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Memorandum

To: LUPC Commissioners
CC: Benjamin Godsoe, Acting Executive Director
From: Stacy Benjamin, Acting Planning Manager; Megan Lamb, Senior Planner; David Ludwig, Senior Planner
Date: August 7, 2025
Re: Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) Update Progress Report

At the December 2024 regular business meeting, Commissioners approved the initiation of a process to update the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (Plan or [CLUP](#)). The proposed process includes a phased approach, with a pre-process to identify priority issues, assess data needs, collect available data, and garner input on the planning process design before the official update and adoption processes begin. At the June 2025 regular business meeting, staff presented an update on the pre-process steps taken to date and requested Commissioner feedback on some of the next steps, including initial outreach. A report summarizing the results of the initial outreach interviews completed to date and a more comprehensive overview of the current status of other pre-process steps will be presented at the August Commission meeting.

Background

The enabling legislation for the Land Use Planning Commission charges the Commission with preparing “an official comprehensive land use plan...for the unorganized and deorganized areas of the State.”¹ The statute further clarifies, “The commission must use the plan as a guide in developing specific land use standards and delineating district boundaries and guiding development and generally fulfilling the purposes of this chapter.” The most recent CLUP was adopted in 2010. Many of the major policy objectives stated in the 2010 Plan have been achieved, or significant progress has been made toward them. For this and other reasons, as identified in previous Commission memos and discussions, the Commission determined an update to the CLUP is warranted.

¹ [Title 12 M.R.S. § 685-C](#)

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To help generate the best possible outcomes, the Commission has outlined a phased approach for a CLUP update. The first phase, or pre-process, includes gathering information to help identify priority issues and inform the structure and process for the second phase. The second phase is the actual process to update the CLUP and includes much broader outreach to landowners and interested parties, developing goals and policies and completing the draft Plan. The third and final phase is the adoption process that involves review by the Commission, leadership at the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry (DACF), and the Maine Legislature.

The pre-process is designed to allow the Commission to collect information on its service area and changes since 2010, identify priority issues, and obtain public input into the update process. Steps in the pre-process include:

- Initial outreach (perspective interviews) and results
- Informational sessions
- Adoption of guiding principles
- A public survey and project website
- Public workshops

Below is a summary of the progress made to date for each step.

Initial Outreach (Perspective Interviews)

Following approval to initiate a CLUP update, Commission staff reached out to over 50 individuals and groups from different areas of interest to better understand current issues and concerns for the LUPC's service area and get feedback on the CLUP update process. Staff qualitatively analyzed the comments received and have prepared a draft summary report of the results (Attachment A). Based on the feedback, staff identified three categories of input: issues and concerns (nine topic areas); data that will be important for the CLUP update (internal and external); and input on the CLUP update process (four topic areas).

Key takeaways from the initial outreach include:

- Interviewees are concerned about how changes in traditional industries (for example, forest products and tourism):
 - will be accommodated by the LUPC in terms of rule flexibility;
 - may impact the character of the service area; and
 - might affect recreational access within the service area.
- County officials face challenges in providing emergency responses, road maintenance, and other services in the unorganized areas, both in remote locations and areas near rural hubs.
- The population is growing rapidly in some areas, mostly from second homeowners with higher incomes.

- The availability and cost of housing is an issue and creates challenges for long-time residents and new residents. The lack of affordable housing also impacts the ability of businesses to find workers.
- There is concern about the environmental impacts from development and the increased intensity of recreational activity in the service area, particularly in terms of water quality. There are fears that more development along shorelines may impact water quality, and that more intense trail use will increase erosion and sedimentation.
- Multiple interviewees identified issues related to current LUPC staffing levels and high staff turnover, including long permit processing times, long callback waiting times, and a lack of enforcement capacity.

This outreach and analysis highlights many of the current issues and concerns in the Commission's service area along with conflicting values among different perspectives. The results of this initial outreach will help staff develop a broader-reaching public survey in the coming months (more on this below). The topics and issues identified to date will provide a focus for the data provided and questions asked by the survey.

Additional feedback will be collected through informational sessions at Commission meetings, the survey, and future workshops, with more perspectives added to the initial topics and new topics potentially identified. Staff are working on an analysis of how the issues and concerns within identified topic areas intersect and overlap with each other. Some of the issues and concerns raised by interviewees do not fall within the scope of the Commission's authority, though they may be indirectly affected by LUPC's policies and practices. It will be important to distill the Commission's role in each identified issue and focus the planning process on those areas within the Commission's purview.

