

# TOWN OF KENNEBUNKPORT

## 2020 Sustainability and Coastal Resilience Assessment

As a quaint New England town with abundant natural resources and rich cultural heritage, Kennebunkport strives to foster a sustainable, resilient community for its residents, visitors, and ecosystems. In 2019, Kennebunkport joined a coalition of six towns in coastal York County to create the Regional Sustainability and Resilience Program. The program aims to foster more sustainable and resilient communities in coastal York County by leveraging regional collaboration to enhance the effectiveness of local government action. To identify and direct sustainability and resilience efforts, the program is establishing a baseline of sustainability and resilience efforts and needs in individual communities and the coastal York Country region. Kennebunkport is making climate change a key consideration in the Comprehensive Plan update, ensuring that sustainability and resilience will be priorities in future municipal initiatives.

Using the SMPDC Sustainability Progress Framework (SPF), Kennebunkport was evaluated on many strategies within twelve sustainability and resilience categories. Strategies were grouped into 22 indicators, shown below. Kennebunkport's status on each progress indicator ranges from "Not Yet Considered" to "Excelling". Explanations for each indicator and suggested next steps are detailed on the following pages.

CATEGORY	INDICATOR	STATUS
Climate	Establish a GHG emissions inventory, target, and plan	Getting Started
	Climate change vulnerability assessment	Making Progress
Coastal Hazards	Integrate coastal risk reduction measures in zoning and regulations	Making Progress
	Incorporate future climatic conditions into land use requirements and municipal policies	Getting Started
Economic Development	Promote and support sustainability and resiliency actions for local businesses	Getting Started
	Reduce municipal fossil fuel consumption and implement municipal energy efficiency measures	Getting started
Energy	Promote energy efficiency for residents and businesses	Getting Started
	Support development of and access to renewable energy	Interested
Land Ecosystems	Promote and practice environmentally-friendly and sustainable landscape approaches	Making Progress
Leadership	Participate as an active member of a national/regional sustainability and resilience network	Almost there
	Promote and facilitate transit systems as well as bicycle and pedestrian networks	Getting started
Mobility	Adopt a complete streets policy	Not Yet Considered
	Support the electrification of the transportation system, leading by example with the municipal fleet	Interested
Municipal Operations	Formally adopt sustainability and resilience goals, policies, and strategies	Making Progress
	Establish local financing strategies for sustainability and resilience activities	Interested
	Incorporate sustainability and resilience criteria in municipal expenditure policies	Interested
Sustainable Communities	Connect residents to resources and services that support well being and enhance community resilience	Making Progress
	Actively engage community members in local climate, sustainability, and resilience issues	Making progress
Sustainable Development	Facilitate compact, mixed-use development that reduces environmental impacts and increases housing affordability	Getting started
Waste & Recycling	Deliver sustainable and affordable waste management services	Getting Started
Water	Include Low Impact Development in performance and design standards	Interested
	Establish and enforce progressive watershed protection measures	Getting Started

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**Climate:** Kennebunkport has started prioritizing climate change action in recent years. A municipal greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory was completed in 2019 with the help of a UNH Sustainability Fellow, and Kennebunkport is incorporating climate change impacts throughout all chapters of the new Comprehensive Plan. The Board of Selectmen approved town climate change goals and priorities in 2020. The Town is also partnering with the Kennebunkport Climate Initiative to engage students on climate action and to advance climate change dialogue and planning.

**NEXT STEPS:**

- Standardize the municipal GHG inventory data collection process by tracking building energy consumption (*i.e.* with EnergyStar Portfolio Manager or through the finance department).
- Measure and monitor GHG emissions for a community-wide GHG inventory.
- Conduct a climate change vulnerability assessment to evaluate non-coastal vulnerabilities.
- Develop a Climate Action Plan with achievable actions to reduce community emissions and that incorporates climate adaptation measures.

