



## TOWN OF BAR HARBOR

93 Cottage Street

Bar Harbor Maine 04609

# Comprehensive Planning Committee Meeting Agenda

## May 16, 2022, 6:00 – 8:00 PM

### Via Zoom Meeting Platform

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Members of the public may view the proceeding by joining the Zoom webinar. Instructions on how to join the Zoom webinar and to offer comment during the public hearing portion of the meeting are posted online at: <https://www.barharmoraine.gov/517/Comprehensive-Planning-Committee>.

In order to assure your full participation in this meeting, please contact Tammy DesJardin in the Planning & Code Enforcement Department to inform her of any special requirements you might have due to a disability. Please call 288-3329.

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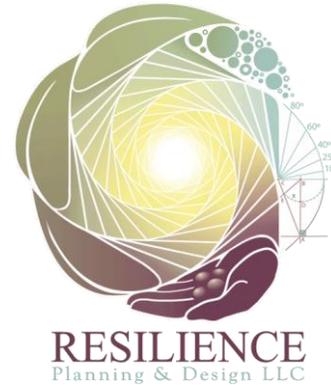
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|---|-------------|
| 1. Call to order  | 6:00 – 6:05 |
| 2. Excused absences                                     | 6:00 – 6:05 |
| 3. Zoom logistic, review of meeting agenda and adoption | 6:00 – 6:05 |
| 4. Adoption of April 13, 2022 minutes                   | 6:00 – 6:05 |
| 5. Public comment period                                | 6:05 – 6:15 |
| 6. Other efforts relating Comprehensive Plan            | 6:15 – 6:20 |
| a. Housing Needs Assessment                             |             |
| b. Examination of Bar Harbor Development Process        |             |
| 7. Public engagement                                    | 6:20 – 6:30 |
| a. Update on the tabling effort                         |             |
| b. Review draft Polco questions                         |             |
| c. Recording touch points during outreach               |             |
| 8. Initial Presentation of Existing Conditions Report   | 6:30 – 7:30 |
| a. Overview of how this document will be used           |             |
| b. Discussion about the data used                       |             |
| c. Edits and revisions                                  |             |
| 9. Next steps   | 7:40 - 7:45 |
| 10. Public comment period                               | 7:45 – 7:55 |
| 13. Adjourn   | By 8:00 PM  |

MEMO

TO:  
Bar Harbor Comprehensive Plan Committee

FROM:  
Resilience Planning and Design

DATE:  
May 5, 2022



On May 16th, we will review the draft Existing Conditions Report and discuss any questions or edits from CPC members and staff. Given the full agenda and draft products created for your review we felt it was most efficient to clarify some details related to these items in this memo.

### **Outreach Related Items**

- **Updated Outreach Plan**
- **Project Flyer for print and digital use**
- **Website - <https://bit.ly/bar-harbor-comp-plan>**

### **Outreach Updates**

- The Polco Survey is currently underway online, and 114 responses have been received.
- A paper or poster version of the Polco Survey is in the works.
- April project update newsletter circulated.
- Begin discussion of Forum format and materials at June CPC Meeting

### **Initial Draft of the Existing Conditions Report**

The focus this month has been on completing, assembling, and editing the draft Existing Conditions Report. This document provides a synthesis of many sources of information including earlier plans and studies, interviews, and issues identified during monthly CPC meetings. The challenge is to keep this information at a comprehensive planning scale and identify major trends and issues that need verification or further discussion as we engage further with the public over the coming months. Once suggestions from the CPC are incorporated into this working document we will begin the process of preparing materials for the public forum and online alternative scheduled for September.



## Town of Bar Harbor Planning & Code Department

### Memorandum

**To: Comprehensive Planning Committee**  
**Copy: Planning Board**  
**From: Michele Gagnon, Planning Director**  
**Re: Other efforts relation to the Comprehensive Plan**  
**Date: May 6, 2022**

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I am excited to report that at its May 3, 2022 meeting, the Town Council unanimously approved hiring RKG Associates Inc. to conduct a Housing Needs Assessment. Attached is my memo to the Town Council explaining what this assessment will do for the town and the agreement.

And, I am thrilled to report that we are working with the Chamber of Commerce to conduct an Examination of Bar Harbor's Development Process. The goal of this effort is to understand the hurdles to development and improve customer services with a focus on housing. From this process we are looking to obtain a variety of comments and suggestions to improve and enhance the development process.



