

# PLAN YARMOUTH



## Community Conversations Results & Analysis November 2023

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## Overview

The Yarmouth Comprehensive Plan team held three topic-based Community Conversations events in Fall 2023 to support the development of the Comprehensive Plan Update. The topics selected were **Housing, Economy, and Environment & Natural Resources**. The topics were chosen by the Comprehensive Plan team as they encompass both the built environment and the natural environment of Yarmouth, and relate to the major themes we heard in the summer survey. Each session provided an opportunity for the community to have deeper discussions on these topics and get more nuanced feedback than the high-level questions in the summer survey.

Each event was held in-person in the same location on a Monday evening on September 18, September 25, and October 2. Events began with a brief presentation by the project team's subject matter experts. Following the presentation, attendees worked in groups to discuss targeted questions on each subject. Groups were led by table facilitators consisting of members of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, the project team, and other community volunteers. Before the event ended, facilitators or other volunteers shared a brief report of what was discussed at each table. After the event, the presentations and video recordings of the events were made available on the Plan Yarmouth website, with online analogues of each activity.

During the same period of time, members of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee held a companion event about the needs of the growing number of Yarmouth residents who work from home. These results are also shared in this report.

In addition to the Comprehensive Plan Update, the Town of Yarmouth is concurrently working on developing its first Climate Action Plan. The Yarmouth Climate Action Task Force and the Yarmouth Sustainability Coordinator held a Community Action Workshop on October 10. Because of the interconnectedness of these two important planning processes, relevant results from the Community Action Workshop are referenced where there is overlap with the results from the Community Conversations.

# Housing

## *Event Overview*

*Community Conversations: Housing* was held on Monday, September 11, 2023 from 6 PM to 8 PM. 53 people attended the event, plus staff and facilitators. Jeff Levine of Levine Planning Strategies and a member of the Comprehensive Plan Team gave a presentation on the data incorporated in the Housing Inventory Chapter and the results of the Housing Affordability Market Study prepared by Levine Planning Strategies. The presentation shared important data points such as:

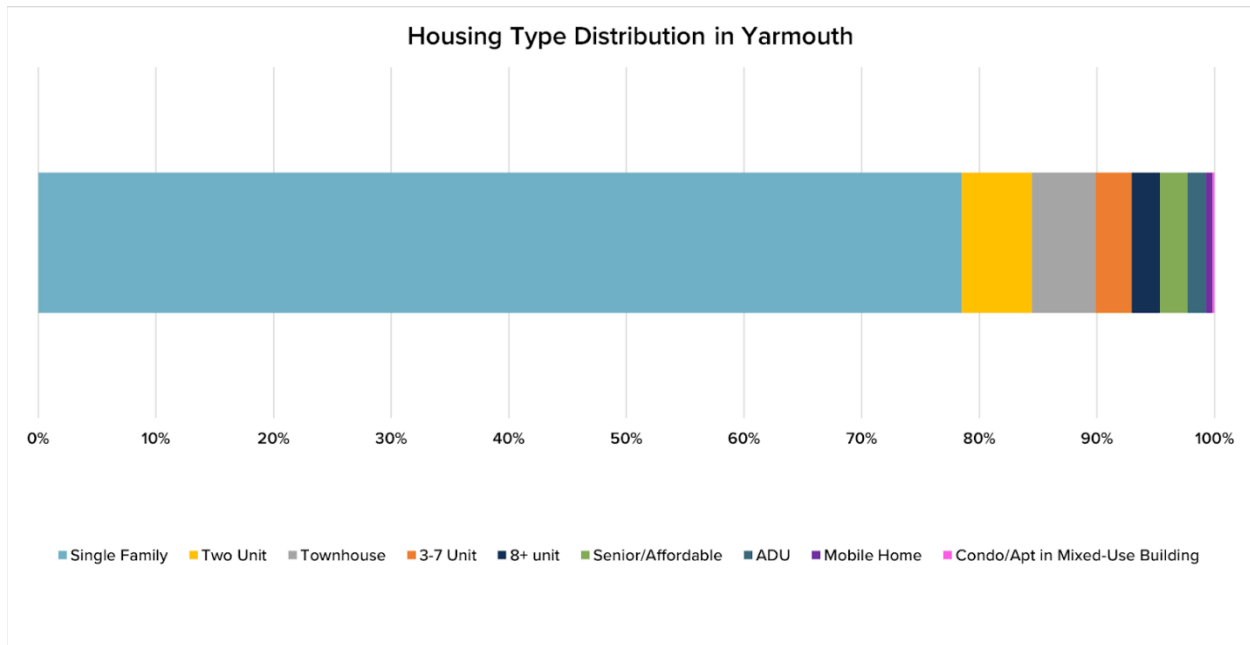
- Existing housing types in Yarmouth;
- Home construction over time in Yarmouth;
- Affordability data including the percent of households unable to afford the median-priced home and the resulting cost-burdened households in Yarmouth;
- Yarmouth’s zoning limitations that affect the construction of new housing; and
- Number of homes needed to satisfy the current demand from renter and homeowner households based on income.

Armed with this information, small groups of attendees were asked to discuss what the mix of housing options should look like in Yarmouth in the future, where new housing should be located in Yarmouth, how new housing might relate to a variety of other topics, and strategies that Yarmouth can advance to create new housing. Attendees could also refer to Yarmouth’s zoning map and land use map as well as the copies of the presentation.



## Housing Mix

Attendees were provided with a graph showing the existing mix of housing types in Yarmouth, shown below.



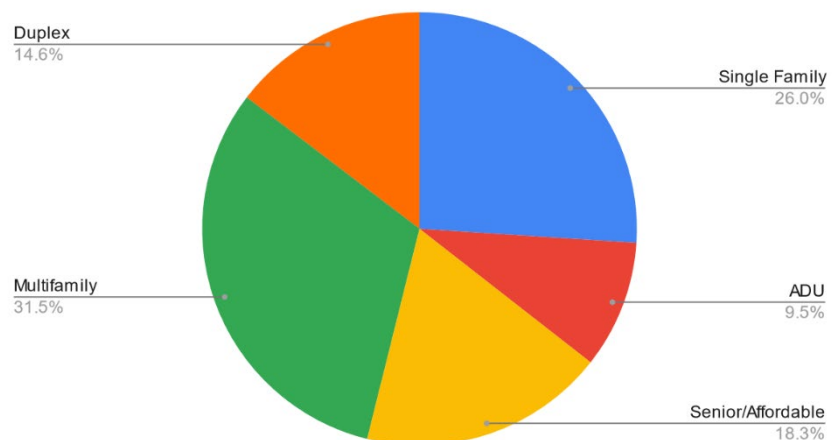
Based on this existing mix, each group was asked to consider what mix of housing types they would like to see be created in Yarmouth over the next 5 years. Groups were encouraged to discuss the housing types to gain a common understanding amongst group members as well as discuss other housing types that are missing. Each group developed their own categories for housing types and provided a distribution for what percentage of each type should be built.