Informational Sessions

A series of informational sessions is planned to allow the Commission to learn more about specific topic areas. These sessions will take place during the Commission's regular business meetings and will include presentations by topic experts and/or roundtable discussions, with a question-and-answer portion to allow Commissioners to learn more from subject matter experts. Each informational session may be structured differently based on the topic and number of presenters. Commissioners may also want to revisit some of the topics at later meetings.

Staff propose including a one-page summary of the upcoming session in the materials that are sent to Commissioners prior to each meeting. Summaries will include a brief overview of the topic, along with session participants, their affiliations, and their areas of expertise. Specific questions on each topic may be highlighted in the summary, and there will be time for Commissioners to ask other questions of the presenters. Once the informational session has occurred, highlights and takeaways from the information presented and discussed will be captured for future reference.

The tentative timing and subject of each session are outlined below. The first few are organized based on speaker availability. Some topics are consolidated in response to feedback from the June 2025 Commission meeting.

- September 2025: Land and Water Conservation
- October 2025: Forestry
- November 2025: Flood Hazards and Resilience
- February 2026: Recreation
- March 2026: Housing and Development
- April 2026: Lakes
- May 2026: Agriculture

Guiding Principles

Staff recommend the Commission adopt a set of guiding principles for the CLUP update process. Principles would provide a foundation for the Commission's and participants' efforts, no matter how the process unfolds. They may include anything that is important to the Commission to help guide the process. Below are some examples of potential guiding principles for discussion at the August meeting. Many of these were drawn from the Commission's existing Community Guided Planning and Zoning (CGPZ) process.

1. Statutory Consistency

The CLUP and its development must be consistent with the LUPC statutory purpose and the plan update process outlined in 12 M.R.S. §681 and §685-C.

2. Regional Representation and Economic Viability:

The LUPC (and an updated CLUP) must place increased emphasis on:

- Serving the regions in which the unorganized and deorganized areas are located;
- Honoring the rights and participation of residents and property owners; and
- Encouraging and facilitating regional economic viability.

3. Public Engagement

The CLUP update process must include a robust, collaborative, and broad-reaching public engagement process. The Commission must seek diverse perspectives and use varying strategies to ensure all voices are heard. The process must be locally desired and driven, be transparent, and allow for broad participation by all with an interest in the Commission's service area to ensure a balance of the Plan's vision, goals, and policies across unique regions.

4. Consider Climate Change

The CLUP update process must consider the potential implications of climate change to ensure consistency with statewide and regional policies as well as regional needs within the Commission's service area. The update process should consider and prioritize future

rulemaking or policy development as needed, focusing on policies that are targeted, but also flexible enough to handle likely uncertainty and potentially unforeseen circumstances related to the effects of climate change.

5. Balance Regional Differences

Taken together, the goals and policies of the CLUP must strike a balance between regional uniqueness and jurisdiction-wide consistency in regulatory structure and predictability for property owners.

6. SMART Goals and Policies

The Commission must focus a future CLUP update on actions within the Commission's range of influence and responsibility. One way to capture this principle would be to require SMART policies, or those that are:

- **Specific** – Describe what will be accomplished and the actions to be taken to accomplish the policy.
- **Measurable** – Define what data or metrics will be used to measure the policy and identify a method for collection.
- **Achievable** – Ensure policies are realistically achievable within the Commission's scope and capacity.
- **Relevant** – Identify the key outcomes of each policy and how those outcomes align with the Commission's statutory purpose and the guiding principles.
- **Time-bound** – Set a prioritized timetable with realistic timelines.

The current 2010 CLUP includes many well-meaning and sometimes competing policies encompassing a broad array of activities and recommendations that, in some cases, exceed the scope of the Commission's work. The updated CLUP should be more focused within the Commission's purview and service area.

Website and Public Survey

A CLUP update website is being developed to share information, progress to date, and solicit feedback. A demonstration is planned for Commission review within the next few months. Staff are also developing a public survey. Survey questions will be generated with information learned through interviews, data analysis, and Commission informational session discussions. Staff have connected with University of Maine researchers experienced with rural survey approaches for advice on its design and delivery. Recent surveys by other entities related to the service area will be consulted for insights gained from the results or framing of questions in those surveys. The survey will be distributed primarily via the CLUP update website, with paper options available to those who may not have online access.

Public Workshops

Several facilitated public workshops or community meetings are planned for next spring and summer. Participants will be able to give feedback on the information learned to date, introduce new issues or ideas, reflect on guiding principles for the update process, and offer thoughts on update process models. Participants will also be able to discuss issues and ideas with each other to improve their shared understanding and community connections. Staff are working to secure partnerships and funding to carry out these components and have begun discussions with potential partners.

