



# TOWN OF FALMOUTH VISION AND VALUES

FINAL REPORT - MAINE, USA

March 2022

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# TOWN OF FALMOUTH

## VISION AND VALUES FINAL REPORT

MAINE, USA

This report presents the community vision and values that have been developed following extensive community engagement undertaken during the Town of Falmouth's Vision and Values planning process. Beginning in 2020 through to early 2022, the engagement process included two Community Surveys, three Future Summits, ten focus group sessions, and one Think-Tank Workshop to explore the long-term future of Falmouth. This engagement process was designed to provide an open, inclusive, and transparent platform for community members to help create a shared community vision and values.

This report represents Future iQ's analysis of the engagement outcomes, and how this data has informed the identification of a preferred future and strategic pillars. As the project consultant, Future iQ was given the responsibility to develop the data-driven process that has informed this report. The analysis in this report builds on the preceding project reports and engagement analysis. The recommended Key Strategic Pillars have been developed from the community input gathered during the visioning process.

These reports and the associated data analysis are available on the project portal:

<https://lab2.future-iq.com/town-of-falmouth-vision-and-values-project/>

March 2022

Report Prepared by:

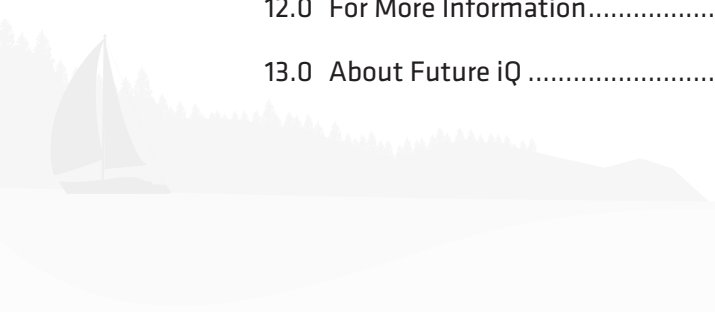
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The Town of Falmouth's vision and values planning process brought Falmouth together - to envision future opportunities and challenges facing the community looking out to 2040.

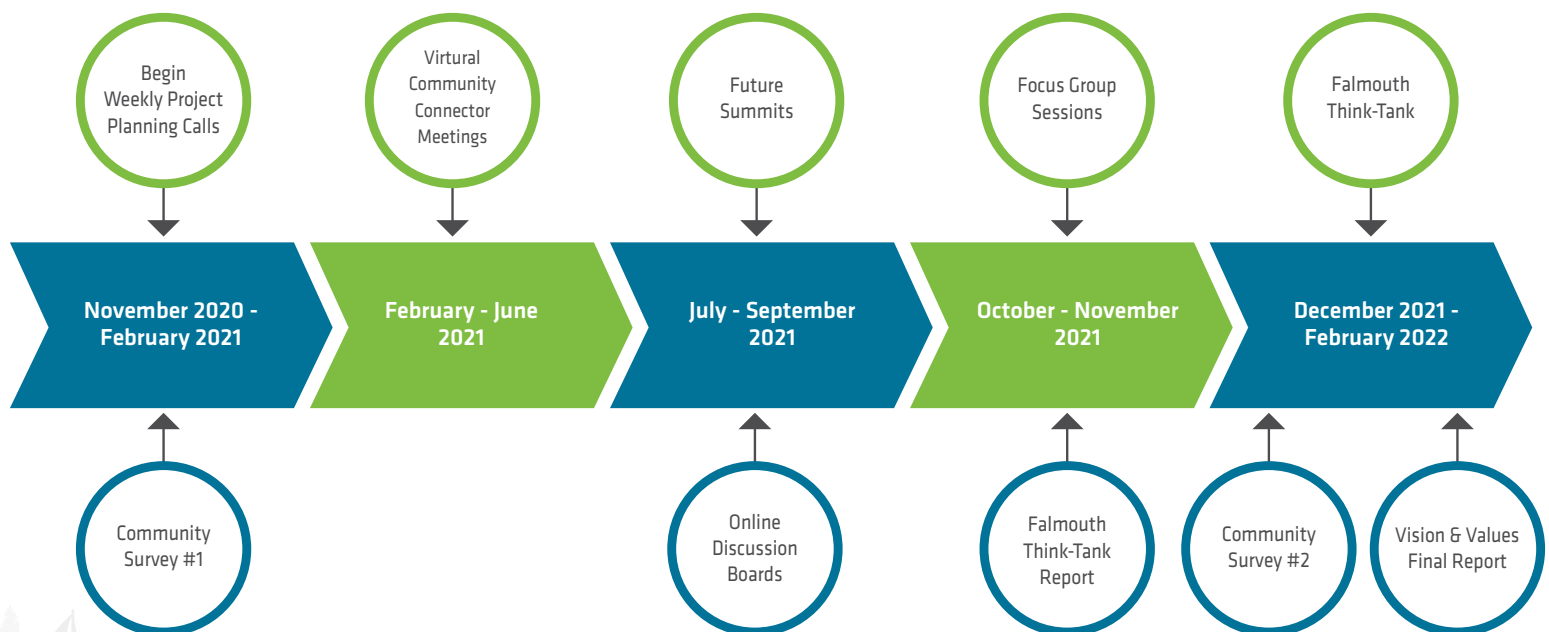
## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Town of Falmouth Vision and Values Final Report represents the final element in the Vision and Values process. The analysis in this report builds on preceding project reports and identifies the vision and values that are important to this community. This report represents Future iQ's analysis of the engagement outcomes and how this data has informed the identification of a preferred future and key focus areas for the Town of Falmouth.

Community input and transparent, inclusive engagement was center to the vision and values process. The comprehensive engagement and data-driven process progressively narrowed and focused the discussion on emerging key themes and community aspirations for the future. The purpose of the process was to arrive, as close as possible, at a "point of consensus" that represented the most widely shared vision for the future, and strategic action areas that guide the community towards that future.

This report examines the identification of the preferred future for Falmouth, while discussing the stages of the overall vision and values process. The key themes and aspirations that emerged from the engagement are included within the "strategic pillars" and further explored in the "strategic action areas" of the report.

### Town of Falmouth Vision and Values Timeline





## 2.0 SNAPSHOT – REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

This report lays out the findings from each step in the visioning process. The process identified key values and priorities for the future. Community members imagined and considered possible directions and the impacts and consequences of those directions. The process, and the report, then drill down deeper into what people saw as the preferred future. This understanding helps lay the groundwork for figuring out “how we get there” and sets the Town up for its comprehensive planning process to follow.

The Vision and Values process highlighted many of Falmouth's strengths. It has also revealed some polarized views. Moving forward, the community needs to work on shared solutions and seek compromise.

### KEY INSIGHTS FROM THIS REPORT:



1. **Clear point of consensus.** Through the visioning process, a clear point of consensus has emerged about the preferred future for the community, and the elements that would make up that vision. This future is defined by carefully managed and intentional change, that gradually adds new community amenities, as identified by residents.



2. **Seeking a shared vision and aspiration.** While the data shows that Falmouth residents broadly agree about a future direction, on several issues there is a wide range of views, and even polarization. This report highlights the areas of agreement. For areas of polarization, such as pace of development, compromise will be required moving forward. There is a mid-point in most issues, that offer very workable solutions, that are consistent with the vision.



3. **Open and transparent process.** The visioning process has followed a methodology that is designed to include as many voices as possible. There has been significant community engagement with over 1,700 people participating in community surveys, plus extensive dialogue by a dedicated core group of approximately 250 residents. All data gathered in this process is available on the project portal.



4. **Strong appetite to care for the environment and importance of schools.** Falmouth residents care for the environment, and this is an overarching value and fundamental building block for Town planning. Likewise, high performing schools are seen as a key part of the community value proposition.



5. **Desire for progress on community amenities and social fabric.** Many residents have expressed the desire to implement strategies and policies that would create a more welcoming environment for current and future residents. In addition, residents have highlighted numerous social infrastructure improvements they believe will enhance the community livability and experience.

### Robust Sample Size

An outstanding feature of the Vision and Values project has been the high level of community participation. This has provided a very robust sample size, that exceeds standard participation levels for a community of this size. In total, it is estimated over 2,000 people have participated at some point. The data is high quality, as all respondents were verifiable, and each survey had approximately 20 questions with a mixture of qualitative and quantitative responses. For a community of this size (approximately 9,100 people over 18 years of age) the sample size to achieve the industry standard 95% confidence and 5% margin of error is 369. For a 99% confidence level the sample size is 621. Almost all the survey questions were close to or exceeded this level, creating a highly representative and robust data set.



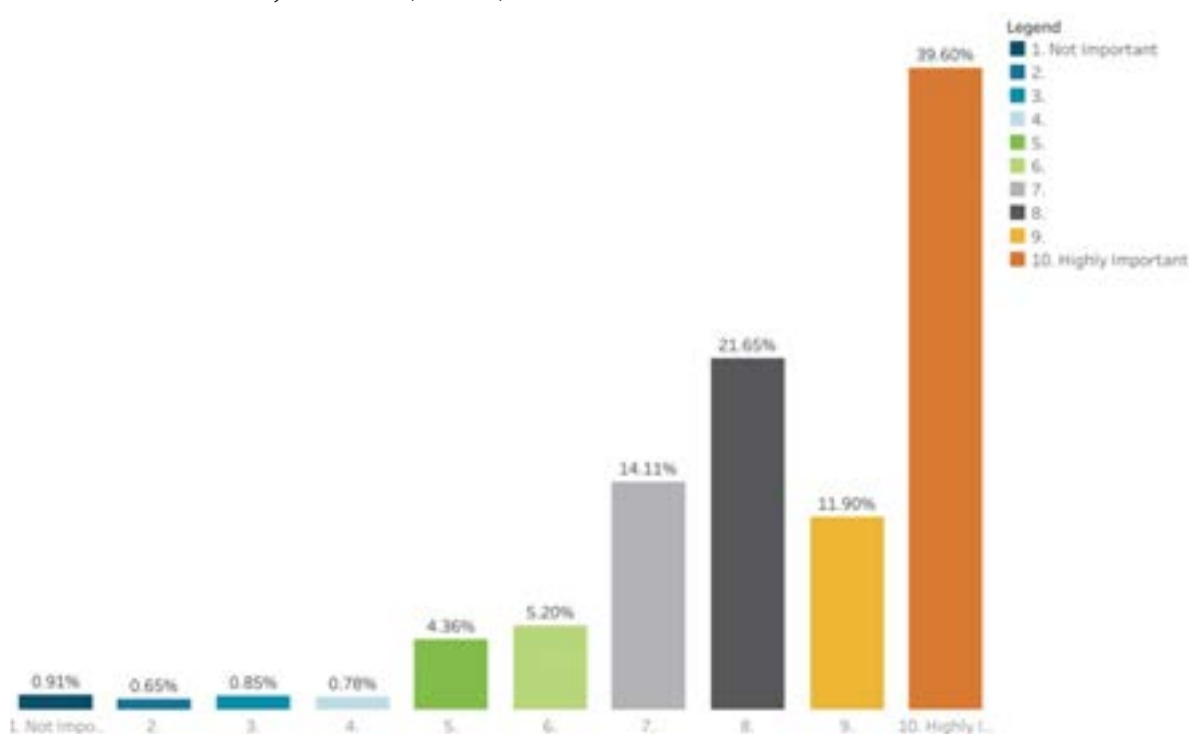
The future vision will guide Town decision-making looking out to 2040. With most residents viewing a shared vision as important, this process is a foundational building block of planning for the future of Falmouth.