Taking each group's housing mix and finding the average of each housing type, an average distribution was calculated.

Written comments on this activity and group comments at the end of the event illuminated that the participants did

not recommend abandoning the single-family housing type in Yarmouth. However,

**Average Housing Distribution**



different types of single-family homes need to be available, such as cottages and smaller homes, and corresponding smaller lots, which in turn may be more affordable.

Many of the groups recommended that a baseline of affordable homes across all housing typologies be available in Yarmouth, with one group specifying 20 percent of all housing types be affordable.

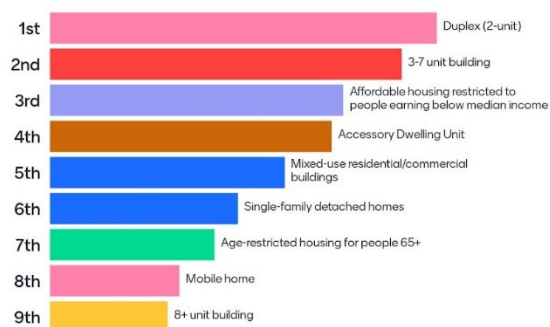
Groups recommended, on average, that about one-third of new housing in Yarmouth should be multifamily. The summer survey yielded a similar result.

A version of this question was available online after the event. Respondents were asked to rank the housing types that should be built in Yarmouth over the next 5 years from a list of options:

- Single-family detached home
- Duplex (2-unit)
- 3-7 unit building
- 8+ unit building
- Age-restricted housing for people age 65+
- Affordable housing restricted to people earning below median income
- Accessory dwelling unit
- Mixed-use commercial/residential
- Mobile home

6 people responded. Results reflected the Community Conversations event and the summer survey in a desire for more multifamily housing, with duplex and 3-7 unit buildings ranked first. There was a strong preference for smaller multifamily developments, with 8+ unit buildings ranked last. Affordable housing was ranked third. Accessory dwelling units were fourth and single-family detached homes were

## Housing Mix



Mentimeter



sixth, showing again that respondents want to keep building single-family homes in Yarmouth, but may be interested in different types of dwellings.

### *Housing Location*

For the next exercise, each small group was given a handful of beans and asked to place the beans on a print out of Yarmouth in places where new housing should be located. Each bean was not assigned a value; rather the groups could use more beans to illustrate higher density and fewer or no beans to illustrate less density of housing.

Two examples of the bean maps that illustrate the range of responses to this question from the small groups are shown below:



The bean map on the left illustrates one group's interest in high housing density within the Village and along major corridors. The bean map on the right illustrates some increased density along Route 1 and some major corridors, but limited new housing elsewhere in town, which is more consistent with the other maps prepared by attendees. The Comprehensive Plan team reviewed each bean map for

commonalities and where there was divergence. Those common locations across the eight bean maps include:

- Village and Main Street;
- Route 1;
- Major corridors and intersections;
- Vacant land between the Garmin building and Bayview Street; and
- Creating more density around existing developments such as the Brookside Condominiums and the Taymil properties.

Where there was less agreement was along minor corridors such as Sligo Road, North Road, Granite Street, and Bayview Street. Only two maps put beans on any of the islands, the example above, and another map that placed beans at Wyman Station.

A version of this question was available online after the event. Respondents were asked where in Yarmouth new housing should be built over the next 5 years, and could drop a pin on a map to share. Only two answers were provided: one near the current Tyler Technologies property by Route 1 and the 295 ramp, and one on Blueberry Cove Road where there is currently an existing development of attached townhomes.

The results of the summer survey echoed the Community Conversations results, with the top response identified for new housing being located along Route 1 and major corridors. The attendees at the Community Action Workshop also supported prioritizing density and mixed-use buildings in areas close to transit and economic centers.

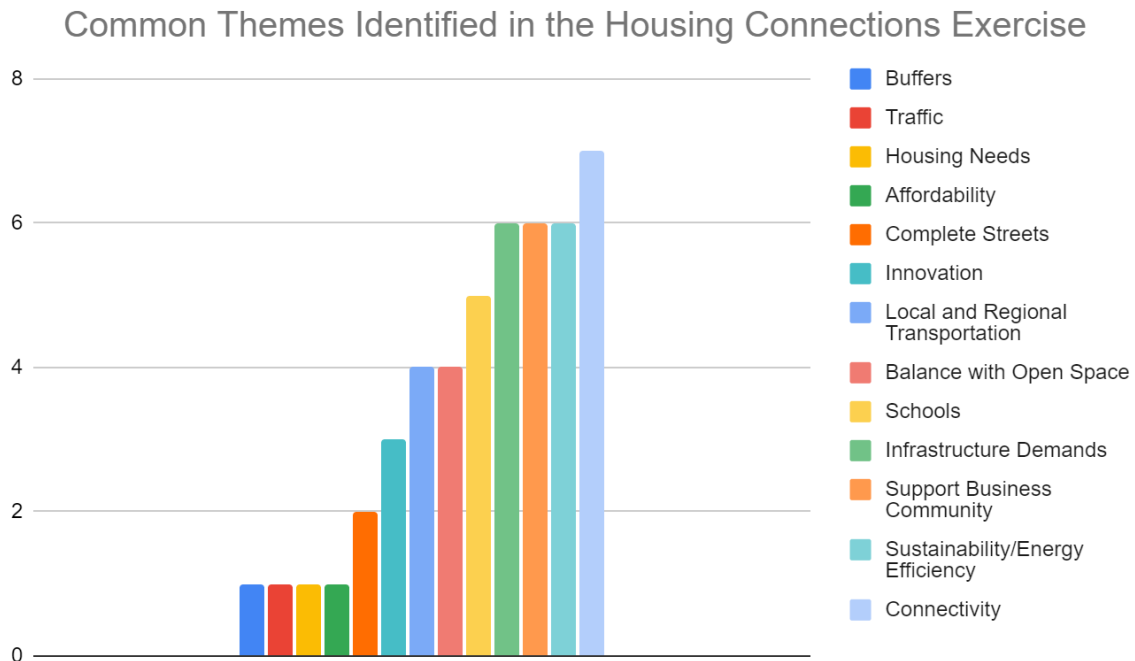
### *Housing Connections*

Attendees were given the opportunity to think about what impacts the housing mix and locations they just developed would have on other aspects of life in Yarmouth: transportation, community amenities & infrastructure, open space & recreation, public schools, facilities, & services, energy efficiency & greenhouse gas emissions, and economy.