Pre-process Outcomes

Anticipated outcomes for the pre-process include the following:

1. A foundation of data and information about the LUPC service area, including more accurate permit data, stakeholder values/interests/perspectives, natural resource and development data, and feedback on LUPC policies and practices.
2. Established mechanisms for delivering data and information, and garnering feedback, such as through an interactive survey and website.
3. Adoption of guiding principles for the CLUP update process.
4. A list of key topics/issues to address through CLUP goals, policies, and implementation measures based on pre-process interviews, facilitated regional meetings, and survey responses.
5. A recommended proposal for the update process for Commission consideration.

Staff will report on pre-process components as work continues. As noted, a website is under construction to post findings, reports, and relevant process information for public engagement.

Proposed Timeline

| To Do Item | 2025 | | | | | | | 2026 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep |
| Data collection, analysis, reporting | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Perspective Interviews | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Commission Meetings | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Public Survey | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Facilitated Workshops | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| CLUP Process Proposal | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Attachments:

- A. Summary Report: Initial Outreach for the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) Update

ATTACHMENT A

Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP)
Update Summary Report:

Initial Outreach for the Pre-Process

Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP)

Update Summary Report:

Initial Outreach for the Pre-Process

DRAFT REPORT

August 6, 2025



BUREAU OF RESOURCE INFORMATION AND LAND USE PLANNING
LAND USE PLANNING COMMISSION
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List of Abbreviations

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| BP | Building Permit (residential) |
| Commission | Land Use Planning Commission |
| CLUP | Comprehensive Land Use Plan |
| DP | Development Permit (non-residential) |
| LUPC | Land Use Planning Commission |
| Service Area | The Commission’s Service Area, which includes the unorganized and deorganized territories of Maine as well as certain towns and plantations. |

Background and Objectives

The enabling legislation for the Maine [Land Use Planning Commission](#) (LUPC or the Commission) charges the Commission with preparing “an official comprehensive land use plan...for the unorganized and deorganized areas of the State.”¹ The statute further clarifies, “The commission must use the plan as a guide in developing specific land use standards and delineating district boundaries and guiding development and generally fulfilling the purposes of this chapter.” The most recent Comprehensive Land Use Plan (Plan or CLUP) was adopted in 2010. Many of the major policy objectives stated in the 2010 CLUP have been achieved, or significant progress has been made toward them. At its December 2024 regular business meeting, the Commission approved initiating an update to the CLUP.

The Commission has outlined a phased approach for a CLUP update. The first phase, or pre-process, includes gathering information to help identify priority issues and inform the structure and process for the second phase. The second phase is the actual process to update the CLUP and includes much broader outreach to landowners and interested parties, developing goals and policies and completing the draft plan. The third and final phase is the adoption process that involves review by the Commission, leadership at the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry (DACF), and the Maine Legislature.

To begin the current pre-process, Commission staff conducted interviews with individuals and groups who have unique insights or expertise in topic areas relevant to the Commission’s Service Area and the CLUP. The purpose of this preliminary outreach is to identify potential issues, concerns, and process recommendations. This report presents the findings by summarizing opinions and synthesizing common themes into topic groups, based on the staff’s analysis. This input will help inform later phases of the CLUP pre-process.

The interviews and this report are not intended to be a comprehensive assessment of the issues and concerns related to the Service Area or planning for the CLUP. There will be many additional opportunities for people to provide feedback during the pre-process, and the information presented here will be further expanded and refined as the process unfolds.

Methodology

Commission staff reached out to over 50 individuals and groups via phone calls, emails, or meetings. From that outreach, staff conducted 31 interviews and participated in three group meetings, with the Maine Forest Products Council (MFPC), environmental organizations, and with Regional Planning Organizations (RPOs) (see Table 1). Informational letters about the CLUP update were also sent to leaders of Maine’s five tribal governments. Additionally, the Commission’s five-year review of its Location of Development Rules (Adjacency Rules), conducted in 2024 in the Millinocket region, informed the questions asked of participants, see Appendix A.²

¹ [Title 12 M.R.S. § 685-C](#)

² Land Use Planning Commission [Location of Development \(Adjacency\) Rule Revisions Summary](#)

Table 1. Interviewee Representation

| Interest Area | Number Interviewed | Group Meetings |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| County Officials | 8 | |
| Economic Development | 5 | 1 ¹ |
| Landowners | 2 | 1 ² |
| Local Perspective / Residents | 5 | |
| Environmental | | 1 ³ |
| Recreation | 3 ⁴ | |
| Agriculture | 1 | |
| Adjacency Rules 5-Year Review | | 5 |
| Total | 24 | 3 |

¹ Meeting with Regional Planning Organizations with 11 organizations in attendance.

