



# TOWN OF MOUNT DESERT, MAINE VILLAGE PLANNING WORKSHOPS SUMMARY REPORT

**Date** February 2003  
**Prepared for** The Town of Mount Desert  
**Prepared by** The Musson Group



# REPORT OVERVIEW

The Town of Mount Desert held the first of a series of village planning meetings between October and November of 2022. These workshops were held in Seal Harbor, Otter Creek, and Somesville. In total, over 150 residents participated either in-person or by responding to a digital survey.

This report provides an overview of the events and identifies common themes from the discussions. *Appendix A* includes photos from each workshop; *Appendix B, C, and D* include scans of the workshop materials (notes and maps); and *Appendix E* includes the survey responses of the people who could not attend in-person. The information from these workshops will inform comprehensive plan discussions and future zoning and land use regulations.

## Purpose and Structure

There were three main purposes for holding the workshops:

- Start a community engagement process that will help inform to the Comprehensive Plan update process;
- Identify areas where the land use zoning ordinance can be improved to support the wants and needs of the villages; and
- Identify the assets, opportunities, and challenges in the villages.

The workshop was divided into two parts. The first part included background information and discussion on why the Town of Mount Desert is a good place to live. The second part included small group discussions about the respective villages with three guiding questions:

- Question 1 asked each group to describe the village and what makes it unique.
- Question 2 asked each group to choose and describe their favorite places in the village and to identify if any of those places were gathering or meeting places.
- Question 3 asked each group to describe their concerns and hopes for the future of the village.

There was a digital survey version of the workshop for those who could not attend in-person. The survey had the same questions as the workshop.

## Common Themes About Mount Desert

Participants at all the meetings expressed how much they value the beauty, accessibility to natural amenities, and community members in the Town of Mount Desert. Other common themes include:

- Unique town history
- Balance of residential and tourism needs
- Diversity of small villages
- Access to Acadia National Park (ANP)
- Strong libraries, churches, and schools

The word cloud on the next page displays the most common words and phrases used to describe what makes Mount Desert unique and special.

## Common Themes For Village Specific Questions

### How would you describe your village and what makes it unique?

- Safe and quiet
- Good place to raise kids
- Good neighbors and community members
- Access to natural amenities and the national park

### What are the special places?

- Natural amenities such as the lakes, ocean, ponds, and ANP trails
- Cemeteries in each village
- Local amenities such as the libraries, stores, campgrounds, and playgrounds
- Village Post Offices are a key gathering spot (Otter Creek used to have one)
- Unique landmarks, businesses, and nonprofits

### Do you have any hopes and concerns for the village's future?

- There is common concern about losing and attracting year-round residents
- Residents are concerned about becoming less connected to each other due to people moving away and a decreasing amount of gathering places to run into each other
- The villages hope for improvements to the infrastructure that supports the year-round community (e.g. roads, sidewalks, sufficient and reliable power)
- The villages want solutions to address the speeding on their main roads, pedestrian safety, and congestion caused by parking conflicts



# MOUNT DESERT VILLAGE PLANNING WORKSHOP SUMMARIES

After each workshop, the meeting materials were transcribed and summarized. All of the workshop materials are in *Appendix A*.

## Workshop Dates and Locations

Seal Harbor: October 11th, 2022; Seal Harbor Fire Station

Otter Creek: October 13th, 2022; Otter Creek Hall

Somesville: November 1st, 2022; Somesville Union Meeting House UCC

## Workshop Overview

The workshops started with a PowerPoint including background information on the workshop, the town, and comprehensive planning. Then the participants discussed the what makes the Town of Mount Desert a good place to live. The rest of the time was spent on the small group activities. The workshop ended with a whole group discussion on the common themes.

## Small Group Activity Overview

The groups recorded their discussions on flip charts and maps based on the activity questions below:

- Question 1: Describe the village and what makes it unique.
- Question 2: Describe your favorite places in the village and identify if any of those places are gathering or meeting places. The participants put a green sticker on the special places on the map.
- Question 3: Describe your concerns and hopes for the future of the village. The participants put a red sticker on areas of concern and yellow stickers in areas where they have hopes.





# SEAL HARBOR VILLAGE PLANNING WORKSHOP

## What Makes the Town of Mount Desert a Great Place to Live? (Full Group Discussion)

Participants had a lot of pride in the town. They described Mount Desert as having many natural and recreational amenities including ANP and a variety of water bodies. Mount Desert has a diversity of villages, serves the residents and tourists, and has good people.

## How would you describe your village and what makes it unique? (Small Group Discussion - Question 1)

Seal Harbor was described as safe, quiet, and a good place to live and raise kids. The village has a strong and supportive community and views its community members as its most unique quality. Participants describe their community as being generational, welcoming, and intimate. The participants view Seal Harbor as having uniquely high quality outdoor amenities, especially the accessibility to ANP and the ocean.

## What are the special places? (Small Group Discussion - Question 2)

- Post Office (a very beloved and valuable common meeting place in Seal Harbor)
- Beach
- Dock
- Village Green
- Carriage trails
- Christmas Tree Lighting
- Playground
- Seal Harbor Cemetery
- Library
- Fire Station community room
- Fountain

## Do you have any hopes and concerns for the village's future? (Small Group Discussion - Question 3)

### Concern 1: Unsafe traffic and speed patterns

- Some areas mentioned include: Main Street, Jordan Pond House (delivery trucks), Day Mountain access points, and the fountain.

### Concern 2: Loss of community

- There is concern about Seal Harbor becoming less affordable, short-term rental growth, and losing year-round families.
- The hours of operation at the Post Office (an important community gathering space) are a concern.

### Concern 3: Lack of parking spaces and parking enforcement

- Some problem areas mentioned include: Seal Harbor beach, post office, Steamboat Wharf Road, and Day Mountain parking lot.

Concern 4: The fountain

- The fountain is an asset to the community and it should be protected, but some residents were concerned about its location and the safety of that intersection.

Hope 1: Strengthen the community

- Many of the groups mentioned they want more community activities/events, more year-round shops and amenities, and improvements to infrastructure (sidewalks and playground).

Hope 2: Enhance street-scape and maintain downtown character

- The participants want improvements to the parking and circulation.
- Many participants want to bury the electric lines (no poles like Northeast Harbor).
- Many small groups identified the need for infrastructure to decrease the speed through the village.

Hope 3: Improve town infrastructure

- The participants would like to see improvements to the sidewalks and the playground.



# OTTER CREEK VILLAGE PLANNING WORKSHOP

## What Makes the Town of Mount Desert a Great Place to Live? (Full Group Discussion)

Participants described Mount Desert as historic, beautiful, and being different than Bar Harbor. They identified the town as having many coastal mountains, a variety of small villages, good water access, and a small and safe community.

## How would you describe your village and what makes it unique? (Small Group Discussion - Question 1)

Participants described Otter Creek as a quiet and safe community. The village has small family friendly neighborhoods and is home to founding/historical families. Participants said that Otter Creek feels rural in comparison to the other villages because it is surrounded by the National Park. Otter Creek has good trail access.

## What are the special places? (Small Group Discussion - Question 2)

- The Grover St. Trail (Quarry Trail)
- Cemetery
- Playground
- Otter Creek Hall
- The Boat Ramp/Landing
- Fish House path (End of Walls Street)
- Fire Pond
- Veteran's Memorial

## Do you have any hopes and concerns for the village's future? (Small Group Discussion - Question 3)

### Concern 1: The speed on Rt. 3

- Participants identified the need for infrastructure to decrease the speed through the village.

### Concern 2: Loss of community

- Participants were concerned about losing year-round residents and young families due to a decrease in affordable housing and competition from other uses such as short-term rentals.
- Participants expressed that they don't want to become a resort community.
- There are no community gathering or meeting places. A few participants mentioned there used to be a Post Office and a market where people would run into each other. However, now most interactions occur by happenstance in the driveway when people are out walking.

### Hope 1: Many participants want to improve walkability

- Some ideas mentioned included adding crosswalks, sidewalks, and traffic calming features.
- Others want more connections to the national park trails for walking and biking.

### Hope 2: Improvement to the boat ramp/landing

- The participants strongly expressed that the landing mainly serve the residents.

### Hope 3: Improvements to the garden next to the playground

# SOMESVILLE VILLAGE PLANNING WORKSHOP

## What Makes the Town of Mount Desert a Great Place to Live? (Full Group Discussion)

Participants described Mount Desert as a safe, quiet, and peaceful community with a deep history. Participants felt that Mount Desert has a less commercial feel than other towns on MDI. It also benefits from a variety of natural resources (both land and water based) and special amenities (libraries, schools, fire houses, etc).

## How would you describe your village and what makes it unique? (Small Group Discussion - Question 1)

Participants described the village of Somesville as having a good mix of year-round and seasonal residents. Many described Somesville as having a generational community and as a good place to raise kids. Somesville was described as having many important natural resources and great water access (e.g. ponds, lakes, ocean). The participants described Somesville as having a quaint and clean appearance. The participants also valued the village's central location on MDI because it allows residents to easily access on and off-island services and amenities.

## What are the special places? (Small Group Discussion - Question 2)

- Landing/Boat Launch
- Somes Pond (access on Oak Hill Rd)
- Beech Hill Farm
- Somesville library
- Post Office
- One Stop / Freshies
- Bridge
- Somes-Maynell Wildlife Sanctuary
- The Ripples Hill Neighborhood on Farnham's Way
- Cemetery
- The Community School
- Acadia Repertory Theatre
- Somes Harbor
- Long Pond
- Camp Beech Cliff
- Mt. Desserts Homemade Pie Shop
- The Bank
- Echo Lake
- Little Echo





## Do you have any hopes and concerns for the village's future? (Small Group Discussion - Question 3)

### Concern 1: Loss of community and growing seasonality

- Participants described some concern regarding residential structures being used for short-term rentals, losing community gathering places, losing year-round residents, and decreasing housing affordability especially for young families.
- Participants wished there were more year-round restaurants or a coffee shop and were concerned about Main Street specifically.