The Comprehensive Plan team reviewed the responses and assigned themes to the various connections identified by each small group. The most often cited item was connectivity – not only references to infrastructure to support walking and biking, but also local and regional transportation. Not unsurprisingly, there were many

references to the schools and infrastructure demands and striving to protect valuable open spaces. Other common themes cited include: sustainability and energy efficiency, housing supporting the business community.

The chart below illustrates how often various themes came up across the various small groups:



The same question was posed to respondents online. Only one person answered, citing the need for affordable workforce housing.

The respondents to the summer survey also expressed strong support for public transit improvements and supporting a community that is walkable and bikeable. Attendees at the Climate Action Plan Community Action Workshop provided input on high priorities consistent with the themes found in this exercise including preserving open space with a focus on wildlife corridors, aligning future development and building construction with climate goals, and supporting public transit and connectivity within Yarmouth.



## *Housing Strategies*

Optionally, attendees could identify actions they would like to see the town of Yarmouth take to encourage this new housing. Not every group was able to complete this exercise, but the variety of responses suggested that the current zoning needs to be updated to support housing needs, there should be density bonuses for transit-oriented development, and affordable housing development needs to be incentivized.

The same question was posed to respondents online. Two respondents answered. One person listed affordability strategies: inclusionary zoning, support ADUs, create a housing trust, and commit town-owned land to affordable housing. Another person suggested that vacant buildings in town could be converted to affordable housing, and all housing should be surrounded by green space.

The variety of strategies provided suggests the desire by many members of the community to support and incentivize affordable housing. At the same time, others want to focus on balancing priorities and preserving Yarmouth's built environment and open space when addressing housing issues.

## **Economy**

### *Event Overview*

*Community Conversations: Economy* was held on Monday, September 18, 2023 from 6 PM to 8 PM. 23 people attended the event, plus staff and facilitators. Tom Dworetsky, of Camoin Associates, and a member of the Comprehensive Plan Team gave a presentation on the data incorporated in the Economy Inventory Chapter and the results of the Real Estate Market Analysis prepared by Camoin Associates. The presentation shared important data points such as:

- Key demographic trends on population and age, commuting, job growth, and growing industries;
- Yarmouth's key assets and strengths within in the region;
- Residential, retail, industrial, and general office market opportunities; and
- Key economic issues and needs in Yarmouth.



Following the presentation, attendees divided into small groups for discussion. Each small group was asked to complete four exercises: what businesses are missing in Yarmouth and where they should be located, what municipal actions to take to strengthen the local economy, what municipal actions to take on the creative economy, and what municipal actions to take on the working waterfront. Attendees could also refer to Yarmouth’s zoning map and land use map as well as a map of Yarmouth’s retail trade area and copies of the presentation.

### *New Business Growth: Missing Businesses and Appropriate Locations*

Each small group was given a poster-size chart of business types for consideration. Each poster also provided space for groups to fill in any other business types that the group identified as missing in Yarmouth. Each attendee voted for five preferred businesses as part of the small group discussions. The photo on the following page is an example of one of the complete charts, illustrating how each small group rated each business category and added other ideas based on the group conversation.

When aggregating the responses from each table, the following top businesses were identified as missing in Yarmouth:

- Restaurants (full service, quick service, cafes, and diners);
- Outdoor recreation and agri-tourism;
- Boutique retailers;
- Daycare and childcare; and
- Urgent care.

This list diverges somewhat from the top five businesses identified for growth in Yarmouth in the summer survey. The top business type identified in the summer survey was restaurants and cafes, consistent with the results from the Community Conversation. Summer survey respondents identified the next four needed business types as small businesses and shops, working waterfront and ocean-based businesses, art studios and maker spaces, and entertainment activities. There is likely overlap between small businesses and shops and boutique retailers when comparing the Community Conversation results and the summer survey results, suggesting that the small business community is important to Yarmouth residents.