## 3.0 IMPORTANCE OF VISIONING

Falmouth residents are highly engaged in the Town's planning processes. The visioning process was largely viewed as an opportunity to come together to articulate and shape the future trajectory of the community. As the chart below shows, residents' belief in the importance of a shared vision was reflected in responses to Community Survey #1 which launched the visioning process in November 2020.

### Importance of shared vision

Question: *Overall, how important do you think it is to create a SHARED VISION for the future of Falmouth that is understood and shared by residents?* (n=1,548)



DataInsight

### DATA INSIGHTS:

- Maintaining a shared vision for the community will involve clear communication. Celebrating progress and linking achievements back to the vision will be important.
- Falmouth has undertaken a visioning process looking out to 2040. Check-in points should be established more frequently (at least every 5 years) to stay abreast of emerging trends and events.



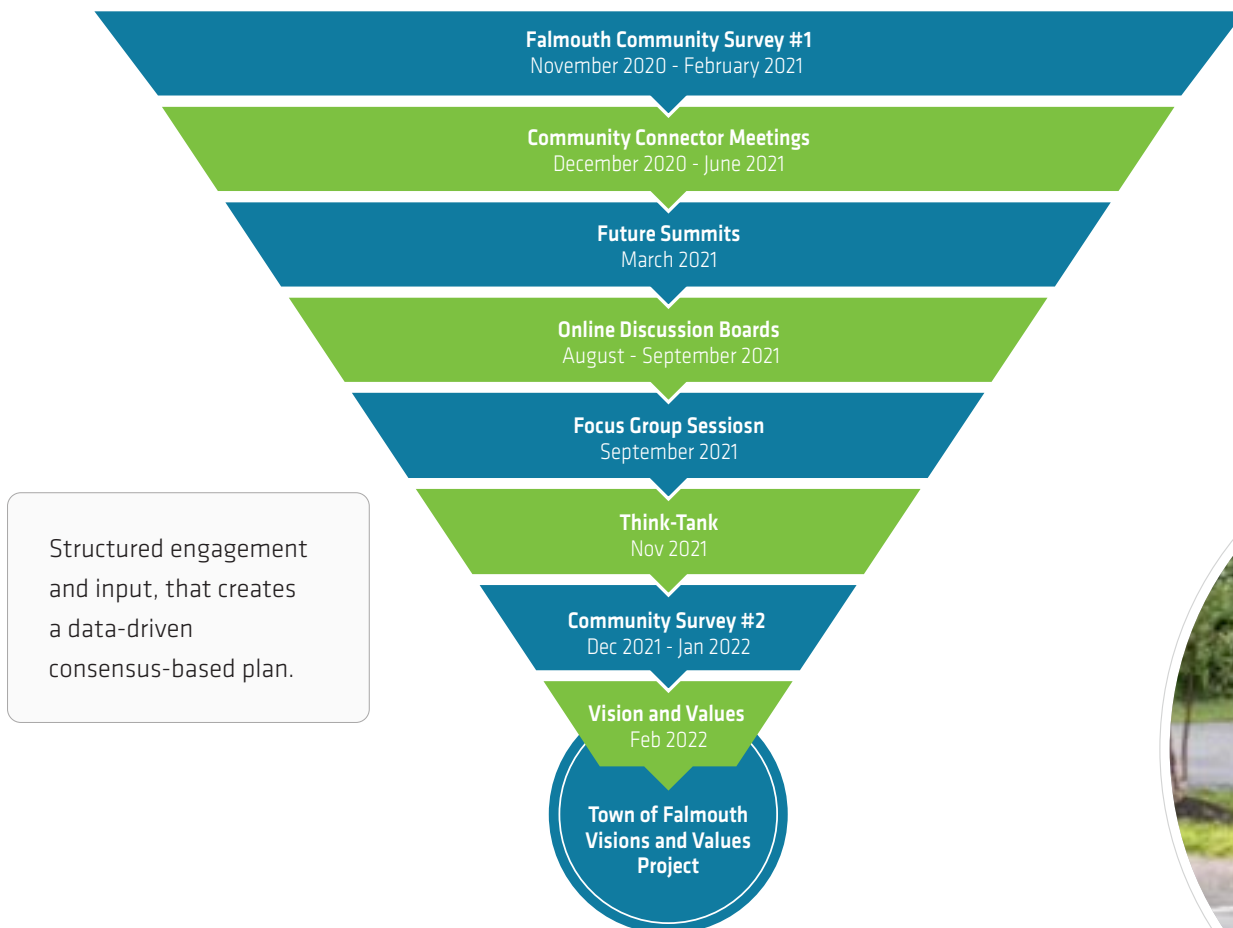
Falmouth residents spent many hours contributing to the visioning process. This helped generate thoughtful conversations and a wide cross section of participation.



## 4.0 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ANALYSIS

The Vision and Values project aimed to be future oriented, people focused, and data driven. The community engagement moved through a series of key steps, to ultimately arrive at a consensus-based vision.

### Vision and Values Community Engagement Process November 2020-February 2022



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### DATA INSIGHTS

- The engagement process of the Falmouth Vision and Values project was extended because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The cumulative input from Community Survey #1, Future Summits, Focus Groups, and Discussion Boards all helped to inform the Think-Tank's scenario planning process.
- Community Survey #2 offered the community a chance to select their preferred future and helped to further "narrow the lens" to the final point of consensus.





Falmouth's visioning process required a wide, in-depth, and transparent engagement process that involved a large and representative cross section of the community.

## 4.1 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT METRICS

Community engagement was a key feature of Falmouth's Vision and Values project. Efforts were made to ensure it was as easy as possible for residents to participate and provide meaningful input in a variety of formats. This allowed individuals to participate as much as they were able and to focus on topics of importance to them. The engagement was offered via two online community surveys, future summits, discussion boards, focus groups, and a Think-Tank. Online, social media and print advertising were used to highlight each stage of the process, and the project portal provided regular update information. Post cards were distributed for key events, the Town newsletter provided bi-weekly project updates, and progress reports were given at each Town Council meeting where public comment was also taken.

### Town of Falmouth Community Engagement - number of participants

- Community Survey #1: 1,739
- Future Summits: 130
- Focus Groups: 214
- Discussion Boards: 153
- Think-Tank: 45
- Community Survey #2: 1,010



DataInsight

### DATA INSIGHTS:

- A total of 26 different opportunities for input were provided to Falmouth residents during the Vision and Values process.
- There were 1,739 responses to Community Survey #1 and 1,010 responses to Community Survey #2. This represents a very robust sample size.
- The respondent demographics were similar in the two community surveys and mirror the town's population and geographic distribution across neighborhoods.





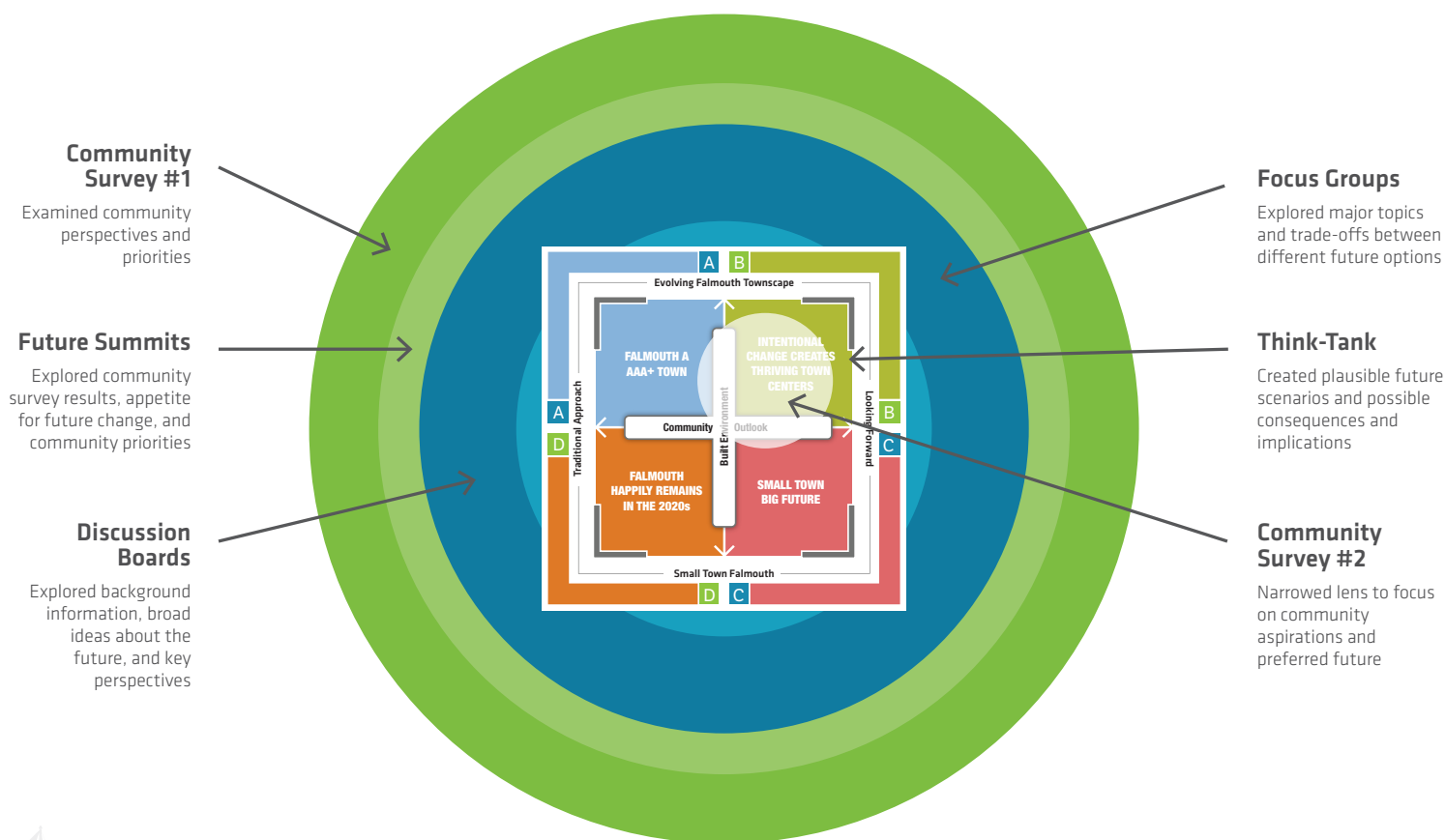
Falmouth's community engagement process included a series of steps. Each step served to build on the previous step, by gradually "narrowing the lens" to drill into a preferred future that reflects the community's vision and values.

