ultimately, on their receiving waterbody. Watershed management is challenging as watersheds tend to cross municipal boundaries and require coordination and partnership.



Figure 2.1: Coastal Bluff Hazards Map



Source: Town of Falmouth, Maine Geological Survey

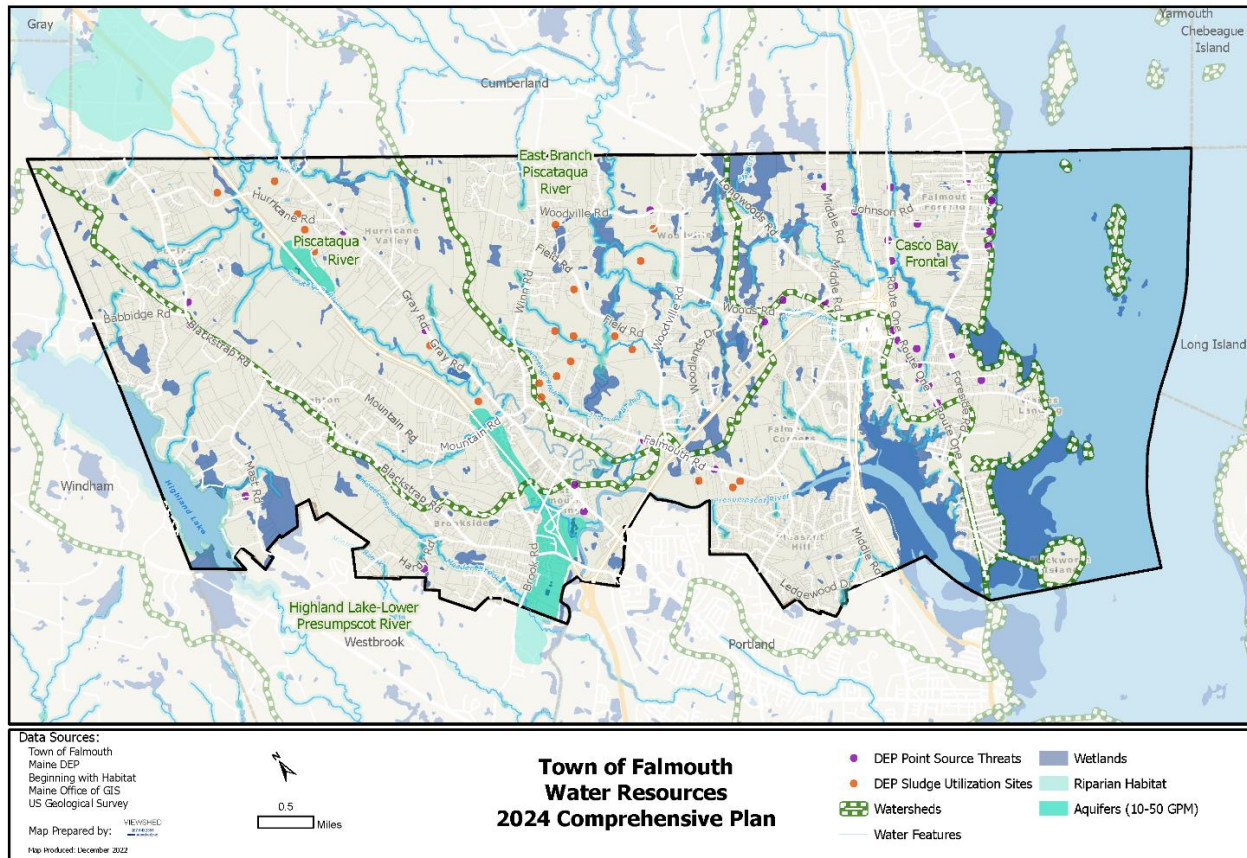


Falmouth is committed to healthy waters within the Town and Casco Bay. Land use, municipal operations, infrastructure, and individual users greatly impact the quality of water within a watershed. The Clean Water Act requires the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to identify waters of the State that fail to meet State and federal water quality standards. The Town of Falmouth does not have any Maine DEP 303(d) listed Urban Impaired Streams, but Hobbs Brook has been identified as impaired and not meeting DEP standards. It is highly advised by DEP to address threatened waterbodies before they become impaired by developing and implementing a watershed management plan. Falmouth also has two threatened watersheds, Webes Creek and Norton Brook, with the concern of being classified in the near future as Urban Impaired Streams. Falmouth has eight turnpike streams around I-95 and I-295 exits and have a risk of impact from potential exit-related development. Due to their location adjacent to major highways these small streams may be at risk of current or future impairment.

Faced with possible regulatory actions, the Town Council accepted the 2021 Falmouth Strategic Watershed Plan, which creates a framework for planning, implementing, and monitoring watershed management actions with the overall goal of improving water quality. The Falmouth Strategic Watershed Plan sets out to develop a watershed health assessment framework for each watershed, evaluate current townwide watershed health conditions, prioritize needs for each watershed, and provide prioritized recommendations and actions needed to protect the health of each watershed. In 2022, the Falmouth Strategic Watershed Plan recommendations were updated and presented to the public in a forum.

Falmouth falls entirely in the Casco Bay Watershed, and there are five river basins within the Town: the Casco Bay Frontal Drainage, Piscataqua River, East Branch Piscataqua, Presumpscot Main Stem, Forest Lake, and Highland Lake. Within these five river basins there are 30 sub-watersheds. The 2021 Falmouth Strategic Watershed Plan identified the Casco Bay Frontal Drainage, Hobbs Brook, and Presumpscot River as the Town's Watershed Priorities. In addition to these priorities the 2020 – 2029 Highland Lake Watershed Management Plan was adopted in 2020 to focus on best management practices (BMP) implementation, water quality testing, and education and outreach for Highland Lake.

Figure 2.2: Water Resources Map



### Casco Bay Frontal Drainage Basin

This priority basin includes all the watersheds along Route 1, most of which drain to Mussel Cove, the Town's impaired marine waterbody. Recommendations for this basin include preparing a Casco Bay Frontal Drainage Watershed Management Plan to address stream water quality and improve Mussel Cove, with the goal of reopening the area to commercial harvesting.

### Hobbs Brook

This priority stream, while is not listed as an Urban Impaired Stream, is listed as impaired for not meeting DEP Class B water quality standards. There is a lack of shade and habitat diversity and there have been recordings of high nutrient levels resulting in algae growth. Recommendations include preparing a Hobbs Brook Watershed Management Plan in partnership with the Town of Cumberland.

### Presumpscot River

This priority basin includes the main stem and many smaller tributaries, including Meader and Minnow Brooks. Local volunteers aid in water quality monitoring on the main stem, but there is





little to no data in the smaller tributaries. The Presumpscot River is a substantial community feature and drains into Casco Bay. Recommendations of the Plan include preparing a Presumpscot Watershed Management Plan, which will require coordination with neighboring municipalities.

### Highland Lake

The 623-acre Highland Lake spans Falmouth, Westbrook, and Windham. Due to serious water quality concerns following ongoing picocyanobacterial (Cyanobium) blooms, the Highland Lake Watershed-Based Management Plan (2020-2030) was adopted in 2020. The Highland Lake Leadership Team (HLLT) is responsible for monitoring, planning, educating, and implementing strategies to improve the water quality. HLLT is a partnership among the Town of Windham, the Town of Falmouth, the Highland Lake Association, and other interested communities and organizations. The team was created to improve the overall health of Highland Lake. Falmouth appoints up to three, but not less than one member to the HLLT.

### Webes Creek

Webes Creek has been identified by DEP as a threatened stream that, despite still meeting DEP water quality standards, is at risk of being classified in the near future as an Urban Impaired Stream. Webes Creek is located in Falmouth's growth area. In 2013, the Route 1 South Commercial District Stormwater Management Plan focused on the Webes Creek Watershed. It is still identified as having high chloride, habitat concerns, stormwater runoff issues, and the natural flow was disrupted in the 1950s and 60s when the Town was developing. Webes Creek would be included in the Casco Bay Frontal Drainage Area Watershed Management Plan recommended by the 2021 Falmouth Strategic Watershed Plan.

### Norton Brook

Norton Brook has been identified by DEP as a threatened stream that, despite still meeting DEP water quality standards, is at risk of being classified in the near future as an Urban Impaired Stream. Webes Creek is also located in Falmouth's growth area. It is identified as having stormwater runoff issues that disturb the sandy bottom of the brook, resulting in habitat loss. There are toxicity issues with chloride, and Route 1 limits migration of fish. Norton Brook would be included in the Casco Bay Frontal Drainage Area Watershed Management Plan recommended by the 2021 Falmouth Strategic Watershed Plan.

## STREAM CROSSINGS

Stream crossings are intended to maintain the continuity of streams to help ensure volume control, accommodate wildlife and protect stream health. Stream continuity is critical to stream health and the creatures that depend on streams, including invertebrates, fish, amphibians, reptiles, and mammals. Typical stream crossing problems include undersized crossings, and shallow crossings or perched crossings that are easily blocked by debris, create



scouring, erosion, high flow velocities, and limit habitat and migration. There are currently 65 culverts that convey streams across roads and other structures in Falmouth<sup>1</sup>. These culverts and their conditions have been mapped by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Falmouth has a variety of road stream crossings that have barriers, potential barriers, and no barriers. There are also four dams in Falmouth which disrupt stream continuity.

## SURFACE WATERS

Healthy surface waters (lakes, rivers, estuaries, and ocean) are a crucial resource because of the ecological, social, scenic, and recreational uses. The State has developed classification systems for lakes, rivers, and salt waters. These systems are based on standards for use, such as drinking water supply, fishery habitat, and recreational use. Falmouth has numerous ponds, rivers, and Highland Lake that make up its surface water network. Mild Pond and Quarry Pond are the Town's two ponds. Mild Pond is a seven-acre pond sandwiched between I-295 and the Presumpscot River. Quarry Pond is a three-acre pond located off Ledgewood Drive.

## WETLANDS

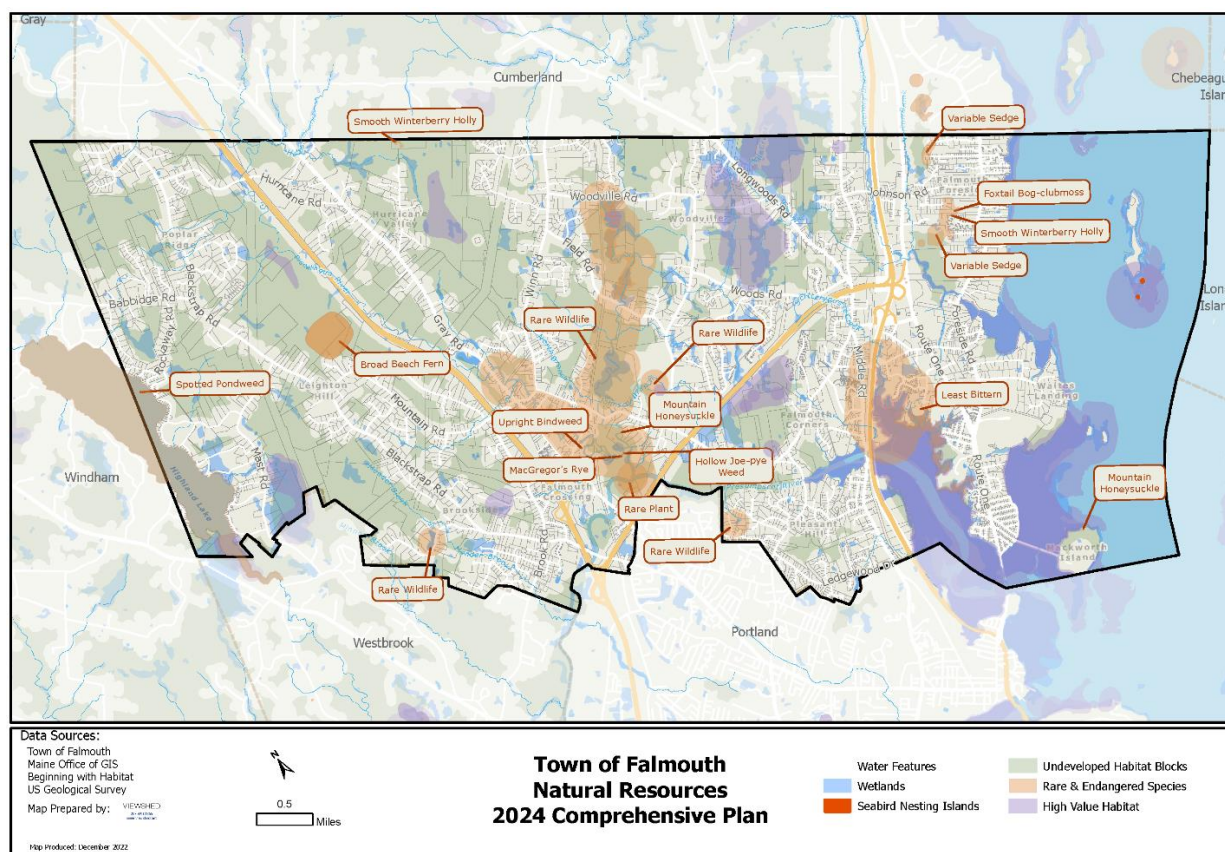
Wetlands are identified by the presence of hydraulic soils, hydrophilic (i.e., water loving) plants, and high-water table for a portion of the year. Wetlands are important for cleansing water, providing flood control, protecting shorelines from erosion, maintaining stream flows, or supporting wildlife habitat. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency tasked with providing information on the extent and status of the nation's wetland and deepwater habitats as well as changes to these habitats over time. As part of the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service maps the country's wetlands and conducts decadal national wetlands status and trends studies and report the findings to Congress. Wetlands are located and mapped throughout Falmouth. While most wetlands are located along the coastline and streams there are many types of wetlands in Falmouth. These include Estuarine and Marine Deepwater, Estuarine and Marine Wetland, Freshwater Emergent Wetland, Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland, Freshwater Pond, Riverine and Lake.

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<sup>1</sup> US Fish & Wildlife Service, *Gulf of Maine Coastal Program*. Accessed March 16, 2023.  
<https://www.fws.gov/office/gulf-maine-coastal-program>



Figure 2.3: Natural Resources Map



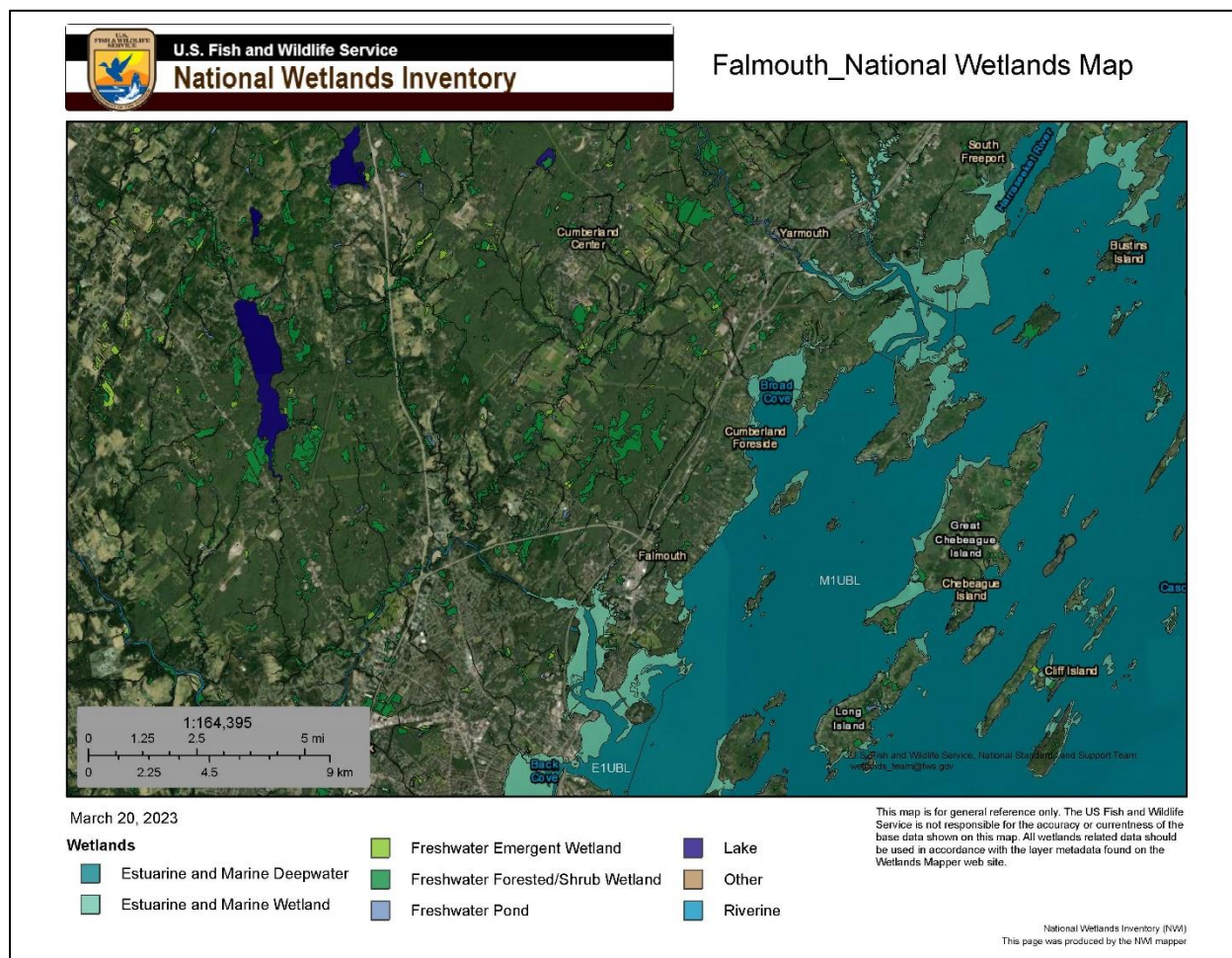
Source: Town of Falmouth

Vernal pools are a specific type of naturally occurring temporary wetland that are seasonal depressional inland bodies of water that occur in glaciated areas and usually occur from winter to spring. They are particularly important because they provide critical breeding habitat for several native amphibian species that, in turn, sustain many other forms of woodland wildlife. As summer comes and dries up the pools, baby frogs, salamanders, and turtles are ready to crawl onto nearby dry land to their fall and winter homes. Vernal pools are an important water feature and can be found throughout Falmouth. Vernal Pools are a protected resource in Falmouth and have been mapped townwide, however there are likely vernal pools located within Falmouth that have not been mapped yet. Urbanization and new development continue to threaten these areas.

Maine's wetlands are resources of great value to Maine communities, the State, and the nation. All three levels of government have a stake in their continued health and availability. Congress established federal regulatory power concerning wetlands under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. In Maine, the 1988 Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA) established state regulatory authority over wetlands. Falmouth's shoreland zoning and floodplain management regulations are intended to protect water quality, wildlife habitat, archaeological and historic

resources, and wetlands, and to prevent coastal erosion and other adverse impacts to shoreland areas.

Figure 2.4: National Wetlands Inventory Map



Source: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Wetlands Inventory

## WATER QUALITY AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

The Maine DEP's Biological Monitoring Program assesses the health of rivers, streams, and wetlands by evaluating the composition of resident aquatic benthic macroinvertebrate and algal communities. The Biological Monitoring Program assesses the health of a waterbody based on the amount and types of aquatic macroinvertebrates and algae living in a waterbody. The amount and types of macroinvertebrates and algae living there change when waterbodies are polluted or disturbed. For example, a polluted stream will often lack pollution-sensitive organisms like mayflies and stoneflies and will have more pollution-tolerant organisms like snails and leaches. Town staff and partners do water quality testing as part of watershed management plans.



There are also numerous local and regional plans to identify and eliminate pollution sources in Falmouth. The Falmouth Wastewater Treatment Facility includes a headworks facility with influent screening, aeration tanks, clarifiers, and a disinfection system that physically, biologically, and chemically removes contamination before the treated water is discharged to the Presumpscot River Estuary and Casco Bay.

Falmouth prepares and implements a five-year permit and management plan to protect stormwater from becoming polluted. As required by the Town's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) General Permit, the Town's Stormwater Management Plan, last effective 2022, includes an Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination Plan and describes how the Town will implement best management practices to meet the six minimum control measures (MCMs). The six MCMs are Education/Outreach Program, Public Involvement and Participation, Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination Program, Construction Site Stormwater Runoff Control, Post-Construction Stormwater Management in New Development and Redevelopment, and Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping for Municipal Operators. The Town also enacted an ordinance prohibiting the discharge of non-stormwater items into storm drains. Falmouth requires stormwater management for new development and works to ensure BMPs are implemented during and after construction activities. Regionally, Falmouth is a member of the Interlocal Stormwater Working Group to collaborate across the greater Portland area.

Maine DEP's Nonpoint Source Management Program Plan was issued in 2020. Nonpoint source pollution (NPS) has a major impact on Maine's lakes, rivers, streams, and marine waters. Unlike pollution from point sources, such as industrial and sewage treatment plants, NPS pollution comes from many diffuse sources. It is caused by rainfall or snowmelt moving over and through the ground and picking up natural and human-made pollutants, such as fertilizer, road salt, sediment, oil, and bacteria, along the way. Eventually these contaminants end up in waterbodies, where they can threaten drinking water supplies, cause nuisance algal blooms, diminish recreational activities, and endanger aquatic habitat. The Nonpoint Source Management Program Plan outlines goals and approaches for protecting and restoring water quality state-wide and at the Watershed level. Chapter II, "Stormwater and Non-Stormwater Discharge Ordinance" of the Town of Falmouth Code of Ordinances, outlines performance standards that recognize the impact of development activities on water quality, with the intent of these standards to ensure necessary controls are put in place for the protection of water quality.





## FLOODPLAINS

Floodplains are low, mostly flat areas adjacent to rivers, streams, ponds, and the ocean and are periodically covered by rising water during major periods of rain or snowmelt. The mapped 100-year floodplain has a 1% chance of being flooded during any year. Falmouth participates in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) to help manage flood risks. Through this program, Falmouth adopted and enforces floodplain management ordinances that define building standards for new and existing development in zones with high flood risks. This allows residents eligible to purchase NFIP flood insurance and to receive disaster assistance for flood-related damage. Cumberland County's Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) were updated in 2017. Falmouth adopted a floodplain management ordinance that requires the recognition and evaluation of flood hazards in all official actions relating to land use in the floodplain areas having special hazards. This article also establishes a flood hazard development permit system and review procedures for development activities in the designated flood hazard areas of the Town.

## RESILIENCE

Falmouth has a long commitment to sustainability and resiliency. The Town's first Climate Action Plan was adopted in 2010 and made 27 recommendations to influence planning and policies. In 2021 Falmouth Town Council voted to update the townwide Climate Action Plan. The plan will include a vulnerability assessment which will identify hazards that the Town will face from climate change, as well infrastructure, ecosystems, economy, and community vulnerabilities. The plan will also include a greenhouse gas emissions inventory to assess municipal operations, transportation emissions, as well as residential and commercial emissions and track progress toward reduction targets.

## GROUNDWATER

Groundwater is water found underground in the spaces between pieces of rock, like sand and gravel, and in the cracks that form in huge layers of solid rocks. Groundwater accumulates from rain and snowmelt that soaks into the ground, where it seeps through soil and other rock materials before landing in an aquifer. An aquifer is a porous layer, such as gravel, sand, or rock where all the cracks and spaces are filled with water. The type of soil greatly impacts an aquifer's ability to recharge. There is a significant sand and gravel aquifer north of the Presumpscot River along the I-95 profile and stretching west. This aquifer is not critical to Falmouth's water supply, but stormwater runoff and land use decisions impact the aquifer and may impact neighboring community's drinking water network.

## SCENIC RESOURCES

Scenic resources help define a community and celebrate significant landscape features. They are attributes that give a community identity and make a place appealing to live. These



resources include the natural views, and vistas and cultural assets. Key scenic resources include the state mapped scenic area inventory of Presumpscot River and Waites Landing.

## SHORELAND ZONING

The Town established an overlay district 250 feet from the normal high-water line of any designated great pond, river, saltwater body or upland edge of a coastal wetland, non-forested, or freshwater wetland of 10 or more acres. It is also mapped within 100 feet of the normal high-water line of any designated stream or brook. Chapter II-19-1-7 of the Zoning and Floodplain Management Ordinance outlines the rules and regulations and requires special review and permitting for development within the shoreland zone. The primary purpose of the ordinance is to further the maintenance of safe and healthful conditions, to prevent and control water pollution, protect fish spawning grounds, aquatic life, bird, and other habitat, to conserve visual as well as actual points of access to inland and coastal waters, and anticipate and respond to the impacts of development in shoreland areas. The Shoreland Zoning is divided into four districts:

1. Resource Protection – areas in which development would adversely affect water quality, productive habitat, biological ecosystems, or scenic and natural views.
2. Limited Residential – area suitable for residential and recreational development.
3. Limited Commercial – areas of mixed, light commercial and residential uses, exclusive of the Stream Protection District. This district includes areas of two or more contiguous acres in size devoted to, or appropriate for, a mix of residential and low intensity business and commercial uses. Industrial uses are prohibited.
4. Stream Protection – areas within 100 feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high-water line of a designated stream.

The Shoreland Zoning outlines permit requirements as well as the bulk and use regulations within the within each district of the overlay.

## WATER RESOURCES PROTECTION

The Falmouth Wastewater Department is responsible for protecting local water resources, including Casco Bay, from pollution due to wastewater. The collection and treatment system consists of approximately 58 miles of pipe and 33 pump stations. The Falmouth Wastewater Treatment Facility processes 1.56 million gallons per day (MGD) before discharging treated water at the Presumpscot Estuary outfall. The Wastewater Treatment Facility has a 4 MGD peak capacity. The collection system extends the full length of Route 1 and Route 88 in the east all the way to Route 100, Winn Road, and the Falmouth on the Green in the west. Much of the rural residential areas of the Town are on private septic.



There is a 2023 capacity assessment currently underway to understand current and future wastewater capacity. Falmouth has an agreement with the Town of Cumberland to treat wastewater generated in Cumberland. There are no combined, stormwater and wastewater overflows in Falmouth. Occasional overflows occur during storm events when flow exceeds system capacity. The Department of Marine Resources has a conditional restriction in this growing area when rainfall meets or exceeds one inch. The Town recently implemented a townwide asset management software in conjunction with Department of Public Works to track and manage infrastructure and work orders.

In 2022, the West Falmouth Sewer Project set out to replace existing sanitary sewers on Middle Road and Lunt Road with the installation of a new sanitary sewer on Woods Road, a new sanitary force main on Pinehurst Drive, Woodlands Drive, and Woods Road, and the upgrade to Falmouth Road Pump Station. Future capital improvements include Johnson Road and Lunt Road pump station upgrades, resiliency hardening, wastewater treatment facility upgrades, replacement of Route 1/Route 88 inceptor with a pump station. Sewer extensions are often realized when developers propose new developments and pay for extensions and upgrades.

## SEPTIC WASTE DISPOSAL

All subsurface sewage discharge systems must be installed in conformance with the State of Maine Subsurface Wastewater Disposal Rules. Holding tanks are not allowed for a first-time residential use in the shoreland zone and must be no less than 100 feet from a perennial water body. The Falmouth Wastewater Treatment Facility treats septic for Falmouth residents for a fee but is limited by DEP permit and it does not treat any other communities.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

As Falmouth continues to experience development pressure, protecting natural areas, wetlands, habitats, water quality, and the coastline from the impacts of development is a major concern. Falmouth has been proactive about conserving land and protecting natural resources for both ecological and recreational purposes, and residents continue to support these efforts. With limited resources for land acquisition and resource management, the Town will need to be strategic about future conservation efforts and will also look to direct growth in appropriate growth areas away from critical environmental areas.

