

## **CHAPTER 5. A VISION FOR OGUNQUIT**

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(Revised 2-14-03)

Ogunquit has something for everyone. In winter, it is a friendly, quiet, close-knit community with caring neighbors. In summer, it is bustling with activity, arts, culture, sophistication, and a worldly-charm. Add spectacular natural areas and a community rich in diversity, and the result is a town with an unsurpassed quality of life.

### **A. Special Places**

Ogunquit, with just four square miles, is surrounded by Wells, York, and the Atlantic Ocean. Despite its diminutive size, it is bursting with special places that define the community. The Marginal Way, with its cliffs, views, and many surprises, is at the heart of the community's identity. It is known not only in Southern Maine but also around New England as a truly unique seaside trail. The Marginal Way is book ended to the north and south by the spectacular Ogunquit Beach and Perkins Cove. These three places are the natural jewels in Ogunquit's crown.

Behind this waterfront bulwark lie Ogunquit's cultural resources. The Ogunquit Museum of American Art, the Barn Gallery (formerly the Ogunquit Arts Collaborative), the Ogunquit Playhouse, the Ogunquit Heritage Museum at the Winn House, and Beach Plum Farm are the core of these places. The library, recreation facilities and programs, Dorothea Grant Common, Downtown, and densely packed historical homes and buildings create a special atmosphere in town that attracts people from all walks of life.

Farther inland are open spaces, farms, woodlands, and wildlife areas. Other special parks, resources, and viewscapes are scattered throughout town. All of these places are important to the residents and serve to define what Ogunquit is.

### **B. A Vision for Ogunquit in 2020**

Ogunquit will continue to be a desirable year-round community with a friendly, diverse population. Ogunquit will also continue to be an attractive summer resort visited by travelers from around the world attracted by its natural environment, diverse cultural offerings, and its pedestrian friendly, car-optional setting. But in 2020, the balance between these two divergent roles of Ogunquit will be better maintained so that tourism does not adversely impact year-round residents while the businesses that serve tourists are welcomed as a positive part of the community.

Ogunquit 2020 will include the following elements:

- Ogunquit Beach will continue to be the premier ocean beach in Maine and the dune system will have been protected. Water quality will be outstanding allowing for a full range of human and natural resource uses.
- The river and stream corridors and other significant natural resources in the community will provide residents and visitors with a contrast to and relief from the village environment and will be protected from development or degradation.
- The area west of the Turnpike will be permanently preserved primarily as working rural land and open space in conjunction with the property owners in this part of Ogunquit.
- The downtown area will continue to be a pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use "New England village" in which the use of personal automobiles is minimized and the "boundary" of the pedestrian area is expanded beyond its current limits.
- The Route One corridor outside of the downtown will continue to be a location for transient housing but its expansion will have been limited to reflect the capacity of the community. The visual quality of this corridor will have been improved and provisions for pedestrians will have been upgraded.
- Shore Road will become more of a pedestrian-friendly corridor with improved sidewalks and crosswalks serving a mixed-use area with retail and transient housing uses. Additional transient housing will be limited to small-scale operations that are compatible with the area and that do not overtax the street and sidewalk network.
- Perkins Cove will maintain the charm of a New England fishing village while accommodating tourist commercial uses in a pedestrian environment. Parking within Perkins Cove will be limited.
- The community's older residential neighborhoods will continue to be desirable areas in which to live year-round and these areas will be protected from encroachment by nonresidential uses and the negative impacts of tourism such as traffic, parking, and noise.
- Good quality residential development that provides pedestrian options and preserves significant amounts of open space will continue to occur east of the Maine Turnpike on a controlled basis

to allow for the growth of the year-round population.

- Traffic in and passing through Ogunquit on Route One will be reduced and better managed. Parking for day-trippers, tour buses, and similar short duration visits will be relocated to the outskirts of the community and the network of trolleys or other mass transit options will be expanded to allow visitors, and even residents, to leave their cars outside of the downtown area for many trips.
- Ogunquit will be a model for a pedestrian-oriented, car-optional, tourist destination that allows visitors and seasonal residents to accomplish most of their need to move about the community without the use of a private automobile. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities will be improved and expanded and the trolley network expanded.
- The options for traveling to Ogunquit will be expanded so that visitors do not need an automobile to come to Ogunquit.

