

Vision Statement

(Public Hearing Draft)

The Vision Statement for this Comprehensive Plan has been developed based on input from property owners and other Westport Island stakeholders. In a recent public opinion survey, and in Visioning workshops held as part of this comprehensive plan update, Island stakeholders shared their ideas for Westport Island for the next 10 to 20 years. The consensus is clear; most people like the town as it is, and want to preserve its essential character and abundant natural resources. The town overwhelmingly wishes to **preserve Westport Island's assets and manage any future changes** while **maintaining the fundamental character of the Island**, which its residents so highly value.

Westport Island is a beautiful, rural, low key island community that retains and protects its special places and character. Being "off the beaten path," Westport Island offers a quiet, yet supportive community, where residents can live safely and free of the burdens of more urban communities. We value our natural resources, our open space, wetlands and shorefront. We will be guided in the future by the desire to protect and preserve the essential character of our town, while balancing needed steps that will provide amenities to improve the quality of life. The essence of this vision for Westport Island is to keep pace with our changing times without altering the essential character of our town.

The following reflects the ways in which this overall vision will guide the town's response to challenges and opportunities over the next decade and beyond:

Natural Resources

- Protecting our natural resources will continue to be a priority, with protection and maintenance of our valuable open spaces, preserves, habitats, wetlands and shorefronts an important priority.
- Scenic view sites and corridors will be protected for future generations to enjoy.

Community

- Public access to Westport Island's natural resources will be protected and expanded when and where possible, for recreation, shore access, boating access, swimming and other traditional uses.
- Island trails and bike paths will be added where appropriate and safety of walkers, pets and bicyclists will be enhanced.
- Needs of our growing senior citizen population will continue to be addressed by vibrant local service groups in partnership with the town.
- Economical housing options will be encouraged to retain and attract young families to the island.

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- A “country” store will be encouraged and supported.
- A small casual restaurant or snack bar will be encouraged as a gathering place for residents and summer visitors.
- Alternatives for collaboration with neighboring towns to provide shared services will be explored.

Public Safety

- Partnerships with State and Federal agencies and nonprofits will be pursued for funding of planned improvements where possible.
- Roads, culverts and causeways will be upgraded in preparation for projected increases in storm rainfall flooding and rising tides.
- Parcels planned for development will be carefully evaluated for capacity of ground water and of septic systems. Limitations of the island’s granite base are recognized, and no town-wide water or sewer system are envisioned during this 10 to 20-year period.
- Development of water resources devoted to fire prevention will be identified, developed, and addressed in appropriate ordinances
- Alternatives for collaboration with neighboring towns to provide shared services, such as emergency medical and ambulance services, will be explored.

Economy

- Residential growth will be measured, with emphasis on sustainable year-round and seasonal single-family homes
- Small businesses, which are ideal for our island community, will be encouraged, particularly fishing related, aquaculture, agriculture, and home-based businesses.
- Reliable high-speed internet will be actively supported for all residents, encouraging the growth of home-based and other businesses. Additionally, this will enhance quality of life and bring the island on a level playing field with larger urban areas, allowing telecommuters and professionals to set-up, and work, from Westport Island.

This is the vision for the future of Westport Island. The vision is not static and is subject to updating as our town evolves and conditions change. The key is that the vision was developed by, and reflects, the careful guidance of the people of Westport Island. It is intended to serve as the guide for developing our Comprehensive Plan, and for guiding our elected and appointed officials and boards charged with carrying out the plan over the next 10 to 20 years.