TOWN OF FALMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
POLICIES AND ACTIONS

The following draft list of policies and action items support the six pillars to guide the Town in a direction that aligns with community values. Policies and actions are also coordinated with state goals and requirements and address issues from both a local and regional perspective, where appropriate.
The policies and action items are organized by topic area as defined by the Maine Growth Management Act; however, the Town recognizes that many actions relate to multiple topic areas and reflect the values of more than one of the six pillars.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Policy 1	**Protect historic resources to strengthen Falmouth's cultural and historic fabric and promote connection through education and place-making.**
Action a	Continue to protect historic resources through the Town's subdivision ordinance.
Action b	Continue to require the planning board to incorporate review and comment by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission for proposed development on or adjacent to a property that is on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.
Action c	Work with the Maine Historic Preservation Commission to evaluate the benefits of a nomination to National Register of Historic Places for the archaeological site at River Point.
Action d	Work with the Falmouth Historical Society, Maine Historic Preservation Commission, and others to assess the need for a comprehensive survey of Falmouth's historic and archaeological resources.
Action e	Develop interpretive signage to educate the community about the historical and cultural significance of certain sites and landmarks.

WATER RESOURCES

Policy 1	**Protect current and potential drinking water sources.**
Action a	Adopt or amend local land use ordinances as applicable to incorporate stormwater runoff performance standards consistent with the Maine Stormwater Management Law and Maine Stormwater regulations, Maine DEP's allocations for allowable levels of phosphorus in lake/pond watersheds, and Maine Pollution Discharge Elimination System Stormwater Program.
Action b	Maintain, enact, or amend public wellhead and aquifer recharge area protection mechanisms, as necessary.
Policy 2	**Protect water resources in growth areas to support sustainable development in those areas.**
Action a	Consider amending local land use ordinances, as applicable, to incorporate low impact development standards.
Action b	Continue to implement recommendations of the 2021 Falmouth Strategic Watershed Plan and monitor watershed health through the establishment and annual review of watershed health metrics.
Action c	Review water quality protection standards and create a guide of best management practices (BMPs) for construction and maintenance of roads and public properties and require their implementation by contractors, owners, and community officials and employees.

Policy 3	**Cooperate with neighboring communities and regional and local advocacy groups to protect water resources.**
Action a	Conduct a public education campaign to educate landowners on protecting water quality, including providing local contact information at the municipal office for water quality best management practices from resources such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Soil and Water Conservation District, Maine Forest Service, Sebago Clean Waters, and/or Small Woodlot Association of Maine.
Action b	Participate in local and regional efforts to monitor, protect, and, where warranted, improve water quality, including preparing and updating watershed management plans in coordination with neighboring municipalities as appropriate.
Action c	Provide educational materials at appropriate locations regarding aquatic invasive species.
Policy 4	**Continue to promote and implement responsible stormwater management practices to protect the Town's rivers and streams, Highland Lake, and Casco Bay.**
Action a	Evaluate requirements for stormwater capture and consider increasing requirements to mitigate impacts from stormwater runoff.
Action b	Create an educational campaign to support responsible stormwater management.
Action c	Review septic system requirements and revise as needed to enhance provisions to protect water resources.
Action d	Review the standards for expanding wastewater service to new developments requiring public sewer with consideration for system capacity.
Action e	Provide for stormwater and wastewater infrastructure in designated growth areas, where appropriate.

NATURAL RESOURCES	
Policy 1	**Conserve critical natural resources and expand protection of environmentally sensitive areas in rural and undeveloped areas.**
Action a	Ensure that land use ordinances are consistent with applicable state law regarding critical natural areas and work to develop model ordinance language.
Action b	Include as part of the development review process, consideration of pertinent information regarding critical natural areas, including Beginning with Habitat maps.
Action c	Explore ways to encourage landowners to preserve and allow access to undeveloped parcels outside designated growth areas including education on stewardship, guidance on the legal implications of public access, and assistance with invasive species removal.
Action d	Evaluate site assessment requirements, and revise as needed, to help ensure that environmentally sensitive areas are not adversely impacted by new construction.
Action e	Evaluate zoning and consider revisions to help protect areas that are vulnerable to hazards caused by climate change.
Action f	Provide for protections of stream corridors, including Chenery Brook, Mill Creek, Mussel Cove, and Hobbs Brook, where certain high-intensity uses would contribute to pollutants in waterways.
Action g	Collaborate with state testing programs to investigate sludge utilization sites to determine environmental, stormwater runoff, and water resource impacts and mitigation needs.