# TOWN OF BAR HARBOR

## Planning and Code Enforcement

93 Cottage Street  
Bar Harbor, ME 04609-1400

# Memorandum

**To:** Town Council  
**From:** Michele Gagnon, Planning Director *mg*  
**Copy:** Kevin Sutherland, Town Manager and Sarah Gilbert, Finance Director  
**Date:** April 27, 2022  
**Subject:** Housing Needs Assessment Proposal

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I am writing to ask the Town Council to consider authorizing more in-depth housing research work (see attached proposal) as part of the Comprehensive Plan. This work would provide a deeper understanding of the housing needs within the town that would go above and beyond what is in a typical Comprehensive Plan. The cost for the additional work is \$20,770 which would be conducted by our consultant RKG Associates.

As the Council adopted a Housing Policy Framework in 2019; and, as housing was identified as the second highest priority at the March 22, 2022, Town Council Retreat; and, as housing affordability is emerging through the Comprehensive Planning process as one of the most important problems facing Bar Harbor; therefore, a more in-depth housing needs assessment is crucial to providing specific housing data to enable us to identify issues and solutions that can be used



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## Planning and Code Enforcement

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to make strategic — meaningful and effective — decisions related to the housing market both as part of the Comprehensive Plan and other efforts.

The additional work will include four main tasks: 1. Background information, data collection and review (beyond what has been done as part of the Comprehensive Plan); 2. Stakeholder survey and data collection; 3. Housing supply and demand analysis; and 4. Housing and affordability gap analysis. What we can expect from these tasks is an analysis of the market to quantify current and future housing demand for different segments of the market; a determination of the quantity of housing needs for each segment (including year-round owners and renters; seasonal and short-term vacation rentals; year-round employee housing; seasonal employee housing; and student housing); an evaluation of what has been done and more importantly what can be done to address the various needs of each segment; a determination of the affordability of the existing housing stock; and an estimation of the needs for projected year-round residents and different types of employees.

The additional data will serve as the basis for targeted housing policy recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan instead of the generally-stated ones, which in our situation is most desirable. It will help us set housing targets, as in “The town will create X number of affordable housing units by 2035,” and much more.



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Additionally, this can serve to help the community secure financing for possible programs and projects and provide a tool to attract and encourage residential development activity and investment. The Island Housing Trust could use the data to identify areas of development potential so that it can strategically develop the type of housing most needed in the community. Finally, having a deep understating of Bar Harbor's housing needs is the first step to start a regional conversation on housing.

This will also inform the Planning Board in its work to amend the Land Use Ordinance, presently the Planned Unit Development section in particular. This work is focused on the creation of affordable housing. The effort is referred to as Inclusionary Housing which is a program where developers set aside a certain percentage of the dwelling units within a new development for low- to moderate-income households, as well as workforce income households. To actually make a difference, as in moving the needle, we must tailor this Inclusionary Housing program to meet our present and future needs; however, we do not presently have any specific housing data — as in target income by segment, rental or owner-occupied, number of bedrooms, etc.

Finance Director Gilbert has reviewed the cost of the proposal and reports that there are several places the money can be drawn from.



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Your consideration on this matter is greatly appreciated. Should it be the desire of the Town Council to authorize the additional work, here is a possible motion:

***Move to authorize the Residential Needs Assessment work per the proposal from RKG dated April 25, 2022 in the amount of \$20,770.***

## PROPOSAL

**TO:** Michele Gagnon, Planning Director, Town of Bar Harbor  
**FROM:** Eric Halvorsen, Vice President & Principal, RKG Associates  
**DATE:** April 25, 2022  
**SUBJECT:** Residential Needs Assessment – Bar Harbor, Maine

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On behalf of RKG Associates, Inc. (RKG) I am pleased to provide a proposal to continue our work with the Town of Bar Harbor in assessing the housing needs within the town. As we have discussed, housing is one of the biggest topics and issues facing the town and demands on the existing housing stock are facing pressure from several different segments of buyers and renters. To help set accurate and realistic goals and strategies for the town as part of the Comprehensive Plan, there is a need to facilitate a deeper understanding of the pressures currently placed on the housing market and how those pressures are driving price increases and a general lack of available housing units.

To this end, RKG is prepared to assist the town with a more in-depth residential needs assessment that will look more closely at the supply and demand on Bar Harbor's housing market. The assessment will attempt to quantify housing demand from the different segments of the market, describe what type of housing each segment may be looking for, and what has been/will be done to address the various needs of each segment. These segments will include, but may not be limited to:

- Year-round owners and renters
- Seasonal and short-term vacation rentals
- Year-round employee housing
- Seasonal employee housing
- Student housing

In addition to quantifying both housing supply and current and future needs, RKG will also look at the affordability of the existing housing stock and what might be needed to support both year-round residents and the different types of employees working in Bar Harbor. As examples, this may range from deeply affordable rental housing for seniors on a fixed income to workforce housing for households earning 120-200% of the area median income.