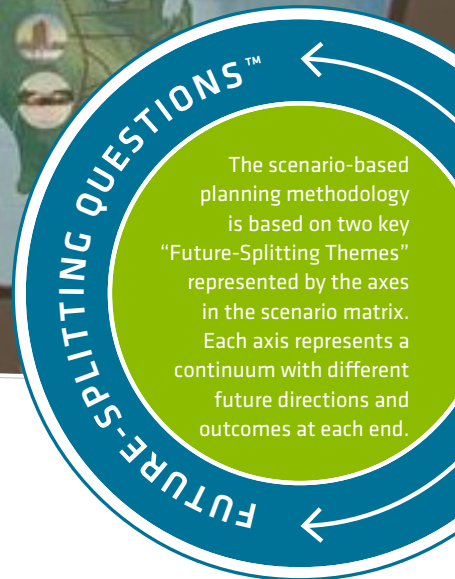
## 4.2 NARROWING THE LENS

The Vision and Values engagement process methodically built upon previous work throughout the visioning project. The data-driven methodology helped Falmouth residents to discover topics of alignment regarding their future vision using data visualization that allows for open, in-depth, and transparent examination of survey results.

By narrowing the lens, the final survey and Think Tank focused on the key topics and eliminated future options that did not appeal to the community, as revealed in the data from previous engagement opportunities. An example is residents' views on growth. Because data from Community Survey #1 demonstrated a preference away from "rapid growth," the notion of "rapid growth" was eliminated from later polls and surveys. As a result, the final discussions were nuanced about "limited growth" and "where" it might occur.

### Tightening the Lens - Creating the Scenario Matrix

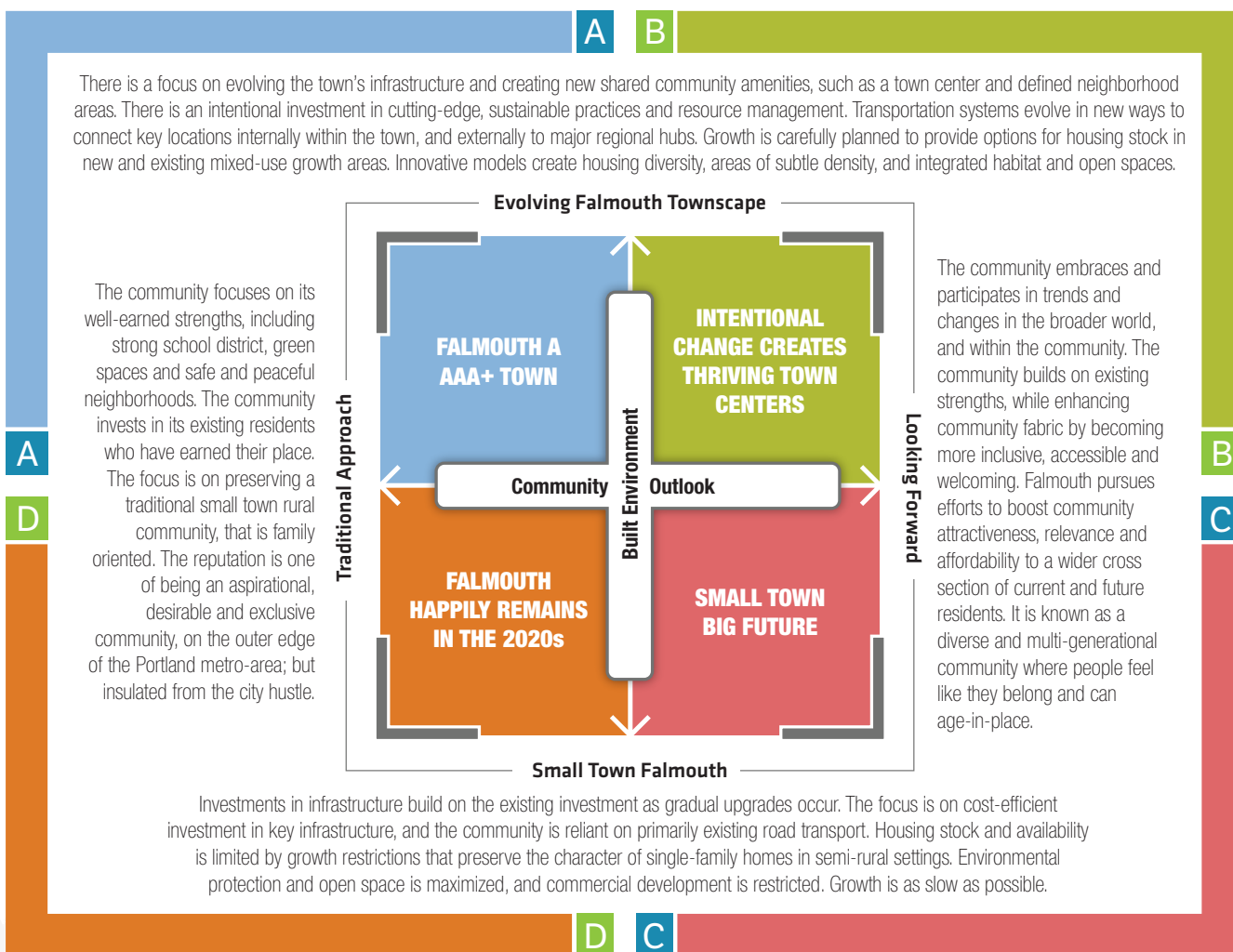




## 5.0 CREATING SHARED VISION AND DIRECTION

### 5.1 SCENARIOS OF THE FUTURE – FRAMEWORK FOR EXPLORATION

This diagram was developed prior to the Think-Tank and presented to participants at that meeting. The scenario planning process creates four plausible versions of the future, built around the main themes of “Community Outlook” and “Built Environment.” The process allows stakeholders to think about the future in a multidimensional manner. Additional detail on the process is available in the *Town of Falmouth Vision and Values Think-Tank Report*, November 2021.





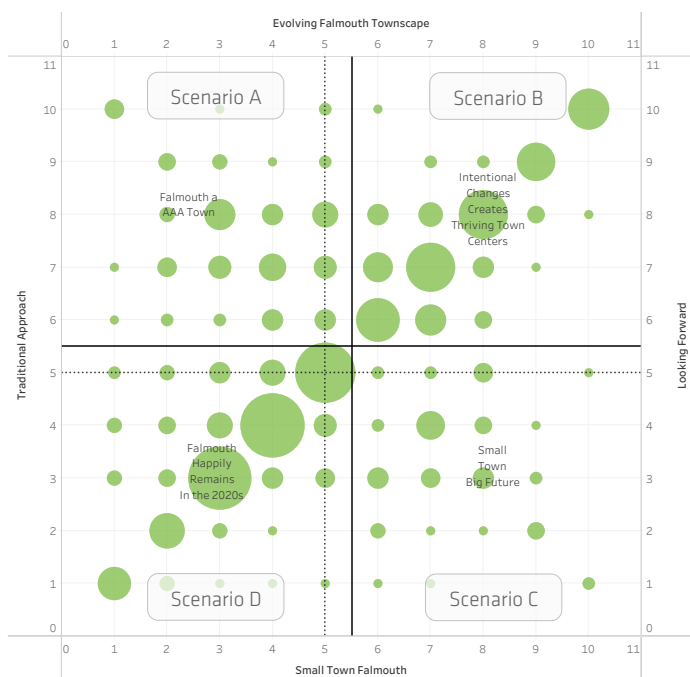
## 5.2 ANALYSIS OF THE EXPECTED, LEAST DESIRED, AND PREFERRED FUTURES

During the Community Survey #2, the scenario matrix, and the topics embedded in the axes were explored. The heat maps are created by the cumulative survey responses for expected and preferred futures. These questions were offered as optional in the survey, with an accompanying instructional video to explain the heat map process. Nearly 600 people completed this survey portion, and there were a similar number of views of the instructional video.

### 5.2.1 EXPECTED FUTURE

Expected Future was defined as “the future you expect most likely to eventuate by 2040, if existing trends and trajectory persists.” The chart can also be explored on the project portal.

#### Expected Future



#### Quadrant counts

Scenario A: 15.6% (96)

Scenario B: 31.7% (195)

Scenario C: 9.7% (60)

Scenario D: 43.0% (265)



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#### DATA INSIGHTS:

- The Median response was 5.0 x 5.0 (shown as dotted line); the Average was 5.2 x 5.0; and the Mode was 4.0 x 4.0. This data, coupled with the quadrant counts places the Expected Future into the future described as Scenario D: Falmouth Living Happily in the 2020's.
- The Expected Future represents the “default future” – the future people believe the community is currently headed towards, and most likely to occur, without a change in direction. This would see the prevailing outcomes defined as “Small Town Falmouth” and “Traditional Approach,” by the scenario matrix.
- NOTE: Median is the middle response; Average is the overall sum divided by number of responses; and the Mode is the most common response.

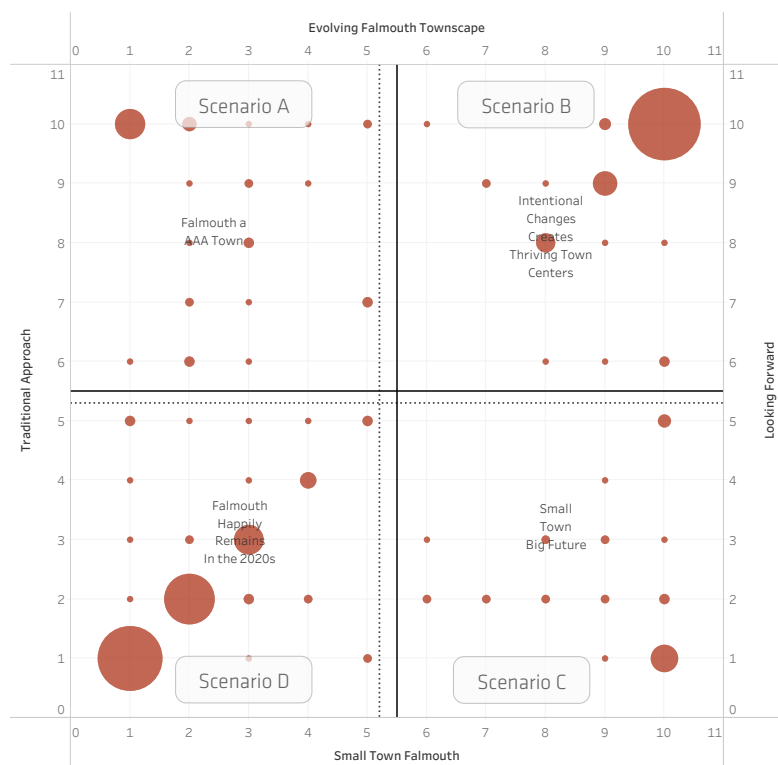




## 5.2.2 LEAST DESIRED FUTURE

The Least Desirable Future was defined as “the future that you think will be most undesirable (or least optimal or least desired) future of the community in 2040.”