Action h	Educate the community about the benefits of maintaining undeveloped land and critical natural resources for the health of the environment and Town residents.
Policy 2	**Coordinate with neighboring communities and regional and state agencies to protect shared critical resources.**
Action a	Continue to support and participate in planning, management, and outreach efforts of the Highland Lake Leadership Team (HLLT) to improve and maintain the water quality of Highland Lake.
Action b	Distribute or make available information to those living in or near critical or important natural resources about current use tax programs and applicable local, state, or federal regulations.
Action c	Work with Falmouth Land Trust and other public and private conservation partners to encourage the continued acquisition of open space, especially to improve trail and open space connectivity and to protect critical environmental areas.

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY	
Policy 1	**Improve and enhance forests on Town-owned open spaces and tree canopy on growth area corridors.**
Action a	Complete a street tree inventory within growth areas.
Action b	Continue to update forest management and property management plans for Town forests and conservation lands as needed, considering the role of habitat diversity and leveraging the existing relationship with the Falmouth Land Trust.
Action c	Identify key invasive species that threaten Falmouth's environment and develop strategies for stopping their spread and/or removing them.
Action d	Continue to update the Town's inventory of significant or historic trees.
Policy 2	**Protect farms and prime farmland for agricultural use and for scenic, recreational, cultural, historical, and economic value to the community.**
Action a	Encourage the use of agricultural conservation easements.
Action b	Consider using transfer of development rights (TDR) in certain growth areas in exchange for purchase of agricultural easements.
Action c	Revise and update the conservation subdivision definition and process to maintain areas with prime farmland soils as open space or for agricultural use to the greatest extent practicable.
Action d	Consult with the Maine Forest Service and Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District in developing or revising land use regulations pertaining to agricultural and forest management practices.
Action e	Provide educational resources and encourage owners of productive farm and forest land to enroll in the current use taxation programs.
Action f	Identify ways to include local agriculture operations in future economic development efforts, including promoting programs and events to support the economic viability of local farms.

MARINE RESOURCES	
Policy 1	**Foster water-dependent land uses and balance them with other complementary land uses.**
Action a	Continue to support management of waterfront land and the efforts of the Land Management and Acquisition Committee with consideration for climate resiliency, habitat protection, and public access to the waterfront.

Action b	Support and strengthen the local fishing community and working waterfront.
Policy 2	**Maintain and, where warranted, improve harbor management and facilities.**
Action a	Seek funding for and implement recommendations of the Town Landing Resiliency Study.
Action b	Continue to enforce the Coastal Waters Ordinance and support efforts of the Harbor/Waterfront Committee, Harbormaster, and Marine Unit to maintain a safe and accessible facility.
Action c	Continue to monitor and address capacity issues of harbor facilities including use of commercial floats, small craft storage, mooring access, and vehicle parking.
Policy 3	**Protect, maintain and improve marine habitat, water quality, and access to the Town's marine resources for all appropriate uses including fishing, recreation, and tourism.**
Action a	Work with local property owners, Falmouth Land Trust, and others to maintain and expand major points of access to coastal waters, especially along public ways and in public parks.
Action b	Continue to coordinate with Maine DEP and Maine DMR on water quality monitoring and assessment, marine habitat protection, and monitoring and enforcement of commercial and recreational fishing regulations.
Action c	Support efforts of the Shellfish Conservation Committee to protect the Town's shellfish resources.
Action d	Implement restoration and regenerative habitat projects to reestablish lost/impacted habitat in coordination with coastal resiliency efforts.