² Maine Forest Products Council meeting with 24 members in attendance.

³ Meeting with The Nature Conservancy, Appalachian Mountain Club, Maine Audubon, and Natural Resources Council of Maine. One individual from each organization was in attendance.

⁴ Meetings are scheduled with representatives from the Maine Sporting Camp Association, the Maine Professional Guides Association, the Maine Association of Wetland Scientists, and the Maine Association of Professional Soil Scientists (joint MAWS/MAPSS meeting) for August 2025. These perspectives will be added to this summary prior to report finalization.

Interviews were conducted between January and July of 2025.³ Questions focused on the following elements:

1. Issues of concern
2. Data important for the CLUP update
3. Important considerations for the update process

Interviews and meetings were conducted in person or remotely by telephone and video conference. Most lasted approximately 60 minutes, and notes were recorded for all of them.

Notes were discussed by staff and qualitatively analyzed with the software QualCoder.⁴ Statements were evaluated and determined to fit under the three categories of investigation (issues of concern, data needs, and CLUP update process) and were assigned a code or theme. This categorization was challenging because many of the issues are complex and interrelated. Statements relating to more than one topic were assigned to all applicable topics. This analysis does not quantify the number of similar comments made or weigh the responses. In many cases, reported comments were made by a single individual.

³ The Millinocket region interviews for the [Adjacency Rules](#) 5-year report were conducted in 2024.

⁴ Curtain, C. (2024) QualCoder 3.6 [Computer software]. Retrieved from <https://github.com/ccbogel/QualCoder/releases/tag/1.9>

Summary of Feedback

Based on the analysis, staff identified nine themes related to issues and concerns, two categories of data for the CLUP update, and four themes related to the CLUP update (see Appendix B for theme definitions). Themes are summarized below.

Issues and Concerns Summary

Economy. Interviewees described the economy as changing and shifting for the Service Area and surrounding region. Several interviewees commented about economic and labor market changes for sectors like forest products, fisheries, and tourism. One person noted “the forest products industry is moving in different directions” and “the whole industry looks different than it did in 2008.” Another interviewee noted that many of the smaller forest landowners are aging out with no one to take their place and continue their forest management efforts. One interviewee highlighted that the CLUP should be supportive of new and existing industries by providing flexibility. Another noted that the Commission should allow for other values and types of development, like renewables and mining, because they create value for a landowner. It was noted that potential changes to the economy in rural Maine are particularly concerning for communities that rely on one industry for a significant portion of their employment, such as fisheries or a forest products mill. One interviewee also noted the closure of healthcare facilities due to a lack of funding.

There were several comments about employment in and around the Service Area. Several noted a lack of sustainable, year-round jobs with livable wages, while some highlighted worker shortages due, in part, to a lack of housing stock and affordable housing in towns, rural hubs, and the nearby unorganized territories. One interviewee noted that a large portion of the workforce is unemployed, and workforce training is needed. The lack of childcare services for working parents was acknowledged, and a limited pool of contractors cannot meet the demand for construction services related to building and restoring second homes. Broadband coverage for home-based workers was also discussed, and although access is improving, participants noted that there are still areas without coverage.

Environmental Impacts. Environmental impacts from development and recreation were discussed. Multiple interviewees raised concerns about development causing water quality issues, especially from development along shorelines, as well as noise and light pollution and increased potential for toxic waste or other impacts from development such as mining, landfills, and energy production. One interviewee stated that development is never denied by the Commission and that too much priority is given to economic development with less consideration for environmental protection. Multiple interviewees commented about environmental impacts from recreation activities. Examples of comments include:

- Motorized vehicles create noise pollution, such as all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and boats.
- Large off-road or all-terrain vehicles that damage trails.
- An influx of users during the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted issues with increased pressure on recreational resources, such as property damage or environmental impacts.
- A lack of thoughtfully planned recreational resources, or slow permit processing times for projects such as campsites, may lead to illegal and improper use, improper river crossings, or unauthorized camping with no subsurface wastewater disposal systems.