### Concern 2: Traffic and Parking

- Participants were concerned about speeding along Main Street, Long Pond, and in front of the Community School.
- Participants were concerned about parking in general and mentioned crowding at Somes Pond and Long Pond.

### Concern 3: Zoning

- Participants described the shoreland zoning as restrictive.
- Participants talked about the commercial zoning relating to the kinds of allowed uses, the amount of certain uses, and the locations where they are allowed.

### Concern 4: Water access conflicts

- Participants experienced conflicts over some of the water access points regarding public versus private usage especially at the Landing.
- Participants expressed concern about Somes Pond being over-used by tourists.

### Hope 1: Grow and support the year-round community

- Participants want Somesville to have more year-round workforce housing, good quality utilities and infrastructure (e.g. internet, power, water, roads, sidewalks), community gathering spaces where people can run into each other, opportunities for village-scale decision making, and support for the generational community members.

### Hope 2: Maintain Somesville's charm

- Participants want to protect the historic quality of the existing buildings.

### Hope 3: Slower traffic along Main Street

- Participants worry about the safety of their children walking along some sidewalks.

### Hope 4: Make Somesville more business friendly

- Participants wish they could run into community members in spaces like a year-round coffee shop. One group mentioned there used to be a bookstore where community members would run into each other.



# MOUNT DESERT VILLAGE PLANNING DIGITAL SURVEY

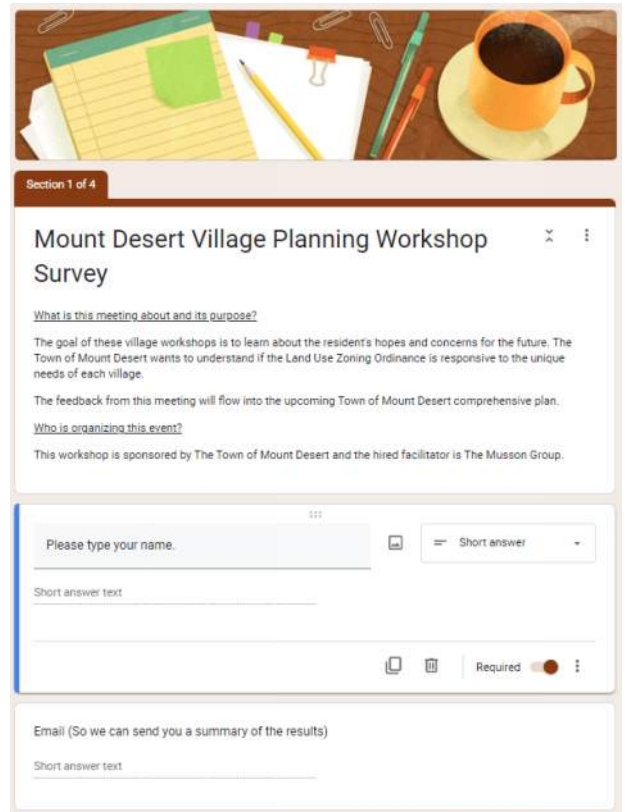
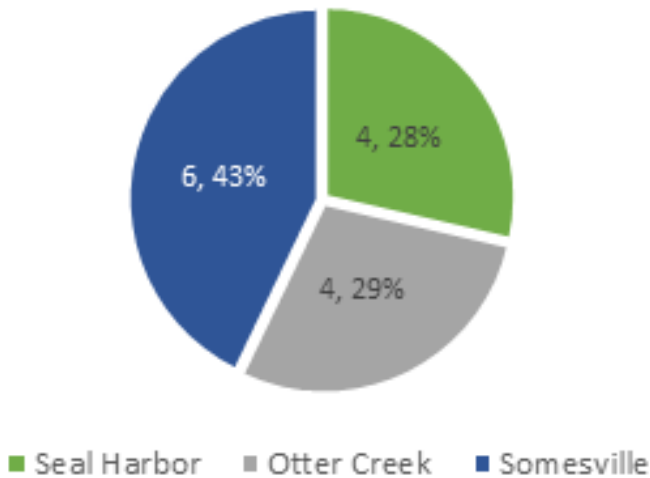
A total of 14 people filled out the online survey. Responses were similar to what participants said at the workshops.

A copy of the survey responses is included in Appendix E (all personal information was removed).

The survey responses were integrated into the summaries of each village meeting. Common themes shared by the survey and workshop participants included:

- A deep appreciation of the local natural amenities and Acadia National Park.
- For the villages to maintain their small, quiet, and quaint character.
- The need for workforce housing and other year-round opportunities.
- Concern about speed, pedestrian access, and safety.

## Survey Respondent Breakdown





# APPENDIX A

Photos



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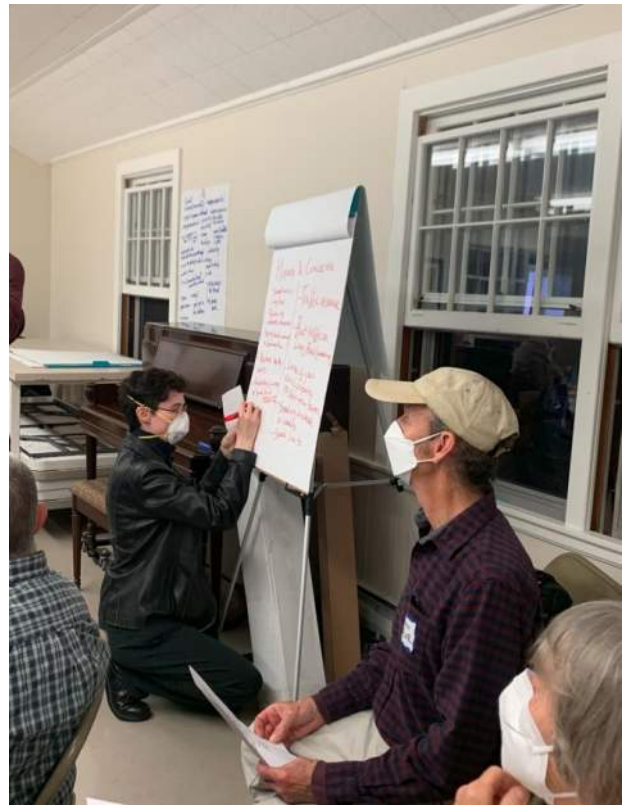


# OTTER CREEK





# SOMESVILLE







# APPENDIX B

Seal Harbor: Workshop Material Scans

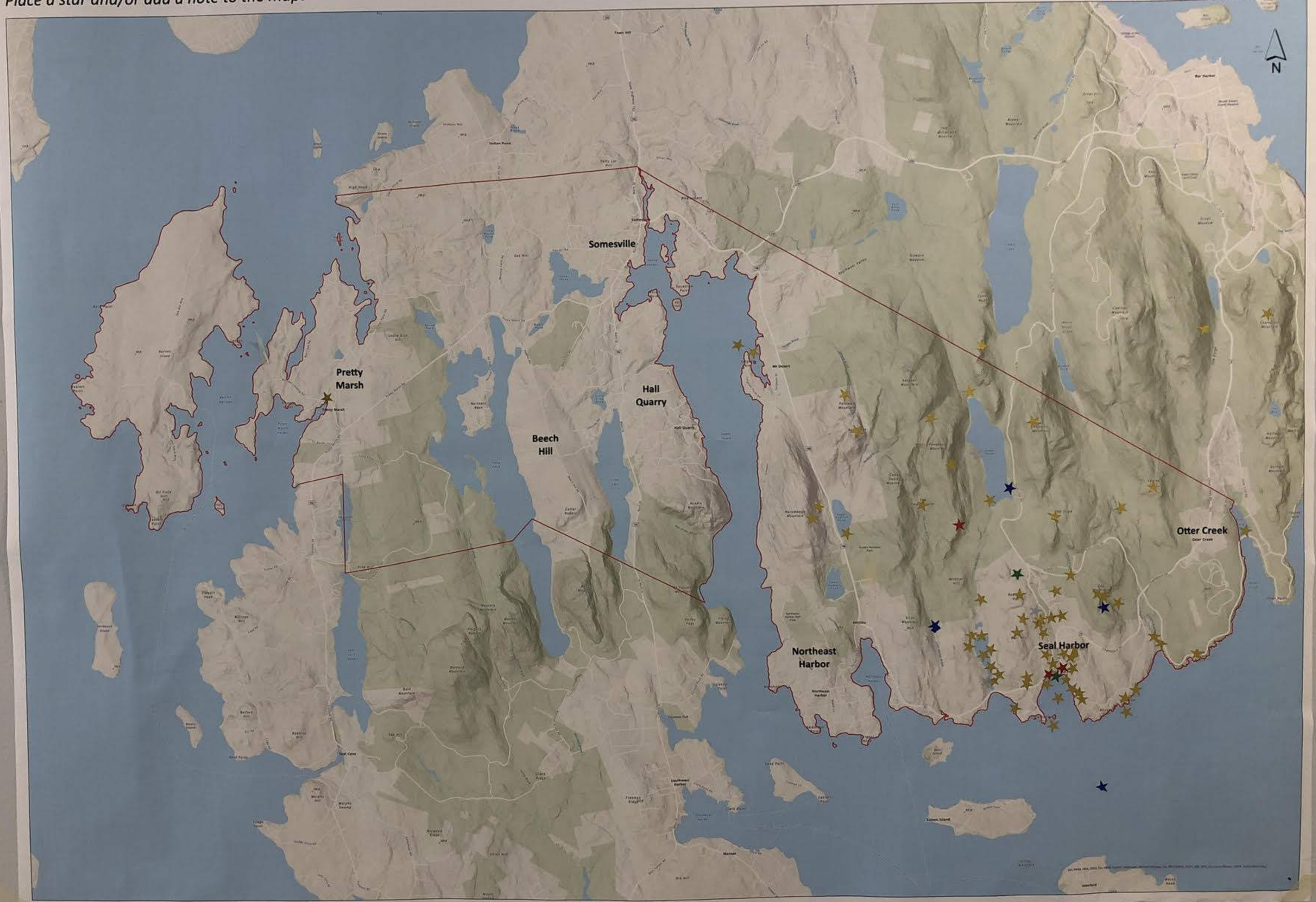


# Where are your favorite places in Mount Desert?

Place a star and/or add a note to the map!

