

2018 Comprehensive Plan Amendments

Executive Summary

In 1989, the State of Maine instituted the Growth Management Program (GMP) legislation requiring towns and cities to adopt a local growth management program, including a comprehensive plan and an implementation program. The goal of the GMP is for communities to develop a “blueprint” for managing growth and change – which amounts to a master plan for how and where development should happen.

Specifically, the comprehensive plan of that blueprint must include an inventory and analysis section, and include economic and demographic data, water resources, natural resources, recreation, transportation, housing data and more. Further, the plan must identify growth areas and provide for development standards, permitting procedures, and ensure that public services are available. The plan must also identify rural areas and adopt policies and ordinances that discourage incompatible development.

Following similar updates to the Comprehensive Plan in 1999 and 2011, the City initiated an update of the 2011 Comprehensive Plan in November, 2016, following the City Council’s appointment of an eleven-member Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC) in October, 2016. With staff assistance to the CPC from the City Planner and the Economic Development Director, the Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission (SMPDC) was hired by the City to facilitate the meetings, perform data gathering, and draft the updated Comprehensive Plan sections.

Over the past year the focus of the CPC has been to update sections in the Comprehensive Plan specifically related to the downtown. Accordingly, an area including the downtown and nearby neighborhoods (the Downtown Development District) has been identified, and a map has been created to clarify the area of interest for the Committee, stakeholders, elected and appointed officials, and residents.

The CPC has met throughout the process and discussed the topics noted above (in the second paragraph) that relate to the downtown, as well as arts and culture, land use, sea level rise, and economic development. Meetings included other town staff, community leaders, organizations and various stakeholders from the development community, Dyer Library, the City of Portland, Heart of Biddeford and Saco Main Street, the Maine Geologic Survey and more.

All the information gathered and communicated in this most recent Comprehensive Plan Update will provide the basis for planning what Saco will look like 10 or 15 years from now. Concurrently, the plan also provides ideas on how Saco can continue to be the best community we can be.

Those ideas, in the form of goals, policies and strategies, together with the inventory data that is gathered, comprise this draft Comprehensive Plan update.