PLAN → Community Conversation  
YARMOUTH Economy

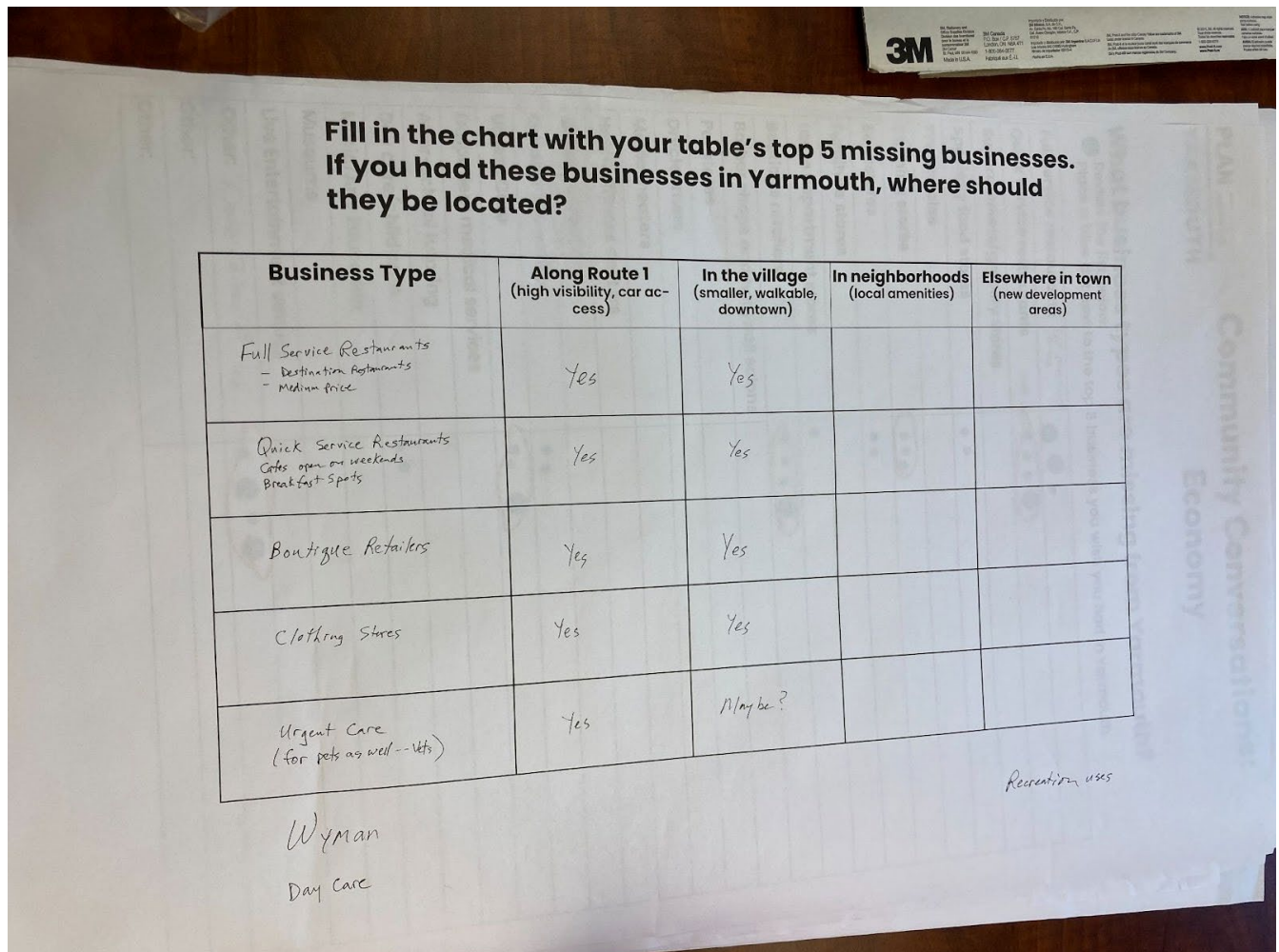
**What business types are missing from Yarmouth?**  
Review the list below.  
Place a blue dot next to the top 5 business you wish you had in Yarmouth.

Full service restaurants	• •
Quick service restaurants	
Supermarkets/grocery stores	
Specialty food stores	
Pharmacies	
Clothing stores	
Bookstores	
Furniture stores	
Large department stores	Sports and other supplies School supplies RENY'S • • •
Boutique retailers	
Barber shops and hair/nail salons	
Pet stores	
Drycleaners	•
Movie theaters	
Health/fitness centers	
Indoor recreation	• • •
Outdoor recreation	•
Urgent Care	
Outpatient medical services	
After-school tutoring	•
Day care/child care	
Music/Arts Education	
Museums	
Live Entertainment venues	•
Other: Energy Generator	• •
Other: Agri Tourism	Apple Orchard, Corn Maze Pumpkin Picking, Maple Syrup • • •
Other:	•

There are connections between the open-ended comments in the summer survey and the highly ranked missing businesses. A number of survey responses focused on family-oriented businesses, and both indoor and outdoor recreation were highly ranked in this event. Further, in the photo example above, this small group suggested that small department stores, such as a Reny's, are missing from Yarmouth, but the summer survey responses were clear that large box stores are not appropriate for Yarmouth.

The second part of this exercise asked attendees where they would locate their top new businesses in Yarmouth. Each small group was asked to identify where in Yarmouth new business growth would be appropriately located. Each table was given a second poster-sized chart as seen in the photo below and the options for

locations for new business growth included along Route 1, in the village, in neighborhoods, and elsewhere in town.



Across the small groups, most new business growth was recommended to be located along Route 1 and in the village, especially for all types of restaurants. Urgent care for people and pets and outpatient medical services were also recommended for Route 1. Boutique retailers and other small businesses were recommended primarily in the Village. One group identified high-end hospitality and accommodations as a new business type for Yarmouth, and recommended it to be located along Route 1 and in the Village.

Turning to new business growth in neighborhoods, the groups recommended daycares, full-service restaurants, boutique inns, and indoor recreation be available.

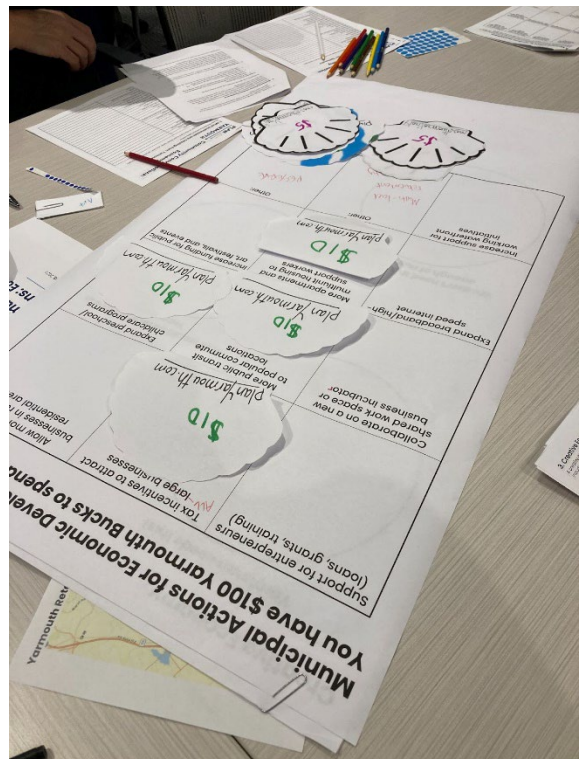
Specifically on Cousins Island, one group recommended new retail options. Groups specifically identified Wyman Station on Cousins Island as a good location for recreation, waterfront services, and aquaculture support. Further, another group identified East Elm Street at Depot Road as a good location for new light manufacturing. Finally, agritourism and outdoor recreation was identified for areas beyond Route 1 and the Village and not necessarily as a neighborhood amenity.