Map created for the Town of Mount Desert by the Museum Group using best available data from the Town of Mount Desert and Maine GIS Library.

Seal Harbor





What is special  
about the town?

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- Topography
- It's NOT BHB
- History of the town
- Land: Garden Preserve  
Land
- People + Location
- Strong Library +  
Strong Church

# What is special?

- Residential places for year-round residents and seasonal
- Some of the most frequently visited places in APP
- Town serves residents, not just tourists <sup>aka</sup> (BHB)



## What is special?

- Best Harbor
- Land preservation in Town of MD
- NOT BHB - fewer crowds
- Careful governance
- Diversity of villages
- Recreational opportunities
- Surrounded by ANP / open water



# Blue Group

## 1A) WHAT MAKES VILLAGE UNIQUE?

- SMALL / BEAUTIFUL BEACH • HISTORY OF PRESERVATION
- ACCESS TO PARK (WALK) • GENERATIONAL WATER
- NON PROFIT - VILLAGE IMPROVEMENT SOC (VIS)
- LAND + GARDEN PRESERVE (LLP)
- COMMUNITY

## 1B) HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE IT?

- PEACEFUL + QUIET
- RESIDENTIAL VS. COMMERCIAL
- QUIET
- NIGHT SKY - STARS

## 2A) SPECIAL PLACES

- VILLAGE GREEN
- LIBRARY
- DOCK
- BEACH
- TRAILS / CARRIAGE
- FOUNTAIN
- POST OFFICE?
- COMMUNITY GARDEN

## 3) HOPES FOR FUTURE

- NOTHING CHANGES
- LAND PRESERVATION
- PLAYGROUND IMPROVEMENT
- LOW TAXES
- MORE FAMILIES
- SENSITIVITY TO GLOBAL WARMING
- STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY CONNECTION
- PICKLEBALL COURT - PLAYGROUND
- MORE RELIABLE CELL SERVICE
- NO EXPANDED PARKING
- BURY ELECTRIC LINES \$\$\$
- SIDEWALK MAINT
- NO CLEAR CUTTING (UNNECESSARY)





Village of Seal Harbor, Town of Mount Desert, Maine



Village of Seal Harbor, Town of Mount Desert, Maine

Blue Group

Map created for the Town of Mount Desert  
by the Mount Desert Island Planning Commission. All rights reserved.  
Seal Harbor, Maine and Mount Desert Island, Maine



①  
green tank

1. Community ✓ - continuity + stability - some families - generations ✓ returning. Both seasonal ± year around
2. Quick access to park + LGP ✓
3. No houses on mountains
4. Mountain, Green, Durham Overlook
5. Beach ✓
6. Old Timers Club from 1931  
Christmas Tree lighting - remembering those who have gone.
7. Generations - connections + introductions to S.H. ✓

Non Profit  
History of Preservation  
Quiet

- ②
- ① Post Office ✓
  - ② Walking (the dog)
  3. Neighbours
  4. Village Green ✓
  5. Beach + overlook ✓
  6. Dock
  7. SH Cemetery
  8. Shops
  9. Infrequent but welcome facility - using the Fire Station Room

Safe

Lacking "coffee shop"



③ 1. Fountain - traffic pattern  
signs unclear to visitors Playground

Need put on National Register for historic.....

2. Island Explorer -

struggles to manoeuvre around fountain  
Possible move pickup stop to Stanley Road <sup>Brook</sup>

3. Sidewalk - continue from lower Dunbar to Day Street

4. Fire Department -

used to do spring burn of "fields"  
helps control deer tick - up to 95% die

Not huge amount of time 1-2 weeks - ceased c. 25 years ago

5. Keep Post Office OPEN ✓

6. Confirm access - Right of Way to Carriage Drive

7. Seal Harbor Resident Parking  
near Cemetery + the Pit

- No Changes
- Strengthening community
- Sidewalk maint
- Bury electric.





*green table*

Village of Seal Harbor, Town of Mount Desert, Maine



dock



Village of Seal Harbor, Town of Mount Desert, Maine *green table*

Map prepared by the Office of Regional Planning  
for the Town of Seal Harbor, Maine  
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# Red group

## ① Unique

- quiet - residential
- intimate - good community
- welcoming
- Topography - Land: Garden Preserve
- seems natural
- Beach - Facilities
- Town green
- Natural limitations to development
- TRAFFIC - MAJOR Thoroughfare
- WATER: WATER supply
- LIBRARY



## Red group

### ② Special places

- Beach
- Town green
- Long Pond
- Dock/Harbor
- Cocksey overlook
- Seal Fountain
- Access to park / carriage Pond
- Seaside Trail
- Standley Brook
- LIBRARY
- Post OFFICE
- great trails
- Harba Brook
- DAY mountain
- playground
- cemetery
- Naturalist Notebook
- Lighthouse

Red group,

### ③ Concerns

- Traffic enforcement
- unwanted development / CONDOS
- AFFORDABLE housing
- POST office hours
- weeky rentals
- Long-term water supply / quality
- wastewater odor
- Beach erosion
- pedestrian safety

ized group

③ - Hopes/~~CONCERNS~~

- STORE/market
- STAY small
- coffee/SANDWICH shop
- music on the Green/EVENTS
- ADDRESS TRAFFIC/speeding
- Better cell service
- seasonal ferry service
- Lower price AFFORDABLE HOUSING/FAMILIES
- more moorings
- community room (keep it)







Feb 2019

Village of Seal Harbor, Town of Mount Desert, Maine



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★ Table  
Star group

(Why we live here...)

Born & chose to stay

Fun place to grow up/  
raise kids.

Carriage roads, beach, streams...  
[OUTDOOR OPTIONS]

All ages blend together -  
residents are welcoming

Wanted MDI but NOT BH.

Quiet, proximity to work/Acadia

# ★ Table

## Concerns & Wishes . . . .

- Street lights ... softer? But more → night sky compliance!
- ★ Bring back more community activities -  
Caroling, Halloween party, etc.
- Partnership between town & VIS
- ★ Maintain non-traditional entrances to the park.
- Day mountain parking - dangers - <sup>electronic</sup> Speed sign?
- Dwindling numbers of year-round families →  
less kids in school
- ★ Town leaf pick-up - October?



# ★ Table

## Concerns & wishes.....

- Post Office - Hours & parking
- Deliveries / Traffic on Jordan Pond Road  
(commercial deliveries to JPH)
- Affordability to actually live here!!
- Beach parking - All day parking for ANP is not okay!
- Steamboat Wharf Road - parking/traffic
- ★ Maintaining look of Main Street → no giant metal poles like NETH.  
↳ WISH
- ★ Don't mess w/ the fountain!
- ★ Fix & maintain the playground! (year round use... skating rink)
- ★ More parking for beach & Steamboat Wharf
- Overnight parking at Day Mountain

★ Table

Beach

Dock

Carriage Roads

Hunters Beach

LLP

Village Green

Playground

Community Center (Fire Station)

Day Mountain

Special Places....

Post office

Lighthouse / AOC

Christmas Tree lighting! ☺

Cemetary

Day Mtn. properties











Unique: Yellow Table

• Beauty

• Beach

• Park Access

• Village Green

• Land and Garden Preserve

• Christmas Tree Lighting

• Great Kids

• Quiet

• Little Long Pond

• Boat House

# Describe Seal Harbor & Why Live Here

- Quiet
- Small/Quaint
- Small Town
- Safe
- Well Establish Community  
↳ But new visitors regularly
- Desirable to J. Lab







*Well on*  
Village of Seal Harbor, Town of Mount Desert, Maine

Map provided by Town of Mount Desert  
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# The Seal Harbor Themes

- Post Office is an important central place
  - Christmas tree lighting
- People run into each other walking
- Strong, supportive community
- How to address parking w/o creating too much parking
- Housing is a challenge

# <sup>Seal Harbor</sup> Themes

- ★ Attracting young ★ families (playground)
- Managing short-term rentals
- Natural Beauty / Access
- Infrastructure condition
  - sidewalks
  - playground



# Themes <sup>Seal Harbor</sup>

- Traffic safety  
(examples of main street  
: trucks going to  
Jordan Pond)