Facilitating growth, climate change risks, and regulatory drivers are the greatest challenges for the Town's Department of Public Works. In addition to human development patterns and the need to manage and expand water treatment infrastructure, the impacts of climate change are also a threat to the Town's infrastructure and natural resources. As a coastal community, sea level rise as well as an increase in number and severity of storms is a concern for the Town, including the impact on estuary habitats.

## MARINE RESOURCES

Falmouth's coastline is approximately 20 miles long and made up of rocky headlands, tidal flats, estuaries, and islands, including the 100-acre public Mackworth Island. There are a variety of private and public uses along the waterfront. Historically Falmouth's connection to Casco Bay allowed the Wabanaki Tribes to flourish and use the waters for food, trade, and transportation. Over time, Falmouth quickly transitioned from farmland to community. Like many of Maine's coastal communities, Falmouth developed a reputation as an unspoiled scenic retreat, well-suited for visiting and summering. As Falmouth transitioned from destination to suburb, much of the coast became private with a limited working waterfront or non-residential uses.

### DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES

The Maine Department of Marine Resources (MDMR) was established to conserve and develop marine and estuarine resources for communities and to facilitate and enforce commercial and non-commercial marine licensing. Falmouth falls within the MDMR Growing Area WI, Growing Area Sections CR3, P9, CA5 and R2 and includes a Prohibited Area at the confluence of Scitterygusset Creek and Presumpscot River.

The area within the Growing Area Section CR3 along the Presumpscot River north of the Route 1 bridge and south of Foreside Common Drive is conditionally restricted. This area is in proximity to the Town's Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and is subject to a combined sewer outfall (CSO) and stormwater runoff during rain events. A special MDMR permit is required when this area is open. It is unlawful to dig, take, or possess any clams, quahogs, oysters, mussels, or whole or roe-on scallops from the shores, flats, and waters following a malfunction or CSO event at the Falmouth WWTP or Arcadia Street CSO, or when rainfall meets or exceeds one inch within a 24-hour period.

Growing Area Section P9 is located south and east of the Route 1 bridge and extends along the coastline to Waites Landing Road. In the Growing Area Section P9, it is unlawful to dig, take, or possess any clams, quahogs, oysters, mussels, or whole or roe-on scallops from the shores, flats, and waters due to pollution and water quality.

Growing Area Section CA5, extending from Waites Landing Road up the coastline to Mussel Cove, is a conditionally approved and harvesting in this area is allowed seasonally. CA5 typically closes from May 1 through mid-November because of seasonal pollution, and it is unlawful to dig, take, or possess any clams, quahogs, oysters, mussels, or whole or roe-on scallops from the shores, flats, and waters during these times.

North of Waites Landing Road, Growing Area Section R2 is Mussel Cove and is currently closed because of pollution. Within the R2 it is unlawful to dig, take, or possess any clams, quahogs,



oysters, mussels, or whole or roe-on scallops from the shores, flats, and waters without a special MDMR permit in this area.

## MARINE WATER QUALITY

DEP's Maine Healthy Beaches Program (MHB) works with Town staff to collect bacteria samples from Falmouth Town Landing Beach north and south. The program is funded by the U.S. Environment Protection Agency (EPA) through the Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health (BEACH) Act of 2000. Water quality is monitored, and advisory and closure signs are posted at the beach entrance or on the lifeguard stands if there is a public health risk. Current beach status is posted online at the MHB Dashboard at Maine DEP.

Marine water quality monitoring efforts have been conducted in Casco Bay by the State of Maine, Friends of Casco Bay, and other Casco Bay Estuary Partnerships partners and collaborators since 1993. Friends of Casco Bay (FOCB) is a non-profit marine advocacy organization dedicated to the health of the Bay. They have two seasonal monitoring sites in Falmouth. One seasonal monitoring location is at Falmouth Town Landing and the other is on Clapboard Island. Key indicators being tracked include chlorophyll, dissolved oxygen, water temperature, water depth, sea level, Secchi depth (water clarity), turbidity, and pH Levels. FOCB has reported that Casco Bay pH levels have dropped over the last 15 years with seawater becoming more acidic, referred to as ocean acidification. Casco Bay Estuary Partnership has reported that between 2004 – 2013, the Gulf of Maine warmed at a rate of 0.41 degrees F per year—faster than 99% of the world's oceans.

In 2021, the sixth edition of the State of Casco Bay report by the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership was released. The report claims “On the whole, Casco Bay continues to be remarkably health as it enters the 2020s, compared to many other U.S. estuaries, testament to the dedicated efforts of many individuals and organizations. Yet major changes are under way that warrant a timely response to protect the Bay and the many people whose livelihoods and quality of life depend on it.” The report identifies six key challenges in protecting the health of the Bay, including population and land use, stormwater, combined sewer overflows, inland water quality, climate change, and invasive species.

## COMMERICAL AND NON-COMMERCIAL FISHING AND HARVESTING

Despite Falmouth's extensive tidal flats, there are limited harvesting activities and facilities in Falmouth. The tidal flats are a valuable community resource, and the Town is committed to protecting and managing them. The Shellfish Conservation Commission administers the Town's shellfish conservation program. This commission works closely with the Department of Marine Resources to establish an annual shellfish recreation digging license. The commission also monitors the flats and make recommendations for the purpose of shellfish conservation and public health. Harvesting is further limited due to prohibited and conditional restrictions set by Maine's Department of Marine Resources due to pollution and water quality. In growing area

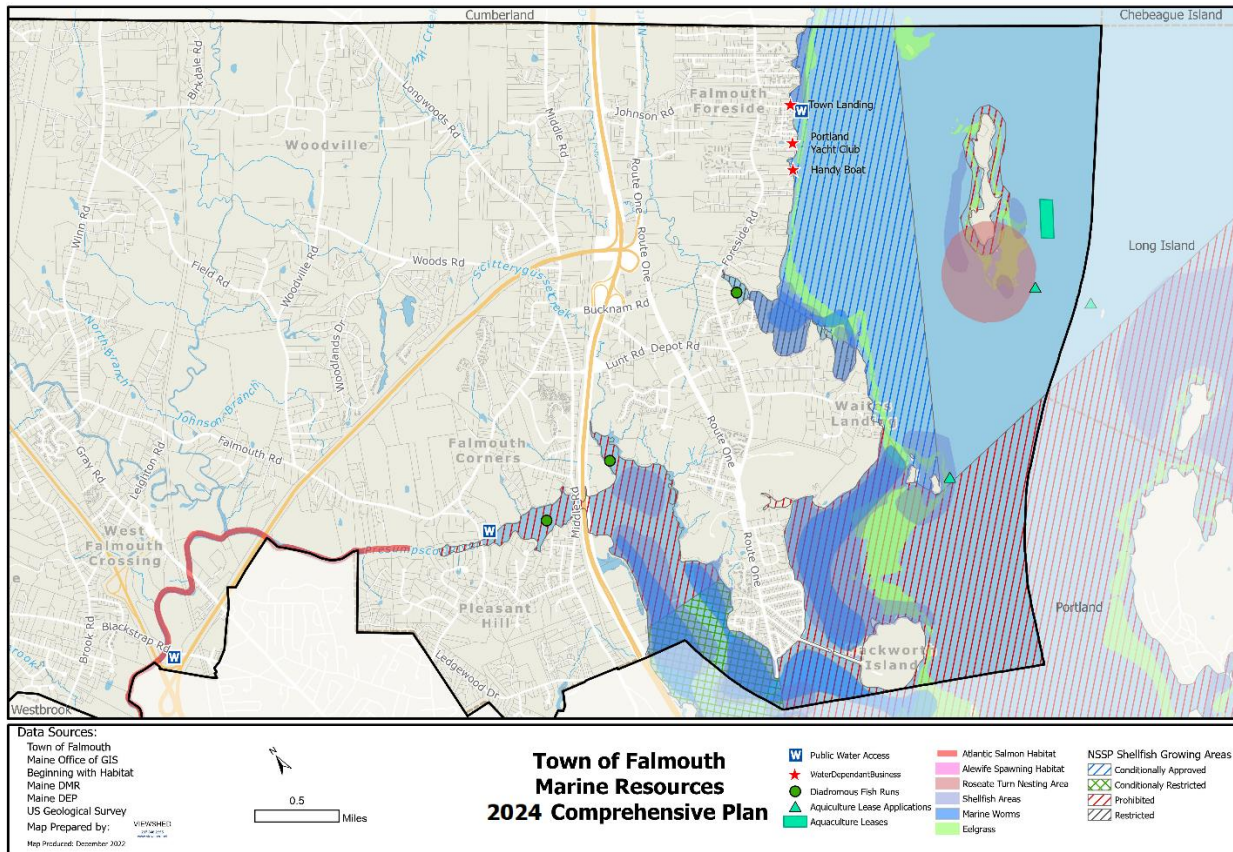
WI, which includes most of Falmouth's growing flats, it is unlawful to dig, take, or possess any clams, quahogs, oysters, mussels, or whole or roe-on scallops from the shores, flats, and waters due to pollution and water quality. Currently only CA5 within Falmouth provides some level of harvesting when it is seasonally open. These limitations typically lead to harvesting being focused on deeper water opportunities outside of the DEP restrictions.

Coastal property is dominated by single-family housing; therefore, there is little infrastructure to support large scale commercial and non-commercial fishing and harvesting. Traditionally, harvesting had been a local industry passed on generationally through families. That trend has been declining and is now further hindered by closures and environmental concerns. This characteristic is also reflected in the number of licenses issued by the Department of Marine Resources. In 2021, only 26 commercial harvesting licenses and 64 non-commercial harvesting licenses were issued.

Similarly fishing licenses are also limited and reflect the predominate suburban make up of Falmouth. MDMR reports that there were only 10 Commercial Fishing Crew licenses and 36 Commercial Fishing Single licenses issued in 2021.

There are marine resource habitats to support fishing and harvesting in Falmouth. The extensive tidal flats in Falmouth are soft shell clam habitats and are located in near-shore waters. Soft shell clams are harvested during low tide and provide a critical food source for crabs, marine birds, wading birds and other animals. Blue mussel habitats are found off the coast of Falmouth and are most productive between Casco Bay and Jonesport. Blue mussels are found just above and below the mean low water. They are an abundant, bivalve mollusks and are commercially harvested. There are also eelgrass beds along the mainland coast, Presumpscot Estuary, Mackworth Island, and Clapboard Island. These form underwater habitats, are an important food source, and provide protection and coastal resilience. There are some patches of marine worm habitats along the coast. Marine worms are typically a sign of a healthy ecosystem and are often used as bait by recreational fishers. Diggers harvest the worms from intertidal mud flats during low tide. There are also significant wading bird habitats along the coast of Falmouth and its islands. Off the coast deeper waters (100 – 300 feet) have scallop habitats, which are harvested commercially. Sea scallops are bivalves like clams and oysters but are more mobile because they can snap their shells open and shut to propel themselves through the water.

Figure 3.1: Marine Resources Map



Source: Town of Falmouth

## HARBOR MANAGEMENT

The navigable waters of Falmouth are managed by the Falmouth Harbor/Waterfront Committee. The Committee monitors and makes recommendations for public use, access to coastal waters, and advises the Town Council on policy matters. The Committee is also responsible for employing a Harbor Master to oversee the Town's water rules and regulations as well as other federal, state, and local laws and ordinances. The Harbor Master oversees the Town's moorings, floats, gangways, wharves, and channels and ensures their proper maintenance. The Town of Falmouth is a designated Federal Special Anchorage allowing special regulations for vessels less than 65 feet. The Harbor Master is stationed at Falmouth Town Landing.

Access to some areas is a concern to the Falmouth Harbor/Waterfront Committee. Dredging is needed in the area to ensure the continued recreational boating lifestyle. Dredging is being considered as part of the overall resiliency strategy for Town Landing. Occasional dredging at private docks and marinas is also common.





## WATERFRONT LAND USES

Falmouth's coastline is almost exclusively residential. In addition to housing there is also the Maine Audubon's Gilsland Farm, Portland Country Club, Handy Boat Marina and The Dockside Grill, Portland Yacht Club, and Falmouth Town Landing. Per local and State regulations, all properties along the coast are subject to the Town's Shoreland Zoning Overlay regulations. Much of the shoreline and land uses are vulnerable to sea level rise, increased storm events, and climate change. In 2022, the Town initiated a Falmouth Town Landing Resiliency Study to help ensure safe public access, long-term sustainability of the facilities, and neighborhood protection.

## PUBLIC ACCESS

Despite the prominence of private residential uses of waterfront land, Falmouth is committed to connecting the community to the waterfront and is actively looking for opportunities to increase physical and visual access. There are several key parks, open spaces, and island trailways that provide public access to the coast. Waterfront access have been expanded and enhanced over the years. Waterfront parcels are considered for resiliency, protection, and access strategies for open space acquisition by the Land Management & Acquisitions Committee (LMAC).

### Falmouth Town Landing

Town Landing is the largest recreational anchorage and mooring field north of Marblehead, Massachusetts. It is the primary public boating facility in the Town and is also the premier public access point to Casco Bay. The site includes the Harbor Master building, boat ramp, and pier. There is a public beach and sitting areas, which offers swimming, fishing, kayaking, and sunbathing. Recent storm events have led to damaged facilities and the site being inundated and eroded. As the Town's most critical waterfront asset, the long-term success of Falmouth Town Landing is necessary. In 2022, the Town initiated a Falmouth Town Landing Resiliency Study to evaluate vulnerabilities, explore options for long-term solutions, and help ensure the protection of the surrounding community. The study recommends raising the grade of the landing with a seawall and fill and relocating facilities to higher ground.

### Gilsland Farm Audubon Center

Gilsland Farm Audubon Center, a Maine Audubon site, is free and open to the public year-round, dawn to dusk. Situated along the Presumpscot River estuary, this is Maine Audubon's headquarters facility. It features an environmental education center and 59-acre sanctuary with more than two miles of trails. The site offers scenic views and waterfront access. Much of the Maine Audubon's Gilsland Farm property is protected by a conservation easement held by the Falmouth Land Trust.

## Mackworth Island

Mackworth Island is a state park and is accessible from Andrews Avenue causeway off Route 1. There is a public 1.5-mile-long walking and biking trail through wooded areas around the island with access to sandy and rocky beaches. Mackworth Island is the former home of James Phinney Baxter and of his son, Governor Percival Baxter. Currently, it is the site of the Baxter School for the Deaf.

## Clapboard East Preserve

Clapboard East Preserve is located on the north end of Clapboard Island and shares the island with multiple private properties. The preserve is open from dawn to dusk. There is no designated public transportation or infrastructure to the preserve, but there are two landing sites for personal watercraft. There is a half mile network of hiking trails connecting four beaches, picnicking area, birding, and scenic vistas.

## Tidewater Farm

In 2005, as part of the Tidewater Master Planned Development District, 69 acres of land was set aside as public open space. It was managed by the non-profit Tidewater Conservation Foundation and protected by a conservation easement held by the Town. The Town purchased the property in 2017. The property is located between Lunt Road and Clearwater Drive with extensive shoreline access and views of the Presumpscot Estuary and Scitterygusset Creek. There is a network of approximately 1.5 miles of trails throughout Tidewater Farm with access to a carry-in canoe or kayak launch. The University of Maine Cooperative Extension operates and maintains the UMaine Gardens at Tidewater Farm, on a leased five-acre space to provide agricultural and horticultural education opportunities to the community. The gardens are open to the public from sunrise to sunset.

## Brickyard Point

The construction of the I-295 separated this point from the rest of the mainland. The 16-acre site is a former brickyard that used marine clay to form bricks that were then fired. Currently only accessible by boat during mid-tide and higher, the site offers a one-mile loop trail with scenic views of the estuary and Portland skyline. Future connections to Tidewater Farm have been proposed via a bridge over Scitterygusset Creek.

## PRIVATE ACCESS

Falmouth has several private access points along the water for recreational waterfront use, including private recreational marinas, a golf course, and waterfront restaurant.

## Handy Boat Marina

Handy Boat Marina is Maine's largest anchorage and offers a full-service boat yard and marina. The marina offers approximately 50 mooring rentals for boats up to 65 feet. The facility offers

parking, fueling, electric, water, restrooms, showers, laundry, internet, and dockside provisions shop.

### The Dockside Grill

Part of the Handy Boat Marina ownership, the Dockside Grill Restaurant is a local destination offering scenic views and waterfront access to Casco Bay. The restaurant is two stories and is currently the only waterfront restaurant in Falmouth.

### Portland Yacht Club

Located on Casco Bay, the Portland Yacht Club is a private club with youth and adult sailing education. The club was founded in 1869 and is one of Maine's oldest yacht clubs. The facilities include a fixed pier, four main floats perpendicular to the shore, and three connected parallel. There is a clubhouse, member and guest moorings, and storage space available to rent for kayaks and dinghies. The club has a ramp for members to launch dry-sailed and trailerable boats. The Portland Yacht Club clubhouse has a range of services including laundry, showers, library, chart room, meeting rooms, event space, and a dining room. There is a 110-space parking lot located at the facility.

### Portland Country Club

Portland Country Club is a waterfront private 18-hole golf course approximately 140 acres. The facilities also include a swimming pool, pool café, six clay tennis courts, two hard surface tennis courts, pickleball courts, and two platform tennis courts. There is a golf shop and a clubhouse with meeting rooms, an event space, a bar, lounge, a casual dining room and a fine dining room. The clubhouse also offers an outdoor patio and second floor deck with expansive views of Casco Bay. The country club is also committed to high environmental standards and is a certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary. To reach certification, a course must demonstrate that they are maintaining a high degree of environmental quality in the following categories: Environmental Planning, Wildlife and Habitat Management, Outreach and Education, Chemical Use Reduction and Safety, Water Conservation, and Water Quality Management.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Falmouth will continue to navigate a balance between development activity and the protection and maintenance of its unique marine resources. The Town's coastline and harbor are comprised of critical habitats and scenic open space areas, support commercial and non-commercial fishing and harvesting activities, and provide access for boating and other recreational activities. These assets are vital to the Town's economy and identity.

Falmouth will look to direction from the State in updating and maintaining shoreland zoning regulations. The recommendations and goals of the Town's Climate Action Plan (to be completed in 2023), will also play a role in guiding the Town in finding a balance for waterfront land uses with protection of water quality and marine habitats.

## FORESTRY AND AGRICULTURE

Agriculture and forest resources are valuable assets for communities. Healthy forest and agricultural lands provide wildlife habitat, contribute to the local food economy, and play an important role in preserving natural resources. Farmland provides food for both the community and wildlife, helps control flooding, protects wetlands and watersheds, and maintains air quality. Farmlands also filter and absorb wastewater and provide groundwater recharge, where surface water can move downward into the water table. Healthy and managed forests provide wildlife habitat, clean air and water, stabilize the soil, and provide recreation opportunities.

### AGRICULTURE

Historically, Falmouth has been a community of farmers and a significant portion of the Town's land was used for agricultural purposes. Farmers grew crops like blueberries, corn, and beans and tended to livestock. Farmers contributed to the local economy, selling their agricultural products including crops, butter, milk, wool, and yarn.

Today, Falmouth has a small percentage of actively farmed land. The State of Maine has four current tax use programs that offer property owners a reduction in their property's assessed value. Properties used for farmland, open space, tree growth, and working waterfront are eligible to enroll in one of the four current tax use programs. To qualify for the farmland program, property owners must use their land for farming, agriculture, or horticulture, and the parcel must generate at least \$2,000 in gross income from farming activities each year.

As of 2022, Falmouth has 330 acres of farmland across nine parcels enrolled in the State's farmland tax use program. Land enrolled in the farmland current land use program accounts for roughly 1.8% of Falmouth's total land area. The total number of acres and parcels enrolled in the program has decreased since 2009 when the State started publishing these data online. The total number of acres declined from 411 acres and 13 parcels in 2009. This follows a broader trend across Cumberland County.

**Table 4.1: Farmland Current Tax Use Program Data**

Year	Number of Parcels	Farmland Acres	Total Farmland Valuation
2009	13	411	\$197,000
2022	9	330	\$175,200

Source: Maine Valuation Return Statistical Summary

According to the most recent U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Census of Agriculture in 2017, the number of farms in Cumberland County has declined by 7%, the total acres of farms has declined 20%, and the average farm size has declined 14%. The same data show a significant decline in agriculture state-wide but an increase in the number of small farms.

Despite a decline in overall land dedicated for agricultural use, the state is experiencing a resurgence in farming, as more than 100 new organic farms were added from 2008 to 2014.

Prime farmland is land with the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing agricultural products like food, fiber, or feed. Prime farmland produces consistently high yields of crops when managed and farmed. There is a significant amount of prime farmland in Falmouth, most of which is in the western half of Falmouth, along Blackstrap Rd. and Mountain Rd. to the Windham border and along Winn Rd.

Falmouth also has a significant amount of farmland of state-wide importance. Farmland of state-wide importance includes land that is nearly prime farmland and can produce high yields of crops. Maine's criteria for determining farmland of state-wide importance includes land that does not have a seasonal groundwater table within 16 inches of the mineral soil surface during the growing season, are more than 20 inches from bedrock, have greater than 2 inches of available water holding capacity in the upper 20 inches of soil, and have less than 35 cover of rocks or stones greater than 10 inches in diameter. In Falmouth, farmland of state-wide importance is located throughout the Town, primarily near waterways like rivers and streams.

**Figure 4.1: Agriculture and Forest Resources Map**

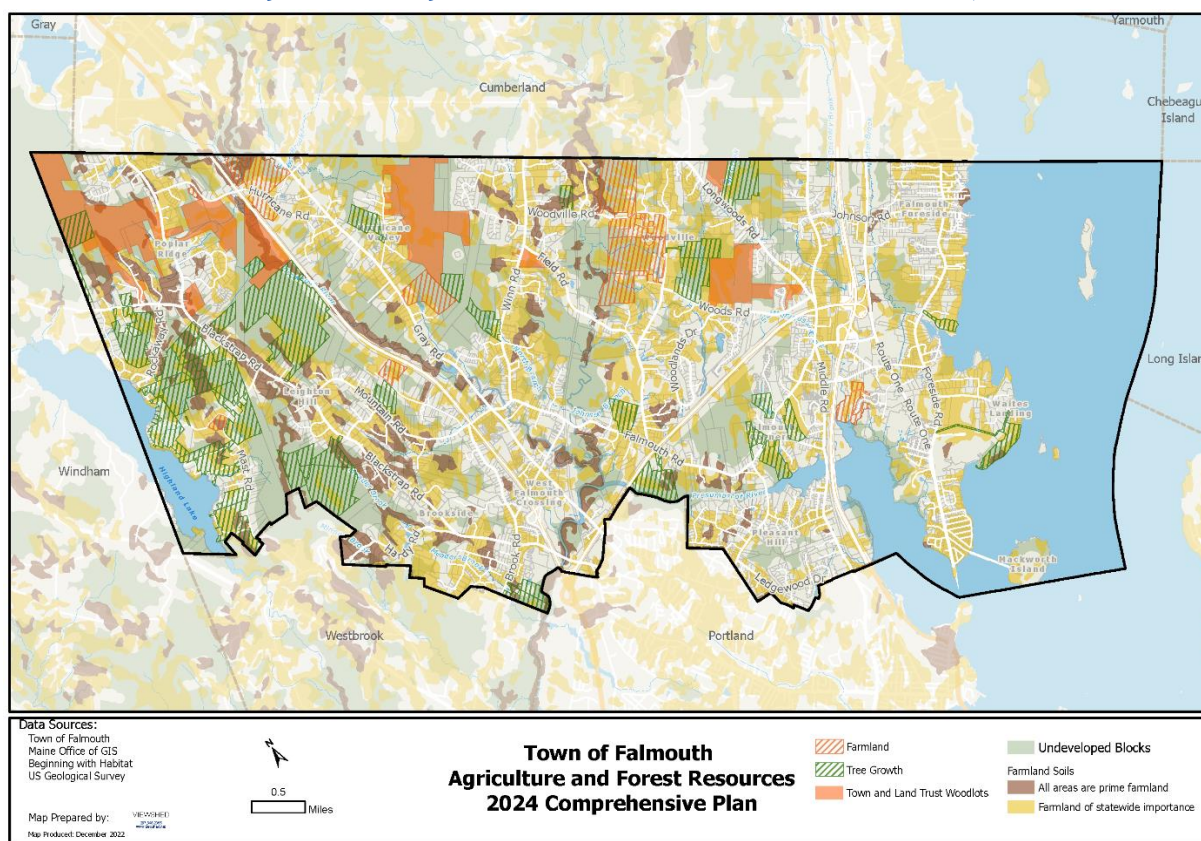
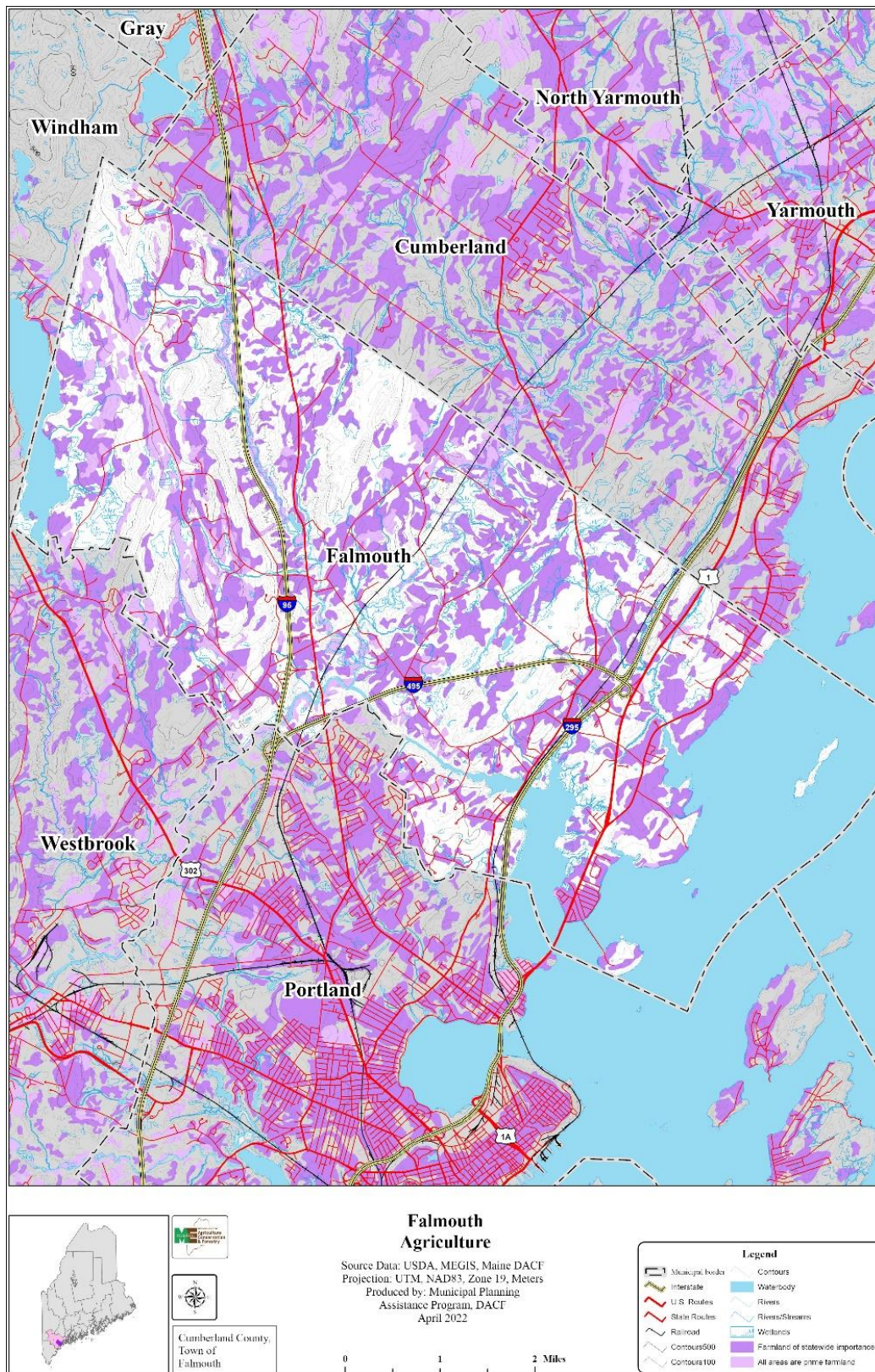




Figure 4.2: Areas of Prime Farmland and Farmland of State-Wide Importance



Source: State of Maine, Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry



## Farmers Markets

The Cumberland and Falmouth Farmers Market was founded in 1997. The Falmouth Summer Market is held every Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 22 Hat Trick Drive, behind the Walmart, from May to October. The Cumberland Summer Market is held every Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 290 Tuttle Road, outside Cumberland Town Hall, from May until October.