Public Services. County officials and economic development groups expressed concern about the current and future demand for public services due to increased costs and a lack of qualified personnel to provide services. They noted that this is made more difficult with rising costs, large land areas that need to be covered, and townships that are more heavily populated. Interviewees commented that payment for services is shouldered by municipalities that provide the services or by year-round residents of the Service Area. Additionally, several comments were made about negative experiences with reimbursement for services provided to the Service Area, or expressed that Service Area residents were not contributing enough toward the cost of maintaining roads, solid waste removal, providing emergency response, etc.

Some interviewees are concerned about the state of existing infrastructure and about the effect of development on emergency services. Specifically, concern was expressed about road access to properties, available water to respond to fires, and communication infrastructure to request emergency services. There were several comments about confusion over responsibility for different services. Junkyards were identified as an issue by several interviewees, who expressed frustration about the lack of coordination and resources to address these in the Commission's Service Area. Several interviewees felt that more support from state agencies is needed to deal with these adequately. Commenters noted that new residents are unfamiliar with private roads and expect the county to maintain their roads.

Housing. Housing affordability and availability are a common concern among interviewees. They noted a shortage of affordable housing near economic centers, where a majority of jobs are located. One interviewee commented that very few vacant homes can be found in the area. Multiple interviewees expressed concern that younger residents or lower-income households are pushed out or kept out of the area due to an influx of higher-income households looking for second homes or housing conversion to short-term rentals. One participant referred to this as "rural gentrification" and asked, "Where will people who make \$17 an hour live?". There is concern about the high cost of new construction, and that those who can afford to build are only building homes attainable to high income households. An interviewee commented that leased lots have increased in price and are very expensive compared to previous years.

Location of Development. Some interviewees discussed the relative importance of where development is in the unorganized territories, and how it relates to nearby towns and infrastructure in rural Maine. The importance of accurately presenting the amount and types of development in the Service Area was noted, especially in any maps produced. Likewise, there is a need to think regionally and to identify "those places most appropriate for growth." Some interviewees noted a lack of readily available developable land in towns and rural hubs, which can put more pressure on the Service Area for development, leading to concerns about sprawl and population growth in the Service Area. On the other hand, in some places, housing in the Commission's Service Area helps provide enough people in the region to support healthcare facilities or schools. One participant noted that it is difficult to get people interested in subdivisions near organized towns because people move to the area for seclusion. County officials noted that providing services has become more difficult due to a lack of resources (see Public Services section above). Land subdivision was highlighted, specifically conversion of working forests to residential development and land divisions creating sprawl under the current "two-in-five" statutory exemption, which allows two land divisions every five years with no regulatory review. Several interviewees commented that

there are not enough incentives to direct development to the appropriate locations and one participant stated that the LUPC has “toothless regulations” for development.

Service Area Character. Service Area Character includes comments that discuss quality of life issues, or how the physical and cultural characteristics of an area seem to be changing. Interviewees commented that overall, more people are moving into the Service Area and rural hubs, and the housing economy currently favors higher-income households and rental units. Several interviewees raised concerns about increasing noise and light pollution as population rises, and the potential negative effects on quality of life. Several participants raised concerns about potential changes to landownership, which could mean changes in the economy, changes in the current practice of public access to private land, or the sell-off or subdivision of large parcels. It was also noted that new residents have additional expectations for services generally not available in the area, such as paved roads, snow plowing, or curbside trash pickup. Several interviewees also discussed a shift away from traditional recreational uses, such as hunting and fishing, to motorized trail use, mountain biking, and other newer forms of recreational day use.

Land and Water Access. Several interviewees commented that many users do not understand that recreation in the Service Area is often on private land and access is granted by permission. Some also commented on the influx of users during the COVID-19 pandemic and the increase in conflicts that can occur as a result. One noted that landowners cannot accept a continued upward increase in ATV size and number on their properties. Others expressed concerns about access being taken away by the large landowners due to these stressors. Groups that manage recreational resources commented on the lack of funding and personnel to build and maintain trails and long permitting processes that can affect access. Several interviewees highlighted that development can restrict access, especially along shorelines, and that more privately owned land is being posted. One commenter noted that there has been an increase in “collaborative conservation” in recent years between landowners and conservation groups that should be recognized by the Commission.

Climate Change. Several interviewees mentioned climate change as a concern. They expressed concerns about how predicted changes to the length of shoulder seasons, storm frequency and intensity, water quality, fire danger, and insect pests and diseases could affect the recreation and forest products economies. Interviewees highlighted the need for more resilient infrastructure, including transportation to and from islands, the electric grid, and road crossings.

