

## **DRAFT / outline**

**Note:** *this approach is based on the format used in Kennebunk's Comprehensive Plan. The Kennebunk Vision Statement includes a high level "current state" summary before describing "Kennebunk tomorrow". As the Kennebunk Plan has been approved, it seemed to be a good starting point.*

*The checklist specifically requires a description of the community's "desired future community character in terms of economic development, natural and cultural resource conservation, transportation, land use patterns and its role in the region." When finalised, the text must address these points but as with the overall Plan, may include material important to our community even if not a State requirement.*

*This document offers some possible text together with bullets addressing some (not all) key points. It is very much a first draft, for discussion and development.*

## **Vision statement**

The Town of Ogunquit most recently adopted an updated Comprehensive Plan in 2003. Then, as now, the Town faced the challenges of growth and change, including "the capacity of the community to be a gracious host and to maintain the quality of life for both the resident and the visitor."

The past 20 years have sharpened our collective focus on the importance of preserving and maintaining our natural, water and marine resources, which is seen as the Town's most significant challenge in the next 5 – 10 years. Traffic, which was the number one issue in the 2003 Community Survey, remains a concern today but in the widest sense: not only cars and parking, but safe cycling, walking and public transport.

This vision statement is informed by the 1103 responses to the 2022 Community Survey; by the comments of nearly 100 participants in the 2022 Vision Day; and by the comments – formal and informal – of our full and part-time residents, taxpayers, business owners and visitors. *[Will also reference public hearings: we must hold at least one.]*

## **Ogunquit today**

*[Should be informed by key points from inventory chapters – this is a placeholder]*

The Town Charter, approved 14 June 2022 – "committing ourselves to being a community which welcomes and values diversity, equity, inclusion and civility".

The words most often used to describe Ogunquit are variations on "charm", "quaint" and "small town" – "beach" the feature most often mentioned - [as per survey]. "Beautiful place by the sea" tag line / motto.

4.18 square miles of land, 11.07 square miles water, 3.5-mile-long beach (1 mile protected from development and maintained by the Town as a public park)

- **Unique character** - Awards and rankings: regularly ranked as one of the top 25 beaches in the country; one of 10 best New England beach towns; most recently [update] #2/25 best towns to visit for the Christmas season; Playhouse Creativity and Innovation Award; others?

- **History** - Town's historic buildings and structures contribute to its charm: Wynn House, Ogunquit Library, Marginal Way Lighthouse; Perkins Cove bridge "the only remaining wooden, double-leaf draw footbridge in the US"
- National Register of Historic Places – Ogunquit Playhouse, Marginal Way (2 designations in such a compact town)
- **Natural resources** – barrier beach system a critical natural resource as well as a cultural resource and economic driver: upstream water quality issues, erosion and sea level rise a challenge to its health. Town owns 250 acres of land including the beach and 7 acres of conservation land
- **Water resources** – protecting them a top priority and concern for Town: management of stormwater pollutants key (enforcement of Federal and State laws, strengthened local requirements re: land clearing "easiest to manage" according to EPA)
- **Demographics** – resident population trends. 1,226 in 2000; 892 in 2010; 1,557 in 2020. There's been a fall / rise pattern to the Town's population in the 10 year surveys since 1970, but in 2022 Maine ranked second nationally as the state with the highest percentage of inbound moves, with Ogunquit one of the two most popular destinations. [age profile]
- Visitor numbers – seasonal increase: upside and downside
- **Economy** – dependence on tourism: beach-related activities; downtown, Shore Road, Perkins Cove shopping and dining. Perkins Cove an active fishing port.
- **Transportation** - Traffic is a challenge, particularly as "the season" lengthens: Town and private parking lots fill up; public transport is limited – post-covid, Ogunquit is the only Town to negotiate a trolley service but there are issues to resolve, including pricing. No links to major transport hubs
- Maine DOT Route #1 project – aims and objectives: has it been a success?
- **Housing** - Potential impact of L.D. 2003: 55% of survey respondents said "Had no plans"; 23.74% "A home for a member of immediate or extended family"; over 17% "short term" or "long term" rental. Will this be born out in practice?
- Businesses struggle to attract / retain staff through lack of suitable housing (potential threat to their survival)
- **Wider initiatives** - Joint working with neighbouring Towns and external agencies (Wells/Ogunquit School District; Fire / Police / Ambulance; initiatives with State and other agencies to improve water quality and reduce bacteria)

What else?

