

March 2018

TO:

From: OCPC

Subject: Town of Oakland's Comprehensive Planning Process

RE: *Overview of OCPC Comprehensive Plan*

I. Introduction

Our Town of Oakland is currently in the process of crafting a Comprehensive Plan¹ with the goal of creating a blueprint for the future and we need your help and cooperation to do this.

Your critical input will aid us, the Oakland Comprehensive Planning Committee (OCPC), in completing our mission by providing us with your valuable vision as to our Town's core values, possibilities, needs, and direction.

This spring and summer (2018), we would greatly appreciate your participation in the comprehensive planning committee's public input processes, including public workshops and a community survey that will be disseminated to benefit and inform the decision making of OCPC and Town of Oakland.

II. What is a Comprehensive Plan?

It is a comprehensive, long range plan intended to guide the growth and development of a community that typically includes inventory and analytical sections leading to recommendations for the community's future economic development, housing, recreation and open space, transportation, community facilities, and land use, all related to the community's goals and objectives for these elements.

III. Why Prepare a Comprehensive Plan?

Comprehensive Planning is more than a document. It is a process that encourages a community to come together, evaluate its current status, and decide what it would like its future to be.

IV. Community Benefit

Good planning makes good communities, including benefits such as:

- Promote economic prosperity and quality of life
- Sustain our village center(s) and vibrant living
- Preserve a healthy landscape and walkable communities
- Protect municipal assets
- Develop a discussion among neighbors
- Develop a basis for sound decisions in town management

¹ The State of Maine statute governing the consistency and guidelines for Comprehensive Plans may be viewed via the *Growth Management Act* (30-A M.R.S.A. §§ 4312 – 4350): <http://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/30-a/title30-Ach187sec0.html>.

V. Financial Benefits of a Comprehensive Plan

Along with the advantages of conducting long range planning, a consistent comprehensive plan helps a town qualify for certain state grant and loan programs. Over \$80 million annually is awarded through 25 state grant and loan programs with some level of consideration of local comprehensive plans. Examples of these programs include:

- Department of Economic & Community Development (DECD) Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
- Municipal Investment Trust Fund
- DEP 319(h) Non-Point Source Protection Grants
- DEP State Revolving Loan Fund
- Land and Water Conservation Fund

Additionally, only communities that adopt a consistent comprehensive plan can:

- I. Qualify for preferred status with many state and federal competitive grant programs; (30-A, M.R.S.A. §4349-A.3-A)
- II. Guide state growth-related capital investment towards locally-chosen growth areas; (30-A, M.R.S.A. §4349-A.1)
- III. Qualify for Site Location of Development Act exemptions for certain growth-area developments; (38, M.R.S.A. §488.14 & .19)
- IV. Qualify for relaxed MaineDOT traffic permit standards for certain growth-area developments; (23, M.R.S.A. §704.A.2.D)
- V. Qualify for authority to issue Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA) permits; and (38, M.R.S.A. §480-F)
- VI. Qualify for authority to issue Site Location of Development Act permits. (38, M.R.S.A. §489-A)