The end goal of this effort is to provide more detailed inputs to the Comprehensive Plan to inform future resident engagement and ensure all participants in the process are starting from the same set of information.

## Scope of Work

To complete the housing needs assessment, RKG offers the following high-level tasks which we believe necessary to complete the requested analysis.

1. **Background Information, Data Collection, and Review** – RKG will submit a request for data and information beyond what has been supplied to date as part of the Comprehensive Plan. This may include more detailed residential permitting data, short-term rental information, and contacts for different employers across industry sectors. RKG will review the data and information provided and meet with town staff to clarify any questions.
2. **Stakeholder Survey/Data Collection** – RKG will work with town staff to develop two separate surveys to capture data for this study. The first will be a digital survey using Polco specifically targeting employers in town to request more detailed information on employment, employment by type (seasonal vs. year-round), salary ranges, current housing portfolio, estimates of housing need, and more.

The second digital survey will be open to all employees currently working in the labor market area (to be defined) to understand their housing preferences and choices, income ranges, household types, and if they were able to live and work in Bar Harbor, would they choose to do so and under what conditions. This second survey will allow us to understand the number of employees working in Bar Harbor and whether they live in town or not. We will also be able to learn about employees in the larger labor market, where they live, and if they would consider living and working in Bar Harbor if they could. This second survey will provide more information on the potential housing demand from an employment standpoint and the barriers different employees and their households face from a housing perspective.

Utilizing these digital surveys will create a standard set of questions for respondents and provide each respondent with the time they may need to gather the data rather than having to respond to detailed questions in an interview. The information provided will help inform the housing supply/demand analysis by providing specific data for the different segments of the market. RKG will also utilize any pertinent information already collected as part of stakeholder interviews through the Comprehensive Plan.

Lastly, RKG will rely on Town staff to help with outreach and engagement with the two surveys to help ensure it reaches as many employers and employees as possible.

- 3. Housing Supply/Demand Analysis**– For the housing supply and demand analysis, RKG will attempt to quantify the current housing demand from the different segments of the market noted earlier in the proposal and compare those demands to the existing housing supply. Where possible, RKG will provide actual demand figures based on our research and discussions with representatives from various market segments. This analysis will include to the extent possible, year-round and seasonal demands for housing recognizing the importance of that delineation in Bar Harbor.

RKG will also quantify the existing supply of housing by unit/structure type, tenure, and owner-occupied versus seasonal/investor owned where possible. We will look at the current prices of both owner and renter housing and the changes that have taken place over the past few years to understand how pricing may be impacting the availability and affordability of housing in town. Lastly, RKG will factor in future housing by working with town staff to quantify any known residential projects already permitted or those that are known to be in the pipeline.

- 4. Housing and Affordability Gap Analysis** – RKG will compare the results of the supply and demand analyses to identify market gaps (demand segments that are underserved based on available supply) within the town. The market gap analysis will present current gaps and projected gaps based on forecasts in new housing development and changes in demand from growing/changing population and employment. The analysis can also factor in different capture rates for future employees that may choose to live in Bar Harbor based on housing availability. The gap analysis will be completed for both rental and owner housing.

RKG will integrate standards of affordability based on U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) household income limits into the gap analysis to provide the town with detailed information on housing gaps at various income levels (AMI). This will include calculations and comparisons of household incomes to monthly rent costs, as well as household incomes to mortgage costs for owners. The resulting gap analysis will provide additional inputs to the Comprehensive Plan and help inform those conversations going forward.

**Presentation and Deliverables** - RKG will meet regularly with staff to provide updates on project progress and to get feedback on any changes or refinements that may be needed. RKG can present the findings if requested at a meeting of the Comprehensive Plan Committee or at another venue of the town's choice. The meeting will take place virtually. The housing needs assessment can be provided to the town as a standalone document with graphics and findings that can also be integrated into the Comprehensive Plan process as appropriate.

**Budget and Timeline – add start and end date.**

RKG proposes to undertake the four tasks described above for a total fixed fee of \$20,770 based on estimates of time requirements at our current billing rates, which range from \$135 to \$205. Eric Halvorsen will serve as the principal-in-charge for this project and Erik Woyciesjes will serve as the staff analyst. RKG will complete this scope of work by the end of September 2022.

