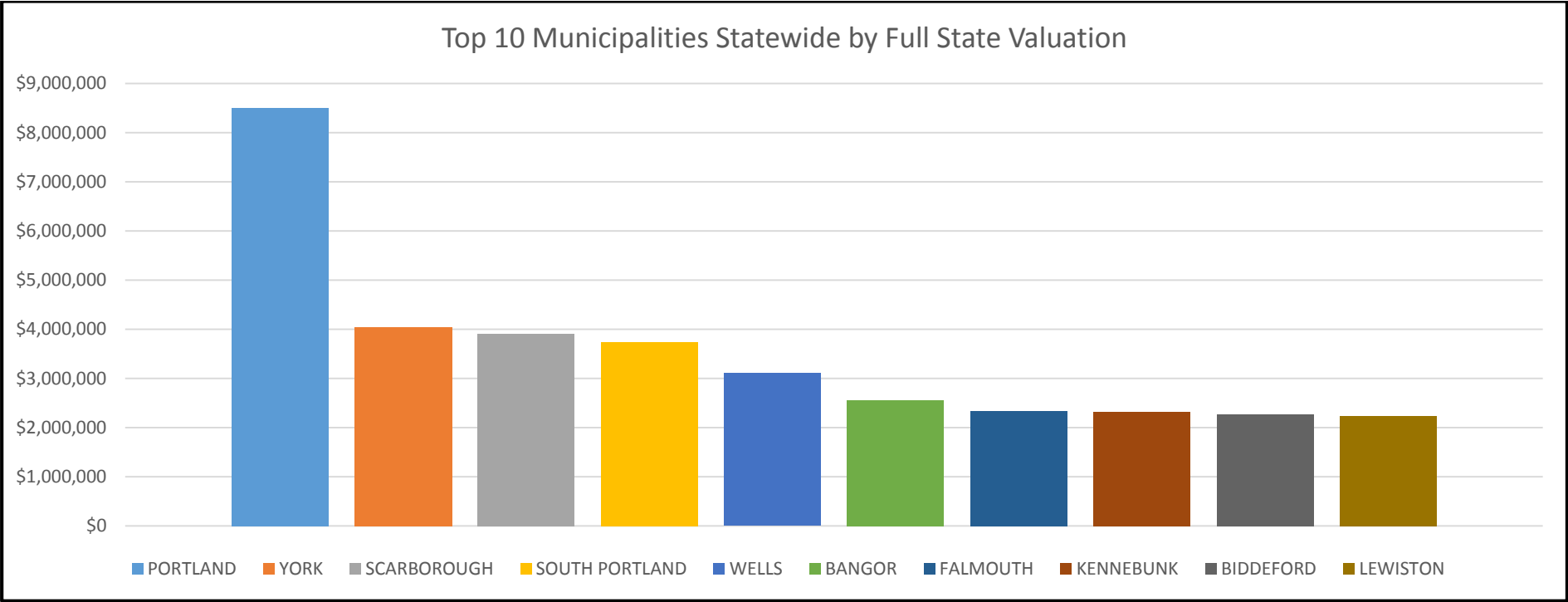


The four Listen to Learn sessions hosted by Town Manager Tom Hall and Superintendent of Schools Julie Kukenberger have wrapped up for this year. Seventy residents, not including Town and School elected officials, came out to share their thoughts and ask questions. Each session unfolded organically with resident questions and comments setting the agenda.

Starting this month in the newsletter and on the [Town's Facebook page](#) we will take up a topic we heard in these sessions was important to residents. I thought we would start with economic development. We heard from different people at each session questions surrounding economic development; how does the Town attract new development, what is the cost of new development, what are the Town's plans for development in the future. In the February 15 edition of this newsletter we will feature the Scarborough Economic Development Corporation, SEDCO. For this edition I will share some data and talk about why economic development matters to the tax rate and to the feel of our community.

Let's start with how the Town of Scarborough compares to the surrounding communities in 2017 Full State Valuation (FSV). Please note that the State of Maine calculates the annual FSV based on sales data from two years prior. This means that the values shown below were reported in 2017 but reflect 2015. Below are two charts, the first shows how we compare within Cumberland and York Counties and the second shows how we compare to municipalities across the state. In both comparisons Scarborough ranks third largest in FSV. This high value reflects not only our beach front properties but also the dense commercial development along Payne Rd and Route 1 and the light industrial development that fills our industrial park. We estimate that between 18% and 20% of our FSV comes from commercial and industrial development. The Haigis Parkway is zoned for a wide range of commercial development and the potential for a wide mix of development at Scarborough Downs means that Scarborough is in a strong position to continue commercial and industrial growth.



While the State's Full State Valuation figure is used to determine General Purpose Aid for Education and Revenue Sharing amounts, towns also assess their own value and use this value to determine the annual tax rate. The formula for the tax rate is:

Amount needed to be raised by taxation/Town's assessed value = Tax rate

To decrease the tax rate a town needs to either decrease services and/or increase revenue (this will decrease the amount need to be raised by taxation) or the town needs to increase the assessed value.

Economic development in the commercial and industrial sectors is seen as financial advantageous because it often increases the assessed value more than it increases the demand for services that drive increases in expenditures. While this is often true, there are costs associated with every type of development; businesses still require Police, Fire, Public Works, Codes, Assessing, Billing, and Planning Department services.

The feel of a town is also impacted by the style of development and the areas of a town where different types of development are allowed. That's why we go through a Comprehensive Plan process every ten years. How we want Scarborough to look and feel in the future depends on land use and zoning decisions that we make now. We can all agree that walking along Route 1 in Oak Hill feels very different than walking along Ocean Ave. at Higgins Beach, East Grand Ave. in Pine Point, or your local neighborhood loop. Are there businesses and parking lots? Are there large single family homes with large yards? Smaller homes with smaller yards? Are there traffic lights or stop signs? Sidewalks or shoulders? Each of us may have a different idea about what makes a neighborhood an ideal place to live and we may all have different ideas for how we would like Scarborough to grow and develop.

The website, scarboroughengaged.org, is designed to gather your thoughts and questions about how Scarborough moves into the future. Economic development is a key component of these discussions. Please take a few minutes and head over to scarboroughengaged.org and share your vision for your community.