

TOWN OF BENTON
2018 Comprehensive Plan
Executive Summary
VERSION 03/10/2018

Plan Approved by Town at the Annual Town Meeting, March 10, 2018

Plan Adopted by Town Select Board, April 3, 2018

**Town of Benton Comprehensive Plan
Executive Summary**

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Town of Benton Comprehensive Plan Executive Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2018 Comprehensive Plan for Benton seeks to enhance and grow the community. The plan's recommended actions are intended to help guide the Town's leaders in making decisions over the next decade that strive to accomplish that goal.

Specific actions are proposed to help accomplish the vision of Benton as a smart town, with great neighborhoods. For ease of reference, these actions have been organized by four (4) themes:

1. Increase overall communications and coordination to ensure accountability and transparency of municipal operations.
2. Encourage business development and overall economic well-being consistent with Benton's rural, small town character.
3. Conservation and protection of our natural, historical and archeological resources.
4. Broadening of residential opportunities and commitment to open space and recreational activity.

Five major motivations focused the plan's direction:

1. Benton's long passion and commitment to a rural, small town character.
2. Benton's tradition of fiscal and management prudence.
3. Benton's desire to move the local economy forward, encouraging business development and expansion to the benefit of all residents.
4. Benton's commitment to open space and recreational activity, including Town-owned parcels.
5. Recognition that of changing demographics and need for broadening of residential opportunities.

To develop this plan, the Strategic Planning Committee met over several months. The committee:

1. Introduced planning topics at 2017 March Annual Town Meeting and provided handouts including topics:
 - o Why is a Comprehensive Plan Important?
 - o Invitations to bi-monthly meetings to participate in plan development.
2. Examined the accomplishments of the 1991 and 2008 Comprehensive Plans.
3. Created open forum using Facebook page; Benton Voice, to:
 - o Ask residents what they thought of Benton as a place to live or do business (and what could be improved).
 - o Conduct a statistically-valid survey of Benton residents and businesses.
4. Researched many local and regional plans.
5. Investigated thirteen topics outlined in State of Maine's Chapter 208: Comprehensive Plan Review Criteria Rule, Section 3 Required Topics, which provides "the criteria used to review community comprehensive plans for consistency with goals and guidelines of the *Growth Management Act* (30-A M.R.S.A. §§ 4312 - 4350)" thirteen (13).
6. Sought feedback on the plan and its contents, by:
 - o Consulted on a regular basis with Select Board.
 - o Powerpoint presentations to convey the plan contents to Select Board, Planning Board, and Budget Committee.
 - o Conducted two (2) public hearings on the draft plan, January 9 & 10, 2018.
7. Published plan materials on Town's website, requested and incorporated feedback from citizens.
8. Socialized comprehensive planning and the plan using Town's website, Facebook page and the Benton Voice Facebook page.
9. Presented plan at the Annual Town Meeting on March 10, 2018 and the 2018 Comprehensive Plan was approved.

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN – SECTION I

Section I, is the actual plan which discusses four (4) key topics; future land use, regional coordination, open space and recreational activity, and capital investment. For each topic, Section I provides recommended goals and policies, and specific actions for implementation.

The plan recommends:

1. Increasing the share of growth in the designated growth area to two thirds of all new residential growth.
2. States a preference for the Town making more of its growth area accessible for public sewer and water services.
3. Expand and manage open space and recreational opportunities, including Town-owned parcels.
4. Allocation of any new municipal infrastructure capital investments into the designated growth areas.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN – SECTION II

Section II, provides the action plan to accomplish the comprehensive plan. It includes recommendations in the form of policies and strategies for each of the thirteen topics outlined in State of Maine's Chapter 208: Comprehensive Plan Review Criteria Rule, Section 3 Required Topics, which provides "the criteria used to review community comprehensive plans for consistency with goals and guidelines of the *Growth Management Act* (30-A M.R.S.A. §§ 4312 - 4350)". These recommendations are intended to address the issues raised in the analysis and review of the elements completed in Section III.

The matrix reflected in Section I will be used for monitoring progress and accomplishments.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN – SECTION III

Section III, provides background information that is the basis for the plan. It includes an in-depth discussion of thirteen topics outlined in State of Maine's Chapter 208: Comprehensive Plan Review Criteria Rule, which provides "the criteria used to review community comprehensive plans for consistency with goals and guidelines of the *Growth Management Act* (30-A M.R.S.A. §§ 4312 - 4350)". This Section III includes the analysis of town, county and state statistical information which was used in Section II to develop the recommendations for policies and strategies.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN – SECTION IV

Section IV, is the source for maps that provide a visual picture of the Town and its infrastructure and sources for images used.

In closing, none of these accomplishments could have been possible without a competent and professional staff, a committed group of elected and appointed officials and an engaged public. We are committed to the notions of transparency and good government and will do everything in our power to engage our citizens. As there are many ways for residents to be involved in community affairs, we encourage all residents to get involved to make Benton a better place to live, work and play. It has been an honor to serve this wonderful community, we look forward to the challenges and opportunities of the future.

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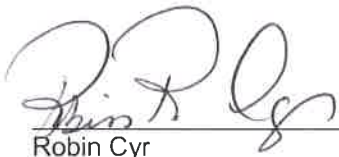
STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE TEAM

NAME	KEY TOWN ROLES
Kathy Bolster	Strategic Planning Committee, Planning Board, Town Budget Committee
Leo Caron	Strategic Planning Committee, Planning Board, Town Budget Committee
Robin Cyr	Strategic Planning Committee Chair, Selectperson, Town Budget Committee
Patricia Lanning	Strategic Planning Committee, Planning Board
Deb Roy	Strategic Planning Committee, Town of Benton Citizen, Plan Photographer
SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS	
Doug Dixon	Selectperson
Gary Dixon	Trustee K.S.T.D.
Todd Littlefield	Road Commissioner
James Mayo	Treasurer
Brandy Meader	Full Time Office Staff, Town Web Master
Ross Nason	Code Enforcement Officer
Melissa Patterson	Selectperson, Senior Office Staff
Sue Rodrigue	Town Clerk, Part Time Office Staff
Ryan Stinneford	Assessors' Agent

TOWN OF BENTON SELECT BOARD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN APPROVAL

The 2018 Comprehensive Plan was approved by the Town March 10, 2018 at our Annual Town Meeting. The Town of Benton Select Board adopts the plan April 3, 2018 to allow creation of the Economic Development Committee to begin plan implementation. The Town of Benton Select Board further authorizes the Strategic Planning Committee Chair to submit the 2018 Comprehensive Plan to the Municipal Planning Assistance Program in the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry for review under Chapter 208: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW CRITERIA RULE.

Select Board Signatures:



Robin Cyr



Doug Dixon



Melissa Paterson