

# **Town of Bingham**

## **DRAFT**

# ***2025 Comprehensive Plan***

Prepared by Kennebec Valley Council of Governments







## **The Comprehensive Plan and Bingham's Future**

### **Why create a Comprehensive Plan?**

At their most basic level, Comprehensive Plans are completed by communities to prepare for the future. A comprehensive review of a community and its current statistical data, issues, and policies promotes discussion among neighbors, and can help communities avoid problems that sometimes occur when community decisions are made in a piecemeal fashion.

A Comprehensive Plan is a guide to a town's future. It is not an ordinance or a set of rules and regulations, but a guide for town government to use to ensure it is moving in a path determined by the public and municipal officials. It provides a "snapshot in time" of the town, a roadmap with a direction the town wants to take over the next 10 years, and guidance on how to proceed.

Good planning makes good communities. A good Comprehensive Plan should enable Bingham in:

- Encouraging thoughtful, orderly growth and development in appropriate areas.
- Protecting the town's rural character, working forest, and continuing to revitalize the village center.
- Striving to reduce the cost of public services by directing growth to areas that are already developed.
- Preserving a healthy landscape and a walkable community.
- Promoting and encouraging appropriate economic development.
- Identifying future housing needs and how to best address these needs.
- Balancing economic prosperity with quality of life.
- Promoting discussion amongst neighbors.
- Developing a basis for sound decisions in town management.

In summary, a Comprehensive Plan encourages orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of the community, while protecting the town's rural character and natural resources. It ensures efficient use of public services and works toward preventing development sprawl. It considers future possibilities and encourages communities to be proactive, instead of reactive. All of this, in turn, protects the town from growing in a way that will eventually cost the town's residents in taxes.

## **The Importance of Community Involvement**

Any good Comprehensive Plan requires a bold planning process that engages the public in a meaningful way to garner input. Without a strong public participation component, there is a risk of developing a plan that lacks broad community support, or a plan that elicits little debate, resulting in a plan that is so cautious it is essentially ineffective.

Communities should always work toward a significant level of public participation and outreach. Many communities, however, struggle with sustaining public interest over the time it takes to develop the plan. Despite efforts to be inclusionary, the individuals responsible for the Comprehensive Plan update often encounter poorly attended meetings and decreased interest. Often, it is not until the public votes on the plan that a large segment of the town's residents voices their views in support of – or in opposition to – the document.

No simple formula exists for increasing the level of public participation in plan updates. Often, encouraging involvement and engaging citizens gets more challenging as time goes by. The public participation process should include creativity, persistence, and a strategic focus to combat declining public interest.

Strong public participation is a must to create “buy-in” to the plan. People will rarely embrace change unless they think there is a problem in the first place. Committees may be stymied in their efforts to address important local and state goals unless a strong case is made for why these goals are pertinent to the community – and important for the town to pursue. Public “buy-in” is necessary before the community can focus on remedying problems with a sense of common purpose.

A sense of public ownership for goals and planning concepts must be fostered to discredit the belief that the plan is a response only to state requirements. Lack of real support for the plan can lead to poor implementation, blunting its effectiveness. Ideally, there should be a long-term process of building awareness of planning and how it addresses specific goals that ultimately benefit the community.

Creating public ownership of the plan and its related goals, policies, and strategies is essential in its effectiveness. A community should strive to avoid the plan simply becoming a response to state requirements rather than to the community's own needs.



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### Note about Data:

**Even at the time of completion there is still limited data available from the full 2020 Census; therefore, this plan uses the most up to date information at the time of writing.**

## INTRODUCTION: THE PLANNING PROCESS

### History of the Comprehensive Plan

Maine enacted the Growth Management Act in 1988, which specifies the format and goals for local comprehensive planning. Subsequent revisions to the Act require local Comprehensive Plans to undergo a new State review for consistency every 12 years, incorporating new data and findings into the planning process, as well as designating areas earmarked for future growth and locations to be maintained as rural.

While comprehensive planning is not a state mandate, towns that adopt this guiding document are provided a level of legal protection and qualify for state-based grants to improve growth-related public facilities. Requirements of the Comprehensive Plan include goals and guidelines identified by the State that encourage a thoughtful planning approach for the community's future and support any necessary land use regulations.

Bingham has enjoyed the benefits of comprehensive planning for decades. This document is an update to the 2000 Comprehensive Plan. The 2000 Comprehensive Plan became obsolete in both real terms and the eyes of the State as of 2012. In 2023, Bingham began the lengthy process of a Comprehensive Plan update using the new State guidelines.

### Bingham's Comprehensive Plan Update

The town's Planning Board, in conjuncture with the Select Board, took on the task of updating the 2000 Comprehensive Plan. The Planning and Select Boards began the preliminary steps towards this update in fall of 2023. The following Bingham residents and Board members were instrumental in the development of this plan:

**Steve Steward:** Steve is originally from Concord but raised his family in Bingham. He has served as Bingham's First Selectman for over 20 years. As such, he provided much historical information and knowledge towards the Comprehensive Plan update.

**Peter Abraham:** Pete was born and raised in Bingham. He has served as the Chairman for the Planning Board for over five years.

**Drew Foran:** Drew was born and raised in Bingham. He has been the Third Selectman in Bingham for two years and he also manages the town's website.

**Julie Richard:** Julie grew up in Bingham. She has been Bingham's Second Selectman for 12 years. Julie has also been the president of the Old Canada Road Historical Society for the past 10 years. Her historical knowledge of the town was instrumental in writing the Historical Resources chapter.



**Barbara French:** Barb moved to Bingham about 15 years ago. She is the Planning Board's Secretary. In addition to being a loving, caring mother, Barb has the distinction of being the only woman on the Planning Board.

**Andy Jacques:** Andy is raising his family in Bingham, where he is also the owner of a small business, Logo Logic. He has been on the Planning Board for a long time.

**William Shaw:** Bill is originally from Bingham and has a lengthy list of civic positions, including Animal Control Officer, Emergency Management Director, Health Officer, Civil Officer, and Free Mason. In addition, Bill has been a member of Bingham's Planning Board for about six years and worked for MDOT for over 40 years.

**Matt Melcher:** Matt was born and raised in Bingham. He has been on the Planning Board for about six months.

**Ed Melcher:** Ed grew up in Bingham, and although he moved away when he was younger, he was always drawn back to the area. He has been on the Planning Board for around 15 years.

**Dick Rogers:** Dick moved to Bingham 32 years ago and became an active member of the community. He has been on the Planning Board for around 15 years.

**Patrick Clark:** Patrick is raising his family in Bingham, where he is also the owner of the local Napa Auto Parts- Clark Auto Parts store. He has been a member of the Planning Board for a number of years.

**Tim Andrews:** Tim was born and raised in Bingham. After graduating high school, he spent 10 years in the U.S Air Force. Tim also worked as a Postal Service contractor for seven years and has worked for MaineDOT for 20 years. Tim has been Bingham's Code Enforcement Officer for over 20 years.

**Jessica Cobb:** Jess is Kennebec Valley Council of Governments' Senior Planner. She assisted this dedicated group in the capacity of consultant. Jess has worked for KVCOG for nearly three years.

### **Committee Meetings:**

The Bingham Planning Board set regular monthly meetings with some exceptions and several extra meetings. All committee meetings were open to the public and advertised on the town's informational sign, at the post office, and on the town's website.

October 31, 2023-	Kick off meeting for the Comprehensive Plan update
November 16, 2023-	Meet committee and introduce Demographic Profile
December 14, 2023-	Review Demographic Profile
January 18, 2024-	Review Transportation chapter, Transportation Policies and Strategies
	Review Local Economy chapter, Local Economy Policies and Strategies
February 15, 2024-	Follow up review of Transportation and Local Economy. Review Historic Resources chapter and Historic Resources Policies and Strategies.
	Review Housing chapter and Housing Policies and Strategies.
March 14, 2024-	Follow up review of Housing and Historic Resources.
April 18, 2024-	Follow up review of Historic Resources and Housing. Review of Fiscal Capacity and Capital Investment Plan.
May 16, 2024-	Follow up review of Housing. Review of Environmental Resources and Environmental Resources Policies and Strategies.
	Visioning session.
June 13, 2024-	Follow up review of Environmental Resources.
	Follow up on Vision Statement.
July 25, 2024-	Recreation chapter and Recreation Policies and Strategies.
August 22, 2024-	Follow up review of Recreation. Review of Agriculture and Forestry and Agriculture and Forestry Policies and Strategies.
September 26, 2024-	Follow up review of Environmental Resources. Review of Existing Land Use.
	Prepared Comprehensive Plan Survey.
October 24, 2024-	Follow up review of Comprehensive Plan Survey. Review of Future Land Use and Future Land Use Policies and Strategies.
January 9, 2025-	Follow up review of Future Land Use.
January 23, 2025-	Review of compiled Comprehensive Plan update.
February 13, 2025-	Review of compiled Comprehensive Plan update and associated maps.

All meeting minutes are available at the Bingham Town Office.

## **Community Involvement**

All Planning Board meetings were advertised and open to the public. When feasible, various stakeholders in the community were invited and involved in meeting discussions on relevant chapters. For example, the Old Canada Road Historic Society weighed in heavily on the Historic Resources chapter.

An effort was made by committee members to engage with the public throughout the update process. The town distributed a survey, and residents were encouraged to participate and share their input. Paper copies of the survey were provided to those who needed them.

The survey was open and available from October 2024 until the end of January 2025. The survey was aimed at collecting residents' thoughts, opinions, and feelings about the town in areas from current and future land uses, transportation, housing, town government, local economy, municipal regulation, and more. There were also several open-ended survey questions where people could express feelings without being prompted by questions.

The survey was promoted on the town's website and through an easy access QR code linked to an online version of the survey. The QR codes were distributed in common areas around town. In addition, the members of both the Planning Board and Select Board spread the word in the community about the importance of the survey and the Comprehensive Plan update.

In his position at the town's Transfer Station, Peter Abraham, the Chairman of the Planning Board, promoted the survey by encouraging everyone he encountered to participate and share their thoughts. Pete supplied paper copies of the survey for those without computer access and supplied the QR code to patrons of the Transfer Station who preferred to take the survey electronically. Pete also made it a point to discuss the Comprehensive Plan update with Bingham residents regularly.

During the time the survey was open, 58 responses (7 percent response rate) were received, which is acceptable for a town Bingham's size. The survey and responses are attached in the Appendix of this plan.

Furthermore, as the Bingham Planning Board completed a review of each analysis chapter, it was added to the town's website for public review. After all the chapters were reviewed, the associated policies and strategies were also posted for public review on the town's website.



Bingham's vision statement was drafted and revised by the members of the Planning and Select Board, combined with public input. The following vision statement was the result of this collaboration:

***Offering small town hospitality and charm, Bingham provides residents and visitors alike with a safe community, access to local, quality healthcare, and the support only found in a close-knit town. The town will strive to provide modern and appropriate housing and employment opportunities. As a regional hub, Bingham will prioritize offering the youth of the town an exceptional education and robust development programs. Bingham will continue to embrace its history and pristine natural resources, to preserve and protect those resources for the enjoyment of generations to come.***

## Implementation

Nearly every chapter of this updated plan resulted in policies and strategies along with specific recommendations for implementing parties along with a timeframe to complete the task. The key to the plan's success is how well the recommendations can be put into action. This requires an implementation plan and a standard by which to measure results.

The responsibility for implementation almost always falls on the leadership of the town and is often delegated to appropriate boards, committees, commissions, and town staff. While many of the policies and strategies of Bingham's 2000 Comprehensive Plan were implemented, many were not. The town should strive to accomplish as many policies and strategies in this plan as they remain viable and reasonable.

This plan was assembled by the Bingham Planning Board in coordination with Bingham town officials, and KVCOG staff. As such, this plan contains ideas and contributions from elected officials, committees, outside organizations, individual residents, and others who are affiliated with the Town of Bingham. These constituents all have one thing in common: They are stakeholders in the future of Bingham. It is their civic duty to see that the recommendations of the plan are carried forward.

While the plan's implementation is assigned to individual members of the town staff, and to boards, committees and organizations, a mechanism to monitor progress and resolve impediments is necessary. This plan recommends the following implementation and evaluation strategies:

- The CEO and Planning Board Chairman will continue to track and document permit application and permits issued to identify trends. The following will also be tracked:
  - The location of new residential structures.
  - The location of new commercial structures/land uses.
  - Redevelopment of existing buildings for commercial/industrial uses.
  - Conversions from seasonal camps to year-round residences.
- The Planning Board Chairman, in conjuncture with the CEO, will prepare a written report on a yearly basis, containing data from the permit tracking history. The report will be shared with the Select Board and Town Manager for review and discussion.
- The Select Board, Town Manager, and Planning Board will identify trends and determine if they are in keeping with the policies and strategies outlined in this plan, as well as the community's vision.

This review of permits issued, and analysis of trends will ensure that town staff, committees, and elected officials, are held accountable for their designated roles in implementing the policies and strategies outlined in the plan.

The annual review of the Planning Board Chairman's written report will serve to evaluate the progress in implementing the policies and strategies, as well as identify any barriers to carrying out the recommendations identified. This process can easily be managed with a spreadsheet that includes each chapter's recommendations, noting whether implementation has begun, whether it is in progress (and to what degree) or has been completed.

After each yearly review of the Planning Board Chairman's written report by the Select Board and Town Manager, recommendations for the upcoming year will be made along with suggested changes to policies and strategies based on obstacles encountered. The findings of the report will be published in the annual report.

The Select Board, which is Bingham's legislative body and is ultimately responsible for the implementation of the plan, will establish an annual review workshop so findings can coincide with delivery of the annual report and budget development. This process will allow for and account for all needs in the coming year's budget.

The workshop will review activities over the prior year and determine priorities for activities in the upcoming year. The workshop may also be the source for recommendations for informally updating or amending the Comprehensive Plan.

This process should provide adequate oversight and feedback to ensure this plan is not ignored or forgotten. The process should also indicate when or if the plan needs revision, new timeline details or is nearing completion and will require updating. The next scheduled update to this plan will begin in 2035.



## Town of Bingham's Vision Statement:

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*Offering small town hospitality and charm, Bingham provides residents and visitors alike with a safe community, access to local, quality healthcare, and the support only found in a close-knit town. The town will strive to provide modern and appropriate housing and employment opportunities. As a regional hub, Bingham will prioritize offering the youth of the town an exceptional education and robust development programs. Bingham will continue to embrace its history and pristine natural resources, to preserve and protect those resources for the enjoyment of generations to come.*

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## COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

- One: .....Historic and Archaeological Resources
- Two: ..... Community Profile
- Three: ..... Local Economy
- Four: .....Housing
- Five: ..... Public Facilities and Services
- Six: ..... Fiscal Capacity
- Seven: .....Transportation
- Eight: .....Recreation and Culture
- Nine: ..... Agriculture and Forestry
- Ten: .....Environmental Resources
- Eleven: .....Existing Land Use

**All statistical data presented in this plan must be viewed through the lens of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has changed many aspects of daily life. At this time, it is not possible to predict the long-term impacts and implications of the virus on the town, but by planning for a range of possibilities, the town can be well prepared. The statistics and data presented in this plan are based primarily on information from early in 2020, and as such will not reflect the sudden, and in some cases, drastic changes brought on by COVID-19; however, this data should be used as a baseline for Bingham.**



# 1: Historic and Archeological Resources



## **Brief Overview of Bingham**

Historic, archaeological, and cultural resources contribute significantly to the character of Bingham's community today and provide context for future growth and change. This chapter inventories and examines available information on historic and archaeological resources so they can be incorporated into planning for the future.

In addition to numerous historical resources, Bingham's legacy is also in the historical settlement patterns of its early residents. The village and landscape are the result of decisions made by the ancestors of today's residents.

## **Bingham's Historical Narrative**

Long before European settlers cleared the forest, established farms, factories, and built houses in the region now known as Bingham, Native Americans moved seasonally through the area. The Kennebec River acted as a major thoroughfare for the Native Americans in their travels.

In January of 1793, William Bingham, considered, by the time he was 40 years old, to be the wealthiest man in America, along with his friend Major General Henry Knox, became joint owners of two million acres in Maine, which was at that time still part of Massachusetts. That land was made up of two separate tracts, one east of the Penobscot River and one straddling the northern portion of the Kennebec River, thus earning the name, the Kennebec Purchase, or the Bingham Purchase.

The Kennebec River tract extended from the southern border of the present town of Bingham to a line north of Parlin Pond Township. It extended westerly to the present-day towns of Kingfield and Mt. Abram and easterly to Wellington, inclusive of those towns. A large portion of the Old Canada Road (U.S. Route 201), which served as the primary link between Lower Canada and Maine from 1820 until 1860, cut through the tract west of the Kennebec River.

Part of the sale agreement called for the buyers to establish 2,500 settlers on the land by 1803 or pay a fee of \$30 per deficiency. Despite an expensive marketing campaign, including a European recruitment trip, garnering settlement was a major difficulty for Bingham and Knox, an issue that carried over for the trustees of Bingham's estate following his death in 1804.

Some of the obstacles Bingham and Knox faced in settling the land on the Kennebec Purchase resulted from the fact that the sales were pitched primarily as farmland. While a portion of the land was suited to farming, most of it was not. The trustees eventually pitched the land sale as timberlands, which were abundant in this location, as they are today. By the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they had disposed of most of the Maine holdings.

The current Town of Bingham is the southern and principal part of the Kennebec Purchase made by William Bingham, for whom the town is named. The Town of Bingham was settled in 1784 and incorporated in 1812.

Early settlers of the town included Daniel Foster, Joshua Goodrich, William Fletcher, and Reverend Obed Wilson

William Fletcher, the first permanent settler in the county, moved from Solon to Bingham in 1799, and located near the present site of Bingham Village. Fletcher lived in Bingham until his death in 1809 at 64 years old. In his lifetime, he lived over a quarter of a century in the county and saw three prosperous settlements begun.

Reverend Obed Wilson, son of early settlers of Skowhegan, moved to Bingham from Starks in 1802. Wilson was a self-made man; he was not surrounded with advantages, but he had a devoted thirst for knowledge. Early in life, Wilson adopted the maxim: "get wisdom; and with all thy getting, get understanding."

Wilson was a graduate of Bowdoin College where he was known to stand out. He later became the first Chairman for Bingham's Board of Selectmen. He went on to represent the town in the Legislature for eight terms: four in Portland and four in Augusta. Wilson was well known for his political speaking abilities. In his lifetime, Wilson was a well-respected man with significant influence. He died in 1840. His house still stands on the side of Route 201 next to the 45<sup>th</sup> parallel sign. It is the oldest house in Bingham.

The early settlement patterns along the Kennebec River are still evident today. Much of Bingham's present-day population and the most developed areas in town are still around the locations of the original mills. Bingham Village was one of the first settlements and is still the center of town.

In fact, present day Murray Street was the early center of Bingham Village. The town developed with this street as the main hub and expanded outward, so that Route 201 eventually became the main corridor through town.

Following its 1812 incorporation, the town established roads and a school system. The school system originally consisted of nine schools because people were scattered so far apart. The village, known as Bingham Village, was the focus of commercial development, because of the availability of waterpower, though most of the population lived on outlying farms.

By 1859, the town boasted 752 residents, two water-powered sawmills and two gristmills. Contributing to its growth, Bingham had become an important Maine Central Railroad loading point for pulpwood floated down the Kennebec River to Wyman Dam until environmental regulations curtailed log driving in the 1970s.

Over the past 180 years, several factors contributed to the concentration of development in the village. One factor was that many of the early farms were on poor, rocky soil.

As a result, most of these were abandoned during the westward movement, as bigger and more farmable tracts of land became available. The cellar holes of these long-ago farms, now scattered throughout the woods, are the only remains of this past era. Mills and other commercial enterprises clustered along the river, to take advantage of the waterpower and nearby transportation system.

That is not to say there were no successful farming endeavors in Bingham. In Southeast Bingham, on the current day Mahoney Hill Road, fruit trees were so prolific that the produce, mostly apples but other fruit, too, was shipped to England between World War I and World War II.

Another factor that contributed to the concentration of development in the early Bingham Village was that there were two railroad systems: a narrow-gauge and a regular gauge railroad. The narrow-gauge had a station at the end of Murray Street, which is still in existence today, though the narrow-gauge railroad is long gone. The regular gauge railroad, also long gone, had a turntable where the ambulance station is today.

As roads eventually improved, Bingham became a crossroads for travelers. People traveling to other parts of the state and Canada often traveled through Bingham, in fact, in that time, Lake Road went all the way from Portland to Moosehead Lake.

Because Bingham was more populous than other towns in the regions, the original Canada Road was moved from the west side of the Kennebec River to the east side of the river, traveling through Bingham in its current location.

Bingham's rich cultural and historic resources are as enticing to tourists as the natural landscape of the region in which the town lies.

Bingham's population changes over the years can be traced to several historic events, such as the construction of the Wyman Dam and the opening/closing of mills. They can be seen in Table 1, below.

**TABLE 1: POPULATION CHANGE: 1820 TO 2020**

Year	Population	% Change
<b>1820</b>	336	-
<b>1830</b>	537	59.80%
<b>1840</b>	751	39.90%
<b>1850</b>	752	0.10%
<b>1860</b>	831	10.50%
<b>1870</b>	826	-0.60%
<b>1880</b>	828	0.20%
<b>1890</b>	757	-8.60%
<b>1900</b>	841	11.10%
<b>1910</b>	775	-7.80%
<b>1920</b>	1,143	47.50%
<b>1930</b>	1,592	39.30%
<b>1940</b>	1,210	-24.00%
<b>1950</b>	1,354	11.90%
<b>1960</b>	1,308	-3.40%
<b>1970</b>	1,256	-4.10%
<b>1980</b>	1,184	-5.60%
<b>1990</b>	1,230	3.90%
<b>2000</b>	989	-19.60%
<b>2010</b>	922	-6.80%
<b>2020</b>	866	-6.10%

*Source: United States Census*

Several of these population changes can be explained and are related to historical events in Bingham.

- 1785: Bingham was settled and became incorporated as a town in 1812.
- 1920-1930: The population increase was the result of the construction of Wyman Dam, which caused an influx of workers to Bingham.
- 1940s: The dramatic population decrease was because the construction of Wyman Dam was complete and the workers who moved to Bingham for this project left.
- 1930s-1940s: The population decrease was offset by the opening of the Quimby Sawmill in 1936, which imported numerous French-speaking Canadian families into the area.
- 1950s: Almost all employment centered around the strong forest product industries.



- Early to mid-1970s: Improved technology in tree cutting, such as tree fellers and grapple skidders resulted in decreased forestry jobs.
- 1976: River drives (pulp and log lengths) ceased due to state and federal laws.
- The other major population decrease, in 2000, was a result of the closing of KD Industries located at the old Quimby Sawmill site.

Overall, Bingham's long ago established Bingham Village is still the epicenter of this rural town. The vestiges and resulting settlement patterns of the reliance on waterpower and the forest industry are still evident today.

### **Maine Historic Preservation Commission Data**

According to Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC), there are three types of historic and archaeological resources that should be considered in comprehensive planning. They are:

- Prehistoric Archaeological (Native American, before European arrival)
- Historic Archaeological (mostly European-American, after written historic records)
- Historic Buildings/Structures/Objects (buildings and other above ground structures and objects)

Archaeological resources are those found underground and are locations where there have been prior signs of the existence of human beings including structures, artifacts, terrain features, graphics or remains of plants and animals associated with human habitation. Prehistoric archaeological resources are those associated with Native Americans and generally date prior to 1600s. Historic archaeological resources are those associated with the earliest European settlers.

### ***Prehistoric Archeological Sites***

Evidence of prehistoric settlement is primarily found as encampment sites. The Kennebec River was a major travel route for native Americans, and the banks of the river would be prime locations for encampment sites. At the time the Williams Dam in Solon was built, the Kennebec River's banks were surveyed, and eight archeological sites were found, though the locations have not been revealed to prevent unauthorized exploring.

According to the MHPC, as of September 2022, various professional archaeological surveys have been done in Bingham. There are nine known archaeological sites, eight of which are located on the banks of the Kennebec River, and one is located on Jackson Stream. The information on the map dated 2013 is still valid for these archeological sites.

Portions of the banks along the Kennebec River and floodplain have not yet been surveyed by a professional archaeologist. The banks of Austin Stream (except where it has been cut for an artificially enhanced channel) also need survey.

### ***Historic Archeological Sites***

Historic archaeology predominantly refers to signs of early settlement, such as cellar holes. Bingham has records of settlements dating back to the 1780's, but coordinated effort is needed to identify and record remnants of the earliest structures. The locations of several historic farms sites in town are known, and Bingham residents have been active in identifying building sites along the Old Canada Road in Concord, the neighboring town to the west. Grant's Farm Preserve is a historic farm site off Mahoney Hill Road, but it is not marked nor publicized.

As of October 2022, the MHPC has identified and documented 17 historic archeological sites for the town. See Table 2 for details.

**TABLE 2: HISTORIC ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES IN BINGHAM:**

Site Name	Site #	Site Type	Periods of Significance	National Register Status	Location
Bingham Cemetery	ME 042-001	cemetery	c 1795 to present	undetermined	Known
Bingham Old Free Meeting House	ME 042-002	church	1836 to present	Listed	Known
Bingham School #1	ME 042-003	school	c 1815 to c 1836	undetermined	Known
Goodrich Hotel	ME 042-004	hotel	1822 to 1952	undetermined	Known
A.B. Wilson House	ME 042-005	domestic	c. 1835 to present	undetermined	Known
Wilson-Gray Farm	ME 042-006	farmstead	c. 1816 to present	undetermined	Known
Wilson-Gray Cabin & Wells	ME 042-007	domestic, cabin	1802 to c.1816	undetermined	Known
Unidentified #1	ME 042-009	farmstead	c. 1800 to c.1855	undetermined	Known
Austin Stream Mill	ME 042-010	mill, sawmill and gristmill	c. 1799 to c. 1955	undetermined	Known
Cattle Drover's Trail & New Canada Road	ME 042-011	road	c. 1802 to present	undetermined	Known
Goodrich Store	ME 042-012	commercial, store	c. 1831 to present	undetermined	Known
A. Bosworth Homestead	ME 042-013	domestic	19th century	undetermined	Known
C.B. Gilman Farmstead	ME 042-014	farmstead	19th century	undetermined	Known
N. Withee	ME 042-015			undetermined	Location Known
J. McCollar	ME 042-016			undetermined	Known
Bingham Ferry Landing	ME 042-017	ferry crossing	Depicted as "Ferry" on the 1860 (Chase) map of Somerset County	ineligible	Known

*Source: Maine Historic Preservation Commission*

No professional town-wide surveys for historic archaeological sites have been conducted to date in Bingham. The Maine Historic Preservation Commission states a need for such a survey. According to MHPC, future archaeological survey should focus on the identification of potentially significant resources associated with the town's agricultural, residential, and industrial heritage, particularly those associated with the earliest Euro-American settlement of the town in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### ***Bingham's Historic Buildings/Structures/Objects:***

The traditional, recognized standard for what makes a historic or archaeological resource worthy of preservation is normally eligibility for, *or* listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register, administered by the National Park Service, United States Department of Interior, is a listing of those buildings, districts, structures, objects, and sites deemed worthy of preservation for their historic, cultural, or archaeological significance. The National Register is intended to accommodate buildings and sites of national, state, and local significance.

The recognized standard for historic or archaeological resources is listing on the National Register of Historic Places. One benefit of National Register listing is that certain buildings may qualify for a 20 percent investment tax credit. To qualify, the building must be income producing, depreciable, and a "certified" historic structure. To obtain this certification, the historic or archeological resource must meet criteria mandated by The National Register Criteria for Evaluation, by the National Parks Service. Additionally, the National Parks Service developed criteria for the recognition of nationally significant properties, which are designated National Historic Landmarks and prehistoric and historic units of the National Park System. Both these sets of criteria were developed to be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation*, which are uniform, national standards for preservation activities.

Structures that are listed on the National Historic Register are also provided a limited amount of protection from alterations or demolition where federal funding is utilized. Bingham has one stand-alone historic structure on the National Register of Historic Places: the Bingham Free Meeting House on South Main Street, formerly known as the Old Union Church.

The Bingham Free Meeting House, constructed between 1835-1836, and built with voluntary funding by Mrs. Goodrich, the spouse of early day settler Joshua Goodrich. It was listed on the National Historic Register in 1976 and is considered in good condition. The bell atop Bingham's Free Meeting House, known as the Revere Bell, was cast in 1819 or 1820 by John Revere, son of Paul Revere. The Revere Bell was bought from a Boston Church for the Free Will Baptist Church in Skowhegan. It was purchased and brought to Bingham in 1863.

The church has 52 pews, contributed by parishioners. Each family that owned a pew was responsible for locating a preacher for one week of the year.

The Old Free Meeting House is in good condition, generally, except that the steeple wood is beginning to rot and will need replacement to ensure it does not crumble.

Other structures of note include the Bingham Union Library, built as a private residence in the 1840's, it has now been used as the Town Library since the 1920's.

Many of the existing homes in the village date from one of the two historic upticks in building: the 1830's and 1840's, and then the 1890's. There are several examples of the large, Victorian- farmhouse style of the 1890's on Main Street, and other older homes are scattered throughout the village; however, no comprehensive survey has been carried out of private homes in town.

The MHPC states that a comprehensive survey of Bingham's historic above-ground resources needs to be conducted to identify other properties that may be eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. According to the MHPC, there are numerous structures scattered throughout Bingham that are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

### **Historic Societies and Historic Districts**

Bingham has the unique distinction of being included in part of the Arnold Trails to Quebec Historic District. This District runs the entire length of the Kennebec River from the Atlantic Ocean up to Quebec.

Bingham is also home to the Old Canada Road Historical Society, located at 16 Sidney Street. The Society became designated as an official 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in 2001. Soon after, they launched an event series called "Community History Nights," featuring various speakers and topics.

As the Society's collection expanded, it became clear that a physical location was needed to display the collection. In November 2009, the Society acquired the building at 16 Sidney Street in Bingham to use as their headquarters. They are open to the public on Fridays and Saturdays.

Unfortunately, Bingham currently does not have any protective measures in place for historic or archaeological resources.

## **Local Historic Sites and Places**

Not all features with known local historical importance are represented by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission. For example, the historic river drives are an area of strong community interest. The history of the Wyman Dam and the significant impact its construction had on Bingham are well-known local knowledge. And the impacts of its construction are still evident today in the strong French-Canadian presence in town. Many of those French-Canadian families can trace their roots back to immigrants who came to Bingham to work on the dam, then chose to make Bingham their home.