LUPC Process and Administration. Many interviewees identified issues related to LUPC processes and administration. Multiple comments related to staffing levels and high staff turnover, and called out long permit processing times, long callback waiting times, and a lack of enforcement capacity. Wastewater disposal requirements, although not handled by the Commission, were noted as a significant barrier in the Commission’s permit process, especially in remote areas that are more difficult for licensed contractors and inspectors to reach. Several interviewees were concerned about a lack of enforcement consistency or enforcement only for the most egregious cases. One interviewee commented that the Commission says yes to all development without enough consideration for the environment. A few interviewees stated that more education and outreach are needed from the Commission, especially about what LUPC is responsible for and what it means to be an unorganized and deorganized territory. One interviewee suggested the State look at actively

developing areas in the UT differently, and several interviewees suggested that taxes should be assessed differently to support dedicated staff for those areas.

Data Needs Summary

Interviewees stressed the importance of using data accurately and that data should not be used to support preconceived narratives about where and how much development is occurring. One commenter recommended creating a planning library on the LUPC website, with readily available permit data and more mapping tools.

LUPC Data. Participants identified the following permitting data as important for the CLUP update:

- Residential development (numbers and location)
- Non-residential development (types and location)
- Energy Development
- Subdivisions

Other Data Sources. Participants felt that the following external data would be helpful for understanding current trends and future outlooks:

- Conservation land in the Service Area (amount, type, and location)
- Infrastructure (transportation, electric transmission, broadband)
- Housing (trends, types, affordability)
- Land ownership
- Natural resources (water resources, forested land, wildlife habitat)
- Accurate demographic data
- Recreational trails
- Public services

CLUP Update Process Summary

Feedback about the 2010 CLUP. Feedback on the 2010 CLUP product was mixed. Some interviewees recalled feeling frustrated at the end of the update, both with the final Plan and the process. Some participants had positive feedback on the goals and policies of the CLUP, while others expressed dissatisfaction. Several interviewees commented that there was tension between environmental advocates and landowner rights advocates. The presentation of data during the update process was also contentious, with different groups presenting different stories with the same permit locations dataset, and it became difficult to understand the real story or the reality on the ground. One interviewee commented that stressors on the Service Area were well presented in the final document.

Public Engagement. Multiple interviewees highlighted the importance of public engagement, urging the Commission to consider who would be most impacted by the CLUP. One commented “it is important to provide opportunities for residents and landowners to shape policies”. Others suggested avenues for reaching target audiences, including but not limited to:

- social media
- newspapers

- local radio stations
- posters or flyers at locations such as storefronts
- North Maine Woods checkpoints
- county and local governments
- message forwarding through well-known organizations

In-person, virtual, and hybrid meetings were suggested, and several stressed that priority should be given to locations in or very near the Service Area. Several comments were made about who should be engaged in the update process, with more weight given to different groups, such as those that own land and live in the Service Area. One interviewee highlighted that people outside of the Service Area also have an interest, and many have a long history of recreating or leasing land. Several participants suggested messaging that informs CLUP process participants about the Commission, the Service Area, and the history of the Service Area to connect the past with the present. One participant suggested an online portal for regular engagement.

What should the CLUP update process be like? There were suggestions for resources to enhance staff capacity during the process, including potential event organizers (workshops, public meetings), facilitators, avenues for sharing messages with participants, and funding sources. There was broad support for a steering committee model as well as Regional and topic-based subcommittees or a mixture of the two. Several participants suggested replicating the successful Moosehead Regional Planning and Community Guided Planning and Zoning process. Some felt that the current update should be shorter than the 2010 CLUP process, while others noted that there should be plenty of time for meaningful public engagement.

What should the next CLUP document look like? Commenters recommended that the next CLUP should generally be a document that is:

- Simple and concise
- Data-driven with open access to data sources
- Long lasting (10+ years)

Various interviewees commented that goals and policies should:

- Include education about the Commission and its Service Area;
- Support economic development that is connected to the land;
- Bolster protections for shoreland zones, water quality, noise production, and dark skies;
- Be flexible so that landowners and businesses can adapt to uncertain economic and environmental futures; and
- Not decrease land development potential or land values.

Who Is Talking About What?

Different interest groups discussed many of the same issues and concerns (see Table 2). For example, public services were discussed by county officials, economic development groups, residents of the Service Area, rural hubs, and conservation groups. Most groups discussed LUPC processes and administration. Conversely, some comments were made by only one representative of the groups interviewed.