# APPENDIX C

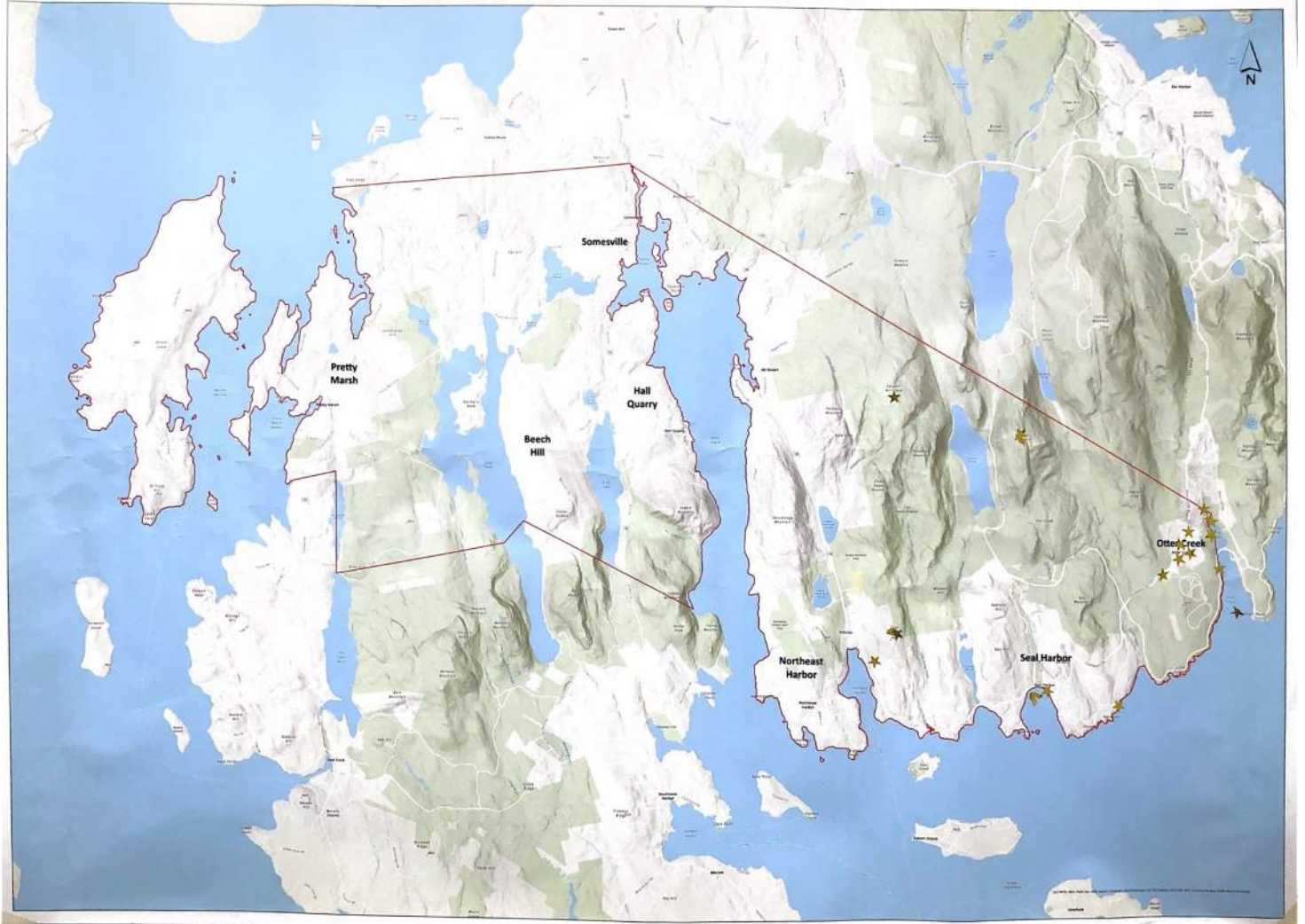
Otter Creek: Workshop Material Scans



# Where are your favorite places in Mount Desert?

Place a star and/or add a note to the map!

Map provided by the State of Mount Desert  
Island. All rights reserved. No part of this map  
may be reproduced without the written consent of  
the State of Mount Desert Island.



What is special <sup>of the creek</sup> about Town of MD?

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- It is not Bar Harbor
- Coastal mountains
- \*Beautiful\*
- Good water access
- It retains its character - quaint fishing village/park
- small villages
- Surrounded by the park (or)
- Town has retained historic buildings - historic flavor
- Small safe community



# Table 1

- ① Not Commercialized
- ② All Dead end Roads!
- ③ Surrounded by Park
- ④ Proximity to trails
- ⑤ Walk to water
- ⑥ Solitude in Winter
- ⑦ Less people = more intimacy

## Describe

Neighborhood feel

- ① Small
- ② Natural

## Hope:

- ① Garden
- ② Bike Trail connecting to carriage Road
- ③ Inner Harbor trail

## Concerns

- ① Sound of Gun range
- ② Speeding Traffic
- ③ Division (Other cliff Road)
- ④ Non Year round residents
- ⑤ Non Residential Growth







Table 2

• Beautiful

UNIQUE?

- Location: Quiet, but with access
- History: Canetaker, fisherman village
  - ↳ Working class, family
  - ↳ loss of...

• Affordability

• Proximity to Park

WHY?

- Quiet, Nature, dead end streets
- Small family friendly neighborhoods
- feels so rural only 10 min from B/H
- Friendly neighbors
- Park access, trails

- crosswalk - between grove + 3
- improve bus stop
- add/improve garden at park
- SLOW DOWN in village
- make the landing useable, but not commercial

## CONCERNS

- DC is the only land locked village
- wall street - One person bought an entire street for Short Term rentals
- short-term rentals are changing the neighborhood
- fewer kids
- speculators from away
- integrity of the village is impacted
- when does a village stop being a village?







## Amigueros:

table 3

- Surrounded by ANP.
- One murder in 200 yrs
- Active farmland
- Trailer Park / Mixed residential (unpretentious)
- Campground (£6,000/yr)
- Home
- Close to M<sup>1</sup> jobs
- Quiet. } children & turkeys are safe
- Slow lane }
- World class querry



## Describe:

- Small
- Walkable
- easy access to ANP
- we have one of the last authentic fishhouses
- Not that many transplants. Founding families still here.
- Dwindling yet bound population.
- safe

DON'T FORGET WII  
RADIO  
STATION

- O.C. Special places
- Grover St. Trail (Quarry trail)
  - Cemetery
  - Jacks field
  - Fish house path (wells st.)
  - play ground
  - fire pond
  - otter creek
  - The Hall
  - Veterans Memorial
  - Boat Ramp
  - Fish House



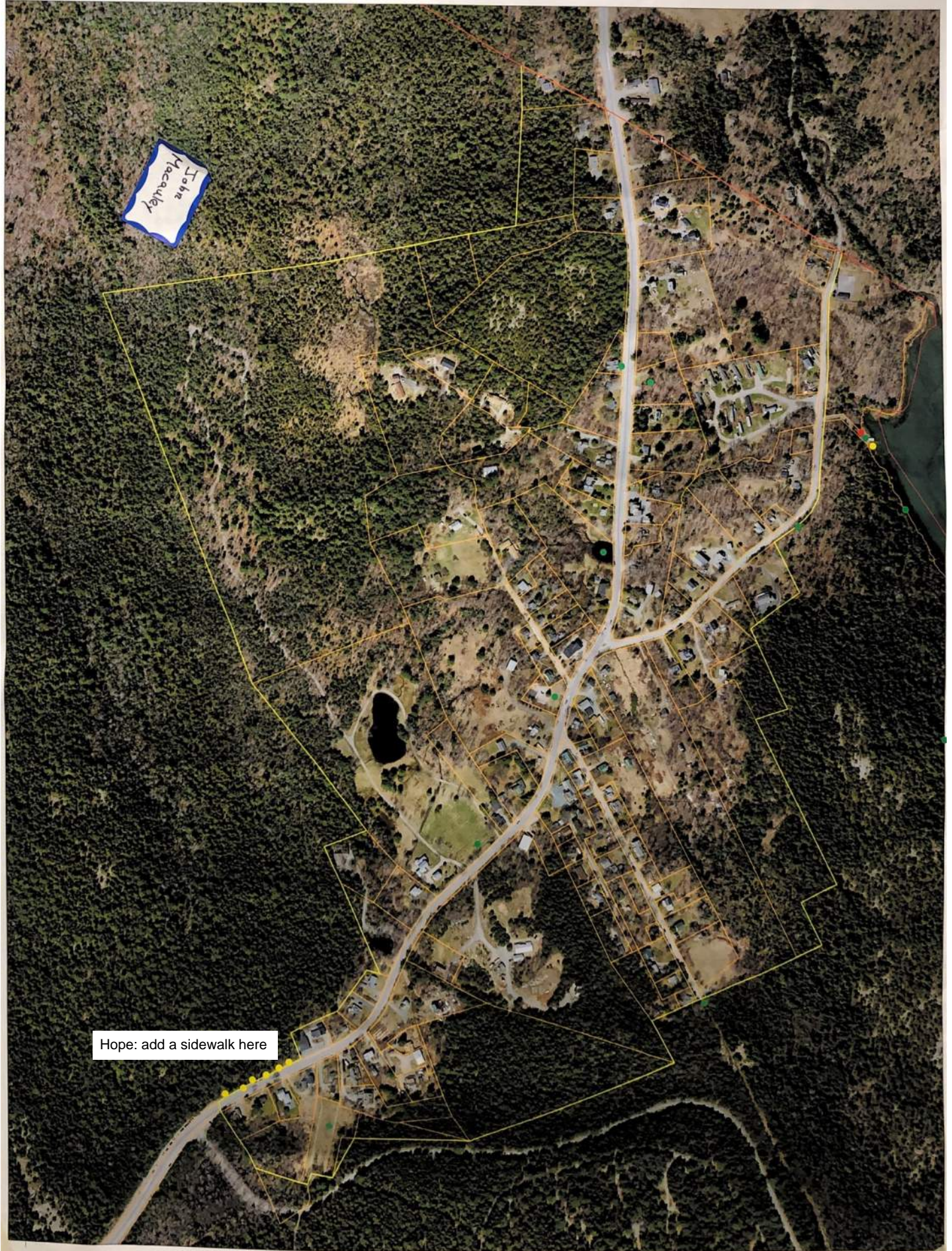
## Hopes + Concerns

- More extensive sidewalks from Market to the Blackwoods.
- Address crosswalks w DOT guideline
- Speed through OC.
- Improve landing
- Improve inner harbor.



Village of Otter Creek, Town of Mount Desert, Maine

Map created for the Town of Mount Desert  
by the Mount Desert Land Trust, based on data from the  
Town of Mount Desert and Maine GIS Data Library





5

What makes D.C. Unique?