## **Threats to Local Historic/Archeological/Cultural Resources**

The Bingham Free Meeting House and the Bingham Public Library are both public buildings and as such, they are maintained and protected by the town. Private homes that are eligible for listing on the National Historic Register or other privately owned structures do not receive any formal protection based on their intrinsic historical importance.

The primary threat to most of these buildings is the desire of their owners, present and future, to alter them in ways that destroy their architectural integrity and character. The buildings' survival in their present form is likely to depend upon the willingness of the individual owner to preserve the historical heritage and integrity of that structure.

No known significant historical resource has fallen into disrepair; however, it is possible that is because there is minimal local knowledge of what is considered historically significant. Bingham has identified this as a goal for the Old Canada Road Historic Society in the future.

## **Cemeteries**

Cemeteries are a critical link to our heritage. The town has an obligation to protect and maintain some cemeteries, while others are private or family cemeteries. The following is a list of known cemeteries in Bingham, which can also be seen on the *Historic Resources Map*: Village Cemetery, Gilman Cemetery, Fall Brook Cemetery, Clark Cemetery, Atwood Cemetery, and Grant Cemetery.

## **Protecting Significant Historic and Archeological Resources**

Bingham does not have any official historic districts to provide guidance and design criteria for historic structures. Most of the historic structures in Bingham are privately owned, so they are subject to the will of their owners. While some historic buildings and other structures have been lost through fire or neglect, there remain many significant historic buildings throughout Bingham.

Due to the lack of traditional “Historic Districts,” the existing regulatory protection for historic and archaeological resources is primarily provided through the mandated state subdivision and Shoreland Zoning statutes. Maine’s subdivision statute requires review of the impact on “historic sites,” which includes both National Register and eligible buildings and archaeological sites. The State Shoreland Zoning statute includes, as one of its purposes, “to protect archaeological and historic resources.” This requirement, however, is only applicable to areas located in a shoreland zone. Any area outside of a Shoreland Zone does not require a survey or review for activities occurring on, or adjacent to sites listed, or eligible to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Therefore, the town does not currently have any specific incentives or regulatory protective measures for historic areas and/or buildings, or potential historic or archeological resources.

Possibly the biggest threat to local historic resources and to those of state and national significance is lack of public knowledge and lack of identification for these important resources. Another significant threat to local historic resources is lack of regulatory oversight.

## **Existing Land Use Protections**

Bingham does not have zoning or a land use ordinance aside from the mandatory Shoreland Zoning which require site plan reviews to consider potential archeological sites, or structures eligible for listing on the National Historic Register.

The Building Permit and Lot Requirement Ordinance includes regulatory measures that have potential to be expanded to include protective measures for sites that are potentially historic sites.

Since Bingham does not have a site plan review ordinance there is no regulatory protection or requirement for a site survey for an area that may contain historic or archeological resources.

In Bingham's Subdivision Ordinance, under Section 4, General Requirements, there is a provision that reads:

*Before granting approval of a subdivision, the Planning Board shall be satisfied that the following criteria have been met. The proposed subdivision: [H] Will not have an undue adverse effect on the scenic or natural beauty of the area, aesthetics, historic sites, or rare and irreplaceable natural areas.*

However, if the historical site is unknown, then this provision is not useful. And aside from this, there are no other regulatory protective measures for Bingham's historical resources, or potential resources.

### **Important Partners for Historic and Archeological Preservation**

Old Canada Road Historic Society  
Arnold Trails to Quebec Historic District  
Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
National Register of Historic Places  
Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway

### **Future Considerations:**

- ❖ Consider introducing special policies and/or regulations to protect historic homes and buildings. Currently, Bingham opts for voluntary preservation of homes without government intervention or restrictive zoning.
- ❖ Is a site survey in areas of proposed development something Bingham would consider?
- ❖ Does the town feel it is important/necessary to add protection for potential archeological sites to goals?
- ❖ Recommendations by Maine Historic Preservation Commission- have historic archaeological surveys conducted to advise local citizens.



## 2: Bingham's Community Profile



This chapter contains a statistical profile for the Town of Bingham and its people. Data like this will often confirm intuitions about what is happening within the community. More importantly, this data can demonstrate early signs of new patterns and trends before their impacts become apparent, enabling the town to be proactive in preparing for them.

For this reason, demographic statistics are valuable and can greatly affect future decisions, such as determining the amount of tax money the town needs to generate to provide services for senior citizens, the size of school systems based on population projections and expected future enrollment, waste management services, and recreational amenities for various ages, to name a few examples.

Bingham's population is evolving. Innovative ideas and strategies will be needed to accommodate the changing population. The information supplied here will be used throughout the plan and will provide information about how the community has changed and how the community is anticipated to change in the future. Growth projections are discussed in relation to planning for future housing and demands on public services.

\*\*\*\*Note: Throughout this document, the population number varies between 866 and 765. This is because the population of 866 was taken from the 2020 Decennial U.S. Census, while the population of 765 was taken from the 2021 American Community Survey (ACS) which is an estimate. Unfortunately, not all data is available from the 2020 Decennial Census, requiring reference to ACS data in certain areas and tables. In other instances, further information was extrapolated (by the U.S. Census Bureau) using ACS data. This is also true of some 2010 data. To change between population data and recalculate would render the information inaccurate. It is important to understand this, because it could be construed as a mistake, and it is not. These discrepancies have been annotated wherever possible.



## Historical Population Trends

Over the course of its existence, Bingham has experienced a rise and fall of population, similar to neighboring communities and the State. Economic and cultural factors have influenced population changes, as displayed in the following table, and graphed in the figure on the following page.

The most common measure of a town's stature is population, reflecting relative status amongst other towns in the region. Bingham, though also a regional service center, is smaller than the urban employment/service centers of Skowhegan and Madison but larger than the more rural towns of Caratunk, Moscow, and Pleasant Ridge.

**TABLE 1: POPULATION CHANGE: 1820 TO 2020**

Year	Population	% Change	Year	Population	% Change
1820	336	-	1930	1,592	39.30%
1830	537	59.80%	1940	1,210	-24.00%
1840	751	39.90%	1950	1,354	11.90%
1850	752	0.10%	1960	1,308	-3.40%
1860	831	10.50%	1970	1,256	-4.10%
1870	826	-0.60%	1980	1,184	-5.60%
1880	828	0.20%	1990	1,230	3.90%
1890	757	-8.60%	2000	989	-19.60%
1900	841	11.10%	2010	922	-6.80%
1910	775	-7.80%	2020	866	-6.10%
1920	1,143	47.50%	-	-	-

*Source: United States Census*

Table 1 shows that Bingham's population rose steadily from 1820 to 1860, after which time the population stabilized or even decreased for some decades. In 1920 Bingham's population jumped up 47 percent, then in 1930, it increased again by 39 percent, the largest population increase in the last 100 years. This was followed by a 24 percent decline in population in 1940. After the 1950s, the U.S. Census has reported a decline in Bingham's population for every decade besides 1990, which saw a 3.9 percent population increase.

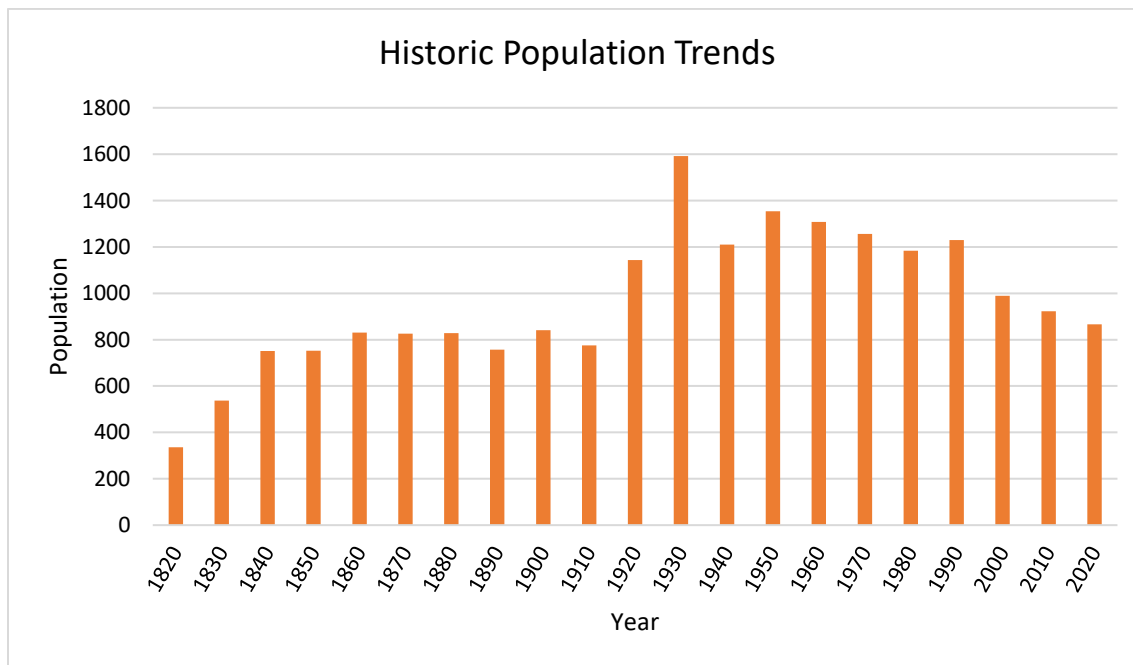
Several of these population changes can be explained and are related to historical events in Bingham.

- Bingham was settled in 1785 and became incorporated as a town in 1812.
- The population increase between 1920 and 1930 was the result of the construction of Wyman Dam (pictured at right), which caused an influx of workers to Bingham.
- Likewise, the dramatic population decrease in 1940 was because the construction of Wyman Dam was complete and the workers who moved to Bingham for this project left.
- The population decrease between the 1930s and 1940s was offset by the opening of the Quimby Sawmill in 1936, which imported numerous French-speaking Canadian families into the area.
- The other major population decrease, in 2000, was a result of the closing of KD Industries located at the old Quimby Sawmill site.



Figure 1 is a bar graph depicting the same population changes as Table 1.

**FIGURE 1: 200 YEARS OF POPULATION CHANGE IN BINGHAM**



*Source: United State Census*

Following the Civil War, and lasting until the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, virtually all of Maine lost population. This was the era of westward expansion when many people relocated to the West. Bingham lost less than most towns, because of another trend – the industrial revolution. Bingham’s population, like most other central Maine towns, is directly tied to local job availability. Bingham is outside the commuting range of most other job centers, which means that most of Bingham’s residents will seek employment within town.

### Population Characteristics:

The 2020 Census shows Bingham has 560 total housing units, 398 occupied units, 162 vacant units, and a population of 866. In contrast, the 2021 ACS shows Bingham as having 564 total housing units, 345 occupied units, 219 vacant units, and a population of 765. Table 2 below highlights the disparities between the 2020 Census data and the 2021 ACS data for clarification purposes.

**Table 2: Differences in 2020 Census vs. 2021 ACS Data**

Categories	2020 Census Data	2021 ACS Data	2010 ACS Data	% Change (2020 Census Vs. 2010 ACS)
Population	866	765	912	-46 -5%
Total Housing Units	560	564	606	-46 -8%
Occupied Housing Units	398	345	434	-36 -8%
Vacant Housing Units	162	219	172	-10 -6%
Households	398	345	422	-24 -6%
Median Age	52.3	43.2	53.5	-1.2 -2%
Average Household Size	N/A	2.22	1.95	N/A

*Source: 2020 Census, 2010 & 2021 ACS*

Additional Census or American Community Survey information can paint a broader picture to help with long-term planning for Bingham. One example is that the median age of Bingham residents has increased over the years. Another significant trend is that the average household size has decreased over the last several decades. Both trends show signs of slowing or rebounding in the most recent data, though. The median age decreased from 53.5 in 2010 to 52.3 in 2020. The average household size was 1.95 in 2010 and increased to 2.22 in 2021 (ACS data); however, the average household size is still much less than it was just three decades ago.

While the average household size of 2.22 is an uptick since 1.95 in 2010, it is still significantly less than 2.60 in 1980 and 2.47 in 1990. Average household size, as defined by the Census Bureau, as the number of people living in one place, who may or may not be related. This contrasts with the average family size, which was 2.96 in the 2021 ACS. Average family size is defined as people living in one location who are related to one another.

Decreasing average household size is a national trend, reflecting social changes like smaller families, lower birth rates, and elderly independent living. What this equates to is fewer people per household, necessitating more houses just to sustain the current population.

Both trends indicate that single-person households are becoming more commonplace. Except in college towns, single person households tend to be elderly householders. Older individuals living alone have unique needs that require public services and planning to be met. These specific needs include smaller sized houses on one level, public transportation, elderly housing, medical facilities, and more.

This data is imperative when considering the population and housing demands for the future. If the number of people in each household continues to decrease, the community will require not only more houses, but a housing stock made up of smaller houses to accommodate the elderly living alone.

**TABLE 3: POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS: 1980 - 2020**

<b>General Population Characteristics</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010*</b>	<b>2021*</b>
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>1,184</b>	<b>1,230</b>	<b>989</b>	<b>912</b>	<b>765</b>
<b>Male Population</b>	-	-	<b>474</b>	<b>473</b>	<b>375</b>
<b>Female Population</b>	-	-	<b>515</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>390</b>
<b>Median Age</b>	<b>37.3</b>	<b>34.9</b>	<b>41.3</b>	<b>53.5</b>	<b>43.2</b>
<b>Total Households</b>	-	-	<b>422</b>	<b>434</b>	<b>345</b>
<b>Family Households</b>	-	-	<b>270</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>167</b>
<b>Married Couple Family Households</b>	-	-	<b>194</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>Nonfamily Households</b>	-	-	<b>152</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>178</b>
<b>Nonfamily Households Living Alone</b>	-	-	<b>123</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>140</b>
<b>Households with children (under 18)</b>	-	-	<b>117</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>269</b>
<b>Single-Person Household 65 years +</b>	-	-	<b>53</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Average Household Size</b>	<b>2.60</b>	<b>2.47</b>	<b>2.28</b>	<b>1.95</b>	<b>2.22</b>

*Source: 1980, 1990, 2000 Census*

*\*2010 & 2021 Data from ACS*

## Components of Population Change

There are many factors that contribute to population changes besides birth rate, migration, and death rate. Some of these factors include economic development, education, quality of life, urbanism, changes in job availability, and many more. Some of these, although not relevant to Bingham, may be factors in why people moved from their original locations to Bingham.

Between 1980 and 1990, Bingham's population increased by 46 people, then shrank by 241 people in 2000. Overall, from 1980 to 2020, Bingham's population decreased by 318 people.

This change is never solely a case of emigration, as mentioned above, there are various contributing factors for people to move to a new home. Population change in a community is a result of both natural change and migration. Natural change is the difference between deaths and births in the community over a period. Migration accounts for people moving in and moving out. Net migration is population change not explained by births and deaths.

Will the ratio of natural change and net migration continue? Considering the aging population, a trend toward smaller families and increasing housing values, it seems that deaths will continue to outpace births, resulting in an increased decline in natural change.

The median age of Bingham residents has been increasing for decades. What are the long-term effects of a population that is increasing in age? Bingham residents' median age has increased by 15 years in just four decades.

However, population trends can be combated in several ways. Bingham has plenty of available land, abundant four-season outdoor recreational opportunities, and other draws, both in Bingham and neighboring towns. While the rate of natural change cannot be impacted with town policy, the rate of migration can be affected by managing land use controls, promoting economic sectors that fit the character of the town such as promoting the numerous recreational opportunities, and offering public services that town residents want and need.

Table 4 below highlights trends in specific age categories. A remarkable trend evidenced by this data is that the age group 65 and older saw the biggest decline since 2010. Just as remarkably, the age category of individuals between five and 19 years old increased by nearly 25 percent.

**TABLE 4: AGE TRENDS 2010 TO 2020**

	<b>2010 % Of Total</b>	<b>2020 % Of Total</b>	<b>10-Year Change</b>
Population	922	866*	-56 (-6.1%)
Male	473 (51.9%)	375 (49%)	-98 (-20.7%)
Female	439 (48.1%)	390 (51%)	-49 (-11.2%)
Median Age	53.5	52.3*	-1.2 (-2.2%)
Under 5 years old	40 (4.4%)	64 (8.4%)	24 (60%)
5 - 19 years old	101 (11.1%)	126 (16.5%)	25 (24.8%)
18 years and older	776 (85.1%)	588 (76.9%)	-188 (-24.2%)
20 - 24 years old	14 (1.5%)	10 (1.3%)	-4 (-28.6%)
25 - 44 years old	184 (20.2%)	201 (26.3%)	17 (9.2%)
45 - 54 years old	140 (15.4%)	109 (14.2%)	-31 (-22.1%)
55 - 59 years old	80 (8.8%)	72 (9.4%)	-8 (-10%)
60 - 64 years old	65 (7.1%)	50 (6.5%)	-15 (-23.1%)
65 years and older	288 (31.6%)	133 (17.4%)	-155 (-53.8%)

*Source: 2010 & 2020 American Community Survey*

*\*Source: 2010 & 2020 Census*

Some important population changes and trend takeaways from the data analysis in Table 4:

- The median age decreased a little more than two percent (or 1.2 years) in a 10-year period.
- The number of children (five and under) increased from 40 in 2010 to 64 in 2020.
- Three high-impact age categories saw an increase in the last decade:
  - Children five and under increased 60 percent
  - Age category 5 – 19 increased nearly 25 percent
  - Age category 25 – 44 increased 9.2 percent



- The increase in school-aged children will have an impact on school enrollment in the future.
- Adults that fall roughly into the “family-age” category were broken into two separate age categories:
  - Age category 20 – 24 decreased by four individuals (or 28.6 percent)
  - Age category 25 – 44 increased by 17 individuals (or 9.2 percent)
- In 2010, the 65 and older age category began to show the outliers in the baby boom generation (persons born generally between 1945 and 1965), accounting for nearly 32 percent of the overall population. This age category had the most individuals out of all other age categories in 2010. Whereas, according to the ACS, in 2021 the age category of 65 and over only accounted for 17.4 percent of the population.
- The most surprising trend observed in the past decade is the decrease in the 65 and older age category by 155 individuals or 53.8 percent.
- Another surprising change is that the age category of 25 – 44 years old accounted for 26.3 percent of the population, an increase of over nine percent in a decade. At 201 individuals, this age category constitutes the largest amount of Bingham’s population.

The trend of more young people and fewer individuals 65 and older is unexpected and unusual for many rural, central Maine communities. Individuals in the 65 and older age bracket typically have the highest contribution to a town’s population. Likewise, the trend of an increasing number of younger people is also unusual for many central Maine communities. The decline in the 65 and older age category is attributed to the decreased median age in Bingham.

There are several factors that have possibly contributed to the trend of decreasing median age and an increase in younger residents in Bingham:

- The only nursing home in Bingham closed within the last two years, necessitating those living there to find a new place to live, reducing Bingham’s median age.
- There has been an influx of younger families since the pandemic.
- The increasing trend of working from home has allowed new residents to move to Bingham who previously could not have lived there.
- By 2024, Bingham will have fiber-optic, high speed internet, a major draw to those working from home.
- Bingham’s municipal water supply has long been known for its excellent quality.
- Younger people have moved to Bingham to take advantage of the four-season outdoor recreational opportunities.
- People appear to be drawn to Bingham because of the town’s abundant green energy (solar farms, the wind farm, and the hydroelectric Wyman Dam).

The trend of new people moving to Bingham is anticipated to continue for all these reasons.

## Seasonal Population

All population data cited above refers to year-round residents. Bingham also has a seasonal population that includes camp owners/renters, visitors, day-trippers, as well as people staying at the numerous outdoor recreation outfitters in town throughout the year.

Seasonal population is more difficult to quantify than year-round residents. One way to gain insight into the seasonal population is to consider how many homes may be used only seasonally. Data from the 2021 Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary report shows 288 Homestead Exemptions claimed in Bingham. It should be noted that using the Homestead Exemption claim for determining seasonal population is less than ideal because State law requires that residents live at the residence for one year before they can file for a Homestead Exemption claim. Further, not everyone takes advantage of this tax incentive.



However, if the 288 Homestead Exemption claims are considered, then out of the 398 occupied housing units reported by the 2020 Census, it can be ascertained that 110 of the households are seasonal or do not claim their property in Bingham as their primary residence.

The Census Bureau also provides limited information on seasonal homes. According to the 2021 ACS data, there are 81 seasonal homes in Bingham; however, these are self-reported so actual data may differ.

If the difference between the 110 homes not claimed under the Homestead Exemption and the 81 reported by the Census is split, that would be approximately 95 seasonal homes, or roughly 17 percent of the total housing stock.

Although privately owned, individual camps or homes only account for approximately 17 percent of the town's housing stock, seasonal visitors greatly affect Bingham's local economy and year-round population. The town is particularly well known for its abundant four-season outdoor recreational opportunities and draws many people each season seeking outdoor adventure. In fact, the population increases by approximately 50 percent during summer months due to seasonal visitors and in the "off-season" seasonal visitors account for approximately 20 percent of Bingham's population.

The town's local economy is largely dependent on this seasonal population. In fact, many businesses in Bingham are entirely dependent upon seasonal visitors who come to Bingham for outdoor recreation. To name just a few of these businesses, North Country Rivers offers whitewater rafting on the Kennebec River, 201 PowerSports caters to those pursuing off-road adventures, and Gateway Recreation and Lodging offers cabin rentals, hunting opportunities, guide services, fishing, and snowmobiling.

Other local businesses not specific to outdoor recreation also benefit from the seasonal visitors, such as Jimmy's Market, the laundromat, the car wash, and Dollar General.

In addition to boosting the local economy, seasonal visitors are important to Bingham in other ways. For example, taxes collected from seasonal homes contribute to Bingham's tax base, and since seasonal residents are only in Bingham for short durations, their children do not attend Bingham schools, furthering their tax contribution to the town.

In addition to those coming to Bingham for vacation and recreational pursuits, there are also many who come to Bingham to work seasonally. Unfortunately, there is no practical way to calculate these individuals or their impact on the community.

Bingham is approximately 60-75 percent financially dependent on all types of seasonal visitors. The seasonal population and seasonal visitors have remained steady in the last decade or so; however, an increase is anticipated when Bingham acquires high-speed internet, which is expected in 2024.

## **Services**

While Bingham is geographically located in a rural area, when compared with other neighboring towns, Bingham has more amenities making it a regional service center. Bingham's regional amenities include a grocery store, several gas stations, a dealer for tractor trailer parts, health and dental centers, schools, employment opportunities, and more.

Since Bingham is attuned to providing for a fluctuating population with the seasonal tourists, the slightly increased daytime population of being a service center requires no additional efforts from the town.

## **School Enrollment Data**

Bingham is part of Regional School Unit (RSU) 83 and Maine School Administrative District (MSAD) 13 which includes Bingham and Moscow. The school district also hosts tuition paying students from Pleasant Ridge Plantation, Concord Plantation, and West Forks Plantation.

School enrollment in Bingham, in surrounding towns, and for Somerset County has fluctuated over the past ten years. Since 2010, Bingham has seen a sporadic increase in school aged children, reflected in Table 5 below.

**TABLE 5: SCHOOL ENROLLMENT DATA**

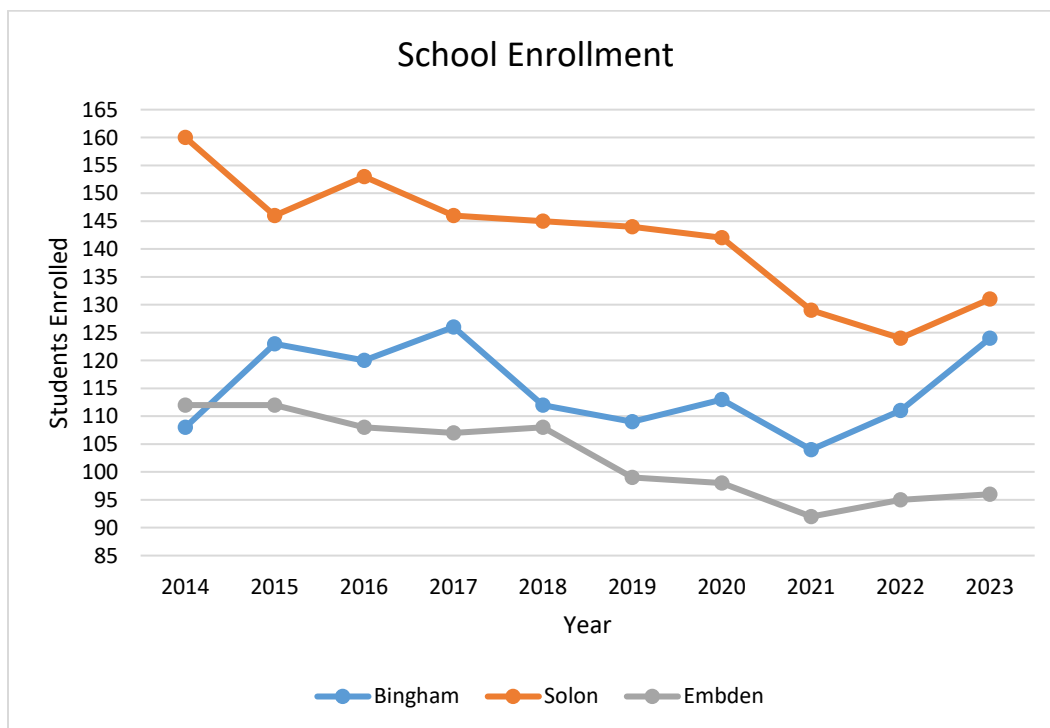
County/Town	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	10 Year Average
Bingham	108	123	120	126	112	109	113	104	111	124	115
Solon	160	146	153	146	145	144	142	129	124	131	142
Embden	112	112	108	107	108	99	98	92	95	96	104
Somerset County	7,787	7,806	7,673	7,590	7,536	7,480	7,378	6,885	6,863	6,936	7,393

*Source: Maine Department of Education, Student Enrollment Data*

Compared with Solon, Embden, and Somerset County, Bingham has been the only community that has a ten-year average higher than the student enrollment in 2014. In fact, from 2014 to 2023, Bingham's student enrollment increased by nearly 15 percent.

Between 2014 and 2023, Solon's student enrollment decreased by 18 percent, Embden's by 14 percent, and Somerset County by nearly 11 percent. School enrollment data for Bingham, Solon, and Embden is depicted on a line graph in Figure 2 below.

**FIGURE 2: STUDENT ENROLLMENT FROM 2014 TO 2023**



*Source: Maine Department of Education, Student Enrollment Data*

From Table 5 and Figure 2, there appears to be a trend of a slight increase in school enrollment between 2015 and 2018, after which time, enrollment decreased. Notably, school enrollment increased for all three towns and Somerset County between 2022 and 2023, with Bingham seeing the most dramatic increase at 11.7 percent.

The decreased school enrollment shown in Table 5 and Figure 2 is more than just a regional trend; it is a trend statewide as Maine's overall median age increases, resulting in a decrease in younger individuals. This trend has been progressing for nearly 10 years, depending on datasets; however, the phenomenon of the global pandemic starting in 2020 and continuing through 2022 may have changed the trajectory of this trend. School enrollment in each town will be affected differently by the pandemic and planning strategies should be considered to prevent negative impacts.

While projections are useful, they are often inaccurate because they are based on past trends. The onset of the Covid 19 pandemic has rendered relying on past trends for future projections useless; however, for planning purposes they should still be considered.

## Regional Perspective

Bingham's development pattern is not at all unusual for Somerset County. All the towns in this area prospered as farm towns during the 1800's, went into decline during westward expansion and the urbanization period of the late-19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and began to grow again as suburbs and green spaces. The region's largest growth period was in the 1970's and 1980's and has slowed since.

Table 6 compares population changes in Bingham, Moscow, Solon, Embden and Somerset County for the past three decades. Solon, Embden, and Somerset County saw slight population increases between 2000 and 2010. Between 2010 and 2020, Bingham, Moscow, Solon, Embden, and Somerset County all saw population decline.

**TABLE 6: POPULATION COMPARISON TO NEIGHBORING TOWNS**

<b>Town/County</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2020</b>
Bingham	989	922	866
Moscow	571	512	475
Solon	940	1,053	978
Embden	881	939	902
Somerset County	50,888	52,228	50,477

*Source: U.S. Census*

The region's towns are also similar in two other high-impact population trends: increasing median age and decreasing household size, depicted in Table 7 below.

**TABLE 7: MEDIAN AGE AND HOUSEHOLD SIZE OF NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES 2020**

<b>Town/County</b>	<b>Median Age</b>	<b>Average Household Size*</b>
Bingham	52.3	2.22
Moscow	53.8	1.92
Solon	52.1	2.18
Embden	55.2	2.06
Somerset County	46.9	2.60

Source: 2020 Census

\* 2021 ACS

Of course, these statistics are not an anomaly; the state's median age and family size are shrinking, as well. Conversely, as seen in Table 8, these trends are not reflected in the United States.

**TABLE 8: STATE, COUNTY, TOWN STATISTICS**

<b>Town/County/ State/Country</b>	<b>Population Change</b>		<b>% Change</b>	<b>Average Family Size*</b>	<b>Median Age</b>
	<b>2010</b>	<b>2020</b>		<b>2020</b>	<b>2020</b>
<b>Bingham</b>	922	866	6.1%	2.96	43.2
<b>Somerset County</b>	52,228	50,477	3.5%	3.2	46.9
<b>Maine</b>	1,328,361	1,362,359	2.6%	2.9	44.8
<b>United States</b>	234.6 million	331.4 million	7.4%	3.15	38.2

Source: 2020 ACS

\*This differs from the Average Household Size, which is 2.22 for Bingham. Household refers to those living together, related or not. Family refers to those who are living together and are related.

## Population Projections and Impact

Historic population and demographic trends are interesting, but their true value is in preparing for the future. Population projections provide useful insight for future planning. Population projections are obtained through mathematical extrapolations of past population growth and factors such as age distribution and household size.

The Maine Office of the State Economist publishes population projections to the year 2038 (prepared in 2018 and based on U.S. Census data). This agency estimates Bingham's population will be 974 by 2038, an increase of 12.5 percent or 108 residents from the current population in a 15-year period.

The Kennebec Valley Council of Government (KVCOG) also does population projections. It estimates a 2030 population of about 799, a decrease of 67 people or 7.7 percent of the population (prepared in 2018). This estimate is based on information from the tax assessor as well as U.S. Census information.