### **Ogunquit tomorrow**

Ogunquit continues to be recognised as a diverse and welcoming Town, rich in history and with a particular charm and character that continues to attract visitors and to delight its permanent residents. As stated in the Town Charter, "We, the people of Ogunquit, affirm our desire to embrace the highest of ethical and moral models for our times, including but not limited to, honesty, integrity and respect for others and our natural resources."

The Town gives its highest priority to the management of the natural, water and marine resources which are at the heart of Ogunquit's identity. Our 2022 survey returned consistently high responses regarding the importance of these resources (79.96%); the priority to be given to protecting the beaches,

watershed and estuary (78.88%) and the Marginal Way (61.74%); and the need, even when funding is limited, to allocate resources to achieve these goals (87.76%).

Ogunquit maintains and is further developing its character as a vibrant and welcoming “beautiful place by the sea”, designing creative and practical responses to the abiding challenges facing the Town. It recognises that many of these challenges – healthy beaches, traffic, and housing for the seasonal staff who keep the Town’s businesses alive – require a co-ordinated effort that crosses town lines, drawing on State resources and working with external agencies.

As expressed in the Town’s 2003 Comprehensive Plan, the community continues to demonstrate its “capacity . . . to be a gracious host and to maintain the quality of life for both resident and visitor.” Landmark events throughout the year, from Splash into Spring to Ogunquit Pride, to BonAire! to Ogunquit Fest and Christmas by the Sea, bring people together to enjoy and celebrate this very special place. The visitor who drove from upstate New York to walk around Perkins Cove, his father’s favourite spot, typifies the continuing importance which Ogunquit has for the community beyond its Town boundaries: his comment, “The most beautiful place I’ve ever been,” continues to resonate – and rightly so.

*[Develop as paragraphs – group by theme, priority. Reference public input – quotes from survey, Vision Day, other public events]*

### **Respecting and protecting our natural resources**

- Being alert to the possibilities and pitfalls of undeveloped land, particularly re: future development near waterways
- Ensuring sound environmental policies inform growth and development through an updated Town ordinance
- Co-operating with neighbouring towns to address overarching issues (impact of sea level rise, watershed management, transport, development of “green” tourism, CO2 reduction) – joint grant applications?
- Successfully promoting alternatives to the car for recreation as well as getting from A to B (NB necessary infrastructure – off road bike paths)

### **Cherishing Ogunquit’s charm**

- Preserving the “small town” feel of downtown Ogunquit / Shore Road
- Celebrating Perkins Cove as an historic working fishing cove, with its own shops and galleries and its heritage as an artists’ colony
- Communicating the Town’s history and its special place in the arts in ways that are understandable, accessible, attractive and imaginative (e.g. Perkins Cove Plein Air event; heritage walks; Winn House; oral history programme); continued support for visual and performing arts
- Supporting unique local businesses; encouraging more year-round opening
- Addressing the (seasonal) need for affordable / subsidised trolleys
- Addressing the need for affordable housing for seasonal workers

### **Building on sound foundations**

- Making the best use of technology to communicate with residents and visitors
- Developing a fit-for-purpose Town Campus meeting the needs of the police and fire departments, town hall staff and the community
- Delivering sound municipal government, financially prudent but not “penny wise, pound foolish”, with a well-structured, efficient and effective committee system fully engaged with the community

What else?

### **Conclusion**

The remainder of this document gives an overview of Ogunquit’s current state together with the relevant goals, policies and strategies which reflect the community’s aims and aspirations for Ogunquit 2030 and beyond. This plan has been prepared in accordance with the State of Maine self-assessment checklist and also addresses topics which are of concern to Ogunquit but fall outside the checklist.

As the saying goes, “If you don’t know where you’re going, any road will take you there.” This Comprehensive Plan documents where our community wants to go and the plans we propose, to ensure that we reach our desired destination.

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