Blackwood Campground.

ANP. Surrounds D.C.

Most Rural Village

Historical Family's

Otter Cove

Resilient

Limited Zoning - Residential

Decent Cell Phone Service

#2

Boat Ramp

Otter Creek Hall - underutilized

Driveways



#3 HOPE/S/FUTURE  
WORKING WHARF  
DEDICATED RECREATION AREA  
AFFORDABLE HOUSING

CONCERNS  
TRAFFIC CONTROL - SPEED BUMPS  
PARKING NEAR THE SHOWERS  
AFFORDABLE HOUSING



# APPENDIX D

Somesville: Workshop Material Scans



What do you love  
about the town?

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- The school
- natural resources
- park proximity
- close to everything
- Safe
- Tong 😊
- community feel ★ but concerns
- People

- Little Long Pond
- History
- CBC + Beech Hill Farm
- Library + cemetery
- libraries
- Firehouse(s) - important resources
- Multiple schools (TCS!)
- streams, ponds
- less commercials
- Town owned public spaces
- Neighborhood House
- Seal Harbor
- Peace + quiet - winter
- some sound

What do you Love Town ♡



#1 Historic  
Picturesque  
Quiet

(table 1)

Few ~~to~~ businesses that rely on tourism

Cute library

Beautiful church + cemetery

Somes Meynell / Somes Pond

Lower taxes

Trash pickup

The Landing

Central to the island

Firehouse with 24/7 services - pd. + volunteers

Echo Lake

Why? Proximity to work

Raise a family

Best town on island

Generational

Somes Pond

Access to oceans + lakes

Convenience to on + off island things / services

less chaotic

#2 What are special places? (hope)

53

Green

- Landing
- Somes Pond
- Echo Lake
- Library
- Sound
- Camp Beech Cliff
- Beach Hill Farm
- Little Echo
- One Stop
- Post office
- Theatre
- Beech Hill Rd
- ~~Somesville~~
- Somesville Harbor
- Existing work force housing (Farmum Way)

Yellow

- Work force housing
- Possible town takeover of private roads before they fall apart
- Recycling - curbside or mixed
- Year round community center (community center) shop
- To promote + sustain a diverse community (including young adults)
- Improved internet that is affordable for all
- More reliable power
- Protect our natural resources from tourists

Red

- Somes Pond
- Landing
- Access on Pretty Marsh side of Some Pond
- Traffic speed (main st.)
- Somesville Landing (private vs public)
- Erosion/overuse at lake/water landings
- Loss of year round residences
- Affordability
- To live on the island

10

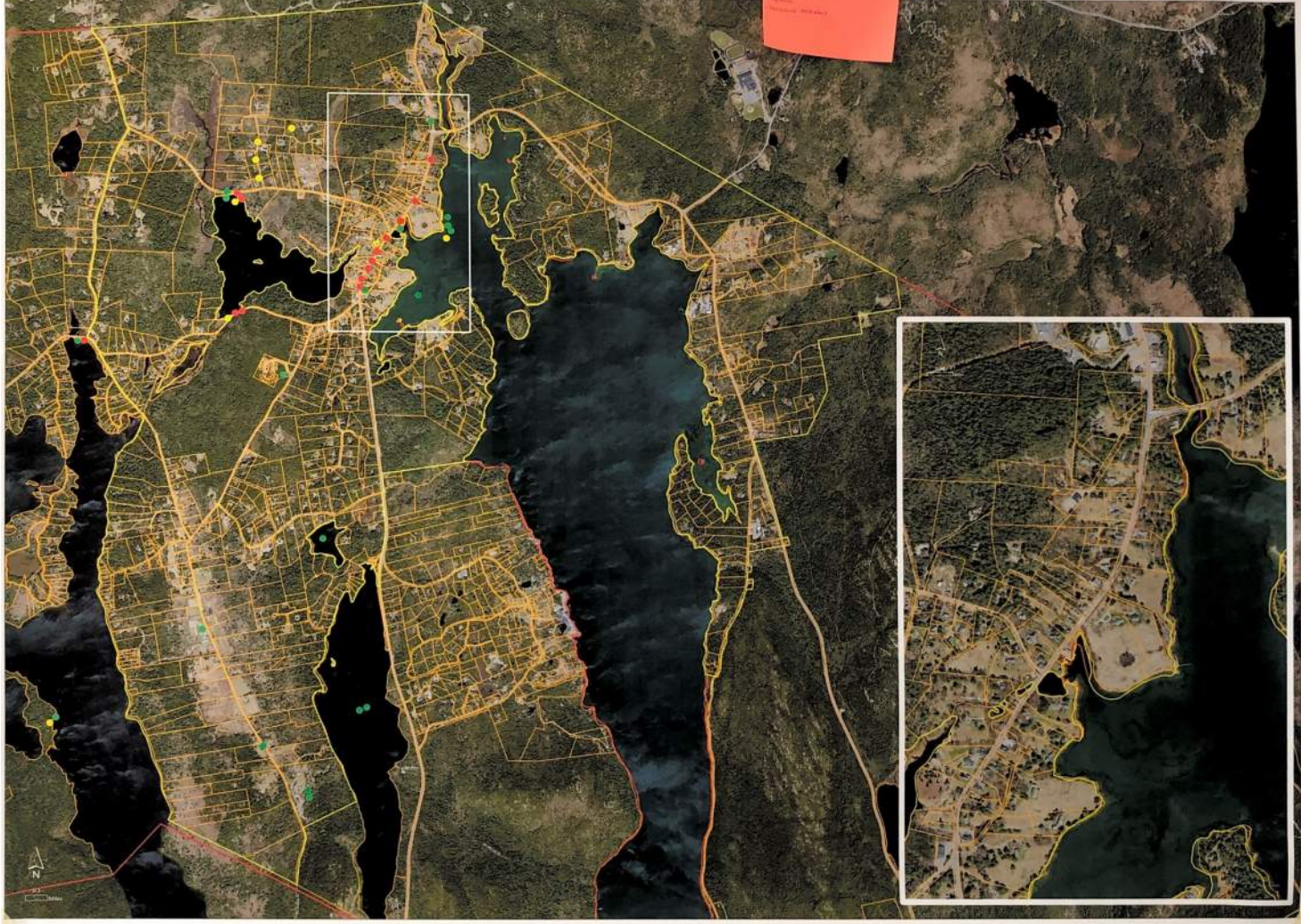


Village of Somesville, Town of Mount Desert, Maine

Table 1  
Legend  
Legend  
Legend

Table 1

Map prepared by the State of Maine  
in 2014. All other information is the property of the user.



# SPECIAL PLACES

~~SOMESVILLE LIBRARY~~ POND'S END

~~SOMES POND~~  
DENNING BROOK

~~SOMESVILLE BOAT LAUNCH~~

~~BROOKSIDE CEMETARY~~

CONVENIENCE/GAS STATION

BEECH HILL FARM

BUSINESSES: FURRET, BANK, POST OFFICE  
ACADIA REP, COASTAL COMPT.

CAMP BEECH CLIFF

ACADIA NAT PARK: BEECH MT.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING: FARNAM'S WAY



# DESCRIPTION

table 2

FOR WALKABILITY

QUIET  
CHARMING  
QUAINT  
CLEAN

LOTS OF PRIVACY  
ACCESS TO H<sub>2</sub>O (fresh + ocean)  
CENTRALLY LOCATED  
WELCOMING

RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

KID FRIENDLY

STRONG TOWN GOV.

CIVIC & BUS. SERVICES

HEAVY TRAFFIC

LOW POPULATION DENSITY

LOTS OF GREEN SPACE

MIX OF YEAR ROUND & SEASONAL RESIDENCE

# HOPES

(table 2)

\* Side Walk / <sup>\* BIKE PATH</sup> Trails from Somesville → Ponds End  
→ SWH