The Office of the State Economist's population project predicts an increase, while KVCOG's model predicts a decline in the population. It is important to note that these predictions are based on past trends, and as such, are often unreliable and inaccurate. These nuances are expounded by the changes brought on by the pandemic. There are many other major factors that also drive population change, such as the availability of housing and economic conditions.

The most likely scenario for Bingham is minimal population change. It is important to note that 'minimal population change' is not the same as 'no growth.' Even if Bingham's population does not change in size in the coming decade, it will undoubtedly change in dynamics. This 'minimal population change' scenario includes the assumption that the decreasing household size will have plateaued and median age will not continue to increase.

From 1980 to 2010, Bingham's average household size decreased from 2.60 people per household to 1.95 people per household. The average household size rebounded to 2.22 people per household in 2020.

Hypothetically, if Bingham's average household size decreased back down to 1.95 people per household in 2030, with their current population of 866, that would result in 444 households, requiring 444 housing units. The town currently has 560 housing units, with 398 occupied and 162 vacant housing units, and approximately 100 seasonal homes. Based on the 2020 Census data, Bingham can accommodate the hypothetical scenario of 444 households with its current housing stock.

When considering the State Economist's population projection of 974 and applying the same principle of dividing the population by average household size (using 1.95 people per household) the resulting number of households would need approximately 500 housing units by 2038. Considering the current housing stock of 560 housing units in Bingham and the approximation that 100 of them are only seasonal, if there were 500 households by 2038, the current housing stock would be inadequate to house them. There would be a shortage of 40 houses and would necessitate the construction of new homes.

Hypothetically, if the household size stayed the same as it currently is (2.22 people per household), the State Economist's population projection of 974 residents would require approximately 440 housing units in 2038, which is still within the scope of Bingham's existing housing stock, when considering the approximation of 100 seasonal homes.

Under KVCOG's population projection of 799 residents by 2030, if the average household size returned to 1.95 people per household, that population would need 410 houses to accommodate this reduced population. If the existing average household size (2.22 people per household) is assumed with KVCOG's projected population, 360 houses would be occupied. In either scenario, Bingham's current total housing stock can accommodate this population projection and household size, even with approximately 100 seasonal homes counted in the current housing stock.

For perspective, when considering Bingham's current population of 866 and current average household size of 2.22, an estimated 390 housing units are needed based on dividing the population by the average household size. The 2020 Census data reports that there are currently 398 occupied housing units, which is accurate for this calculation. But this extrapolation is too broad to be used for more than just a projection.

It is important to bear in mind several factors when considering population estimates. Simple population projections like the ones described above are rarely accurate. With the COVID-19 pandemic, these are unprecedented times. Towns are experiencing unpredictable changes and scenarios because of COVID-19. The projections detailed in this section are simple scenarios, based on a variety of factors, such as the size of Bingham's population, the town's location, and past trends.

## **Managing Population Growth**

The rate of housing development is an effective way to estimate population growth, but it is also a way to manage it. Local policies can affect the rate of housing growth through their influence on the cost of development or land use restrictions. Bingham has relatively low land development costs now and minimal municipal regulations, so it would be difficult to accelerate growth this way.

Trends can be managed to produce the desired results, to a certain extent. For example, if the local economy or housing market changes, that in turn affects how the community grows and changes too.

Growth in population and households increases the demand for public services and commercial development. Unless specifically designed for senior citizens, each new household must have one or more jobs to support it. Younger, larger households will generate school children. All households require added waste management and road maintenance costs. All these factors must be considered when projecting population growth.

It is important that the community pays attention to annual changes in housing development and other local and regional indicators. The town should continue to monitor the rate of new construction and the type of homes that are being built and should continue to discuss these implications and address them through policy changes, as needed.



## **Analysis of Trends**

Prior to the 2020 Census, the prominent demographic trends in Bingham were an aging population and declining average household size. While the median age is still quite high at 52.3 years old, it has decreased by slightly more than a year since 2010. In addition, the number of individuals 65 and older has decreased by 17 percent since 2010, while the number of children under five and individuals in the age category of 25-44 years old increased slightly. These statistics underscore the importance of demographic statistics when analyzing trends.

The increase in school-aged children resulted in Bingham's school enrollment increasing sporadically over the past decade, particularly in the last few years. If this trend continues, the town will need to consider the related implications of whether the existing facilities can accommodate continued growth in school enrollment.

While the State Economist's Office predicts a population increase to 974 by the year 2038, and KVCOG predicts a decreased future population of 799 by 2030, it is more than likely that additional housing units will be needed in either scenario due to the state-wide housing shortage. While Bingham's current housing stock of 560 housing units (with approximately 100 housing units for seasonal use only) can accommodate a larger population, it is unrealistic to think that no new houses will be constructed within the next 10 years.

Most towns in central Maine must consider the rapid increase in individuals 65 and over, but Bingham has lost over 50 percent of residents in that demographic category. Still, with the median age being 52.3, consideration should be given to the adequacy of senior services supplied by the town and ways to accommodate an ageing population in the future.

Other consideration must be given to population growth as well. Growth in population and households increases the demand for public services and commercial development. Unless specifically designed for senior citizens, each new household must have one or more jobs to support it. Younger, larger households will generate school children. All households require added waste management and road maintenance costs. All these factors must be considered when projecting population growth and planning for the future of the town.

## 3: The Local Economy



## **Overview**

Bingham's economy still needs to be viewed through the lens of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has changed nearly every aspect of daily life. At this time, it is not possible to predict the long-term impacts of the virus on the town, but by planning for a range of possibilities the town should be well prepared. In the interim, the statistics and data presented in this plan are primarily based on information from early 2020, and as such will not reflect the sudden changes brought on by the pandemic. The statistics and data present a baseline of the essential components for Bingham's local economy, even if used as a before and after comparison.

This chapter seeks to describe current conditions, outline Bingham's role in the regional economy, identify the town's economic development assets, examine visible trends and areas that need improvement, incorporate public sentiment and lay out direction and strategy to guide the town's economic development efforts for the foreseeable future.

The health of a community is often measured by its economic activity. Income and employment, in addition to describing the nature of the population, can be indicators of current and future demand for housing, recreation, and social and cultural services. This chapter reports on the economy from two perspectives: statistical information and local business issues.

As with many central Maine communities in recent times, Bingham has had challenges regarding economic development. The Historic Profile outlines the active roles of both community leaders and citizens in purposefully attracting employment and tax base to Bingham throughout the town's history. These efforts continue to this day, as the town must try to keep up with changes in economic activities as they have shifted from manufacturing, millwork, and agriculture to a more service-oriented economy, as well as changes in retail consumption patterns.

## **Introduction**

Improving the local economy was noted as a strong priority, if not top priority in the 2000 Comprehensive Plan, in part because Bingham is a regional service center. Bingham's economic center is its downtown area, which has been in decline for many years. The 2000 plan made every effort at downtown revitalization, including having a chapter so designated in the plan. This updated plan will include a dissection of the downtown area in a subheading within the Local Economy chapter.



## Historic Development Patterns

Bingham originated as a river settlement along the Kennebec River. Farmers and loggers spread out from the original settlement into the surrounding area. Bingham differed from other towns in the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century because when many other towns were losing population due to westward expansion, Bingham developed waterpower and an industrial base, creating many employment

opportunities. The farmland, which was not particularly prosperous, reverted to forests as mills developed and grew.

By the turn of the century, Bingham had become a business and employment center for the surrounding towns, a characteristic still evident today. The addition of public water and sewer connections, the main travel corridor of Route 201, and the construction of the Wyman Dam all contributed to Bingham's historical development.

Historically, and persisting to this day, Bingham residents have been accurately perceived as hard working, an evaluation evidenced by the types of jobs that are abundant in Bingham. Many Bingham residents can trace their roots back generations to families that did not shy away from hard work, from logging, to the construction of the Wyman Dam.

## Per Capita Income Vs. Household Income

The most conventional measure of a town's economic health is the income of its individuals and families. The Census reports two basic types of income measures: "per-capita income" (PCI) which is simply the aggregate income of the town divided by its population, and "household income" which is the income (usually the median) of the households within the town. The latter is more helpful from a planning perspective.

The PCI is used to determine the average per-person income for an area and to evaluate the standard of living and quality of life of the population. Since PCI divides the number of the town's population, including all individuals and not just adults, by the total income of the population, it will inevitably be lower for areas where more people are not working or are working but earning lower wages money.

Table 1 below shows the comparison between Bingham's Per Capita Income and median household income with that of surrounding towns.

**TABLE 1: COMPARISON OF SURROUNDING TOWNS' PER CAPITA VS. MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOMES**

	Bingham	Embden	Moscow	Solon
<b>Per Capita Income</b>	\$765	\$777	\$528	\$775
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$36,122	\$61,094	\$37,583	\$48,500

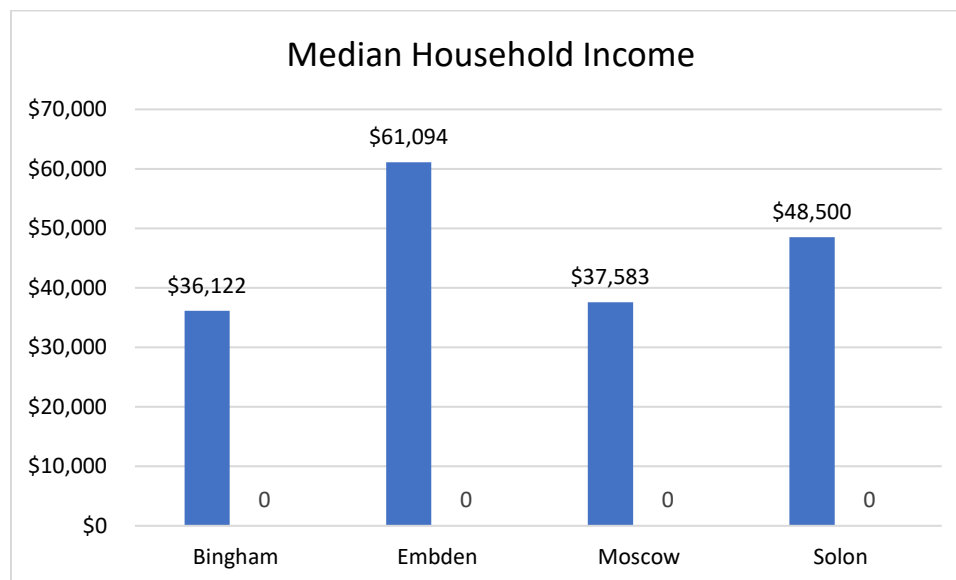
*Source: 2021 American Community Survey (ACS) Inflation adjusted dollars*

Figures 1 and 2 below show the same information as Table 1, but it is broken out separately in graphs.

Median household income represents the total gross income received by all members of a household within a 12-month period. The median divides the income distribution into two equal parts: one half of the cases falling below the median income, and one half above the median income. Two factors distinguish it from per capita income:

- 1) decreasing household size over time,
- 2) changes in the number of members of the household with income.

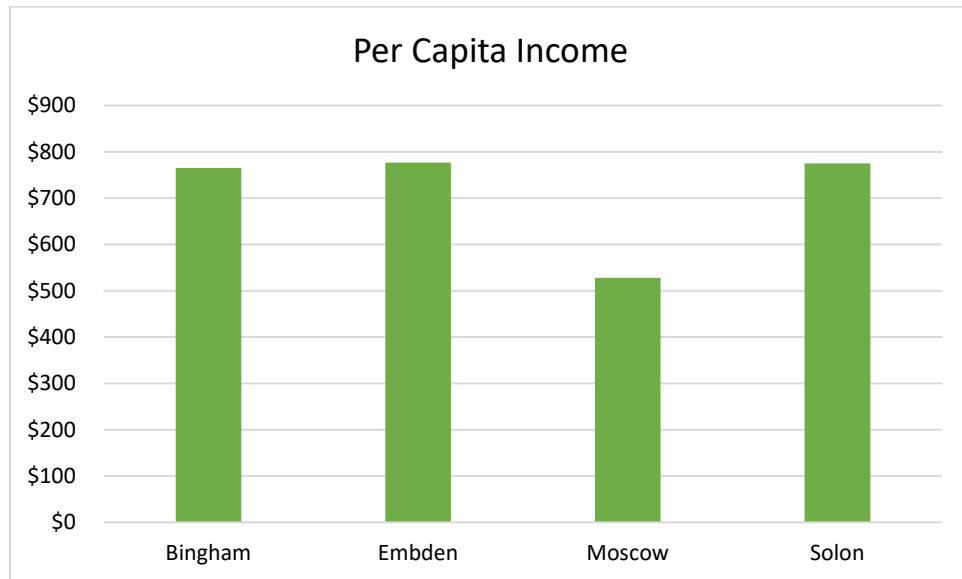
**FIGURE 1: MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME FOR SURROUNDING TOWNS**



*Source: 2021 ACS*

One use for per capita income is comparison among towns. According to the 2021 American Community Survey (ACS), Bingham had a per capita income (PCI) of \$765, on par with Embden and Solon, and higher than Moscow (Table 1 and Figure 1). For median household income, Bingham was significantly lower than Embden, slightly lower than Solon, and nearly the same as Moscow.

**FIGURE 2: PER CAPITA INCOME FOR SURROUNDING TOWNS**

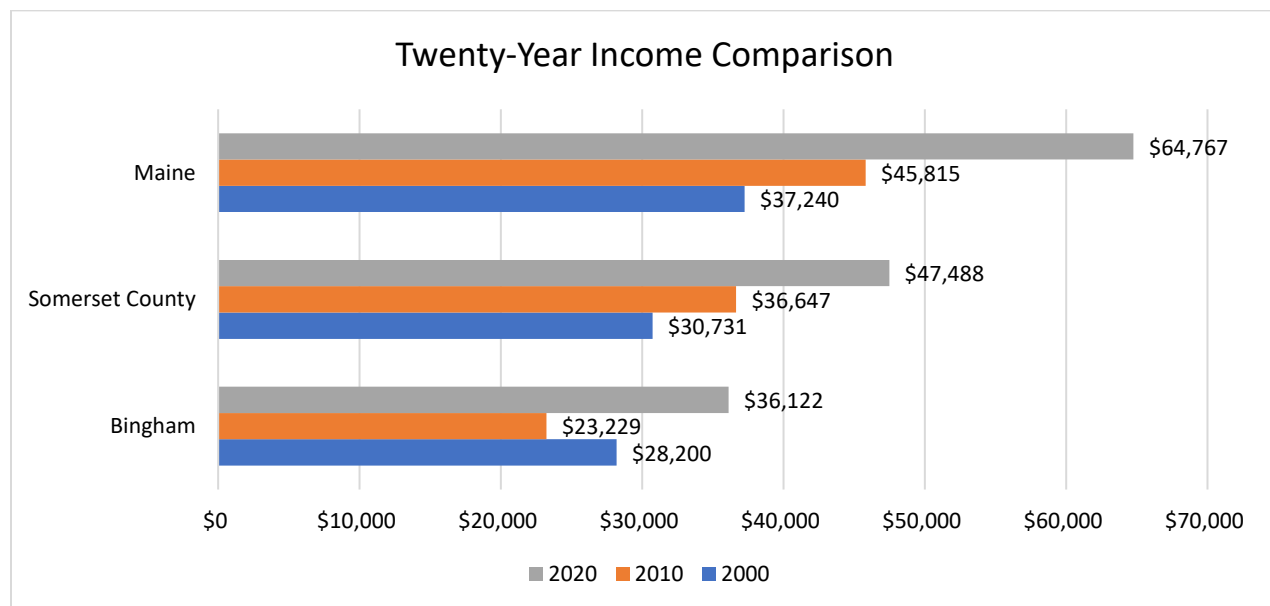


*Source: 2021 ACS*

Bingham's income profile falls between Solon's and Moscow's income profiles. For comparison, the State of Maine has a PCI of \$87,756 and a median household income of \$64,767. Somerset County had a PCI of \$50,424 and a median household income of \$48,488. Bingham's PCI is much lower than that of the state and county, as is the median household income.

The changes in Bingham's median household income in the past three decades are illustrated in Figure 3 below. From 2000 to 2010, there was almost an 18 percent decrease in median household income. Then from 2010 to 2020 the median household income rebounded with a 55.5 percent increase. Considering the recent upswing in economic conditions generally, that change is not surprising. It is important to note that when calculating this data, the Census Bureau adjusts for inflation.

**FIGURE 3: 2000, 2010 & 2020 MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOMES: BINGHAM, SOMERSET COUNTY AND MAINE**



*Source: 2000 Census, 2010 and 2020 ACS*

Historically, both the State of Maine and Somerset County have traditionally had higher median household incomes than those of Bingham. In fact, Bingham's current median household income is still slightly less than the median household income for the State of Maine in 2000.

These income levels are also a way to assess housing affordability. A house is considered affordable if a household whose income is at or below 80 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI) can live there without spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs (including heat, electricity, insurance, etc.).

For example, in Somerset County, 80 percent of the AMI by family size is as follows:

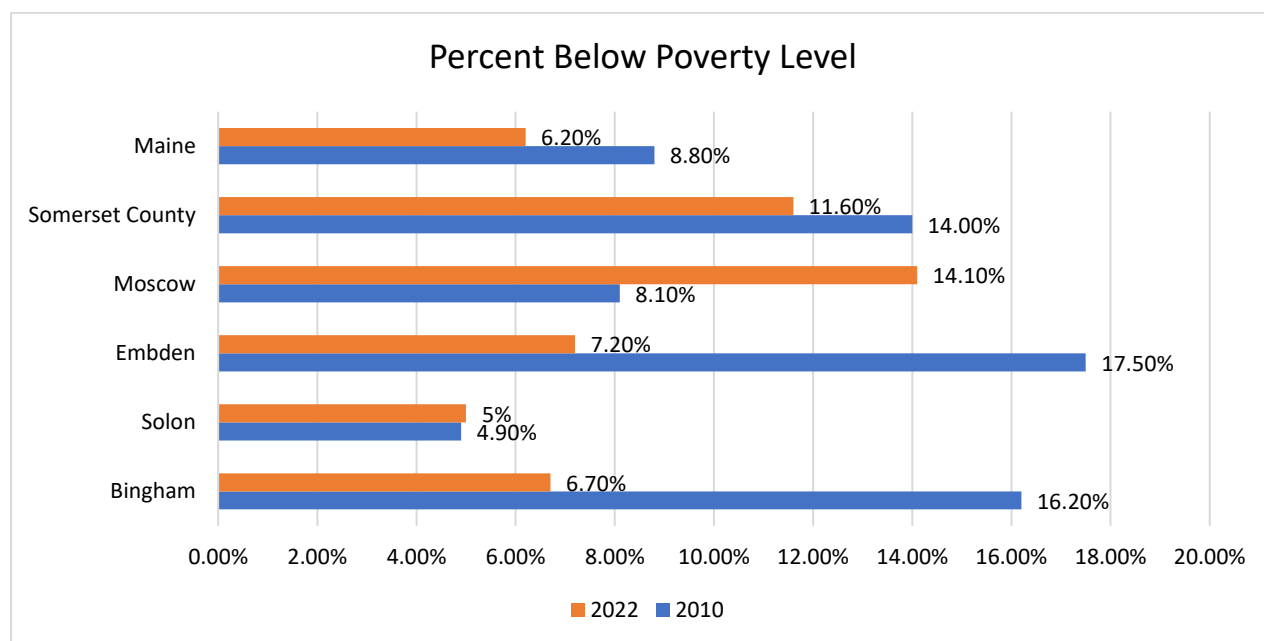
Family of 1: \$42,450	Family of 5: \$65,450
Family of 2: \$48,500	Family of 6: \$70,300
Family of 3: \$54,550	Family of 7: \$75,150
Family of 4: \$60,600	Family of 8: \$80,000

This data is from 2023 and can be found on the Maine Housing website ([https://www.mainehousing.org/docs/default-source/homeimprovement/80-ami-income-limits.pdf?sfvrsn=6df08615\\_5](https://www.mainehousing.org/docs/default-source/homeimprovement/80-ami-income-limits.pdf?sfvrsn=6df08615_5)). In Bingham, 80 percent of the median household income is \$28,898. Roughly 45 percent of Bingham's 345 households earn less than this income level.

The percentage of families in Bingham that were below the poverty level has decreased significantly between 2010 and 2020, as they have for Embden and to a lesser extent, Somerset County, and the State of Maine. The percentage of families below the poverty level has increased for Moscow between 2010 and 2022. Solon has seen minimal change in those below the poverty level between 2010 and 2022.

The 2000 Comprehensive Plan notes that the population below the poverty level in 1980 was 15.4% and 21.4% in 1990.

**FIGURE 4: FAMILIES BELOW POVERTY LEVEL**



*Source: 2010 & 2022 ACS*

The American Community Survey identified 145 households with Social Security income, about 42 percent of all households in Bingham. Additionally, 23 Bingham families are assisted by Supplemental Social Security Income, which is earmarked for those with disabilities and older adults with little or no income or resources.

The 2021 ACS also identified 24 households with retirement income; however, there is probably a significant overlap between that and Social Security income. According to the ACS, there are 82 households who depend upon public assistance income or food stamps.

Overall, when comparing the 2021/2022 American Community Survey income statistics with nearby towns and the 2010 ACS statistics, Bingham residents' poverty status has improved in the last decade.

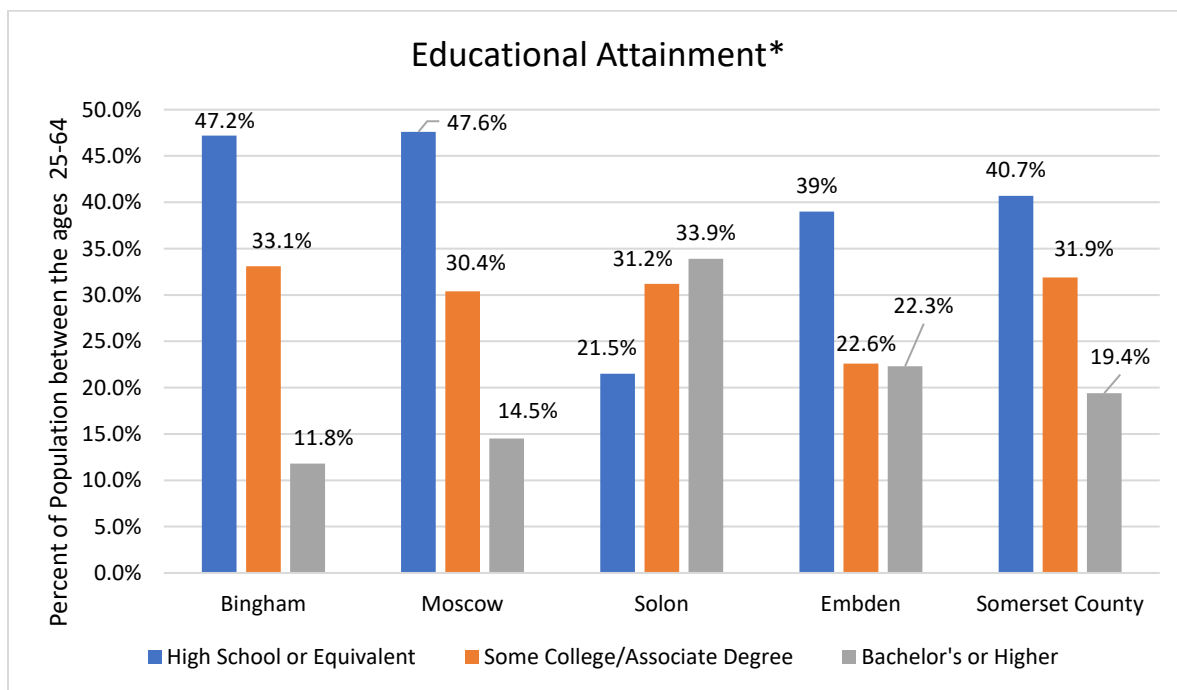


## Educational Attainment

A measure of how likely the town is to progress economically is the educational attainment of its residents. Jobs that require mastery of math, science and special skills are typically more likely to flow to areas with higher educational levels; however, this is not always true. College graduation is a basic requirement for many professional, managerial and educational professions. And, generally, wages are higher for jobs demanding higher educational attainment.

It should be noted that individuals who work in jobs that require skilled trade are in higher demand currently due to fewer people going into those lines of work. This trend has resulted in wages for people who work in trades that are comparable to those working in jobs that require a college education.

**FIGURE 5: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT COMPARISON WITH SURROUNDING TOWNS**



Source: 2021 ACS

*\*For the population between the ages 25 to 64 years old.*

Figure 5 compares the populations between the ages of 25 to 64 years old in Bingham, Moscow, Solon, Embden and Somerset County.

The percentage of those who have a bachelor's degree or higher in Bingham is lower than that of surrounding towns as well as the county. However, Bingham's population who obtained high school education or equivalent is the second highest in this comparison, and only 0.4 percent less than Moscow's, which was the highest at 47.6 percent. At 33.1 percent, Bingham's residents with some college education or an associate degree is higher than any of the surrounding towns or county.

Overall, Bingham's residents have a higher-than-average educational attainment when compared with surrounding towns and the county.

## Local Labor Force and Employment

The labor force refers to the number of people either working or available to work within the working-age population. For the purpose of the Census, the working-age population is everyone over age 16 including those of retirement age.

According to the 2021 ACS, Bingham's labor force consisted of 313 people, 52 percent of the working-age population. This is a decrease of approximately 2.5 percent or 8 individuals since 2010. In 2000, there were 428 individuals in the labor force, accounting for 54 percent of the working-age population. These details are better displayed in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Three Decades of Labor Force Data**

Year	Working-Age Population	In Labor Force (% of Working-Age Population)	Female	Male	Unemployed
2021*	601	313 (52%)	125 (40%)	188 (60%)	19 (0.32%)
2010*	798	321 (40%)	179 (55.8%)	142 (44%)	59 (18.4%)
2000	793	428 (54%)	198 (46%)	230 (54%)	13 (3%)

*Source: 2000 Census, \*2010 & 2020 ACS*

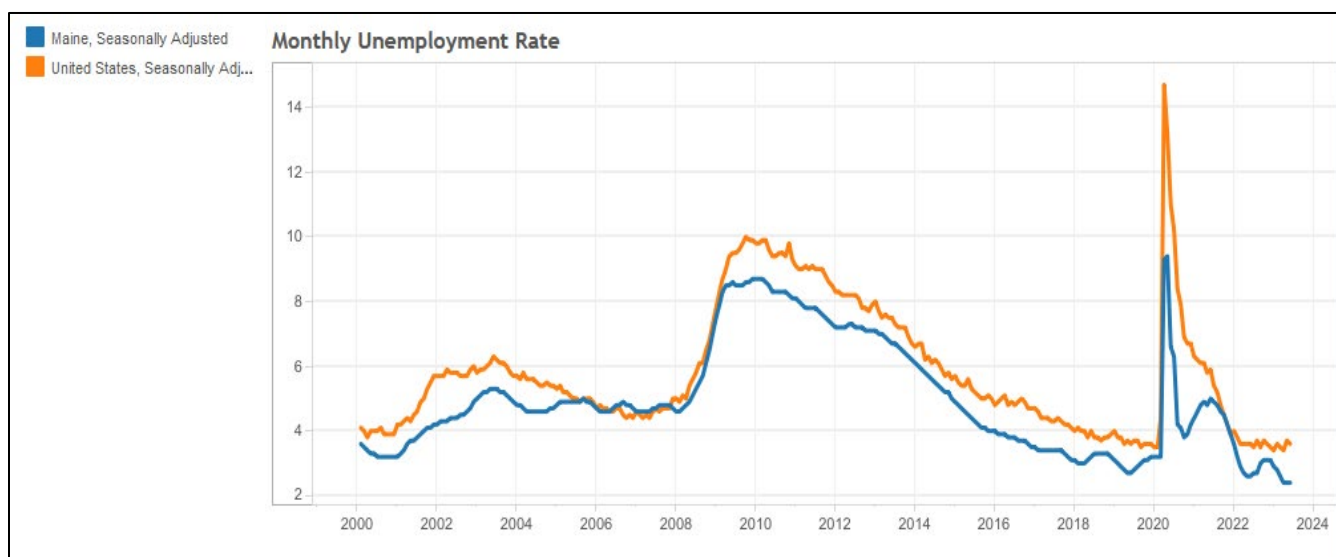
At 40 percent, Bingham's percentage of females in the labor force is lower than that of Somerset County's percentage of females in the labor force which is 47.7 percent. Somerset County's unemployment rate, according to the 2021 ACS is 4.8 percent, which is higher than Bingham's 0.32 percent unemployment rate.

Being in the labor force is not the same as being employed. The labor force is the sum of the employed plus the unemployed. According to the 2021 ACS, 19 people in Bingham were unemployed (21 percent women or 4 individuals, 79 percent men, or 15 individuals) for an unemployment rate of 0.32 percent. In 2010, the unemployment rate was 18.4 percent. It should be noted that the Census defined "unemployment rate" only as representing the number of unemployed people as a percentage of the civilian labor force. It does not specify if those counted toward the unemployment rate were only those collecting unemployment.

Unemployment is better reported by the Maine Department of Labor (MDOL), which conducts periodic surveys. Figure 5 is a graph of unemployment in the United States and the State of Maine, of which Bingham is a reflection.

The MDOL defined unemployment as the number of people who are not employed but are actively seeking work. This includes those who are waiting to be called back from a layoff or are waiting to report to a new job within 30 days. The unemployment rate is measured monthly through a sample of surveyed households.

