

## **Bar Harbor Town Council**

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### **Vision**

The Bar Harbor Town Council is resolute in its commitment to promoting a sustainable and resilient community. Taxpayers appreciate ongoing attention to keep the rate of property tax increase low, helped by implementation of user-based fees. Bar Harbor voters value the role of local government to assure efficient and effective use of public funds in order to improve the quality of life for residents and visitors. Recognizing that much of our economy is based on the natural environment, the Council supports steps to protect those resources. Valuing transparency and mutual trust, town officials and residents work to improve communication so that we all better understand concerns and work through policy choices and practical solutions.

### **2019 Five Year Goals and Strategies**

**~ FY19 through FY24 ~**

#### **Goal 1: Increase the amount of year-round housing affordable to working families**

**Strategy 1a:** Reduce the cost of residential home development by directing the planning board to create zoning ordinances that encourage higher, medium and lower density residential development in appropriate zones

**Strategy 1b:** Increase the supply of year-round housing units (for purchase and rental) through partnerships with developers, employers and non-profits (e.g. Island Housing Trust)

**Strategy 1c:** Provide incentives for providing year-round rentals, and direct the planning board to develop appropriate land use ordinances and regulation to stem conversion of year-round housing to vacation rentals

#### **Goal 2: Create effective plans for a Sustainable Future**

**Strategy 2a:** Explore opportunities to significantly reduce reliance on fossil fuels by the town, local businesses and residents, including the use of additional publicly-owned lots for development of solar energy.

**Strategy 2b:** Support the Town Manager in developing the appropriate capacity within the planning department that will allow the town to begin an update of Bar Harbor's Comprehensive Plan in 2020, including vision and goals for the future of the town, and, importantly, the basis for a more workable Land Use Ordinance.

**Strategy 2c:** Work with the Cruise Ship Committee and other stakeholders to create plans to reduce congestion in the vicinity of the town pier and waterfront by tour busses and various services provided to seasonal visitors, including passengers from cruise ships.

## **Goal 3: Improve the Effectiveness and Delivery of Municipal Services**

**Strategy 3a:** Building on lessons learned from our collaboration with the Town of Mount Desert for shared police services, explore additional possibilities in public safety, including dispatching services, and other town services/functions (e.g. human resources and finances), where collaboration among towns could lead to greater effectiveness and efficiency.

**Strategy 3b:** Study space and facilities needs for public safety functions within Bar Harbor, and recommend shorter-term solutions, even as longer-term exploration of strategies for collaboration with the Town of Mount Desert continues

## **Goal 4: Improve and Maintain Local Infrastructure**

**Strategy 4a:** Given implementation of a parking program approved by voters in 2018, seek additional solutions to on-going parking and congestion problems in the summer season, including promotion of walking, biking and shuttle-bus alternatives to private automobiles in the downtown

**Strategy 4b:** Continue to evaluate opportunities for improved broadband service within downtown and areas of the town not currently served.

**Strategy 4c:** While continuing to develop funding sources for street-scape improvements outlined in plans for Cottage and Lower Main Streets, direct the Planning Board to address elements of the land use ordinance that tend to make such redevelopment more difficult.

## **Goal 5: Improve the Effectiveness and Efficiency of our Town Governance and Encourage citizen involvement**

**Strategy 5a:** Continue to improve communications with tax-payers and residents, so that council members better understand the hopes and concerns of residents, and residents better understand the roles, responsibilities and authority of the council.

**Strategy 5b:** Review, and clarify where necessary, the purpose and roles of all boards, committees and task forces to streamline, consolidate and improve their effectiveness. Update the draft “handbook for boards and committees” to better orient new board and committee members and to allow for periodic review.