Following the event, a similar prompt was posed online. Respondents were asked what businesses are missing in Yarmouth and where they should be. Three people replied, requesting: restaurant with breakfast/moderately priced dinner, tech firms or incubators with mid to high paying jobs, and an inn/bed and breakfast.

### *Municipal Actions for Economic Development*

For this exercise, the small groups were given \$100 Yarmouth Bucks to allocate to different municipal actions to support economic development. Each small group was directed to divvy up their \$100 toward a variety of actions Yarmouth could take including:

- Support for entrepreneurs (loans, grants, training);
- Tax incentives to attract large businesses;
- Allow more small businesses in rural and residential areas;
- Collaborate on a new shared work space or business incubator;
- More public transit to popular locations;
- Expand preschool/childcare programs;
- Expand broadband/high speed internet;
- More apartments and multiunit housing to support workers;
- Increase funding for public art, festivals, and events; and
- Increase support for working waterfront initiatives.

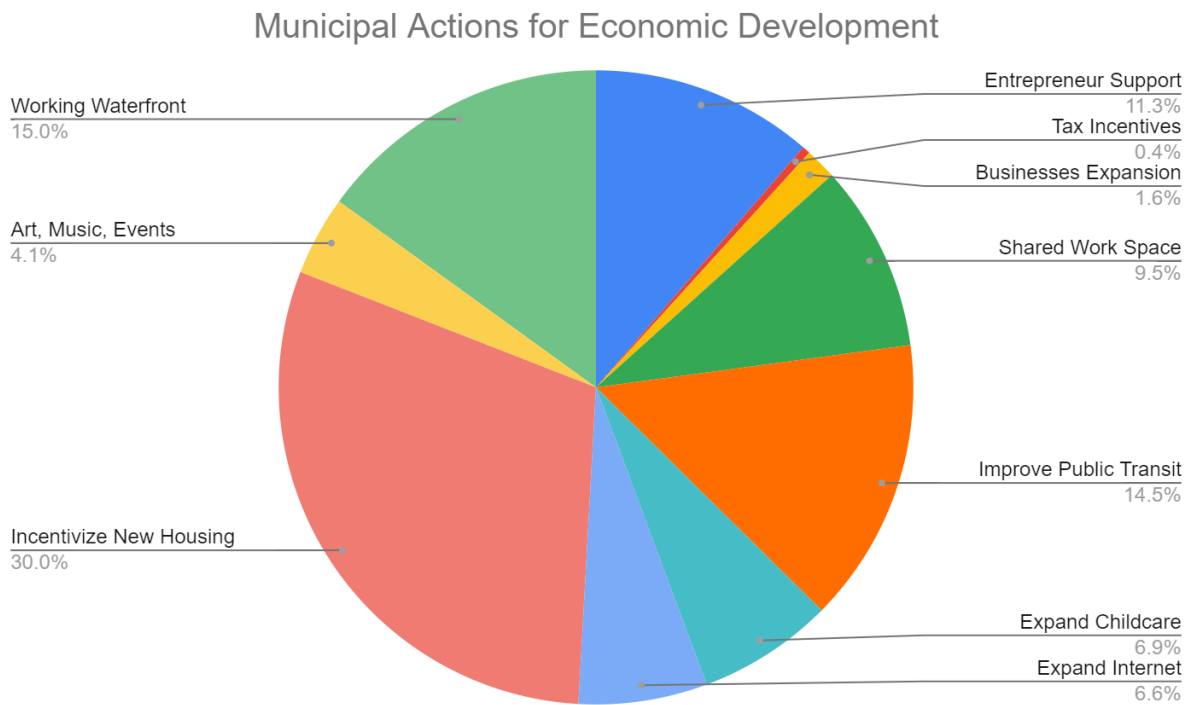


As with other activities, the small groups could add their own suggested municipal actions.

By aggregating the data across the small groups, the categories that received the highest amount of Yarmouth Bucks are:

- Incentivize new housing options;
- Increase support for working waterfront initiatives;
- Improved public transit to popular locations;
- Collaborative on a new shared work space or business incubator; and
- Support for entrepreneurs.

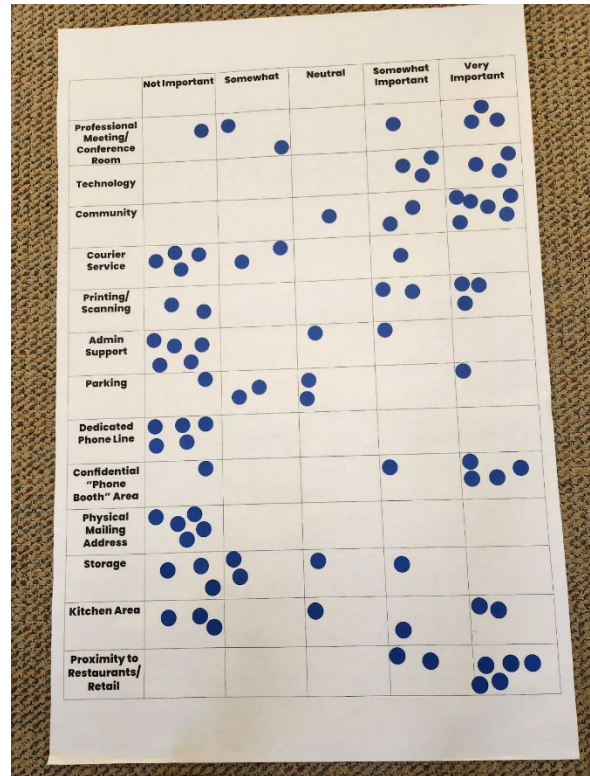
The following chart illustrates how the small groups in the aggregate distributed Yarmouth bucks across the topics.



“Other” responses included tax incentives for small businesses, outdoor recreation, entertainment, satellite parking in the Village, and trail connections. The results suggested that the small groups found consensus on supporting the small businesses in Yarmouth and expanding those opportunities for small businesses. These results are consistent with the feedback received through the summer survey.

The focus on collaborating on a shared work space or business incubator is consistent with the Town's Economic Development Advisory Board's current plan to focus on workforce development, business resources through shared work space, and business attraction.