This broad vision for the community translates into the following neighborhood visions for the various geographic areas of the community:

In 2020 the **Downtown** will be the core of the community, containing the central services, shops, and restaurants that serve the community. Businesses will be proud to operate here, and new businesses will be attracted (including convenience shopping, pharmacy, unique little shops, boutiques, a crafts collaborative, an outdoor café, and a hardware store, as well as improving the quality of existing shops). Pedestrians will be able to move about in safety and with ease, thanks to sidewalk improvements, better traffic flow, new bike paths, and designated crosswalks. Despite these changes, the Downtown will retain its New England character (highlighted by lamp post lighting and new landscaping).

**Route One** will continue to be the principal corridor into and out of the Downtown, but it will have a noticeably different feel. The New England character and pedestrian environment established in the Downtown will extend along this corridor. Pedestrians will be able to move around more easily and in greater safety due to new bike lanes and sidewalks along Route One, including extending to the Ogunquit Playhouse. Vehicular traffic will be more prominent here, but commercial growth especially additional transient housing will have been controlled. Ocean views will be protected and the streetscape will be more attractive with trees, granite curbing, improved lighting, and underground utility lines.

In 2020, the historic character of the **Shore Road** will be preserved. Expansion or new development will have been curtailed, or at least where it does occur, it will have conformed to the historical character of the area. Aesthetics will be improved

with new tree plantings, new lighting, new sidewalks, and granite curbing. Pedestrian safety will be improved with clearly designated crosswalks and improved signage. All this is to be accomplished with special attention to the balance of residential and commercial interests.

**Perkins Cove** will retain its look and feel of quaintness by maintaining its role as a functioning harbor (allowing parking for fishermen and preserving fishermen’s rights and privileges). This role will be complemented by focusing future commercial development, if any, on uses and activities that enhance the pedestrian character of Perkins Cove. New sidewalks and improved lighting will be added in conjunction with these new pedestrian-focused businesses. The amount of public parking will be reduced if alternatives are developed, and the amount of green space and pedestrian areas increased, thereby making the area more pedestrian friendly. The pedestrian draw bridge will be maintained as it is.

The residential areas **East of Route One** will retain their current character. This character is defined by historical homes, views to the ocean and estuary, rights-of-way to the waterfront, and buildings that complement each other. Single-family housing will continue to be promoted; additional condominiums, timeshares, inns, restaurants, or multifamily housing units will be discouraged. Better lighting and new infrastructure improvements (water and sewer) will serve these neighborhoods, and parking regulations near the footbridge will be enforced.

Residential areas **West of Route One** will counterbalance the denser development in the eastern part of town. Wooded areas and open spaces will be preserved for recreation and habitat protection. This area will include a range of housing affordable to various groups with a range of densities from village-like to more rural in character. Campgrounds/RV parks will continue to be prohibited to maintain the rural landscape. Ogunquit will partner with other towns and organizations to protect open areas and wildlife habitat (land trusts) as well as to provide services (for example, continuing to partner with Wells and York to provide fire/rescue services to this area of town).

## **C. Tourism in 2020**

Ogunquit wouldn’t be Ogunquit without tourism. Tourism has its benefits, but it also has many costs. In 2020, Ogunquit will have better balanced these competing pros and cons by:

- **preserving Ogunquit as a unique place** by retaining the character of the town (perhaps through an expanded design review process),
- **maintaining a resource-based tourist experience** that attracts tourists to the town’s cultural and environmental resources,

- ***maintaining support for local businesses*** (perhaps by facilitating the creation of proper seasonal-employee housing through less stringent zoning requirements or creating a welcome plan for out-of-area employees),
- ***establishing user fees to offset the costs to property owners*** (for example, charging more for parking or taxing room rentals),
- ***improving the traffic situation***, and in particular addressing truck traffic in town and the toll situation on the Maine Turnpike, to reduce traffic and improve air quality, and
- ***rigorously and continually examining the tax balance among businesses, residents, and seasonal property owners.***

#### **D. Parking and Traffic**

In 2020, there will be less vehicular traffic on the town's major roads and the Downtown will have a safer and more pedestrian-oriented pattern of use. There will be an expanded role for public transportation and safer alternatives for pedestrians, which will include bike paths, better sidewalks, and an expanded trolley system. Public parking areas will be less visible, but still efficient and able to conveniently get people to their destination. Finally, the Town will push for an alternative toll structure on the Maine Turnpike that eliminates the incentive to travel on Route One through the Downtown.