### Least Desirable Future



#### Quadrant counts

Scenario A: 9.8 % (57)

Scenario B: 35.8% (209)

Scenario C: 8.1% (47)

Scenario D: 46.3% (270)



DataInsight

#### DATA INSIGHTS:

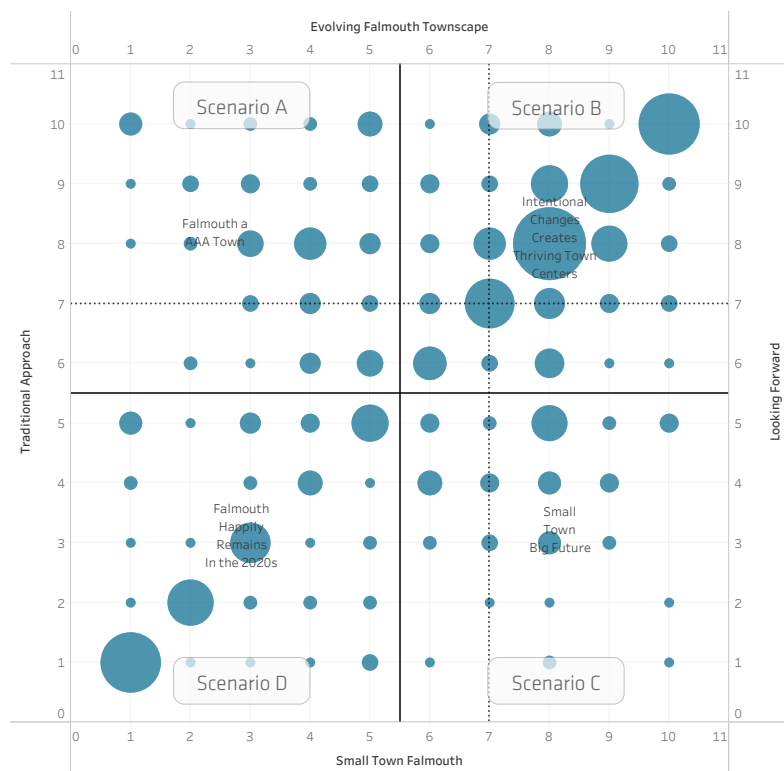
- The data of Least Desirable future shows very polarized outcomes, with concentrations at the 1 x 1 and 10 x 10 locations.
- In polarized data, such as this, Average and Median numbers are not as useful. That said the results are Average in 5.2 x 5.3 (shown as dotted line); and Median is 3.0 x 3.0 The quadrant counts lean to the Scenario D space as the Least Desirable.
- The data can be viewed on the project portal, and filtered to explore underlying patterns. For example, neighborhoods on the west side of Falmouth were more inclined to see Scenario B as the Least Desirable; and the younger (<40) populations were more inclined to see the lower left corner as the Least Desirable.



## 5.2.3 PREFERRED FUTURE

The Most Preferred Future was defined as “the future you think is absolutely optimal and creates the best outcomes for the Falmouth in 2040”.

### Preferred Future



#### Quadrant counts

Scenario A: 14.2% (86)

Scenario B: 49.8% (300)

Scenario C: 11.3% (68)

Scenario D: 24.7% (149)



DataInsight

### DATA INSIGHTS:

- The data of Preferred Future shows a clear concentration of data (along with an outlier cohort), which helps “narrow the lens” into a very specific area within the scenario matrix.
- The Median response was 7.0 x 7.0 (shown as dotted line); the Average was 6.1 x 6.3; and the Mode was 8.0 x 8.0. This data, coupled with the quadrant counts, places the Preferred Future into the future described as Scenario B: Intentional Change Creates Thriving Town Centers.
- Those people who saw Scenario B as Preferred Future generally viewed Scenario D as the Least Preferred, and visa-versa. However, median, centered on 7.0 x 7.0 in the matrix, allows for blending some aspirations and working to seek compromises.
- The data can be explored on the project portal, and various subsets can be highlighted. For example, households with retirees were more inclined to select Scenario B as the preferred future.



## 5.3 SCENARIO VALIDATION MATRIX OF PREFERRED FUTURE

In addition to the scenario heat maps, Community Survey #2 explored a range of key themes or issues. Approximately 950 people completed that set of questions. The resulting “scenario validation matrix” is a way to explore what might be the cumulative results of responses to a range of individual issues, and how it compares to the more intuitive and aspirational preferred future heat maps. This provides a validation or back-up analysis, to ensure the heat map data of the Preferred Future is reflective of real-life responses and issues.

### 5.3.1 KEY TOPIC QUESTIONS

The questions were drawn from the scenario matrix descriptions and were presented as continuum questions around six major themes, three from each axis. The key topic questions were framed based on the following topics:

#### Built Environment

- Community Infrastructure
- Transportation
- Future Development

#### Community Outlook

- Orientation and Outlook
- Community Focus and Fabric
- Community Reputation

Each of the key topic questions were presented as 1-10 ranges, reflecting the text describing the end point of each axis. People were asked to record their preference, for that topic, on its continuum. For each person's responses, the answers to the questions were averaged based on the groupings above and plotted over the scenario matrix. For example, if someone scored all three topics under the Built Environment category as 2 on the scale of 1 to 10, their combined average x-axis responses would be 1.2.

An additional question was asked about the future approach to environmental management, as this was an overarching issue that was incorporated in all future scenarios (as determined from Community Survey #1). The responses to the seven key topic questions can be seen individually and collectively on the project portal, under the data visualization for the Community Survey #2.



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#### DATA INSIGHTS:

- Typically, responses on key topic questions regarding the Preferred Future are slightly muted compared to the heat maps. This is not unexpected as the heat maps are asking for more aspirational, preferred future responses, whereas the key topic questions are more granular (as they have more choice options) and immediate. The Falmouth data also reflects this common observation (see next section).
- These broad topic questions are reflective of the topics that have been explored through the project, from the first community survey, through the focus groups, Think-Tank, and the final community survey.

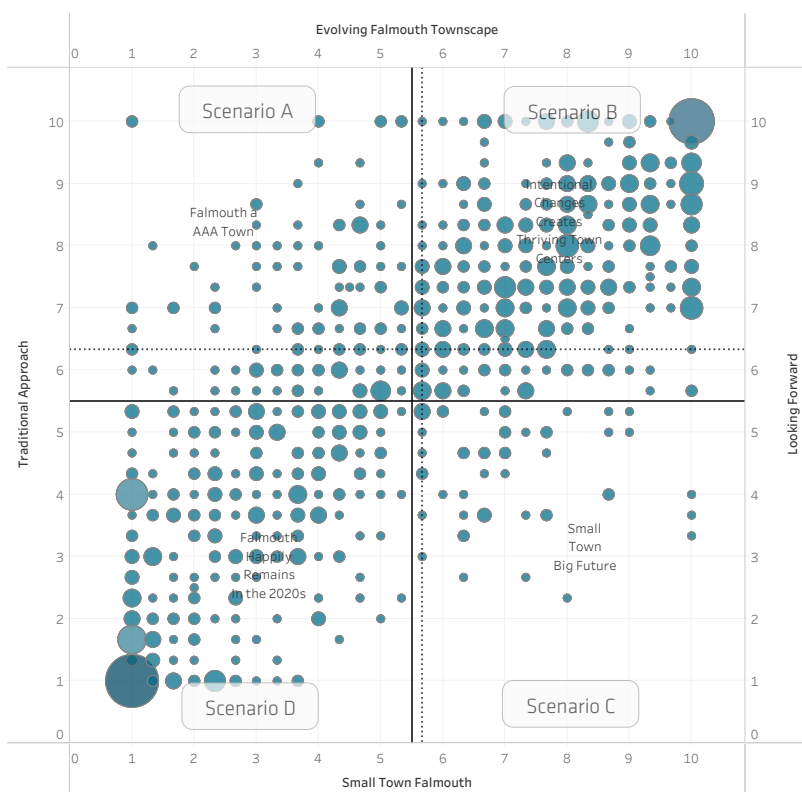




### 5.3.2 SCENARIO VALIDATION MATRIX CHART FOR PREFERRED FUTURE

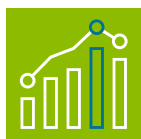
The scenario validation chart plots the combined responses, for each person, over the scenario matrix. This provides a way to verify or validate the heat map responses.

#### Scenario Matrix Validation - All Data



#### Quadrant counts

Scenario A: 13.4% (128)  
 Scenario B: 46.2% (439)  
 Scenario C: 5.6% (53)  
 Scenario D: 34.8% (331)



Data**Insight**

#### DATA INSIGHTS:

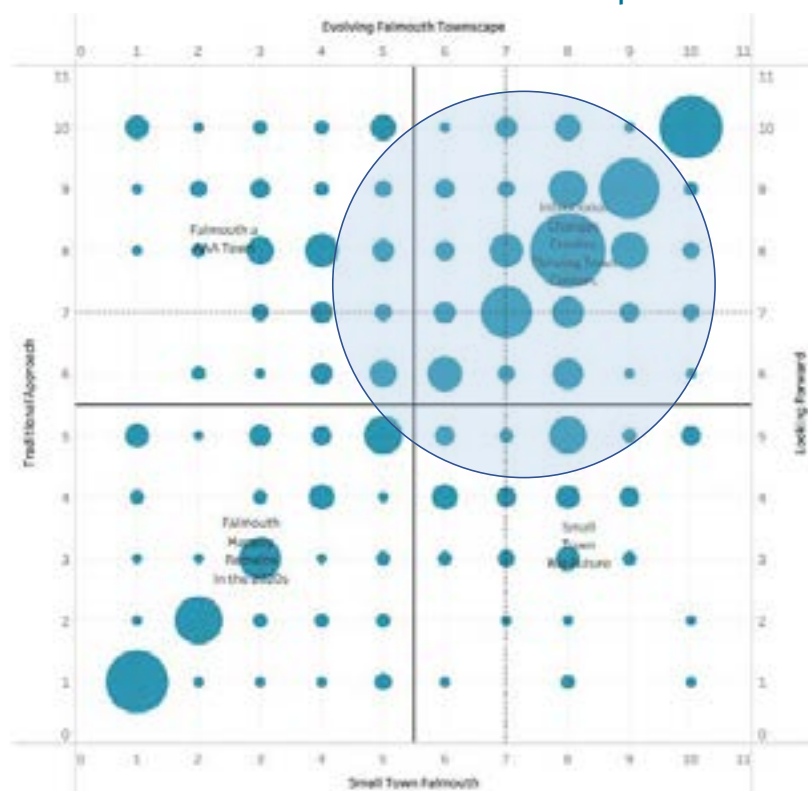
- The scenario validation data reflects the polarization seen in the heat maps, with concentration in the 1.0 x 1.0 and 10.0 x 10.0 locations; and other responses spread between these extremities. The average result (shown by dotted line) and the scenario quadrant count, largely reflect the preferred future heat maps.
- The broad distribution of responses indicate that the community will have to be thoughtful about addressing future actions. Some people will perceive change occurring too fast; and some people will see it moving too slow. Implementing plans and actions that strike a balance will be important.