**FIGURE 6: UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN MAINE AND UNITED STATES**

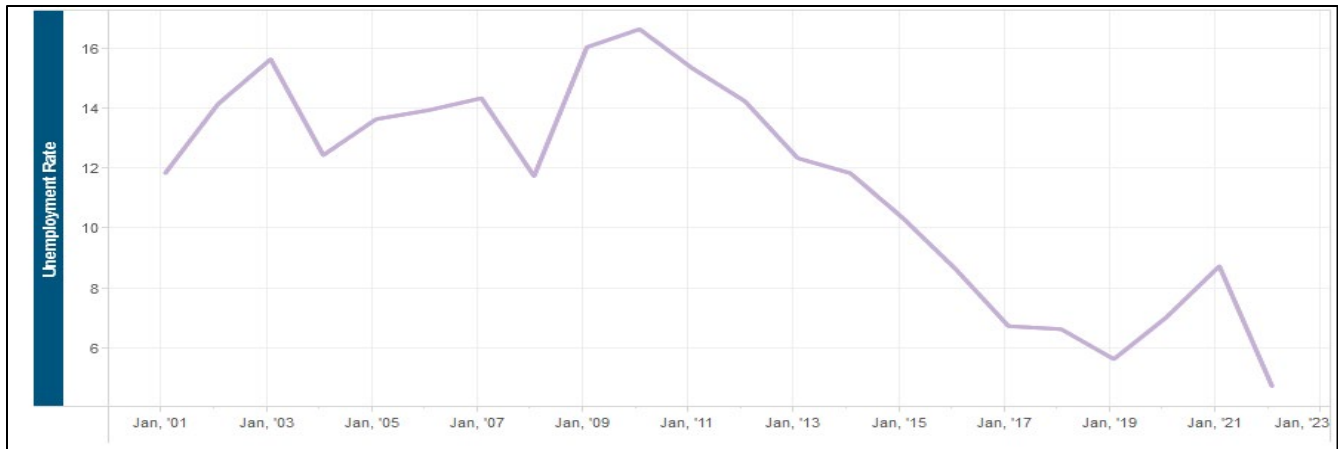


*Source: Maine Department of Labor*

The graph in Figure 6 depicts the trend of dropping unemployment until 2020 when the global pandemic hit, then the unemployment rate skyrocketed until approximately mid-2021. Maine did not see the extremes in high rates of unemployment or for as long as the United States during the pandemic.

Figure 7 shows Bingham's unemployment rate, taken from the first month of each year. Bingham did not see the high rates of unemployment as the state and country during the pandemic but it has taken longer to rebound from those effects.

**FIGURE 7: BINGHAM'S UNEMPLOYMENT RATE**



*Source: Maine Department of Labor*

In 2001, the Maine Department of Labor (DOL) estimated there were 468 persons in the labor force in Bingham, with an unemployment rate of 11.8 percent. By 2010, the DOL estimated there were 398 persons in the labor force, a decrease of nearly 15 percent. In 2015, the DOL estimated there were 369 persons in Bingham labor force with an unemployment rate of 10.3 percent, and most recently in 2022, the DOL estimated Bingham's labor force at 340 and an unemployment rate of 4.7 percent.

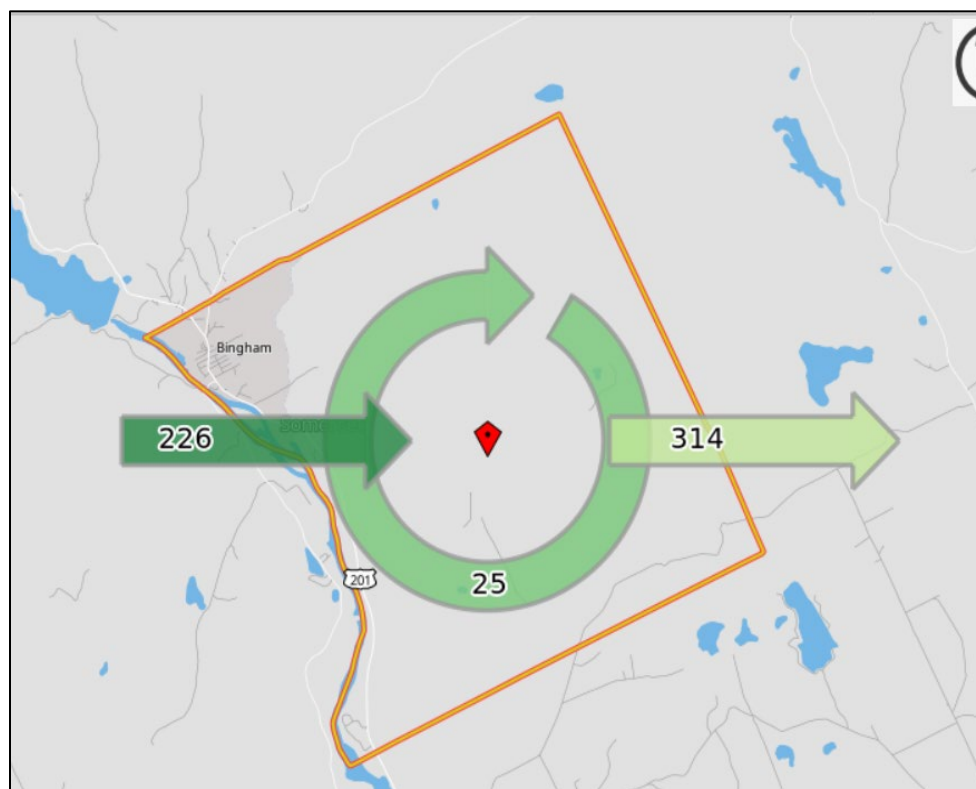
Even though the number of people in Bingham's labor force is decreasing, the unemployment rate has also been declining steadily since 2016. Historically, Bingham's unemployment rate has hovered between 10 – 15 percent, until 2016 when it dropped to 8.6 percent. Since that time, the unemployment rate has not risen to double digits again, and has, in fact, continued to decrease to the current 4.7 percent.

## Commuting to Work

Bingham is a net contributor of workers to the regional economy, as are all small towns in the area. Of the 2021 ACS respondents, 226 people reported that they lived outside of Bingham and commuted to Bingham for work, 314 people reported that they lived in Bingham and commuted to work in another area, and 25 people reported that they both lived and worked in Bingham.

It is important to note that the workers represented in the following figures are year-round workers only; no information on seasonal workers was available.

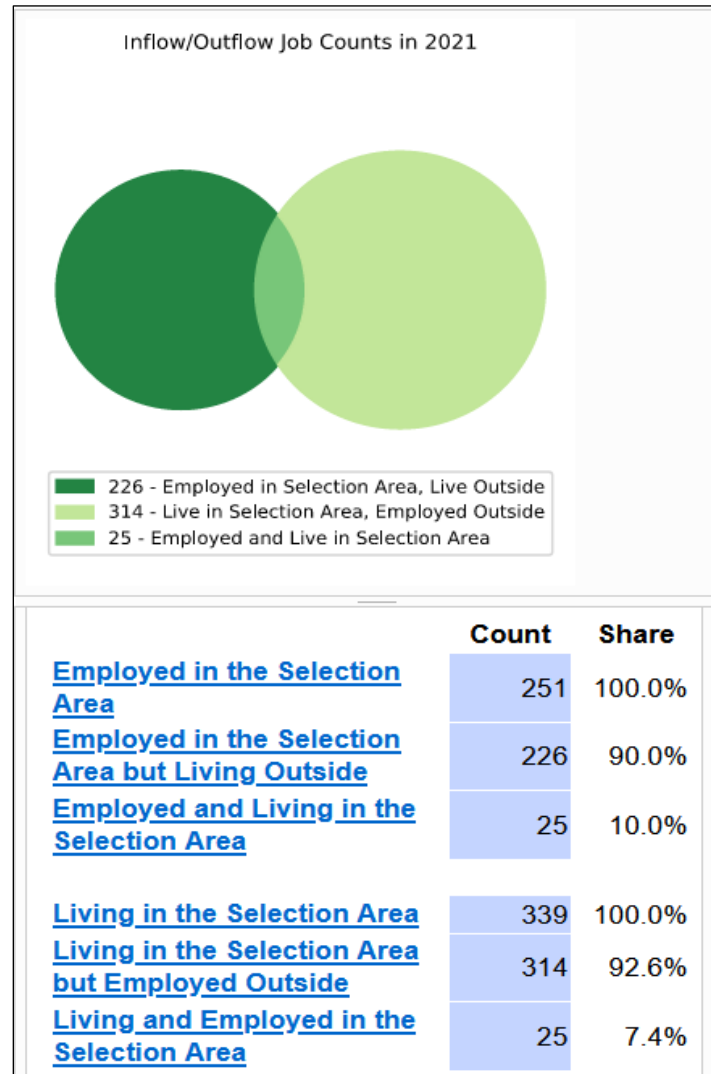
**FIGURE 8: FLOW OF WORKERS TO AND FROM BINGHAM**



Source: 2021 ACS

Figure 8 shows the 226 workers who live elsewhere and commute to Bingham to work as the green arrow going into the circle. The circular arrow represents the 25 workers who live and work in Bingham. The light green arrow out of the circle represents the 314 workers who live in Bingham and work elsewhere.

**FIGURE 9: SHARE OF WORKERS WHO COMMUTE INTO/OUT OF BINGHAM**













Source: 2021 ACS

The dark green circle in Figure 9 represents the 226 individuals employed in Bingham but living elsewhere. The larger, light green circle represents the 314 individuals who live in Bingham but are employed elsewhere. The overlap of these two circles represents the 25 individuals who live and work in Bingham.

Below, of the 251 people employed in Bingham, 90 percent live somewhere outside of town and only 10 percent live in Bingham. Of the 339 people who responded to this Census survey, 92.6 percent live in Bingham but work in another town, while only 7.4 percent live and work in Bingham.

**FIGURE 10: WORK DESTINATION FOR BINGHAM RESIDENTS**











<b>Jobs Counts by Places (Cities, CDPs, etc.) Where Workers are Employed - All Jobs</b>		
	<b>2021</b>	
	<b>Count</b>	<b>Share</b>
<u><a href="#">All Places (Cities, CDPs, etc.)</a></u>	339	100.0%
 <u><a href="#">Skowhegan CDP, ME</a></u>	34	10.0%
 <u><a href="#">Bingham CDP, ME</a></u>	22	6.5%
 <u><a href="#">Waterville city, ME</a></u>	20	5.9%
 <u><a href="#">Augusta city, ME</a></u>	11	3.2%
 <u><a href="#">Madison CDP, ME</a></u>	8	2.4%
 <u><a href="#">Bangor city, ME</a></u>	7	2.1%
 <u><a href="#">Norridgewock CDP, ME</a></u>	7	2.1%
 <u><a href="#">Auburn city, ME</a></u>	6	1.8%
 <u><a href="#">Pittsfield CDP, ME</a></u>	6	1.8%
 <u><a href="#">Portland city, ME</a></u>	6	1.8%
<b>All Other Locations</b>	212	62.5%

*Source: 2021 ACS*

Of the 339 workers who commute out of Bingham, Skowhegan is the predominant importer of workers at 34, followed by Bingham's Census Designated Place (see the Existing Land Use chapter for more information on Bingham's Census Designated Place) at 22, then Waterville at 20.

A Census Designated Place or CDP is a concentration of population defined by the United States Census Bureau for statistical purposes only. A CDP is not the same as a town; it is a location delineated by the Census Bureau based on population density in that area. In Bingham's case, the CDP includes Bingham Village and encompasses a land area of 2.27 square miles.

**FIGURE 11: WHERE WORKERS LIVE WHO ARE EMPLOYED IN BINGHAM**

<b>Jobs Counts by Places (Cities, CDPs, etc.) Where Workers Live - All Jobs</b>		
	<b>2021</b>	
	<b>Count</b>	<b>Share</b>
<u>All Places (Cities, CDPs, etc.)</u>	251	100.0%
 <u>Bingham CDP, ME</u>	20	8.0%
 <u>Skowhegan CDP, ME</u>	8	3.2%
 <u>Anson CDP, ME</u>	6	2.4%
 <u>Madison CDP, ME</u>	6	2.4%
 <u>Bangor city, ME</u>	4	1.6%
 <u>Farmington CDP, ME</u>	4	1.6%
 <u>Augusta city, ME</u>	2	0.8%
 <u>Bath city, ME</u>	2	0.8%
 <u>North Anson CDP, ME</u>	2	0.8%
 <u>Waterville city, ME</u>	2	0.8%
<b>All Other Locations</b>	195	77.7%

Source: 2021 ACS

Figure 11 tracks where people live, who commute to Bingham for work. In the old Comprehensive Plan, Bingham imported 102 individuals from Moscow for work. In 2021, there is no significant number of people coming from Moscow to work in Bingham. As with where Bingham residents commute *to work*, again Skowhegan is the predominant location where workers live who commute *to* Bingham with eight people, followed by six people commuting to both Madison and Anson. By far, the largest number of individuals are those who live in more rural parts of Bingham and commute to Bingham's Census Designated Place for work.



## Job Types

Table 3 lists the occupational categories of Bingham’s workers for 2010 and 2020. Nearly half of Bingham’s workforce was in management, business, science and art in 2010. That number stayed about the same for 2020. The percentages of workers in the other job categories have changed little since 2010, as well.

**TABLE 3: OCCUPATIONAL PROFILE FOR BINGHAM’S WORKERS**

Occupation	2010	% Of Total	2020	% Of Total
<b>Management, business, science, and art</b>	58	22.1%	37	12.6%
<b>Service</b>	73	27.9%	53	18%
<b>Sales and Office</b>	79	30.2%	30	10.2%
<b>Natural resource, construction, and maintenance</b>	26	9.9%	102	34.7%
<b>Production, transportation, and material moving</b>	26	9.9%	72	24.5%

*Source: 2010 & 2021 ACS*

The majority of Bingham’s workforce was employed in the ‘service’ job category in 2010, accounting for 27.9 percent of the workforce. ‘Service’ is a broad category that includes jobs such as car repair, beauticians, accountants, medical workers, and many other types of jobs. From 2010 to 2021, the number of individuals employed in the service job category dropped by 20 people, resulting in a 27 percent decline. It is noteworthy that the service job category is where the previous Comprehensive Plan anticipated the most growth. Likewise, the sales and office job category decreased by 62 percent from 2010 to 2021.

Meanwhile, the job category of natural resources, construction, and maintenance increased by 292 percent, going from 26 individuals in 2010 to 102 individuals in 2021. The only other job category that saw a similar increase was production, transportation, and material moving, which increased from 26 to 72 individuals between 2010 and 2021. The 2000 Comprehensive Plan anticipated the job category that includes construction would see the least amount of growth.

Since logging falls into the natural resource, construction, and maintenance category, this increase is not altogether surprising. The job category of production, transportation, and material moving is closely associated with logging and construction, so the increase in workers in this broad field coincides with the increase in the natural resources, construction, and maintenance job category. When the logging industry thrives, so too does production, transportation, and the moving of materials.

Bingham's workforce can also be broken down by their industry of employment in Table 4, below. This is not as specific as describing a person's actual job because manufacturing, for instance, may include secretaries, managers, sales staff and skilled workers all together. However, breaking industries down in this way provides information to gauge which sectors of the economy are doing well. An additional advantage is that this is the classification that the Maine DOL uses for its annual updates.

**TABLE 4: INDUSTRIAL CLASSIFICATION FOR BINGHAM'S 1,427 WORKERS**

Industry	2010	% Of Total	2020	% Of Total
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining	31	11.8%	50	17%
Construction	5	1.9%	36	12.2%
Manufacturing	4	1.5%	31	10.5%
Wholesale trade	0	0%	0	0%
Retail trade	44	16.8%	33	11.2%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	15	5.7%	10	3.4%
Information	6	2.3%	0	0%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	14	5.3%	0	0%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	0	0%	36	12.2%
Educational services, health care and social assistance	73	27.9%	72	24.5%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	46	17.6%	15	5.1%
Other services, except public administration	18	6.9%	11	3.7%
Public administration	6	2.3%	0	0%

*Source: 2010 & 2021 ACS*

This data shows that the major industry for Bingham's workers in both 2010 and 2020 was the educational services, health care and social assistance by a significant percentage in both decades. For 2021, the industry with the next highest percentage was agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining, which had a 61 percent increase since 2010. Other noteworthy changes between 2010 and 2021 were the increases in the following categories: construction, manufacturing, and the broad industry that covers professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services.

Industries that saw a decline in workers between 2010 and 2021 include information, finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing, arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services, and the public administration industry.

The decline in the ‘information’ category is due to the closure of the information building. The building previously used for information was converted to a clinic overseen by Somerset Public Health. Other closures in the decade between 2010 and 2020 include the real estate office and local drugstore.

This data has implications for local or regional economic growth. Manufacturing, for example, grabs the headlines when another plant or mill shuts down. Yet, from the 2021 ACS data, it appears that manufacturing has increased slightly in the last 10 years in Bingham.

Bingham’s strength is in health and education jobs which, fortunately, are growth sectors both regionally and nationally. That means Bingham is in a good position to take advantage of foreseeable economic trends, though on a regional basis rather than locally.

An area also noted in the 2000 Comprehensive Plan that has seen a decreasing trend is retail trade. Between 2010 and 2021, this job category went from 44 workers to 33 or decreased by 25 percent. This decrease in retail trade is not unique to Bingham; it seems retail stores are choosing to centralize in more populated locations such as Skowhegan, or existing stores in those locations growing.

While this can have an immediate negative impact in some ways, it is also an opportunity for smaller, local establishments to fill the void left by larger retailers. This is also an opportunity for Bingham to work towards revitalizing the downtown area to attract new, desired businesses.

### **Bingham’s Local Business Climate**

The retail/commercial economy in Bingham is comprised of small businesses primarily in the service and retail sectors that serve the needs of Bingham residents, those passing through, and the numerous tourist and seasonal population. The major retail/commercial centers are in Bingham Village, though there are other businesses spread throughout town as well. Bingham Village or the downtown area historically served the needs of those people living in the outlying areas of town and in other nearby towns.

Bingham Village, in recent years, has been improving. The 2000 Comprehensive Plan notes that at time of writing, the village was deteriorating; however, town officials and residents have taken great strides to improve both the appearance and vitality of the village and are continuing to work towards future improvements. The improvements include the removal of the dilapidated buildings along Main Street, the creation of green spaces in the village, upgraded street lighting, and sidewalk maintenance. A future improvement is that high speed internet will be available in 2024, which is anticipated to increase economic viability. Continued improvements to Main Street are still a high priority for the town.

Bingham's major employers today include Irby Cianbros, which is likely the largest employer in town, Melcher's Logging, Weyerhaeuser, and Upper Kennebec Valley Ambulance Service. Other employers in Bingham include the laundromat, Jimmy's Market, the health and dental center, the car wash, Bingham Fish Hatchery, Dollar General, the businesses that cater to those seeking outdoor recreation and internet businesses run out of private homes. The school system is also one of the town's largest employers and one of Bingham's biggest expenses, as with most small towns.

Home occupations, or small home businesses in Bingham play an important role in the community. They contribute to approximately 50 percent of the town's business base, although some of them are lesser known than brick and mortar businesses. The availability of high-speed internet will only increase the presence of home occupations in town.

As Bingham has an abundance of four-season tourists, seasonal homes, camps, visitors passing through, and day trippers, the town and its economy is hugely dependent upon tourism. The town has taken steps to continue to support and promote tourism, including redevelopment and improvements to the village area and preserving and protecting the town's natural resources.

Bingham is a unique town in that even though it is a service center in its region, it still retains its small town feel where neighbors know each other and are willing to help each other out. For example, Jimmy's Market, the local grocery store, provides grocery delivery every Thursday to those in need who are unable to get to the store on their own to buy groceries. Bingham strives to maintain and promote that special character while also encouraging economic growth by hosting a myriad of townwide events. Some of those events include a Christmas light decorating contest, a Santa Clause Christmas party, Kids Day, putting American flags on the telephone poles for both Memorial Day and Veterans' Day, and putting wreaths on the poles during holidays.

The town also collaborates with the Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway and Old Canada Road Historical Society for events and improvements throughout the town.

### **Bingham's Downtown**

To rejuvenate the local economy is to rejuvenate the downtown. The downtown area, which is the historic Bingham Village, consisting of present-day Main Street, is a barometer for Bingham's economic health. Currently, the downtown is improving, with fewer buildings that are vacant or in poor condition. Other improvements include sidewalk maintenance, more green space, streetlights with LED lighting, and an informational sign at the intersection of Murray Street and Main Street to detail townwide events. In spring of 2024, the town will be planting trees along Main Street to improve the aesthetic appeal.

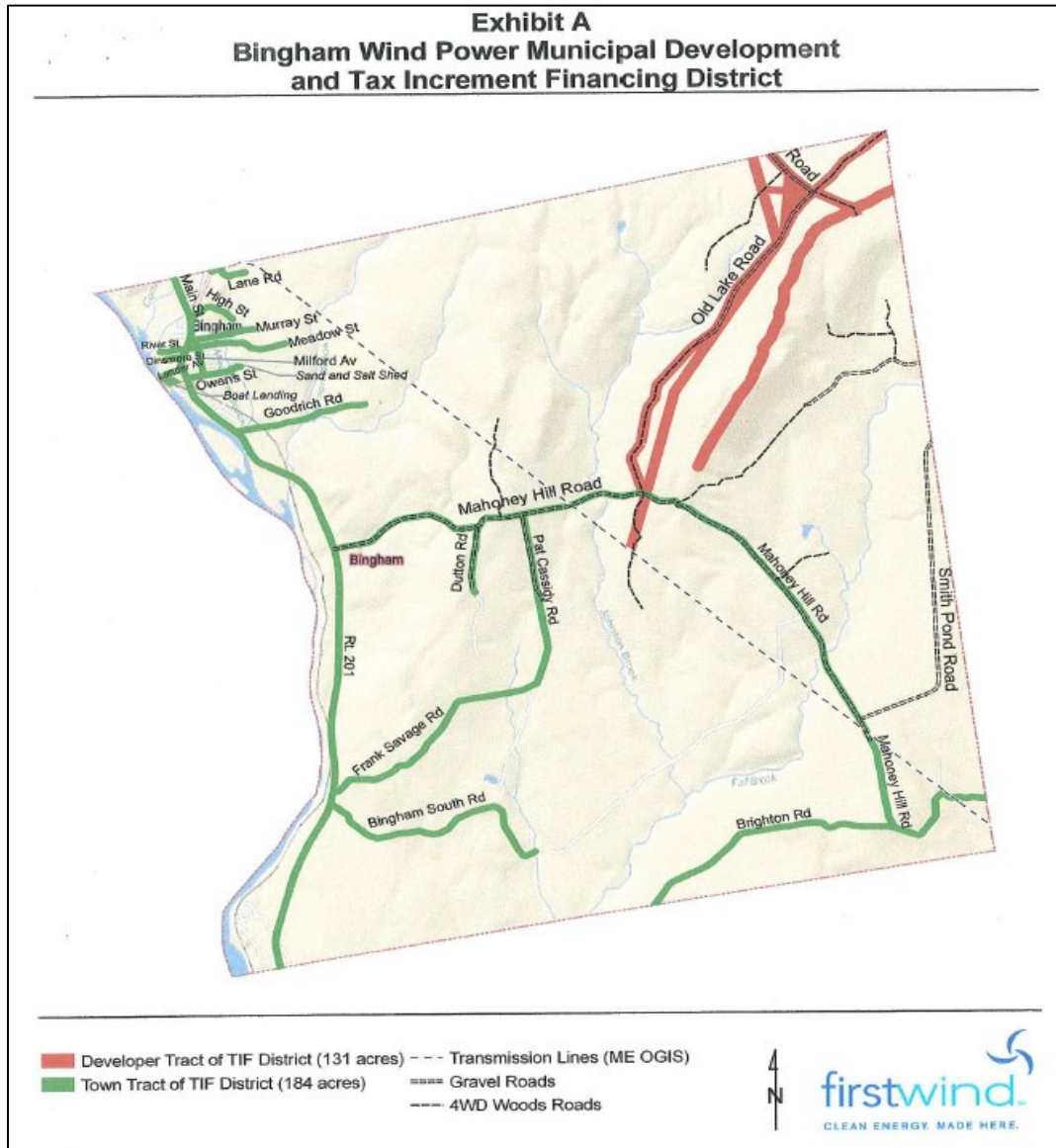
There are issues that, unfortunately, nothing can be done to remedy, such as the limited parking downtown. The town has created additional off-street parking around the municipal building, but few people want to park down a side road and walk any distance to Main Street. Another known issue without a solution is that Route 201, the major travel corridor through town, bisects the downtown area. This road is known for a high volume of traffic, much of which is tractor trailer traffic. The speed at which the trucks travel through the village is a concern with no easy solutions.

Bingham does have a Parking Ordinance, albeit quite antiquated. It was enacted in 1968 and needs updating. Regardless, the Parking Ordinance regulates and restricts parking on the street in certain areas.

Tax increment financing (TIF) is a public financing method that is used as a subsidy for redevelopment, infrastructure, and other community-improvement projects. The TIF district is a geographic area from which a portion of taxes can be used for predetermined expenses and in preapproved methods.

Bingham does have a Tax Increment Financing district, structured to supplement and offset the cost of infrastructure improvements. The town uses the TIF funds mostly to defray the cost of the plowing contract and other necessary infrastructure updates. Since the village area is the designated growth area and the road maintenance and infrastructure updates are mostly in the village, the TIF districting does encourage development in the growth area.

**FIGURE 12: BINGHAM'S TIF MAP**



Bingham's priorities for economic development mostly consist of improvements to the village area. The town appropriates money and puts it in a capitol fund for economic development improvements. Bingham is also a member of the regional council of governments, Kennebec Valley Council of Governments (KVCOG), and Bingham Area Development Corporation, a nonprofit for local businesses. Bingham's economic development priorities mirror those of both regional organizations.

## **Forestry and Agriculture**

Forest management and farming are traditional contributors to the local economy in many ways. Those traveling through to work in the woods stop at local stores. Many forestry operations employ their immediate family, but they also hire individuals who are not related, thus contributing to the job base. Bingham has a short growing season and hilly terrain, which limits farm productivity. The town has no commercial farms, and only a few parcels used for a secondary income, pasture, or hay production.

Forestry has historically played a significant role in Bingham's history and economy. Weyerhaeuser owns approximately 13,569 acres in Bingham, which is about 2/3 of the town's total land area. The remaining land area is largely forested and owned by individuals or small businesses.

The Agriculture and Forestry chapter of this plan details the parcels enrolled in the Tree Growth Tax Law Program and harvest production information. The logging industry and forestry management operations are likely the reason the job category of Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining increased by 61 percent between 2010 and 2021.

## **Regulation of Economic Development**

Bingham currently relies on the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, a Building Permit and Lot Requirement Ordinance, and a Subdivision Ordinance to regulate land use and economic development activities.

The Building Permit and Lot Requirement Ordinance does not differentiate between residential and non-residential, but it does regulate and set standards for minimum lot sizes, minimum road frontage, and set back requirements. Commercial or industrial development is limited to the area in Bingham which is served by public water and sewer connections and other infrastructure, not by ordinance.

The buildings that previously housed the mills are the most likely location for those land uses and they are right on the Kennebec River. As such, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) regulates these activities and set performance standards and permitting requirements. Bingham does not have performance standards for development on its own.

The 2000 Comprehensive Plan determined a need for a Site Plan Review Ordinance to allow the Planning Board oversight of future commercial development. A Site Plan Review Ordinance would allow the Planning Board or other prescribed part the authority to review applications and site plans for commercial, industrial, and other nonresidential development applications to ensure they meet public health, safety, and environmental concerns. This is still a viable need for Bingham, as a Site Plan Review Ordinance was never adopted.

A Site Plan Review Ordinance is different than a Zoning Ordinance and more similar to the subdivision review process in that the proposal will be reviewed to ensure it meets specified standards. A Site Plan Review Ordinance would establish processes and standards for local review of retail, industrial, office, service and all other nonresidential development, but it could also include processes and standards for the review of multi-family housing developments, as well. The review procedures and standards are adopted by the local community to address the types of development and issues the town may be concerned about and grant the Planning Board authority to set appropriate conditions when approving permits.

## **Economic Growth Projections**

Historically, Bingham's economic growth has happened incrementally. Bingham's economy is largely dependent upon tourism, which means significant seasonal fluctuations. But since Bingham offers four-seasonal recreation, there is typically always a steady stream of tourists throughout the year. Bingham's abundant outdoor activities and recreational opportunities draw numerous visitors, a virtue the town would like to continue promoting.

Bingham, as is much of Maine, is home to a small but growing population of individuals who work from home and are increasingly dependent on internet access. This trend boosts the demand for improvements to the broadband infrastructure. The ACS reports that 14 individuals worked from home in 2010; however, this information was not available for any more recent years. And this data does not include those with side businesses or home occupations that are not full-time.

Bingham is on track to have high-speed internet sometime in 2024. Since the town has acquired new residents in the last few years because of the trend of working from home, the availability of high-speed internet is expected to draw even more new residents into town.

Population projections for Bingham forecast a small amount of population growth in the future. But, as covered in the Demographic Profile chapter, population projections are rarely accurate. Population growth, regardless of how minimal, will affect many aspects of jobs and housing and these things will, in turn, be affected by population growth.

The town recently invested in upgrades to all wastewater pump stations. Currently, the municipal wastewater system does not require any additional upgrades and has capacity to accommodate future development, as does the municipal drinking water supply.

Bingham has three-phase power capabilities in most places in town where development is likely; however, they are not currently hooked up. The town will have fiber optics and high-speed internet in 2024, which is anticipated to increase the town's economic vitality.

These amenities are anticipated to be sufficient in supporting the projected amounts and locations of future economic development.



## **Summary of Analysis**

Bingham's labor force decreased by 8 individuals between 2010 and 2021, and the unemployment rate dropped from 18.4 percent in 2010 to 0.32 percent in 2021 (Maine Department of Labor statistics). Bingham's families below poverty level decreased nearly 60 percent in the last decade.