ECONOMY	
Policy 1	**Coordinate with regional development corporations and surrounding towns as necessary to support desired economic development.**
Action a	Participate in applicable regional intiatives, including attracting amenity businesses (e.g., restaurants, hair salons, retail shops) to meet the needs of residents.
Action b	Create opportunities for sharing across learning environments in the region, including secondary schools, colleges, research institutions, and other organizations, and develop partnerships for workforce development.
Policy 2	**Attract and retain businesses in village centers to increase the Town's tax base, provide jobs, and support quality of life by increasing the diversity of amenities and services available to residents and visitors of all ages.**
Action a	Evaluate the benefit of a resident committee to support economic growth and improve the economic climate in Falmouth.
Action b	Work with the Chamber of Commerce to support and partner with businesses through programs and events and promote the Town as a place to do business by actively marketing Falmouth to the Maine business and real estate community.
Action c	Update the Town's economic development strategy to define goals.

HOUSING	
Policy 1	**Encourage a variety of housing types and increased density in designated growth areas.**
Action a	Provide guidance on creating accessory dwelling units to support homeowners through the process, including examples of plans that comply with Town requirements.

Action b	Review zoning regulations, and revise as needed, to further remove barriers for homeowners to create ADUs.
Action c	Revise zoning to allow residential development in commercial districts and to encourage a variety of housing types in growth areas, including low-rise apartments, townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, cottage courts, etc.
Policy 2	**Encourage development that increases livability for people of all ages and abilities.**
Action a	Investigate initiatives and funding opportunities that support aging in place and enhance livability for people of all ages.
Action b	Encourage the application of universal design practices and consider standards for accessible or adaptable design for new residential development to increase housing accessibility for people of all ages and abilities.
Action c	Encourage housing development that is walkable to transit locations and amenities like parks, healthcare, and shopping options.
Policy 3	**Allow and support the development of affordable and workforce housing within the Town's growth areas.**
Action a	Investigate opportunities to reduce development costs by using vacant and underused public land for affordable housing development.
Action b	Implement incentives for the development of affordable or workforce housing units, such as density bonuses, reduced parking requirements, reduced/waived fees, affordable housing development impact fee, use of Affordable Housing Tax Increment Financing, and use of Town-owned land for development.
Action c	Create housing opportunities targeted to Town staff and community members.
Action d	Support regional efforts to address affordable and workforce housing, including working toward the Metro Regional Coalition's goal to expand housing choices.

RECREATION	
Policy 1	**Continue to invest in and maintain the Town's recreational facilities.**
Action a	Support the work of the Parks and Community Programs Advisory Committee to identify recreation needs and develop strategies to meet future needs.
Action b	Make improvements to enhance safety, accessibility, and usability to Town recreation facilities in coordination with planned upgrades and improvements with a focus on creating more visitor-friendly spaces, multi-generational spaces, and ADA accessible trails, parks, and playgrounds.
Action c	Overlay sports fields/parks upgrades with flood mitigation infrastructure and other multi-benefit project opportunities (pollinators, education, resiliency, etc.).
Action d	Support and explore private funding initiatives to upgrade or expand recreational facilities, such as a community pool or concession stand and announcer's box at Community Park.
Policy 2	**Maintain the Town's public access to the waterfront and expand opportunities for waterfront recreation.**
Action a	Consider opportunities for small craft storage (e.g., kayaks, dinghies, paddle boards, etc.) at Town Landing.
Action b	Identify other areas for water access and investigate with appropriate Town committees.