## 6.0 NARROWING THE LENS – FOCUSING ON THE PREFERRED FUTURE

The Preferred Future heat map highlights the concentration of responses in the Scenario B quadrant, which is the “Intentional Change Creates Thriving Town Centers” future. The circle highlights the area of the preferred future, with over 50% of total responses. It excludes the extreme upper right and lower left corners, as these were seen as least desirable to many residents. The obvious concentration of responses is around the 8 x 8 portion of the matrix. This is also supported by the overall analysis of average, mode, and median data.

**Preferred Future - Main concentration of responses**



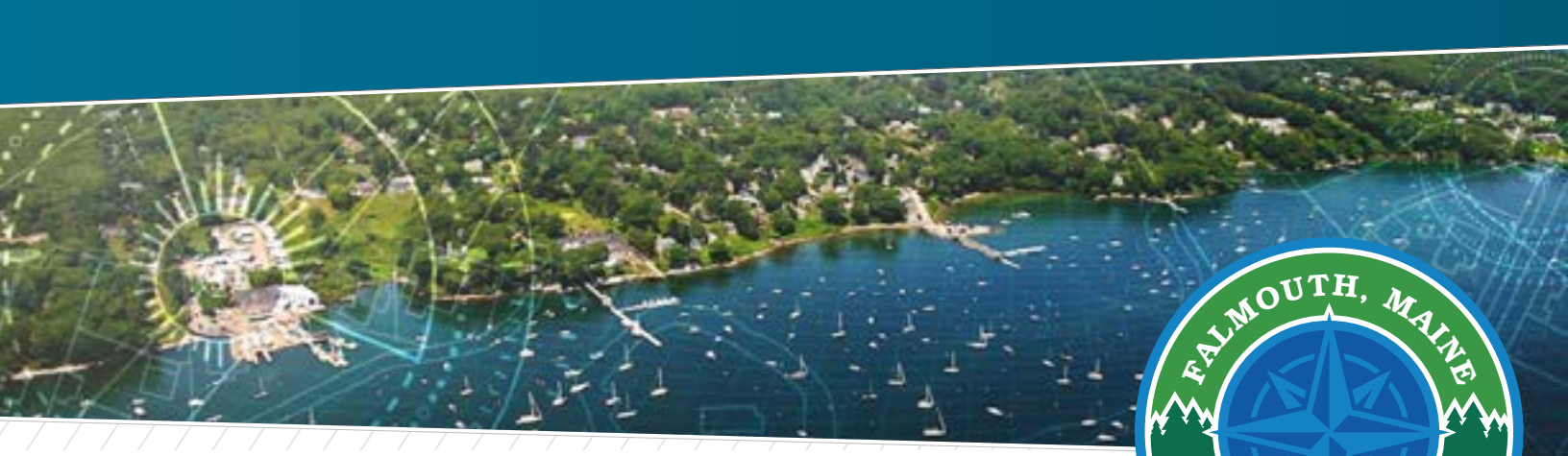
*(X axis is Community Outlook, Y axis is Built Environment)*



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### DATA INSIGHTS:

- The point of consensus, based on a range of analysis approaches, centers on the 7.5 x 7.5 point on the scenario matrix. This reflects the “Intentional Change Creates Thriving Town Centers” scenario of the future.
- Coming together as a community and accepting balanced solutions, will be important for harmonious community decision-making. The range of views needs to be acknowledged, but decision-making must focus on the point of consensus.



## 6.1 COMMUNITY VISION AND VALUES STATEMENT

The community of Falmouth has wrestled with the challenges of creating a shared vision and explored potential implications and trade-offs of various choices about future direction and decisions. While there was a range of views, there is a clear point of consensus that has emerged.

### **The future is built on embracing the following major values and approaches:**

- Falmouth is a forward-looking and inclusive community. It builds on core strengths, and keeps the door open for new ideas and people.
- The community intentionally plans the built environment and infrastructure, to ensure that future growth enhances the community, and respects the physical character of existing neighborhoods.

Key elements of the future vision include the following outcomes:

- ✓ Careful planning has revitalized village town centers in growth areas, which includes a concentration of subtle density and multi-use options and provides important social amenities and infrastructure.
- ✓ Open and green spaces are preserved and protected throughout the town and provide a foundation for the community's approach to environmental sustainability.
- ✓ Neighborhoods are more defined, with a clear shared understanding of the important physical characteristics that represent and reflect each unique area.
- ✓ Falmouth has embraced and implemented a spectrum of innovative affordable housing options including addressing the needs of seniors, workforce, and young people.
- ✓ Multimodal transportation networks connect key locations in the town, creating a walkable community with connected neighborhoods.
- ✓ The town has evolved as a multi-generational community where people feel welcome and can grow, thrive, and belong.

The vision and values are also reflected in the Strategic Pillars and Strategic Action areas, outlined in the following sections.

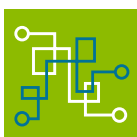




The Strategic Pillars organize community input into high priority focus areas. This creates a framework that helps guide community progress towards its preferred future.

## 7.0 STRATEGIC PILLARS FRAMEWORK

The Strategic Pillars of the community Vision and Values process were developed from the community input and data which was gathered over the course of the whole engagement process. The “pillars” represent the major themes or topic areas that underpin the preferred future for the Town of Falmouth. The specific strategic action areas listed under each pillar are the building blocks to achieve the preferred community future. Vision and Values Project participants have expressed a desire for Falmouth to become a more welcoming and inclusive community for all. These aspirations are a central tenet of each pillar and strategic action area.



### FUTURE INSIGHTS:

- The Strategic Pillars create a framework that draws together the community input into a set of high priority focus areas.
- The Strategic Pillars are not intended to solve all the community’s challenges in the short term. Rather, they present a series of focus areas that can be considered actionable in the comprehensive planning process, and that will produce long-term results, reflective of the community’s shared vision and preferred future.

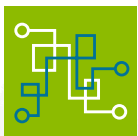
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## VISION AND VALUES STRATEGIC PILLARS AND STRATEGIC ACTION AREAS

The following list provides a summary of the strategic pillars and the strategic action areas that have been proposed. These are explored in more detail in the next sections.

- **Continue to pursue environmental protection and sustainable practices**
  - Protect and maintain existing open spaces
  - Enhance environmental health
  - Strengthen Falmouth as a green and sustainable community
- **Respect the physical character of established residential areas**
  - Create and update distinctive commercial mixed-use areas that are physically separated from established residential areas and rural areas
  - Require new development in established residential areas to build upon existing neighborhood development patterns
  - Develop strategies to preserve the character of rural areas
- **Foster the development of village centers in core mixed-use areas**
  - Encourage a mix of business and residential development that fosters community interaction and identity
  - Enhance community amenities and infrastructure
- **Strengthen community fabric and commitment to life-long learning**
  - Strengthen community fabric by further integrating schools and learning centers into community life
  - Develop inclusive and welcoming spaces, programs, events, and other opportunities for engagement
- **Encourage more diverse housing options to increase livability**
  - Create more diverse housing options that expand the spectrum of affordability and increase housing choices
  - Accelerate development of aging in place housing options
- **Enhance infrastructure for recreation, multimodal transportation, and connectivity**
  - Enhance parks, public recreation facilities, and open spaces
  - Continue the development of a connected multimodal transportation network
  - Improve connectivity to public spaces



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### FUTURE INSIGHTS:

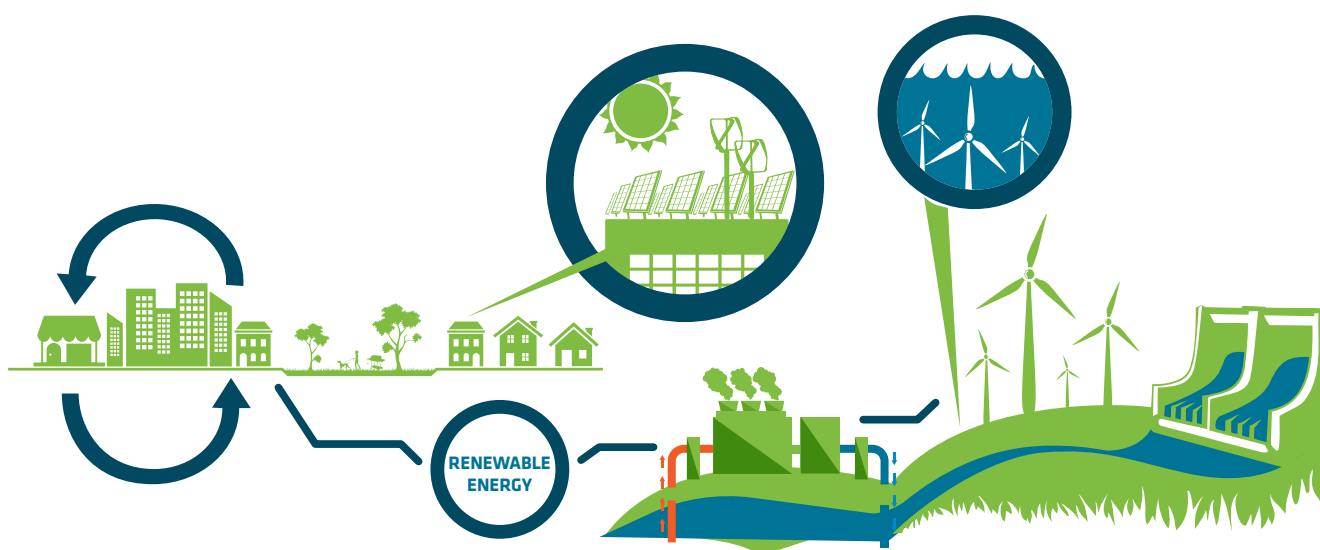
- The Strategic Action areas reflect the desires of the community, as expressed through the scenario planning, focus groups, and surveys. In all cases, they will require balancing a variety of viewpoints, and finding a practical implementation pathway that reflects the desires of most residents, but also reflects the desires and needs of unique neighborhoods and population cohorts.



This pillar reflects the underlying value the community places on environmental protection and sustainable practices. This is a potentially exciting area for future innovation, as Falmouth tackles the important challenge of environmental sustainability.

## 7.1 PILLAR 1: CONTINUE TO PURSUE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

Falmouth has a successful history of implementing programs to protect open spaces. This is an important and well-supported focus area, as made clear by residents in the Vision and Values community surveys and other engagement input. Survey responses reflected a growing awareness of the impact that the built environment has on the natural environment, and the individual and collective responsibility towards good environmental stewardship. One of the key issues is how Falmouth develops its land in the future. Residents recognize that the climate is changing and could have a significant impact on the coastal environment. Some residents believe that the community is not doing enough to protect and manage local open spaces and resources. The “sweet spot” for the Town is seen to be balanced development with a commitment to the environment that is realistic for Falmouth.