Housing Needs Assessment  
Bar Harbor, Maine



**COST PROPOSAL**

Tasks	RKG Associates		TOTAL HOURS	TOTAL COST
	Principal (\$205)	Analyst (\$135)		
Task 1: Background, Data Collection, Review	1	3	4	\$610
Task 2: Stakeholder Survey/Data Collection	6	22	28	\$4,200
Task 3: Supply/Demand Analysis	8	60	68	\$9,740
Task 4: Housing and Affordability Gap Analysis	4	40	44	\$6,220
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>\$20,770</b>

We look forward to engaging with you on this project. Please let me know if you have additional questions or need anything further.

Thank you,  
Eric Halvorsen, AICP



Approved

Town of Bar Harbor  
93 Cottage Street  
Bar Harbor, ME 04609

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Signature

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Please print name and title

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Date

RKG Associates, Inc.  
76 Canal Street, Suite 401  
Boston, MA 02114

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Signature

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Please print name and title

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Date

# TOWN OF BAR HARBOR

## Comprehensive Planning Committee

### April 13, 2022, 6:00 – 8:00 PM

# MINUTES

The meeting was held in person in the Town Council Chambers with the consultants participating via Zoom.

Comprehensive Planning Committee members present were Elissa Chesler, Jacquie Colburn, Greg Cox, Kevin DesVeaux, Cherie Galyean, John Kelly, Calistra Martinez, Michael McKernan, Kristin Murphy, Misha Mytar, Val Peacock, Allison Sasner, Kyle Shank, and David Woodside. Jim Mahoney was absent.

Staff present were Planning Director Michele Gagnon and Deputy Code Enforcement Officer Mike Gurtler.

Consultants present were Steve Whitman, Liz Kelly, and Zak Brohinsky.

**1. Call to order**

Chairperson Shank called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

**2. Excused absences**

Jim Mahoney was excused.

**3. Zoom logistic, review of meeting agenda and adoption**

On a motion by Greg Cox, seconded by Kevin DesVeaux, the agenda was adopted (14-0).

**4. Adoption of March 9, 2022 minutes**

On a motion by Greg Cox, seconded by Elissa Chesler, the March 9, 2022 minutes were adopted (14-0).

**5. Public comment period**

No comments were made.

**6. Update on Other Related Efforts**

Michele Gagnon provided an overview of related efforts as outlined in her memo to the CPC. This included a review of the Planned Unit Development and Affordable Housing provisions of the Land Use Ordinance. She explained that inclusionary housing provisions are being

explored. The next step will include case study scenarios. Michele Gagnon was then asked how this may inform the comprehensive planning process. She said that waiting on the completion of the Comprehensive Plan to address the town's housing problem is not an option given the severity of the situation and that she is confident that this will be in line with the direction of the plan.

## **7. Outreach and Engagement**

Liz Kelly summarized the outreach activities completed to date and some ongoing efforts as identified in the meeting memo. Elissa Chesler commented that many people do not understand how the Comprehensive Plan fits with other regulations, or the role of the CPC. Val Peacock requested that there be clarification of what the Committee's role is on the various outreach tasks. Ms. Peacock also requested that outreach be tracked so that it can be quantified.

Ms. Kelly explained that the April newsletter is in the works, and that it will include a link to the Polco survey. Mike McKernan asked if the Polco questions are open-ended questions, and if so, how they will be analyzed. Steve Whitman clarified that these will be open-ended questions and the analysis will be focused on the qualitative responses. Michele Gagnon added that the intent is to look for the trends in this data.

John Kelly shared a concern that Polco alone will not reach everyone. This led to a discussion on all of the ways that outreach and engagement tools should be made available including online, on paper, and in-person when possible. It was decided that tabling (where members of the committee and/or staff will interact with residents to inform them of the Comprehensive Plan and distribute information) should begin in June for the election and Town Meeting. Kyle Shank, Greg Cox, and Cherie Galyean agreed to coordinate future tabling activities and to coordinate offline with the consultant on any materials that are needed.

Val Peacock suggested adding a demographic question to better understand who is responding, and Michele Gagnon agreed that this will help with some of the cross tabulation. John Kelly also mentioned that half of the businesses are part of the Chamber and that other ways need to be found to reach the rest. Liz asked for the Committee's help in doing that and in reaching other audiences in the community.

The September forum was then discussed briefly and Misha Mytar asked if the focus of the event will be on existing conditions review. Liz Kelly explained that it will include identifying barriers, opportunities and challenges that should be addressed in the comprehensive plan. Steve Whitman added that it should do so by allowing for the review of the existing conditions data and by looking to actions needed in the future.