Table 2. Overview of themes discussed by interest area.

| Interest Area | Themes discussed |
|-------------------------------|---|
| County Officials | Climate Change, Housing, Infrastructure, Location of Development, LUPC Process and Administration, Service Area Character, Public Services |
| Economic Development | Climate Change, Economy, Housing, Infrastructure, Land and Water Access, Location of Development, LUPC Process and Administration, Service Area Character, Public Services |
| Landowners | Economy, Environmental Impacts, Housing, Land and Water Access, Location of Development, Service Area Character |
| Local Perspective/Residents | Climate Change, Economy, Environmental Impacts, Housing, Land and Water Access, Location of Development, LUPC Process and Administration, Service Area Character, Public Services |
| Environmental | Climate Change, Environmental Impacts, Land and Water Access, Location of Development, LUPC Process and Administration, Service Area Character |
| Recreation | Environmental Impacts, Housing, Land and Water Access, Location of Development, Service Area Character, Public Services |
| Agriculture | LUPC Process and Administration |
| Adjacency Rules 5-Year Review | Environmental Impacts, Housing, Land and Water Access, Location of Development, LUPC Process and Administration, Public Services |

It will be important to identify and get feedback from additional representatives of the various individuals and organizations interviewed to date. Other perspectives not yet included will arise as information is refined through further outreach and analysis in the CLUP update pre-process. The results from additional interviews, the public survey, and future workshops will further inform the scope and priority of issues, identify other data to consider, and provide additional input to structure the update process.

Implications, Recommendations, and Next Steps

This outreach and analysis highlights many of the current issues and concerns related to the Commission's Service Area along with some of the conflicting values among different perspectives. It was helpful to get feedback on data, potential sources for capacity building, and the process to update the CLUP.

Although this project was not a comprehensive analysis of issues facing the Commission's Service Area, these initial interviews help plan the next steps of the CLUP update. The staff will continue to refine understanding of each topic with additional outreach and informational sessions at Commission meetings during the fall of 2025 and beyond. Some of the issues and concerns raised by interviewees do not fall within the scope of the Commission's authority, though they may be indirectly affected by Commission policies and practices. It will be important to distill the Commission's role in identified issues and focus the planning process on those areas within the Commission's purview.

Next Steps for Outreach. This process identified the initial topic areas of interest. Additional interviews may be scheduled as other groups or individuals reach out to staff. These results will help staff develop a broader-reaching public survey to be developed in the coming months. The topics and issues identified to date will provide a focus for the data provided and questions asked in the survey. Additional feedback will be collected through the informational sessions, the survey, and future workshops, with more perspectives added to the initial topics and new topics potentially identified. Staff are working on an analysis of how the issues and concerns within identified topic areas intersect and will work to build an overall picture of issue connectivity.

Next Steps for Data. Staff are reviewing and refining internal data to share throughout the CLUP update process and are searching for relevant outside data and information related to issues and concerns identified through initial outreach.

Next Steps for the Update Process. Staff are developing a website to provide public access to materials generated for the CLUP update process, including this report. The website will provide a place for members of the public to get information and provide input as the process moves forward. Additional information about the next steps and timing for the CLUP update is included in the August 6, 2025 Memorandum to the Commission.

Appendix A. Detailed Overview of Interview and Group Meeting Participants

Twenty-four individuals and three groups provided input about the CLUP update and key issues for it to address. The organizations listed here include landowners, county government officials, community members, and many organizations that serve and work in the Commission's Service Area. Participants represent an array of perspectives from throughout the State, including but not limited to local interest, recreation, landownership, forest products, government, economic development, natural resources, and conservation. Four individual residents and one leaseholder interviewed are not named in the table.

Table A1. Overview of Individual Interviews

| Interest Area | Region | Organization or Group | Name, Title |
|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Agriculture | Statewide | Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine | Eric Venturini, Executive Director |
| County Government | Aroostook County | Government | Ryan Pelletier, County Administrator |
| County Government | Washington County | Government | Heron Weston, UT Coordinator |
| County Government | Oxford County | Government | Zane Loper, County Administrator and Tony Carter, UT Coordinator |
| County Government | Penobscot County | Government | Scott Adkins, County Administrator; George Buswell, UT Coordinator; and Tina Morrison, Deputy UT Coordinator |
| County Government | Knox County | Government | Leticia vanVuuren, Geospatial Database Manager |
| Economic Development | Washington County | Sunrise County Economic Council | Charles Rudelitch, Executive Director |