Farmers markets serve important roles in communities across the country, providing access to fresh fruits, vegetables, and other locally sourced items. The Cumberland and Falmouth Farmers Market features local vendors from across southern Maine.

## Local Farms

Local farms continue to contribute to the Town's economy and provide local plants and produce to the community.

Wilshore Farm, located on Hurricane Rd., is a former dairy farm that has been preserved by the Town and the Falmouth Land Trust. The farm is part of the Blackstrap Hill Community Forest and Preserve. Wilshore Farm hosts the Hurricane Meadows Fall Festival from September to October and, in 2023, the farm hosted a flea market during the summer months.

Winslow Farm, located on Gray Rd.) is a family-owned farm and nursery. Winslow Farm's farm stand offers a selection of annual and perennial flowers, in-season produce, and herbs. The farm also has pick-your-own blueberries starting in mid-July.

Hurricane Valley Farm was one of the original homesteads in Falmouth, and the land is owned by the Falmouth Land Trust today. The Land Trust hopes to restore the property to produce agriculture and produce locally grown food. Additionally, in 2018, Cultivating Community partnered with Falmouth Land Trust to start its second community farm on 62 acres of Hurricane Valley Farm. This expansion was in response to a group of New Mainers living in the greater Portland area looking to access affordable land to grow vegetables and other produce unavailable at grocery stores. The farm is now home to over 50 community gardeners and farmers and their families, growing on 3,000 square foot plots.

In 2011, the University of Maine Regional Learning Center moved to Tidewater Farm. The Cumberland County office for the University of Maine Cooperative Extension offers public educational programs for families, children, and adults. The nearby UMaine Learning Center in Tidewater Village offers programs in human nutrition, food preservation, and food safety. The gardens are open to the public from sunrise to sunset.

The Town and Falmouth Land Trust have worked to conserve a number of former farms, including the Zacharias Farm, which is now Falmouth Community Park.

Falmouth Public Schools are a leader in the state for their Farm to School Program. The Falmouth Elementary and Middle Schools each have gardens and the high school is developing

an orchard. There are three greenhouses and a hoop house on the school campus. The Falmouth Farm and Garden Learning Center is across the street from the school campus and is an established growing space built on permaculture methods. There are two full-time farmers who coordinate with the schools to connect classroom learning to agriculture. Approximately 325 students across all grades visit the gardens and greenhouses each week.

## FOREST RESOURCES

Maine has the largest contiguous block of undeveloped forestland in the eastern United States. Despite more than 200 years of harvests, Maine has the highest percentage of forested land in the United States, with about 90% of the state being forested.

Forests provide key habitats for plants and animals and are important to the overall health of watersheds. The Maine DCF regulates timber harvesting activities to minimize adverse impacts on forest resources, including improper harvesting leading to erosion, phosphorus pollution in lakes and streams, and increased runoff. The Maine Tree Growth Tax Law helps landowners maintain their properties as productive woodlands through well-planned and regulated harvesting.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, most of Falmouth's land was used for agricultural purposes and was not heavily forested. Over time, the predominant land cover has become forest. Today, there are 1,227 acres enrolled in Maine's Tree Growth Tax Program, which is roughly 6.5% of the Town's land area.

The State incentivizes the active management and utilization of land through the program. This program is similar to the Current Use Tax Program for agriculture. When enrolled in the program, landowners can receive favorable property tax assessment reductions. Landowners must own 10 forested acres and have an approved forest management plan to participate. Forests can be managed to meet a variety of landowner goals, including recreation, wildlife habitat, and lake and fishery protection. The program requires some commercial harvest in line with the property's approved forest management plan.

In 2022, Falmouth had 52 tree growth parcels. The Town has 269 acres of softwoods, 333 acres of hardwoods, and 625 acres of mixed woods. Since 2009, the number of parcels and acres enrolled in the program has declined. However, the total value of the timber has increased.

**Table 4.2: Tree Growth Current Tax Use Program Data**

Year	Number of Parcels	Softwood Acres	Hardwood Acres	Mixed Wood Acres	Total Acres	Total Value
2009	54	245	402	763	1,410	\$422,247
2022	52	269	333	625	1,227	\$519,527

Source: Maine Valuation Return Statistical Summary





According to data from the Town's year-end landowner reports to the State, there has generally been a decline in timber harvested year-to-year since 1991. From 1991 to 1999, there were 1,463 total acres where a harvest was carried out. From 2010 to 2019, there were 1,067 acres where harvests were carried out. Most of the harvests in Falmouth's history have been selective harvests, meaning some trees are removed and others remain. Since 1996, there has not been a clearcut.

Forests also provide various recreational benefits for residents and visitors. Publicly accessible land offers scenic benefits and recreational opportunities, including hiking, hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, and cross-country skiing. The Town and Falmouth Land Trust continue to seek protection and conservation opportunities, as well as ways to connect trails and recreation networks. In April 2023, the Town entered into a contract agreement with Falmouth Land Trust to manage and oversee open space properties. Properties like Blackstrap Hill Preserve and Community Forest, Falmouth Nature Preserve, Hadlock Community Forest, North Falmouth Community Forest, Pleasant Hill Woods Preserve Area, Town Forest, Underwood Springs Forest Preserve, Woods Road Community Forest are managed and overseen by the Land Trust. Falmouth Land Trust is in the process of updating forest management plans for each property. Falmouth also has a Tree City USA designation, meaning the Town has effectively managed its public resources and encouraged the implementation of community tree management according to Tree City USA standards.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Emerging challenges can impact the health of forests and cropland in Falmouth. Tree disease and insects—beech leaf disease, wood borers, insects, and defoliators—are becoming more common and are impacting tree health across Maine. Native trees are also being displaced by invasive species. Invasive plants out-compete native plants and can lead to a reduction in the diversity of species in a forest, and invasive plants can make it difficult for property owners to achieve objectives for their property. Additionally, warmer, wetter weather can cause trees stress, which can lead to poorer tree health and wood products.

Warmer winters and heavy rains, which the state has been experiencing and will likely continue experiencing, can impact the ability of foresters and loggers to conduct harvests and actively manage forests because heavy equipment and machinery cannot travel across wet or flooded grounds. This can lead to less healthy forests, decreased amounts of timber that can be harvested on a property, and less valuable timber.

Additionally, heavier rains can cause farmers to delay their planting season, which can delay harvesting. Excessive rain can also damage soil and deplete soils of nutrients, potentially impacting local farming production and disincentivizing new community members from getting involved in local agriculture.



Falmouth has taken several measures to preserve its agricultural and forest resources. The Town, Falmouth Land Trust, and other community partners have provided resources to educate private landowners on invasive species and have encouraged the preservation of forests and agricultural lands. Falmouth allows farming and forestry resources in the Town's Farm and Forest District.

As the Town examines areas for development, it will have to determine how to best preserve forests, tree canopy, and green space in the future. The Town will also have to consider how to best preserve prime farmland and support and encourage local agriculture. The Town should look to limit development in rural areas of Bridgton to better preserve natural resources, like prime farmland, open space, and woodlands.

As the Town looks toward its future resilience, the efforts of groups like the Falmouth Land Trust will be essential for long-term progress. When considering resources and issues that extend beyond the Town, such as habitat management, a regional approach is important to provide broader habitat connectivity, forest preservation, and leveraging and coordinating resources to address challenges.



## LAND USE

### HISTORY OF DEVELOPMENT IN FALMOUTH

Modern settlement in what is now Falmouth dates to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In part, due to the proximity to Portland's urban center, the Town did not develop around a traditional village center. Rather, development spread throughout the Town and up the coast along the Town's primary roads leading from Portland. Development was primarily focused around fishing and agricultural industries.

Most of the Town's land remained agricultural into the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the Town began to experience more significant population growth with a development boom post-World War II. The development of I-95 and I-295 and the Town's proximity to Portland made it an ideal location for suburban residential development and further stimulated growth. During the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Town lost significant areas of forest, open space, and farmland to residential development.

In the 1980s, the Town experienced an increase in the subdivision of undeveloped land into buildable residential lots. Many of those lots were developed in the 1990s, as the number of new homes constructed increased throughout that decade. In response to the rapid development of the 1980s and 1990s, the Town evaluated development trends and the Town's growth rate as part of the 2000 Comprehensive Plan.

### GROWTH MANAGEMENT IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

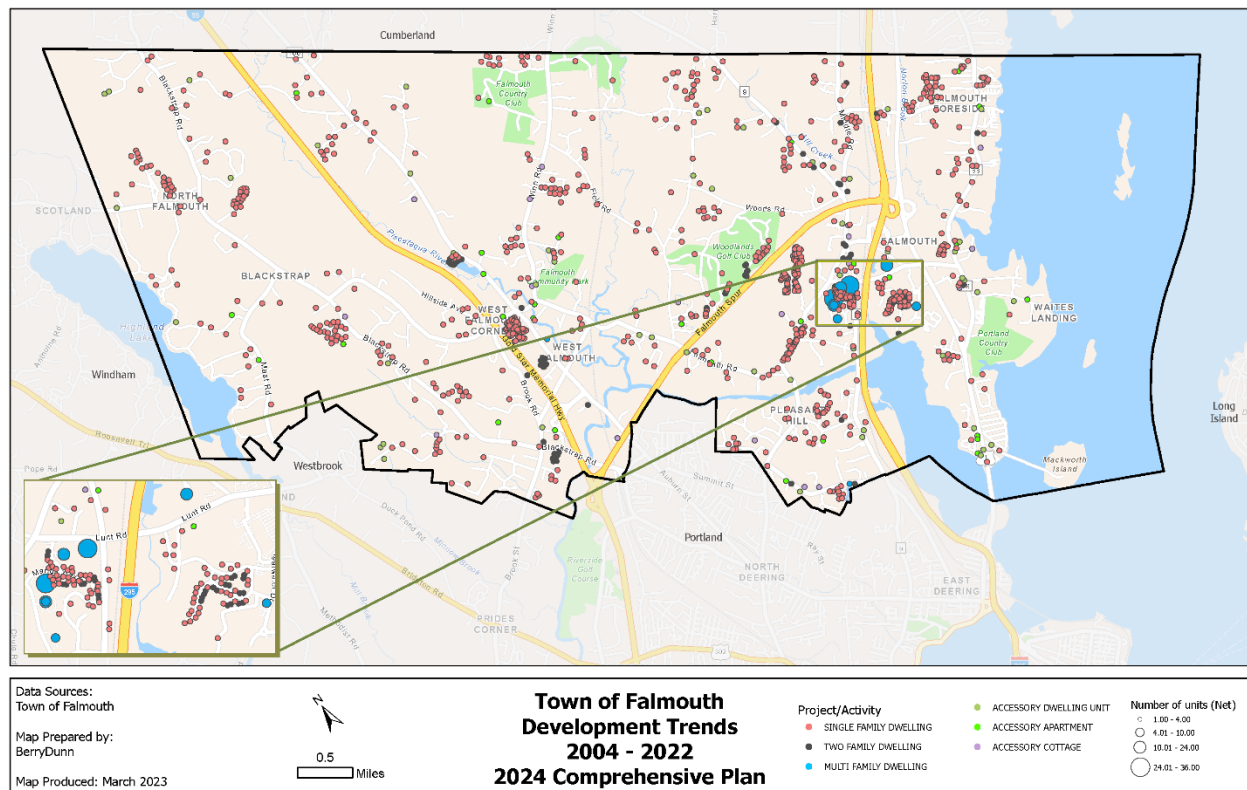
With most new housing development in the 1990s being single-family homes built on previously undeveloped land, this growth had a significant impact on the Town's landscape and community character. The 2000 Plan also considered the fiscal impacts of this type of suburban development. Based on the projections assumed in the Plan analysis, the average home would result in a slight net negative fiscal impact when estimating the expected taxes and other revenues compared to the estimated costs for services to support the development, including infrastructure maintenance, education, and other services.

Conservation of open space and preservation of the Town's rural character have been consistent values of Town residents for decades, as documented in several Townwide surveys and other resident feedback related to planning and development. The 2000 Comprehensive Plan divided the Town into three development zones. Zone 1, east of I-295 including Falmouth Foreside, would support infill growth. Zone 2, including Woodville and Falmouth center to Winn Road, would be targeted for master planned growth due to the availability of water and sewer service. Zone 3, including Hurricane Valley and all areas west of I-95, would be designated as rural residential for low-density development.

In response to the residential growth and development of the 1990s, the Town enacted a rate of growth ordinance in 2000. The initial ordinance placed a cap of 100 new single-family dwelling

annually, with some exceptions for congregate and retirement housing. In 2003, the cap for single-family dwellings was lowered to 65 new units annually, and in, 2004 and 2006, caps were added for accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and two-family and multi-family units. In 2016, the rate of growth ordinance was further amended to revise the housing type categories for growth caps, merging the single-family and two-family categories under one combined cap of 65 units annually. Most recently, in 2021, the Town temporarily raised the growth cap for the 2021 calendar year in response to the unusually high volume of development permits early in that year as a result of increased residential growth pressures in the region.

**Figure 5.1: Development Trends, 2004 – 2022**



## RECENT DEVELOPMENT TRENDS AND PLANNING INITIATIVES

The 2013 Comprehensive Plan reexamined the balance of growth and preservation of land and established a more precise designated growth area and future land use plan in accordance with the State’s revised Growth Management Program requirements. The 2013 Future Land Use Plan directs growth in more efficient development patterns that protect environmentally sensitive areas and in proximity to existing development and infrastructure. This reflected the sentiment of the community to grow more sustainably and improve walkability, and addressed guidelines established by the Maine Growth Management Program toward reducing suburban sprawl.

The 2013 Future Land Use Plan designated commercial growth areas along Route 1, from Route 88 north to the Cumberland town line, and Route 100, from the Presumpscot River north to Mountain Road. These designated commercial growth areas incorporate the Town's major commercial nodes. Residential growth areas were primarily designated on the east side of the Town, along Route 88, Route, 1, Middle Road, and the Pleasant Hill area. Additional residential growth areas include areas surrounding the Route 100 commercial growth area.

The intent of the designated growth areas is to guide development policy and direct most new growth and growth-related capital investments to those areas. According to the 2013 Plan, less than 50% of residential growth from 1990 to 2011 was located in the growth areas.

Not including units constructed within retirement communities (or designated senior housing), 2021 saw the greatest number of new dwelling units constructed in Falmouth in at least the past 16 years. After a decline from 2017 through 2020, requests for permits for new dwellings increased in 2021. This increase in demand led the Town Council to temporarily expand the growth cap in 2021, with the understanding that the additional units over the limit, as set by the rate of growth ordinance, would be subtracted from the cap for the following year.

Figure 5.2: Development Trends, 2014 - 2022

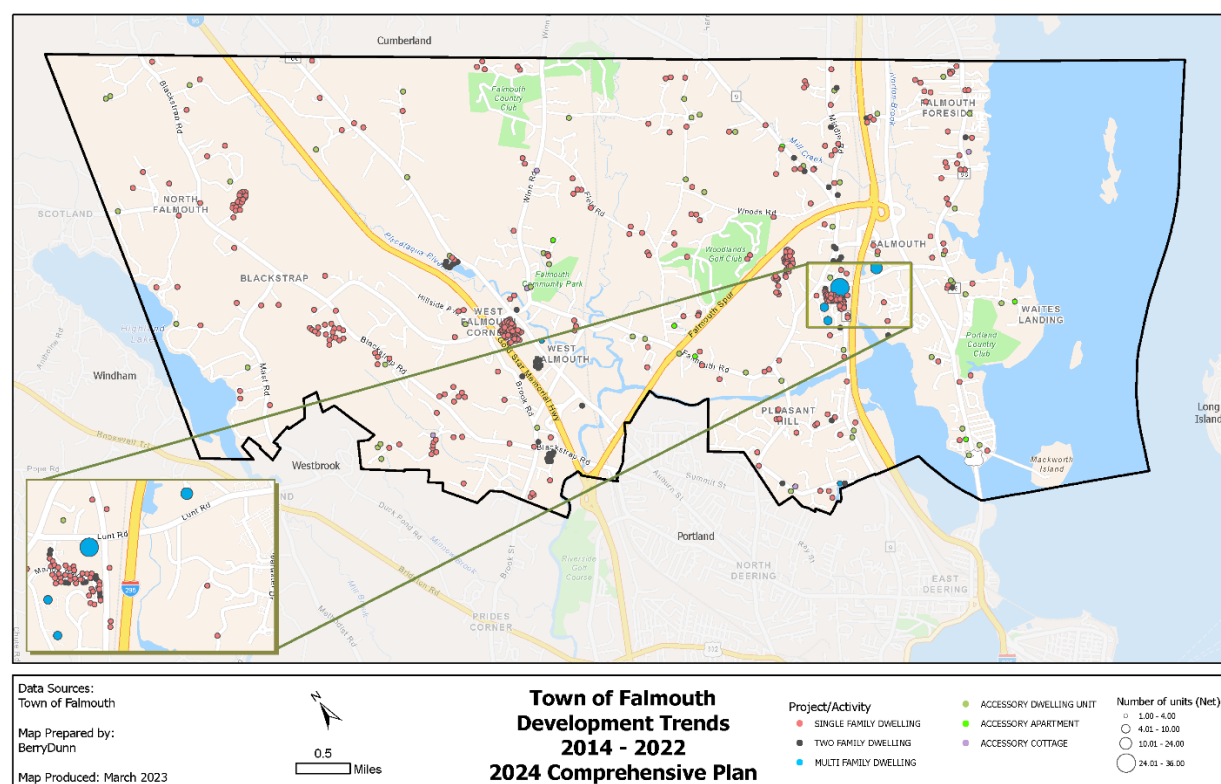
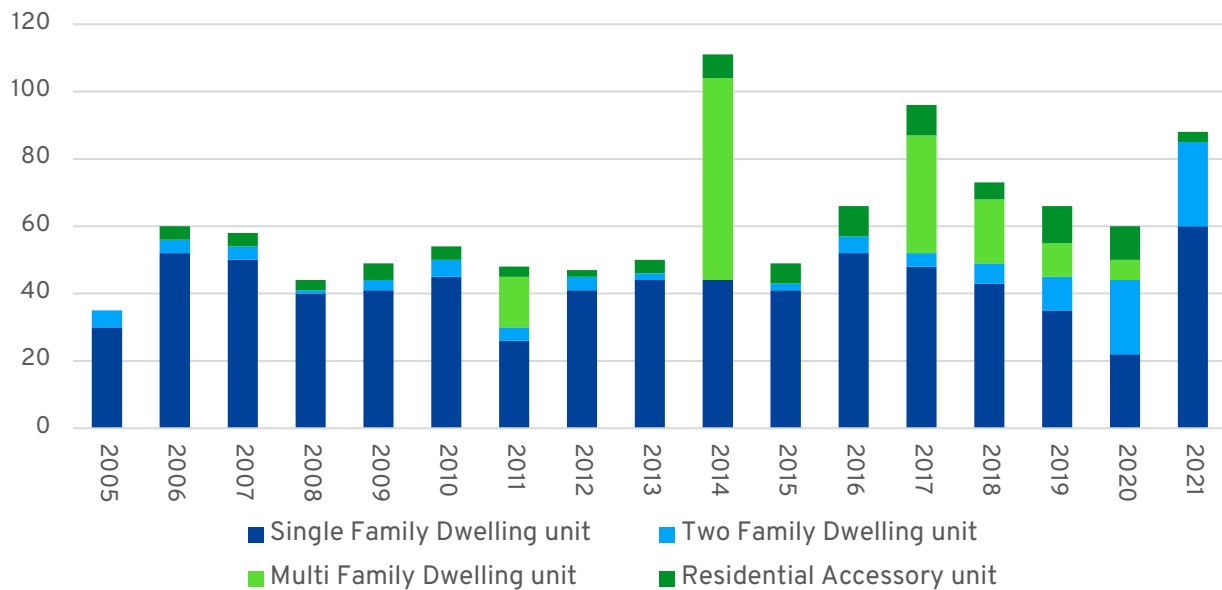
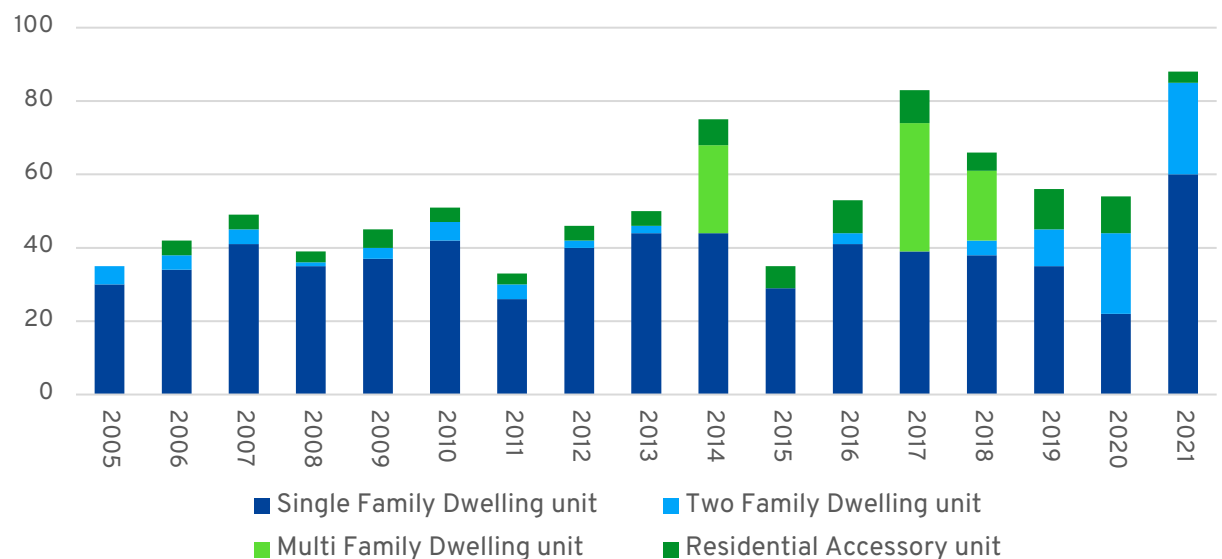


Figure 5.3: New Units Completed by Unit Type



Source: Town of Falmouth

Figure 5.4: New Units Completed by Unit Type (excluding retirement communities)



Source: Town of Falmouth

Since 2013, the Town has completed several plans and studies, amended land use ordinances, helped to conserve open space, and moved forward with infrastructure improvements. These efforts have been guided by the 2013 Comprehensive Plan to protect environmentally sensitive areas, preserve the rural character of the community, and strategically encourage growth in the designated growth areas.

## LAND CONSERVATION

Land conservation has been a central value to the Town for decades. The numerous open spaces, rural landscape, and the Town’s dedication to stewardship are fundamental to Falmouth’s identity. The Town maintains a variety of open spaces including working lands, woodlands, wetlands, riparian corridors, waterfront areas, farmlands, orchards, fields, and parks. For decades, but especially in response to the priorities established in the 2013 Plan, the Town has worked to acquire and maintain open space for the protection of environmentally sensitive areas, for recreational use, and as part of a land and growth management strategy. Since 2013, the Town and the Falmouth Land Trust have acquired several properties, including the Morrill-Stillings Bird Sanctuary (2018) and the Underwood Springs Forest Preserve (2020). In 2018, Falmouth adopted an Open Space Implementation Plan to guide the Town in the use and protection of open spaces.

## EXISTING LAND USE

While Falmouth has experienced growth and development in key growth centers and corridors, the majority of the Town’s land area maintains the Town’s rural character, with most land area used for residences, open space, or remaining undeveloped. The largest land use category in Falmouth is residential, with nearly 40% of land area used for residential development. Of that 40%, nearly 90% of residential land area (34% of total land area) is used for single-family dwellings. Nearly 30% of the Town’s land area is designated as conservation, recreation, or open space property. While this is a significant percentage of the Town’s total land, not all of this land is permanently protected as open space. The third largest land use category is “undeveloped land”, which accounts for 14.3% of total land area.

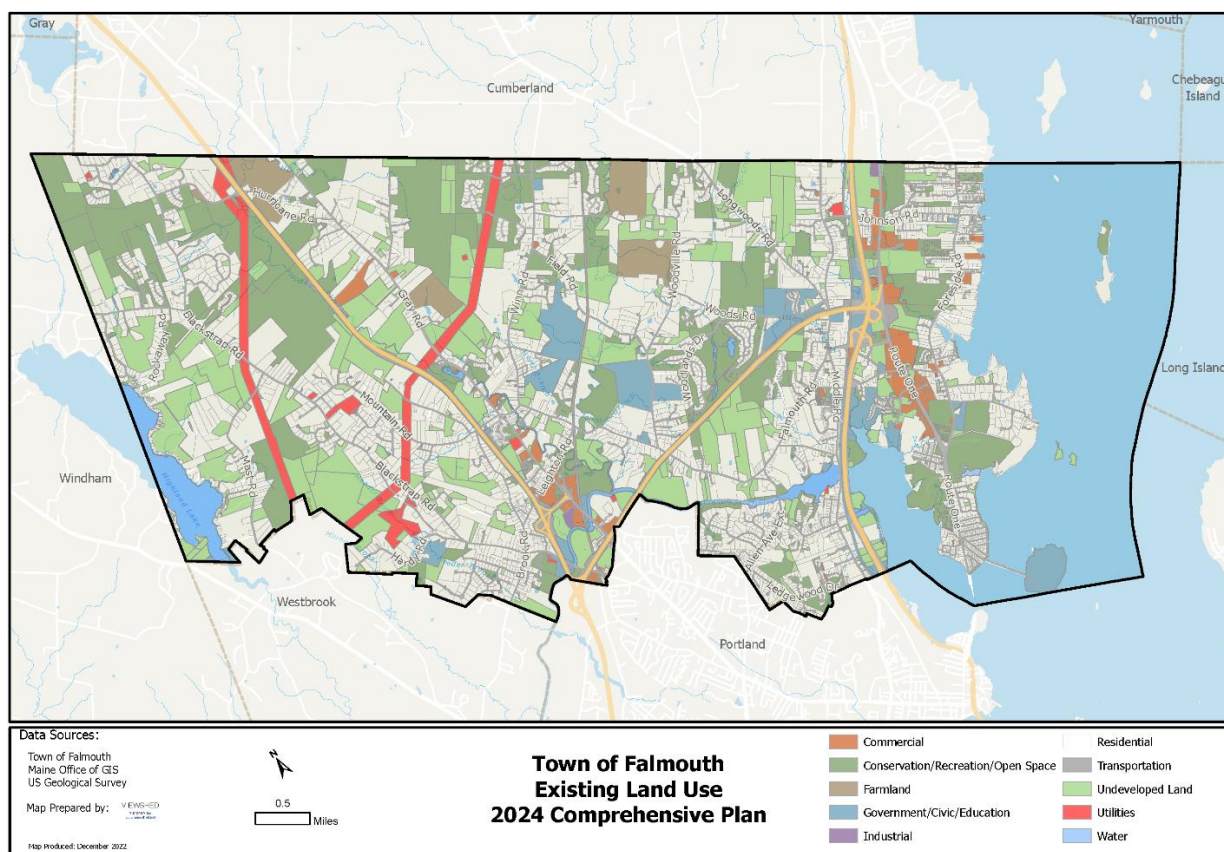
Table 5.1: Existing Land Use

Land Use Category	Land Area (in Acres)	Percent of Total Land Area
Residential	8,517	38.7%
Conservation/Recreation/Open Space	6,497	29.5%
Undeveloped Land	3,154	14.3%
Utilities	1,468	6.7%
Transportation	882	4.0%
Government/Civic/Education	674	3.1%
Farmland	441	2.0%
Commercial	382	1.7%
Industrial	15	0.1%

Source: Town of Falmouth



Figure 5.5: Existing Land Use Map



## Conservation Land

Of the 6,497 acres of land designated as conservation/recreation/open space, 1,780 acres are owned and maintained by the Town. The remaining conservation and open space land is owned by other organizations (including Falmouth Land Trust) or is privately owned.