## COMMUNITY INSIGHTS:

- The responses to Falmouth Community Survey #1 showed clear majority support for future environmental protection and sustainability efforts including:
  - Adopting zero-waste and net zero carbon goals
  - Embracing renewable energy
  - Enhancing coastal protection
  - Focusing on environmental sustainability
  - Preserving lands for habitat and recreation
- Similarly at the first Future Summit, only 9% of respondents wanted to leave the future direction of Falmouth's overall environmental sustainability focus "as is;" the rest favored bolder action.
- Community Survey #2 confirmed that an overwhelming majority of residents support protecting and expanding open spaces. The overall sustainability focus seems to be understood and supported in the community, with perhaps different views on how this could be best accomplished.
- In both community surveys, and in various discussions forums, residents emphasized a strong desire to protect the open and green space of the community.

## WHAT IS CURRENTLY HAPPENING IN FALMOUTH:

A summary of highlights of what is currently happening on this topic includes:

- Open Space Plan – The Council accepted the open space preservation and conservation strategies outlined in the 2018 Open Space Plan. This plan is now being implemented.
- Strategic Watershed Plan – A comprehensive "road map" has been developed to better understand current watershed health and prioritize watersheds for protection and intervention.
- Highland Lake - There are ongoing efforts to enhance water quality through specific watershed management strategies.
- Landfill Solar Array – The Town is implementing a solar array on the 4.2-acre capped landfill on Woods Road. The 875 kW AC array has an expected annual output of 1,500,000 kWh for the initial delivery year and will produce enough renewable energy to offset approximately 70% of municipal electric use. It is estimated to save the Town roughly \$2 million in energy costs over its 20-year lifespan.
- Climate Action Plan – Work is under way to complete an updated climate action plan. This will include a greenhouse gas emissions analysis, vulnerability assessment, and strategic plan to meet climate action goals as part of a coordinated initiative with other Greater Portland communities.



## STRATEGIC ACTION AREAS

The following three key strategic action areas consolidate ideas and priorities identified by the community during the Vision and Values process.

### 1. Protect and maintain existing open spaces

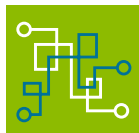
Approximately 18% of Falmouth is currently protected open space. Open spaces are increasingly recognized as valuable opportunities for flood mitigation and other buffers to changing weather patterns. Assessing the ways different open spaces are utilized is vital to strengthening their value as functioning habitats. The community supports efforts to manage and maintain open space that strikes a balance between protecting natural habitats, providing community recreation, forest and ecosystem management, and possible food production.

### 2. Enhance environmental health

Surveys showed environmental conservation is an important desire, with some concerns expressed about the future environmental health of the waterways and water bodies. Community members encouraged actions that focus on water quality, especially around developments, to ensure a good foundation for habitat, recreation, and public health.

### 3. Strengthen Falmouth as a green and sustainable community

Vision and Values project participants expressed a desire to become a more green and sustainable community. Suggested areas to explore and continue include “living lawns,” alternative energy, bicycles and trails, sanctuaries for wildlife, connectivity of open space, water quality, a variety of housing options, ordinances that govern development, carbon neutrality, and working relationships with surrounding towns and organizations.



FutureInsight

## FUTURE INSIGHTS:

- Environmental awareness is increasing rapidly in society, as people better understand the future impacts of climate change. As a coastal community, Falmouth will be subject to additional impacts associated with rising sea levels and more extreme weather events. Preparing and building climate resilient infrastructure will be essential.
- Community-wide sustainability approaches, such as resource management, renewable energy, and waste reduction are rapidly gathering support across the United States. These trends and approaches will have significant implications and Falmouth would be well served to be ambitious and future ready. Consideration should be given to establishing targets on future emissions, waste, and environmental performance.



While people recognize that Falmouth has grown and is no longer a small rural farming community, there is a deep desire for a more familiar, intimate community “village feel” that respects the physical character of established residential neighborhoods.

## 7.2 PILLAR 2: RESPECT THE PHYSICAL CHARACTER OF ESTABLISHED RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Building a sense of place for a community is an important part of creating identity and connection for residents and visitors alike. Throughout the Vision and Values process, community members highlighted both the importance of respecting the Town’s existing physical character and sense of place and also a desire to become a more welcoming community accommodating a broader socioeconomic range and stages of life. While people recognize that Falmouth has grown and is no longer a small rural farming community, there is a deep desire for a more familiar, intimate community “village feel” that respects the physical character of established residential neighborhoods. Navigating tensions between these desires – and finding points of agreement and compromise – will be a constant challenge for Falmouth’s future planning. Respecting the existing character of established neighborhoods and directing growth towards separate growth areas accommodates both.







## COMMUNITY INSIGHTS:

Resident input reflects polarized views around residential growth and development.

- Residential growth in Falmouth continues to concern many residents, as reflected in all the engagement stages. The concern is having uncontrolled or rapid growth. There is a desire for carefully managed and thoughtful developments that address future community needs (such as village centers), but do not undermine the established character of key residential areas.
- Community Survey #1 revealed a divergence of views in Falmouth about the ideal nature of future developments, with differing views on topics such as the types of developments (single family homes on larger lots versus cluster developments), and types of housing (detached housing versus diverse options).
- Community Survey #2 respondents expressed support for carefully managed growth to develop thriving village centers alongside a desire to restrict growth in existing residential areas, especially in the western neighborhoods such as Leighton Hill and Brookside.
- The residential development Focus Group explored the tension between residents opposed to change and others wanting to expand housing diversity and livability options.

## WHAT IS CURRENTLY HAPPENING IN FALMOUTH:

- Falmouth has experienced significant development pressure and excess demand in recent decades. Falmouth adopted a residential growth cap in 2000 to slow the pace of growth.
- While the pace of development in Falmouth has subsequently slowed over time (from 2.6% per year in the 80s and 90s to 1.3% annually in the 2000s), housing values have nearly doubled over the past 10 years, far outpacing regional wage growth, and Falmouth has hit its growth cap in 3 of the last 5 years.
- The disappearance of modestly priced housing is changing Falmouth's demographics, and more and more of Falmouth's residents are higher income professionals from out of state.
- Every significant residential development proposed in Falmouth over the past 10 years has been met with significant and vocal opposition.
- Housing options for single, adult, and elderly residents have declined as a share of the overall housing stock.





## KEY STRATEGIC ACTION AREAS

The following strategic action areas consolidate ideas and priorities identified by the community during the Vision and Values process.

### 1. Create and update distinctive commercial mixed-use areas that are physically separated from established residential areas and rural areas

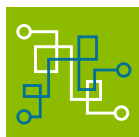
Falmouth residents have also expressed a desire to resist the trend toward upper-middle class professional homogeneity and to foster development of housing that welcomes residents across a broader socioeconomic range and stage of life. These desires can coexist by directing new development toward growth areas and guiding development to meet these community goals. Support for residential development is significantly higher among Falmouth residents when it is directed away from existing neighborhoods and toward separate growth areas.

### 2. Require new development in established residential areas to build upon existing neighborhood development patterns

Small scale development following existing patterns helps to preserve a sense of place, can serve as an important tool to meet development pressure without transforming the physical character of the Town, and is more broadly accepted by Falmouth residents.

### 3. Develop strategies to preserve the character of rural areas

Residents expressed a sense of loss over the changing landscape over many decades in the rural areas. Falmouth should evaluate its current strategies including open space acquisition, separate growth caps, and conservation subdivisions and explore new ones to ensure that Falmouth continues to preserve its rural areas.



Future**Insight**

#### FUTURE INSIGHTS:

- Many communities are wrestling with these housing issues, and are seeking innovative solutions to balance density, open space, and housing types. Housing designed to be attainable by the middle class on smaller, more affordable lots is of particular importance to many communities.







The evolution of Town Centers in Falmouth is consistent with trends seen elsewhere, as people seek more intimate, local, and walkable community centers. This notion was strongly supported by the community.

### 7.3 PILLAR 3: FOSTER THE DEVELOPMENT OF VILLAGE CENTERS IN CORE MIXED-USE AREAS

Throughout the Vision and Values process, the concept of developing a town center was expressed repeatedly. Town centers and greens are multi-functional social infrastructure that connect people and encourage social interactions. There is a societal trend towards more livable, multi-modal, and mixed-use neighborhoods and communities. The walkability of a community is a measure gaining traction among young and old alike. The concept of 'Town centers' plays directly to this trend and making Falmouth more livable and walkable.







## COMMUNITY INSIGHTS:

Over the course of the visioning process, residents coalesced around support for carefully created town centers with a mix of residential, commercial, and recreational uses.

- In Community Survey #1, most respondents trended towards restricting commercial growth at least to some level, but there were pluralities of support for creating a definable town center and encouraging and attracting desirable businesses.
- Community Survey #2 showed significant support for an intentional focus on evolving the town's infrastructure and creating new shared community amenities. A clear majority supported an "evolving Falmouth townscape," including town centers, that provide more social infrastructure and amenities.

## WHAT IS CURRENTLY HAPPENING IN FALMOUTH:

- The desire for a town center has driven planning and zoning in Falmouth for the past several decades and the Town continues to actively work towards this end.
- Some see today's town center location as the retail stretch on Route 1 between the Turnpike Spur and Route 88, an area where there has been significant infrastructure investment. North of that is dominated by professional office development. Historically this corridor was developed with strip malls, car dealerships, and "big box" stores. The car dealerships have mostly relocated, and more service uses, including medical and financial, have located in this area. Various civic uses, such as the library and recreational facilities, are nearby.
- Although there is general community support for redeveloping Route 1, most proposed and actual commercial development has remained controversial since the 2013 Comprehensive Plan.





## STRATEGIC ACTION AREAS

The following two key strategic action areas consolidate ideas and priorities identified by the community during the Vision and Values process.

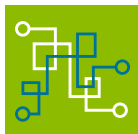
### Key Focus Areas

#### 1. Encourage a mix of business and residential development that fosters community interaction and identity

Multi-functional public spaces create significant environmental, social, and economic contributions to community vitality. Encouraging a mix of development and business types in the town centers that create a sense of place where people live, shop, dine and work will be important.

#### 2. Enhance community amenities and infrastructure

Vision and Values participants indicated a significant desire to enhance community amenities and infrastructure to provide greater walkability of village centers and multi-modal connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods. It is recommended that land be reserved for community gathering spaces and points of interest.



FutureInsight

### FUTURE INSIGHTS:

- There is a societal trend towards more livable, mixed-use communities.
- The development of well-defined town centers can provide an important opportunity to address housing diversity.
- Over the next decade, it is likely that society will accelerate its shift away from a car-centric focus. Parts of Falmouth may in the future include more small retail hubs and “neighborhood-centers” decreasing the need for a vehicle in some instances.







This pillar reflects the overarching value of education in Falmouth, as well as a desire to strengthen community fabric by becoming a more welcoming and inclusive community.

## 7.4 PILLAR 4: STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY FABRIC AND COMMITMENT TO LIFE-LONG LEARNING

Falmouth highly values and promotes its public schools, and this asset is a significant draw for new residents to the town. Participants in the Vision and Values process routinely singled out quality education as one of the defining characteristics of their preferred future. Where the Falmouth School District does a good job creating a sense of community for school-aged families, survey results indicate there is a sense of isolation, especially outside of the school community. There is considerable desire for the community to become more welcoming and inclusive towards people of all ages, backgrounds, and needs.