\* SLOWER TRAFFIC

PRIVATE & PUBLIC UTILITIES  
- safe H<sub>2</sub>O, ground water quality

\* ENCOURAGE BUSINESSES

ROUNDABOUT / ROTARY AT  
FIRE HOUSE

\* More affordable housing

\* Maintain the village of Somesville charm



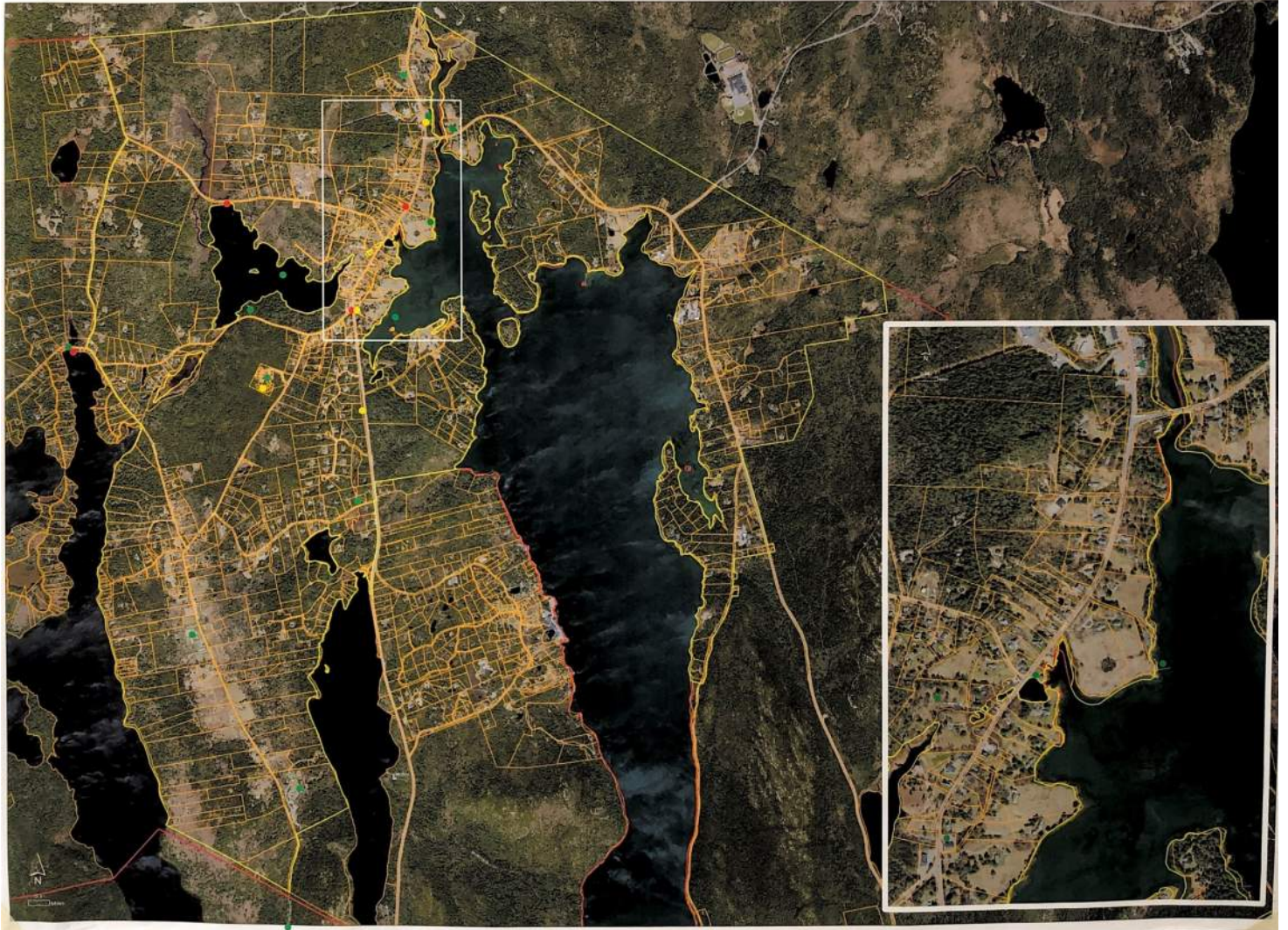
(table 2)

# CONCERNS

---

- \* Unaffordable to young families
- \* over use of Somes Pond + other resource/rec. spots
- \* seasonal traffic
- \* brown tail moth
- \* No Restaurant
- \* limited safe walking/side walks
- \* Not friendly to businesses
- \* loss of public gathering spot (fire house)
- \* evolution of main street to rental housing







(A)

(TABLE 3)

- Quaint
- Seasonal (increasingly)
- Oldest European settlement
- intergenerational
- no commerce on Main St. in town in gen.
- destination for some, but also a passthrough
- miss the ability to vote as a village
- walk in town
- The Community School
- Clean
- good services
- low taxes
- largely residential
- diverse resources
- proximity to the water
- access to H<sub>2</sub>O
- Library
- the bridge
- walkability
- access to wildlife is unique
- SAFE
- Access to trails
- A hub
- easy access off island
- to ponds park
- central
- great spot to raise children
- Children!

(TABLE 3)

# ACT-2

## TABLE 3

- Landing
- Sages Meadow
- Cemetery
- Mill Pond
- Fish Ladders, migration fish
- Lupine fields
- Long Pond
- Sages Pond Swimming hole
- The Community School
- Pretty Marsh picnic
- Babson Creek marsh/estuary
- Bridge
- I-STOP
- Pat Foster's Halloween
- Sargent Drive
- Sages Sound views
- View from Babson Creek Bridge
- Mt Desert Campground
- Bird watching spots
- Christy Seeds Office
- Post Office
- NCHT preserve/office



## CONCERNS:

- traffic
- short-term rentals
- lack of affordable housing
- community spaces
- inflation
- losing families
- speed limit enforcement

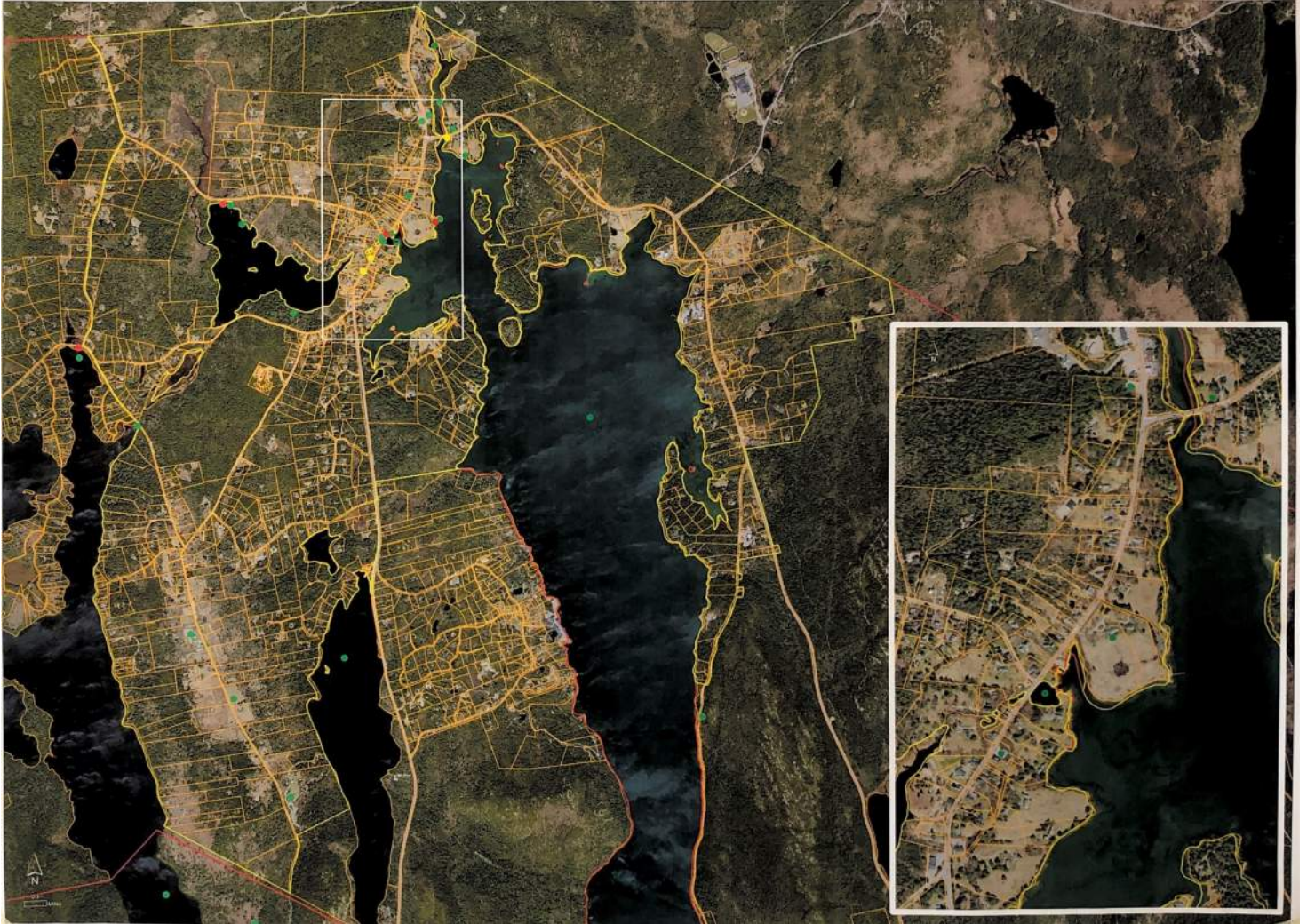
3

## TABLE 3

- balance between working from home and maintaining community
- economic diversity
- amount of people @ landing  
↳ some pond swimming  
↳ long pond  
↳ parking
- accessibility to landing  
↳ parking pass

## HOPES

- village trail behind village homes
- sidewalk to Community School
- sidewalk on water side of village
- bike lanes
- intentional parking
- bus drop/stop
- opportunity to vote as a village
- coffee shop  
↳ ice cream  
↳ change in code
- a gathering space (like the bookstore was)
- ↳ but not too many things
- protecting historic buildings





## TABLE #4

What makes Somesville unique?

Special Places

- Somes Pond + path
- Playhouse
- Wildlife Sanctuary
- Gallery
- Library
- Somes Sound
- bridge
- Landing
- Cemetery + birding area
- Beach Hill + Farm
- Bank
- Commercial section
- Post office
- This building
- Church
- Multiple-use buildings
-

# Your Village

TABLE 4

Why move here?