**Coastal Hazards:** Evaluating and adapting to the impacts of coastal hazards are priorities for Kennebunkport. The Town's Dock Square area and beachfront neighborhoods already experience flooding and shoreline erosion issues. Kennebunkport has been working to address its risk to flooding from sea level rise, storm surge and extreme weather. The Town is elevating some of its roadways to reduce flooding and is participating in an EDA grant-funded project assessing and planning for the economic and social vulnerabilities associated with sea level rise and coastal flood events. Kennebunkport also had advanced flood modeling completed by Ransom Engineering.

**NEXT STEPS:**

- Include updated sea level rise projections, coastal erosion rates, and goals to address those hazards in the Town's Comprehensive Plan in order to enable policies and land use measures that protect people, property, and places.
- Adopt a policy that limits or prohibits municipal funds being used for development in existing and potential future flood hazard areas, unless expressly for adaptation, mitigation, or resilience measures.
- Consider establishing a coastal hazard overlay zoning district and accompanying development standards to ensure new and redevelopment in areas vulnerable to storm surge and future sea level rise are resilient.

**Economic Development:** Kennebunkport participated in a 2016-2018 project through the Wells Reserve that focused business resilience with the Dock Square businesses.

**NEXT STEPS:**

- Engage the business community on climate change and resiliency issues, potentially as part of SMPDC's EDA grant-funded project on coastal economic resilience.
- Support the establishment of a regional business sustainability award or recognition program.

**Energy:** Kennebunkport has begun exploring municipal energy efficiency measures, such as LED lighting upgrades, attic insulation, and energy efficient technology in new buildings. The town is also exploring opportunities to participate in Maine's Net Energy Billing Program to support solar development. Kennebunkport has not yet undertaken any efforts to promote energy efficiency for residents and businesses. Kennebunkport has started to support the development of renewable energy, passing a Property Assessed Clean Energy ordinance and installing solar panels on the fire station roof.

**NEXT STEPS:**

- Complete the streetlight LED conversion project.
- Continue exploring options for procuring solar electricity for municipal operations, including on and off-site options.
- Work with non-profit partners to connect residents and businesses to energy efficiency resources and educate the community about renewable energy options.
- Adopt a renewable energy ordinance prescribing the permitting, standards, and allowable use of renewable energy systems.



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**Land Ecosystems:** Kennebunkport's Conservation Commission and Shade Tree Committee lead efforts to promote sustainable, environmentally-friendly landscaping in the Town. The Shade Tree Committee actively works to plant trees in locations where they make a direct, positive impact on the community. The Dept. of Public Works is pursuing forest management plans for town owned lands to ensure climate resilience.

**NEXT STEPS:**

- Consider adapting the subdivision and development codes to encourage sustainable landscaping in the community.
- Encourage community-wide use of integrated pest management strategies through a pesticide policy and/or community education programs.
- Work through the Conservation Commission, Shade Tree Committee and partnerships with local non-profit organizations to educate the community about the value of trees, native plants, and sustainable landscaping.

**Leadership:** Kennebunkport does not currently have a committee that leads sustainability and resilience efforts in town. Kennebunkport is a member of ICLEI: Local Governments for Sustainability.

**NEXT STEPS:**

- Designate a town committee and/or staff members to lead municipal sustainability and resilience efforts.
- Actively participate in regional/state networks, such as by reporting local data to advance national and international sustainability efforts.
- Share information about municipal leadership in sustainability and resilience broadly in the community and externally.

**Mobility:** While Kennebunkport has no formal Bike and Pedestrian committee, the Department of Public Works strives to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety and infrastructure. Bike and pedestrian planning was recommended in the 2012 Comprehensive Plan, but has not yet taken place. Kennebunkport does not have a Complete Streets policy, but does try to incorporate complete street principles in road redesigns. Kennebunkport is exploring opportunities for both EV fleet vehicles and public EV charging stations.

**NEXT STEPS:**

- Identify gaps in the bike and pedestrian networks and create a Bike and Pedestrian Plan to implement strategies for improving connectivity and safety.
- Consider establishing a Complete Streets Policy.
- Pursue public EV charging station installation and collaborate with businesses to develop EV infrastructure.
- Establish a fleet purchasing policy to prioritize electric vehicles and continue exploring EV fleet opportunities.

