

**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** City Council

**From:** Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC)  
Kathleen Egan, Chair  
Eli Rubin, Community Planner  
Milan Nevajda, Planning Director

**CC:** Scott Morelli, City Manager  
Josh Reny, Assistant City Manager

**Date:** February 5, 2025

**Re:** **2024 Annual Report for the Comprehensive Plan Committee**



Through 2024 the Comprehensive Plan Committee continued updating the City's 2012 Comprehensive Plan. The committee began its work in the spring of 2021 with a [comprehensive audit of the 2012 plan](#). Over the past 3 years the committee has engaged with the community through public events and online surveys to receive thousands of suggestions that helped develop the [Vision and Goals](#) which was sent to Council on [February 20, 2024](#), and the potential strategies to accomplish that vision and goals.

## PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The Committee's work in 2024 focused on four areas of the Comprehensive Plan:

### KEY POLICY QUESTIONS

The Committee selected six broad policy questions to seek community feedback on questions related to transportation, city services, waterfront development, economic development and housing. The purpose of this feedback was to help guide the committee in strategy development that best accomplishes the community Vision and Goals. Over 300 answers were



submitted to the policy questions both online and during in-person events and are summarized [here](#).

## COASTAL RESILIENCE

The City contracted GPCOG to perform an assessment of the city’s waterfront assets at risk from coastal flooding. The analysis combined different tidal and storm modeling to explore where and how often properties and infrastructure in South Portland may be impacted by increased coastal flooding within 25 to 75 years.

[Two public events](#) and a [new website](#) were developed to engage in conversations about future flooding hazards in the City’s coastal areas. A Coastal Resilience Policy Framework was developed to categorize the types of policies the city could pursue, and scenarios were provided to exemplify specific strategies and their impacts. The PDF of the full booklet of examples can be found [here](#) and an excerpt is pictured below.

### Coastal Resilience Policy Framework

**Avoid:** Avoid new development in areas most vulnerable to flooding

**Accommodate:** Adopt coping strategies that enable continued human habitation in areas with periodic flooding

**Protect:** Protect land and buildings from erosion and flooding with new infrastructure

**Retreat:** Move people and existing structures in areas most vulnerable to flooding out of harm’s way, allowing coastal habitats to migrate naturally as the sea rises.

A total of 521 comments were collected (in person and online) in response to questions about community member’s preference or opposition to each policy category in different places along the coast.

# ACCOMMODATE

Instead of preventing tidal inundation, erosion, and flooding, coping strategies are developed that enable continued human habitation with periodic flooding.



**STRATEGY**  
**Wave Attenuation**



*Wave attenuation and sand accretion*

<b>COST</b>	No Cost	Low (\$)	Medium (\$\$)	High (\$\$\$)	Variable
<b>MAINTENANCE</b>	None	Low	Medium	High	Variable
<b>LIFESPAN</b>	Short (<5 years)	Medium (5-25 years)	Long (>25 years)	Permanent	
<b>SCALE</b>	Site	Neighborhood	Community	Regional	

**STRATEGY TYPE**  


**ADDRESSES RISK OF COASTAL HAZARDS**  


**DESCRIPTION:** Install infrastructure along the coastline to reduce wave energy and mitigate erosion. Examples include:  

- Implementing a low-elevation structure in the intertidal zone parallel to shore (all). The area landward of the sill is filled with sand and may be planted with salt marsh grasses to stabilize sediment.
- Installing a Wave Attenuation Device anchored to the ocean bottom, which sits both above and below the water, or installed in the intertidal zone to reduce wave energy reaching the shoreline.

**ADVANTAGES:**

- Reduces wave force and height thus reducing storm surge, flooding, and erosion. Slows inland water transfer.
- Stabilizes sediments and creates sheltered areas that can support wetlands or submerged aquatic vegetation growth.
- Can provide habitat and increase habitat complexity.
- Creates hard structure for non-mobile marine life.
- Can modulate wave action, reducing damage to harbor areas including moored boats and marine infrastructure as well as inland properties.

**DISADVANTAGES:**

- May create a navigational hazard.
- Change from existing habitat type could have negative impacts to existing resources and degrade habitat by fragmentation and other means.
- Can have negative impacts to adjacent properties from limited redirected wave energy and erosion.