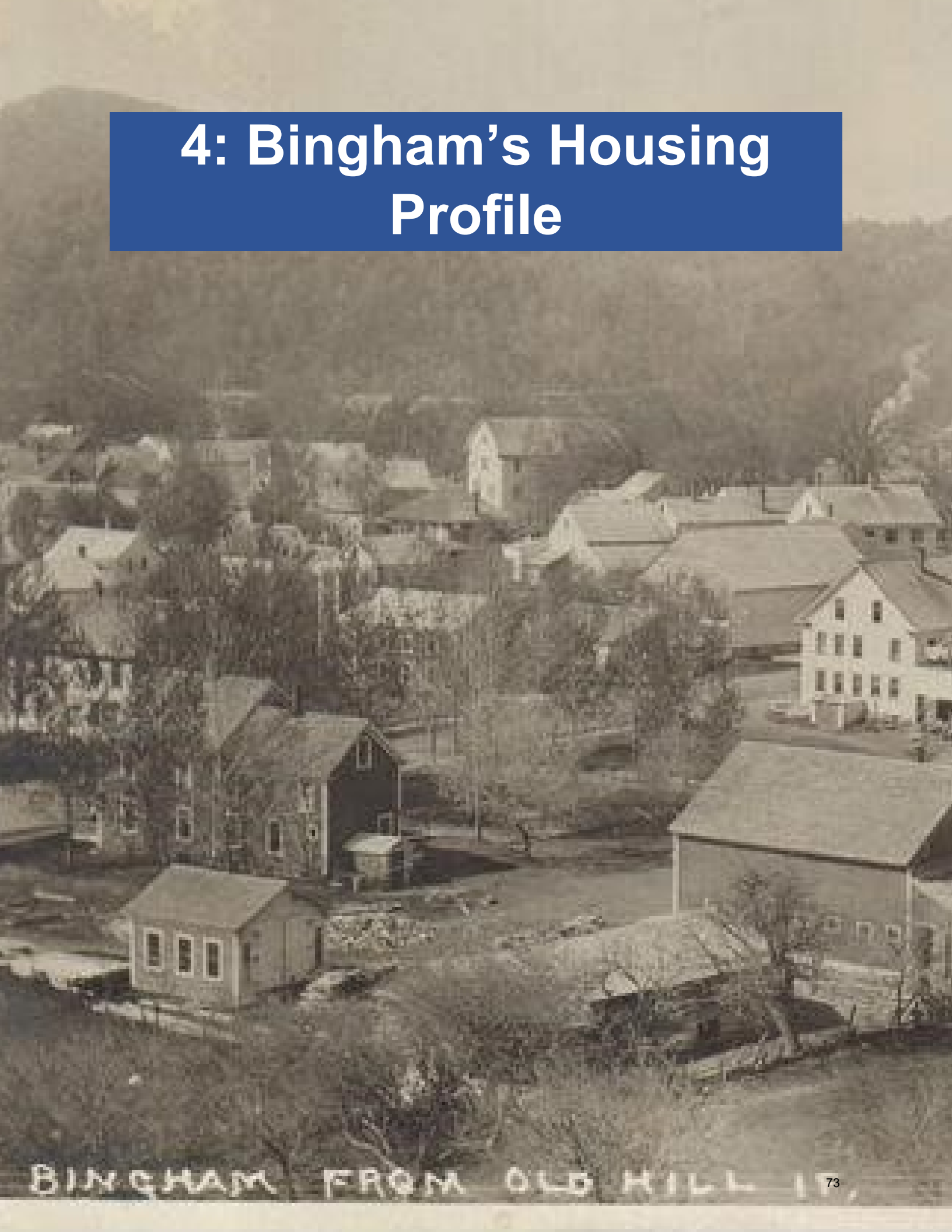
The huge drop in unemployment indicates a healthy local economy. The largest local employers are Irby Cianbros, Melcher's Logging, and Weyerhaeuser. Skowhegan is the biggest importer of Bingham residents for work, followed by those who live and work in Bingham.

Bingham has a significant number of home-based businesses, which account for nearly 50 percent of businesses in town, though they are less conspicuous than brick and mortar businesses.

In addition, Bingham has a small manufacturing base, independent workers and service providers, as well as more than 100 small commercial establishments. The town also participates in several regional economic development initiatives.

To maintain the town's rural qualities and ecological character, Bingham must balance providing goods and services needed and desired by residents with economic activities that increase local jobs. At the same time, economic activities can have undesirable impacts on neighboring properties and the environment, such as noise, dust, litter, traffic, visual degradation or loss of privacy. Finding ways to mitigate these impacts, such as implementing a Site Plan Review Ordinance, is essential and will ensure the existing rural character of the town is maintained.

## 4: Bingham's Housing Profile



Bingham's housing supply and prices determine the potential for future growth in the town, as well as the diversity of opportunities. A mixture of housing types encourages a mixture of residents – young and old, singles and large families, as well as different economic classes. Character and appearances of housing, including location, quantity and especially price, make up the essence of a town.

While local government is not, and should not, be in the business of providing housing to residents, many local policies influence the style, price, and location of housing. Towns have historically been responsible for ensuring that their residents have safe, sanitary, and secure homes, and have done what they can to keep the price of housing down. Towns have little control over the supply of housing, but it is possible for them to address potential problems through grants if a large portion of housing is substandard, for example, or not energy efficient. If housing prices rise to the point where new houses are not affordable, that presents a whole new set of problems in encouraging people to move to town for the employment that is available. This chapter profiles the housing supply and its characteristics in Bingham.

\*\*\*\*Note: You may notice the population number varies between 866 and 765. This is because the 765 is from the American Community Survey (ACS) and is an estimate. It has been used in certain charts, graphs, and tables because the data was calculated based on this number from the ACS. To change the population and recalculate the data would be inaccurate. The 2020 Census data shows that Bingham has 560 housing units, with 398 occupied, and 162 vacant housing units. The ACS data shows Bingham as having 345 occupied housing units and 219 vacant for a total of 564 housing units. Table 1 highlights these important differences. It is imperative to understand this because it could be construed as a mistake, and it is not. These discrepancies have been annotated in several places.

## **Introduction**

Bingham has approximately 560 housing units of which roughly 74 percent are owner-occupied, leaving roughly 26 percent renter occupied. Bingham's housing unit stock varies in size, style, and price. Most of the town's housing falls in the private sector, as there are few subsidized housing unit options available.

Historically, Bingham's has attracted new residents through the affordability of available housing. Currently though, Bingham is facing issues with housing prices and availability, a situation that is decidedly not unique or specific to the town. In fact, the entirety of the state and beyond are facing unprecedented housing costs and an overall shortage of housing stock. Options for addressing housing needs on a regional level include coordinating with the state and seeking assistance from nonprofit organizations. These challenges and other data are detailed in this chapter.

## The Housing Stock

The 2020 Census shows Bingham has 560 total housing units -- 398 of which are occupied, 162 of which are vacant, and 81 are considered seasonal. In contrast, the 2021 ACS data shows Bingham has 564 total housing units -- 345 occupied units, and 219 vacant units. Table 1 below highlights the disparities between the 2020 Census data and the 2021 ACS data.

It is important to note that the number of vacant units includes housing units that are used only seasonally, and those that are on the real estate market for sale or rent, in addition to housing units that are truly vacant. Per the Census, a housing unit is considered vacant if no one is living in it at the time of the survey, unless its occupants are only temporarily absent. In addition, a vacant unit may be one that is entirely occupied by persons who have a usual address elsewhere.

**TABLE 1: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN 2020 CENSUS DATA Vs. 2021 ACS DATA**

Categories	2020 Census Data	2021 ACS Data	2010 ACS Data	2020 Census Vs. 2010 ACS (% Change)
Population	866	765	912	-46 -5%
Total Housing Units	560	564	606	-46 -8%
Occupied Housing Units	398	345	434	-36 -8%
Vacant Housing Units	162	219	172	-10 -6%
Seasonal Use Only	85	155	94	-9 10%
Households	398	345	422	-24 -6%

*Source: 2020 Census, 2010 & 2021 ACS*

In Table 2 below, 2021 ACS data was used for comparison because not all the 2020 Census data was available at the time of writing and calculations were made (by the Census Bureau) using the ACS data. To switch back and forth between data sources would render data inaccurate. Table 2 shows the development of housing by type since 1980. (There are other discrepancies, too, for example, the Census changed its definition of seasonal units in 1980.)

**TABLE 2: HOUSING: TYPE AND OCCUPANCY FROM 1970 TO 2020**

	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010*</b>	<b>2021*</b>
Total Housing Units	530	529	583	619	606	564
Occupied Housing Units	433	439	484	420	434	345
Vacant Housing Units (Includes seasonal)	97	93	99	199	172	219
Seasonal Housing Units	4	35	30	97	94	155
Vacant Homes (not including seasonal)	93	58	69	102	78	65
Mobile Homes	-	-	-	45	41	46
Owner Occupied Housing	324	343	350	221	303	254
Renter Occupied Housing	109	96	134	106	131	91
Single-Family Housing Unit (attached and detached) Including Mobile Homes (out of total housing stock)	-	-	-	510	504	495
Two or More Unit Housing	-	-	-	104	102	113

*Source: 1970, 1980, 1990 & 2000 Census unless otherwise noted.*

*\* Data source 2010 & 2021 ACS*

As mentioned above, the U.S. Census defines “vacant” as a housing unit in which no one is living at the time of the Census interview unless its occupants are only temporarily absent. In addition, a vacant unit may be one that is entirely occupied by persons who have a usual residence elsewhere. It also may be listed for sale or even under contract to be purchased.

When the homes that are considered seasonal are separated from those that are classified as vacant, it can be determined that the number of vacant homes peaked in 2000 and decreased in the following decades.

Data for single-family homes (including mobile homes) versus multi-family homes was only available from 2000 onwards. The number of mobile homes, separate from single-family homes, has stayed relatively the same since 2000. Between 2000 and 2021, the number of single-family homes fluctuated slightly, decreasing by 3 percent or 15 homes. And between 2000 and 2021, the quantity of multi-family homes increased by 9 percent or nine homes.

There is no data directly addressing how many renters live in houses versus apartments. Of the 113 multi-family housing units, some may be owner-occupied, leaving only a small number of single-family housing units rented. Currently, available data does not break down housing stock and rented units in this way.

Data produced by the U.S. Census Bureau and the American Community Survey is important for statistical analysis and to identify trends, but it is obsolete almost as soon as it becomes available. In the last two to three years, Bingham has witnessed a steady influx of new residents from out of state or southern Maine. The town is growing rapidly. This growth is not necessarily represented in the current data available, nor in the predictions of the State Economist's Office.

## **Seasonal Housing**

As with most Maine communities, Bingham has many homes used only seasonally. Due to the town's four-season recreational opportunities and available resources, Bingham is an ideal location for seasonal homes.

Table 2 shows that the number of houses classified as seasonal by the Census Bureau has risen steadily over the decades. While there are undeniably more seasonal homes in Bingham in recent decades, the Census Bureau changed the definition of seasonal in the 1980s, as well. These numbers are self-reported by individuals responding to surveys by the Census Bureau, so their accuracy is not guaranteed.

According to the 2021 ACS, Bingham has a total housing stock of 564 housing units; of this 155 or 27 percent are reported as seasonal. In 2010, seasonal homes accounted for 16 percent of the total housing stock. In fact, the number of seasonal houses increase by 65 percent between 2010 and 2021.

Although only used seasonally, these housing units may have amenities that allow for year-round habitation. While some homes that were initially for seasonal-use only are being converted to year-round use, there is no real impact due to these conversions. Likewise, there are some houses that can accommodate year-round use that are used only seasonally, though these instances are minimal.

The use of year-round houses on a seasonal-only basis has the potential to reduce the housing supply further. And the conversion of seasonal-use housing to year-round use has potential to reduce housing quality if not converted properly. For this reason, these conversions need to be documented and observed to reduce the possibility of any negative effects.

## Housing Conditions

The census tallies the age of the housing unit stock as well as its condition. The age of a housing unit could be an indicator of other issues. Older housing units usually mean increased maintenance and heating costs but could also indicate potentially historic architecture. And while these older housing units may have modern plumbing and electric systems, they are less energy efficient. Housing units built more recently will typically be more energy efficient and structurally sound. The age and last inspection of septic systems associated with older housing units is also a concern.

Bingham's housing inventory has 387 housing units that were built prior to 1980 when the building codes and standards began to change. Many older homes have been lived in for many years by the same families. Trends indicate that more recently purchased older homes tend to sell to those on more constrained budgets. These properties would benefit from updates to septic systems, interior plumbing, electric wiring and panels, energy efficient features, roofing, et cetera, but homeowners may not have the means for these improvements. Seeking funding for and encouraging investment in affordable home improvement programs are solid approaches for the town's residential revitalization and healthy housing inventory.

### *Housing Unit Conditions*

The Census does not provide abundant statistical data on the age and condition of a town's housing stock. There are questions in the Census such as the age of a house and if it has modern plumbing and heating systems, but this is based on a statistical sample and the samples are so small in a town the size of Bingham that the figures are not dependable.

**TABLE 3: HOUSING CONDITIONS**

<b>Occupied Housing Units</b>	<b>345</b>
<b>Lacking complete plumbing facilities</b>	4
<b>Lacking complete kitchen facilities</b>	0
<b>No telephone service available</b>	11

*Source: 2021 ACS*

Complete kitchens and plumbing are common identifiers used to determine the condition and quality of homes in each community; however, camp-style homes have potential to skew the numbers. Land line telephone service is rapidly being phased out in preference for cell phones, so lacking telephone service is not a useful indicator of housing conditions anymore.



A Census tally of substandard living conditions is intended to identify poverty housing conditions. According to 2021 ACS data, Bingham does not have a problem with substandard housing, and no housing units were reported to be overcrowded based on having more than one person per room.

### ***Housing Unit Age***

The age of housing structures can often be used as an indicator of housing conditions with varying degrees of accuracy. While some older homes are structurally very sound, they may have inadequate wiring, inefficient insulation, or contain hazardous materials like lead paint or asbestos. Homes built in the 1960's and 1970's tend to have inadequate insulation, whereas homes built more recently mostly conform to modern building code requirements. In Bingham, the 2021 ACS estimates 36.3 percent (205 housing units) of houses were built prior to the start of World War II in 1939 (59 percent of all occupied housing stock). In Somerset County, 23.3 percent of all homes were built before WWII. According to the 2021 ACS, in Bingham, 177 homes or 51 percent of the occupied housing units were built after 1980; in Somerset County 44.9 percent of the housing units were built after 1980.

**TABLE 4: AGE OF HOUSING STOCK IN BINGHAM, MAINE**

<b>Age of Housing Units</b>		
<b>Year Structure was Built</b>	<b># Of Homes</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>
Total Housing Units	564	100%
Occupied Units	345	61%
1939 or earlier	205	36.3%
1940-1949	60	10.6%
1950-1959	42	7.4%
1960-1969	50	5.3 %
1970-1979	30	5.3%
1980-1989	95	16.8%
1990-1999	47	8.3%
2000-2009	23	4.1%
2010-2019	12	2.1%
2020 or later	0	0%

*Source: 2021 ACS*

Table 4 shows the housing age for Bingham's housing stock. It should be noted that this data (provided by Census responders) does not align with the actual number of housing units reported by the Census or ACS.

Although approximately 36 percent of the housing stock in Bingham was constructed after the 1970s, these homes are still likely to have poor insulation, single-pane windows, substandard plumbing, antiquated heating units and faulty septic systems. They also are likely to need general updates to maximize or at least increase energy efficiency. In addition, several housing units around Bingham are in visible need of repair.

There are numerous houses around town that are visibly in need of repair or that would be considered substandard. These houses are not just in one location; they are scattered throughout town.

## Housing Price and Affordability

The price and affordability of housing is often a significant factor in the economic life of a town. Housing prices are governed by economic factors, and often the relationship between housing unit prices and local median income levels becomes out of line. This results in insufficient housing availability and unaffordability for prospective residents and people who work in Bingham. It could eventually result in residents relocating to another town that is more affordable.

The growth management goal for affordable housing states that 10 percent of new housing should be affordable to households making less than 80 percent of the area median household income. How this goal is attained is left up to the town to determine whether that 10 percent should be stick-built homes, mobile homes, rental properties, or elderly apartments.

A housing unit is considered affordable if a household whose income is at or below 80 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI) can live there without spending more than 30 percent of their income (including insurance, utilities, heat, and other housing-related costs). This is true for both renters and owners.

In Somerset County, 80 percent of the AMI by household size is as follows:

**TABLE 5: 80% AREA MEDIAN INCOME LIMITS BY FAMILY SIZE**

Family Size	Income Limit for Family Size
Family of 1	\$42,450
Family of 2	\$48,500
Family of 3	\$54,550
Family of 4	\$60,600
Family of 5	\$65,450
Family of 6	\$70,300
Family of 7	\$75,150
Family of 8	\$80,000

Source: [https://www.mainehousing.org/docs/default-source/homeimprovement/80-ami-income-limits.pdf?sfvrsn=6df08615\\_5](https://www.mainehousing.org/docs/default-source/homeimprovement/80-ami-income-limits.pdf?sfvrsn=6df08615_5)

This data is from 2023 and can be found on the Maine Housing website listed in the source.

The determination of whether housing is affordable begins with a discussion of cost. The Census provides adequate, though sample-sized, data regarding the price of housing in Bingham (see Tables 6 and 7 below). This price is derived through owners' estimation of their homes value, meaning it does not necessarily match up with actual recorded sales prices, assessor evaluation, or real estate appraisals. As such, this information is a good starting point; however, the margin of error is significant and should be taken into consideration.

**TABLE 6: VALUE OF OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS FROM 2000 TO 2010**

	2000	2010	Change
<b>Median Value* of Specified<sup>1</sup> Housing Units</b>	<b>\$58,000</b>	<b>\$74,500</b>	<b>\$16,500 (28%)</b>
<b>Number of Units Valued at:</b>			
<b>Less Than \$50,000</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>-13 (-22%)</b>
<b>\$50,000 - \$99,999</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>19 (13%)</b>
<b>\$100,000- \$149,999</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>16 (123%)</b>
<b>\$150,000 - \$199,999</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>18 (600%)</b>
<b>\$200,000 - \$299,999</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32 (100%)</b>
<b>\$300,000 - \$499,999</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5 (100%)</b>
<b>\$500,000 - \$999,999</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>\$1,000,000 or more</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5 (100%)</b>

\*"Value" is the Census respondent's estimate of how much the property would sell for if it were for sale.

<sup>1</sup> "Specified" units exclude one-family houses on ten or more acres and units with a commercial establishment on the premises. In 2000, mobile homes were excluded as well, but not in 2010, accounting for the significant rise in housing counts.

Source: 2000 Census & 2010 ACS

According to the 2010 ACS (Census data was not available), the median value of owner-occupied housing in Bingham was \$74,500; the 2021 ACS median home price was \$74,600. Given the state-wide housing shortage and increasing cost of homes currently, the data from the 2021 ACS does not seem altogether accurate or reliable.

**TABLE 7: VALUE OF OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS FROM 2010 TO 2021**

	2010	2021	Change
<b>Median Value* of Specified<sup>1</sup> Housing Units</b>	<b>\$74,500</b>	<b>\$74,600</b>	<b>\$100 (0.13%)</b>
<b>Number of Units Valued at:</b>			
<b>Less Than \$50,000</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>41 (89%)</b>
<b>\$50,000 - \$99,999</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>-88 (53%)</b>
<b>\$100,000- \$149,999</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>34 (117%)</b>
<b>\$150,000 - \$199,999</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>6 (29%)</b>
<b>\$200,000 - \$299,999</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-32 (-100%)</b>
<b>\$300,000 - \$499,999</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-5 (-100%)</b>
<b>\$500,000 - \$999,999</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0 (0%)</b>
<b>\$1,000,000 or more</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-5 (-100%)</b>

\*"Value" is the Census respondent's estimate of how much the property would sell for if it were for sale.

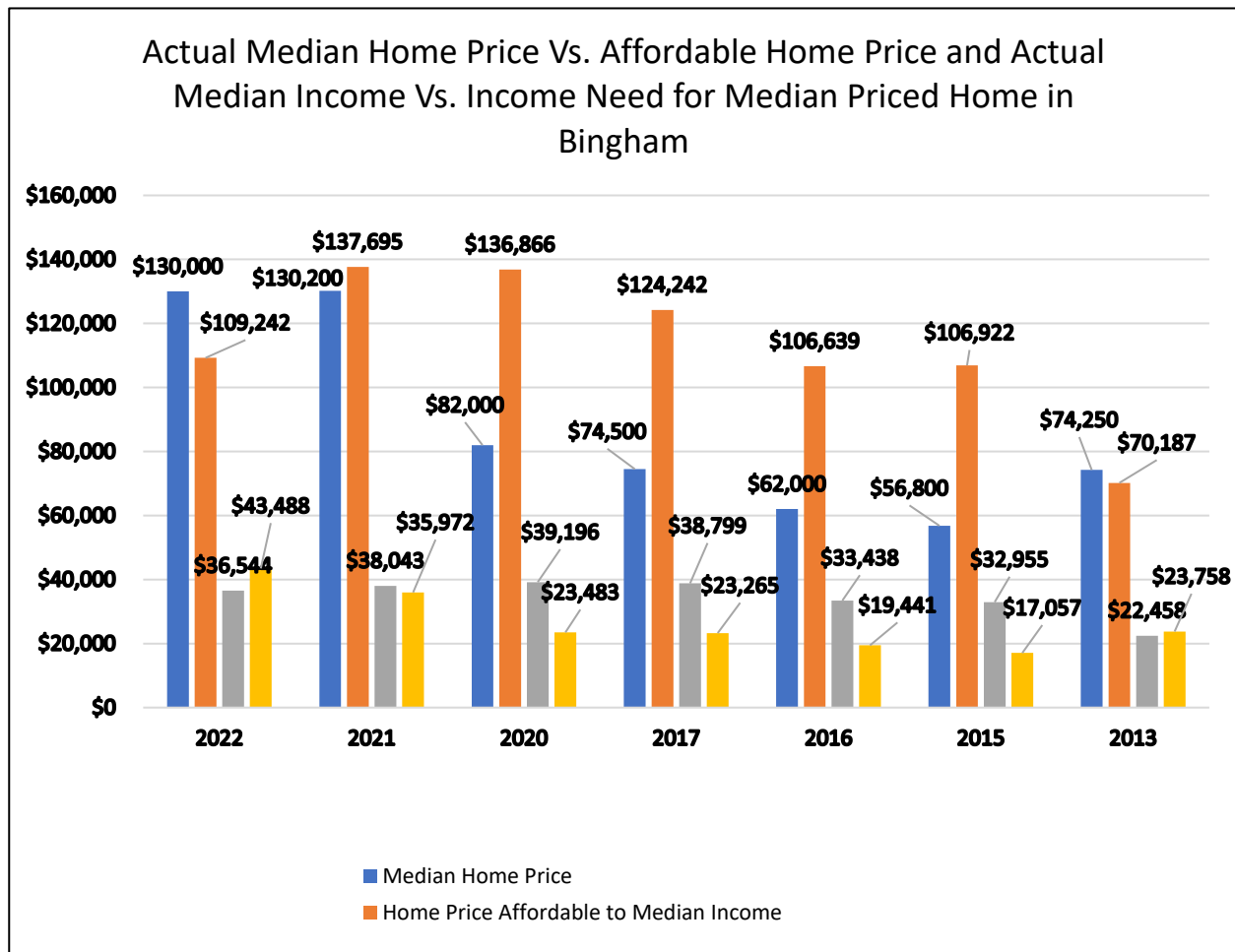
<sup>1</sup> "Specified" units exclude one-family houses on ten or more acres and units with a commercial establishment on the premises. In 2000, mobile homes were excluded as well, but not in 2010, accounting for the significant rise in housing counts.

Source: 2010 & 2021 ACS

It is essential to bear in mind that the estimated values of the houses in Tables 6 and 7 are supplied by the Census-takers and do not represent what the home would sell for or even the appraised value. It is also important to understand that this data is from 2021 and even in that short time, home prices have changed drastically. The data presented in both Tables 6 and 7 should not be considered a current, actual representation of home values in Bingham.

Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA) tracks actual sales data, median income, and other statistical data, though it is sometimes out of date by the time it is published. According to MSHA, the median price (actual sales) for a home in 2022 in Bingham was \$130,000. Bingham residents had a median income of \$36,544 in 2022; while a median income of \$43,488 was needed to afford a median priced home. Figure 1 below details these statistics and more.

**FIGURE 1: COMPARISON FROM 2013 THROUGH 2022**

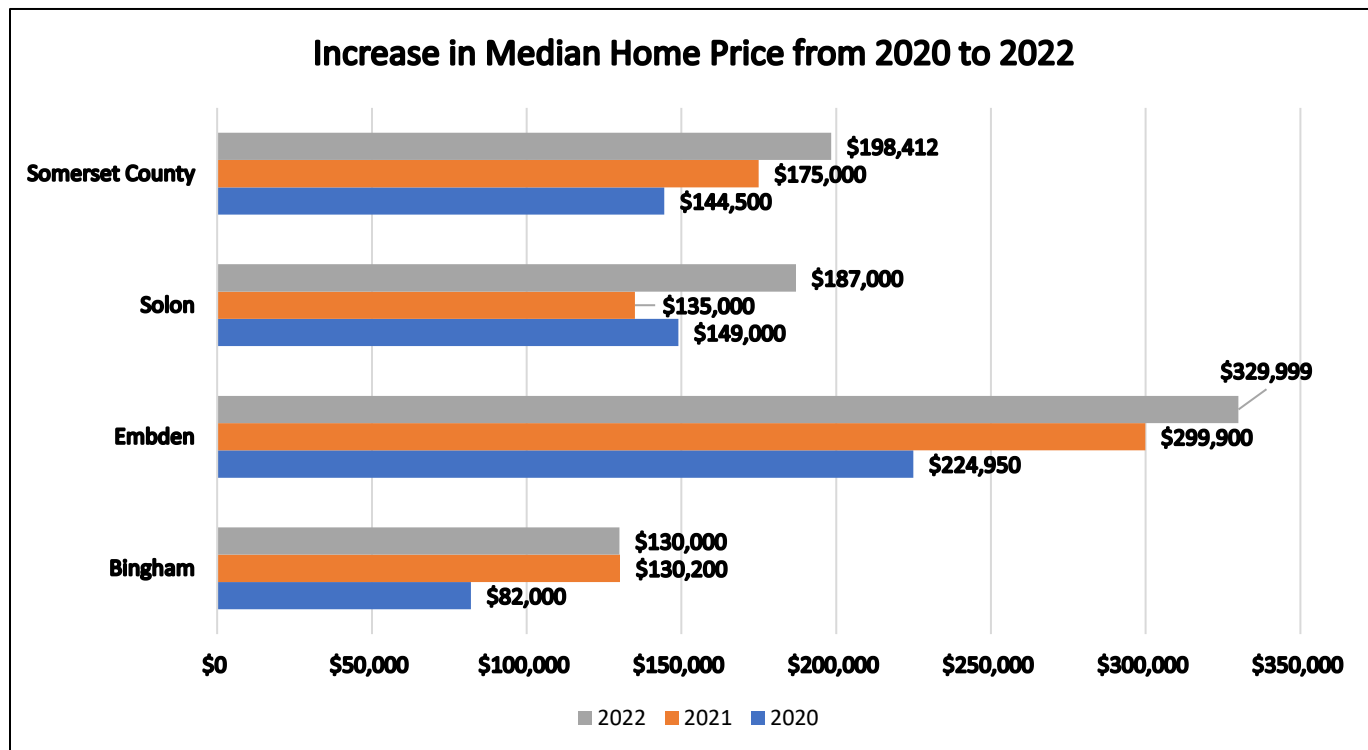


*Source: Maine State Housing Authority*

According to the MSHA, some counties saw a staggering increase of more than 20 percent in median housing prices in 2020. In 2022, the median housing unit price for the State of Maine was \$334,000 and \$198,412 for Somerset County. Comparatively, in 2015 the median housing price for the State was \$180,050 and \$94,875 for Somerset County. The MSHA predicts this upward trend will continue.

Shown below in Figure 2, when compared with surrounding communities and Somerset County, Bingham's median housing unit prices for 2020, 2021, and 2022 were less than those of the surrounding towns. In 2020, Bingham had a significantly lower median house price than Solon, Embden and Somerset County. In 2021, Bingham's median house price was comparable with Solon's but less than Embden and Somerset County. In 2022, Bingham's median house price stayed nearly the same as it was in 2021, while the median house prices in Embden, Solon, and Somerset County increased.

**FIGURE 2: MEDIAN HOME PRICE COMPARISON WITH NEIGHBORING TOWNS**



*Source: Maine State Housing Authority*

In 2022, at \$130,000, Bingham's median home price remained lower than those of surrounding communities and Somerset County, but still unaffordable to nearly 60 percent of Bingham residents.

Provisions of affordable housing options are assisted by MSHA programs. MSHA provides some state and federal options for many types of buyers and renters. Maine State Legislature recently enacted several new bills to remediate the affordable housing problem state-wide.

## Household Income

The data from the Maine State Housing Authority is different than the 2021 ACS data, which is presented in Table 8, below. This table shows a breakdown of household income levels as estimated by the 2021 ACS.

**TABLE 8: BINGHAM'S ESTIMATED HOUSEHOLD INCOMES**

<b>Total Households: 345</b>	<b>Approximate Number of Households</b>
<b>Less than \$10,000</b>	37 (10.7%)
<b>\$10,000 - \$14,999</b>	43 (12.5%)
<b>\$15,000 - \$24,999</b>	56 (16.2%)
<b>\$25,000 - \$34,999</b>	19 (5.5%)
<b>\$35,000 - \$49,999</b>	72 (20.9%)
<b>\$50,000 - \$74,999</b>	72 (20.9%)
<b>\$75,000 - \$99,999</b>	30 (8.7%)
<b>\$100,000 - \$149,999</b>	4 (1.2%)
<b>\$150,000 - \$199,999</b>	0 (0%)
<b>\$200,000 or more</b>	12 (3.5%)
<b>Median income</b>	<b>\$36,122</b>

*Source: 2021 ACS*

The 2021 ACS data shows that, overwhelmingly, most Bingham residents have a household income between \$35,000 and \$74,999, which is a significant range.

The Maine State Housing Authority breaks down household income and compares it with housing prices to create an affordability index. Since the MSHA is looking only at affordability and income levels, its data is a bit more complete and thorough compared with the estimates by the ACS in Table 8, above.

According to data from the MSHA, the median home price in Bingham of \$130,000 is considered unaffordable based on the 80 percent of area median income rule detailed above. MSHA calculates an affordable home at various income levels, factoring in interest rates and other variables, and using the rule of thumb that a homeowner should pay no more than 30 percent of its monthly income in housing costs.

For a house to be affordable in Bingham, the median household income would need to be \$43,488; while the actual (2022) median household income is \$36,544, which is \$6,944 less than required to afford a median priced house. The household income needed to afford a median priced home calculates to \$20.91 an hour, based on a full-time, 40-hour work week, to meet the 80 percent rule.



The housing price that is affordable based on the actual, current median income is \$109,242. At present, 255 households living in Bingham cannot afford a median-priced house. Another way of looking at this is, of the housing units sold in Bingham, approximately 65 percent are considered unattainable based on current median household income.

That means Bingham is not affordable for 255 households out of 428 total households living in the town (Maine State Housing Authority has different data for number of households than the Census or ACS). In general, Bingham has some affordability challenges, but it is faring better than other parts of the state. The MSHA conducts an annual analysis of housing sales data and median household income by community to create the affordability index. The MSHA describes the index this way: *the Homeownership Affordability Index is the ratio of Home Price Affordable at Median Income to Median Home Price. An index of less than 1 means the area is generally unaffordable- i.e., a household earning the area median income could not cover the payment on a median priced home (30-year mortgage, taxes, and insurance) using no more than 28 percent of gross income.*

For Bingham, the 2022 affordability index was 0.84, which makes sense since the difference between income needed to afford a median price home was only \$6,944 more than the actual median income. Table 9 compares the index of neighboring towns, county, and state.