TRANSPORTATION	
Policy 1	**Improve safety and efficiency of the transportation system for all types of users.**
Action a	Establish Complete Streets design guidelines for street improvements in village centers and other areas with multimodal activity.
Action b	Develop a traffic calming toolbox and implement traffic calming and speed reduction measures on local roadways, especially main arterials into and through town.
Action c	Limit new curb cuts within village centers and consolidate or reduce curb cuts where possible for new development and redevelopment projects.
Action d	Prioritize building in safe pedestrian and bicycle crossings into new and redesigned intersections along main arterials.
Action e	Investigate new trends in transportation, including electric bikes and micromobility options, and explore strategies and amenities to support their use.
Action f	Maintain, enact or amend local ordinances as appropriate to address or avoid conflicts with: a. Policy objectives of the Sensible Transportation Policy Act (23 M.R.S.A. §73); b. State access management regulations pursuant to 23 M.R.S.A. §704; and c. State traffic permitting regulations for large developments pursuant to 23 M.R.S.A. §704-A.
Policy 2	**Promote fiscal prudence by maximizing the efficiency of the state or state-aid highway network and leveraging state and federal funding and municipal financing tools to fund infrastructure improvements, transportation projects, and public facilities.**
Action a	Continue to partner with Maine DOT to fund transportation improvements that support multimodal transportation on the Town's major corridors.
Action b	Seek state and federal grant funding for innovative public infrastructure projects, including rail trails.
Policy 3	**Improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and safety with a focus on connecting existing public spaces and amenities, to enhance livability and public health.**
Action a	Update the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan to evaluate infrastructure and determine the level of infrastructure required (e.g., shared-use lanes, protected bike lanes, multi-use paths, signage).
Action b	Consider establishing a Bicycle-Pedestrian Planning Committee to make recommendations regarding non-motor vehicle transportation.
Action c	Work with public and private partners and property owners to extend and maintain a network of trails and establish permanent easements on properties to allow for connection of existing local and regional trail networks.
Action d	Coordinate with Falmouth Schools to expand connections between campus and surrounding neighborhoods and parks, including a possible connection to Community Park.
Action e	Prioritize expanding the Town's sidewalk network with a focus on connecting public facilities, schools, and parks and protecting pedestrians on main arterials and within designated growth areas.
Action f	Explore increased bicycle infrastructure in new commercial, mixed use, and multi-family residential development.

Action g	Investigate alternative bicycle and pedestrian path construction types like boardwalks, pervious pavement, or other technologies in appropriate settings where water quality is a concern.
Policy 4	**Support efforts for regional coordination on transportation and connectivity to enhance safety, efficiency, and optimal use of the transportation system.**
Action a	Continue to update a prioritized improvement, maintenance, and repair plan for Falmouth's transportation network.
Action b	Work with GPCOG to improve regional transportation efficiency.
Action c	Identify opportunities for enhanced connectivity between neighboring communities, including coordination with the Town of Cumberland on improvements to Route 1, Route 100, and Route 88 and continuing to implement the recommendations of the North of Portland Route One Complete Streets Corridor Plan.
Action d	Coordinate with MDOT on plans for access management to I-95, I-295, and the Falmouth Spur.
Action e	Support efforts to expand METRO transit service, including service enhancements to and within growth corridors.
Action f	Improve connections to regional transportation and consider establishing a ride share program.
Action g	Consider the potential for a Downeaster train station at West Falmouth Shopping Center.
Action h	Coordinate with communities along the St. Lawrence and Atlantic rail line to explore building out a trail until rail.

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND COMMUNITY SERVICES	
Policy 1	**Review the anticipated staffing and facility needs for police, fire, emergency services and other public facilities and services to continue to efficiently provide a high level of service to all residents.**
Action a	Define "level of service" for municipal functional area, to establish a benchmark for service and allow for assessment of anticipated need.
Action b	Identify any capital improvements needed to maintain or upgrade public services and evaluate the need for additional staffing to accommodate the community's anticipated growth and changing demographics.
Action c	Consider cost-saving opportunities for regional collaboration to share resources, knowledge, and to provide services.
Action d	Support efforts for recruiting, retention, and training for Town emergency services and other Town staff to help ensure adequate staffing and continued high level of service.
Action e	Evaluate the accessibility of Town facilities and services and continue to make accessibility improvements for people of all ages and abilities.
Policy 2	**Support continued transition to carbon neutral energy sources for public services and facilities.**
Action a	Conduct an energy audit and continue to monitor and report on energy use at Town facilities to optimize efficiency through implementation of upgrades where appropriate to minimize energy cost and consumption.
Action b	Continue to develop public EV charging infrastructure where appropriate and encourage private development of EV charging infrastructure.
Action c	Continue to transition to zero-emission fleet vehicles.