At a companion event focused on remote work, the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee learned that remote workers desire better internet infrastructure in the community. Although it was rated lower priority at the Community Conversation, the discussion at the remote work event illustrated that internet infrastructure in Yarmouth is still lacking. At the same event, attendees were asked about features of a



shared work space that would be considered important. Attendees indicated that the sense of a community would be the most important aspect of a shared work space, whereas features such as a dedicated phone line, administrative support, and a physical mailing address were not as important to attendees. (Results of community preferences for a shared workspace are in the photo above.) Although most of the attendees indicated that the firms they work for provide significant support for remote work, those who do not have that support system would benefit from growth strategy, graphic design and marketing, and technical support services.

Online, respondents were asked to share on a scale of 1-5 how much they agree (5) or disagree (1) with the following municipal actions. Two people responded.

- Support for entrepreneurs: average rank 2
- Tax incentives for large businesses: average rank 1
- More small businesses in rural/residential areas: 3
- Support public transit to popular commute locations: 5
- Expand preschool/childcare programs: 3
- More workforce housing: 3
- New coworking space or business incubator: 1.5
- Expand high-speed internet: 5

The small number of respondents means these rankings are not representative, but the two respondents did also highly value public transit and workforce housing, which were some of the top-ranked municipal actions in the in-person activities.

### *Creative Economy and Working Waterfront*

The final two activities required the small groups to consider two niches of Yarmouth's economy, the creative economy and the working waterfront. For the two exercises, the small groups were provided with a list of elements that support these economies and were asked to determine whether Yarmouth needs that element, would be nice to have, or has enough of that element or it is not needed.

For the creative economy, the pre-selected elements included:

- "Percent for art" tax fund for arts and culture;
- Event space;
- Studio space;
- Visual/performing arts classes for kids;
- Visual/performing arts classes for adults;
- Public art installations;
- Sidewalk vendors;
- Music festivals; or
- Art fairs.

Each small group could also identify other elements that were important to the attendees.

Overall, the exercise illustrated that there are strong organizations in Yarmouth that already offer many of the items on the list, such as youth and adult classes and studio space. The "need to have" items included event space, sidewalk vendors (but not blocking the sidewalk), and music festivals. The "nice to have" items included studio space and public art installations. The items identified as not needed included the percent for art tax fund, youth and adult classes, and art fairs. An additional item identified included marketing to showcase Yarmouth's local creative economy to Yarmouth and the region.

Online, respondents were asked to rank the same list of creative economy elements in order of preference. Only one person answered. They ranked visual and performing arts classes for kids and adults highest, differing from the in-person results. Similar to



the in-person results, they also highly valued public art, art fairs, and studio space. "Percent for art" tax fund was ranked lowest.

For the working waterfront, the pre-selected elements included:

- Public wharves, piers, and boat ramps;
- Dedicated moorings for commercial use;
- Waterfront parking for commercial use;
- Boat and gear storage;
- Waterfront processing facilities;
- Education and job training;
- Increased shoreline and beach access;
- Public facilities (changing rooms, bathrooms, etc);
- Recreational boat tours;
- Waterfront dining;
- Address vulnerability to sea level rise; and
- Water-dependent energy generation (i.e., offshore wind).

As above, the small groups could also provide other responses.

Although not all of the groups completed this exercise, the responses that were received illustrate the tension between providing access to the waterfront for commercial users and for recreational uses when most of the shoreline in Yarmouth is privately owned. Additionally, more education may be needed in the community to understand what is needed to support a working waterfront today. There was strong interest in increased public access, boat ramps, public facilities, and energy generation. There was moderate support for dedicated commercial moorings, storage, and education. The responses were divided on recreational boat tours, waterfront dining, and other "touristy" activities.

Online, respondents were asked to rank the same list of working waterfront elements in order of preference. Only one person answered. They ranked "address sea level rise" highest, followed by public facilities and public wharves, piers, and boat ramps. Commercial activities were ranked lower.

### *Open-Ended Questions*

The event also featured two open questions which attendees could respond to any time during the event. The two questions asked were:

- What are the biggest obstacles to starting or running a business in Yarmouth?
- If you could give input on the redevelopment of Wyman Power Station, what public benefits would you like to see?

The responses received to the first question included parking, staffing, and access for deliveries. These responses (parking and access for deliveries) suggest that Yarmouth’s commercial districts do not provide space for indirect support for businesses, and this may be truer for the Village and Main Street.

The responses received to the second questions included providing a commercial tax base, establishing an environmentally sound business, and that appropriate future uses may be a park, a new mixed-use space open to the public, or a modern power plant. The commonality between these responses is that it should be put into productive use that could have public benefits for Yarmouth and the region.

## **Environment & Natural Resources**

### *Event Overview*

*Community Conversations: Environment & Natural Resources* was held on Monday, October 2, 2023, from 6 PM to 8 PM. 29 people attended the event, plus staff and facilitators. Bina Skordas of FB Environmental, and a member of the Comprehensive Plan Team gave a presentation on the data incorporated in the Natural Resources, Marine Resources, Agriculture and Forestry, and Recreation Inventory Chapters. The presentation shared important data points such as:

- Highlights on invasive plant species, groundwater water quality, stormwater management, and fish passage on the Royal River;
- Coastal bluff stability;
- Land conservation;
- Threats to water quality;
- Highlights on marine resources including important habitats, threats to marine resources, water-dependent commercial activities, and access; and
- Impacts of climate change on recreation and agriculture and forestry.

This presentation was more substantial than at the previous Community Conversation events, so the attendees were asked to complete fewer exercises in small groups. The first exercise was a mapping exercise where attendees used

different colored dots to identify locations in Yarmouth that should be prioritized for ecological value and resiliency, and locations that should be preserved for recreation uses.

For the second exercise, the small groups reviewed various municipal priorities to protect environmental quality, increase access to open space, and prepare for the impacts of climate change. Attendees could also refer to Yarmouth's zoning map and land use map and copies of the presentation.



### *Places to Protect*

In the mapping exercise, attendees used different colored dots to designate areas in Yarmouth for ecological value and resiliency, or for recreation. Identified locations could be designated for both priorities. Attendees could also provide comments by

adding sticky notes to the map. The photo to the right of one group's map is representative of the feedback received through this exercise.

