

## CHAPTER 2 VISION OF BATH IN 2025

This is how we see Bath in 2025:

*Bath has remained a unique place when many other small cities have lost this authenticity by succumbing to fast-money development. It thus has preserved one of the most important characteristics, which attract the creators of jobs in the new economy: quality of place. This new economy is based on individual initiative, is small, knowledge based, and transportable. Throughout Bath's history, individual initiative was paramount for its success. Now, because of its well-preserved harmonious architecture, walkability, and waterfront environment, it is a good city in which to live, work, play, and shop and it is a great place to visit.*

This Comprehensive Plan is not an amorphous set of many goals, more policies, and even more strategies, most of which might never be dealt with after the Plan is adopted. Although it contains ambiguities necessary for creative action, this Plan will generate real action by providing a blueprint. To be effective, the Plan must be kept current by revising data when needed and by regularly reviewing its elements. The Plan will be implemented by assigning responsibilities to the people, boards, and departments that will accomplish them.

It is the City's vision that this Plan will create the type of future that we, as a community, want. Bath will become a better place by implementing the recommendations of this Plan. Given that the future is not a location to which we are going but rather one that we are creating, the paths to this future are not to be found—they are to be made. This Plan will create the paths.

The following statements are our vision for the next twenty years:

*Bath has created a more diversified economy. Bath has preserved its authenticity of place for both new and long-established residents. The creative economy with its new jobs is drawn to the City.*

*Bath plays an important role in the larger regional economy. The City continues to work with its municipal neighbors on economic diversification and economic development strategies for the region. However, Bath also promotes its own competitive advantages. A diverse industrial cluster is growing in Bath, making use of its unique competitive advantage of industrial land adjacent to deep-water access—a competitive advantage that has been Bath's for centuries.*

*Bath's downtown persists as the geographical, commercial, and emotional focal point of the community, a lively location in both evening and daylight hours. The development and redevelopment of previously undeveloped, under-developed, and mis-developed parcels have been accomplished in such a manner as to preserve the downtown's historic feel and sense of place, thereby increasing property values. The transportation system provides citizens and visitors the ability to explore the riches of our maritime heritage, cultural treasures, natural resources, and all the places beyond—and then return to the heart of the City.*

*Educational opportunities for all ages exist because Bath's taxpayers have supported the notion that good schools are a community's best asset, best promotion, and best insurance for the future. Furthermore, the strong educational resources are a primary recruiting tool in making both the community and the region attractive to new business. They demonstrate an understanding of the future's challenges.*

*Bath's historic resources are also major economic resources that have been actively and sensitively preserved by working with the owners of these community assets. Recognized are not only buildings and landscapes that testify to Bath's place in the past, but also the community's diverse history is promoted as a vital part of national maritime history, regional development, and local accomplishments. Education about our historic past—and how to protect it—plays a major role in these efforts by presenting information and solutions to citizens, property owners, and visitors.*

*The strong distinction between what is urban and what is rural has been a part of Bath's appeal for centuries. This component of Bath's land use pattern continues to be preserved and protected. Bath has kept what was urban, urban, and what was rural, rural. All the qualities of rural Bath, not*

*just a shallow veneer of a pastoral past, are protected. Bath's agrarian elements remain important and, therefore, shielded from inappropriate residential development as well as promoted. Natural resources such as Merrymeeting Bay, the New Meadows River, the Kennebec River, Winnegance, Thorne Head, Sewall Woods, Butler Cove, and the City parks are equally vital pieces in the cityscape. These green and blue spaces are augmented by the undeveloped parcels, the cemeteries, and the new park with its wind turbine that rests on the former landfill. All of these places are respected and guarded for the role that they play in the natural resources of the region.*

*As a walkable community for decades, Bath has enhanced further this aspect of the City. In 2025, Bath is laced together with bicycle trails and esplanades, walkways and pocket parks, river walks and running paths from the northern tip of Thorne Head to the southern reaches of the Winnegance. These features link residential neighborhoods to the downtown and other important community-gathering spots. Sidewalks and trails not only strengthen the City's tangible ties with the various natural resources, such as the Kennebec River, but also connect the urban portion to the rural resources, and link us to our neighboring communities. These paths also play a part in making our community healthier, offering formal and informal athletic activity to all age groups.*

*Paths are also an important element in the "Cool Communities" initiative—a movement about the wise use of energy and sustainable development that Bath has undertaken. In 2025, Bath is a zero-energy city. Through wind, solar, water, and other "clean" technologies, we produce enough renewable energy to power our City and others in our region. Our homes, businesses, vehicles, industries, and other public systems have been rehabilitated to be as energy-efficient as possible. The City's residents and leaders are all aware of what we individually and collectively put into our environment and we are protective of our natural resources.*

*The appearance and safety of Route 1 are improved—unlike the time when the gateway was an affront to our City's unique character. Innovative and flexible techniques are used to make Route 1 a more attractive entrance to the City, one more representative of Bath's character. These changes have altered the character of the roadway itself and the vehicle-oriented businesses that surround this commercial streetscape. The Route 1 Corridor*

*has become a welcoming streetscape, representative of Bath's character, providing necessary services and connecting the various neighborhoods of the City.*

*The appearance and safety of the waterside approach on the Kennebec, a most important calling card for the City, are improved. The residents remain actively engaged with the river in a multitude of ways—recreationally, economically, industrially, historically, and visually.*

*Bath maintains an important role in the region, which includes Georgetown, Arrowsic, Woolwich, Phippsburg, and West Bath, as well as Bath. As the County Seat, host to both the Patten Free Library and one of the state's largest private employers—Bath Iron Works (BIW)—and home to regional recreational opportunities, Bath is the region's "downtown."*

*The significance of Bath as the Service Center to this region is accepted, celebrated, used as a tool for development, and supported by neighboring towns. The downtown has become a versatile source of service-related businesses, embracing that portion of the municipal role in the region. The City has invested in the infrastructure needed to attract business. Reflecting regional needs and opportunities, Bath and the surrounding communities actively participate in a variety of regionalized public services—including fire, police, education, waste recycling and disposal, and transportation issues—and in the preservation of recreational space and natural habitat.*

An often-recommended attitude about the role of a comprehensive plan is to anticipate change and to work with it. That's not good enough! We believe that we should be creating visionary change and pragmatic improvement—better schools, an improved Route 1, improved Kennebec approach, great neighborhoods where people want to live, a vital downtown, a better and more diversified economy. Being serious about implementing this Comprehensive Plan and its recommendations is the way to make the vision a reality.