Policy 3	**Support maintenance of and investment in Town facilities, infrastructure, and services to improve resiliency and environmental protection and to support economic growth in a fiscally responsible manner.**
Action a	Invest in infrastructure that is climate resilient.
Action b	Identify and plan for necessary upgrades to Town buildings and facilities and for water, wastewater, and transportation infrastructure, as community needs change.
Action c	Update the Town's Emergency Operations Plan to reflect the current personnel, resources, and potential hazards.
Action d	Invest in infrastructure improvements and beautification to support business growth and enjoyment of public spaces in village centers by incorporating playgrounds, bicycle storage and access, pedestrian lighting, sidewalks, and street furniture.
Action e	Explore grants available to assist in the funding of capital investments within the community and seek funding especially for the installation of renewable infrastructure and energy efficiency upgrades.
Policy 4	**Create gathering spaces and program opportunities that promote a sense of community through community interaction and learning.**
Action a	Identify Town-owned parcels that could be considered for community uses (such as community gardens, playgrounds, dog parks, or for passive recreation) and develop those that have potential in a fiscally responsible manner.
Action b	Identify opportunities for an outdoor Town green or community gathering space suitable for both larger events and daily interactions among residents to serve as an anchor for a village center.
Action c	Support the development of a community center or enhancement of the existing community center to support multi-generational programming needs and foster intergenerational connections.
Action d	Support the school district in developing a master plan, including establishing the school campus as a community-wide facility with resources and programs for all community members.
Action e	Continue to support the Parks and Recreation Department, Falmouth Public Library, Falmouth Land Trust, and other Town departments in programming and facility needs.
Policy 5	**Continue to support opportunities for community engagement.**
Action a	Investigate the need and demand for expanded programming for community members of all ages and opportunities for intergenerational connectivity.
Action b	Work with local businesses and community organizations to host seasonal events and support programming that provide social and cultural opportunities for the community and encourage public-private collaborations regarding community spaces and programs.
Action c	Continue to improve and expand Town-wide communication and use of technology to increase awareness of opportunities for community engagement and evaluate the effectiveness of current communication strategies.
Action d	Facilitate partnerships with nonprofit organizations to increase involvement, provide learning opportunities for young people, and support cross cultural engagement.

FISCAL CAPACITY	
Policy 1	**Finance existing and future facilities and services in a cost-effective manner that supports growth and development in identified growth areas.**
Action a	Explore opportunities to work with neighboring communities to plan for and finance shared or adjacent capital investments to increase cost savings and efficiencies.
Action b	Provide for adequate public facilities primarily in existing growth areas in proximity to existing infrastructure, transportation systems, housing, and other amenities.
Action c	Direct development to growth areas where there are existing utilities and infrastructure.
Action d	Continue to evaluate sewer connection charges to ensure that fees are scaled consistent with the cost of system maintenance and improvements.
Action e	Limit extensions of sewer and water service and coordinate any extensions with the Future Land Use Plan.
Action f	Continue to seek alternate funding sources to supplement Town revenues and reduce dependence on property tax revenue for annual operating and capital expenses, such as impact fees and public/private partnerships.
Policy 2	**Promote development that is fiscally responsible.**
Action a	Incorporate fiscal impact analysis into the development review process to help the Town in making fiscally responsible development decisions that align with the Town's goals.
Action b	Consider a public/private partnership to develop a master plan for a village center development that will support the community's goals and benefit the Town's fiscal capacity.
Action c	Evaluate the Town's current use of tax increment financing (TIF) districts to encourage development in commercial growth areas and finance infrastructure improvements that support walkability and the development of village centers.

SUSTAINABILITY	
Policy 1	**Encourage sustainable development and building practices.**
Action a	Investigate additional energy standards beyond the minimum required standards of the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code.
Action b	Provide guidance, support, and incentives to builders interested in adopting sustainable development practices, including the use of alternative building materials and technologies for new and existing buildings and paved surfaces.
Action c	Develop green infrastructure design guidelines for new development and public infrastructure projects.
Action d	Review current open and public space requirements for developments to ensure that requirements result in quality open and public space for the community.
Action e	Review requirements for designing for flood levels and consider increasing floodplain building elevation standards and implementing other climate resiliency standards to minimize impacts to property as a result of climate change and sea level rise.
Policy 2	**Support residents in creating a more sustainable and resilient community.**