The Comprehensive Plan team reviewed each map and cataloged where attendees placed the different colored dots. The most common responses are provided below. Many of the groups designated the same locations as needing to be preserved for ecological value and resiliency, as well as for recreational opportunities.

The following locations in Yarmouth were most commonly recommended to be preserved for ecological value and resiliency:

- Land adjacent to the Royal River;
- The Garmin/DeLorme property;
- Sandy Point Beach and Camp SOCI on Cousins Island;
- Wyman Station;
- Archdiocese land on either side of Whitcomb's Way near the Yarmouth Water Treatment Plant;
- Large vacant privately-owned land near existing important resources and open spaces.

The large vacant parcels consisted of parcels around the Frank Knight Forest and Pratt's Brook Park; at the mouth of the Royal River; along Cousins River; and off of Sligo Road. Although not necessarily vacant, the land around the estuary that intersects with Princes Point Road was also identified as an important area for ecological value and resiliency.

The following locations in Yarmouth were most commonly designated as recommended to be preserved for recreation:

- The Saint Lawrence and Atlantic railroad corridor;
- Sandy Point Beach;



- Wyman Station;
- Maine Coast Heritage Trust property at corner of Granite Street and Old County Road;
- The Garmin/DeLorme property;
- Privately-owned land at the end of Bucknam Point Road;
- Town-owned land adjacent to the Yarmouth Water District;
- Large vacant privately-owned land around Frank Knight Forest and Pratt's Brook Park;
- Archdiocese land on either side of Whitcomb's Way near the Yarmouth Water Treatment Plant.

These two lists have many overlapping locations, illustrating how land preservation could serve both ecological and recreation purposes in Yarmouth, and accommodate other priorities such as access to the waterfront, accessible trails, and wildlife corridors and connectivity.

As noted above, each small group could also provide additional information through written notes on the maps. Those comments were categorized into different themes as outlined in the chart below with examples:

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Accessibility	"Accessibility for all users"
Buffers	"Buffers along Royal River are critical" "Wider buffers along waterways"
Connectivity	"Protect wildlife corridors and ensure there is connectivity even under roads" "Wayfinding and connections"
Preservation	"Permanent protections for town owned property"
Process	"Implement/build on Open Space Plan" "Prioritize high value ecological sites"
Regulations	"Steep slopes protection and ordinance" "Assess coastal bluffs for updated maps and regulations"
Water Quality	"Water quality is important for aquaculture industry" "Look at septic systems along Casco Bay"

Following the in-person workshop, a similar mapping activity was placed online. Participants could drop a blue pin on a map in places that should be protected for environmental value, and an orange pin in places that should be protected from recreation. Only two pins were dropped, both on the Cousins Island power line corridor. The respondent added a note that habitat on Cousins Island has been damaged by CMP.

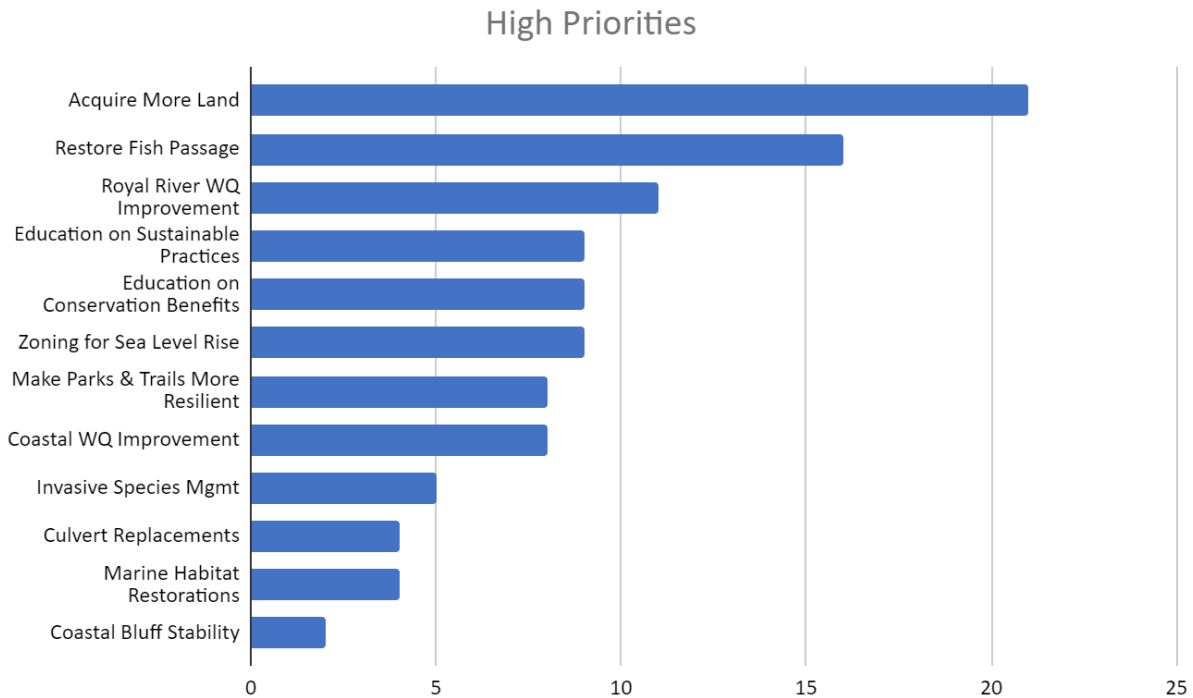
The results from the Climate Action Plan Community Action Workshop mirror the results recorded from this mapping exercise. One of the highest priorities for natural resources coming out of the Community Action Workshop was to protect 400 to 500 acres of land through focused acquisitions prior to 2050. In addition, the attendees at the Community Action Workshop recommended new regulatory and incentive strategies to protect trees within the community and to reduce clear cutting. There was also interest in conserving land with a focus on wildlife corridors and maximizing the tree canopy.

