

## **Bar Harbor Town Council**

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### **Vision**

The Bar Harbor Town Council is resolute in its commitment to promoting a sustainable and resilient community. Efficient use of public funds, good governance in accordance with the Town Charter and citizen involvement will ensure ample access to goods, services, housing and education and afford our diverse residents and visitors an outstanding quality of life.

## **2018 Five Year Goals and Strategies**

**~ FY18 through FY23 ~**

### **Goal A: Keep the rate of Property Tax Increases low and Enhance User-based Revenues**

**Strategy A1:** Work with the manager to draft a Municipal Budget that will keep property tax increases to a minimum, while still considering services that are necessary and appropriate.

**Strategy A2:** Work to identify opportunities to match potential revenues to incurred expenses to minimize impact on property tax and rate-payers, including revenues from proposed parking program, cruise ship fees, fees for commercial trash haulers, licensing fees for sale of marijuana, and fees related to enforcement of various town ordinances (e.g. registration and inspection of weekly rentals).

**Strategy A3:** Continue to encourage payments in lieu of property taxes while recognizing the varied public benefits provided by non-profit organizations.

### **Goal B: Protect the local environment on which much of our economy is based**

**Strategy B1** Explore opportunities to significantly reduce reliance on fossil fuels by the town, local businesses and residents, including the use of additional publically-owned lots for development of solar energy.

**Strategy B2** Assess Municipal Street Lighting for possible improvements in efficiency, reduction in annual cost and compliance with the town's night sky ordinance, and determine priorities for replacement of existing street lights with LED or other lighting.

**Goal C: Create effective plans for a Sustainable Future**

**Strategy C1** Update the town comprehensive plan to identify a vision and goals for the future of the town, as well as the basis for a more workable Land Use Ordinance

**Strategy C2** Work with The League of Towns, the Island Housing Trust and other partners and stakeholders to determine what steps the town can take to encourage additional Affordable/Workforce Housing, including review of land use ordinance changes that could promote such housing.

**Strategy C3** Create an overall street/sidewalk plan that lays out priorities and timing for municipal investment through the Capital Improvement Program, incorporating recommendations for streetscape and sidewalk design to improve safety and access for pedestrians, cyclists and those with handicaps (Parking Solutions Task Force, Aging in Place Task Force, Cottage Street Streetscape Project)

**Strategy C4** Work with the Cruise Ship Committee and other stakeholders to create a plan to reduce congestion in the vicinity of the town pier and waterfront by tour busses and various services provided to seasonal visitors, including passengers from cruise ships.

**Goal D: Improve the Effectiveness and Delivery of Municipal Services**

**Strategy D1:** Building on lessons learned from our collaboration with the Town of Mount Desert for shared police services, explore additional possibilities in public safety and other town services/functions (e.g. human resources and finances), where collaboration among towns could lead to greater effectiveness and efficiency.

**Strategy D2** Study future space and facilities needs for public safety functions within Bar Harbor, as our collaboration with the Town of Mount Desert continues.

**Goal E: Improve and Maintain Local Infrastructure**

**Strategy E1:** Continue to actively engage MDOT and our State and Federal delegations to ensure Route 3 reconstruction is completed successfully, while continuing to support efforts by the Village Improvement Society to improve sidewalk lighting from Duck Brook Bridge to West Street.

**Strategy E2:** Work with partners and stakeholders to ensure that land at the former ferry terminal remains zoned and developed for marine uses, assuring that Bar Harbor retains its status as a Class A port of entry.

**Strategy E3:** Manage cruise ship visitation, within limits set by the Town Council on a yearly basis, to ensure that the income stream from cruise visitation continues to make public acquisition and development of the ferry terminal viable.

**Strategy E4:** Seek solutions to on-going parking problems in the summer season.

**Strategy E5:** Evaluate opportunities for improved broadband service within downtown and areas of the town not currently served.

**Strategy E6:** Explore potential for and promote construction of additional bike lanes and other amenities for cyclists in the downtown area, and along roadways/routes leading into town, especially when roads are reconstructed, and when collaboration is possible with Acadia National Park and Maine Department of Transportation.

**Strategy E7:** Inventory and prioritize improvements to town parks for inclusion in the Capital Improvement Program and further collaboration with Village Improvement Society and other partners and volunteers.

**Goal F: Improve the Effectiveness and Efficiency of our Town Governance and Encourage citizen involvement**

**Strategy F1:** Improve communications with tax-payers and residents, so that council members better understand the needs and hopes of residents, and residents better understand the roles and responsibilities of the council.

**Strategy F2:** Determine ways in which Council meetings can be structured to improve civility and increase satisfaction among both Council members and citizens in our ability to work together on opportunities and solve problems. Use techniques employed by other towns, including:

- Reviewing and revising council rules of order, including use of Council Workshops in order to frame future discussions and possible action.
- Determining and distributing “best practice” suggestions for the conduct of meetings of town boards, committees and task forces.
- Using a neutral facilitator to assist boards, committees and task forces, as well as the town as a whole, when topics are complex and such facilitation would help determine community views and alternative courses of action.
- Assessing and improving the effectiveness of POLCO as a way to gather public opinion on various community concerns and policy alternatives.

**Strategy F3:** Convene a Charter Commission to make recommendations on electronic voting at town meeting, streamlining the budget formulation process, and the purpose, function and structure of the warrant committee

**Strategy F4:** Determine “best practices” for use of social media and add appropriate language to ethics / conflict of interest standards which apply to all town staff, elected officials and volunteers, including committee members

**Strategy F5:** Review and clarify where necessary, the purpose and roles of all boards, committees and task forces to streamline, consolidate and improve their effectiveness. Update the draft “handbook for boards and committees” to better orient new board and committee members and to allow for periodic review. (Appoint a small ad hoc committee of staff and council members and an editorial consultant, with input from boards and committees, to review and update the draft handbook.)