**Oakland Comprehensive Plan**

**Full Committee: State Economist Presentation**

8.02.2018 | 4pm

Attendees: Gary Bowman, Donna Griffin, Robert Nutting, Kelly Roderick, Mike Rossignol, Dale Sturtevant, Chuck Sweigart, Laura Tracy

Facilitator: Garvan Donegan, CMGC

Presenter: Amanda Rector – State Economist of the Maine Department of Administrative and Financial Services.

**Agenda:**

1. Approve Minutes
2. Review Recent Public Input Opportunities
   1. Public Workshop
   2. OakFest
   3. Community Survey
3. Overview of State Trends and Issues Related to Demographics and Workforce
   1. Population
   2. Economy
   3. Housing
4. Next steps

**I. Approve Minutes**

Motion to approve minutes as written made by Dale, seconded by Chuck. All in favor, no discussion, so moved.

**II. Review Recent Public Input Opportunities**

Public Workshop, 6/21

15 people attended the first public workshop, which went well. Attendees were engaged in the planning exercises, and discussion went smoothly. No major concerns were raised, and the group found consensus on ideas for the Town’s future, particularly in relation to the downtown.

OakFest, 7/28

OCPC was given a table within the Town of Oakland section, and volunteers were able to speak with over 100 families about the CompPlan process and the accompanying survey. Most Oakland residents were aware of the community survey, and many expressed gratitude for the opportunity to provide input.

Community Survey

The Town mailed about 3,000 physical copies of the survey.

Over 200 responses have been recorded, roughly split between online and physical submissions. The majority of respondents report appreciation for Oakland’s small town feel, location (“close to everything but you feel miles away”), and friendly and effective Town staff and services. Areas of improvement include business development, additional green space and family-friendly activities.

Most respondents are between 45-64 years of age and are year-round residents.

**III. Overview of State Trends and Issues Related to Demographics and Workforce**

*Presented by Amanda Rector, State Economist*

Population

Maine is the oldest and whitest state in the nation, with the 42nd largest population. Our birth rate, which is lower than the national average, is declining, and is too low to replace our population (births < deaths). The Baby Boomer generation is now over 65, and following generations are much smaller.

However, Maine’s population has increased by 0.6% between 2010-2017, and Oakland’s has increased by 0.3% in that same time period, which is greater than the rate for Kennebec County. More recently, Oakland’s population increased by 0.7% between 2016-2017. This population increase is due to in-migration – people are moving to Oakland. While people move for a variety of reasons, they often move for jobs and quality of life.

Workforce

Yet, Oakland’s population is older – there are more households with people over the age of 65 than under the age of 18. Statewide, the working age population (between ages 25-64) peaked in 2010 and is projected to decline. This has concerning consequences for employers, as Maine’s unemployment rate is already below U.S. and New England averages.

A complicating factor is the changing mix of jobs in Maine’s economy. Whereas manufacturing employed the most people up until the 1990s, now education and healthcare are the dominant employers. Given the dramatic shift, Maine residents’ skill sets may not fit the new jobs that are now available.

Housing

Oakland performs better than Kennebec County and Maine in homeownership and rental affordability, though renting in Oakland is not affordable for the median income earner. A caveat – housing affordability does not mean availability.

NOTE: most population statistics and baselines are derived from the 2010 decennial census, which is now 8 years old. The new 2020 census will provide more accurate information.

**IV. Next Steps**

* Attend the next OCPC meeting, August 14 at 4pm.
* Central Maine Growth Council staff will continue to prepare the CompPlan draft.