### *Municipal Priorities*

The focus of the second exercise was for the small groups to identify high and medium priority municipal actions from a pre-selected list. Attendees also had the chance to add their own recommended priorities. Dots were used to differentiate between high and medium priorities. The pre-selected priorities included the following:

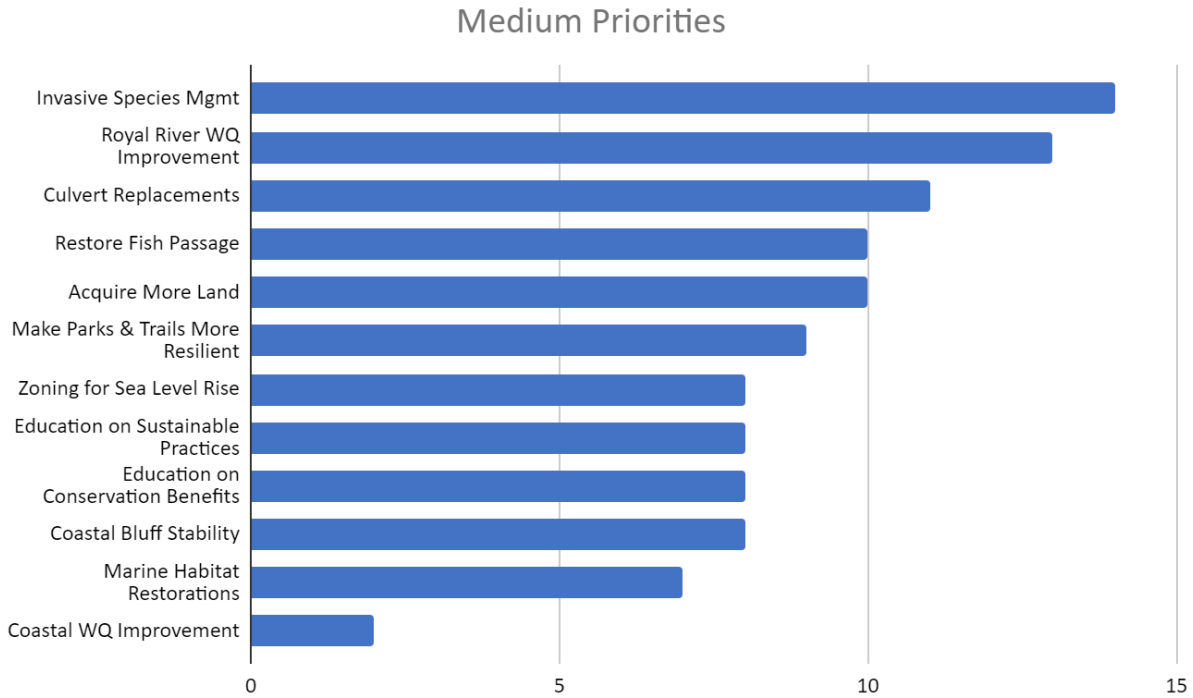
- Coastal water quality improvement;
- Marine habitat restoration;
- Royal River water quality improvement;
- River restoration for fish passage;
- Coastal bluff stability;
- Zoning for sea level rise;
- Make waterfront parks & recreation trails resilient to sea level rise;
- Invest in culvert replacement projects to reduce flood risk;
- Invasive species management;
- Invest in acquiring more conservation land;
- Educate large private landowners on the benefits of easements for conservation and recreation; and
- Educate homeowners on sustainable land care practices (native plants, pesticide and fertilizer use, etc).

The Comprehensive Plan team aggregated the results across the groups. The chart below illustrates the high priority ranking.



The top five high priorities were investing in acquiring more conservation land, restoring fish passage on the Royal River, Royal River water quality improvements, education for property owners, and zoning for sea level rise. These top three priorities have implications throughout Yarmouth and are big picture priorities for the community to address. These results are consistent with the results of the Climate Action Plan Community Action Workshop.

The next chart illustrates how the groups ranked the pre-selected priorities as medium priorities. If we took out the items ranked the highest of the high priorities, the top five medium priorities include invasive species management, culvert replacements to reduce flooding, making parks and trails more resilient, coastal bluff stability, and marine habitat restoration. In comparing these items to the high priority items, these actions are more targeted to specific areas in town, with the exception of marine habitat restoration.



Other priorities that were identified by the small groups include the following items:

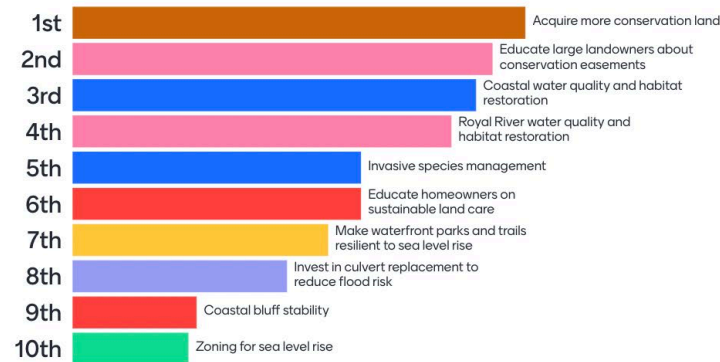
- Provide accessible trail systems;
- Protect the health of the tree canopy and increase the tree canopy each year;
- Eliminate point source pollution and other stormwater management improvements;
- Act regionally to address water quality improvements in Casco Bay;
- Educate the community on the threats of erosion from climate change;
- Provide multilingual outreach on these topics.

Respondents online were asked to rank the same municipal priorities. Seven people responded. Notably, acquiring more conservation land was also the top-ranked priority. The other high priorities were education for large landowners, coastal water quality, and Royal River water quality. Zoning for sea level rise and coastal bluff stability were the lowest-ranked priorities. (See chart on following page.)

Comparing these results to the feedback received in the summer survey about priorities for Yarmouth, there is clear consistency in the goal of preserving open space within the community, and a desire for Yarmouth to be a leader in addressing climate change and sea level rise. Access to and connectivity around open spaces for wildlife as well as people were also referenced often in the summer survey.



## Rank these municipal priorities.



### *Open-Ended Question*

The event also featured an open question which attendees could respond to throughout the evening: what factors are most important when considering the future of the Royal River dams?

The responses received to the question were mixed, but one response noted that whatever is done, it must be done correctly after the completion of the analysis currently underway by the Army Corps of Engineers. Other responses noted that there is the opportunity to reverse the impacts to biodiversity and the natural riverine ecology resulting from the dams. Still others noted that the fish ladders can work properly even if the dams remain. Finally, another response noted that the removal of the dams could help mitigate global warming and sea level rise projections.