## COMMUNITY INSIGHTS:

- Residents overwhelmingly support efforts to enhance community fabric to promote community health, safety, and wellness, become more accessible, welcoming, and inclusive, and ensure that all residents feel connected and that they belong.
- Falmouth residents differ regarding the extent to which the focus should be on existing residents or future residents but there is broad support for improving the extent to which Falmouth is a welcoming and inclusive place for all people.

## WHAT IS CURRENTLY HAPPENING IN FALMOUTH:

- The Town of Falmouth began taking steps to understand racial justice issues as they exist in Falmouth and to promote improvement, transparency, and accountability in the community.
- The Falmouth School Department established an Intercultural Awareness and Inclusion Committee and has undertaken several diversity, equity, and inclusion activities in recent years.
- Falmouth Community Programs and the Falmouth Memorial Library offer robust programming for youth, adults, and 55+ residents. Community Program's 55+ offerings, administered by the Department's Senior Services Coordinator, include dedicated senior room at the Mason-Motz Activity Center, free activities, and 55+ newsletter.
- Falmouth is also home to several non-profit adult education resources such as the Maine Audubon and the University of Maine Cooperative Extension.
- The Town's Community Wellness Committee is working to determine best strategies and practices to inform and promote wellness for individuals, families, and Falmouth as a whole, educate and engage the public around available wellness resources, and respond to relevant and current challenges and opportunities that impact community wellbeing.





## STRATEGIC ACTION AREAS

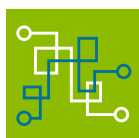
The following key strategic action areas consolidate ideas and priorities identified by the community during the Vision and Values process.

### 1. Strengthen community fabric by further integrating schools and learning centers into community life

Schools and libraries are key elements of social infrastructure for communities. They are gathering places for all ages and provide enrichment at all levels. Focus group participants identified a strong desire in the community to continue strong support for the Town's schools and to expand collaboration between the schools and community.

### 2. Develop inclusive and welcoming spaces, programs, events, and other opportunities for engagement

There is a strong desire in the community to increase opportunities for Falmouth residents to come together. Survey respondents and focus group participants indicated this should be done intentionally. Suggestions include welcoming newcomers to the community, doing more with trails and park experiences to be inclusive, and creating more public spaces and community-wide events for people to gather.



FutureInsight

### FUTURE INSIGHTS:

- There is a broad range of people who are attracted to Falmouth, from retirees to school-aged families. The natural attractiveness of the town landscape, and its proximity to Portland, make this an appealing location for many people, which also increases property values. Finding creative ways to build community connections will be important to ensure a healthy and vibrant community fabric, one that draws people together.
- There are groups within the community, who seek quite different outcomes and have different priorities from each other. The critical challenge for the Town is finding a balance of priorities that can serve these differing desires and needs. There is also a responsibility for residents to work in a convivial manner, and find flexibility to accommodate different perspectives, desires, and needs. Weaving this together is the key to creating a vibrant and harmonious community fabric.







## 7.5 PILLAR 5: ENCOURAGE MORE DIVERSE HOUSING OPTIONS TO INCREASE LIVABILITY

Like most communities in the U.S., there is a clear identified need in Falmouth for new types of housing options such as condos, senior living and accessory dwelling units. Seniors, workforce, those with special needs, and youth are being priced out of housing markets in many locations. In affluent communities like Falmouth, it is becoming more difficult for these groups to live or remain in the community. Survey respondents, focus group, and Think-Tank participants pointed to this topic as a critical future-determining issue for how the community will look and feel in the future. Housing availability and affordability were seen as intricately connected to livability, and how welcoming and inclusive Falmouth wants to become.

Future housing options will largely define the type of community Falmouth will become.







## COMMUNITY INSIGHTS:

- Community Survey #1 revealed some divergence of views about how housing developments should progress. Overall, Community Survey #1 highlighted a widespread concern about unmanaged future residential development.
- Throughout the visioning process, there has been support and interest in a carefully managed approach to providing more diverse housing options, especially to support seniors, aging in place and housing affordability. This was especially highlighted in Community Survey #1 and in the focus groups. This data shows some support for ideas like cluster type neighborhood developments, with closer detached homes, and more shared amenities and green space.
- Community Survey #1 also showed that about 60% of residents supported an aim for Falmouth to provide more housing that is affordable for lower and middle income residents. This was somewhat tempered by 20% of residents who felt strongly that Falmouth should aim exclusively on preserving and enhancing existing home values.
- Throughout the community discussions, it has been identified that additional housing options could logically be provided in mixed-use areas located in the identified growth areas and embedded in walkable areas within future village centers. This would help provide key housing options, while respecting the characteristics of existing residential areas.
- Overall, community residents supported a focus on an evolving Falmouth townscape, that adapts and changes to future community needs and trends. This is reflected in the preferred future heatmaps.

## WHAT IS CURRENTLY HAPPENING IN FALMOUTH:

- Finding affordable and diverse housing in Maine in 2022 is more difficult than ever. A tight supply and huge demand mean housing prices are soaring across the state. Buyers need to be prepared to offer more than the asking price. The pandemic is partly to blame for this affordable housing crisis.
- More out-of-state buyers are coming to Maine, looking to get away from areas such as Boston and New York. An expensive property here can seem like a relative bargain compared to those markets. According to the Maine Association of Realtors, 32% of home sales went to out-of-state buyers in 2020. In 2019, the number was 25%.





## STRATEGIC ACTION AREAS

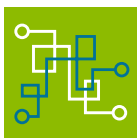
The following two key strategic action areas consolidate ideas and priorities identified by the community during the Vision and Values process.

### 1. Create more diverse housing options that expand the spectrum of affordability and increases housing choices.

The livability of a community is, in large part, governed by its housing stock. Throughout the Vision and Values process, residents pointed to the real need to address housing to accommodate a broad set of current and future needs in the community while respecting unique characteristics of existing neighborhoods. The Town could encourage developers to put forth creative proposals for new housing types and under-represented housing categories in existing and new growth areas in Falmouth.

### 2. Accelerate development of aging in place housing options

There is a clear desire in Falmouth to encourage housing options that allow residents to age in place, or to live out their years in the community. This includes alternative housing options that include ADUs, senior living, active retirement, and affordable senior housing. This will allow people to transition through their life and have housing available to suit their changing needs.



FutureInsight

#### FUTURE INSIGHTS:

- Increasing home values influence the demographic character of the community. Rapidly increasing housing costs can limit options, even for locals. For example, most children who grow up in Falmouth cannot afford to purchase a home in their own community.
- Parents who want to downsize after their children leave home, or retirees who want to “age in place,” can have difficulty affording the property taxes on homes that are appreciating in value.
- Many communities, including Falmouth, are facing the prospect of an aging population, or at least a cohort of residents who are transitioning to retirement. An aging population creates the need for housing and services that allow people to age-in-place. This need was highlighted in comments on the community surveys, as well as in some of the focus group discussions.







This pillar reflects the community's desire to enhance community amenities and infrastructure, to create more multimodal transportation, and connectivity.

## 7.6 PILLAR 6: ENHANCE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR RECREATION, MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION, AND CONNECTIVITY

Many communities are seeing a movement away from a built environment designed around cars. Survey, focus group, and Think-Tank participants indicated tremendous support for walking and biking paths that promote transportation by non-vehicular means. This would provide greater connectivity, enhance the “village experience,” improve health and safety, and benefit the environment. There is a macro societal trend towards more livable, multi-modal, and mixed-use neighborhoods and communities. Communities like Falmouth offer the potential of great livability, especially in a world where more people are working from home or engage in hybrid live and work models.







## COMMUNITY INSIGHTS:

- Community Survey #1 participants indicated broad support for multimodal transportation and connectivity such as:
  - A network of pedestrian-friendly sidewalks
  - Corridor connections between open spaces
  - Expanded trail networks
  - Easy access to the water
- Community Survey #2 confirmed that over 80% of respondents want to embrace more multimodal transportation and connectivity. There was desire for greater connectivity that would allow people to move through the community, without having to travel on roadways.
- Throughout the visioning process, the parks and open spaces in Falmouth were highlighted as key aspects of the community infrastructure. In Community Survey #1, 62% of respondents supported more enhanced parks and other recreation infrastructure.
- During the focus group discussions, and in survey comments, people highlighted the importance of protecting and enhancing the parks and recreation facilities. These were identified as key community connection points, and there was desire to include more public spaces, such as pocket parks, in future mixed-use or village center developments.

## WHAT IS CURRENTLY HAPPENING IN FALMOUTH:

- The Town's 2016 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan lays out a vision for physical improvements throughout town.
- The Town has created bicycle and pedestrian connections through the Route 1 South and parts of the Route 100 corridors. Efforts are underway to extend these improvements to Route 1 North.
- The Town is working to make sure that bicycle lanes and/or sidewalks are included in all substantive roadway improvements. This includes the Interstate 295 bridge replacements that MaineDOT has completed or is planning on Lunt Road, Bucknam Road, and Johnson Road.
- The Casco Bay Trail Alliance is working to realize a vision to convert the currently unused St. Lawrence and Atlantic rail line into a multi-use trail.
- The Town is working with Greater Portland METRO to enhance and expand bus service.
- Public open space properties include a vast trail network that continues to evolve including a cross town trail.
- The Town is evaluating potential improvements to Underwood Park and plans to conduct an evaluation of all parks and recreation areas in Falmouth.



## STRATEGIC ACTION AREAS

The following three key strategic action areas consolidate ideas and priorities identified by the community during the Vision and Values process.

### 1. Enhance parks, public recreation facilities and open spaces

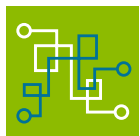
Ensuring the widespread usability of public space is an increasingly important issue for communities. As Town demographics change, ensuring that public spaces remain inclusive and accessible becomes increasingly important to maintaining residents' quality of life. Vision and Values participants indicated the need to enhance current parks and other public spaces to be attractive, welcoming, and inclusive for all abilities. This translates to a desired optimization of recreational facilities and amenities at all existing parks and recreational spaces.

### 2. Continue the development of a connected multimodal transportation network

The increasing importance of all types of mobility is a global trend that accelerated during the pandemic. Community support for this trend provides the opportunity to prioritize enhanced multimodal transportation, bicycling, walking, micro-transit, enabling safe access to services and amenities throughout the town.

### 3. Improve connectivity to public spaces

Vision and Values Project participants have indicated that they want to enhance the community and “village experience” by providing and connecting a range of public spaces for the community to enjoy. Embracing the range of scales, visual character, and functions that parks can take ensures that diverse populations of users can benefit from their presence. There is clear evidence that the community wants to provide this range of public spaces and that they want those spaces connected by multimodal options.