**TABLE 9: AFFORDABILITY INDEX FOR HOMEOWNERSHIP**

	Year	Median Home Index Price	Median Home Price	Median Income	Income Needed to Afford Median Priced Home	Home Price Affordable to Median Income
Maine	2022	0.64	\$334,000	\$38,316	\$106,225	\$214,805
	2021	0.80	\$295,000	\$63,427	\$79,201	\$236,243
	2020	0.91	\$255,000	\$63,340	\$69,691	\$231,762
	2019	0.90	\$225,000	\$63,340	\$66,044	\$202,959
	2018	0.89	\$212,500	\$56,987	\$64,367	\$188,138
Skowhegan Micropolitan Area	2022	0.87	\$190,500	\$52,633	\$60,393	\$166,021
	2021	0.99	\$178,500	\$47,808	\$48,509	\$175,920
	2020	1.13	\$145,500	\$45,277	\$40,079	\$164,371
	2019	1.15	\$130,750	\$44,232	\$38,576	\$149,922
	2018	1.30	\$110,000	\$43,938	\$33,810	\$142,796
Bingham	2022	0.84	\$130,000	\$36,544	\$43,488	\$109,242
Anson	2022	1.16	\$132,000	\$51,570	\$44,349	\$153,494
Athens	2022	0.76	\$155,000	\$39,500	\$52,184	\$117,326
Embsden	2022	0.62	\$329,999	\$64,491	\$103,633	\$205,359
Madison	2022	0.87	\$175,000	\$50,820	\$58,626	\$151,623
Norridgewock	2022	0.91	\$197,500	\$56,132	\$61,437	\$180,445
Skowhegan (town)	2022	0.81	\$186,250	\$49,793	\$61,779	\$150,115
Solon	2022	0.81	\$187,000	\$50,000	\$61,647	\$151,669
Somerset County	2022	0.78	\$198,412	\$50,585	\$65,626	\$155,303

*Source: Maine State Housing Authority*

In Table 9, the rows in red are considered unaffordable, while the rows in green are considered affordable. Housing affordability issues are not specific to just Somerset County or the State of Maine; housing affordability is a national issue.

According to the MSHA data, Bingham's median household income increased by approximately 63 percent between 2013 and 2022, while the median house price increased by 75 percent. This data is skewed by a variety of economic factors; however, it is undeniable that household incomes have not increased to keep pace with the rising housing prices.

## Year-Round Rental Housing

With approximately 26 percent of Bingham's population, or 91 families, living in rental housing, the affordability of renting is a crucial aspect to consider.

Table 10 below shows changes over the last two decades in the cost and affordability of rental housing in Bingham (2021 ACS). The number of residents who rented decreased by 31 percent and the median cost of renting increased by 24 percent between 2010 and 2021.

**TABLE 10: COST OF RENTING IN BINGHAM**

	2010	2021	% Change
Renter Occupied Units	131	91	-31%
Median Monthly Rent Specified Renter-Occupied Units	\$500	\$620	24%
Less than \$500	54	35	-35%
\$500 - \$999	51	41	-20%
\$1,000 - \$1,499	3	9	200%
\$1,500 - \$1,999	0	0	0%
\$2,000 - \$2,499	0	0	0%
\$2,500 - \$2,999	0	0	0%
\$3,000 or more	0	0	0%
No Rent Paid	23	6	-74%
<b>Rent as a Percent of Household Income</b>			
Less than 20%	23	0	-100%
20 – 30%	29	64	121%
30% or more	56	21	-63%
Not Computed	23	6	-74%

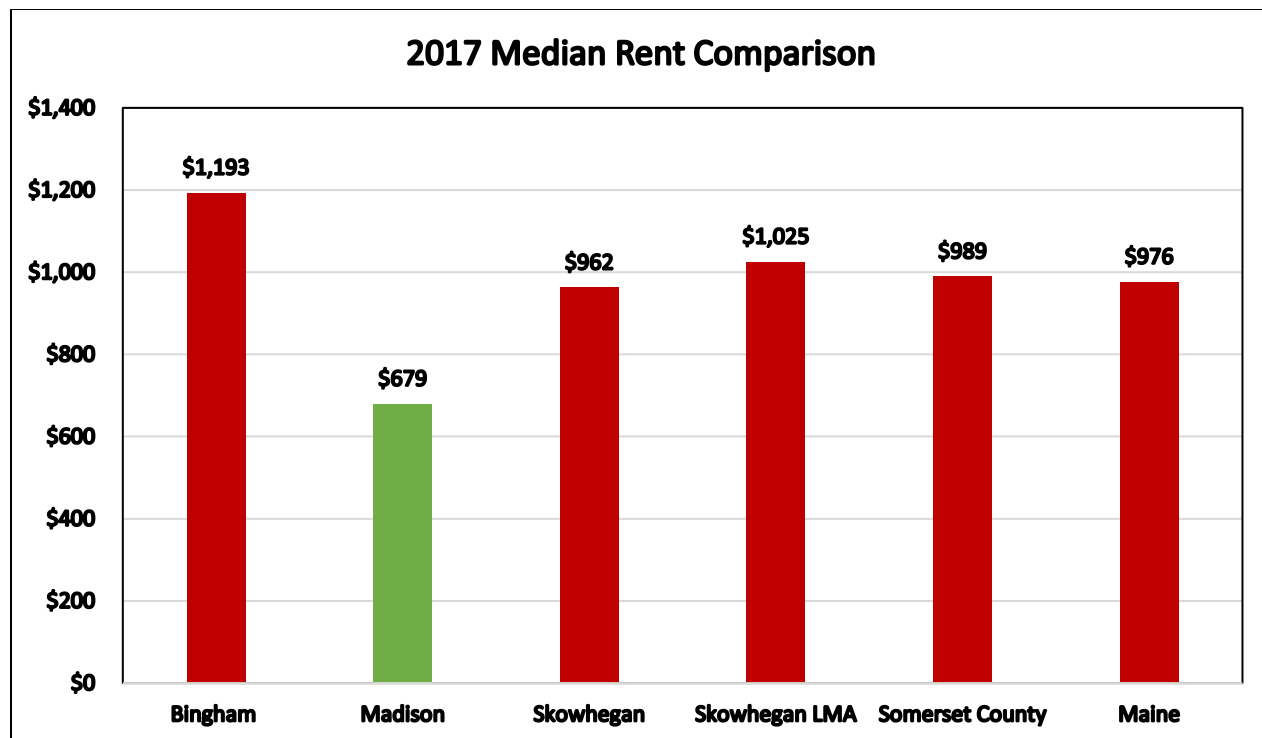
*Sources: 2010 & 2021 American Community Survey*

While renters paying less than \$500 per month decreased, as did those paying between \$500 - \$999, the number of renters paying between \$1,000 and \$1,499 a month increased by 200 percent. This data shows an undeniable trend in increased rental prices in Bingham.

On a similar note, there were no renters paying less than 20 percent of their household income on rent in 2021, compared to 23 families in 2010. The category of those paying 20-30 percent of their income on rent increased 121 percent in the last decade. As a rule, for rental housing to be considered affordable, a household should not spend more than 30 percent of its gross monthly income. Counterintuitively, Table 10 shows that renters paying more than 30 percent of their income for rent has decreased by 63 percent. Without further investigation, it is not possible to speculate the reasons behind this decrease. It could be a result of the increased amount of those paying between 20-30 percent, and the decrease of those paying less than 20 percent.

Comparatively, according to MSHA statistics, in 2017 (more recent data was not available) the median cost of the average two-bedroom rental in Bingham was considered unaffordable at \$1,193 per month. According to Maine State Housing Authority's data, the renter's household median annual income was \$20,369 and able to afford a \$509 for a month's rent. Additionally, MSHA estimates that some 82.6 percent of Bingham's renting households are unable to afford the median cost for an average 2-bedroom rental, though that data conflicts with the ACS data, which is an estimate.

**FIGURE 3: MEDIAN COST OF RENTAL COMPARISON- 2017\***



*Source: Maine State Housing Authority*

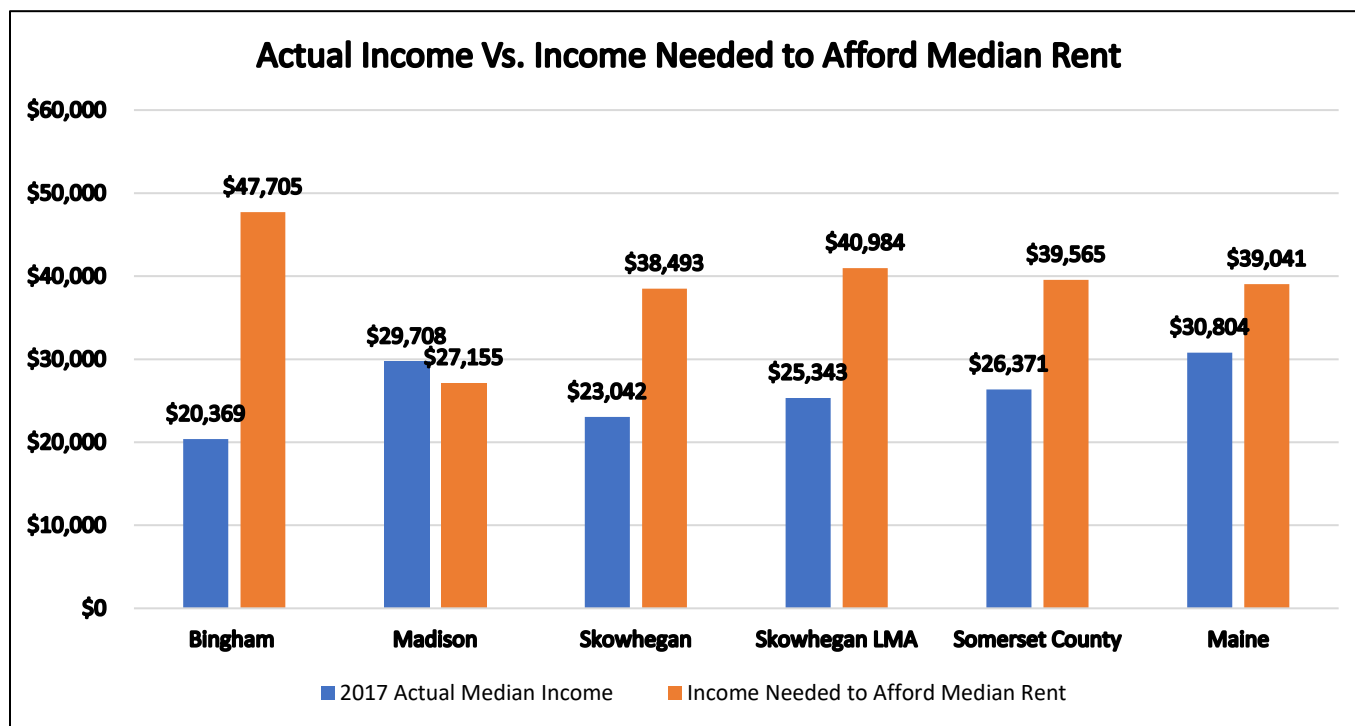
\*Newer data not available for all locations

Bingham's 2017 median cost of rent for a 2-bedroom apartment was significantly higher than neighboring towns, Somerset County, and the Skowhegan Labor Market Area in which it lies. Data from MSHA shows the median cost of a 2-bedroom apartment including utilities was \$850 in 2020 for Somerset County, nowhere near as much as Bingham's 2017 rental cost.

While Maine State Housing Authority's 2017 data on rental prices in Bingham may not be accurate, rental prices in Bingham have historically been higher than rental prices in surrounding towns because Bingham is a service center for the region.

Data was not available for median rental costs in other neighboring towns, aside from those in Figure 3. In this comparison, the only location with a median monthly rental cost considered affordable, based on median income, was Madison.

**FIGURE 4: COMPARISON OF ACTUAL INCOME AND INCOME REQUIRED TO AFFORD MEDIAN PRICED RENTAL\***



Source: Maine State Housing Authority

\*2017 is most recent data

The disparity between actual household income and household income required to afford a median priced rental in Bingham is more pronounced than others in this comparison (Figure 4). The difference between actual and need household incomes is nearly 43 percent.

Figure 4 compares the nearby towns, Skowhegan Labor Market Area, Somerset County, and the State of Maine. In Figure 4, the only town considered to have affordable rentals was Madison. The average renter's median annual income was \$26,371 in Somerset County, however the income needed to afford a median priced apartment was calculated to be \$39,565. This leaves 66.7 percent of households unable to afford what is considered a median priced apartment in Somerset County.

Based on this analysis, housing, including rental housing, is not affordable to those earning the median income in the region. Nor is housing affordable for those earning 80 percent of the median income in the region.

Since Bingham has no zoning regulation or restrictions on land use activities, there is no ordinances preventing the development of housing. The town is actively seeking ways to increase elderly housing options. In addition, there have been preliminary discussions on the creation of an affordable/workforce housing committee or coalition, aimed specifically at increasing the availability of elderly housing.

While there is a subsidized rent program option for housing in Bingham, this program is through the state, not the town. It provides low-income housing options for those that fit a specified criterion; however, it does not provide senior housing accommodation.

To be truly affective, housing affordability needs to be addressed on a regional scale. Bingham is by no means the only town facing housing affordability issues, or insufficient housing options for its elderly residents.

### **Housing Location Trends**

Bingham's community character is defined extensively by its downtown core, rural environs, and plethora of outdoor recreational opportunities. This does not seem to be under threat from any substantial development or maintenance of existing homes in the rural areas. The Census designates Bingham as having an urban cluster and a rural area. Based on the 2020 Census, 716 people or nearly 83 percent of Bingham's population lives in Bingham's Census Designated Place. That leaves 150 people living in the town's more rural parts. The number of residents living within the CDP equates to a greater density of housing within that urbanized area to accommodate more than half the town's population.

Statewide there is a trend for the development of new houses in more rural areas, termed 'suburban sprawl.' Bingham is unique in that the town is not necessarily affected by suburban sprawl, as are many small towns in Maine. Bingham has a more active urban core, but expansion into other areas outside the village is somewhat limited by several factors listed below:

- Most of the land in the more rural parts of town is privately owned by either individuals or by timber companies.
- Most of the privately owned areas do not have public roads for access.
- The rural areas that do have public roads for access are limited in terms of development because they lack paved roads and municipal services.
- The biggest challenge for rural parts that are accessible via public road is the limited availability of electricity.

Regardless of access to electricity, the rural parts of town that are accessible by public roads have seen an uptick in development in the past 10 years. In fact, these are the areas where most of the development has been taking place, as the village area and most of the Route 201 corridor are at capacity. The rural areas of town that are privately owned are not currently threatened by development.

Table 11 below shows the number of permits approved by the Planning Board for either year-round houses and/or camps between 2010 and 2023. These permit numbers reflect only permits obtained for either year-round dwelling units or camps; they do not include other types of permits.

**TABLE 11: HOUSING PERMIT TRENDS**

Years	Year-Round Dwelling Unit	Camp	Total Permits for Year-Round Dwellings and Camp Construction ONLY
2010	3	3	6
2011	1	0	1
2012	0	0	0
2013	0	0	0
2014	0	1	1
2015	4	0	4
2016	1	2	3
2017	1	2	3
2018	1	0	1
2019	0	0	0
2020	0	4	4
2021	1	1	2
2022	1	1	2
2023	1	1	2
Totals	14	15	29

*Source: Bingham Planning Board*

Permit applications for houses and/or camps have not changed significantly over the last 13 years; however, there has been an uptick in permit applications for camps since 2020, which coincides with when the global pandemic of COVID-19 started. In addition, as stated in the Demographic chapter of this plan, Bingham has recently witnessed an influx of new residents, likely due to the pandemic.

Bingham's current residential designated growth area, so delineated in the 2000 Comprehensive Plan, appears to include the village and Route 201 corridor south of the airport. Of the 14 year-round houses built between 2010 and 2023, all were in Bingham's designated growth area, as delineated in the 2000 Comprehensive Plan or in the designated growth area detailed in this plan.

Recently, the timber company Weyerhaeuser has begun parceling out buildable lots and selling them for housing development in rural locations of town that are outside of the designated growth area. The construction of seasonal camps on these properties would have little impact on the town; however, if these parcels were used for year-round housing, it could potentially present a challenge in providing them with municipal services.

## Projections

Referring to the population projections in the Demographic Profile, the Maine Office of the State Economist predicts an increase in Bingham's population of 108 individuals, while KVCOG predicts a decrease in population by 67 individuals. As noted in the Demographic Profile, these projections are based on data and trends prior to the COVID 19 pandemic, making them unreliable.

Populations are affected by regional trends, such as increasing median age and decreasing household size. Bingham's median age has been increasing for decades but is beginning to show signs of plateauing. According to the 2020 Census, Bingham's median age is 52.3, a 2.2 percent decrease from 2010. Likewise, the average household size also showed signs of rebounding after decades of decreasing.

However, hypothetically, if those high impact trends were to continue and Bingham's average household size decreased back down to 1.95 people per household in 2030, with the State Economist's population projection of 974 residents, that population would require 500 houses. The town's current housing stock is 560 total housing units, of which approximately 100 are seasonal homes, meaning only 460 are available for year-round habitation. This scenario creates a deficit of 40 houses.

Table 12 below shows different scenarios using population projections by the State Economist's Office and KVCOG. The table incorporates both the current average household size and a hypothetical decrease in household size for comparison.



**TABLE 12: POPULATION PROJECTIONS AND HOUSING NEEDS**

	Population Projection	Total Current Housing Units (Minus Seasonal)	Average Household Size	Amount of Housing Needed	Deficit?
<b>Current</b>	<b>866</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>2.22</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>N/A</b>
State Economist's Population Projection	974	460	2.22	440	No
State Economist's Population Projection	974	460	1.95	500	Yes, 40 houses
KVCOG Population Projection	799	460	2.22	360	No
KVCOG Population Projection	799	460	1.95	410	No

Based on Table 12, Bingham would need additional housing to accommodate its residents for the population projected by the State Economist, but only if the average household size decreased down to 1.95 per household. With the current housing stock and average household size, Bingham can accommodate the population projection by the State Economist, but just barely.

Since Bingham does not have zoning, the minimum lot size requirements are determined by the availability of public water and sewer connections, as mandated by the Department of Health and Human Services. For lots that can connect to the town sewer, the minimum lot size is 10,000 square feet. For lots without a connection to the town sewer, the minimum lot size is 40,000 square feet.

Under the State Economist's population projection and a decreasing household size, Bingham would need to add approximately 40 housing units to accommodate the population increase. Hypothetically, if those houses were built in an area with access to the town sewer, those 40 houses would only take up 40,000 square feet or slightly less than one acre. This estimation does not include other necessities such as driveways, roads, or utilities which would take up more land.

Conversely, if all 40 hypothetical houses were built in the rural part of town on minimum lot sizes, they would take up 1,600,000 square feet of land or approximately 37 acres. Again, this does not take into consideration other necessities such as driveways, roads, or utilities which would take up more land.

Of course, both examples are hypothetical scenarios. Not all new housing construction will happen within access to the town sewer connection, but neither will all housing construction happen in the rural part of town. Nor will all new housing construction take place on minimum lot size, despite location.

Regardless of which projection is considered, there are several undeniable constants that affect the need for housing stock. One constant is that the effects of an increasing median age will be felt for years to come, even if it continues to decrease with younger people moving to Bingham. What this means is that specific types of housing will be needed to accommodate the aging population, such as more right-sized housing such as one-story houses, apartments, condominiums, or senior housing.

Additionally, the effects of decreasing household size will continue to be felt for many years even if the average household size continues to increase, as well. This means more single-person and two-person households. The type of housing typically most appealing to this demographic are smaller houses.

There are many factors that will contribute to Bingham's future growth, including the national trend of people working from home, the forthcoming availability of high-speed internet, the town's proximity to outdoor recreation and many other factors. In the past decade, there has been a noticeable increase in new, younger residents moving to Bingham, particularly in the past two to three years. In fact, Bingham has seen unprecedented population growth in the last few years, which is not reflected in the Census or ACS data due to when that data was published. This trend is anticipated to continue, eventually shifting the demographics if not the population total.

Population projections and demographic statistics are a starting point when planning for the future. The most likely scenario for Bingham is continued population change in terms of numbers. Housing stock will fluctuate as new houses are built, year-round houses are converted to camps, and camps are converted to year-round housing.

Development of the rural area is a worst-case scenario typical of sprawl. Placement of 75 percent of new housing units in the town's designated growth area is consistent with the comprehensive planning guidelines to reduce the cost of providing public services to residents and decrease development in rural areas.

When considering the changing population demographics and the influx of new residents, it is undeniable that Bingham will need additional housing, specifically low-to-moderate income housing and senior housing. Whether these needs will be met locally within the community or regionally is more challenging to determine. The town intends to work proactively towards creating more senior housing options within Bingham; however, the lack of affordable housing is a regional issue and can only be addressed as such.

## **Current Housing Regulations**

Bingham does not have a zoning ordinance besides the State mandated Shoreland Zoning Ordinance. Bingham enacted their Shoreland Zoning Ordinance on March 3, 2008, while the latest amendment to the State's guidelines was January 26, 2015. The town should consider updating their Shoreland Zoning Ordinance to reflect the latest amendments by the State and provide the utmost protection to natural resources.

Bingham has a Building Permit and Lot Requirement Ordinance [For the Town of Bingham], enacted March 5, 1990, and amended through March 3, 2008. This Ordinance was developed to encourage and promote legal, orderly development, control density of buildings, protect the health, safety, and welfare of residents, and assist the Planning Board in the equitable implementation of regulations. The Ordinance names the Planning Board or Code Enforcement Officer as the party responsible for review of applications.

The Building Permit and Lot Requirement Ordinance sets standards and requirements for construction-related activities. Detailed in this Ordinance are requirements for the following areas:

- Building permits,
- Lot size,
- Lot setbacks,
- Lot ratio,
- Minimum road frontage, and
- Exceptions to these requirements.

The lot size requirements outlined in this Ordinance are based on the availability of a public sewer connection, not zoning districts as this is not a zoning ordinance.

The Bingham Subdivision Ordinance is outdated and does not reflect the latest version of the State's subdivision law.

Bingham does not regulate any land use activity above and beyond what is covered in the ordinances detailed above. The town's current ordinances do not encourage nor discourage the development of affordable or workforce housing development.

The State of Maine recently enacted legislation to promote affordable housing and increase housing density, as part of a nationwide trend. Since Bingham does not have zoning other than Shoreland Zoning, it will have little purview over new construction resulting from this legislation.

While Bingham currently has no plans to enact a zoning ordinance, any time a Comprehensive Plan is updated, the town will need to review and amend its existing ordinances to ensure they are up to date and consistent with the new Comprehensive Plan.

## **Analysis**

The community has an undeniable interest in maintaining a range of housing opportunities for its residents, as a diversity of housing units leads to a diverse and vibrant community. And the town's housing stock and prices ultimately determine future growth. Bingham has historically been known for the affordability of homes but based on data from the Census Bureau and Maine State Housing Authority, that affordability has changed. Many of the residents currently living in Bingham could not afford to buy a house there now. While the affordability issue is less pronounced in Bingham than in other areas of the state, it is still an issue, nonetheless.

As structured, many local governments are not in the business of providing housing to residents; however, towns have traditionally been responsible for ensuring their residents have safe, sanitary, and secure housing. Keeping the price of housing affordable is in the best interests of the town and the town's residents.

Since Bingham is the service center for the surrounding towns, there is an increased demand for workforce housing. There is also an added demand for elderly housing due to the increasing median age in Bingham and in the surrounding communities. Housing that would most likely meet those needs would be single-story, smaller housing, apartments, or condos.

The town has recently observed an influx of new, younger people residents. With the trend toward working from home, people can live where they want without concern of commuting distance. The town has taken steps to improve amenities that will continue to draw new residents, including high-speed internet in 2024.

Younger people and families are more likely to seek larger houses with 3-4 bedrooms on larger lots versus older residents who would prefer smaller houses, on one level. Thus, a diversity of housing in Bingham is necessary to meet all needs.

Zoning, or in many cases, the lack of zoning, is part of the equation in the supply and location of housing within a community. Private enterprises are also affected by zoning or lack thereof. Just as zoning can influence housing, so, too can the many styles of housing influence the size, age, and income levels of a community. Additionally, the location of housing can impact the cost of providing town services and economic health of commercial areas. Since Bingham does not have zoning, land use regulations cannot be leveraged to affect the type or location of housing development.

In the future, if the town continues to attract new residents, Bingham may need to consider enacting minimal zoning standards to preserve its rural character. The Code Enforcement Officer and Planning Board should monitor the location and type of new buildings on a permit-by-permit basis to ensure development is consistent and in keeping with the character of the town.

Bingham's overall housing objective is to maintain the character of the town while promoting the types of housing that will meet current and future demand. The community strives to create more affordable housing options, particularly for elderly, to provide flexibility and opportunities for residents and future residents.

## 5: Public Facilities & Services



## **Municipal Services**

The Town of Bingham, by itself or in collaboration with neighboring towns and other partners, offers comprehensive public facilities and services to residents, workers, and visitors. This chapter details Bingham's town government and how it provides public facilities and services to the region.

## **Bingham's Municipal Government**

Since its incorporation as a town, Bingham has adopted the Town Meeting-Selectmen style of government. This style of government, often referred to as the purest form of democracy, relies on an annual town meeting to perform the legislative function of local government and every citizen who is a registered voter may directly participate in this "peoples' assembly". The annual Town Meeting passes laws in the form of ordinances needed for orderly governance, approves a budget, effectively decides the amount of property taxes to be raised and elects various town officials, including the members of the Board of Selectmen.

The Board of Selectmen performs the executive functions of the town by administering, enforcing, and carrying out decisions made at the meeting. Under state law, Selectmen have specific duties relating to town meetings and elections, finances, personnel, streets and highways, public safety, human services, public works, and planning. The Board of Selectmen are also granted some legislative powers as well, under state law, such as enacting laws or ordinances regulating vehicles, public ways, and others.

Bingham's current First Selectman, Steve Steward, has been in the position for over 20 years. However, with his announcement of retirement, the town has made a historic decision to change government style; in 2021, the residents of Bingham voted to switch to the Town Meeting- Selectmen- Manager style of government. The actual change in government styles did not take place until February 2024, when a Town Manager was hired.

The Town Meeting- Selectmen- Manager style of government is like that of Town Meeting- Selectmen with one big exception: the Board of Selectmen hire a Town Manager as the administrator of local government, with clearly defined duties responsibilities and powers. The Town Manager Plan, authorized by the Legislature in 1939, gives the Town Manager authority over much of the town's operations, such as preparing the budget for the Selectmen to submit at Town Meeting and administering the budget with the oversight of the Selectmen, following Town Meeting approval. In short, the Town Manager administers all municipal operations, with the oversight of the Selectmen. The Board of Selectmen remains the executive body, but they will now have a single chief administrator, the Town Manager, to supervise daily operations.

## **The Town Office**

The Bingham Town Office is the base of operations for general government services. The current Town Office is in the same building as the firehouse but has a separate entrance. The Town Office provides office space for the First Selectman (or Town Manager), the Tax Collector and other office staff.

The Town Office is located at 13 Murray Street in the village area. The building, while structurally sound and functional, needs cosmetic improvements, such as replacing the flooring and ceilings. Recently, the Town Office has received upgrades such as heat pumps, fiber optics, and a generator. The cosmetic upgrades are expected to cost approximately \$75,000.

There is a meeting room behind the office that fulfills the needs of the fire department and other group meetings. The Town Office is open for the normal conduct of business five days a week.

The Town Office has limited parking and is at capacity. Future consideration will have to be given to the expansion of the Town Office as Bingham continues to grow.

## **Public Safety**

Bingham provides not only its residents, but also several towns in the surrounding area with public safety and health services, including fire protection and ambulance services, detailed below.

Bingham was the first town in the area to adopt the E-911 service, including house numbering and street naming. This work was completed in 1999.

## **Police Protection**

Bingham's police protection is covered by the Somerset County Sheriff's office. Currently, that police protection provided by the Sheriff's office is adequate and anticipated to meet the changing population and demographics.

The cost for the town to supply its own police service is prohibitive. In the past, Bingham had its own full-time officer, but the cost of a municipal department for such a small population was not sustainable.

Somerset County Sheriff's office covers roughly 4,000 square miles in Somerset County. For this reason, call response times vary greatly.



## Fire Protection

Bingham's municipal fire department is served by trained, paid volunteers, led by a Fire Chief. The Bingham Fire Department also provides fire protection to the neighboring towns of Moscow and Caratunk and the Townships of Mayfield, Pleasant Ridge, and Concord. Bingham also has a mutual, county-wide aid agreement which covers all Somerset County. Bingham charges subsidies to neighboring towns, of which a portion goes into the Capital Fund for future investments.

The volunteer firefighters are paid for responding to calls such as fire, smoke, alarms, and accident calls, as well as storm responses to clear roads of trees and power lines, and mutual aid calls. Table 1 shows the call volumes and locations for the past three years.

**TABLE 1: FIRE DEPARTMENT CALL VOLUME:**

Town	2021	2022	2023
Bingham	32	42	36
Moscow	26	24	14
Caratunk	4	15	6
Concord/Mayfield	9	10	8
Other	9	7	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>66</b>

*Source: 2021, 2022, 2023 Town of Bingham Annual Reports*

One of the most important functions of the department is training to keep abreast of modern practices and building standards. Between training and response time, volunteers contribute approximately 800 hours of service to the town annually.

These hours put in training can be attributed to the town's Insurance Safety Officer (ISO) rating which is generally a "6," and considered a very good rating for a rural town. This rating is a score that encapsulates how well-equipped the community's fire department is to put out fires. The ISO rating system ranks fire departments from one to ten, with those deemed more capable of putting out fires receiving a lower number. The ISO rating influences homeowner's and business fire insurance rates.



The fire department's vehicles and other equipment are stored in the joint firehouse/Town Office on Murray Street and are owned by the Town of Bingham. Although the brick station is in good condition, it is crowded. The town has plans to move the fire station to the Old Colby Theater which is next door to the existing municipal office/fire house.