| Interest Area | Region | Organization or Group | Name, Title |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|--|---|
| Economic Development | Eastern Region | Eastern Maine Development Corporation | Jennifer King, Chief Operating Officer and Amy Collingsworth, Katahdin Region Economic Development Director |
| Economic Development | Eastern Region | University of Maine at Augusta: East Millinocket Center | Deb Rountree, Director |
| Economic Development | Eastern Region | Former Legislator; Former Executive Director of the Maine County Commissioners Association | Charlie Pray |
| Landowners | Statewide | Maine Woodland Owners | Tom Doak, Executive Director |
| Landowners | Northern Region | Lease Holder | |
| Recreation | Northern and Moosehead Region | North Maine Woods | Bill Greaves, Executive director |
| Recreation | Western Region | High Peaks Alliance | Brent West, Executive Director |
| Recreation | Statewide | Bureau of Parks and Lands | Joe Higgins, Supervisor of Off-Road Recreational Vehicle Program |
| Local Perspective | Western Region | Dallas Plantation municipal officials | Linda Jones, 1 st Assessor and Katrina Gacki, Town Clerk |
| Local Perspective | Eastern Region | Resident | |
| Local Perspective | Moosehead Region | Resident | |
| Local Perspective | Western and Moosehead Region | Residents (two individuals) | |

List of Attendees at the environmental perspectives meeting.

Eliza Townsend, Appalachian Mountain Club

Kaitlyn Nuzzo, The Nature Conservancy

Francesca Gundrum, Maine Audubon

Luke Frankel, Natural Resources Council of Maine

List of Attendees with known affiliations at the Maine Forest Products Council (MFPC) meeting.

Krysta West, Executive Director – MFPC

Anthony Hourihan, Irving

Patrick Strauch, Consultant, Director Emeritus - MFPC

Kevin Topolinski

Hannah Stevens, Seven Islands Land Company

Eugene Mahar, LandVest

Peter Johnson, Maine Sustainable Forestry Initiative

Matt Jacobs, American Forest Management

Andrew Brown, Wagner Forest Management Ltd.

Alex Ingraham, Pingree Associates

Scott Morrison

Karin Belanger, Prentiss and Carlisle

Isac Quint

Brent West, High Peaks Alliance

Jeff Barrett

Mike Jurgiewich, Wagner Forest Management Ltd.

Peter Triandafillou

John Steward, Acadian Timber

Ray Ary, Weyerhaeuser

Steve Hanington

Jennifer Bakke

Bill Ferdinand

Chris Fife, Weyerhaeuser

Katherine Carrier, Irving

List of Organizations at the Regional Planning Organizations meeting.

| | |
|---|--|
| Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments | Northern Maine Development Commission |
| Greater Portland Council of Governments | Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission |
| Hancock County Planning Commission | Sunrise County Economic Council |
| Kennebec Valley Council of Governments | Maine Office of Community Affairs |
| Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission | Municipal Planning Assistance Program |
| Midcoast Council of Governments | |

Table A2. Overview of meeting notes included from the Adjacency Rules 5-year review.

| Town | Individuals Present |
|------------------|---|
| East Millinocket | General Assistance Administrator; Selectman |
| Island Falls | Members of the Select Board and Planning Board |
| Medway | Selectmen, Town Administrator, and Fire Chief |
| Millinocket | Town Manager, Town Assessor, and Code Enforcement Officer |
| Patten | Public Works Director, Town Manager, and First Selectman |

Appendix B. Themes identified through qualitative analysis.

| CATEGORY | DEFINITION | CODES | DEFINITION |
|---------------------|--|--|---|
| Issues and Concerns | Themes that are issues or concerns for, or related to, the Service Area and that should be understood for the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) planning process. | Service Area Character | Issues related to the perceived character of the Service Area. |
| | | Location of Development | Issues related to where development is located within the Service Area, and what drives location selection. |
| | | Economy | Issues related to the economic functioning of the Service Area. |
| | | Housing | Issues related to housing in and around the Service Area. |
| | | Environmental Impacts | Issues related to environmental impacts. |
| | | Public Services | Issues related to services provided to landowners, residents, and users of the Service Area. |
| | | Land and Water Access | Issues related to accessing land and water resources. |
| | | LUPC Process and Administration | Issues related to the Land Use Planning Commission's activities, responsibilities, and internal processes. |
| Data | Data that is or will be important for the CLUP update. | Internal Data | Data collected and held by the Land Use Planning Commission. |
| | | External Data | Data and information from sources outside of the Land Use Planning Commission. |
| CLUP Update | Themes to consider for the CLUP update. | 2010 CLUP | Feedback on the 2010 CLUP update process and product. |
| | | Engagement | Feedback and suggestions relating to engaging the public for the CLUP update process. |
| | | Process | Feedback and suggestions relating to the update process model. |
| | | Product | Feedback on desired outcomes of the update process. |