- Parents bought house
- Quiet & natural resources
- Water access
- Central location
-



## TABLE #4

# Hopes & Concerns

- Speed limit on Long Pond
- Retain its intimate character
- bring back community in Somersville
- Maintain healthy waters
- Availability of access to Somes Sound  
(kind of a concern rather than hope)
- Caring for road
- Sidewalk

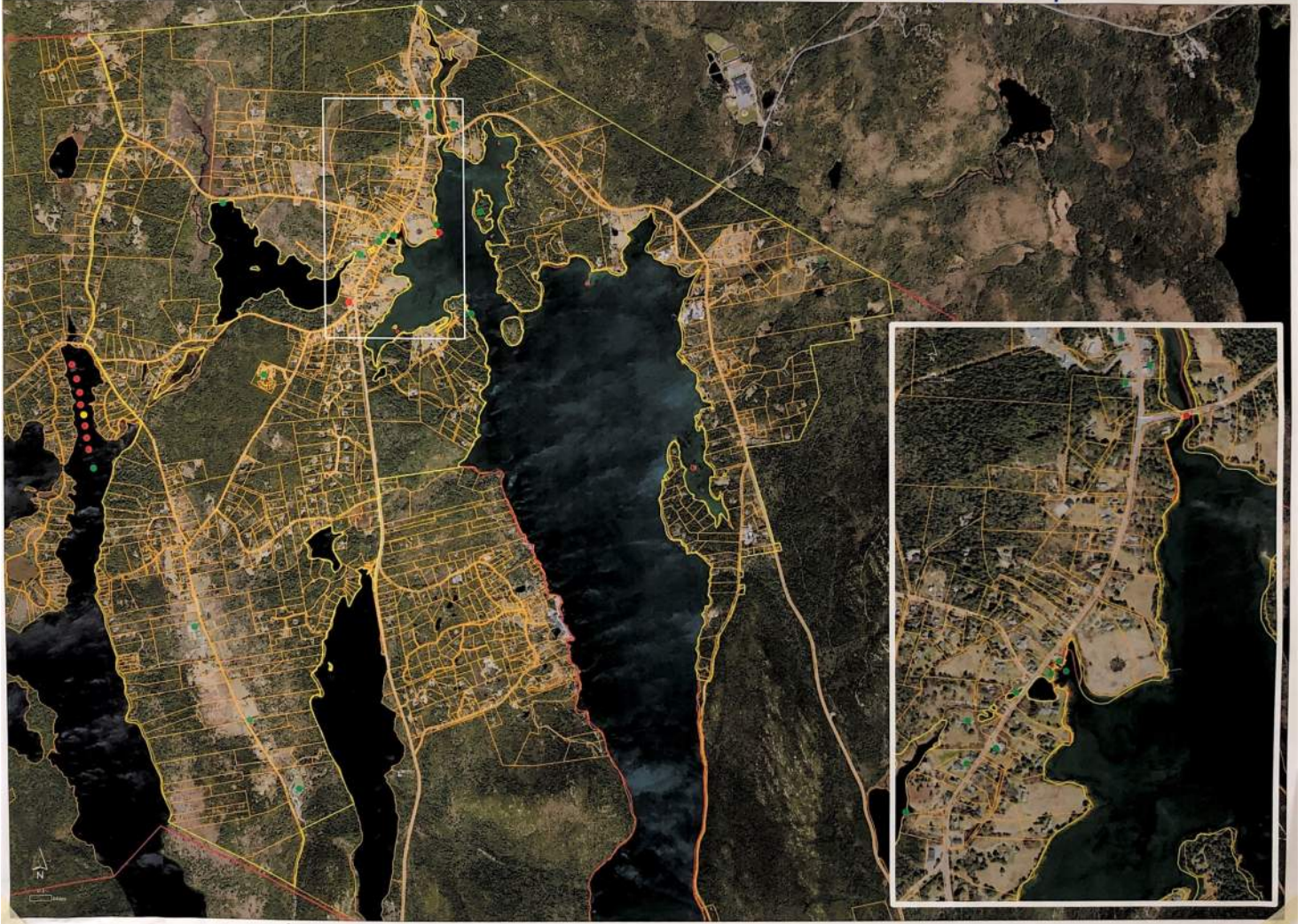
- Traffic increase
- Boat traffic on Long Pond (speeding)
- Loss of year-round property to short-term rental
- Speeding trucks & air breaks
- Speed limit

TABLE 4

Concerns, Cont.

- ~~Don't~~ Worries about ~~in~~ commercial zoning  
(what kind? How much? Where?)  
→ areas that can support it, in terms of space & resources
- Access to Somers Pond
- Canada geese - Library lawn, etc.
- Water supply for a growing community
- Restrictive shoreland zoning





# Overall Themes

## What makes Somerville unique?

- Access to water
- Central location
- Quiet, clean, quaint
- Special places are part of the identity
- Privacy
- Fish migration - special place
- Kid friendly
- Civic + other services



# Overall Themes

## Hopes

- good utilities <sup>supply</sup>
- healthy water
- maintain charm
- village voting/gathering
- Workforce housing
- Support multi-generational
- side walks + trails <sup>needs</sup>

- 
- Using residential as <sup>commercial</sup> commercial zoning
  - restrictible shoreland zoning
  - no restaurant <sup>or coffee</sup> seasonal

## Concerns

- speeding / traffic
- public/private access to
- loss of water
- loss of year-round residents
- affordability
- loss of public gathering spots
- loss of main street
- parking
- crowding at <sup>Somes Pond +</sup> Long Pond
- loud air brakes / speeding



# APPENDIX E

Survey Responses



Which village meeting would you have liked to attend, but could not? Please choose one. If you wanted to attend more than one please fill out the form again.	Choose all the descriptions that apply to you.	What is your favorite place in the Town of Mount Desert? Please refer to a place or several places within the boundary shown in the map below.	What makes the Town of Mount Desert a great place to live? Please write as much or a little as you want.	Where are the special places in your village? Where do people gather and/or run into each other?	What makes your village unique? How would you describe it? Why do you choose to live here?	What are your hopes for the village in the future? What are your concerns? Is there something that you wish the village had that it does not have now?
Otter Creek	I own a business in one of the villages	Acadia national park	Very quaint but still has everything you need	Special places are the otter creek market, it has picnic tables to meet at, and the park across the street. People gather at the market or in their homes, or meet out at specific places outside of otter creek	Great value for the money, still feels very local	I hope that it stay affordable. I wish it had a pharmacy.
Otter Creek	I live in one of the villages year-round	Otter Creek	Waking, hiking, biking, park, cute shops, good breakfast restaurants	In the store but otherwise there are not good year round spots	It's sandwiched between the mountain the park/ocean. It's small and quaint. It's close to BH. My family has lived here since the 1800s.	A coffee shop and rec center for folks to gather.
Otter Creek	None of the above	Otter Creek, Seal Harbor, NEH	Because it is uniquely situated in the middle of a National Park, the natural beauty and ability to enjoy it from your door is the greatest draw. The small town feel used to be a draw but with so many families pushed out by high housing prices and no limits on weekly rentals, the year-round community is no longer available.	The Otter Creek Church (now turned into The Otter Creek Hall) used to be the gathering place when I was growing up. There is no longer a gathering place because there is no year-round community.	Otter Creek has had a very distinct blue-collar, hard-scrabble small-town family feel. It has not been overwhelmed by summer homes and is uniquely situated near Bar Harbor and so much of the national park. I live there because my family history is there. I know all of the paths throughout the village and even some of the non-beaten paths and it is where my heart is.	I have had family in Otter Creek for several generations and know the history of the town. I understand the opportunities that used to be available to my grandparents and even my parents that are no longer available to my generation and my children. As much as I do not agree with limitations imposed by government entities, I do believe that there must be limitations on the use of homes for weekly and short-term rentals and the number of homes that one individual/family/LLC can own in the town, particularly when they do not vote or are listed as year-round residents in the town. We need to find ways to encourage more year-round residents to live in the town and keep housing costs down. I would even agree to higher property taxes for non-year-round residents (if that doesn't already exist). The other problem that I have with the Village of Otter Creek is that the zoning is limited, obstructing the abilities of individuals to start businesses that used to exist within the community within the last 50 years. There needs to be some flexibility and assessment in the zoning abilities. I would like the town to fight for the residents of Otter Creek to maintain access to the fishing pier in Otter Creek Cove. We have a wonderful fishing and agricultural history in Otter Creek and we need to be able to maintain those options.
Otter Creek	None of the above	Otter Creek, Seal Harbor NEH.	The town of mount desert is unusual and that it has access to all the things you want in a natural environment – ocean, ocean beaches, ocean cliffs, quiet roads, mountains, off-road hiking mountain biking, freshwater lakes, four seasons, busy and quiet locales, friendly vibe and civility.	On the paths, walking through the village at the store or meeting house, family gatherings, parades, school activities, town meetings.	Auto Creek has a very attractive location for those looking for peace away from the bustle of Northeast Harbor or Bar Harbor. It has easy access to the national park either on foot bike or car. In the winter it is especially quiet again with activities during the winter to include ice fishing, ice-skating, snowshoeing, Snow skiing cross-country and snowmobiling. It has a long history and a certain pride and it's local flavor. Some of the characters who have influenced that history include Stevie and Dennis Smith, Mike Bracey and others who have been leading efforts to improve the village as well as the family such as the walls, Davises, traces, and Smiths who have been here for multiple if not double figure generations now .	My hopes are that it continues to be a rural in nature, woody and mountain access location with minimal commercial activity, a welcoming attitude to those who come to vacation and recreate here and a strong relationship and positive growth relationship between the village and the national park.
Seal Harbor	None of the above	Seal Harbor	I am a 4th generation summer resident of Mount Desert Island. I have loved the island my entire life and am fortunate to share that love with my children and grandchildren. Its extraordinary natural beauty, the peacefulness and simplicity of life, the few changes that have occurred over the past century, along with the lovely people who live there, are a rare combination of factors that make it the special place it is. It's a haven from our busy, noisy world and our time there is always restorative and inspiring.	The Seal Harbor Village Green, the Seal Harbor Beach and the nearby trails are special places. I run into neighbors while walking on the Seal Harbor roads and trails, at the Post Office, the Lighthouse Restaurant, the Library, the Village Green, the village cafe (when there is one), the Seal Harbor Beach, the Yacht Club, the Town Dock and the Harbor Club. Many of us also get together at one another's homes throughout the summer.	It's a small, quiet, charming village that is has not changed much for a century or more. It's close to as it was when my great grandparents spent time here. I choose to own property in Seal Harbor because living there allows time to slow down, reminds us of the important things in life, offers the restoration and inspiration of the natural world, and nourishes our souls. Seal Harbor hasn't been ruined yet, as so many other charming seaside villages have. We are extremely grateful to have the opportunity to enjoy its peacefulness, simplicity and beauty.	I hope the village does not change much at all. I hope it doesn't grow much and doesn't invite more tourists and more residents. I hope that it provides affordable year round housing for the winter community, however hopefully in existing structures rather than new ones. My concerns are that it could become crowded, busy, noisy and impersonal. All the things we go there to escape from. I'm concerned it could lose its quiet, unique community feeling and become like other tourist villages that lose their way and are no longer recognizable, serving only those who pass through, not the locals. I'm concerned about increased traffic and the beach and green being over crowded. I'm concerned about multiple rentals, particularly short-term, and the influx of transient residents who have no investment in the village, or the island, and take what they want from it and move on. I'm concerned about rising real estate costs causing further gentrification and making it difficult for year rounders to afford local housing. I'm concerned that newcomers, and those with resources, might want to change it into their vision rather than honoring it as it's been for decades.