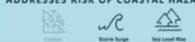
**STRATEGY**  
**New Services and Equipment**



*Warning beach closure sign. Photo credit: Portland Press Herald*

<b>COST</b>	No Cost	Low (\$)	Medium (\$\$)	High (\$\$\$)	Variable
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**STRATEGY TYPE**  


**ADDRESSES RISK OF COASTAL HAZARDS**  


**DESCRIPTION:** New services and equipment to protect residents and businesses in vulnerable areas such as enhanced emergency communications, road closure equipment and procedures, debris clean up, and public utility flood proofing.

**ADVANTAGES:**

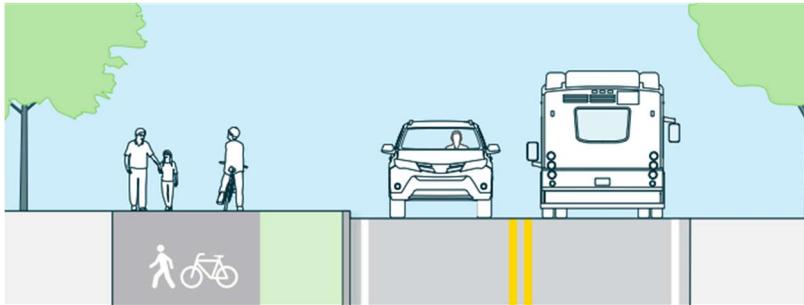
- Enhances community safety during reoccurring flood events.
- Allows continued habitation in vulnerable areas.
- Streamlines road/infrastructure recovery from flooding.

**DISADVANTAGES:**

- Increases municipal responsibility and associated cost with flood response.
- Allows continued habitation in vulnerable areas.
- Increased annual/budgetary spending likely not fundable through grants.

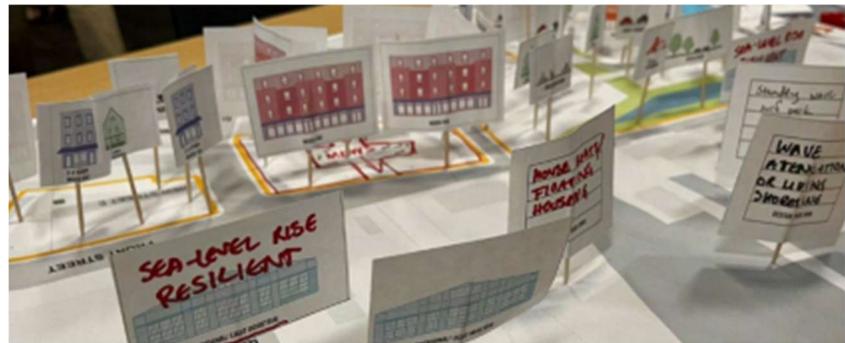
## COMMUNITY DESIGN

The Committee hosted two community design charrette in 2024. Building off of the market and infrastructure analysis of Cash Corner and Coastal Ferry Village from 2023, the design charrettes presented an opportunity for community members to further the discussion of redevelopment ideas in those areas.



The Cash Corner charrette [presentation](#) reviewed the history of the Crosstown Connector proposal and the City's new [Street Design Manual](#) to engage participants in planning the uses and design of the Crosstown Connector.

The Coastal Ferry Village charrette [presentation](#) and [materials](#) fostered a [deep community dialogue](#) about the challenges facing this neighborhood within 25-75 years.



## COMMUNITY GOALS AND STRATEGIES



In the fall, the Committee began discussing and reviewing strategies and policies for achieving the Committee's previously developed [Community Goals](#). The Comprehensive Plan will include both broad city-wide goals and strategies as well as specific place based guidance in certain Key Land Use Policy Areas (KLUPAs). The KLUPA policies are tailored to place, but will still be in alignment with the broader vision and goals of the Comprehensive Plan. This

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preliminary [map](#) shows the draft KLUPAs. The current working drafts of the City-wide policies and KLUPAs can be found [here](#).

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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2024 included the following events:

- 13 CPC Meetings - Agendas, minutes, and meeting materials can be found on [BoardDocs](#). Recordings of the meetings can be found on the [SPC-TV archive](#).
- 2 Waterfront Resilience Events
- 2 Comp Plan Open Houses
- 5 District Community Conversation
- 2 Community Design Charrette
- Key Policy Questions Online Survey
- Waterfront Resilience Online Survey
- Waterfront Resilience Website



Community members have also been engaging directly with the committee through public comment during the committee's meetings and submitted online.

## NEXT STEPS

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The Committee will continue drafting the Comprehensive Plan through most of 2025 before presenting the draft plan to City Council for final review and approval. The dedicated Comp Plan website ([southportland2040.com](https://southportland2040.com)) continues to be updated with completed materials and engagement opportunities.