

APPENDIX C: A VISION FOR KENNEBUNKPORT

In the fall of 2001, the Growth Planning Committee hosted a two-day session to develop a “vision” for the future of Kennebunkport. The following excerpts are based on the opinions of those citizens attending the town visioning sessions on October 19 and 20, 2001, as compiled by Planning Decisions, Inc.

I. CHARACTER OF THE COMMUNITY

Kennebunkport has a small-town charm derived from the distinct areas that comprise the Town as a whole: Cape Porpoise, Dock Square, Goose Rocks, Turbat's Creek, Cape Arundel, the Village, Wildes District, and Town House. Each area evokes a distinct feeling. Yet each also shares a common Kennebunkport heritage of historic New England colonial and shingle-style homes, sidewalks and shade trees, views of the shore and the forest, working waterfronts and farms, proud churches and locally-owned stores. The Town is peaceful and safe, with excellent municipal services. Kennebunkport is a good place to raise children. Its people are friendly, caring, and involved in community life.

Kennebunkport also has a lively cultural life. From its diverse and talented citizens, Kennebunkport has created good schools, fine libraries, a historical society, conservation groups, service clubs, and an array of interesting art galleries, restaurants, and stores. When people need more, they can take an easy drive from Kennebunkport to Portland or Portsmouth, or to Boston, or to several major airports for points further away.



II. DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

The identity of Kennebunkport is captured in its well-known places such as the historic homes in the Village, Dock Square, and the village at Cape Porpoise. But there are many other smaller places that are also special to Kennebunkport's identity.

III. VILLAGES AND AREAS

Here is the vision that emerged from the participants at the visioning process for how Kennebunkport's distinctive villages and areas might look several years in the future.

Cape Porpoise will remain an unpretentious, livable community. Its homes will reflect its diverse year-round population – including fishermen – and will be modest in scale and affordable. The harbor will be home for fishing and lobster boats as well as pleasure craft. The village stores will be oriented towards basic goods, such as groceries and hardware. The village itself will be walkable, with maintained and extended sidewalks. For those seeking a longer walk, there will be bike paths and walking paths. Streets will remain narrow, and automobile traffic will be minimized. The area's 19th Century feel will be preserved.

Goose Rocks Beach will retain its flavor as a family-oriented area with cottage-style houses. The beach will remain uncrowded and walkable, with public bathrooms and public access. The beach patrol will manage boat and jet-ski use, and dogs will be controlled. Wildlife areas and the piping plover will be actively protected; more land will be in conservation easements. New buildings will be in scale with those already there. The Route 9 area is one where new village-scale residential development may be considered for the future. If more parking is needed, it will be away from the beach.

Dock Square will remain primarily a retail center. Its stores will include day-to-day convenience items as well as high quality, locally owned galleries and shops. The historic architecture will be strictly maintained, and buildings will stay in scale with the area. The commercial area will cover the same area it does now – it will not expand. The appearance of Dock Square will be improved by burying utility lines and screening dumpsters. Parking will be provided off-site, with connecting shuttles. There will be public restrooms.

The Maine Street/Village Residential area will remain the center for municipal services in town – with the Town Hall, fire station, and library. Improved sidewalks and bike paths will make it easier to get around. The tree canopy overhead will be encouraged and maintained. Historic homes and structures will be maintained;

none will be torn down. Traffic will flow smoothly and all-day parking restricted. Bed and breakfast establishments will be encouraged in historic buildings.

The Farm/Forest area will have an expanded Town forest, continuing farmland uses, free-range and domestic animals, hiking trails and picnic/recreation areas, wildlife refuges, watershed protection areas, and wilderness and open space. The character of the area will remain rural, with few public improvements. (*Note: This is an area needing intensive planning attention in the immediate future*).

Cape Arundel will retain its nineteenth century resort character, with the Colony Hotel, the Cape Arundel Inn, Walker's Point, St. Anne's, and the shingle-style houses. Parson's Way will remain open, the Colony Beach Road will remain unpaved, and Wandby Beach will remain public. Better ways of moving tourists and visitors through the area will be found. New homes, as well as the reconstruction and modification of existing homes, will be in the same scale and style, and use the same materials as the older homes.

The Riverfront area will have a town dock and public access to the water. There will be visitor slips for those who want to come to Kennebunkport by boat. An improved sidewalk system will make walking in the area more convenient and safer. Government Wharf and fishing activities, as well as other marinas and yacht clubs, will be maintained. Buildings will be mixed in their use, and small in scale, as now. The river will be kept clean from pollution and protected from degradation. A maritime museum will be a place for teaching about the town's long maritime history.

The Town House area will develop as a small village, with a neighborhood of affordable housing and small convenience stores nearby. As much of this area is in Arundel, the area's future will be cooperatively planned with the Town of Arundel. Farms will remain in the area. This may be a location for parking for a shuttle or trolley to Dock Square. There will be converted hiking and biking trails.

IV. PRINCIPLES FOR MANAGING FUTURE GROWTH

The Town of Kennebunkport will need to accommodate more residents and visitors in its future. The goal is to do so in ways consistent with the character of the Town, in ways that preserve the distinctive landmarks of the Town, and in ways that enhance the villages and areas of the Town. With this in mind, here are some key principles to guide future growth.

1. ***Preserve existing village identities.*** Kennebunkport's unique villages and districts are part of its identity. New development should take place in a way that respects and even enhances the differences among the various areas, rather than

homogenizing the Town and blurring differences. At the same time, new development within the villages should maintain the character of that area and be compatible with the existing scale and style of construction.

2. ***Encourage new housing in designated growth areas.*** In the visioning sessions, citizens suggested that, as the population increases, the Town consider designating growth areas at Town House and in the Route 9 area of Goose Rocks Beach. The area between North Street and School Street will absorb the expanding village residential growth. The wisdom of these alternatives requires technical study from the Growth Planning Committee, since any new village center will require innovative zoning policies and utility expansions. In general, new housing clustered in cohesive areas is the preferred pattern of development.
3. ***Encourage alternative means of transportation.*** Preserving the character of the Town and its villages will require reducing both the volume of automobile traffic and the need for on-site automobile parking. Affordable alternative transportation, a network of bike trails, sidewalks, and walking trails throughout the town for year-round residents, and a strategy for tourist/visitor management involving off-site parking lots and shuttles or trolleys, are all essential for the future quality of life in Kennebunkport. The Town should require new development to address alternative transportation issues.
4. ***Maintain the diversity of the population.*** Part of the quality of the community in Kennebunkport is its diversity, the fact that it includes young as well as old, fishermen as well as software consultants, old-timers as well as newcomers, and all income groups. To maintain a diversity of people, a diversity of housing types and costs must be maintained as well. This goal was strongly endorsed by participants in the visioning session.
5. ***Maintain good communications.*** Kennebunkport is distinguished by its friendly atmosphere and extensive participation by volunteers in community and civic functions. The way to keep involvement high, and to avoid "us vs. them" confrontations, is to maintain good communications through meetings, newsletters, web sites, and the like.

6. ***Keep the local elementary school.*** This is a critical part of the small scale and personal feel of Kennebunkport and should be maintained.
7. ***Promote the performing arts.*** Culture and the arts are important components of the quality of life in Kennebunkport and the community needs to find ways to foster them.
8. ***Protect natural and scenic resources.*** The most frequently mentioned special places from the visioning session include beach and coastal areas, islands, brooks and rivers, open fields, and forests. These are important habitats for wildlife and plants as well as being valued by residents for their natural and scenic qualities. They are part of the essential and enduring character of Kennebunkport, and they must not be compromised by future development.