Seal Harbor	None of the above	Seal Harbor and Northeast Harbor	Availability of services, maintenance of community assets (parks, beaches, municipal wharves and ramps), form of government	Park, beach, post office, town pier, churches, trails and local businesses	Very quiet money, not in your face. Not commercialized. Only truly sand beach on the island. Have a family history that goes back to the founding of the village.	Hope our commercial enterprises, such as they are, remain - Lighthouse Inn & Restaurant, Post Office, The Rusticator, the Naturalist Notebook, and the Acadia Outdoor Center. Minor change overs or additions are welcome but not major growth. Minor residential growth is welcome within established residential areas but not new subdivision. Affordable housing for year round residents and workers should be encouraged.
Seal Harbor	None of the above	Seal Harbor	There are a number of reasons why the Town of Mount Desert is a great place to live. As a long-time summer resident of Seal Harbor, I especially appreciate this village and surrounding area for its natural beauty. We are fortunate to have many ways to access Acadia National Park. Seal Harbor's large natural harbor and sand beach provide residents many ways to experience the sea, both recreationally and through traditional maritime occupations.  The Town of Mount Desert community includes year-round residents and summer residents. While many of our local businesses are situated in Northeast Harbor, a few businesses and independent service-providers are still found in Seal Harbor and neighboring Otter Creek. Bar Harbor and Southwest Harbor, with their larger schools and excellent medical facilities, are a few miles away. In addition to our local town government and related branches, there are numerous community organizations, including churches, libraries, village improvement societies, garden clubs, to name a few.	Seal Harbor Beach and Village Green are among the special places in this village. Residents frequently run into each other at the Seal Harbor Post Office and along Main Street.	My family has owned a summer cottage in Seal Harbor for nearly one hundred years. My cousins, my children and grandchildren all treasure their friendships and experiences from many summers in Seal Harbor.	1. First, I hope the Seal Harbor Post Office will continue to offer window hours with a postal clerk on duty, on a regular schedule. The Seal Harbor community should be able to rely on this service from the U.S. Postal Service. 2. Second, I hope the Town of Mount Desert will work together with the State of Maine and with Acadia National Park, to assure road and traffic safety. In particular, I am concerned about a pedestrian crossing - across Route 3 - between the Day Mountain trail and the Day Mountain parking area. This crossing is especially hazardous for southbound pedestrians descending from the mountain trail. Due to the curve and slope of the roadway, visibility is very limited, and vehicle speeds tend to be too fast at this point. For safety's sake, I hope more signage will be installed to warn both drivers and pedestrians. I would also suggest a painted crosswalk for the Day Mountain crossing (similar to the painted crosswalks near Seal Harbor Beach and Village Green crossings).
Seal Harbor	I live in one of the villages year-round	NEH Family Cottage on Manchester Point, Somes Sound, Sound, NE Harbor (Fleet),	<b>I spent every summer but one in NEH (a Fred Savage designed cottage on Manchester Point) from the time I was 3 weeks old (my 16th was missed) until becoming an adult. It is the place my family gathers to be together. I bought my house in Seal Harbor in 2000, but had lived in my family's guest house for 2 years after becoming involved in the Christmas Festival as the Chair of the Board of the Great Harbor Maritime Museum in NEH.</b>  <b>I am fortunate enough to own a sailboat that I race, but most of my time is spent in the community: Island Housing Trust, Saint Mary's by-the-Sea, Acadia Community Theater, Acadia Senior College, MDI Photo Club, Town of MD Sustainability Committee, NEH Fleet Green Team, and ACTT's Zero Waste Committee. I created a NP (NEHIP) to consider Main Street NEH's future, mostly aesthetic. (I had experience in Urban Design from City Life: Boston's award winning at Post Office Square, Boston.)</b>	The Post Office, FT Brown, Neighborhood House,	Well, it is small. Filled with intelligent people from everywhere, I found a house with light! (unlike my apt in Boston), I was married a Seal Harbor man for a while so became connected to the Community. I knew many wonderful of employees of the Rockefeller family from I was a Board Member of the VIS.	I am very concerned about workforce housing. Many summer residents have been generous by hosting events for IHT, but we need to engage and commit everyone. And be creative!
Somesville	I live in one of the villages year-round, I have school-age kids	Jordan Pond, Hadlock ponds, carriage roads and trails	Beautiful scenery and a friendly community	Somesville library, Post Office, Community School, Somesville Landing, Somes-Meynell Sanctuary, Somes Pond	Quiet, but close to the beauty of Acadia.	More walkability and bike-ability through better sidewalks and bike lanes. Walking options are quite limited beyond a certain point. I wish I could bike to Bar Harbor safely, but I don't feel safe on the roads with a barrier for a bike lane. My kids go to the Community School, but the walk there is treacherous because of fast cars, no crosswalk, and a sidewalk that ends too soon.
Somesville	I live in one of the villages year-round, I have school-age kids	Upper Hadlock Pond, Parkman Mountain, Bald Peak, Jordan Pond, Somes-Meynell	I like that Mount Desert is home to many beautiful places in Acadia National Park. I also love that The Community School of Mount Desert Island is located here, right down the street from our house.	Special places include: The Community School of Mount Desert Island, the white bridge, Somesville Library Association, Somesville Landing, Somes Pond.	Somesville is unique because it doesn't have the shopping or attraction of other villages on the island, which makes it pretty quiet. While it is small and quiet, it offers a lot of beauty. I choose to live here because it's close to the school where we send our kids, it's close to many places in Acadia, and it is, as mentioned, quiet.	I hope that Somesville will improve signage and consequences for speed limits. I have serious concerns about how fast people drive--tourists and locals alike. I would also love to see better sidewalks and crosswalks, especially near The Community School. We walk to school many days, and while we wear reflective gear and follow the rules of the road, people still speed by us.
Somesville	I live in one of the villages year-round, I have school-age kids	Somesville, Northeast Harbor & Pretty Marsh	Services (ex.trash, schools); high quality of life, strong municipal leadership;	Somesville: Gathering Places: 1. Library; 2. Fosters on the Run; 3. Post Office; 4; Somesville Meeting House; Beech Hill Farm; 5. The Community School Favorite Places: Cemetery; Somesville Landing; Somes Pond; Long Pond;	1. Very central, on the Island. 2. Historical and quaint; 3. Beautiful; 4. Low key pace and rhythm	It would be nice for more opportunities to bring people together, and foster more community. Except for the Library's occasional winter soups, there isn't really a place to bring the community together during the off season



Somesville	I live in one of the villages year-round	Acadia National Park, Northeast Harbor, Somesville	Having the park within walking distance is good for the soul! I like the seasonality of the area too; it's nice to be able to slow down in the winters.	I live in the Town of Mount Desert (Somesville?) but spend most of my time in Northeast Harbor. The gathering spot for most is the post office, Brown's Hardware and for a certain group, Main Street Variety. Since Covid, the Rising Tide park at 131 Main Street has also become a popular spot to meet.	We are unique because we have a group of property owners that pay 80% of our tax base but use only a small portion of our services. We are very lucky to fund excellent schools and services with funds that come only in a small percentage from local pockets. I live here because it's where my work is and I love the proximity of the park.	My hope for the future is balance for, participation of and sensitivity to the people who have worked hard to make a living, own a property and find a way to survive here. My concern is that we change the character of our unique town. We have non profit groups trying to change the towns and some are sensitive and others are not. My concern is that the group paying the most in taxes is not paying attention while zoning and ordinances are being changed, boards being petitioned, discussions and input being muted from opposing views and projects are rubber stamped and bulldozed through. We need parking (and any project that is approved needs to be held to requiring their tenants to parking offsite if that is the agreement), we need a grocery store, we need a well maintained public bathroom in town and we need seasonal housing. Our town is above all a seasonal town and we cannot even provide what we need to successfully run it as such. I'd also like to see a BOS that invites discussion rather than rolling their collective eyes and a new town manager to bring in a new era.
Somesville	I live in one of the villages year-round	Long Pond	It has a great hometown feel. I am proud to have grown up here and also have my kids do the same.	Pond End of Long Pond, Somes Pond, Somesville Landing, Library, Church, Massonic Hall, Echo Lake	It is like lots of other coastal villages. Very quiet in the winter and in the summer super busy. I choose to live here because it is a beautiful place, with a great school system.	That it stay small and quiet. I liked when I was a kid and could bike down to the landing and swim and fish off the dock with a group of village friends. I don't think my kids will be able to do that. Its to bad the town doesn't have public access to the harbor and marina.
Somesville	I live in one of the villages year-round, I have school-age kids	Somes Pond, Echo Lake, Northeast Harbor, seal harbor playground/beach, little long pond	Beautiful scenery, good schools, good local businesses, good community	Brookside cemetery, the library (sorta), Fire Station (voting) Beech Hill Farm, Somes pond	It's quieter, more rural, honestly people don't really have a choice, it's really about where you can afford to be.	HOUSING! That is number one. Commercial zoning needs to increase as well. We need to allow more multi-family homes. We need more public community space as well. Limit the size and scale of houses, limit air b&b's, make NEH a place for the local community, force out the summer folks (okay that's controversial but they annoy me) How can we make this place affordable for business owners and entrepreneurs?