## **8. Existing Conditions**

Steve Whitman provided an update on the status and timeline of the existing conditions work being completed by the consulting team, and provided an overview of a proposed deeper-dive housing needs assessment. He explained that the requested scope of work for the additional housing needs assessment and analysis work that will go deeper than a typical comprehensive plan, and could be completed by RKG Associates in parallel to this planning process. If

approved this would provide additional information on the existing housing challenges, and some possible strategies. Michele Gagnon explained that this is headed for approval and if she shared with the CPC.

## **9. Parks, Open Space, and Recreation**

Zak Brohinsky provided an overview of the topics as they are defined by the State of Maine, and explained why these appear to be especially important to Bar Harbor. The following feedback and ideas were offered by committee members during the discussion:

- Limited in recreational boating access, limited mooring space with long waiting list.
- Hadley Point provides limited launching opportunity, and the launch in Town is challenging as well.
- Vocal contingent asking for space for dogs.
- Maine Coast Heritage Trust hears that coastal access, places for dogs, and community garden spaces are in need.
- How much more open space is needed?
- The lack of mountain bike trails leads to some informal use and some use where this should not happen. Breakneck Road is a current spot for riding.
- Maybe Bar harbor does not need to provide it all?
- Need to recognize the economic importance of open space. It is the biggest economic driver in the community.
- Recreation opportunities for children are needed closer to where they live. Currently most are at the YMCA but fewer children live in this part of town.
- If there are natural resources we value, we should make sure the land use regulations actually protect them.
- The Glen Mary Woods area needs protection and we should provide more recreational opportunities for older children. The Glen Mary Pool skating rink is not maintained.
- Consider miniparks along major routes and other places where green space could be formalized.
- We need to recognize that the town does not have a Parks and Recreation Department and that this role has defaulted to the YMCA. The YMCA charges and therefore the services are not accessible to all. Who is not being served?
- The in-town park was fixed through non-municipal funding and fundraising, as was the skate park, dog park, and Town Hill park.
- Based on the size of the community it is amazing to have so much available including Little League, and programs through the YMCA paid for by the town.
- Facilities are well maintained. The town staff should be commended and this should continue.
- There is pressure on these locations, and it is challenging to sustain the number and type of users as they continue to change. There is a need for a clear plan for open space and recreation areas and funding behind the plan.
- Increasingly people are discovering every spot in town.
- There is an opportunity to think about open water and recreational aspects, and the open space management of the waterfront. This should include considering aquaculture and other potential impacts. The open space of the ocean.

- Need a clear vision for open space and recreation, what the town can commit to, and what others should do.
- Should clarify how formalized the open space and recreation spaces are between the many organizations that care for them.

## **10. Community Facilities and Services Discussion**

Steve Whitman provided a short introduction to the topic and explained the work completed to date with the various department heads. The following feedback and ideas were offered by committee members during this discussion:

- Electric vehicle charging infrastructure is needed.
- Energy – some buildings are very expensive to operate and may not be deficient otherwise. Should we consider new facilities or additional investment in existing facilities? Could the school buildings be an option?
- There is a need for a police station.
- Could the municipal office building be moved? It is expensive to run and is not as accessible or inclusive as it could be.
- The Town needs an overall facilities assessment and plan.
- Has regionalization of the police department been successful? Yes, and this success has been documented.
- Looking at regional ambulance service now.
- Could trash and recycling be handled differently? Large impact from visitors. The town has University of Maine interns doing a waste audit to inform the management of this system. Climate to Thrive is also looking at waste issues.
- Important to know that many businesses are having their waste and recycling hauled away privately.
- There are wireless/internet capacity issues during summer and the increase in remote workers has added to this issue.
- The municipal fiber project is moving forward.
- Need to remember our role as a tourism destination versus the community needs when considering solutions.
- Can there be a comparison of the visitor impact by comparing the town to other communities of a similar size that do not get as many visitors?
- Mention the MDI Search and Rescue which is a non-profit coordinating with the Park and others.
- Life Flight comes to Bar Harbor often and the service does not have access to the best infrastructure, but a new landing area is in the works for the corner of the field.
- Overall, most are very satisfied with the department efforts.
- Some facilities may be under-sized – Fire Department and schools as examples.
- Is the Fire Department in the right location?
- Sea-level rise and the need to address the pier, Harbor Master’s office, and other facilities?
- Other climate change impacts relate to the roads and culverts.

**11. Next Steps**

- Members interesting in staffing the tabling effort should submit their name to Kyle Shank.
- Note that the next meeting is May 16<sup>th</sup>.

**12. Public Comment Period.**

No comments were made.

**12. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 PM on a motion by John Kelly, seconded by Mike McKernan (14-0).

**Minutes approved by the Comprehensive Planning Committee on May 16, 2022:**

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**Kyle Shank**

**Chair, Comprehensive Planning Committee**

**Date**