Action a	Develop a comprehensive education plan in consultation with the Falmouth Land Trust, homeowners' associations, and other partners, that provides residents materials on local issues, such as guidance on energy and water saving measures and subsidies, natural hazard preparedness, and strategies to increase resiliency.
Action b	Promote Town initiatives like the composting program and monthly challenges like No-Mow-May, to include Town facilities and operations.
Action c	Review current recycling initiatives and determine best practices for future solid waste diversion.
Action d	Provide educational support for removing invasive species on private property.
Action e	Implement the policies established in Falmouth's 2023 Climate Action Plan (CAP) and establish metrics and tools to monitor progress on CAP initiatives.
Action f	Work with neighboring municipalities and regional organizations on climate resiliency initiatives.
Action g	Enhance the online dashboard of the Town's energy efficiency metrics to include climate action progress and other energy usage to build awareness, foster transparency, and provide data that can be used for educational initiatives.

FUTURE LAND USE	
Policy 1	**Protect the physical character of developed residential neighborhoods.**
Action a	Review zoning standards to ensure that new development is consistent with and minimizes impacts (e.g., visual, traffic, noise) to established residential neighborhoods within and outside growth areas.
Action b	Require a tree preservation plan for new developments to prevent unnecessary clear-cutting of large areas of open space.
Action c	Revise site design standards for residential development to minimize the impact of new and infill development on existing neighborhoods through landscaping, screening, building orientation, buffer areas, lighting, and other requirements.
Policy 2	**Protect the physical character of rural and undeveloped areas.**
Action a	Consider revising the rate of growth ordinance to further limit new development outside of designated growth areas and direct growth to designated growth areas.
Action b	Revise zoning to prioritize existing low-density development patterns in the Farm and Forest District and direct growth to designated growth areas.
Action c	Limit non-residential development in rural areas to natural resource-based businesses and services, agricultural uses, nature tourism/outdoor recreation businesses, farmers' markets, and home occupations.
Action d	Review and revise, as needed, street lighting requirements to minimize light pollution.
Policy 3	**Revise the Town's land use and zoning regulations to direct growth to designated growth areas and to support the type of development and uses that will enhance village centers.**
Action a	Allow for and encourage shared parking in commercial areas and consider implementing flexible parking requirements to be based on availability of shared parking, access to transit, and other factors.
Action b	Update building orientation and active building frontage requirements to support active streets.
Action c	Allow for higher density development in strategically designated areas where density will support a vibrant village center by enhancing walkability and minimizing vehicle trips.

Action d	Research establishing a maximum building footprint and further limiting the size of commercial tenant spaces for new buildings in village centers.
Action e	Revise design standards for mixed-use and commercial areas to provide guidance on style, scale, site design, landscaping, connectivity, lighting, and public amenities.
Action f	Work with developers and property owners to encourage redevelopment of existing underutilized commercial parcels to enhance the village character and livability and consider performance incentives that would encourage property owners to redevelop underutilized properties.
Action g	Require a master plan for larger parcels where development is proposed.
Action h	Conduct an analysis of connectivity as a part of site plan review for development in village centers to help ensure that development does not adversely impact pedestrian, cyclist, public transportation, or vehicular traffic patterns and safety.
Policy 4	**Revise the Town's site design requirements to promote walkability and vibrant village centers.**
Action a	Establish minimum sidewalk widths in village center districts.
Action b	Require commercial uses on first floor of mixed-use buildings where applicable, and promote outdoor dining and retail uses that enliven sidewalks and storefronts.
Action c	Incorporate review of community amenities and access to amenities, such as playgrounds, bicycle storage and access, pedestrian lighting, sidewalks, and street furniture, in the site plan review process.
Action d	Revise zoning to allow for limited neighborhood retail uses (cafes, small markets, bookstore, hardware store) within existing residential neighborhoods at key intersections or along suitable corridors.
Action e	Review and revise off-street parking requirements to support a more walkable environment and to reduce impervious surface areas and encourage developers to build on-street parking where appropriate.