## Undeveloped Land

Of the 3,154 acres of undeveloped land in Falmouth, only 94 acres of undeveloped land have access to both public water and sewer service, and an additional 541 acres have access to either public water, sewer, or both. Much of the Town's undeveloped land is outside of the designated growth area and is not currently served by public utilities.

With several large parcels of undeveloped land along the Route 1 North corridor, the Town developed a Route 1 North Vision Plan, completed in 2017, to guide the future development for the corridor. The Vision Plan recommendations include encouraging office, technology and innovation, and light industrial uses (as are currently allowed); creating opportunities for mixed-use development including retail, office, residential, light industrial, and other uses; improving connectivity to open space trails and to the Route 1 South commercial areas; and encouraging small scale development that is in keeping with the Town's character.

## ZONING

The Town's current zoning districts align with the designated growth areas established in the 2013 Plan. Commercial growth areas along Route 1 and Route 100 are zoned for commercial and mixed-use development. In 2013, the Town established Village Center Districts, which cover the Route 1 South commercial center and allow for and encourage a mix of residential, retail, office, and service uses to be developed in a pattern that supports walkability and a village center aesthetic. The Route 100 corridor also allows for mixed-use development in the Village Mixed Use and Mixed-Use Cluster Districts. The Route 1 North corridor is designated as a Business & Professional District, allowing for businesses, professional offices, some light industrial uses, and other select non-residential uses as appropriate.

Designated residential growth areas allow for low-density residential development with minimum lot areas ranging from 20,000 square feet, in districts closer to amenities and commercial districts, to 60,000 square feet. The Town has also established several overlay districts and special districts to address unique site conditions, master planned areas, and to allow for the expansion of housing developments for older adults. The Town has additional districts to allow for development based on specific site constraints or unique features, broader planning objectives, and the protection of critical natural and historic assets.

Rural residential (or limited growth) districts include the Farm & Forest Districts and Highland Lake Residential District. These districts allow for low-density residential development, agricultural and forestry uses, and limited low-impact conditional uses, such as private clubs, places of worship, and day care centers. The 2013 Comprehensive Plan identified these rural residential areas as being less desirable for development due to the benefit of open space, lack of water and sewer service, and distance from existing amenities, services, and other Town infrastructure.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

As development pressure continues, especially in West Falmouth, the Town should consider the long-term impacts of development in this area, including the loss of open space, cost expand and maintain infrastructure, and the cost to provide services. As the Town and region grow, coordination with neighboring communities is critical related to corridor development and improving transportation options to support growth.

In 2022, the State passed LD 2003 to help alleviate housing affordability issues in Maine by requiring municipalities to allow for increased housing opportunities. The extent of the law will be dependent on each municipality's growth area, as identified in the Comprehensive Plan. The Town will consider implications of LD 2003 in reviewing the current growth areas in the following phases of this planning process.

Balancing the management and protection of open space with the demand for growth will continue to be a challenge for the Town. Careful consideration of significant natural resources



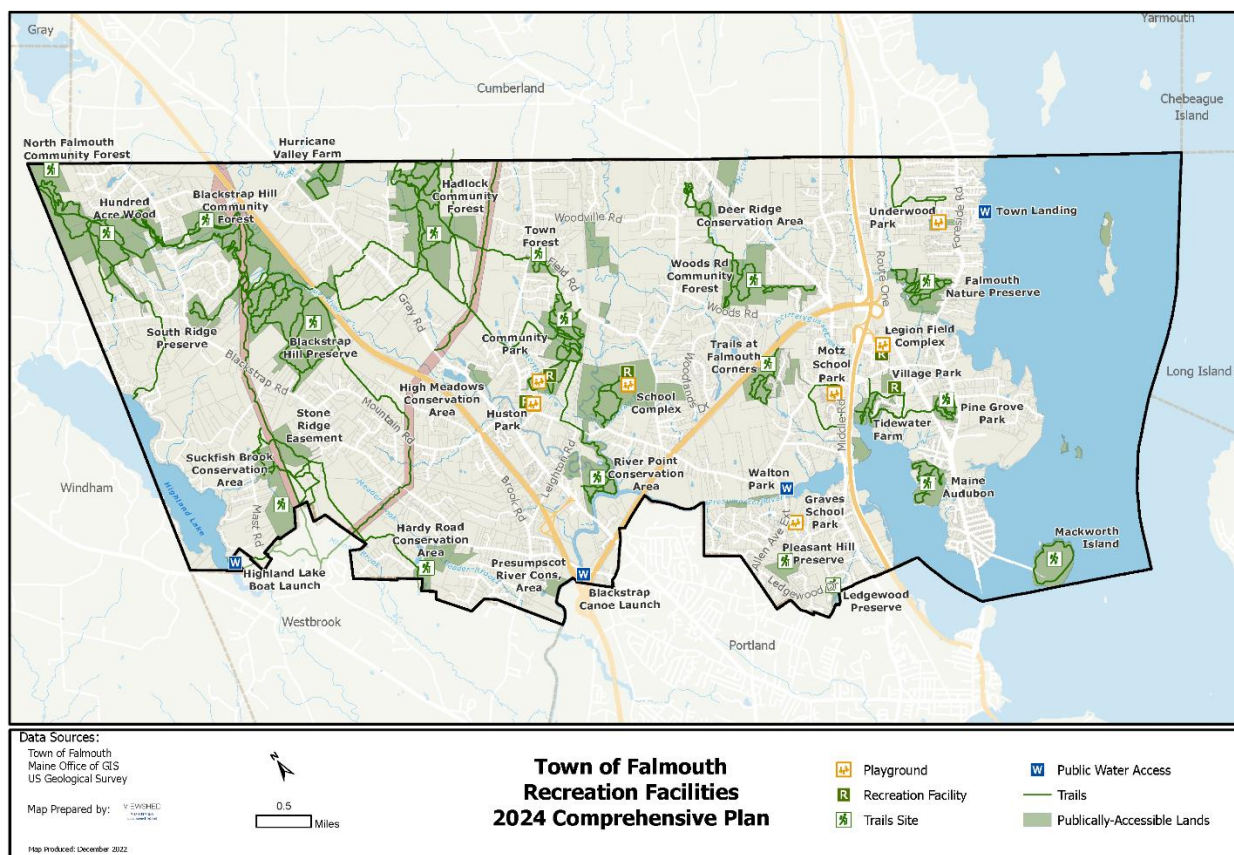
and how to use the Town's available land to meet the needs of the community most effectively will be central to the recommendations of this Plan.

## PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

Parks, recreation, and open space are vital to the quality of life in Falmouth. The Town has abundant open spaces, access to trails, and a variety of sports fields and parks. In addition to its land-based recreation access, the community can also enjoy aquatic recreation on the Presumpscot River, Highland Lake, and Casco Bay. The Town has kayak and canoe launch points, and the Town seasonally installs a floating dock on the Presumpscot River for fishing and canoe/kayak access. Falmouth is home to the largest mooring field north of Marblehead, Massachusetts, providing abundant opportunity for boaters.

Falmouth provides opportunities for outdoor recreation for residents of all ages. Falmouth has more open space and opportunities for recreation compared to municipalities of similar size. In addition to its physical recreational areas, the Town also offers activities and programs for people of all ages and abilities.

Figure 6.1: Town of Falmouth Recreational Facilities Map



## MUNICIPAL PARKS

Falmouth's open spaces and parks offer the community a variety of ways to engage in physical activity, enjoy time outdoors, and connect with neighbors. Falmouth has an abundance of outdoor recreation opportunities, including 1,800 acres of open space, 206 acres of parks, and over 55 miles of trails. The Town also has six playgrounds, nine tennis courts, four pickleball courts, eight multipurpose fields, five baseball diamonds, two basketball courts, and a seasonal outdoor ice rink. The Parks and Community Programs Department has nine full-time equivalents (FTEs), with seven full-time staff members and two part-time staff members. The Town also hires multiple seasonal employees.

The Town also offers approximately 815 activity programs annually. Programming is designed for Falmouth community members of all ages, from young children to senior citizens. Programs vary seasonally and can include art classes, cooking classes, 55+ activities, pickleball, fitness and wellness classes, community safety courses, afterschool enrichment, and recreational athletic programming. Town staff also organize a variety of community events and activities through the year.

**Table 6.1: Existing Municipal Park Facilities**

Name/ Address	Facility type	Miles of trails	Athletic fields	Basketball courts	Tennis courts	Gazebo	Memorial	Passive recreation	Picnic tables	Playground	Skating pond	T-ball field	Trails/walking path	Water access	Indoor recreation
Community Park 19 Winn Rd.	Park	4.7	●			●			●	●			●		
Huston Park Falmouth Rd.	Park	2	●	●	●			●			●	●			
Legion Ball Field Complex Depot Rd.	Park		●		●		●			●			●		
Graves Park Pleasant Hill Rd.	Park									●					
Mason-Motz Playground Middle Rd./Lunt Rd.	Park									●					
Mason-Motz Activity Center Middle Rd.	Activity center	2.5						●					●		●
Underwood Park Route 88	Park									●					
Bucknam Road Tennis Courts	Tennis courts				●										





Name/ Address	Facility type	Miles of trails	Athletic fields	Basketball courts	Tennis courts	Gazebo	Memorial	Passive recreation	Picnic tables	Playground	Skating pond	T-ball field	Trails/walking path	Water access	Indoor recreation
Depot Rd.															
High School Tennis Courts (Triple Courts) Woodville Rd.	Tennis courts				●										
Superintendent Tennis Courts Woodville Rd.	Tennis courts				●										
Depot Park Rt. 1 and Depot Rd.	Park							●							
Engine 2 Park Corner of Bucknam Rd. and Route 9	Memorial						●								
Falmouth Corners Corner of Falmouth and Bucknam Rds.	Park							●							
Fundy Road Cul- de-Sac Fundy Rd.	Park							●							
Heater Piece Woods Rd.	Park							●							
Nature Preserve Route 88	Natural area	3						●					●		
Phillips Park Route 1	Park							●							
Pine Grove Preserve Foreside Rd. and Route 88	Natural area	3					●						●		
Presumpscot Falls Park Allen Avenue Ext.	Natural area												●	●	
Town Forest Winn Rd. and Field Rd.	Natural area	1						●					●		
Underwood Park Foreside Rd. and Route 88	Park	1						●		●			●		
Village Park Hat Trick Drive	Park					●		●							



Name/ Address	Facility type	Miles of trails	Athletic fields	Basketball courts	Tennis courts	Gazebo	Memorial	Passive recreation	Picnic tables	Playground	Skating pond	T-ball field	Trails/walking path	Water access	Indoor recreation
Walton Park Allen Avenue Ext.	Park	0.2						●					●	●	
Blackstrap Hill Community Forest Hurricane and Blackstrap Rd.	Natural area	13.6						●					●		
Falmouth Nature Preserve Foreside Rd.	Natural area	2.5						●					●		
Hadlock Community Forest Hadlock Rd.	Natural area	5.7						●					●		
Hardy Road Conservation Area Hardy Rd.	Natural area	1.6						●					●		
North Falmouth Community Forest Blackstrap Rd. and Babbidge Rd.	Natural area	6.8						●					●		
River Point Conservation Area Gray Rd. and Falmouth Rd.	Natural area	3.6						●					●		
Suckfish Brook Conservation Area Upland Way and Mast Rd.	Natural area	3.3						●					●		
Tidewater Conservation Area Presumpscot Pt Rd.	Natural area	0.5						●					●		
Woods Road Community Forest Woods Rd. and Long Rd.	Natural area	3						●					●		



## NON-MUNICIPAL FACILITIES AND PROGRAMMING

Non-municipal and private facilities in Falmouth also provide recreation opportunities to supplement those offered by the Town. Falmouth Schools maintain a turf field and track, baseball field, softball field, and a grass practice field. Family Center Ice and Casco Bay Arena both operate indoor ice rinks. The facilities serve local area high schools and youth teams. Family Center Ice also operates Lee Twombly Pond, an outdoor refrigerated ice rink, which was closed for the 2022 – 2023 season, but recently re-opened in December of 2023. The organization is currently fundraising to upgrade its refrigeration mechanism to keep the rink operational. There are three country clubs located in Falmouth. Members of each country club have access to a golf course, pool, and racket sports like tennis and pickleball. Portland Yacht Club is also located in Falmouth. The Club offers learn to sail lessons for children and adults, hosts races throughout the summer, and provides boat launch services. There are also a variety of privately owned gyms and fitness centers throughout the Town.

## OPEN SPACE

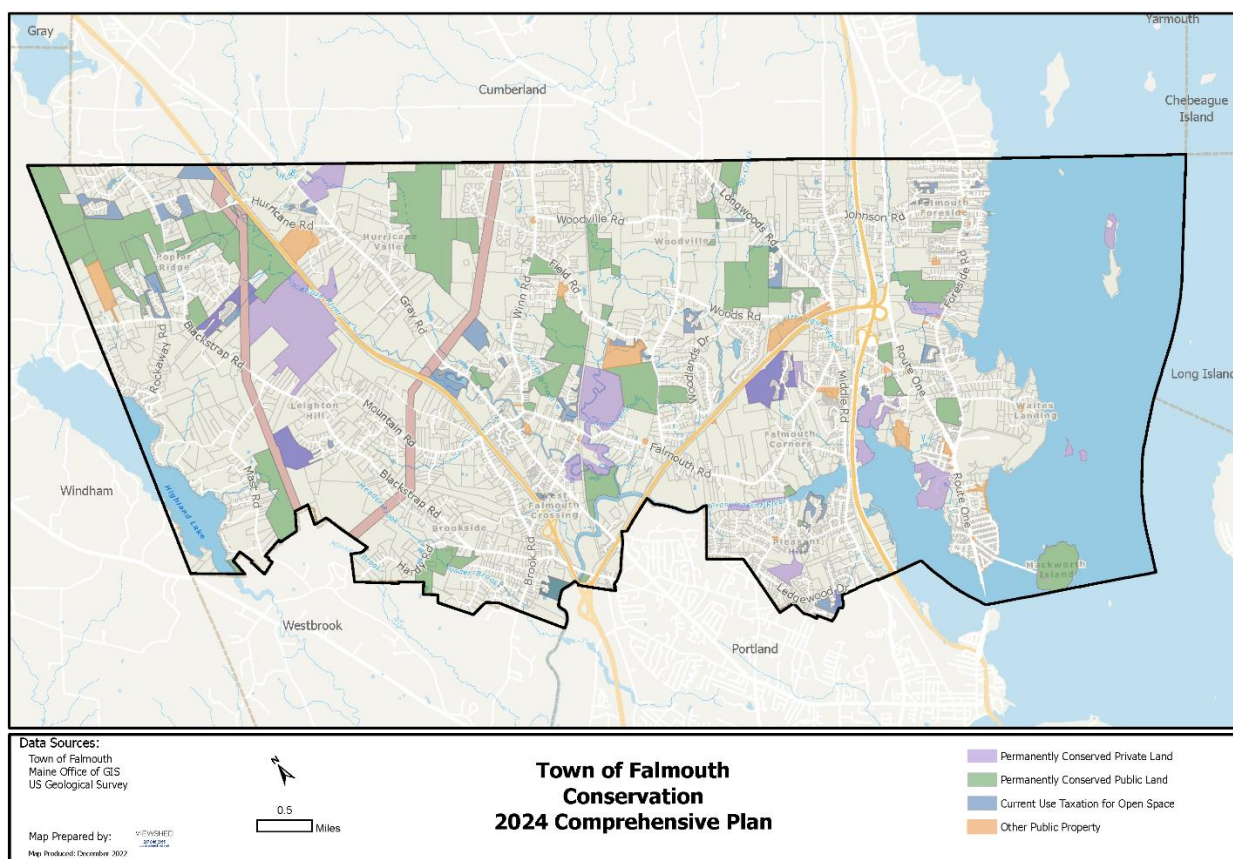
The Town of Falmouth currently owns 1,780.5 acres of conservation land; of which, 1,378 acres are protected. The Town also maintains an additional 170.4 acres of conservation easements that are protected. Town staff maintain trails for use by community members. There are 249.3 acres of privately held subdivision conservation land.

The Falmouth Land Trust (FLT) was established in 1981 to protect areas in Falmouth for the benefit of the community. Today, FLT owns and maintains 757.9 acres of conservation land and has 367.6 acres in conservation easements. In total, FLT maintains over 1,000 acres of conservation land in Falmouth. In addition to land maintenance, FLT hosts a variety of events for residents of all ages to engage with their natural environment. In April 2023, the Town entered into a contract agreement with FLT to actively manage Town-owned open space properties.

Mackworth Island is a state park located on the southeastern edge of Falmouth. The island is roughly 100 acres and has a 1.25-mile trail loop. The Baxter School for the Deaf is also located on the Island.

The Town has emphasized the need to increase the connectivity among open spaces across Falmouth. Multi-use trails are maintained by both the Town and FLT to provide connectivity. The Cross Falmouth Trail is a trail network that connects parks throughout the Town, as well as in Windham and Cumberland. Open space properties such as Community Park, Town Forest, Blackstrap Hill Community Forest, North Falmouth Community Forest and River Point Conservation Area are connected through the trail network.

Figure 6.2: Conservation Land Map



In 2013, the Town Council created the Land Management and Acquisitions Committee (LMAC), which replaced the Open Space Implementation Subcommittee. In 2007, Falmouth voters approved \$5,000,000 over the span of 10 years to fund the acquisition of open space. In April 2023, the Town entered into a contract agreement with FLT to manage and oversee open space properties.

Since the 2013 Comprehensive Plan, the Town increased their total open space. Falmouth's trail network grew from roughly 40 miles at the time the 2013 Plan was drafted to over 55 miles today. Over the same time, the amount of property owned by the Town increased from 1,524 acres to 1,780.5 acres.

In 2013, the Falmouth Land Trust owned 540 acres. The Trust held easements on 14 properties totaling approximately 335 acres. In 2023, the Land Trust owns 757.9 acres of land and holds easements totaling 367.6 acres.

Table 6.2: Falmouth Open Space

Type	Permanently Protected	Not Protected	Total	% of Total Land Area
Town-owned conservation land	1,358.1 acres	402.4 acres	1,760.5 acres	77.1%
Town-held conservation easements (not including FLT properties)	170.4 acres	0.0 acres	170.4 acres	5%
FLT-owned land	757.9 acres	0.0 acres	757.9 acres	22%
FLT conservation easements (not including Town-owned properties)	367.6 acres	0.0 acres	367.6 acres	11%
Privately held subdivision conservation land (deed restricted)	249.3 acres	0.0 acres	249.3 acres	7%
State-owned land	0.0 acres	38.9 acres	38.9 acres	1%
Other conservation land	86.3 acres	0.0 acres	86.3 acres	3%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>2,989.6 acres</b>	<b>441.3 acres</b>	<b>3,430.9 acres</b>	<b>17.9% of total Town land area</b>

Source: Town of Falmouth

## 2018 OPEN SPACE PLAN

In 2016, the Town's Long-Range Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC) began updating the 2006 Greening of Falmouth Plan. The plan created a vision for what Falmouth's open spaces should continue to be. The Plan includes a background on the Town's open space program, including land management and acquisition, information on key stakeholders, progress made after the 2006 Open Space Plan and 2016 Greening of Falmouth Plan, 2017 Open Space Survey and Public Forum results, and information on open space financing. The plan includes six goals for the Town's future open space planning:

1. Protect natural resources and open spaces
2. Provide a range of open spaces and experiences for a diverse population
3. Ensure that protected open spaces are available throughout the entire Town
4. Utilize open space acquisition as a land use growth management tool
5. Ensure the utility and longevity of open spaces through good management
6. Educate the public about the presence, functions, and values of open spaces





## LAND MANAGEMENT

### Land Management & Acquisition Committee (LMAC)

The LMAC replaced the Open Space Implementation Subcommittee of the Conservation Commission (2006 – 2008), Open Space Implementation Committee (2008 – 2011), and Land Management Team (2011 – 2013). The LMAC develops procedures for how conservation land and associated facilities are created, managed, and maintained in accordance with Town ordinances and advises the Town Council on matters related to the acquisition and management of conservation land. The LMAC creates management plans for each conservation property owned by the Town and recommends funding levels for the acquisition of new properties and for the management of existing properties. The LMAC is also responsible for producing information for the public regarding trails, land, and public facilities in the Town and designs public information events and activities regarding open space issues.

### Open Space Manager

From 2008-2019, Open space management was under the direction of a contracted open space ombudsperson managed by the Parks & Community Programs Director. In 2019, the Town hired a part-time Open Space Manager, and in April of 2023, the Town entered into a contract agreement with the Falmouth Land Trust to manage Town-owned open space properties.

Currently, the Town employs a part-time Property Steward/Trails Manager to provide general day-to-day trail management and property maintenance. The Open Space Manager, and now the Falmouth Land Trust, in cooperation with the Property Steward and Parks & Community Programs Director, work with landowners interested in permanently protecting their property from development, staff the LMAC and Falmouth Conservation Corps, and oversees the development and implementation of management plans for each open space property.

This team also works with external agencies and people in a position to support the Town's open space efforts, monitors easements held by the Town, and raise funds for open space acquisition and management.

### Conservation Corps

The Falmouth Conservation Corps is a group of volunteers that provide much of the hands-on labor required to effectively manage the Town's open spaces. Over 6,500 hours of volunteer time has been logged by the Conservation Corps since 2007, when the Town's 2006 Greening of Falmouth Plan was implemented. The volunteers have helped build trails, control invasive species, conduct natural resource inventories, and create educational materials for the public.

## Property and Forest Management Plans

Property management plans are designed to outline the goals, uses, and maintenance for Town open space. Falmouth has property management plans for Blackstrap Hill Community Forest, Community Park, East Branch, Falmouth Nature Preserve, Hardy Road, High Meadows, North Falmouth Community Forest, River Point, Suckfish Brook, and Woods Road. These plans were written between 2012 and 2013 and updated in 2017. Each individual property management plan outlines the conservation values, desired visitor experience, management goals and activities for the property, and future opportunities and plans. The Falmouth Land Trust is in the process of updating all management plans.

The goal of a forest management plan is to make sure that natural ecological functions of the forest are preserved. Management techniques could include harvesting some trees to encourage growth of certain species; ensuring that as a trail's popularity grows, there is not conflict between different user groups; or deciding not to expand a trail network or parking to preserve sensitive habitat. The Town created forest management plans in 2009 for Blackstrap Hill Community Forest, Hadlock Community Forest, Woods Road Community Forest, Falmouth Nature Preserve, North Falmouth Community Forest, Community Park, Pine Grove Park, and Town Forest. A separate management plan was created in 2011 for Hadlock Community Forest, North Falmouth Community Forest, Community Park, and Longwoods Road Forest.

One of the six goals in the Town's 2018 Open Space Plan is to ensure the utility and longevity of forests through good management. Good property and forest management can ensure that the Town's sensitive habitats and open spaces are preserved and are able to be enjoyed by the community. The LMAC and Open Space Manager have worked with Town staff to update management plans and provide guidance on future forest management needs.

In August 2022, the Town began working on a project to address safety concerns and improve the health of Pine Grove Preserve. The Town implemented a forest management plan that included a substantial harvest of dead and dying pine trees on the property. These trees posed a safety risk to park visitors. Pine trees across the Preserve were harvested and removed. In addition to dead and dying trees, invasive plants were also removed, which allows for new growth of multiple tree species and will improve the overall health of the forest.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Open space and access to recreation opportunities is important to Falmouth residents, and the Town offers significant opportunities for year-round recreation. As demand for recreation and open spaces increases, consideration should be made to help ensure that there are appropriate staffing and funding levels available to maintain quality services.

The Parks and Community Programs Department should look to make improvements to their municipal buildings and parks. The Department currently operates out of the Mason-Motz Activity Center, which is an older building requiring significant upkeep. In the future, the



Department will look to update its meeting room with new technology, maintain an outdoor classroom, address accessibility issues at the playground, increase parking, address drainage issues on the property, and explore more sustainable practices, like solar panels and additional heat pumps. The Department will also look improve its park's maintenance garage on Falmouth's east side to improve operations, increase efficiency, and support the Town's sustainability efforts.

Staffing levels are a notable challenge. Currently, one part-time staff member is responsible for managing and maintaining over 55 miles of trails, 12 trailheads, and several waterfront areas. Three full-time staff members maintain the Town's parks facilities, athletic fields, tennis courts, playgrounds, cemeteries, and outdoor ice rink. The Town has also struggled to recruit seasonal parks staff members in recent years.

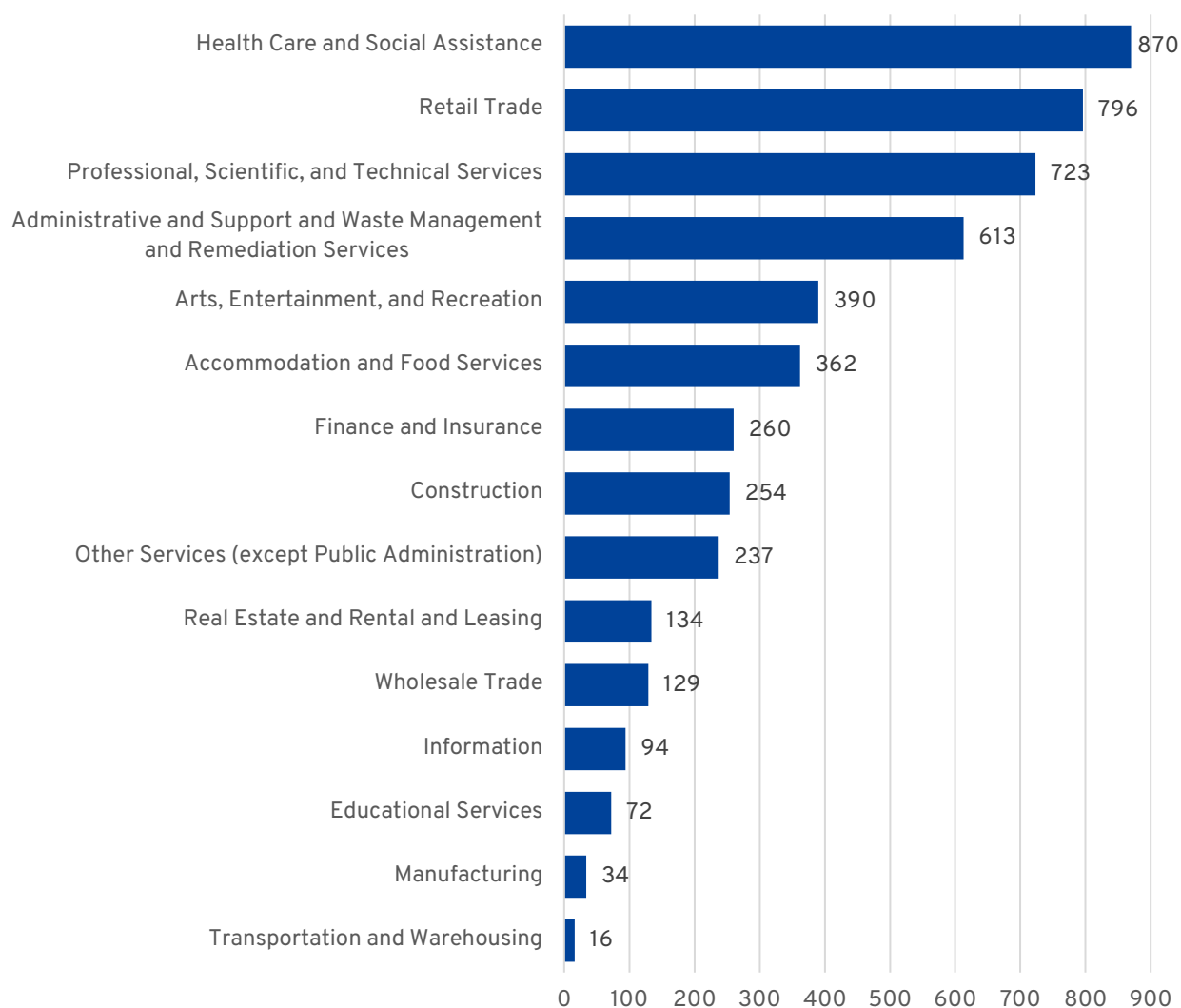
Residents value the extensive opportunities for recreation, including programs and availability of a variety of open space areas. In order to maintain a high level of service, the Town will look to balance the addition of new conservation land and facilities with the allocation of resources needed to maintain lands and provide quality programs for the community.