The town's fire fighting vehicle stock includes:

1928 Maxim Fire Truck (show truck)  
1984 Ford Fire Truck  
2001 Navistar Model 4900 Fire Truck  
2005 Chevrolet Silverado 3500 FD  
2014 International 4300 SBA w/ tank FD

In addition to the expansion of the fire house into the Old Colby Theater building (estimated to happen in approximately 2035), Bingham is also currently budgeting for a new tanker truck, estimated to be replaced in 2024. Overall, the fire department building, and equipment are in good condition and adequate for meeting future changes in population and demographics.

### **Ambulance Service**

Upper Kennebec Valley Ambulance Service has its own facility in Bingham, built in approximately 2000. They provide services to Bingham, Caratunk, Moscow, Pleasant Ridge, The Forks, West Forks, and 11 of Somerset County's Unorganized Territories. UKVAS is a 501(c)3 non-profit. The ambulance service is supported by subsidies from the towns it serves. Those subsidies are detailed in Table 2.

**TABLE 2: TOWN SUBSIDIES FOR AMBULANCE SERVICE**

<b>Town</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
Bingham	\$93,598	\$146,511	\$150,174
Caratunk	\$21,186	\$24,872	\$25,494
Moscow	\$92,680	\$108,805	\$111,526
Pleasant Ridge	\$55,329	\$64,956	\$66,580
Somerset County	\$92,596	\$108,706	\$111,424
The Forks	\$21,735	\$25,516	\$26,154
West Forks	\$13,716	\$16,102	\$16,505

*Source: 2022 & 2023 Annual Reports*

Of Bingham's share of the UKVAS subsidy, the increase between 2023 and 2024 is \$3,662. This increase is due to the wage adjustment for frontline staff.

The UKVAS is expected to adequately handle future demand of a changing population and demographics. Currently, the ambulance service, building and equipment do not need any immediate upgrades or improvements. In 2023, Upper Kennebec Valley Ambulance Service (UKVAS) received a \$600,000 federal grant which was used to purchase two new ambulances, replace the roof on the ambulance base and purchase a new heart monitor. The UKVAS building is in good shape, as is the UKVAS equipment, in fact, UKVAS has the only four-wheel drive ambulance in Somerset County.

The UKVAS average response time varies depending on call volume and call location since such a large area is covered.

### **Bingham's Public Safety Analysis**

Overall, Bingham's public safety amenities are in good condition and have minimal requirements, particularly of Bingham. Police protection, provided by the Somerset County Sheriff's Office, and ambulance services, provided by Upper Kennebec Valley Ambulance Service, are not owned nor operated by the town although they are supported, in part, through subsidies from the town.

Bingham does own the fire department, which covers several neighboring towns, and unorganized territories. The fire department's equipment is in good shape and Bingham has a long-term plan and budget in place to manage the anticipated expenses of the fire department.



### **Health Care Facilities**

As a regional service center, Bingham provides the area with health services and a dental center. Bingham Area Health and Dental Center, located at 237 Main Street, was the first practice in the HealthReach system and provides medical, behavioral health, and dental services for those living in Bingham, Caratunk, Embden, Moscow, Pleasant Ridge, Solon, The Forks, West Forks, and surrounding areas along the Kennebec River in Somerset County.

Bingham Area Health and Dental Center partners with Reddington-Fairview General Hospital in Skowhegan when outside hospital services are necessary and maintains connections with other helpful partners in the community to support the needs of their patients.

The Health Office is open five days a week, Monday through Friday, and the dental center is open Tuesday through Friday.

Prior to the COVID pandemic, there was a mobile clinic operated by the Veteran's Affairs Maine Healthcare System to provide services to the area's veterans; however, the mobile clinic was removed during COVID. Currently, the VA provides services out of the old Health Center/Chamber of Commerce building, at 356 Main Street. This location is also used one day a week by Somerset Public Health for substance abuse assistance, which is under the umbrella of Reddington-Fairview General Hospital.

Bingham does not have any nursing homes or assisted living facilities. Residents seeking those facilities must relocate to a larger town.

The town's general assistance fund is intended for qualified applicants; the new Town Manager is the General Assistance Officer. Bingham also has a health officer.

Bingham's current health care facilities and public health offerings are generally meeting the needs of the community.

## **Utilities**

The availability of utilities such as public water supply, public sewer systems, internet, and power service is a principal factor in growth and development. The availability of public sewer connections enables homebuilders to avoid the state-minimum 20,000-square-foot lot size mandate, permitting greater density of development. The availability of high-speed internet has the potential to draw in new residents who work from home.

### ***Internet/Telecommunications Accessibility***

Bingham is served by Consolidated Communications, which is owned by Fidium. This company has plans to expand in 2024-2025, which includes offering fiber optic services for high-speed internet. There are already areas in Bingham where fiber optics are available through Consolidated Communications. These improvements will not be at the expense of the town.

### ***Power Service***

Electricity is supplied by Central Maine Power. Three-phase power is available on Main Street and in the industrial locations in town. Power lines have not been extended to portions of Mahoney Hill Road and the Brighton Road, in the rural area.

Improvements to the town's telecommunications and energy infrastructure are forthcoming in 2024.

### ***Public Water***

Bingham's public water supply, which supplies homes and businesses within the Bingham Water District, comes from a well in Concord Township. The Bingham Water District sells some of its water to the Moscow Water District, which acts as a commercial customer. The Bingham Water District is a public utility and is quasi-municipal. It is run by a board of local area people, who oversee operations and control the water district.

The well water is pumped and stored in a covered reservoir on the hill above the village. Supplies are generally considered to be adequate, although some of the distribution lines in the downtown area are outdated. The main line along Main Street, dating from 1911, was replaced in 1997 in conjunction with the sewer project.

In approximately 2013, the public water system was expanded to southern Bingham. As the southern part of town is the designated growth area, the southern expansion of public water is logical and forward thinking. Bingham Water District's service is adequate in meeting the anticipated changes in population and demographics. At present, the district serves approximately 320 public water users, with capacity to serve more. The current users are predominantly residential with a few commercial uses.

The water supply system does not have any significant issues regarding capacity or maintenance. The system is in good order with minimal upgrades needed, except for normal aging issues. The Bingham Water District is budgeting for these upgrades.

Since the Bingham Water District is under PUC control, it is mandatory that it aligns with the town's Future Land Use Plan, though expansion is not anticipated in the future. Expansion further south would require a booster station due to pressure issues, for which there has not been a demand. The current system has reached capacity for expansion; however, there is more capacity for increased user connection.

### ***Public Sewer***

The public sewer system, known as the Town Sewer Department, located at 928 Main Street, is available for those living in the village area. The Town of Bingham owns the sewer department; it is not a public utility. The Board of Selectmen oversee and control the sewer department. The town has not partnered with neighboring communities to share public sewer services.

The public sewer is available for approximately 385 users in the village area, of which most are residential, but some users are commercial. The Sewer Ordinance controls who can connect to sewer lines. For example, if a house is within 200 feet of the sewer line, it is mandatory that it be connected to the public sewer. Any new connections require approval by the Bingham Sewer District.

The sewer plant is located south of town at the mouth of Jackson Brook. The plant has recently been upgraded to increase its user capacity for the foreseeable future and the Town Sewer Department's services are adequate to meet the anticipated changes in population and demographics. However, the capacity for expansion of the system is at its limit. The public sewer currently serves the entire village area, except for the top end of Murray Street, and the system extends to the southern end of Bingham all the way to the sewer plant, which it cannot extend past.

Most of the town's sewer infrastructure was updated in 2013 and Bingham is currently budgeting for the replacement of a pump station in the fiscal year 2024-2025. After the pump station is replaced, the whole system will have been upgraded, as far as pump stations.

The biggest concern related to the public sewer system is infiltration inline (commonly known as I&I). This is not an uncommon concern for public sewer systems. Bingham is taking steps to address this issue this year (2024).

### ***Bingham's Public Utility Analysis***

Power service and internet connectivity are available in most places in town, particularly in the village area. The availability of high-speed internet is important to businesses and the growing number of people who work from home. It is anticipated that the availability of high-speed internet will compel more people to move to the area, a trend already evident in the town.

Bingham's public utilities are in good condition with minimal upgrades needed, and the upgrades that have been identified are already accounted for in the budget. Both public water and sewer utilities have been maintained to prevent any issues that could result in unexpected, costly repairs. While neither system has capacity for future expansion, both have capacity to accommodate additional user connections.

### **Solid Waste Disposal**

Bingham shares the responsibility of the Bingham Transfer Station with Moscow and Concord; and although the transfer station is in Concord Township, it is owned by Bingham. Bingham charges a subsidy to Concord, Moscow, and Mayfield to cover expenses. Pleasant Ridge is included to an extent. The transfer station handles single stream recycling for these towns, as well as universal waste. Bingham currently contracts with Cassella Waste for municipal solid waste, demolition, single stream recycling, universal waste, and all other waste management needs. Single stream recycling reduces the reliance on waste disposal and encourages recycling because items are not required to be separated.

Currently, Bingham's Transfer Station handles approximately 1,400 – 1,500 tons of municipal solid waste and recycled material per year.

The transfer station is operated by one town employee, and it is open Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays. The Board of Selectmen perform administrative enforcement when necessary.

The transfer station building, facilities, and equipment are new and in excellent condition, with no repairs required aside from general maintenance and upkeep. The transfer station and current waste management program are anticipated to adequately meet the projected growth and changing demographics. The town uses a front-end loader at the transfer station that is replaced on a 10-year basis. The current front-end loader is a 2015 Case Backhoe/Loader 580SN WT. Bingham has been budgeting with the anticipation of this replacement in 2035.

## **Septic Waste Disposal**

Bingham is mostly served by private septic systems, except for the limited public sewer connection in the village area. When pumping of private septic systems is needed, the town is not involved in the disposal process. When pumping is needed for a private system, it is accomplished through a third-party licensed contractor and the owner of the property.

As the town is not, nor should it be, involved in this process, there are no concerns or issues regarding septic tank waste disposal. As such, Bingham currently does not have any community policies or regulation related to septic waste disposal.

## **Public Works**

### ***Road Maintenance***

The town is responsible for maintaining all roads except for Routes 16 and 201. There are just under 20 miles of town ways for which Bingham is responsible. Road maintenance is done by a private contractor, on an as needed basis. The contractor is responsible for winter maintenance on roads and removing snow from sidewalks. While winter road maintenance is performed under the specified contract, typically the same contractor also performs summer road maintenance, though without a contract (more detail in the Transportation chapter).

The transportation system is one of the major services for which the town is responsible. The 2023-2024 budget for road maintenance is \$340,256, making it the second largest expenditure for the town. Most of the local roads, and nearly all the paved roads in Bingham, are in the village area. Most of the undeveloped parts of Bingham are served by two major rural roads: Mahoney Hill Road and the Solon-Brighton Road.

Bingham is currently budgeting for an expansion for the Town Garage to include a break room and the addition of a salt shed. Bingham has minimal road maintenance equipment aside from the 1990 GMC Top Kick Plow Truck (public works) since all road maintenance functions are performed by the contractor.

The municipal services Bingham currently supplies are adequate in meeting the expected changes in population and demographics. The town has not partnered with any other communities in providing public works services. The general physical condition of the Town Garage and public works facilities and equipment is adequate.

## **Stormwater Management**

Existing stormwater management facilities are adequately maintained, though necessary upgrades have been identified due to the frequency and severity with which the amount of stormwater exceeds culvert capacity. Considering recent storms, town officials have determined that the existing 18-inch culverts are not large enough to accommodate stormwater runoff; all culverts throughout town will need to be replaced and upsized, some with box culverts in certain areas. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is aiding the town financially in some of these upgrades.

Bingham is responsible for stormwater management on all roads besides Route 201, which is maintained by the state. Due to the scope of the necessary upgrades to bigger culverts and replacing catch basins on so many roads, the system is being upgraded slowly to accommodate the cost that will not be covered by FEMA.

Bingham does not have any Combined Sewer Overflows or any other major stormwater management issues besides the need to upgrade culverts and catch basins due to the recent severity of storms.

## **Cemeteries**

The following cemeteries are in Bingham. Some are town maintained, while others are not.

Village Cemetery  
Fall Brook Cemetery  
Atwood Cemetery

Gilman Cemetery  
Clark Cemetery  
Grant Cemetery

Unfortunately, Bingham's cemeteries are at capacity, and residents have begun using cemeteries in neighboring towns. Bingham should consider future locations for either new cemeteries or possible expansion of existing ones.

## **Education**

Bingham is part of Regional School Unit (RSU) 83 and Maine School Administrative District (MSAD) 13, which includes Moscow. The school district also hosts students from Pleasant Ridge Plantation, Concord Plantation, and West Forks Plantation on a tuition basis. It is important to note that all data and figures in this section pertain only to children enrolled in the public school system; this information does not include children who are home schooled.

Student enrollment from Bingham, in surrounding towns, and for Somerset County has fluctuated over the past ten years. Declining enrollment has been an issue in the past and threatens to increase the costs of education.



Table 3 shows Bingham's contribution of students to the district, as well as overall enrollment for RSU 83/MSAD 13. Since 2014, Bingham has seen a sporadic increase in school aged children, with an average school enrollment for the data period of 115 students, while the district's average student enrollment for this period was 164 students.

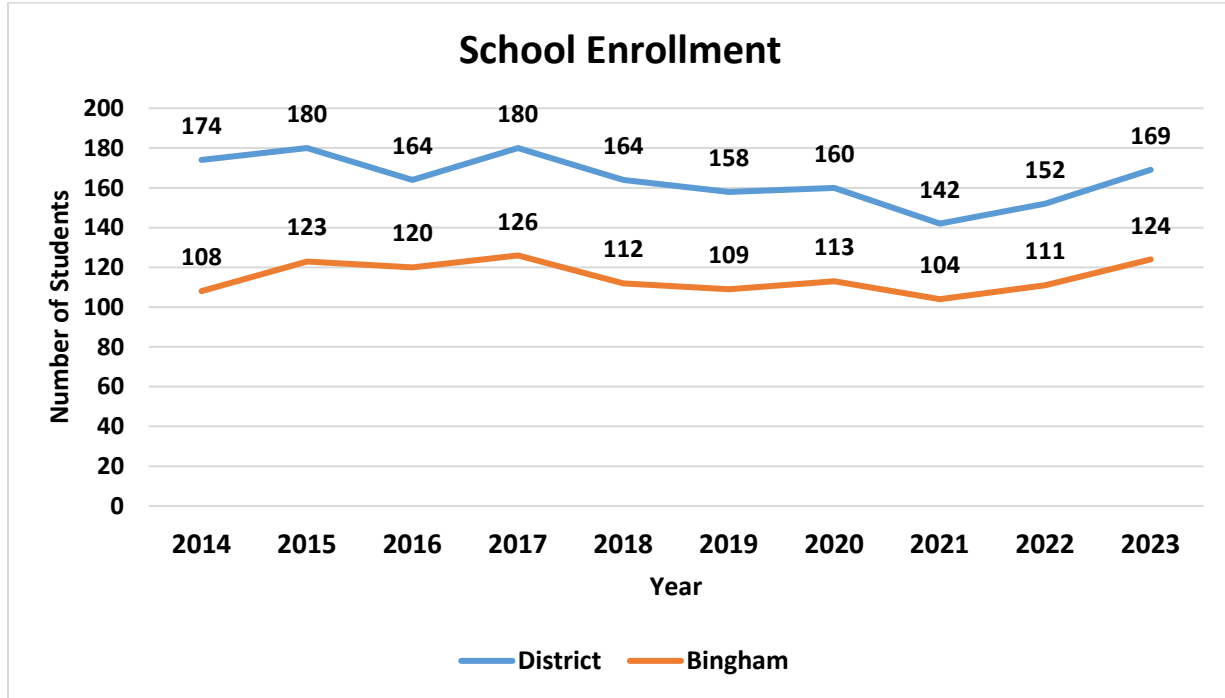
**TABLE 3: SCHOOL ENROLLMENT DATA FOR BINGHAM**

Year	Bingham's Students Enrolled	District's Students Enrolled	Percent of Bingham's Contribution to Total Enrollment
2014	108	174	62%
2015	123	180	68%
2016	120	164	73%
2017	126	180	70%
2018	112	164	68%
2019	109	158	69%
2020	113	160	71%
2021	104	142	73%
2022	111	152	73%
2023	124	169	73%
<b>Average</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>70%</b>

*Source: Maine Department of Education, Student Enrollment Data*

The comparison of student enrollment numbers for the school district versus Bingham's contribution can be seen in Figure 1, below. Both Bingham and the district saw decreased enrollment from 2017 to 2019. The drop in enrollment in 2020 can likely be contributed to the global pandemic. Since 2021, both the school district and Bingham have had increased student enrollment.

**FIGURE 1: STUDENT ENROLLMENT FOR BINGHAM AND THE SCHOOL DISTRICT**



*Source: Maine Department of Education, Student Enrollment Data*

Bingham is home to the Upper Kennebec Valley High School, while Moscow Elementary School is in Moscow. Both schools are owned by the school district and are in adequate condition. Recently, the district replaced windows, doors, the security system, and updated the HVAC system. The district also purchased a new tractor for field maintenance.

**TABLE 4: RSU 83 AND MSAD 13 SCHOOLS**

Location	School	Grades
Moscow	Moscow Elementary School	Pre-K through 4 <sup>th</sup> grade
Bingham	Upper Kennebec Valley High School	5 <sup>th</sup> grade through 12 <sup>th</sup> grade

*Source: Town of Bingham*

While the schools are in acceptable condition, there is no room for expansion to accommodate the anticipated or existing growth in Bingham. School enrollment and population growth have been on an upswing for the last few years. Bingham has observed an influx of new residents recently. If growth continues at this rate, the district will need to consider future expansion or possibly construction of a new building.

Upper Kennebec Valley High School is at the end of a road where there is no room for residential development. Moscow Elementary School is not in Bingham; therefore, the town cannot influence promoting residential development in another town.

RSU 83/MSAD 13 strives to offer programs and classes that meet the needs of the currently enrolled population of students. For example, the school district provides a robust special education program in response to the recent uptick in enrollment of special education students. Advanced Placement college level courses are available online to students who meet the criteria and wish to take these courses. Outside of the school district, the Skowhegan Vocational School reserves enrollment slots for Bingham students, and many have taken advantage of that opportunity.

## **Leisure Services**

Bingham Union Library, located at 297 Main Street, has served Bingham and surrounding towns in its current location since the 1920s. The building itself was built in the 1840s as a residence. Though not listed on the National Historic Register, the Bingham Union Library has historic significance, nonetheless.

The Bingham Union Library is open on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and hosts events and workshops, such as computer education for seniors, throughout the year. Bingham Union Library is not a town entity, although they are a 501(c)3 and are tax exempt.



*Bingham Union Library*

The library building provides handicapped access through the east entrance. The building is in good condition and recently received upgrades to the heating system and was repainted.

While library services have decreased in demand in recent years, the classes the library provides are still well attended. At present, there is no room for future expansion to accommodate growth for these classes.

The Old Canada Road Historical Society is another 501(c)3 nonprofit in Bingham that is not a town entity. The Historical Society building is in fair condition and needs work. It does provide handicapped access, though. The Old Canada Road Historical Society is not owned by the town and is a private entity.

## **Summary of Analysis**

Bingham's public facilities and services are quite satisfactory for a rural community that is a service center. While the Town Office and fire department have limited room for growth, the town has a plan to accommodate this. The town has accounted for future expenses associated with replacement and/or maintenance of facilities and equipment in the long-range budget, putting Bingham in a good financial position.

Where feasible, the town has partnered with neighboring towns to reduce the cost of providing services to residents. The extent to which investments in facility improvements are directed to Bingham's growth area are proportional. Bingham's biggest expense, besides the school district, is the roads, which are throughout town. Primary public buildings such as the Town Office and fire department are in or adjacent to the growth areas that are already developed. While the transfer station is not in Bingham's growth area, the building and equipment currently only require routine maintenance.

The town has made huge efforts to improve the village area, along the Route 201 corridor, which is in the growth area. These improvements include planting trees along the roadway; although the town does not have a street tree program.

Bingham's public safety amenities, which includes police protection, fire protection, and ambulance services, are acceptable; however, the town is only responsible for the fire department. Public utilities have been well-maintained and improvements to the availability of high-speed internet are forthcoming.

While the school buildings may have challenges with accommodating future growth, the school district and the town should have the time necessary to find a solution to this potential problem.

## 6: Bingham's Fiscal Capacity



**Fiscal Management**

Comprehensive plans are not intended to dictate day-to-day financial decisions of local government; they are intended to identify long-term trends and needs resulting from growth and development. These needs are usually resolved by new or expanded capital facilities or an increased range of public services. These needs must be balanced with the capacity of a town to fund them.

A significant element of the public services picture is the ability of the town to finance and maintain its services. Town governments are faced with multiple challenges: ordinary population growth, sprawling new patterns of development, new technology, mandates from state and federal government, and more sophisticated demands from residents for leisure services, protection, education, and more. Coupled with a heavy reliance on property taxes, fiscal management is key to delivery of all other services.

Local property values were last assessed in 2009; however, another revaluation is in progress and slated for completion in 2024. The housing market has changed dramatically since 2009, particularly after the COVID 19 pandemic struck in 2020. The pandemic resulted in out-of-staters flocking to Maine, seeking refuge from both the pandemic and urban lifestyles in 2021-2022. More recently, in 2024, the town has seen an influx of new residents from southern Maine. Both these influxes have driven up the cost of housing (detailed further in the Housing chapter) and are changing tax valuations.

The town has a clear accounting and budgeting system in place which has resulted in sound financial management. Because of this, Bingham has had the means to pay for capital improvements. And, because of sound financial management, Bingham has stayed in compliance with 30 MRSA, Section 5061, as amended, which requires that no municipality incur debt that exceeds 15 percent of the state valuation. Bingham’s debt, in fact, was lower than 2 percent of that state valuation between 2019 and 2023 (Table 1).

**TABLE 1: BINGHAM’S DEBT ANALYSIS**

Year	Total Debt	% of Valuation
2019	\$832,562	1.06%
2020	\$752,423	0.92%
2021	\$889,974	1.06%
2022	\$865,350	0.99%
2023	\$26,406.42	0.3%

*Source: 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, & 2023 Annual Reports*

Bingham, despite being a service center, is primarily a residential town in terms of taxable property. Additionally, Bingham has many tax-exempt properties, detailed in Table 2.

**TABLE 2: LIST OF TAX-EXEMPT PROPERTIES AND EXEMPTION AMOUNTS**

<b>Tax Exempt Properties</b>	<b>2022</b>
Total Value Government and Municipal	\$1,020,140
Literary and Scientific	\$905,000
Total exempt churches and parsonages	\$844,010
Fraternal Organizations	\$51,930
Property leased by hospitals	\$613,760
Pollution control facilities	\$703,370
Quasi-governmental organizations	\$42,890
Total Value Veteran exemptions	\$234,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,489,600</b>
<b>STATE VALUATION</b>	<b>\$87,350,000</b>
<b>Percent Exempt</b>	<b>5.14%</b>

*Source: 2022 Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary*

Table 2 displays the portion of the town's tax base that is exempt from taxation. These properties account for slightly more than five percent of the entire state valuation for 2022. To offset this, the town could explore fees in lieu of taxes to recover some support for especially relevant municipal services (e.g., roads and public safety), thereby expanding the town's income.

**TABLE 3: SIX YEARS OF STATE VALUATIONS FOR BINGHAM**

<b>Year</b>	<b>State Valuation</b>
2018	\$68,750,000
2019	\$78,700,000
2020	\$81,450,000
2021	\$83,950,000
2022	\$87,350,000
2023	\$96,950,000

*Source: Municipal Valuation Statistical Summary*

**TABLE 4: SIX YEARS OF BINGHAM'S BUDGET INFORMATION**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>FY2018</b>	<b>FY2019</b>	<b>FY2020</b>	<b>FY2021</b>	<b>FY2022</b>	<b>FY2023</b>
<b>STATE VALUATION</b>	68,750,000.00	78,700,000.00	81,450,000.00	83,950,000.00	87,350,000.00	96,950,000.00
<b>COUNTY TAX</b> (Treasurer's Report)	167,670.54	188,709.01	192,116.00	187,156.13	196,022.55	216,218.65
<b>EDUCATION APPROPRIATION</b> (Special Assessment)	1,056,536.82	961,997.07	989,038.78	1,045,443.18	1,052,796.47	1,328,775.16
<b>MILL RATE</b>	0.0163	0.0163	0.0173	0.0174	0.0183	0.01675
<b>REVENUES</b>						
General Fund (taxes, fees, etc.)	2,337,246.00	2,183,604.00	2,226,611.00	2,305,674.00	2,172,777.00	
Intergovernmental	206,491.00	227,860.00	239,729.00	419,171.00	455,905.00	
Charges for Services	259,970.00	256,752.00	253,834.00	288,485.00	320,689.00	
Interest	4,907.00	8,712.00	6,429.00	5,837.00	6,801.00	
Miscellaneous	9,004.00	57,745.00	44,200.00	5,018.00	31,556.00	
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>2,817,618.00</b>	<b>2,734,673.00</b>	<b>2,770,803.00</b>	<b>3,274,185.00</b>	<b>3,213,729.00</b>	
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>						
General Government	153,566.00	164,010.00	196,084.00	175,491.00	208,786.00	
Public Safety	230,331.00	218,561.00	236,817.00	238,615.00	400,336.00	
Public Works	336,942.00	198,916.00	216,668.00	359,451.00	381,499.00	
Health and Sanitation	148,723.00	154,647.00	153,872.00	180,574.00	223,426.00	
Leisure Services	40,006.00	39,339.00	21,882.00	91,926.00	131,089.00*	
Social Services	3,195.00	3,195.00	3,247.00	6,145.00	3,695.00**	
Special Assessments (Education)	1,604,317.00	1,771,150.00	1,638,005.00	1,695,572.00	1,877,657.00	
Unclassified	42,755.00	46,832.00	78,493.00	56,579.00	190,864.00	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>2,559,835.00</b>	<b>2,596,650.00</b>	<b>2,545,068.00</b>	<b>2,804,353.00</b>	<b>3,417,352.00</b>	
<b>TOTAL DIFFERENCE</b>	<b>257,783.00</b>	<b>138,023.00</b>	<b>225,735.00</b>	<b>469,832.00</b>	<b>203,623.00</b>	

*Source: Town of Bingham Annual Reports, Municipal Valuation Statistical Summary, Bingham's Selectmen*

*\*In 2023, this line item changed to Recreation*

*\*\*In 2023, this line item changed to Health and Welfare*



The town's mil rate is a calculated value which means taxpayers pay the mill rate for each thousand dollars of their property's assessed value. For example, for the 2022 tax year, property assessed for \$150,000.00, the assessed taxes were calculated by multiplying \$150,000.00 by the mil rate:  $150,000.00 \times 0.0183 = \$2,745$ .

Education appropriation is Bingham's biggest expense, accounting for between 40 – 50 percent of the budget between 2019 and 2023.

Property taxes are the largest contributor to the town's budget. Those are broken down by categories in Table 5.

**TABLE 5: REAL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY BY TYPE**

Year	Land	Buildings	Total Land and Buildings	Mil Rate	State Valuation	Total Taxable Personal Property	Motor Vehicle Excise Tax	Distribution and Transmission
2018	\$27,952,010	\$101,076,036	\$129,028,046	0.0163	\$68,750,000	N/A	\$169,968	\$9,551,185
2019	\$27,680,620	\$94,824,734	\$122,505,354	0.0163	\$78,700,000	\$1,731,330	\$153,571	\$10,484,970
2020	\$27,725,060	\$88,863,424	\$116,588,484	0.0173	\$81,450,000	\$1,763,860	\$137,345	\$10,484,970
2021	\$28,056,680	\$86,588,938	\$114,645,618	0.0174	\$83,950,000	\$1,547,220	\$184,806	\$11,009,700
2022*	28,494,700	85,508,540	\$114,003,240	0.0183	\$87,350,000	\$1,747,290	\$186,036	\$11,359,140

*Source: Municipal Valuation Statistical Summary (2018-2022)*

*\*Most recent, complete data available*

Between 2018 and 2022, the mil rate has increased by 12 percent, which is not a dramatic increase. Motor vehicle excise tax increased by 9 percent and the state valuation increased by 27 percent.

Excise taxes are generally tied to economic conditions also but in general this revenue source will likely continue to increase slightly each year.

## Accounting Practices

The town has its financial records audited annually. The 2018 - 2021 audits were all performed by Keel J. Hood, Certified Public Accountant. Bingham's annual reports include a detailed audit report and description of all town funds accounting practices. Reports for 2018- 2022 were all favorable in their characterization of the town's approach to financial management, as evidenced in the *Total Difference* row of Table 4 above.

## Grant Income

Grant income is kept out of the regular budget, so it does not appear in the tables displayed in this section. Bingham recently received a grant through the Norther Borders Regional Commission totaling \$897,000 for upgrades to a wastewater pump station.

The town currently maintains separate capital project funds or Special Revenue Funds which often receive transfers and intergovernmental revenue. The town maintains a capital equipment replacement plan and funds that plan each year. More of this is detailed in the Capital Investment Plan chapter of this plan.

### **Tax Increment Finance District**

Another modification to valuation is one tax increment financing (TIF) district for infrastructure improvements, which was \$599,300 in 2023. The TIF money can only be used for preapproved expenses, such as snowplowing and road maintenance.

