



**Stonington's
Economic Resiliency
Strategy:**
Opportunities for Investment

A Vision for the Future

Stonington's 2018 Comprehensive Plan

The Town of Stonington shall be an affordable and desirable place to live, work, and raise a family.

The traditional marine-based fisheries and industries shall continue to thrive and be supported by the Town.

The Town shall retain its scenic resources, working waterfront, culture, natural environment, and the historical buildings that give the Town its distinctive character.

Tourism and non-marine related industry and businesses shall gradually increase to provide new employment opportunities and a hedge against potential fishery stock reductions.

The Town shall have quality housing options for low and middle-income families, senior citizens, those requiring long-term care, and seasonal workers.

The Town shall have quality education opportunities in the community.





Imperative for Action



Lower Income Levels & Higher Than Average Poverty Levels for Hancock County

Stonington is the oldest population in the county with an average age of 55.4 compared to Hancock County's 49.5 or the State of Maine's 45.5. 19% of Stonington households are below the poverty line, a larger percentage than in comparison geographies. 21% of Stonington households earn less than \$25,000.



Declining School Enrollments: a 12% loss in 10 years

Inadequate education, workforce preparation, and skill levels to support current and emerging workforce needs.



Increasing Seasonality and Declining Opportunities

The lack of housing, schools, and year-round services create a cycle of reduction in resident jobs, businesses, and property opportunities that in turn impact seasonal services. Seasonality approaching island carrying capacity, with over 140 active short-term rental properties in 2022.



Year-Round Residents own only 45% of combined assessed value of property

Year-round residents own only 41% of the land area; less than 50% of downtown; and approximately 20% of the shoreline. As of 2018, a near-term need for an estimated 30 housing units for working families in the 18- to 60-year-old class.

Core Strategies

For Economic Diversity and Resiliency



Retain & Attract Year-Round Population & Workforce

To support year-round
business and economic
opportunities



Support the “Blue” Economy

Lobstering, fishing,
small-scale aquaculture,
marine trades



Maintain & Invest in Infrastructure, Policies, and Practices

Supportive to local
value-added economic
opportunity & resiliency

Current Actions



Energy

Awarded an ETIPP (Energy Transitions Initiative Partnership Project) grant from the Department of Energy to identify the means by which to secure and sustain a cleaner, higher capacity, more reliable local energy grid.



Transportation

Awarded Maine Shore and Harbor and Coastal Community Planning Grants for sea level rise adaptations along Fifield Point Road and Stonington Harbor. Working in collaboration with the Town of Deer Isle and Maine DOT to rebuild the Causeway and Bridge to sustain safe, persistent connections to the mainland. Using federal ARPA funds for plans to raise Oceanville Road and as match for a Village Partnership Initiative for downtown improvements.



Housing

Secured federal Community Designated Spending to purchase the Odd Fellows Hall. A second CDS application is alive in the appropriations process for purchase and conversion of the Methodist Church. The Town has also established a Housing Reserve Fund and voters passed a new Short-Term Housing Registration Ordinance by a 2:1 margin in March 2023.

Seeking Investment in Maine's #1 Port

Neither taxes nor charitable contributions alone will sustain this island year-round

Develop Financial Capacity

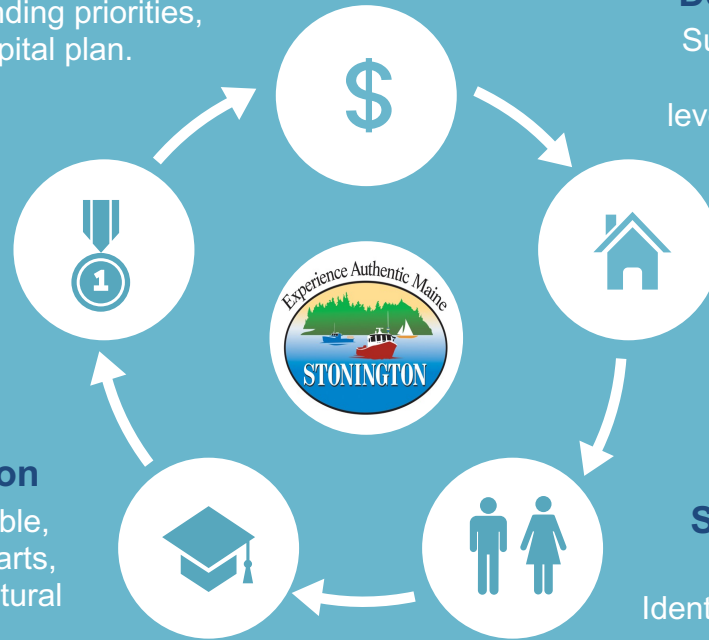
To support funding priorities, including a capital plan.

Increase Visibility

Continue to develop communications and marketing for unique branding of place and products and to attract funding/people/resources.

Develop Sustainable Visitation

Develop longer-term, more compatible, and higher-value visitation through arts, recreation, cultural heritage, and natural resource-based approaches.



Develop Workforce Housing

Support workforce recruitment via affordable housing strategies, leveraging Town Housing Reserve, water and sanitary districts.

Recruit Workforce

Support workforce and schools via housing strategies and active recruitment of young families.

Support Entrepreneurship & Workforce Development

Identify and fund opportunities, training and support for small businesses.

25 Years of Public-Private Investment & Innovation in Stonington

SAMPLE LIST (incomplete!)

- 44 North Coffee
- Coldwater Seafood (Stonington Sea Products)
- Greenhead Lobster
 - Harbor Cafe
- Island Community Center
- Maine Center for Coastal Fisheries
 - Opera House Arts
- Osprey's Echo and Sea Kayak Stonington
- Stonington School Building
 - Stonecutters Kitchen



You Too Can Make a Difference

- ✓ Support Town priorities and strategies for use of Town properties
- ✓ Sell or donate land and/or buildings to the Town for housing development
- ✓ Invest in a Main Street business startup
- ✓ Startup a “blue economy” business – such as Coldwater Seafood
- ✓ Support our Connectivity Hubs project for Workforce Transitions and Aging in Place
- ✓ Setup a Community Trust to be used for year-round economic resiliency

*“...ask not
what your
[community]
can do for you –
ask what you can
do for your
[community].”
- adapted from
John F. Kennedy
1961 inaugural speech*



**THANK
YOU**



Kathleen Billings, Town Manager
Linda Nelson, Economic & Community
Development Director
www.stoningtonmaine.org
econdev@stoningtonmaine.org