# ECONOMY

## LOCAL ECONOMY

The Town of Falmouth has maintained a strong and diversified economy in the last 10 years. Economic growth has been driven by continued new residential and commercial development, and the Town continues to benefit from the growth in the region. The Town has a diverse commercial tax base, with a variety of retail and service businesses, largely along the Town's two major commercial corridors, as well as professional and technical services, and healthcare services. Healthcare and Social Assistance is the largest employment industry in Falmouth followed by Retail Trade and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services.

**Figure 7.1: Employment by Industry, 2022**



Source: Maine Center for Workforce Research and Information



In 2020, the Town of Falmouth was the Town's largest employer (surpassing TD Bank north as the largest employer), followed by professional services firms, several large retail employers, a private golf club, and assisted living and senior care facilities.

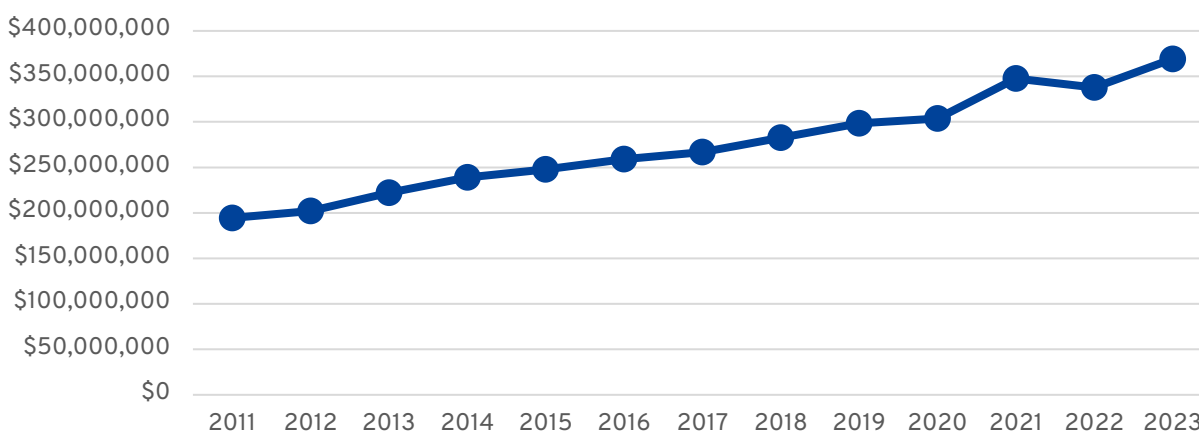
Largest employers (2020):

- Town of Falmouth
- TD Bank north
- Tyler Technologies
- Hannaford Bros. Inc.
- Walmart
- Sedgewood Commons
- Shaw's Supermarket
- Falmouth-by-the-Sea
- Skillin's Greenhouses
- The Woodlands Club
- OceanView Assisted Living

Other employers include Southworth Products Corporation, which is headquartered in Falmouth and has been in business in the greater Portland region for more than 110 years, as well as many small businesses (retail, personal services, restaurants, etc.) and non-profit organizations that support the community. While employment in the retail sector declined slightly from 2019 to 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, employment in retail has increased since 2020 but remains below retail employment levels of the early 2000s. Still, retail sales remain strong with a 90% increase in retail sales from 2011 – 2023, with an increase in sales each year except from 2021 to 2022.



Figure 7.2: Total Retail Sales in Falmouth, 2011 – 2023



Source: Maine Revenue Services

## REGIONAL ECONOMY

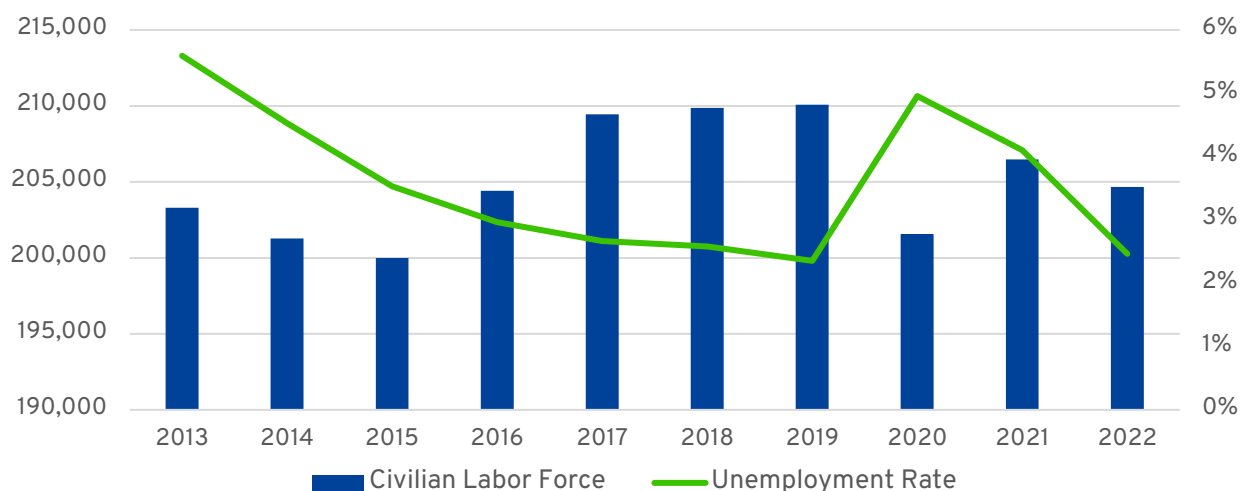
Falmouth is largely a residential community with a concentration of commercial activity along the Route 1 corridor and, to a lesser extent, the Route 100 corridor. While the Town is characterized by suburban single-family residential development, conservation areas, and agricultural land, it is located just north of the City of Portland, the state's largest municipality and the regional population and employment center. The Town's economy, employment opportunities, and commuting patterns are all closely linked to economic conditions in Portland and the broader metro region.

Since the 2008 recession, the region has broadened its economic diversity, with expansion of existing industries and the development of new sectors, including the growing food and beverage sector. Economic growth has been concentrated in more urban areas, and the region has struggled with increasing income inequality.<sup>2</sup> Challenges noted in the Greater Portland Council of Government's (GPCOG) 2018 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy include workforce growth and development and housing.

Both issues continue to impact the region's economic growth. While many areas of the economy have shown signs of a strong recovery post-pandemic, the labor force has struggled to recover. In 2022, the Portland-South Portland Labor Market Area (which includes Falmouth), returned to a pre-pandemic unemployment rate of 2.5%; however, the civilian labor force declined 2.6% from 2019 – 2022, despite an increase in total population in the region. This decline in the labor force is indicative of the region's aging population and the loss of workers from the labor force due to pandemic-related challenges such as lack of child care and health issues.

<sup>2</sup> 2018 GPCOG Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

**Figure: 7.3: Change in Civilian Labor Force and Unemployment Rate (Portland-South Portland Labor Market Area)**



Source: Maine Center for Workforce Research and Information

## CURRENT ECONOMIC TRENDS

The Town's economic base has shifted slightly in the past decade. Retail trade was previously the largest employment industry. With a slight decline in retail jobs since 2011 as well as growth in the healthcare industry, healthcare and social assistance is now the largest employment industry in Falmouth, followed by retail trade, and then professional, scientific, and technical services.

With a significant retail sector, many of the Town's businesses were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Businesses shifted to online, curbside pick-up, and outdoor operations, where feasible. The Town aided in sharing information on businesses' operations and establishing a regulatory framework for temporary outdoor retail and restaurant operations.

The COVID-19 pandemic also had a significant impact on the office market as office workers shifted to remote work, either temporarily or, in some cases, permanently. While the greater Portland office market has not fully recovered from the impacts of the pandemic, office vacancy rates have steadily declined since their peak in 2020. The

Falmouth/Cumberland/Yarmouth submarket had an office vacancy rate of 1.97% for 2022, compared to an overall rate of 7.59% for the combined regional suburban market<sup>3</sup>. The 2023 Greater Portland Market Outlook predicts an increase in office space availability as more office workers transition to work remotely for the long-term.

<sup>3</sup> 2023 Greater Portland Market Outlook

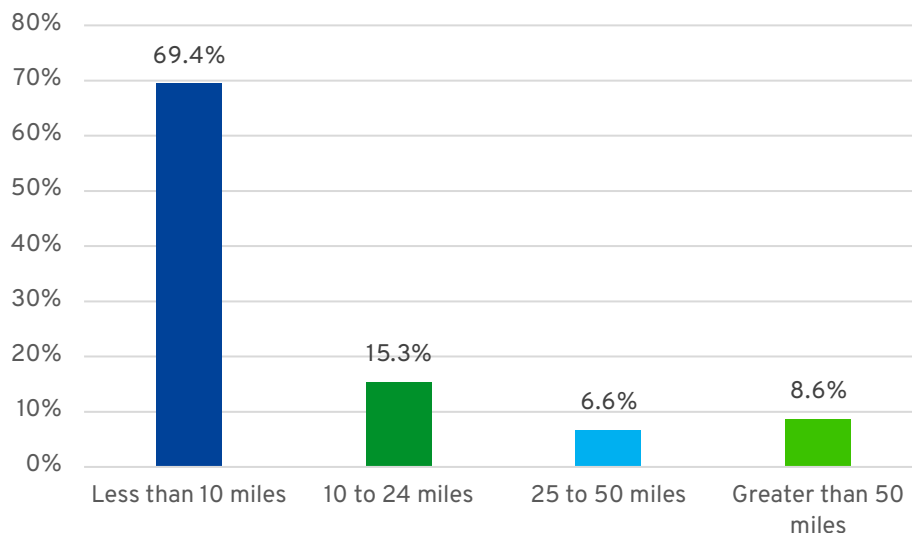
The expansion of research and development institutions as well as the growth of the biotech industry in Portland will continue to draw knowledge workers and entrepreneurs to the region. Falmouth's small-town character, amenities, exceptional public schools, and proximity to employment opportunities will continue to make the Town an attractive location for employees and entrepreneurs looking to relocate to the region.

Two new four-story retail and commercial buildings at Falmouth Plaza on Route 1 are the largest commercial development in the Town since the last Comprehensive Plan, adding approximately 50,000 square feet of primarily new office space with one restaurant use on the ground level of one of the buildings.

## EMPLOYMENT COMMUTER TRENDS

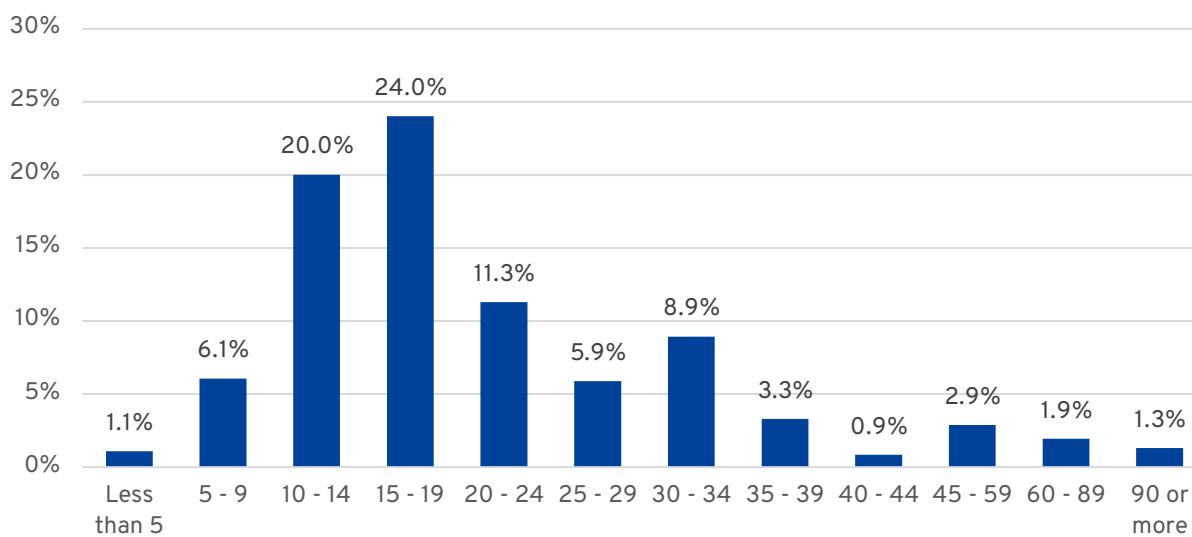
Falmouth's geographical position along the I-295 and I-95 corridors and just north of downtown Portland make it a desirable location for both residents and certain businesses. Most commuters living in Falmouth travel less than 10 miles (69.4%) and have a commute time of less than 25 minutes (84.7%). Despite being viewed as a bedroom community, Falmouth has a larger daytime inflow of employees than outflow and can be considered a regional employment center. Roughly 5,400 employees commute to Falmouth from outside the Town while 4,500 residents commute outside of Falmouth for work.

Figure 7.4: Resident Commute by Distance



Source: US Census On the Map, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES) 2021

Figure 7.5: Travel Time to Work (workers over 16 who did not work from home)



Source: Maine State Economist (2022)

## COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH AREAS

Since the 2013 Comprehensive Plan, the Town has established Village Center zoning districts to allow for mixed-use development within the Town's designated growth areas, along Route 1 South and Route 100. The intent of the Village Center districts is to support a variety of uses in a site configuration that will enhance the vibrancy and create a village character along the Route 1 corridor. In 2014, streetscape improvements were implemented to make the corridor safer and more accessible for pedestrians and cyclists. The completion of two office/retail buildings within the Falmouth Shopping Center Plaza and the proposed development north of the plaza will contribute to the Town's goal of adding vibrancy and supporting walkability of the district.

The Route 1 North corridor (north of the Falmouth spur interchange) is zoned for Business and Professional use. The Town has considered allowing a greater diversity of uses along this corridor including mixed-use and multi-family residential development, as reflected in the Route 1 North Vision Plan. This corridor has been identified as an ideal location for both housing and commercial uses, being proximate to transportation infrastructure and with existing access to public water and sewer service.

The Route 100 Corridor Overlay District was established to allow for additional requirements to help ensure that the rural character of the corridor is maintained while also accommodating development and traffic capacity along Route 100. The Town also established the West Falmouth Crossing Master Planned Development District and associated Exit 10 Design Guidelines to allow for flexibility and more creative site design for this area, while also protecting the rural character of West Falmouth.



## LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

In 2010, the Falmouth Economic Improvement Committee (FEIC) was formed but has been inactive in the last year. The FEIC was tasked with implementing the initiatives recommended in the Town's 2015 Economic Development Strategy.

The 2015 Strategy laid out implementation steps to enhance business growth, expansion, and retention, and to cultivate the Town's innovation and entrepreneurial community. The Strategy tasks the FEIC with implementation and calls for coordination and developing relationships with regional organizations, local business associations, business owners, and residents. Since 2015, the Town has made some efforts to implement action items, including amending the zoning ordinance to allow for a diversity of businesses in commercial areas, improving transportation infrastructure, and developing Class A office space.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Prior to going on hiatus in 2022, the FEIC noted some community opposition to commercial and retail development proposals and efforts to support business growth in the Town. Similarly, the Economic Development Strategy identified community opposition to growth, with some residents concerned about the potential adverse impacts of commercial growth on the Town's character.

Goal one of the Strategy is to improve Falmouth's economic development climate. Noted in the Strategy is the dichotomy of values related to Falmouth's future and the need for balanced policy that allows for economic growth that is appropriate for the Town. The Strategy recommends initiating conversations on economic development policy and including residents, business owners, and business associations in those discussions.

Availability of a diversity of housing options and affordable housing has become an increasingly critical issue for employers in attracting employees. There are very few rental units, apartments, and condos within the Town, and the housing that is available is too expensive for most people, especially younger workers and seniors.

Falmouth is a highly desirable community with many assets that influence the Town's ability to build a more sustainable economic future. First, the Town's commitment to investing in infrastructure, recreational and open space amenities, public schools, and other amenities and services provides an exceptional quality of life in Falmouth. With the implementation of proposed projects and maintenance of existing facilities and services, the Town will continue to be a desirable place to live.

Both the Route 1 and Route 100 commercial corridors have development potential within the designated growth areas. Development of additional commercial and mixed-use building could





support the Town's vision of a more vibrant and intimate village areas with amenities and services that meet the needs of nearby residents.

Town residents have higher educational attainment and a higher net income than the region, providing a market that could support a variety of retail and service businesses. Additionally, the Town's proximity to Portland and growth of surrounding communities contribute to the broader regional market for certain types of businesses.

Finally, the community's commitment to education and life-long learning is a value that is demonstrated through the Town's excellent public schools and high educational attainment and is a fundamental value established by the community during the Vision and Values initiative. The Town has an opportunity to build upon the existing educational resources and leverage creativity and talent in the community to promote innovation and entrepreneurship.

## HOUSING

The challenge of housing affordability and the need for a greater variety of housing types has been evaluated in the 2000 Comprehensive Plan, the 2013 Comprehensive Plan and in regional and local housing studies completed in the last 10 years. One goal of the 2013 Plan is to create more diverse housing options to meet the needs of residents throughout all stages of life and to provide housing options to support the Town's workforce.

While housing affordability and availability has become an increasingly critical issue in the region for many years, the direct and indirect impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as other external changes impacting the region have exacerbated the housing crisis in the region and state. The question of the Town's appropriate role in addressing a regional affordable and workforce housing crisis continues to be a divisive issue.

The Town of Falmouth has initiated some projects and policy changes to address the Town's housing needs. A more robust and steadfast approach to create housing opportunities is necessary to meet the changing needs of the community and the regional economic challenges.

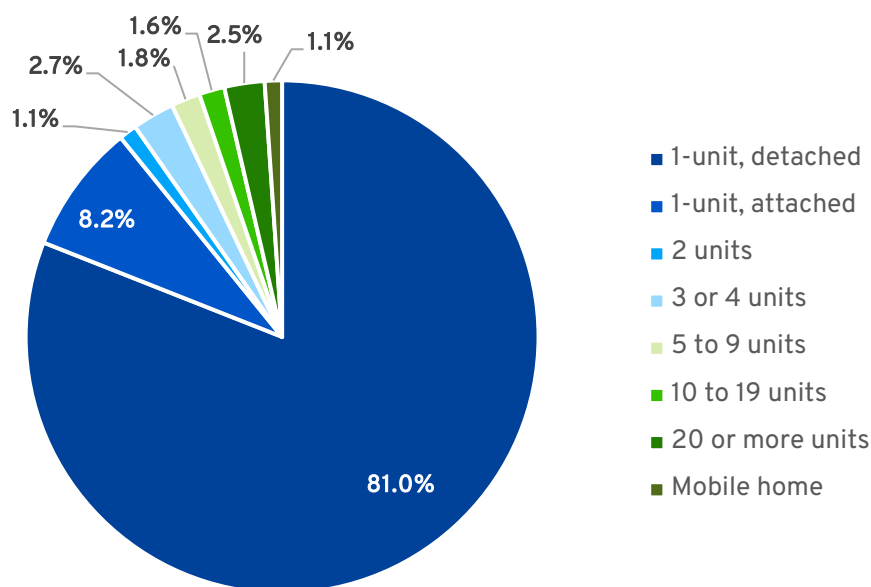
### HOUSING STOCK

From 2010 to 2022, the total number of housing units in Falmouth increased from 4,751 to 5,240, or about 10%. Over the same period, the Town's population increased 11.8%. Of the 5,240 units, approximately 6% are vacant, which is similar to surrounding communities. While some units that are categorized as vacant are seasonally occupied, other may be short-term rentals, or vacant and unoccupied.

There is very little variety in the Town's housing stock. More than 81% of housing units are single-family detached, and less than 10% of units are in structures with three or more units. Single-family detached units are structures containing only one dwelling unit intended for the use of one family. Falmouth allows for mobile homes pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A §4358(3)(M) and manufactured housing pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A §4358(2) where single-family detached dwellings are permitted.

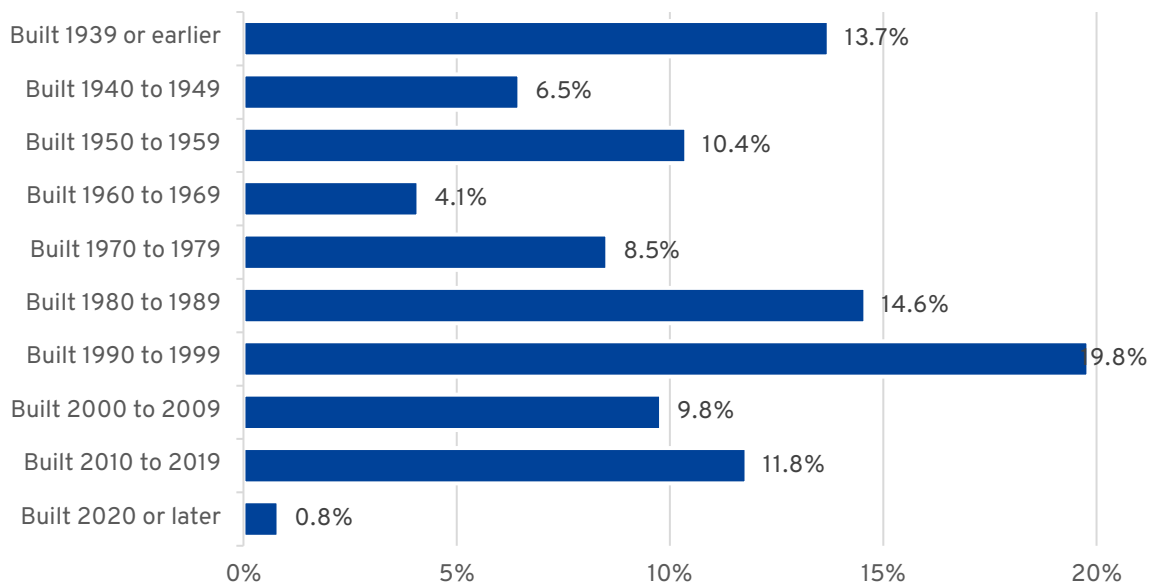
In recent years, there has been an increase in the diversity of housing types being constructed within the Town. From 2014 – 2021, approximately 60% of new housing units (excluding units in retirement communities) were single-family dwelling units. From 2006 – 2013, 84% of new dwelling units (excluding units in retirement communities) were single-family homes. Since 2019, more two-family dwellings have been constructed compared to prior years. Additionally, approximately 12% of new units constructed from 2014 – 2021 were ADUs.

Figure 8.1: Percent of Housing Units by Units in Structure



Source: ACS 2018-2022 5-year estimates

Figure 8.2: Housing Units by Year Built



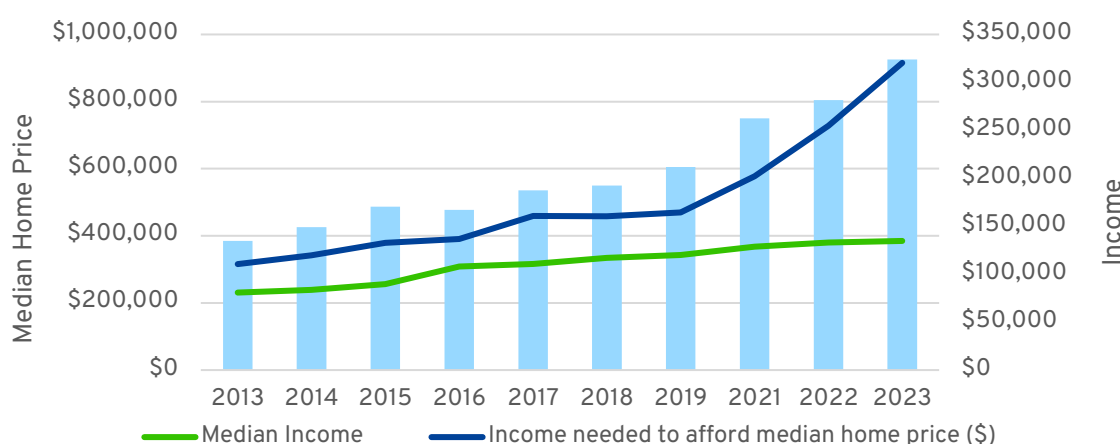
Source: ACS 2018-2022 5-year estimates

With steady growth in the Town for several decades, there is variety in the age of the housing stock. About 22% of the Town's housing units were built after 2000, and only 13.7% were constructed prior to 1940. Housing stock in Falmouth is in good condition; however, the increased cost of maintenance and repairs may be a concern for some residents.

## AFFORDABILITY

While the lack of housing affordability was noted in the 2013 Plan, the Plan's policies and implementation strategies do not directly address affordability. Since 2013, the Town, like many other communities in the region, has experienced a drastic increase in the cost of housing. From 2013 to 2023, the median home price more than doubled, from \$384,500 to \$925,000, an increase of 140%. While incomes have increased as well, incomes have not kept pace with housing costs. It should also be noted that median income tends to rise as a result of housing prices rising, because a higher income is needed to purchase a home. So, as housing costs (and, as a result, incomes) rise, fewer people have the resources to be able to move into a community.

Figure 8.3: Median Home Price Compared to Median Income



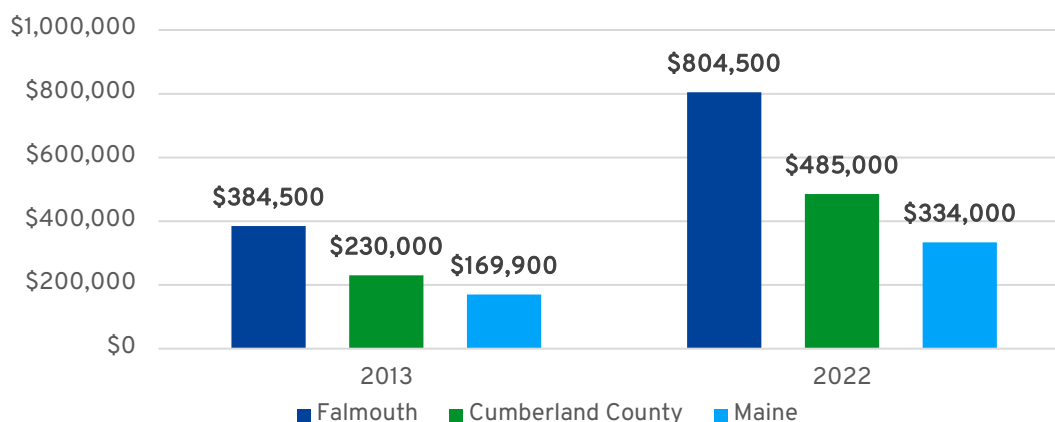
Source: MaineHousing

While housing costs have increased similarly in Cumberland County (130%) and Maine (111%) from 2013 – 2023, the Town's median home price was already 57% higher than the median home price for the County. As a result, the increase in home prices and rental costs have made living Falmouth unattainable for most households in the region.