**Municipal Operations:** As part of the Comprehensive Plan update, Kennebunkport is incorporating climate change impacts throughout the plan. Kennebunkport does not have regular financing strategies in place for sustainability and resilience activities. Sustainability and resilience criteria are not incorporated into Kennebunkport's municipal expenditure policies.

**NEXT STEPS:**

- Formalize climate change, sustainability, and/or resilience goals and plans for the Town.
- Explore strategies such as PPAs, leases, and EPSCs to finance renewable energy systems and energy efficiency projects for municipal buildings.
- Consider incorporating sustainability and resilience as themes in the Comprehensive Plan update.
- Budget and plan for long-term energy efficiency equipment upgrades.



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**Sustainable Communities:** Kennebunkport's Public Health Dept. services connects residents to vital community services that enhance wellbeing and promote community resilience. There is currently no farmers's market or community garden in Kennebunkport that would enhance access to local foods. Kennebunkport frequently partners with Kennebunkport Conservation Trust and the Kennebunkport Climate Initiative to host education and outreach events on sustainability, resilience, and climate change for community members.

### NEXT STEPS:

- Apply emergency management lessons from Covid-19 pandemic to increase community preparedness and resilience.
- Host events educating the public about climate change and local impacts and how to reduce GHG emissions.
- Support the development of community gardens and increased access to local foods.
- Develop online materials for the community about sustainability initiatives and other allied organizations and government agencies.

**Sustainable Development:** Kennebunkport is interested in ways to facilitate compact, mixed-use development that reduces environmental impacts and increases housing affordability. Open space preservation is a requirement of the subdivision regulations. Preserving and acquiring green space/open space was identified as a priority in the 2012 Comprehensive plan, as was promoting housing affordability. Kennebunkport has recently completed a Village Parcel master plan that recommends compact, affordable development on a parcel of land recently purchased by the municipality.

### NEXT STEPS:

- Consider revising and/or developing codes to promote sustainable building and site practices.
- Explore incentives for green building in new construction and re-construction.
- Identify sustainable development priorities in the Comprehensive Plan update.
- Ensure that compact, affordable development is incorporated into the Village Parcel project.

**Waste & Recycling:** Kennebunkport's waste and recycling efforts are advised by the Solid Waste Committee, which also leads outreach and education efforts. The committee led a successful lobster trap compost bin program promoting residential composting. After disbanding curbside recycling due to escalating costs, Kennebunkport is re-starting a curbside recycling program in 2021. Kennebunkport partners with Kennebunk to offer disposal and recycling for items at the Kennebunk transfer station.

### NEXT STEPS:

- Provide recycling and composting infrastructure at public places.
- Continue to explore opportunities for offering composting services for residents and businesses.
- Continue to develop partnerships with the schools to promote education about consumption and waste.
- Consider a mandatory recycling ordinance that applies to single and multifamily residences and businesses.

**Water:** Kennebunkport protects water quality by supporting watershed conservation efforts, protective zoning for the Branch Brook Aquifer, and participation on the 2020 regional Kennebunk River Watershed Management project. Most properties are served by public water. The Town limits the use of pesticides and fertilizers on municipal property.

### NEXT STEPS:

- Implement recommendations of the Kennebunk River Watershed Management Plan.
- Enhance existing land use regulations to require the use of Low Impact Development (LID) for stormwater management for all development and redevelopment projects, and develop associated performance standards and stormwater management criteria.
- Adopt a policy that all municipal development projects will utilize LID techniques and green infrastructure.
- Adopt a septic inspection and pump out ordinance to ensure proper functioning of systems and minimize potential detrimental impacts to water quality and the environment.
- Incorporate wetland impact assessment requirement in land use requirements and enact and enforce policies that preserve, protect, and restore wetlands, including those smaller than the 10-acre threshold used for shoreland zoning.