FutureInsight

## FUTURE INSIGHTS:

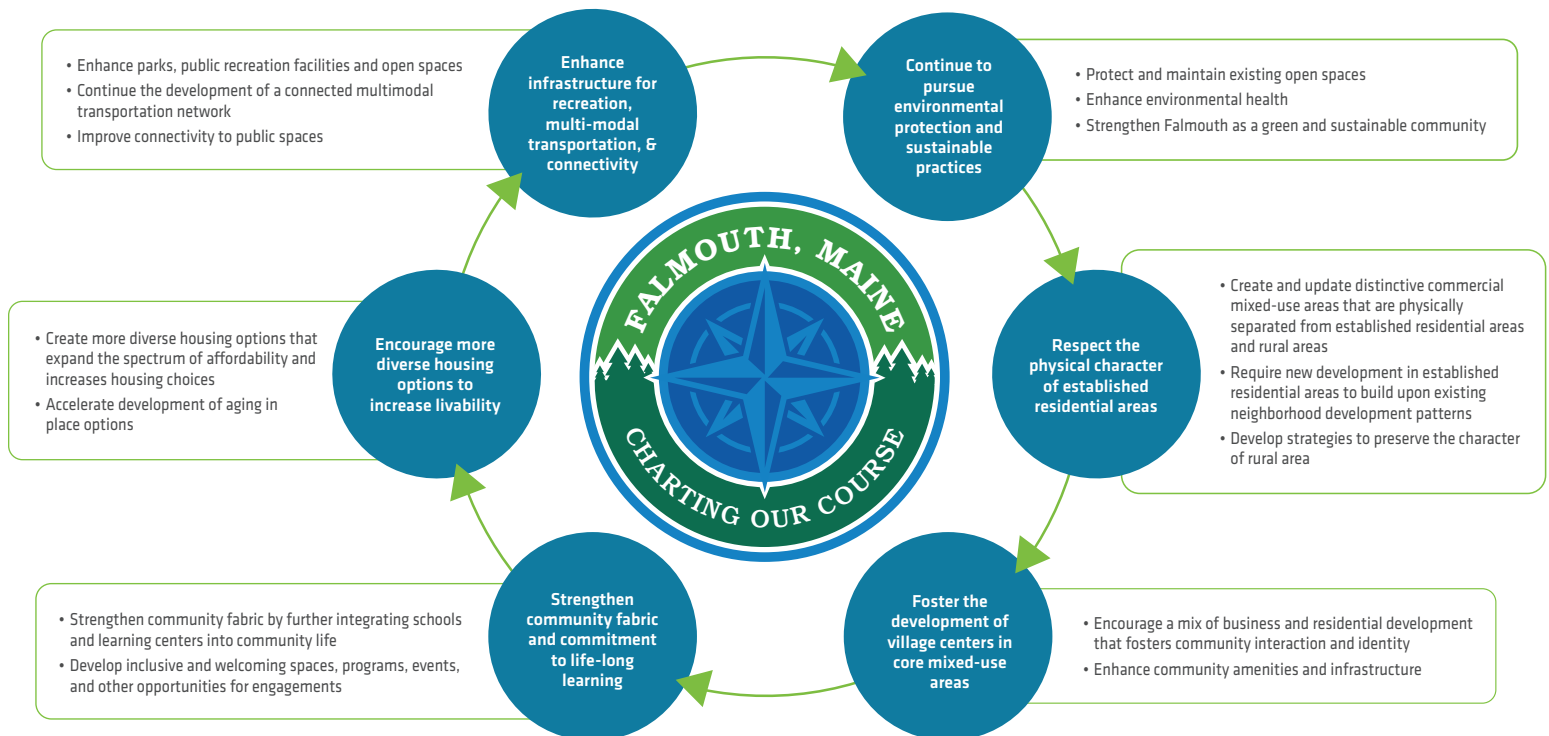
- Greenways” are ribbons of open space that are in corridors that are either natural, such as rivers and streams, or man-made, such as abandoned railroad beds and utility corridors. They are not new but have exploded in use since the pandemic. A common trend is to expand existing greenways or develop new ones to connect neighborhoods and communities and to create non-vehicular corridors for people to recreate.
- Designing streets with a “Complete Streets” approach is a trend in transportation that focuses on providing access and connectivity for all people who use streets, not just drivers of cars. Street networks using this concept are designed to provide better and safer streets for people walking, biking, driving, riding transit, and moving actively with assistive devices.





## 8.0 COMBINED STRATEGIC ACTION FRAMEWORK

The preferred future scenario that emerged from the Vision and Values process provides a guiding framework to apply best practices to the key areas of focus in the community. This framework is the result of input from two community surveys, Future Summits, online Discussion Boards, Focus Groups, and the Think-Tank. The resulting overall framework creates the guiding vision and values for informing the upcoming comprehensive planning process.



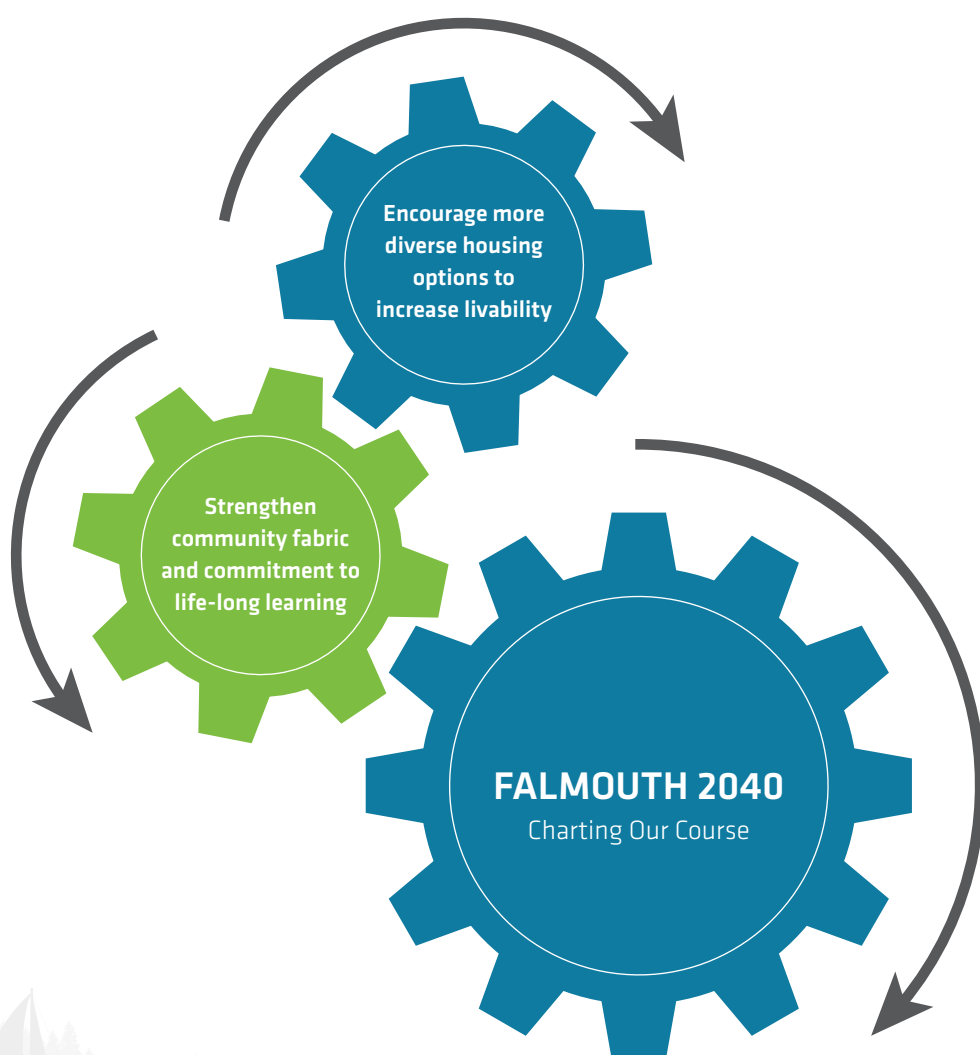




Falmouth's strategic pillars operate in a dynamic systems-thinking approach. Each pillar enables and empowers the other to function as the community works to attain its preferred future.

## 8.1 DYNAMIC SYSTEMS-THINKING APPROACH

The Strategic Pillars Framework lays out the key themes and specific recommended actions to lead to the preferred future scenario for Falmouth. However, it is very important to think of this in a “dynamic systems-thinking approach.” This means that each part of the approach needs to enable and empower the other elements. For example, to strengthen community fabric and commitment to life-long learning, there will need to be an expansion of diverse housing options to increase livability and allow residents to age in place.



“There is a need for large strategic goals to achieve what we ultimately want to see. What kind of investment is required to achieve what we want? We need to be audacious in our thinking about the future.”

- Focus Group Participant



The visioning process has activated considerable interest and input into planning for the future of the Town. Transparency and inclusiveness were defining elements of the visioning process. A continued commitment to these principles will also contribute to the success of the upcoming comprehensive planning process.

## 9.0 NEXT STEPS

The Town of Falmouth has undertaken an extensive Vision and Values Planning process that has produced the following outcomes:

- Documented a detailed understanding of the community's views across a range of important topics and future shaping factors.
- Allowed detailed examination of plausible future scenarios, explored expected, least desired, and preferred futures, and built an understanding of the implications of these future options.
- Identified a vision for the future, acknowledging that there are a variety of viewpoints, with the majority in a central range.
- Identified key strategic pillars and strategic action areas.

This work has been built on extensive public participation and open and transparent dialogue. The vision looks out to 2040.

Now, the next phase of work needs to begin. The following immediate next steps are recommended:

- Consideration and acceptance of the **Falmouth Vision and Values Final Report** by the Town Council.
- Incorporation of the key elements of the vision and strategic pillars into the Town's upcoming **Comprehensive Plan Update**.





## 11.0 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Town Council, Community Connectors, and community members have engaged in the visioning process with great enthusiasm. Their passion and interest ensured that discussions were thoughtful, and the outcomes reflect the myriad of perspectives that exist within the Town of Falmouth. This dedication underscores the commitment participants have to the future of Falmouth. Future iQ would like to acknowledge the substantial background efforts from the Town staff. We would also like to thank Town Council Chair Amy Kuhn and Councilor Jay Trickett for their consistent support. Their contributions were greatly appreciated.

### Town Council

Amy Kuhn, *Chair*

Peter LaFond, *Vice-Chair*

Ted Asherman

Hope Cahan

Janice de Lima

Tommy Johnson

Jay Trickett

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For more information, visit the project portal <https://lab2.future-iq.com/town-of-falmouth-vision-and-values-project/>



Town of Falmouth  
Think-Tank Report  
November 2021



Town of Falmouth  
Final Report  
March 2022



Town of Falmouth  
Lab Portal





## »»»»»» 13.0 ABOUT FUTURE IQ

Future iQ specializes in applying innovative tools and approaches to assist municipalities, organizations, regions, and industries shape their economic and community futures. With nearly two decades of experience, the company has a global clientele spanning three continents. To learn more about Future iQ, and our recent projects visit [www.future-iq.com](http://www.future-iq.com) or by email at [info@future-iq.com](mailto:info@future-iq.com).

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