1.8% of Falmouth's housing units are affordable (income restricted rental apartments). Falmouth has three properties providing affordable housing in Falmouth. Blackstone I and II on Squidere Lane is a property with 39 income restricted units for people with disabilities or people aged 62 and over. Foreside Village Apartments on Fundy Road offer 24 income-restricted units for people with disabilities or people aged 62 and over. Foreside Estates on Clearwater Drive have 35 income-restricted units that are not age restricted. In 2023, Falmouth had 18 low-income families using Housing Choice Vouchers. Income restrictions are

based on the U.S. Housing and Urban Development's income limits for the Portland Metro, which includes Falmouth.<sup>4</sup>

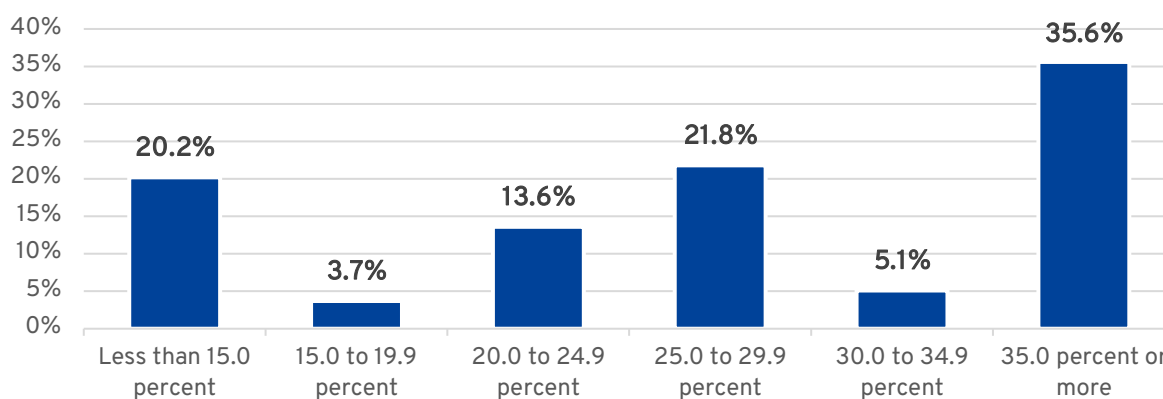
**Figure 8.4: Change in Median Home Price**



Source: MaineHousing

The median rent in Falmouth (in 2018 – 2022) was \$1,973 per month. Approximately 36% of renter households in the Town spent more than 35% of their income on rent and nearly 42% spent more than 30%. Again, these measures of affordability do not include households who are unable to afford and access housing in Falmouth. For comparison, the income needed to afford the median rent of \$1,973 is \$78,936 (based on 30% of gross income), while the income needed to afford the median rent in Cumberland County (\$1,418) is \$56,700.

**Figure 8.5: Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income (percent of occupied units paying rent)**



Source: ACS 2018-2022 5-year estimates

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2023 Adjusted Home Income Limits, Accessed February 3, 2024. [https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/home-datasets/files/HOME\\_IncomeLmts\\_State\\_ME\\_2023.pdf](https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/home-datasets/files/HOME_IncomeLmts_State_ME_2023.pdf)



## HOUSING DEMAND

Changing demographics, including slightly smaller household and family size and an aging population are impacting demand for housing. Across the region, there has been a significant increase in demand for housing resulting from several factors. Regionally, there has been a slow-down in housing development in recent years. The increase in domestic in-migration to Maine, especially since 2020, combined with the increase in the number of immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, coming to southern Maine has put added pressure on the region's housing market.

The Town experienced an increase in residential construction permit applications in 2021, with development pressure increasing post-pandemic. While demand in the regional market has reduced slightly, housing prices remain high in southern Maine, and the average number of days on the market for a single-family home remains significantly lower than in 2019<sup>5</sup>. These numbers are indicative of the latent demand for housing throughout the region, as people continue to be attracted to the quality of life and amenities in the region, and in Falmouth in particular.

The approach to growth and housing development throughout the region has varied. Some municipalities have opted to control growth through rate of growth ordinances similar to Falmouth. Other communities have been more proactive in allowing for and encouraging new residential development, especially affordable multi-family housing. Still, demand for housing throughout the region remains high, with home sales prices remaining high and low inventory. Population growth in the region has contributed to demand for housing in the region.

## HOUSING SUPPLY

In 2000, in response to rapid residential development in the 1990s, the Town adopted a rate of growth ordinance. The purpose of the ordinance was to limit uncontrolled growth and plan for continued residential population growth at an appropriate rate based on the Town's ability to provide services and infrastructure to support it.

The adoption of this ordinance contributed to the slow-down in residential development in Falmouth. The ordinance remains in effect and has been modified over the last decade to provide more allowances for development in certain growth areas and for the development of housing for older people.

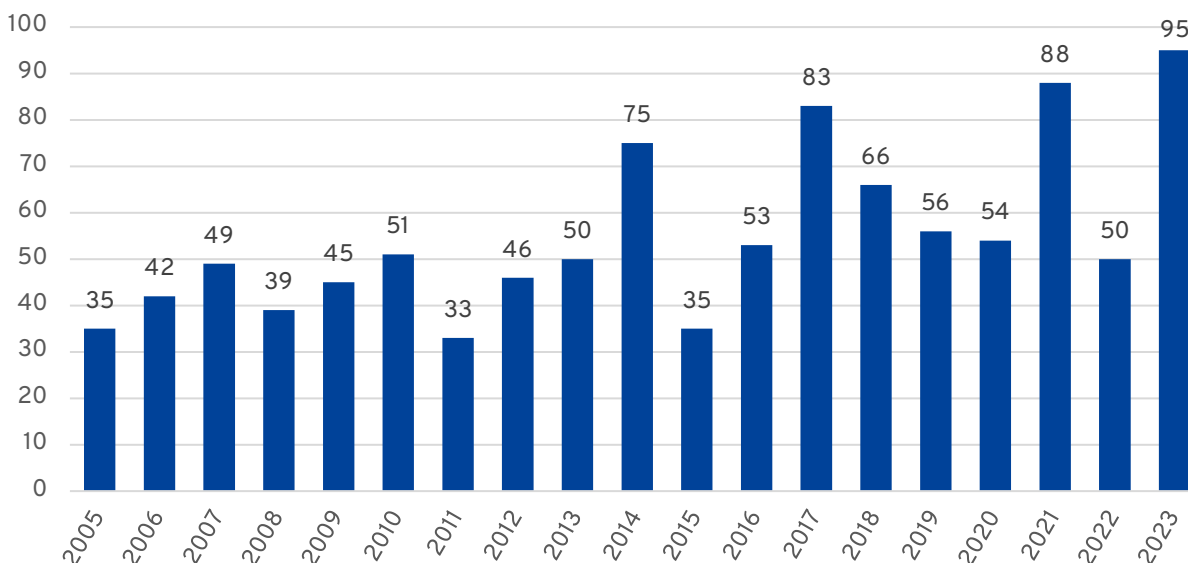
In the years since the pandemic, development pressure in Falmouth has increased, with more housing units (excluding units in retirement community developments) being constructed in

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<sup>5</sup> Maine Real Estate & Development Association, Southern Maine Residential Forecast Presentation, January 26, 2023, Accessed March 1, 2023, <https://mereda.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/07-Dava-Davin-2023-Residential-Forecast.pdf>.

2023 than in any of the past 15 years. Since the 2013 Comprehensive Plan, there has been more variety in the type of housing units constructed, with a greater percentage of two-family, multi-family, and ADUs being constructed compared to single-family units. Still, single-family homes make up most new residential development in Falmouth, with 64% of dwelling units in the Town being single-family dwellings.

**Figure 8.6: Total Units Constructed (excluding retirement communities)**



Source: Town of Falmouth

**Figure 8.7: New Units Completed by Type (Total)**



Source: Town of Falmouth



## RECENT AND PROPOSED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

To address the needs of the Town's and region's aging population, Falmouth has continued to support development of housing for older adults. Recent senior housing development include several expansions of OceanView retirement community and an addition of 19 units to Blackstone Apartments, an affordable senior housing development. Most new (non-senior) residential development continues to be located in West Falmouth. Recent developments include Homestead Farms, a 68 detached unit development off Gray Road, and Clover Way, a 20-unit duplex condominium development, also off Gray Road to the south of Homestead Farms. Both developments were completed in 2022.

A mixed-use building on Route 1, south of the I-295 interchange, was approved by the Planning Board and approved for construction in early 2023. The proposal includes 46 market-rate apartments and will offer an alternative to the single-family suburban housing that has dominated the housing market in Falmouth. These apartments reflect the significant increase in multi-family housing construction in 2023.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Falmouth residents have been largely divided on issues of growth and housing development, and the Town has struggled to find an acceptable balance between development and land conservation. Friction around these discussions is apparent in prior plans, studies and from community feedback during the recent Vision and Values process. At other times, tension about growth and development patterns have been brought to light in response to a proposed development project.

The Town has engaged in deliberate efforts to plan for growth, analyze potential impacts of various development scenarios, and implement best planning practices for smart growth. Still, the Town has not been able to establish a clear consensus on how to move forward in guiding and regulating future growth.

As the Town weighs the costs and benefits of different development scenarios, the region continues to struggle with a housing shortage and affordability crisis. While most residents are homeowners and are largely insulated from the financial impacts of rising rents and housing costs, the lack of affordable housing in Falmouth and region is having an impact on the Town in other ways as well. Lack of affordable housing is impacting employers throughout the region and is affecting the Town's and private sector's ability to provide services and amenities.

## TRANSPORTATION

Falmouth is located adjacent to Maine's largest city and has developed as a prominent suburb of Portland. Historically, the extensive trolley service from Portland to the Falmouth Foreside area helped link the two communities. As Falmouth transitioned from destination to community, key transportation infrastructure has allowed Falmouth to accommodate population growth, suburban lifestyle, and economic development.

### ROADS

To support connections to major urban areas to the south and north, the Town is dominated by three major north-south accesses: the I-295 state highway, I-95 interstate highway and Route 1 which is a federal highway. I-295 is the major regional connector with an average annual daily traffic of 26,410 vehicles and is the direct link to Portland. I-95, which connect Maine to states to the south, has an average annual daily traffic of 14,990 vehicles. Route 1 is a local thoroughfare in Falmouth with an average annual daily traffic of 11,886 vehicles, connecting directly to Portland from the south and Cumberland to the north. While there are significant north-south connections through Falmouth there are limited east-west connections and traversing the Town can be slow due to traffic and limited road capacity. The turnpike spur connects I-295 to I-95 and has an average annual daily traffic of 5,840 vehicles. Falmouth is primarily residential with significant rural areas with low population density<sup>6</sup>.

### Department of Public Works

The Falmouth Department of Public Works is responsible for maintenance of townwide public infrastructure. The Town's pavement management responsibilities include street repaving, sidewalk and street repairs, and emergency maintenance. In the winter, the Department clears snow from streets, public parking lots and sidewalks. Recently Falmouth implemented a cross-department asset management software program to track public infrastructure, manage work orders, and plan future capital projects. This new asset management tool will help optimize pavement resurfacing and coordinate with other infrastructure and utility projects. Department of Public Works also constructs parking lots for parks and other public facilities, installs small furniture and street amenities and replaces storm drains.

### Road Moratorium

Prior to repaving or reconstructing a roadway, the Town provides a 60-day notice to abutting properties about upcoming paving work prior to work starting. Once the roadway is paved, a 5-year moratorium is placed on the roadway prohibiting non-emergency excavation. This helps

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<sup>6</sup> Maine Department of Transportation, *Traffic Data Website*. Accessed March 16, 2023.  
<https://mainedottrafficdata.drakewell.com/publicmultinodemap.asp>



the Town manage staff and resources associated with paving and protects the investment in municipal infrastructure.

## Crash Data

In 2022, there were a total of 304 car crashes within the Town on public roads. This is up from 266 crashes in 2021. Most accidents happened August – January from 2 pm – 6 pm. Of the 304 car crashes in 2022, 56 involved deer and reflect the rural nature of some parts of Falmouth. There was only one fatal car crash in 2022.<sup>7</sup> Three high crash locations were identified in 2022. The intersection of Blackstrap Road and Brook Road, the intersection of I-295 northbound on ramp from Bucknam Road, and the intersection of Falmouth Crossing Road and Gray Road each had ten or more crashes in 2022.

## Bridges

Within the Town limits there are 45 road and rail bridges. These bridges cross streams, the Piscataqua River, and the Presumpscot Estuary and River. Falmouth owns and maintains the Field Road Bridge over East Piscataqua and Mill Road Bridge over the Piscataqua River. There are 19 bridges owned by the Maine Turnpike Authority and 22 bridges are owned by the State of Maine. A \$10.6 million bridge replacement project has been identified for Bucknam Road bridge and an \$8 million bridge replacement project for Johnson Road Bridge in the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS) 2022 – 2025 Transportation Improvement Program.

## Route 1 North Infrastructure Project

In 2021, the Route 1 North Infrastructure Project was initiated to prepare a preliminary engineering plan and cost estimate for the infrastructure component of the 2017 Route 1 North Vision Plan. This project focuses on the section of Route 1 between Bucknam Road and the Cumberland town line and the Johnson Road section between Middle Road and Route 1. The work will include a shared use path and sidewalk along Route 1, modifications to Johnson Road/Route 1 intersections with sidewalks, a sidewalk for the north side of Johnson Road between Middle Road and Route 1, bus shelter improvements, and wastewater force main improvements.

## REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION

The GPCOG is a Cumberland County regional planning organization helping the region adapt and thrive across issues like safe roads, public transportation, housing, economic growth, and environmental sustainability. PACTS recently merged with GPCOG in 2020 and represents 18

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<sup>7</sup> Maine DOT, *Public Crash Query Tool*. Accessed March 16, 2023.  
<https://mdotapps.maine.gov/MaineCrashPublic/>



communities. PACTS is a federal metropolitan planning organization that coordinates transportation planning and investment decisions with the State, municipalities, and public transportation partners. PACTS directs and allocates \$25 million annually for community studies and projects that meet the organization's goals and priorities. PACTS shares responsibility with Maine Department of Transportation for programming of all capital improvement projects funded with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Federal Highway Administration (FHA) funds in the PACTS Capital Management Area.

In 2011, PACTS completed the Moving Great Portland Towards a Transit-Focused Region study that evaluated Portland North Alternatives. It found that there is a large daily commuter population in the Portland/Yarmouth corridor. The study found that 1,200 people from Cumberland, 1,950 people from Falmouth and 550 people from Yarmouth commute to Portland daily. While this data should be retested in a post-pandemic environment, it emphasizes the demand suburbs like Falmouth have for transit options. Recommendations of the study included prioritizing existing infrastructure to create new multimodal transportation and transit-oriented development opportunities.

The 2022 – 2025 PACTS Transportation Improvement Program identifies 12 projects in Falmouth. Highlights from this list include a mill and fill project along Lunt Road, a highway striping project for interstate striping, an emergency response project along I-295, multiple highway ultra-thin bonded wearing course projects along Interstate 295, highway safety improvements along Route 26, Bucknam Road bridge replacement, Johnson Road bridge replacement, and bridge painting on the I-295 Presumpscot Bridge.

### Greater Portland METRO

Greater Portland METRO (METRO) is the region's fixed-route bus system that provides transit service to Brunswick, Falmouth, Freeport, Gorham, Portland, South Portland, Westbrook, and Yarmouth, and provides connections to local and regional transit systems. Route 7 provides bus service from downtown Portland to Falmouth. There are six total stops along the route. METRO Pulse Elm Street is the METRO transfer point in downtown Portland. The other stops include Washington Avenue and Veranda Street in Portland, Walmart in Falmouth, Town Landing in Falmouth, and Ocean View Development in Falmouth. End to end the route is approximately 27 minutes and variations of the route run seven days a week. Monday – Saturday service every hour in most locations begins at 6:30 a.m. and ends at 7:25 p.m. Sunday service every hour in most locations begins at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 4:25 p.m. In early Summer 2024, METRO plans to extend the Route 7, which currently runs between Falmouth Foreside and downtown Portland, south and west to the Jetport. Additionally, METRO plans to double weekday frequency on the Route 7 for most of the day. This will result in consistent, twice-hourly service to the Jetport, and providing a new one-seat ride to the Jetport from the neighborhoods surrounding Washington Ave on Portland's peninsula, Veranda Street in East Deering, and Route 1 in Falmouth. In fall 2024, METRO will pilot a microtransit program, an on-



demand transit option that can connect people to near-by amenities and neighbors within METRO's coverage area. The program is expected to replace the Route 7 loops serving Town Landing Market and Oceanview.

## Rail Transportation

There are no passenger rail stops within Falmouth. There are two rail lines that run north-south through the Town. The first runs parallel to I-295 and is owned by CSX Transportation. The second rail line runs further inland to the west and is owned by St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad which connects Portland to Montreal. Given the rural character of some neighborhoods not all streets have safety gates at crossings. Federal law requires sounding of horn at crossings. Blackstrap Road and Falmouth Road crossings are currently located in a quiet zone, which is approved by the Federal Railroad Authority to preserve livability around rail lines. No routine train whistle will sound in this zone at crossings. A quiet zone is only allowed if there are adequate supplemental safety measures in place that will ensure similar or greater safety related conditions than reliance on a train whistle.<sup>8</sup> In June of 2021 and 2022, the Amtrak Downeaster made stops at the Falmouth Country Club to provide rail access for attendees of The Live & Work in Maine Open Golf Tournament, part of the Korn Ferry Tour.

The Town has engaged in discussions about a potential West Falmouth Amtrak stop, adjacent to the West Falmouth Crossing shopping center. The Amtrak Downeaster line runs through West Falmouth providing service to Freeport and Brunswick.

## BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

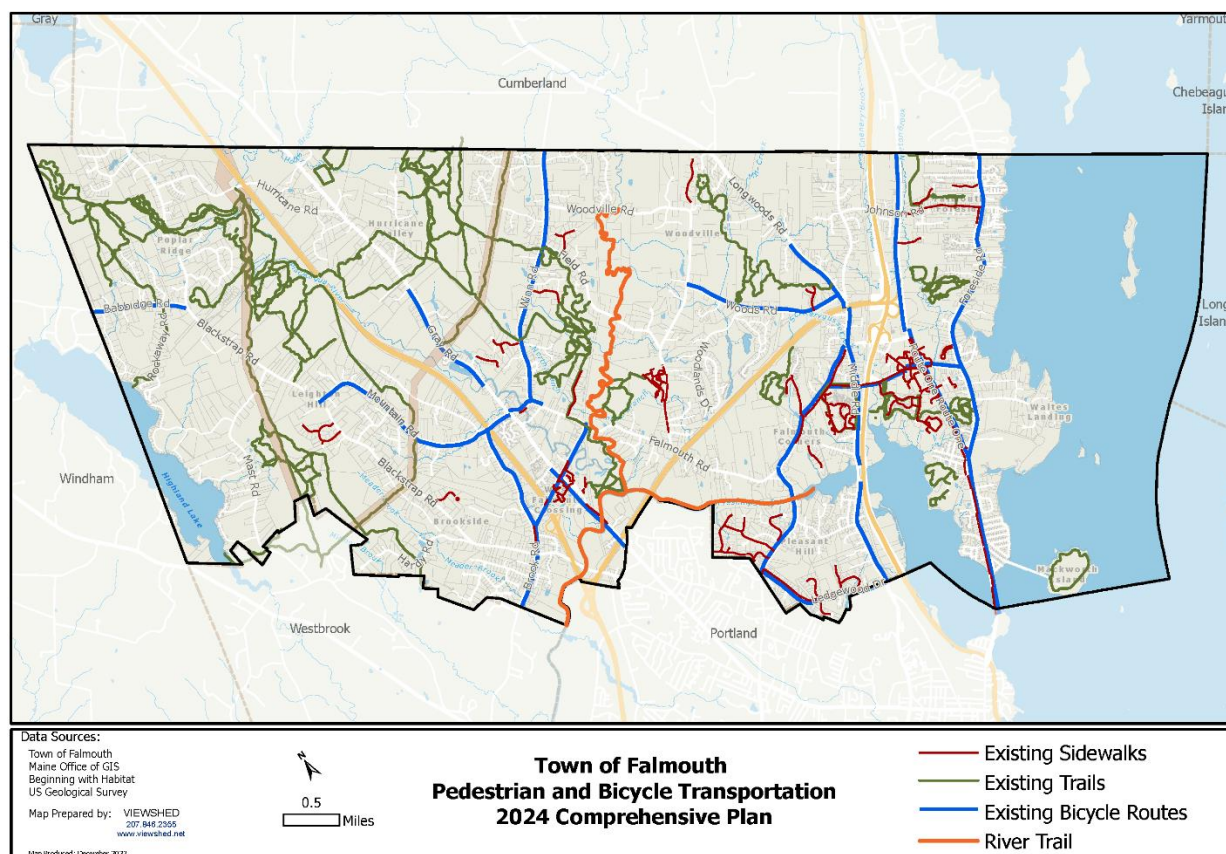
Falmouth does not have a formal Bicycle Pedestrian Committee driving policy or initiatives for Town. Various plans and strategies have been completed throughout the years and Town staff have worked with stakeholders to push priorities through to the Town Council. A 2016 Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan has been used as the basis of community group meetings. Recent community meetings sought input and explored ideas to incorporate bicycle and pedestrian priorities in current or planned projects. The 2016 Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan outlined a 20-year vision and recommended actions. Recommended actions are detailed by three categories and seven project types. The categories include General Management, Pedestrian Improvements and Bicycle Improvements. The project types include Route 1 Commercial Area, To School Campus, To Downtown Portland, Neighborhood Pedestrian Walks, and Rural Bicycle Route Loops. There are also over 55 miles of trails townwide that explore a range of terrain and open space. With most coastal properties being private residential spaces, the parks and trail

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<sup>8</sup> Department of Transportation, *Train Horn Rule and Quiet Zones*, 2020. Accessed March 16, 2023. <https://railroads.dot.gov/highway-rail-crossing-and-trespasser-programs/train-horn-rulequiet-zones/train-horn-rule-and-quiet>

networks also provide critical access to the waterfront. The Town has mapped parks and trails via their online Parks and Trails Finder App.

**Figure 9.1: Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Infrastructure Map**



In 2021, the Town Council approved a resolution to create a Rail Corridor Use Advisory Council to consider future use of the Casco Bay SLA Corridor as a multi-use “trail-until-rail.” In January of 2023, after a review of potential rail and non-rail uses for the state-owned Berlin Subdivision rail corridor from Portland to the Auburn/New Gloucester town line, seven of 15 members of the Portland to Auburn Rail Use Advisory Council voted to recommend the conversion of 26.5 miles of existing railroad track to an interim bicycle and pedestrian trail. Many people use the streets in Falmouth for biking both for recreation and commuting. There is a mix of paved shoulders and dedicated bike lanes that have stenciled bicycle lane and road sharing symbols and pavement markings. There is currently minimal signage or continuity of bikeways in Falmouth.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Continued growth in region will impact transportation and transportation infrastructure. As the population grows, demand and need for public transportation and a variety of transportation options will increase. The Town will also continue to address safety concerns for all road users. The Town is engaged in several projects to improve bicycle and pedestrian access and safety in



Falmouth and will continue to support efforts to improve connectivity and access within and beyond the Town.

The cost of transportation infrastructure maintenance is a growing concern, and the benefits of extension and expansion of roads, sidewalks, and other infrastructure should be carefully considered relative to the long-term costs of maintaining these facilities.

Falmouth will continue to consider its position within the region as it relates to transportation options, including bus service and potential rail opportunities. The Town will look to balance increasing access to transportation options, while considering the impact of an expanding transportation network on the community's rural character.

# HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

## HISTORIC RESOURCES

Falmouth's history dates back approximately 12,000 years ago as the Paleo-Indians followed big game into land now known as Maine. Maine's indigenous people began to practice agriculture 7,000 years ago. Later in the early 1600's, European settlers began to arrive, and the incorporation of the Town followed in 1718. Over the years, Falmouth has shown honor and acknowledgment of its historic assets through its efforts to preserve and celebrate its precious history and resources.

### Prehistoric Archaeological Resources

The Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) recommends considering two types of archaeological sites in preparing municipal growth management plans: prehistoric archaeological sites and historic archaeological sites. Prehistoric sites are Native American sites that come from the period before European arrival. Historic sites are post-European arrival era. Prehistoric sites are commonly located within 50 meters of canoe-navigable waterways, on well-drained, level land. Ancient sites dating back to over 10,000 years ago may be located on sandy soils within 200 meters of small streams.

Falmouth has 24 prehistoric archaeological sites. Prehistoric artifacts typically included habitation/workshop sites, lithic (stone raw material) quarries, cemeteries, rock art and pictographs. The MHPC determined that 15 of these sites may be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Most of these prehistoric archaeological sites are located along waterways, which was their means of transportation, and may extend 50 yards inland. Prehistoric archaeological resources in Falmouth are located along the east shores of Highland Lake, along parts of the Presumpscot and Piscataqua Rivers, along estuarine and coastal waters of Foreside and around Casco Bay islands. The Town should consider further evaluation of these sites to determine eligibility status. Two sites are located on Highland Lake. The Town also has several sites that are located on the Piscataqua and Presumpscot Riverbanks.

MHPC describes the archaeological site at the River Point Conservation Area as highly significant and has recommended that the site be nominated on the National Register for Historic Places. MHPC has also completed a reconnaissance archaeological survey of the islands.

### Historic Archaeological Resources

Historic archaeological resources began with the arrival of European settlements in Falmouth. Historic archaeological sites are often found around transportation corridors, first rivers, then roads as they were built. To date, 13 historic archaeological sites have been documented. Sites range from settlements, burial ground, brickyard, roads, and vessels.



