

Community Vision Process: A Summary

Overview of Process

In August of 2021, the Town Office, working with the North Haven Collective and Gabe McPhail, embarked on a community vision process. This process included several months of community engagement, ongoing communications from the Town with updates on the process, analyzing community input to create a Findings Report, and the formation of a working group to draft a vision statement for review by the community.

The results of the vision process were a consensus-approved, community derived vision statement and three focus priorities for the Town and Select Board to work on addressing.

In early January of 2022, the Select Board approved the vision statement and focus priorities, which were then shared in a community-wide presentation.

Project Goals

The stated goals of the North Haven Community Vision Process were:

- Create a vision statement that can serve as the foundation for updating the comprehensive plan.
- Set North Haven up for applying to grants and loans that ask for a vision statement and be able to demonstrate community engagement and buy-in.
- Provide the Select Board and other town boards and groups with direction so they can make decisions for the future.

Project Outcomes

Vision Statement

North Haven is a remarkable island community -- resourceful, caring, safe, and inclusive -- committed to sustaining a thriving year-round economy, stewarding our natural resources, and preserving our scenic beauty for current and future generations.

Focus Priorities and Objectives

1. Access to Housing
 - Objective: Increase the availability of affordable year-round housing rental and ownership opportunities.
2. Workforce Development and Economic Diversification
 - Objective: Foster a diverse economy that sustains both a year-round workforce and the human infrastructure (childcare, healthcare, education) needed to support that workforce.
3. Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Impacts
 - Objective: Take actions that support environmental sustainability and address the impacts of climate change on the island.

Project Timeline

August 2021: Introduction of the Timeline

The Town of North Haven began facilitating a process to collectively identify what is most important to us, the North Haven Community, our top concerns and challenges, and what we envision for our future. The Vision Team focused on outreach to introduce the community to what the goal of the process was, why the Town decided to embark on the vision process, who was leading the efforts, and, most importantly, how to get involved.

September 2021: Launching the Community Vision Survey

By the end of September, the Vision Team developed a survey to gather input from community members. The survey was launched on September 27, 2021.

In order to reach both year-round and seasonal community members, a variety of channels were used. The survey was mailed to local box holders and sent out with the October edition of the North Haven News, shared on the Town and community Facebook pages, posted to the Town website, and sent out via a Vision Process listserv. Weekly reminders went out on social media and via email to encourage participation from everyone in the community. We invited community members of all ages to participate.

The survey closed on November 6th, 2021.

October 2021: Collecting Community Input

In addition to the survey, the Vision Team organized a series of Community Conversations to gather additional insights from community members. These small group conversations, hosted virtually on zoom, in-person at the Town Office, and around the island at convenient times and locations allowed community members to share ideas with the Town while also hearing from and engaging with one another.

November 2021: Analyzing and Reporting Findings

The survey closed on November 6, 2021, with a total of 387 responses. Community Conversations also wrapped up in November after 10 meetings with a total of 85 participants.

The survey results and a summary of the themes that emerged during Community Conversations were compiled in the Survey & Community Conversations Findings Report. This document was shared with the public via the email listserv, the Town and Community Facebook pages, and was made available on the Town website.

The Findings Report summarized the top values and priorities of the North Haven Community, providing the basis to build a vision statement and create a plan to move forward with addressing the challenges facing North Haven.

December 2021: Drafting a Vision

The Vision Statement Working Group was formed and began meeting in early December. They were tasked with using data from the Community Visioning Process survey and conversations to agree on (by consensus) a draft vision statement for North Haven.

The Working Group was an 11 member group of North Haven residents consisting of one Select Board member, five year round residents, and five seasonal residents of diverse perspectives, ages, genders, etc. The goal was for members to represent the community's differing viewpoints and demographics.

The Working Group met three times to create a draft statement. Members who could not attend meetings provided input and feedback via text and email that was shared with all members of the group. In late December, the group released the statement to the North Haven community for feedback.

January 2022: Board Approval and Next Steps

In early January, the Working Group reviewed the community feedback on the vision statement. With a majority of respondents supporting the statement and ways to address most other comments through the priority work plans, the vision statement was approved by the Select Board.

In mid-January, the Select Board approved the plans and mechanisms for addressing the priorities as identified in the Findings Report. The final vision statement, priorities, and next steps were shared with the community through online community meetings and the Town website.

With the outcomes of the vision process shared with the community, we are moving into the next phase: addressing top priorities.