There have not been any professional surveys for historic archaeological sites conducted to date. The MHPC recommends that future archaeological survey should focus on identification of potentially significant resources associated with the agricultural, residential, and industrial past of Falmouth, specifically associated with the early European settlements in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Below is a list of the historic archaeological sites that the MHPC has documented for the Town:

**Table 10.1: List of Historic Archaeological Sites**

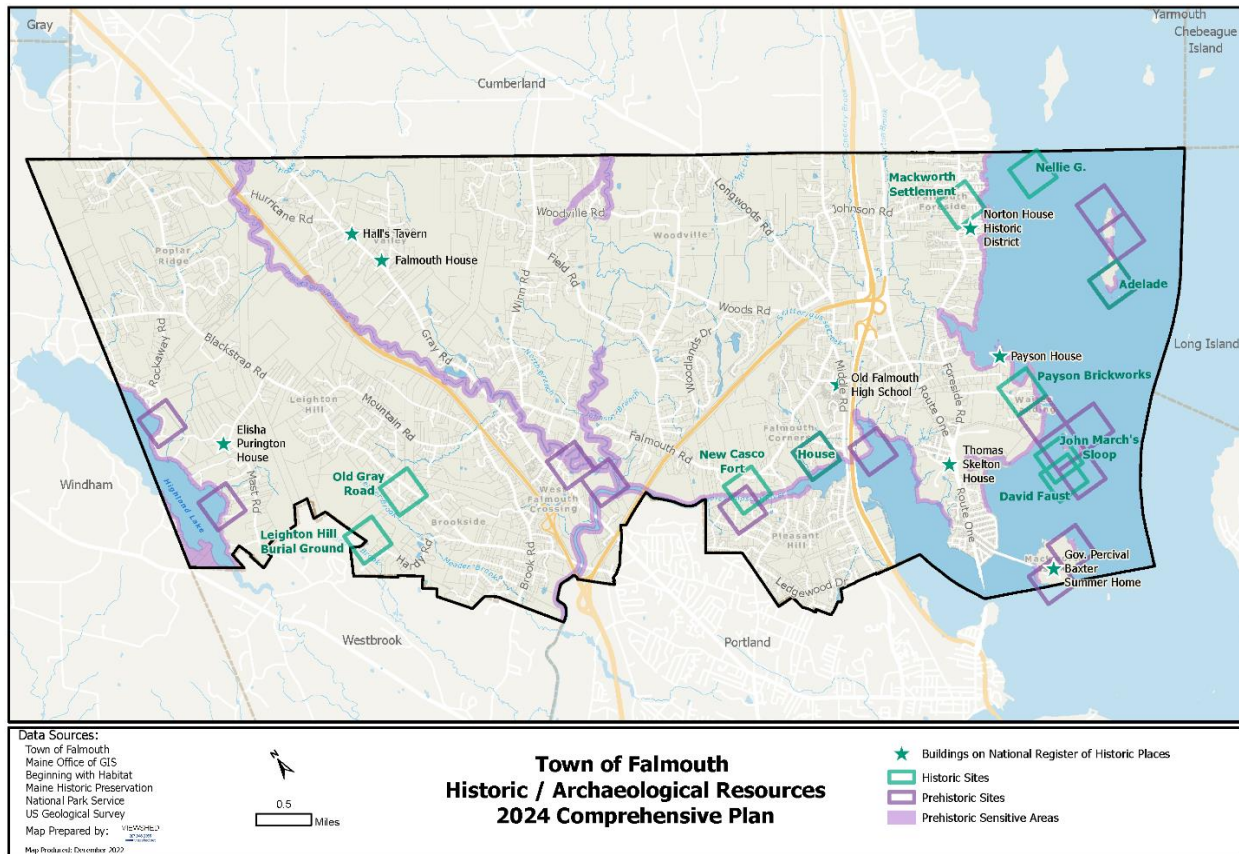
Site Name	Type of Site	Periods of Significance	Location
New Casco Fort	Military, fort	1700 – 1716	Location unknown
Mackworth Settlement	Settlement	c. 1635	Location unknown
Payson Brickworks	Brickyard	Mid-18th century	Location known
House	Domestic	Unknown	Location known
David Faust	Wreck, vessel	1910	Location known
John March's Sloop	Wreck, sloop	1703	Location unknown
Adelaide	Wreck, schooner	1875	Location known
Old Gray Road	Road	c. 1771 - c. 1833	Location known
Nellie G.	Wreck, gas, screw	1895 – 1953	Location known
Leighton Hill Burial Ground	Cemetery		Location unknown
Prob. Jonathan Hobbs homestead	Domestic	Hobbs homesteaded the property before March 1775	Location known
E.T. and J. Williams	Domestic		Location known
Bucknam Tavern	Tavern and domestic residence	Mid-18th century; but possibly as early as 1720s	258 Middle Road

Source: MHPC

Included on the list above is New Casco Fort on Menickoe Point near Waites Landing. After the end of the Indian Wars, resettlement occurred. The Indian Wars was marked with many fatalities and great destruction. Many European settlers vacated Falmouth for a while after the war. In the early 1700s, survivors joined together and built the fort. The location is the fort is still unknown, but possible location has been recorded as being directly across from the two islands known as “The Brothers.” The map below in Figure 41 displays the locations of historic

and prehistoric resources in Falmouth. As noted above, many of the prehistoric and historic archaeological sites follow the location of waterways.

Figure 10.1: Historic/Archaeological Resources Map



## Historic Buildings

According to the Maine Historic Preservation Plan of 2021, Cumberland County has the highest number of properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places of all counties in Maine with 242 places listed. Falmouth has eight properties on the National Register for Historic Places. The properties are listed in Table 6 below and the location of the properties are displayed on the map in Figure 41.

**Table 10.2: Properties Listed on the National Register for Historic Places**

Property Name	Location
Thomas Skelton House	124 U.S. Route 1
The Falmouth House	340 Gray Road
Hall's Tavern	377 Gray Road
Elisha Purington House	71 Mast Road
Baxter Summer Home	Mackworth Island
Norton House Historic District	241 and 243 Foreside Road
Payson House at Thornhurst	48 Thornhurst Road
(Former) Falmouth High School	192 Middle Road

Source: MHPC

A reconnaissance-level survey of Falmouth's historic above-ground resources was conducted in 1992-1993. The survey identified 985 buildings built prior to 1945. These buildings included farms, schools, businesses, and summer homes. It also included several architectural styles including colonial, federal, Greek revival, Italianate, and Romanesque. The MHPC recommends further evaluation of the buildings to determine eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places.

### Falmouth Historical Society

The Falmouth Historical Society is a significant historic resource for the Town of Falmouth. Established in 1966, the Historical Society is a self-funded, non-profit organization. Its members promote the interest in Falmouth's history through community outreach and historic collections. The Historical Society also provides educational programs and assist with historic research in the community.

The Historical Society operates the Falmouth Heritage Museum and Barn located at 60 Woods Road in Falmouth. The museum is a former residence that was relocated to a 5-acre property donated by the Historical Society. According to tax records, the farmhouse and a barn were built by Humphrey Merrill Jr. near the western edge of present-day Woods Road in about 1812. It then served as a residence for different families over the next 150 years. It was moved to its present location where it has operated as the museum since 2005.

### Cemeteries

The Town has almost 30 cemeteries that range from small family burial grounds to larger cemeteries. Among the largest cemeteries are Pine Grove, Pleasant Hill, Foreside Community Church, Blanchard, McGregor, Leighton, and Packard. Smaller cemeteries are in various locations throughout the Town. This inventory of cemeteries does not include any Native American burial grounds. The Town and the Falmouth Memorial Library both maintain inventories of cemeteries.



## Falmouth Veterans' Memorial

In November of 2014, the Town dedicated the Falmouth Veterans' Memorial. The memorial was created with the donations and contributions of many members of the community. The memorial is located at the American Legion 164 at 65 Depot Road.

## Tercentennial Year Recognizes “Building Community”

During Falmouth's Tercentennial Year (300<sup>th</sup> year anniversary) in 2018, the Town and community partners, including the Falmouth Historical Society, organized events and activities to celebrate Falmouth's history and to mark the “once-in-a-lifetime” milestone. This was also a goal from the Town's 2014 Comprehensive Plan.

In June 2019, Falmouth launched a publication entitled, “Building Community-*Edward La Salle's 1940 Illustrated Map Painting of Falmouth, Maine.*” This book was published as part of the Town's 300-year celebration. The 1940 illustrated map painting is in Town Hall where it has hung on the walls since the 1990s. The painting features a map of Falmouth with 30 circular vignettes that depict the historic places and structures with their real location identified on the map. The painting was restored and framed in 2018 – 2019. The book, “Building Communities...” was completed with the help of many volunteers in the community. The book tells the story of the painting and walks the reader through the story of Falmouth as the Town grew and changed through the years.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

In addition to the wealth of historic assets, Falmouth also has various cultural resources. These resources are part of the community fabric in Falmouth and help to shape its identity.

### Parks and Open Space

Falmouth has an abundance of parks and open space that serve as recreational and cultural resources for the community. Parks and open space have historic and cultural value that are visual representations of the community identity. Many of these locations include trails, natural habitat, and conserved lands that provide opportunities for discovery and exploration.

### Parks Community Programs

The Parks and Community Programs Department provides cultural programs and activities for the community. These programs include art activities for children. Adult programs include group travel excursions, internal trips, and arts and crafts activities.

### Falmouth Memorial Library

The Falmouth Memorial Library has been in operation since 1952 and is a non-profit organization that provides free library services residents of Falmouth. The library has



resources and programs that create cultural and social experiences for the community. These cultural programs promote the share of ideas, the celebration of the arts, and creativity.

### Falmouth Public Schools

Falmouth's schools are also places that provide opportunities for cultural connection. Schools offer a variety of programs for students to participate in arts and culture activities. School performing arts programs also bring families and friends together.

### Community Events

Events, such as Falmouth's annual holiday program, Very Merry Falmouth and the Falmouth summer concert series, Concerts in the Park, provide opportunities for human connection and community interaction. These events help to reinforce the social fabric of the community

### Gilsland Farm Audubon Center - Maine Audubon Society

Falmouth is the location of the Maine Audubon Society headquarters. Situated along the Presumpscot River estuary, the headquarters includes an environmental education center and a 64-acre sanctuary. It also includes more than two miles that travel along environmental lands with forest, meadow, salt march, and a pond. Gilsland Farm Audubon Center is a cultural resource that brings community members together through a variety of public programs that it provides year-round. The Center also has a Children's Discovery Room, Educator's Resource Center, an apple orchard, peony garden, and a nature store.

### Faith-Based Institutions

Falmouth's religious organizations are valuable sources of cultural connection and community identity. Organized religion began in Falmouth in 1674. The first parish was designated in 1735. Several churches have been built in Falmouth since then. These religious organizations are social gathering places. In addition to worship services, churches provide events and activities for the community. Churches are often charitable organizations that are often resources to help community members in times of need.

### The University of Maine Regional Learning Center

The University of Maine Regional Learning Center offers sustainable living education program for children, families, and home-based business owners. It opened in 2011 and represents a public-private partnership among the University of Maine, the Cumberland County Extension Association, and the Tidewater Conservation Foundation. In 5,000 square feet, the Center has a large meeting room for programs and events and offices for the University of Maine. It also has three acres of land at a nearby Tidewater Farm for the Cooperative Extension's teaching and demonstration gardens.





## Local Arts Organizations

Falmouth has a variety of organizations and small businesses that provide community members with opportunities to learn different art forms such as music and dancing. These venues provide residents of all ages with opportunities for education in the arts, creativity, and individual expression.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Falmouth's historic and cultural resources are valuable assets to the community and help to create a sense of place and shape its identity. Falmouth should continue to support and maintain its historic and cultural resources which provide residents with opportunities in education, enjoyment, social interaction. These resources help to strengthen its cultural and historic fabric while also cultivating community.

Falmouth should also consider opportunities to expand its historic resource inventory. Recommendations from the MHPC to evaluate the previous reconnaissance-level survey from the 1990s can offer opportunities to identify resources eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, which can strengthen its network of historic assets. In addition, consideration should be given to the archaeological site at River Point Conservation Area. Nominating sites to the National Register can give awareness of these historic assets and elevate their significance to the Town's identity.

Historic resources often come under threat as development opportunities can result in demolition and loss of historic assets. Falmouth has developed protections of historic resources within its subdivision ordinance. Any land proposed for development on or adjacent to a property that is on or eligible for the National Register for Historic Places must also apply for review and comment to the MHPC. Local historic preservation ordinances can also provide additional protections to help retain historic resources.

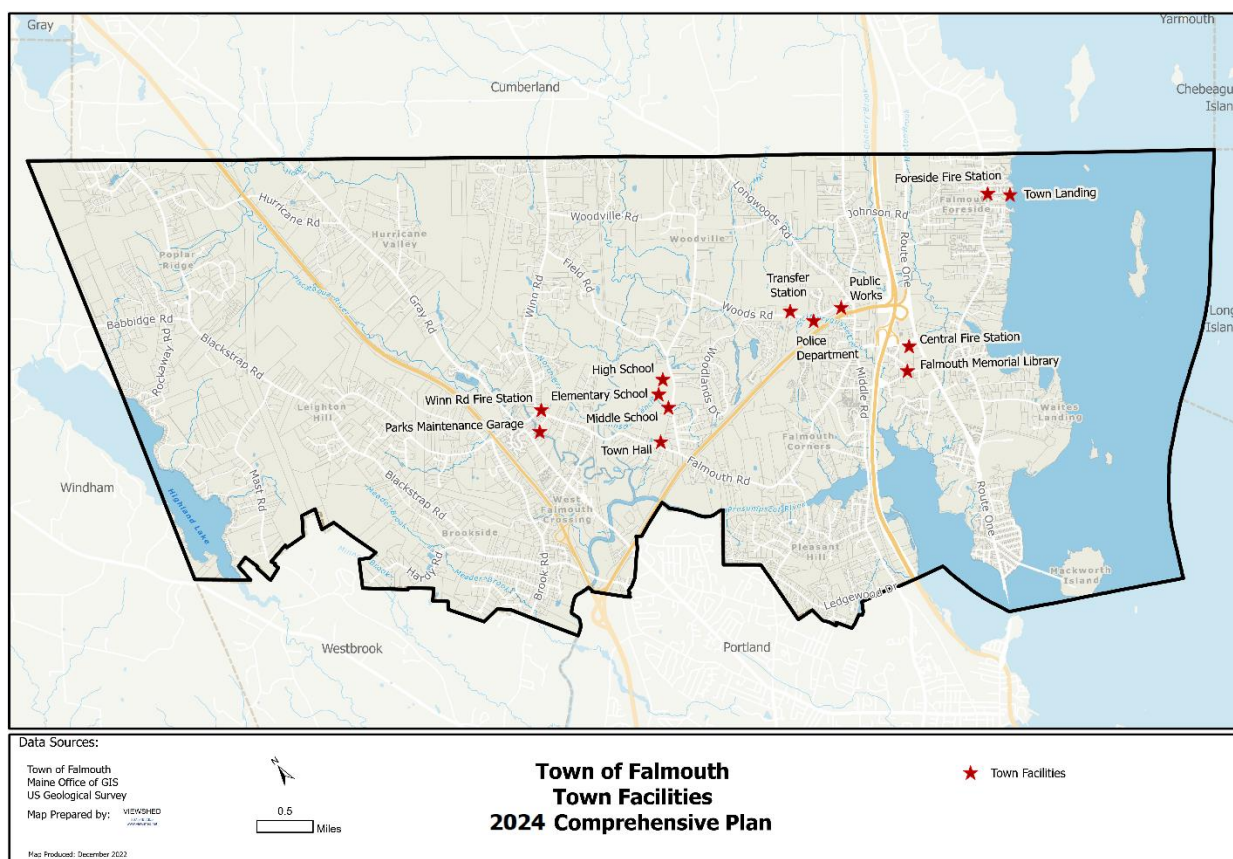
Historic resources can also provide an opportunity for a community to become more sustainable. The preservation of historic buildings through adaptive reuse and rehabilitation, can have more energy and environmental savings than demolition and new construction.

Falmouth has an abundance of cultural resources, and these resources exist in a variety of local facilities and programs. Falmouth should continue promoting these cultural assets. Cultural resources can add to the vibrancy of the community and create opportunities for learning.

## COMMUNITY SERVICES AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

Falmouth has strategically invested in municipal services and facilities to maintain a high level of service for residents, including excellent schools, a variety of parks and recreation programs, and facilities that are well-maintained. Recent major capital investments include a new elementary school and extensive renovations to Falmouth Memorial Library. The Town has ongoing and planned projects including improvements to existing facilities, energy efficiency upgrades, and repairs to the Town Landing.

Figure 11.1: Town Facilities Map



## PUBLIC SAFETY

### Police

The Falmouth Police Department currently has 20 full-time staff members. The Department is led by a Chief who oversees six divisions—the Marine Harbor Unit, Patrol Division, Criminal Investigation Division, Communications Division, Animal Control Officer, and School Resource Officer. The Department also oversees the Town Landing.

Emergency call volume has remained consistent in recent years. The Department responds to 15,000 – 17,000 calls per year and conducts between 3,000 – 5,000 traffic stops per year.



While call volume has remained consistent, the Town has seen an increase in mental health related calls over the last five years.

The Department recently hired a full-time behavioral health specialist to better respond to mental health related calls. This position is shared between Falmouth, Yarmouth, and Cumberland.

In addition to an increase in mental health and substance use calls, the Department has been proactive in responding to other community needs. Falmouth has an aging population, and the Department provides support to older adults, who are often the target of fraud, scams, and elder abuse. The Department has also looked to improve their ability to help unhoused individuals whether that is providing access to a phone, increasing patrol of parking lots to connect with individuals, or providing contact information for resources like local area shelters, food pantries, and domestic violence organizations.

The Department has worked to modernize their technology to become more transparent. All officers wear body cameras and police cruisers are also equipped with cameras. The Department has enhanced their public communication efforts, including increased social media use, sharing information in local publications, and giving informative presentations to various community groups. The Department has also improved its sustainability efforts. Police cruisers are hybrid electric vehicles and police administration has two electric vehicles. The Department has purchased two electric bicycles through a local grant.

Like many other police departments in Maine and throughout the United States, the Falmouth Police Department has struggled with hiring and retaining officers. The Department currently has funding allotted for 20 full-time officers, though the FBI recommends 26 full-time officers for a town of Falmouth's size. In addition to the general decline in interest in public safety professions, the shift to addressing social service issues through policing has been a deterrent to some. The Department also reported that housing affordability has been a challenge when trying to recruit officers to Falmouth.

### Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

Since Falmouth's 2013 Comprehensive Plan, the Fire and EMS Department has transitioned from a mostly volunteer department to a department that is staffed by full-time personnel. The Department has 33 full-time staff members and 12 part-time staff members that staff Central and West Stations in Falmouth. The Department also maintains a station in Falmouth's Foreside. The Department also relies on 30 on-call volunteers to support Fire and EMS events in Falmouth. The Department has three ambulances and five fire trucks. The Department responds to roughly 2,300 calls per year, with over 1,400 of those being EMS calls. Fire and EMS calls have increased in recent years.

The Department has seen an additional call volume to senior housing, like the OceanView community, and to older adults living in their homes. Fire and EMS staff respond to medical



emergencies, help older adults who have fallen, and conduct wellness checks. The Department has adapted to help residents with a variety of non-emergency issues, such as car and house lockouts, pipe bursts, or helping older adults get to and from their home or car. The Department also provides public education courses, such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) or first aid; emergency planning for schools, local facilities, and businesses; assistance in opening warming shelters; and aids in disaster recovery from large weather events.

The Falmouth Fire and EMS Department works to provide as-needed support to neighboring communities through mutual assistance agreements. The Department has received an increase in call volume from neighboring towns and is often challenged to help due to staffing limitations and a general shortage of EMS providers in neighboring communities.

Like neighboring towns, Falmouth Fire and EMS has struggled to fill vacant positions and recruit new staff to the Town. A continued increase in call volume has put a strain on resources and staffing availability. A lack of affordable housing in the Town has meant that Fire and EMS staff are living farther away, making it challenging to call in additional resources if there is a large emergency. The number of volunteer firefighters have decreased significantly, also making it difficult to have adequate staff response time to large emergencies.

Supply chain issues and increasing cost of equipment have delayed the arrival of a new fire engine and necessary life-safety equipment for staff. Delays have also made budget planning more difficult.

## PUBLIC WORKS

The Public Works Department is responsible for engineering and construction of capital improvement projects, maintenance of public rights-of-way (including streets, planting areas, and drainage system), managing solid waste and recycling services, and maintenance of fleet maintenance for Town vehicles and equipment.

### Capital Improvement Projects

In accordance with the Town's 2013 Comprehensive Plan and regional transportation planning efforts, the Town has several planned and in-progress infrastructure projects to improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and safety and to improve traffic circulation. Projects include the Route 1 North Infrastructure Project (new sidewalk, intersection improvements, shared use path, bus shelter, and wastewater force main improvements), sidewalk along Route 88, and a solar array on the former Town landfill site (recently completed).

The Department also conducts and manages roadway repaving which is planned for in the Town's 10-year Capital Improvement Plan.



## Solid Waste and Recycling

Falmouth offers curbside solid waste and recycling collection and has contracted with Pine Tree Waste for collection. The Town has implemented a “pay-per-bag” or “pay as you throw” trash collection system. The cost of disposing of trash is covered by the cost of the bags, so residents only pay for what they throw away. The curbside collection service is primarily paid for through property taxes. All of Falmouth’s solid waste and recycling goes to Ecomaine, in Portland, for processing.

Recently, Falmouth implemented a composting program to help residents reduce household waste. The Town provides three food waste drop-off locations: at the transfer station, Community Park, and Village Park.

The Town also operates a transfer station, located on Woods Road, where residents can dispose of certain bulky items and some household hazardous materials. The transfer station also accepts leaf and lawn waste for composting and offers recycling services for Falmouth businesses.

## WASTEWATER

The Falmouth Wastewater Department is responsible for operating the Town’s wastewater infrastructure. The Department oversees the collection and treatment of wastewater generated from sewer system users. The Wastewater Treatment Facility on Clearwater Drive includes a headworks facility with influent screening, aeration tanks, clarifiers and a disinfection system that physically, biologically, and chemically removes contamination from wastewater before the treated water is discharged to the Presumpscot River Estuary and Casco Bay.

Properties served by the Town’s wastewater system are broadly located east of I-295 and along Route One and Middle Road. Some areas of West Falmouth are also served including Woods Road, Woodland Drive, Winn Road, and areas along and adjacent to Gray Road.

The Town is completing improvements and expansion to the wastewater system in accordance with the 2017 West Falmouth Sewer Master Plan. Improvements include replacement of existing sanitary sewers on Middle Road and Lunt Road, installation of new sanitary sewer on Woods Road, installation of a new sanitary sewer force main on Pinehurst Drive, Woodlands Drive and Woods Road, and upgrades to the Falmouth Road Pump Station.

## WATER

Water service is provided to Falmouth residents by the Portland Water District (PWD), a quasi-municipal organization that serves 11 communities in greater Portland. The water system and system infrastructure are owned and operated by PWD. In response to the 2013 Comprehensive Plan, the Town conducted a Public Water System Analysis in 2016 to evaluate

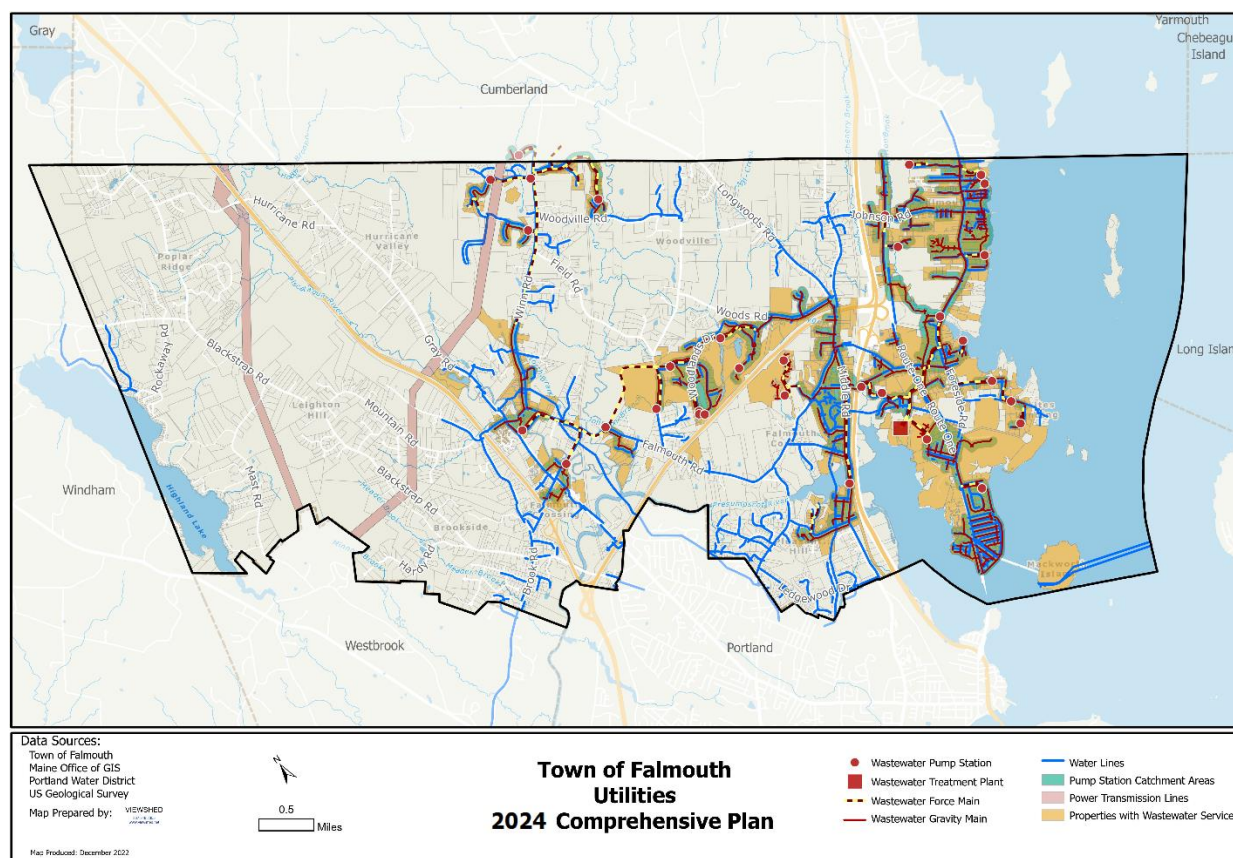


capacity of the existing system and its ability to serve new development within designated growth areas.

The analysis found that PWD has the supply and hydraulic capacity to meet anticipated future needs within the Town's growth areas but will require new water mains and booster pumping stations in some locations to meet pressure requirements. The analysis also confirmed that the Town's existing fire protection is sufficient to accommodate future development in the designated growth area.

Areas of West Falmouth served by the public water system include Winn Road, Falmouth Road, Brook Road, Leighton Road and Gray Road (Route 100). However, much of West Falmouth is outside of the growth area and not served by the public water system. Development of these areas was not considered in the analysis of water service and assessment of future needs. Extensions to the water system are at the discretion of PWD, and the cost of extending a water main or service line are the responsibility of the developer.

Figure 11.2: Utilities Map



## BROADBAND

In 2016, Town staff presented an Evaluation of Options Report to the Town Council. The Report provided an analysis of the Town's existing broadband fiber network. Fiber internet uses fiber-



optic cables to provide internet access. It can allow for higher internet speeds than cable. The Town contracted with Tilson Technology Management to conduct a survey of fiber coverage in designated growth areas. The study found that the Town's two commercial corridors were served by multiple fiber networks and anticipated growth areas had at least two fiber service providers available to provide service. The report stated that the Town did not have a pressing need to expand its fiber network.

In 2022, Consolidated Communications began installing and updating parts of the Town's fiber network. The first phase of the project provided fiber internet access to subscribers living east of Town Hall. The remaining phases will provide access to other areas of Falmouth. Consolidated Communications expects the project to be done before 2025.

## PUBLIC HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

### Public Health

Medical facilities in Falmouth are limited to a small number of doctors and alternative healthcare providers. Medical facilities in Portland, including Maine Medical Center and Northern Light Mercy Hospital, offer a variety of healthcare options near Falmouth.

There are several nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and retirement communities in Falmouth. OceanView, Foreside Harbor, Falmouth-by-the-Sea, Blackstone Senior Housing, Plummer Senior Living, and Sedgewood Commons provide a variety of housing and assistance options to older residents in the Town.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, several departments took on additional responsibilities to better serve residents. The Parks and Community Programs Department made wellness calls to residents over 55 years old to identify residents who did not have a support system in place and would like to receive a weekly check-in phone call. Staff also operated a Senior Resource Hotline and responded to calls to grocery shop for residents unable to leave their home, provide toilet paper and paper towel delivery for residents unable to find these products, bring recyclable bins to the curb and back, weed gardens, and other services as requested. The Fire and EMS Department also conducted wellness checks.

### Community Services

The Town administers its General Assistance program that is mandated and partly funded by the State of Maine. The program helps residents who have difficulty meeting basic needs like housing, utilities, food, prescriptions, medical care, and other essential care.

Regionally, Falmouth works with the GPCOG and Cumberland County to increase the services available to the Falmouth community. The Town joined the County's "Keep Cumberland County Warm" project, which allocated funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to provide heating assistance to homeowners struggling to pay for heat.



The Falmouth Food Pantry has served Falmouth and surrounding communities for over 25 years. Today, the Food Pantry serves residents of Falmouth, Westbrook, Cumberland, Yarmouth, and Portland. The Food Pantry is open one to two times per week at different times and days of the week. The Food Pantry does accept donations during operating hours, at Town Hall, at Falmouth churches, and at the Falmouth Memorial Library.

The Falmouth Memorial Library is independently incorporated and governed by a 12-member Board of Trustees. The Town funds roughly 78% of the library's annual budget. An annual fund drive, annual silent auction, book sales, library operations, and gifts provide additional funding. In Falmouth, the library serves as a public gathering place, hosting a variety of events and discussions for the public to attend. The library also provides open access to digital and hard copy books and digital services.

## Schools

Falmouth's elementary, middle, and high schools are located in the center of the Town on a 125-acre campus. Falmouth Elementary School, a K-5 National Blue Ribbon (2017) school, is the largest elementary school in Maine with approximately 900 students. The middle school, a 6 – 8 National Blue Ribbon (2016) school, has an enrollment of 510. The high school, a 9 – 12 National Blue Ribbon (2018) school, has a student population of roughly 700 students.

Falmouth public schools are consistently ranked among the top schools in Maine. The School Board is made up of seven members and two student representatives from Falmouth High School. Falmouth Public Schools are accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. Falmouth Public Schools are currently developing a Campus Master Plan to align the schools' strategic priorities and resources.

The COVID-19 pandemic led to the closure of schools across the country. Education institutions shifted to remote, online learning for the duration of the 2019 – 2020 school year, and schools took varied approaches to in-person operations for the 2020 – 2021 school year. Falmouth Public Schools closed to in-person instruction in March 2020. Students had access to electronic devices and internet access within the first week of closure. Devices and hotspots were distributed to families who could not afford them. Falmouth schools opened to hybrid instruction during the 2020 – 2021 school year, with less than 10% of students opting for fully remote instruction. Schools were opened to full, in-person instruction in spring 2021.

As a result of the pandemic, the schools added roughly 60 outdoor learning spaces with wi-fi access, including three greenhouses on the property. The elementary and middle schools each have a garden, and the high school has one existing orchard and is in the process of developing a second. Two full-time gardeners maintain these spaces and work with teachers to connect classroom learning to these agricultural spaces.

During the pandemic, the Intercultural Awareness and Inclusion Committee (IAIC), which was started in 2017, became more active. One of the four compass points outlined in the schools'



strategic plan is to create a climate and culture that is safe, equitable, and fosters wellness, where all community members feel safe, included, valued, and have equitable access to learning and participation. The Committee and district leaders underwent an equity audit for the district in 2021 and have increased professional development opportunities on equity and inclusion for staff members.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

As Falmouth continues to grow, consideration of how growth will impact the ability to maintain and provide services is a concern for the Town. Expanding development beyond the designated growth areas has a long-term financial impact on the Town. A larger geographic area to serve and further distances to travel to provide services may put strain on Town services that are already experiencing challenges in staffing, increased costs of labor and materials, and aging facilities. The Town's fire stations and public works facility are in need of replacement or renovation, and these future capital investments are part of the Town's capital improvement plan (CIP). Planning for future needs and identifying opportunities to increase efficiency in operations will be critical for the Town to maintain a high level of service in all areas while minimizing the impact to taxpayers.

As Falmouth's population continues to age, the Town will consider how best to provide services to older residents. The Town will consider the proximity of retirement communities and assisted living facilities to transportation and community services, like senior programming at the Mason-Motz Activity Center and events at the library, to help ensure that older adults can participate in the community. Falmouth will also consider the impact of an aging community on its Fire and EMS services. Staffing challenges can limit the Town's ability to continue to provide a high level of Fire and EMS services and additional support services to older residents.



# SUSTAINABILITY

## HISTORY OF SUSTAINABILITY IN FALMOUTH

Falmouth's sustainability initiatives began in 2007 when the Town signed the U.S. Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement. This agreement recognized a nation-wide commitment to reducing Town greenhouse gas emissions in municipal operations. Around the same time, the Town established an ad hoc Green Ribbon Commission. The Commission prepared an emissions inventory and offered recommendations on ways to lower emissions in the Town. The Commission identified 27 recommendations in a Climate Action Plan, which were accepted by the Town Council in 2010. The Town also committed to reduce energy use and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2% per year. These recommendations were also incorporated into the Town's 2013 Comprehensive Plan.

Since 2007, the Town has undergone several initiatives to improve sustainability practices in municipal facilities and schools. The Town has also held educational events for residents to learn more about sustainable practices.

In July 2022, Falmouth's Town Council voted to update the Town's emission reduction goals to align with the Paris Agreement's mandate to keep global temperature increases below 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit). To do its part in meeting this goal, the Town pledges to reduce community-wide emissions by 65% by 2030 and by 85% by 2040. The Town strives to maintain net zero emissions by 2050. The Climate Action Plan includes strategies for the Town to reach its emission reduction goals, as well as metrics to track the Town's progress.

## RECENT SUSTAINABILITY PROJECTS

In May 2020, the Town Council approved the Tangent Energy landfill solar array Power Purchase Agreement. The solar array was completed in summer 2022 and is located on the 4.2-acre capped landfill on Woods Road. The solar array offsets roughly 70% of all municipal electric use and is estimated to save the Town nearly \$2 million over the array's 20-year life span. The Town has also upgraded their fleet to include electric vehicles at the Police Department and other municipal locations. Heat pumps were also installed at municipal buildings, replacing propane and heating oil systems.

The Town Council adopted the 2020 – 2030 Highland Lake Watershed-Based Management Plan in 2019 to restore and protect Highland Lake water quality. The Plan was developed by the Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District and members of the Highland Lake Leadership Team's Watershed Management Committee, which includes representatives from Falmouth and Windham. The Plan was initiated following water quality concerns when a picocyanobacterial bloom was noticed on Highland Lake in 2014. The blooms were the only ones of their kind in New England at the time the Plan was developed. The Plan aims to provide guidance to maintain the Lake's Class GPA water quality status. In addition to commitments to





improve water quality, the Town also created an Invasive Management Plan to manage invasive species and improve forest and ecosystem health.

In November 2018, the Municipal and School Department Energy and Sustainability Plan was adopted by the Town Council. The Town also upgraded lighting in Town buildings to light emitting diode (LED) lights in 2018. Streetlights were updated to LEDs in 2016. The Town purchased streetlight assets from Central Maine Power (CMP), and the Town now owns and maintains approximately 600 streetlights in Town. The Town also began a food waste drop-off program for residents at the transfer station.

## CLIMATE HAZARDS

Climate hazards are the effects of climate change that can impact Falmouth's people, infrastructure, economy, or ecosystem. There are several climate hazards facing Falmouth and neighboring communities today.<sup>9</sup>

Maine's annual average temperature has increased 3.2 degrees Fahrenheit since 1895, with temperature changes being most pronounced along the coast. Warmer temperatures have shortened Maine's winters and lengthened summers by roughly two weeks. Weather is also becoming more variable, and extreme winter cold snaps are becoming more frequent. Maine can expect an increase in high heat index days (over 90 degrees Fahrenheit) per year. The State averaged one high heat index day per year from 1971 to 2000. By 2050, high heat index days are expected to be two to four times more frequent. By 2100, the State is expected to have 36 high heat index days per year. Warmer annual temperatures throughout the year have increased the likelihood that ticks survive the winter and are more active through the spring and summer. Maine has seen an increase in Lyme Disease cases and, as of March 2023, Babesiosis is endemic in the State.

Precipitation patterns have changed, and the annual average precipitation in Maine has increased by 15% since 1895. Snowfall has decreased due to warming temperatures and the State has experienced increased periods of drought, even as precipitation increases. The Gulf of Maine has experienced "ocean heat waves" and is warming faster than 99% the world's oceans, causing it to lose its subarctic characteristics. Along with increased precipitation, Maine has seen an increase in extreme weather events, like polar vortexes. Long-term projections on changing precipitation patterns are not as well understood compared to projections on warming temperatures. There is less certainty about the trend line to expect in

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<sup>9</sup> Greater Portland Council of Governments, Falmouth Climate Action Plan, Climate Hazards, 2022. Accessed March 17, 2023. <https://falmouth-cap-gpcog.hub.arcgis.com/pages/climate-hazards>



the future, though it is known that there is more volatility and an increase in precipitation intensity.

Sea levels around Portland have risen 7.5 inches since 1912, or 0.07 inches annually. Since 1990, the rate of sea level rise has increased to 0.12 inches annually. Sea level rise is caused by the melting of polar ice caps and the expansion of ocean water due to warming temperatures. Sea level rise can lead to coastal erosion and flooding and damage to infrastructure and property.

The average temperature in the Gulf of Maine has increased 2.0 degrees Fahrenheit since 1895, with sharper increases in recent years. Between 2004 – 2013, the Gulf of Maine warmed at a rate of 0.41 degrees F per year—faster than 99% of the world’s oceans. According to the Gulf of Maine Research Institute’s 2022 annual report, the Gulf of Maine’s average sea surface temperature (SST) was 53.66°F – more than 3.72°F above the long-term (1982 – 2011) average – the Gulf of Maine experienced its second-warmest year on record in 2022, with 2021 being the warmest. Warming varies by season and is most pronounced in summer and early fall. “Summer conditions” in the Gulf now last roughly two months longer than they did in 1982.

Ocean warming and acidification can impact Maine’s marine ecosystems and the State’s fishing industry. Stratification happens when warmer surface water separates from colder deep water in the Gulf. Warming temperatures increase stratification, meaning fewer nutrients from deep water reach the surface, harming surface ecosystems. Stratification can lead to an increase in phytoplankton blooms in the fall and winter, which can be toxic to humans.

## CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

The Falmouth Climate Action Plan (CAP) contains strategies and actions to guide decisions and development in the Town to prepare for localized climate effects. The CAP outlines existing greenhouse gas emissions and climate hazards to provide context for strategies in the plan. Broadly, the strategies are related to municipal operations, building and energy use, transportation and land use, waste reduction, and social resilience. The CAP also sets emission reduction targets to help the Town meet its goals.

The Town’s climate action planning closely follows suggestions from the Maine Won’t Wait climate action plan, which outlines the need for the State to take action to help slow the effects of climate change. The Maine Won’t Wait plan outlines action to prepare Maine people and municipalities for climate-related challenges in the future.

Falmouth’s CAP was a collaborative effort from the Town Council, Town staff, Climate Action Planning Committee, GPCOG, and the Falmouth community. Residents provided input throughout the planning process, including at workshops, surveys, events, and the project website.



## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Climate hazards, like an increased weather intensity, can cause damage to vulnerable properties in Town. A winter storm in December 2022 damaged significant infrastructure at the Town Landing. More intense and frequent storms can cause future damage to Town infrastructure. Rising sea levels can also cause damage to infrastructure and decrease property values, impacting the municipal tax base. The Town's CAP will establish goals and strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for potential hazards the Town will face due to climate change. After the CAP is complete, Falmouth will continue to work with the State and the GPCOG on regional climate planning initiatives. The Town will also look to secure state and federal grants to help meet climate goals.

# FISCAL CAPACITY

## FISCAL HEALTH IN THE PLANNING CONTEXT

Planning for growth and the associated capital and operational costs is essential for Falmouth’s long-term fiscal health. Increasing costs for maintenance, personnel, and improving resiliency should be considered when planning for fiscally sustainable growth.

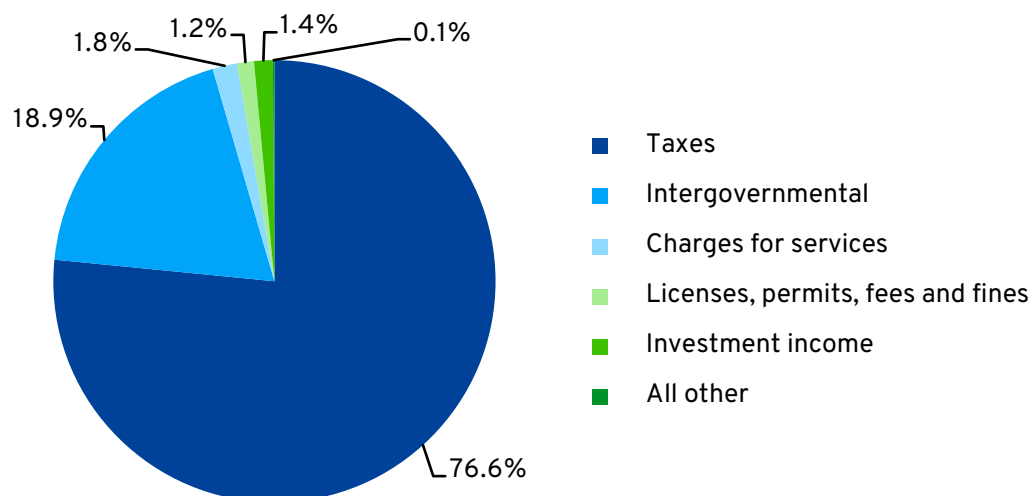
The addition of parks and Town-owned open space and maintenance of those spaces, equipment needs for public works and public safety operations, infrastructure maintenance and improvement projects, and upgrades and reconstruction of certain Town facilities will have a significant impact on the Town budget, all while the Town will need to maintain a high level of service delivery and programs.

The Town has been engaged in long-range planning for capital improvements through the 10-year CIP. While significant capital needs are accounted for in the CIP, continuing to grow the Town’s tax base in a way that is keeping with the community’s values, will help to ensure that the Town can meet its capital improvement and equipment needs, expand programming and services, and initiate projects as laid out in this Plan.

## OPERATING REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES

Like most other Maine communities, the Town’s operations are largely financed through local tax revenue, most of which is from property taxes. Nearly 80% of revenues are from taxes. The second largest revenue source is intergovernmental funds (including state revenue sharing), and a small portion of revenue is from other sources including Town charges for services, fees, and fines.

Figure 13.1: General Fund Revenues, Actual 2023

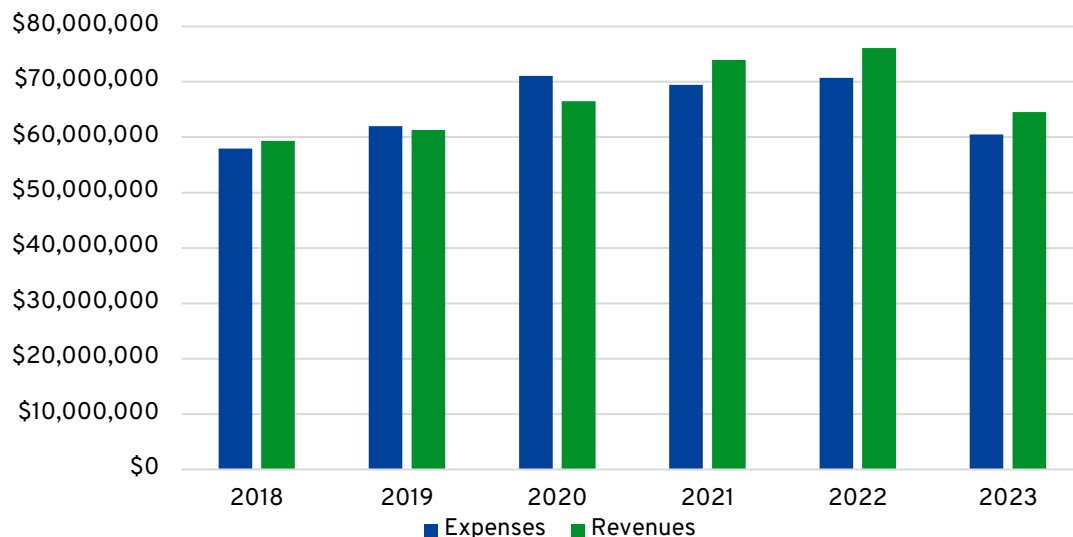


Source: Town of Falmouth, 2023 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report

The proposed operating expense budget for the 2024 fiscal year (FY) of \$18,933,379 (not including education) is a 7.1% increase over the approved budget for FY23. About half of the \$1,261,438 budget increase is due to increases in full-time salaries and benefits. Additionally, the FY24 budget accounts for general increases in cost of material and equipment and increases in debt service payments.

Approximately 56% of revenue for municipal services (non-education) are from property taxes. Auto excise taxes and state revenue sharing are projected to increase for FY24 compared to the FY23 budget.

**Figure 13.2: Total Revenue and Expenses Over Time**



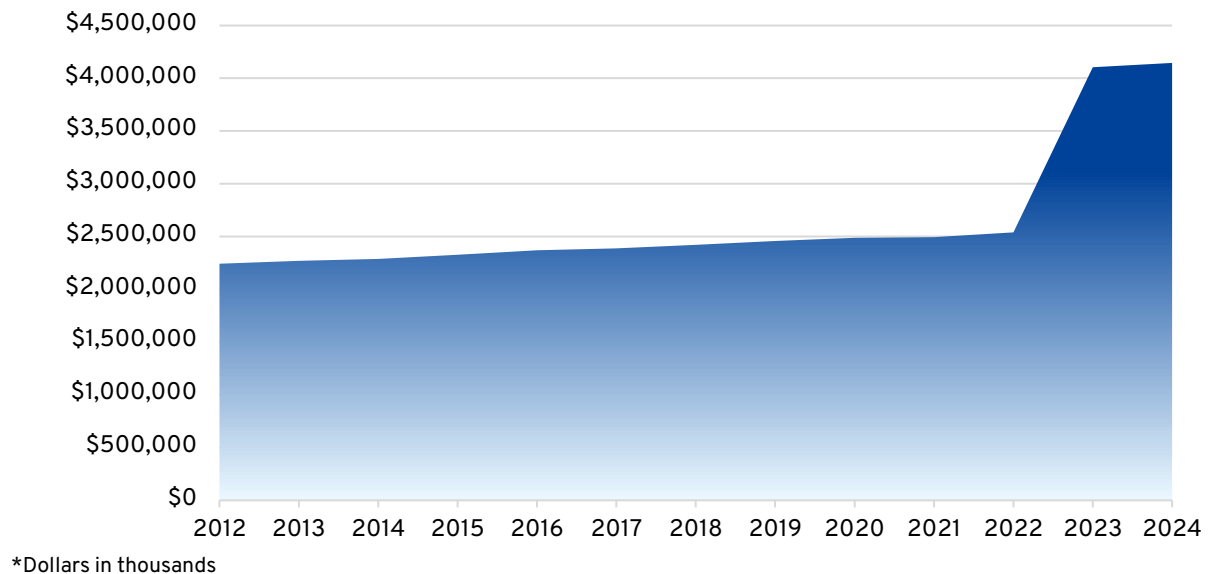
Source: Town of Falmouth, 2018-2022 Annual Comprehensive Financial Reports

## TAX ASSESMENT AND TAX RATE

In 2021, the Town began a revaluation process, which was completed in August 2022. The previous revaluation was conducted in 2009. As a result of the 2022 revaluation, the Town's total assessment increased approximately 60%, to \$4.17 billion (not including exempt and non-taxable properties). The total assessment of residential properties increased more than 66% and accounts for \$3.65 billion, or 88%, of the Town's total assessed value.



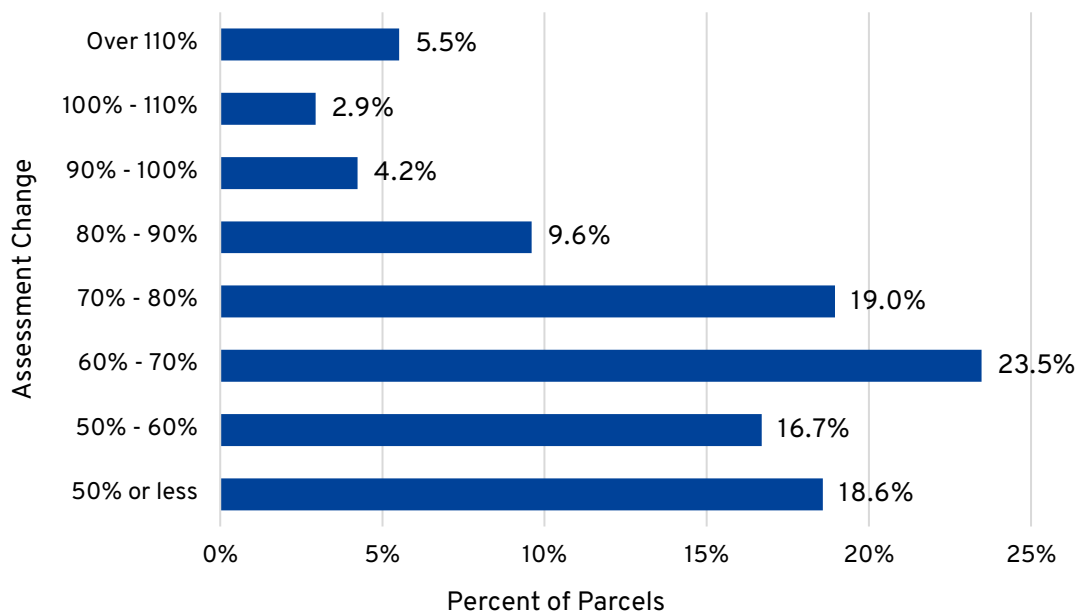
Figure 13.3: Assessed Valuation by Fiscal Year\*



Source: Town of Falmouth

More than 80% of properties experienced an increase in assessed value of more than 50%, and 8.4% of properties experienced an increase of more than 100%. The increase in the Town's valuation has resulted in a decrease in the tax rate for the 2022 - 2023 tax year, from 17.43 to 11.92. The Town's tax rate has been steadily declining each year since 2016, similar to other communities in the region. The Town has maintained a tax collection rate over 99% for the past three years.

Figure 13.4: Assessment Change (after the 2022 reassessment)



Source: Town of Falmouth



## TAX INCREMENT FINANCE (TIF) DISTRICTS

Municipal tax increment financing is a tool used by municipalities to leverage new property taxes generated by development within a defined geographic area and a defined period of up to 30 years. TIF districts have been used in defined growth areas and to fund special projects and initiatives.

The Town has six established TIF districts:

- West Falmouth Crossing – established in 1998
- Route 1 North – established in 2000
- Route 1 South – established in 2000
- OceanView/Natural Gas – established in 2016
- Route 100 – established in 2023
- Route 1 Transportation – established in 2024

TIF revenue can also be used to partially reimburse a developer or business for development project costs related to a specific project using a Credit Enhancement Agreement (CEA). CEAs have been used in Falmouth in two instances: to support wastewater infrastructure expansion into West Falmouth and to provide property tax relief in exchange for excise taxes in excess of the amount of tax relief.

With three of the six TIF districts having been established in 2000 or prior and nearing expiration in the next several years, the Town is considering a TIF Restructuring Plan. This plan is intended to be implemented over several years to allow the Town to maintain the current level of TIF funds which help to pay for maintenance of infrastructure and special projects. As part of this plan, a new 30-year TIF district on Route 100 was established to help replace revenue from the West Falmouth Crossing and Route 1 North and South TIFs when they expire.

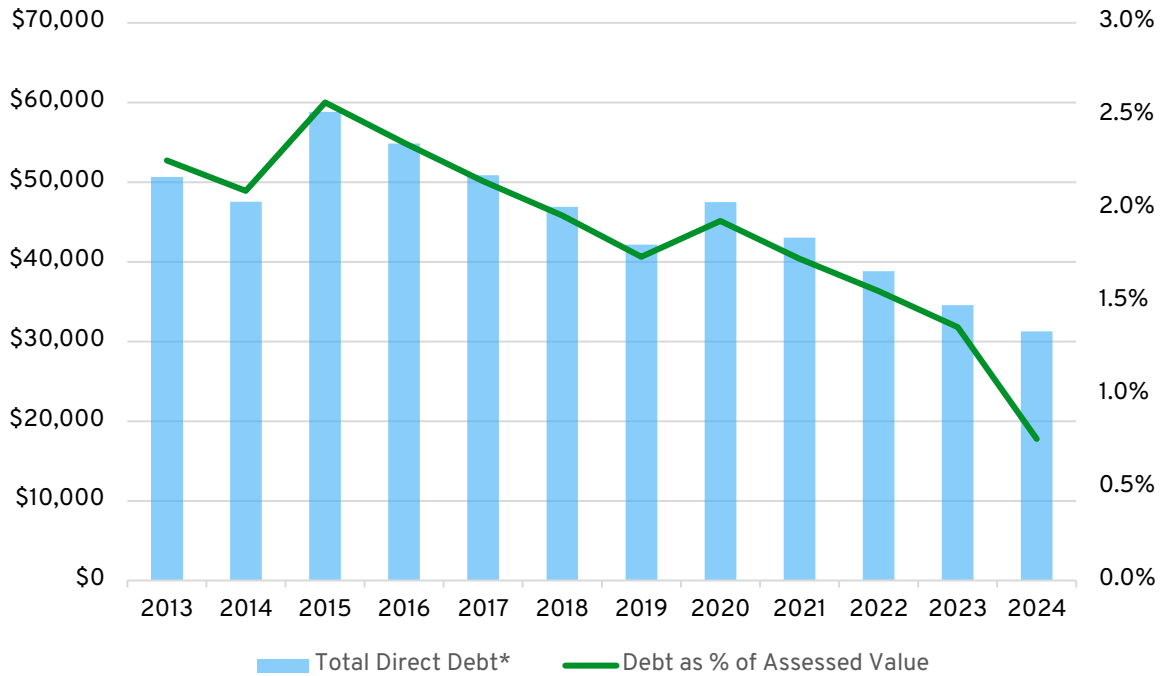
## DEBT CAPACITY

Falmouth relies on the sale of bonds for its most substantial financing needs. The Town's current total direct debt obligation is \$27,965,000, which is estimated to be (as of June 30, 2024) a debt/valuation ratio of 0.67%. This debt/valuation ratio is below the acceptable industry standard of 3%, and below the average for municipalities in Maine (2.1%). In addition, most of the Town's current debt obligation is for the Falmouth Elementary School construction of which 95% is funded by the State.

The Town's total direct debt and debt per capita have continued to decline over the last decade. During this time, the Town's bond rating has also been upgraded to AAA, by both S&P Global and Moody's, with a stable financial outlook based on a strong economy, good financial

management, steady growth, and low debt burden and liabilities. The Town is in a strong position to take on additional debt as will be needed to fund future substantial capital projects.

Figure 13.5: Debt Ratio\*



\*Dollars in thousands

Source: Town of Falmouth

## PLANNING FOR CAPITAL INVESTMENTS

The Town maintains a detailed 10-year CIP which is revisited and revised as needed each year as part of the Town's budget review process and is used to guide the preparation of the following year's budget. The Town has developed a Capital Improvement Planning Policy to provide a process for planning for capital projects that considers the needs of all departments and helps to ensure that investments are appropriately managed.

The Town's CIP accounts for all capital expenditures (including all expenditures more than \$5,000 that have a useful life of more than one year). The largest planned capital expenditures for the next 10 years include street and sidewalk improvements, new Fire Department buildings and equipment, new Public Works Department buildings and equipment, and computer equipment.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Town of Falmouth is currently in a stable financial position to continue to provide a high level of service to residents. The Town has experienced steady population growth and growth of the taxable base and TIF district values in the last decade. The Town maintains strong fiscal



policies and engages in comprehensive long-term capital planning. Falmouth's AAA bond rating will help ensure the Town's ability to make necessary capital investments to support Town operations, including constructing new Fire and Public Works facilities and continuing to invest in infrastructure improvements.

Despite Falmouth's strong financial position, the Town should continue to strategically identify opportunities to expand and diversify the commercial tax base. The Town currently provides a very high level of services and amenities to residents. As operational costs continue to rise and residents look to the Town to provide additional services and amenities, including open space, community programs, and services for older adults, a strong and diverse tax base is needed to help support Town operations without further burdening property owners.