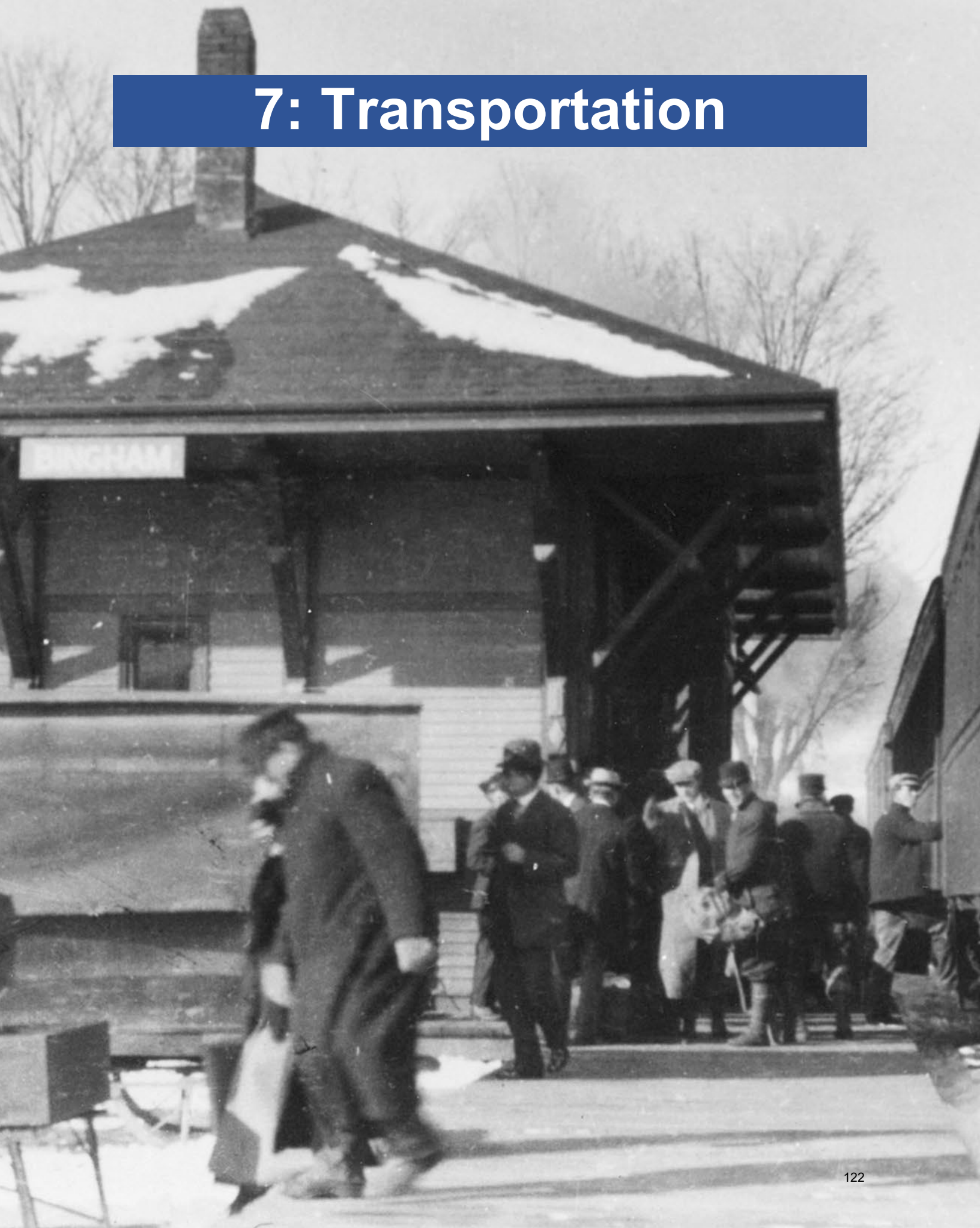
### **Tax Collection Rate**

Due to the town's efforts to manage funds as frugally as possible, the property tax burden is reasonable and affordable to many of Bingham's taxpayers. The collection rate for the current year's taxes has been running in a similar range. Town officials, both elected and appointed, remain vigilant at trying to minimize the tax burden.

### **Summary and Findings**

The Town of Bingham has given obvious consideration to proper budgeting and financial management. This is apparent when analyzing the town's debt to income ratio and the overall debt (Tables 1 and 4). Bingham's minimal overall debt has remained in compliance with the Maine Bond Bank recommended limits and state statute over the last five-year period. Further, the mil rate has not increased significantly between 2019 – 2023. The most obvious indication of a healthy municipal budget and sound financial management is that for the analysis period of 2018 to 2022, Bingham has consistently operated in the black.

## 7: Transportation





This chapter describes the transportation system, identifies deficiencies within the transportation facilities serving Bingham and provides general recommendations for meeting the existing and future needs of those facilities. This chapter also addresses how Bingham can provide the most cost-effective transportation choices, while the Future Land Use Plan and Local Economy chapter address how the town can manage development to make the best use of the system.

As Bingham becomes more complex and interwoven with neighboring communities, the need for a quality transportation system becomes more and more critical. Businesses need transportation to move products and attract customers. Commuters need a way to get to their jobs out of town, and employers need a way to get out of town workers here. Families need transportation to schools, services, shopping, and recreation. And tourists and summer residents need a way to get to Bingham.

### **Maine DOT Road Classification**

Roads in Maine are classified in two ways: Highway Functional Classification and State Highway System. The Highway Functional Classification is a federal classification that describes the functionality and geographical characteristics of the road based on federal guidelines, while the State Highway System identifies which entity (State or local) is responsible for maintenance and capital expenditure of that road.

Functional classification classifies roads by the role they serve in the overall transportation network. The principal classifications are:

**Arterials:** These are the most important travel routes in the state. Arterial roads are designated for their capacity to carry large volumes of traffic efficiently between commercial or service centers. The DOT has restrictive access standards on arterial roads to preserve this mobility function. These highways generally carry a federal route number designation, such as Route 201 which is a principal arterial.

**Collectors:** These are the roads that collect and distribute traffic from areas of lower population density onto arterials and service centers. Collectors are further divided into “major” and “minor,” depending on the proportions of federal, state, and local money available for maintenance and improvements. In Bingham, State Route 16 is classified as Minor Collector.

**Local Roads:** These roads provide direct access to residential neighborhoods, local businesses, agricultural properties and timberland. Traffic volumes typically range from less than 100 to possibly 1,000 vehicles trips per day. Roads not classified as arterials or collectors are considered local roads.

The State Highway System determines maintenance responsibility. The State Highway System is grouped into three categories:

**State Highways:** These roads form a system of connected routes throughout the state that primarily serve intra- and interstate traffic. The State Highway category generally corresponds with the federal 'arterial' classification. The a few exceptions, MaineDOT is responsible for year-round maintenance of state highways. In Bingham, Route 201 falls under the State Highway classification.

**State Aid Highways:** These roads connect local roads to the State Highway System and generally serve intra-county rather than intrastate traffic movement. The State Aid Highway category generally corresponds with the federal 'collector' classification. Except for compact areas, state aid roads are usually maintained by MDOT in the summer and by municipalities in the winter. Route 16 is classified as a State Aid Highway.

**Town Ways:** These roads are all other roads not included in the State Highway or State Aid Highway classifications that are maintained by municipalities or counties. These roads are classified as federal 'local' roads.

Maintenance and improvement projects done by MDOT are programmed into the state budget through a Biennial Transportation Improvement Program (BTIP). This program outlines transportation projects (including non-road projects) that have been funded with a combination of federal and state funds.



## **Bingham's Highway System**

US Route 201: This is the principal corridor through Bingham and is also one of the state's major highway corridors through this part of the state. It traverses about seven miles through Bingham and continues north to the Canadian border. This road carries large volumes of traffic mostly in the form of truck and tourist traffic. Route 201 connects the busier service centers of Madison and Skowhegan to the south. North of Bingham, Route 201 (Rt 201) continues to travel through the state and ends at the Canadian border.

For the most part, Route 201 is a high-speed highway with wide shoulders, except where it convenes with State Route 16 (SR 16) in the middle of Bingham and bisects the town through the village. This stretch of road through the village is known as Main Street and is quite congested. The speed of truck traffic on Main Street is a concern.

North of Bingham Village, Route 201 (Canada Road) received crack sealing in 2017 and ultra-thin bonded wearing course in 2022 to preserve the road's surface. Route 201 south of Bingham Village (Bingham Road) nearly all the way to Skowhegan received ultra-thin bonded wearing course in 2018 and crack sealing in 2017, both to preserve the roadway.

State Route 16: This road, extending approximately half a mile in Bingham, is another primary corridor through Bingham and sees high volumes of traffic, running parallel to Rt 201 on the opposite side of the Kennebec River. Route 16 enters Bingham via Moscow from the north, then follows Rt 201 through the downtown area (Main Street) and exits Bingham across the bridge into Concord Township.

The convergence of SR16 with Route 201 has long been known as a dangerous intersection due to the long steep grade from Moscow, ending at a stop sign at the Route 201 junction.

SR16 north of Bingham (Mayfield Road) received light capital paving for roadway preservation in 2017. South of Bingham, SR 16 (Bridge Street) received light capital paving for road preservation in 2016.

## **Traffic Volumes**

The volume of traffic is a measure of the intensity of road use and the potential for traffic delays, congestion, or unsafe conditions. Economic developers also use traffic volumes to determine potential customer base. Historic traffic count data, measured in Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT), equivalent to vehicles per day, is compiled by MDOT for roads in several locations throughout Bingham.



**TABLE 1: AVERAGE ANNUAL DAILY TRAFFIC COUNT**

Location	2014	2017	2018
GOODRICH RD @ BR# 1017		110	
GOODRICH RD E/O US 201 (MAIN ST)		200	
IR 308 (MAHONEY HILL RD) E/O US 201		60	
IR 308 (MAHONEY HILL) W/O IR 313 @BR#5254		10	
IR 313 1.8MI SE/O IR308(KAMYS LN@BR#1018		20	
MEADOW ST E/O SR 16/US 201 (MAIN ST)	280		
MURRAY ST E/O SR 16/US 201 (MAIN ST)	310	330	
NICHOLS HILL RD W/O US 201 @ BR# 5214			70
OLD CANADA RD SE/O US 201 @ BR# 2845			
OWENS ST E/O SR 16/US 201 (MAIN ST)	460		
PREBLE ST W/O SR 16/US 201 (MAIN ST)		330	
ROLLINS ST E/O SR 16/US 201 (MAIN ST)	110		
SIDNEY ST E/O SR 16/US 201 (MAIN ST)	160		
SR 16 (BRIDGE ST) W/O US 201 (MAIN ST)	1,040	820	
16XSR 16 NE/O AUSTIN DR	1,120		
SR 16 NE/O US 201 (JACKMAN RD)	1,140	1,120	1,000
SR 16/US 201 (MAIN ST) N/O PREBLE ST		4,310	
SR 16/US 201 (MAIN ST) N/O SR 16(BRIDGE)	5,370	4,790	
SR 16/US 201 (MAIN ST) NE/O MEADOW ST	5,150	4,550	
SR 16/US 201 (MAIN ST) S/O BATES	4,860	4,070	
SR 16/US 201 (MAIN ST) S/O PREBLE ST		4,420	
SR 16/US 201 (MAIN ST) SW/O RIVER ST	5,350		
US 201 (MAIN ST) S/O SR 16 (BRIDGE ST)	4,840	4,520	
US 201 (MAIN ST) SE/O GOODRICH RD	4,750	4,380	
US 201 N/O IR 1040 (OAK ST)	3,450		
US 201 N/O OLD CANADA RD @ MOSCOW TL	3,130	2,900	2,680
US 201 S/O IR 308 (MAHONEY HILL RD)	3,840	3,480	
US 201(JACKMAN RD) NW/O SR 16 @ BR# 2027 II	3,570	3,330	3,380

*Source: Maine DOT Traffic Volume annual report, 2019*

**KEY FOR TABLE 1:**

SW/O= southwest on  
SE/O= southeast on  
S/O= south on  
NW/O= northwest on

NE/O= northeast on  
N/O= north on  
W/O= west on  
E/O= east on

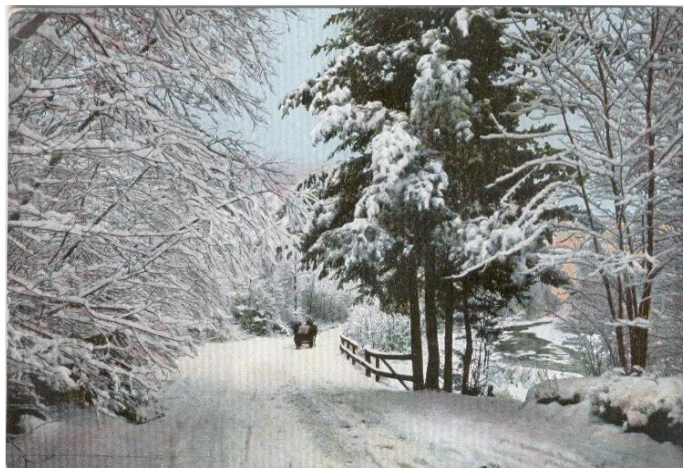
SR= state route  
IR= inventory road  
EB= eastbound  
WB= westbound

Unfortunately, no 2019 annual traffic count data was available for Bingham. As expected, State Route 16 and Rt 201 carry the most traffic based on Table 1. This is not surprising, as they are connecting roads; however, it is surprising to see that the traffic volumes have not increased significantly. In many locations, traffic counts even decreased between 2014 and 2017. Since 2018 is the most recent data available for Bingham, it is not possible to evaluate more recent traffic counts.

Part of the declining traffic counts could be attributed to the stable or stagnant economic conditions from 2015 – 2018, combined with the aging and decreasing local populations. Economic conditions also affect the volume of materials shipped from numerous working forests in Bingham and further north. Tourism plays a part in increased or decreased traffic on Rt 201, as that is the main travel corridor from Canada.

While some of the traffic is a result of commuters, those numbers are likely minimal compared with the amount from tourism and logging. Once updated Average Annual Traffic Count data is available, there will likely be a further decrease in traffic counts between 2020 and 2021 due to the impacts from Covid 19.

Maine DOT has permitting requirements for new driveway entrances onto all state roads, which includes both SR 16 and Rt 201, with extensive review of major development. This increases the cost of development to maintain the mobility of the road. Route 201 has been and continues to be the focus of Bingham's commercial development corridor.



Traffic on Main Street, where SR 16 and Rt 201 run together through Bingham Village, is a concern due to the high volume of truck traffic, speed, congestion in that area, and pedestrians. That part of the street is characterized by many driveways, on-street parking, and pedestrian crossings.

Bingham has a Parking Ordinance, enacted in 1968, that restricts parking in certain areas to prevent unsafe conditions caused by parking on the side of the road in and around the village area. The Parking Ordinance needs to be reviewed and updated to ensure it is viable and meets the purposes for which it was intended. Aside from this ordinance, Bingham does not have any other local access management or traffic permitting measures in place.



Most of Bingham's year-round residential development has been in the village area over the years. The rural area has experienced some development; however, nearly all of it has been for seasonal uses. The transportation system is not stressed by this development for seasonal uses in rural areas. The town should be mindful if year-round residential development increases in the rural areas, as this type of development does not result in efficient use of the road system, requiring a larger percentage of road budget per capita for maintenance and overstressing the back roads which were not designed for heavy use.

## **Traffic Controls**

Despite having a major highway and a busy downtown area, Bingham has not yet been overwhelmed with traffic controls. In fact, Bingham's only traffic control measures are numerous crosswalks in the village area.

Due to the hilly nature of the town's topography, in previous years, there were discussions about a runaway truck ramp on SR 16; however, this never came to fruition, likely due to the cost involved in implementation.

The speed of traffic, especially by trucks, on Main Street is the primary traffic concern in Bingham. The only viable way to address this is better enforcement of speed limits, which requires additional law enforcement in the area. In an attempt to counteract the speed of trucks, the town had MDOT lower the speed limit in the southern part of town for safety purposes. While strict enforcement of speed limits is effective, it is also expensive. Assigning a police officer to work full-time in the downtown would be beneficial; however, one full-time officer may not have enough impact on traffic speeds.

Bingham is committed to using the standard, federally established traffic control practices and devices identified in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), as amended. Further consideration is being given to other forms of traffic control devices and traffic calming measures as speeds and volumes of traffic both increases.

## **Traffic Safety**

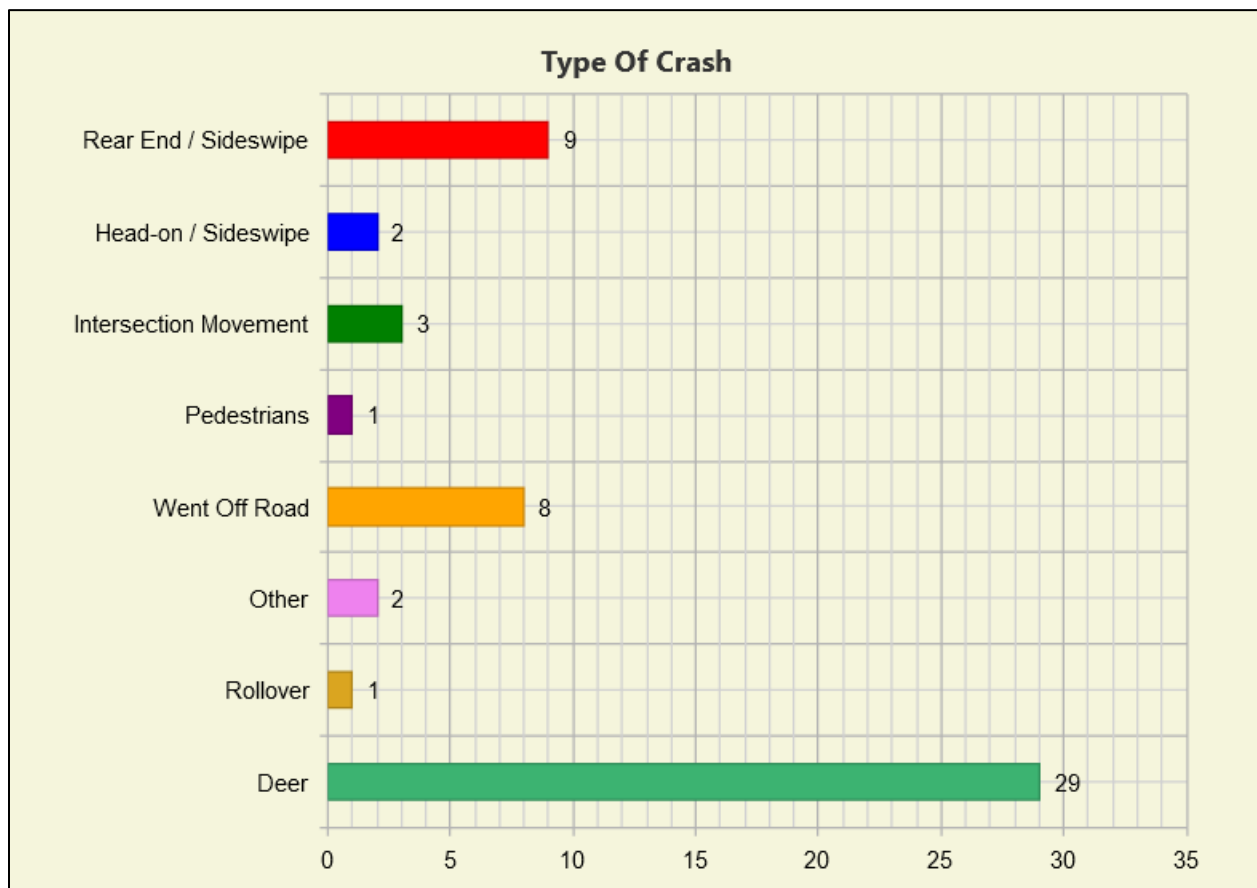
A critical element in management of the transportation system is the safe movement of traffic. Records are kept of vehicle accidents and areas along the highway system are marked as High Crash Locations (HCL). MDOT defines an HCL as a roadway intersection or segment, which experiences eight or more accidents in a 3-year period and has a Critical Rate Factor (CRF) of more than 1.00. CRF is a measure of the actual number of accidents compared to the theoretical accident experience that would normally be expected in that situation.

Meeting both criteria (eight or more crashes in a three-year period and a CRF of more than 1.00) on many rural roads in Bingham would be difficult – because of the lack of traffic, a high CRF may not be statistically valid. Many roads in Bingham do not produce a volume of traffic that meets the criteria for HCLs. But that means there may be some curves or intersections that are dangerous without being identified as an HCL.

According to MDOT's Maine Public Crash Query Tool, between 2020 and 2023, no High Crash Locations were documented in Bingham. Even between 2017 to 2020, there were no HCLs documented in Bingham, most likely because there is not enough traffic volume to meet the criteria.

That does not mean there were not any crashes at all, in fact between 2020 and 2023 there were 55 crashes. According to MDOT, the category of 'crashes' is rather broad and includes all types of crashes. By large, motor vehicle collisions with deer were the most common in Bingham, with 29 incidents in that three-year period. Figure 1 shows the counts for the other types of crashes documented.

**FIGURE 1: CRASH TYPES BETWEEN 2020 AND 2023**



*Source: Maine Department of Transportation, Public Crash Query Tool*

Even though MDOT does not have any High Crash Locations documented in Bingham, which does not mean there are no other potential traffic concerns. As noted in the 2000 Comprehensive Plan, the dual role of Route 201 as Main Street and the principal travel corridor for the region has proven to be problematic. While this situation is not unique to Bingham, it is an issue, nonetheless.

Unavoidably, Main Street in Bingham is one of the most traveled corridors in the town, if not the most traveled corridor. This volume of traffic can be leveraged as an asset to bolster the local economy; however, the speed and sheer volume of traffic isolates the two sides of the street and present safety concerns for crossing.

There are other issues with the downtown area and Main Street in Bingham. One of them is that a high percentage of the traffic on Main Street is tractor trailers, which only furthers the perception that crossing the street is not safe. Another issue is that since most of the buildings along Main Street were built during a time when parking and traffic issues were not a consideration, off-street parking is limited. Most of the available parking is on the wide shoulder of Main Street, which leads to congestion. While Bingham does have a Parking Ordinance, it is outdated and needs review and revision to bring it to today's standards.

Several structural techniques could “calm” traffic in the downtown area, though they are less effective or appropriate in areas outside of the downtown. Shifting the curbing out into the roadway at pedestrian crossings is called a “neckdown” because drivers feel they must slow down to fit through a tighter space, even though the driving lanes are the same width. Pedestrians, meanwhile, feel safer with a shorter distance to cross the road. Stamped pavement (imitation cobblestones) and speed tables (not speed bumps) also ensure drivers slow down at pedestrian crossings. Street trees are another option that can make Main Street feel less like a highway. Although, with the amount of truck traffic, none of these may be viable options.

## **Traffic and Development**

The quality of the transportation system depends not only on its physical condition, but on the usage it receives. Town government is generally responsible for the infrastructure itself but has little control over how it is used. Traffic levels are a function of the location of trip points (“traffic generators”); traffic conflicts (“crashes”) are often the unintended consequence of those locations.

Major traffic generators in Bingham, such as the Main Street area, and the schools, tax the capacity of roads. The impacts are different depending on the area, for example in the downtown area, high traffic locations result in congestion and slow travel whereas on Route 201, local traffic generators produce potential conflict points.

Bingham's major traffic generators include the schools, logging operations, and seasonal visitors. Other traffic generators can include the occasional events held at the former Quimby school and the durational traffic from Blu Roc Corridor employees.

In terms of road use, automobile traffic has a greater impact. Most trips originate in the residence and move to employment centers, schools, or shopping. The impact of transportation on living in rural locations is that residents drive longer distances to get to their destinations, something entirely unavoidable in Bingham. Statistically, this would show up as increased use of roads leading into rural areas and stable or declining use of urban roads. This is not readily apparent in Table 1- Average Annual Daily Traffic Counts, because the data has not been collected consistently.



## **Town Ways**

The Town of Bingham is responsible for maintaining slightly under 20 miles of town ways, the majority of which are paved and in the village area. The function and condition of these roads varies, from downtown side streets to narrow, rural roads. The town maintains a complete inventory of these roads. Significant roads are listed in Table 2, below.

**TABLE 2: BINGHAM'S ROAD SYSTEM**

Road Name	Condition	Priority	Paved/Gravel	Funding Source/Responsible Party
<b>Austin Drive</b>	Poor	L	Paved	
<b>Baker Street</b>	Good	L	Paved	Paved in 2020
<b>Bates Street</b>	Poor	M	Paved	
<b>Bridge Street</b>	Good	L	Paved	DOT- heavy maintenance
<b>Brighton Road</b>	Fair	M	Gravel/dirt	Needs ditching and gravel. Usually graded spring and fall.
<b>Collins Street</b>	Fair	L	Paved	
<b>Dinsmore Street</b>	Fair	L	Paved	
<b>Dutton Road</b>	Good	L	Gravel	Usually graded spring and fall.
<b>Frank Savage Road</b>	Fair	L	Gravel	Usually graded spring and fall.
<b>Goodrich Road</b>	Good	M	Paved	Damage in 2023, paved in 2018
<b>High Street</b>	Excellent	L	Paved	Paved in 2017
<b>James Street</b>	Good	L	Paved	Paved in 2017
<b>Lane Road</b>	Good	L	Paved/Gravel	Paved in 2016
<b>Lander Avenue</b>	Poor	M	Paved/gravel	NRBC Grant 2024
<b>Mahoney Hill Road</b>	fair	H	Paved/gravel	Needs some work. Some parts were done in 2018. Usually graded spring and fall. Work proposed for 2024.
<b>Matheson Street</b>	Fair	L	Paved	
<b>Meadow Street</b>	Good	M	Paved	Paved in 2021. Sidewalk redone in 2022.
<b>Milford Avenue</b>	Excellent	L	Paved	Paved in 2018
<b>Murray Street</b>	Good	M	Paved	
<b>Nichols Hill Road</b>	Fair	L	Paved	
<b>Old Cananda Road*</b>	Good	L	Paved	Bridge needs a patch on concrete
<b>Old Church Street</b>	Poor	L	Paved	
<b>Owens Street</b>	Good	L	Paved	Redone 2016 I believe
<b>Pat Cassidy Road</b>	Fair	L	Gravel	Usually graded spring and fall.
<b>Preble Street</b>	Fair	M	Paved	Need sewer work so will repave after sewer work completed
<b>River Street</b>	Good	L	Paved	Paved around 2019
<b>Rollin Street</b>	Good	L	Paved	TIF eligible?
<b>Route 16 East</b>	Excellent	H	Paved	DOT maintains
<b>Sidney Street</b>	Good	L	Paved	Refurbish sidewalks, not feasible
<b>Tanglewood Drive</b>				
<b>Taylor Avenue</b>	Good	L	Paved	Redone recently
<b>Whitney Street</b>	Fair	L	Paved	
<b>Wing Street</b>	Good	M	Paved/dirt	TIF eligible
<b>Wood Pond Lane</b>	Good	L	Paved	Redone within last 15 years

Source: Bingham Town Office

\* Old Canada Road in this list is the old, Old Canada Road, not Route 201.

**Priority Key for Table 2:**

H= High Priority

M= Medium Priority

L= Low Priority

Bingham allocates \$2,000 (\$1,000 taxation and \$1,000 TIF) a year towards sidewalk maintenance, sweeping, and weed control. The town has a capital fund for future sidewalk projects aside from maintenance. Bingham tracks necessary road maintenance by keeping a road maintenance sheet, updated annually, to track which roads need the most immediate attention. The 2024-2025 budget is made up of contributions from various sources, including:

\$90,000 Tower

\$85,000 TIF

\$20,356 DOT URIP

\$145,000 taxes

These contributions amount to a total of \$340,256 for the 2023-2024 road maintenance budget. This budget covers all summer maintenance, maintenance on back roads, and winter road maintenance. The determination of which road will receive maintenance priority is based on which roads are in the worst condition, as well as available time and money.

The town relies less on policies and standards for the design, construction, and maintenance of public and private roads; instead, roads must meet state standards, or the town will not accept them as public roads. This ensures all roads adopted by the town meet the minimum qualifications.

Since Bingham is a rural town with no specified land use patterns aside from maintaining its rural nature, adopting and utilizing the state's minimum requirements for road standards aligns with the rural character of the town.

Bingham does not promote or restrict dead ends on recently built subdivision roads (either residential or commercial). So few subdivisions have been created in Bingham in recent years that this is not a major concern for the town.

### **Support Infrastructure for the Road System**

To function efficiently, the transportation system needs certain additional elements of infrastructure. These include bridges, culverts, and various traffic controls (signals, directional controls).

Bridges: There are seven significant bridges in Bingham which are the responsibility of the Maine Department of Transportation (DOT), including the posting of bridges.

Culvert maintenance is contracted out, including ditching and culvert inspection. The box culvert bridge on Mahoney Hill Road is also maintained via the contractor.

## **Road Maintenance**

The town is responsible for maintaining all roads except for Routes 16 and 201. Road maintenance is done by a private contractor, on an as needed basis. The contractor is responsible for not just winter maintenance on roads but also removing snow from sidewalks. While winter road maintenance is performed under the specified contract, typically the same contractor also performs summer road maintenance, though without a contract.

Due to the recent increased severity of storms, the town has determined that all the culverts need to be replaced. The culverts throughout town now are 18 inches, but that has proven insufficient to accommodate the stormwater in the last several storms. Bingham is currently working to replace and upsize all existing culverts or install box culverts. Due to the classification and severity of recent storms, Bingham has been working with FEMA on the culvert project.

## **Facilities and Services**

The Town of Bingham does not own a significant amount of road equipment. The town does now have a town garage and salt bin (it did not, in the 2000 Comprehensive Plan). The garage is used by the contractor who provides road maintenance. Other equipment owned by Bingham includes a rock rake, and a 1-ton dump truck.

Bingham has plans to upgrade and expand the town garage to include a break room and the construction of a new sand shed.

## **Other Roads**

Other roads include over 100 privately owned roads throughout town. The most common of these are camp roads. Camp roads generally provide access to waterfront properties, or off-the-grid camps, and do not form a part of the public road network. Other privately owned roads in Bingham include roads inside of approved subdivisions that have not been offered to or accepted by the town. The Town of Bingham has no legal right or obligation to maintain private subdivision roads, including culvert replacement or snowplowing.

## **Transportation Choices**

Even with the overwhelming reliance on motor vehicles, there is still demand for alternative forms of transportation. Some segments of the population (notably youth and some elderly) cannot operate motor vehicles to get around. The increasing costs and environmental impacts of motor vehicles are reasons to consider options for reduced their use, where feasible. While a shift in demand for transportation alternatives is not anticipated in the next 10 years, these alternative options require a significant amount of planning efforts both in funding and time, resulting in the need for consideration well in advance.

Bingham currently does not have any transit services for the community. KVCAP provides a taxi service on demand for those in need, but their availability is limited. The most common way residents who cannot drive get around is by the courtesy and generosity of their neighbors. Luckily, the residents of Bingham still have enough sense of community to provide transportation to elderly neighbors who may need a ride to go shopping or to the doctor's office.

The demand for this type of transportation is anticipated to increase due to the population of older residents and lack of other public transportation options. So far, aside from neighbors providing each other rides, there are no other anticipated ways this demand will be met.

#### Public Transportation:

Bingham does not have a large enough population density to support either rail or public transit services. Public transit, including bus and van services, are not available in Bingham. Bingham is not alone in lacking any viable public transportation options, particularly in the region in which it is located.

A variation on public transit is neighbors offering to provide rides for their neighbors in need, as detailed above.

#### Bicycling:

Bicycle travel in Bingham is mostly limited to on-street routes or cross-country trails. Because Bingham has a downtown area with schools, stores, and other attractions, there is plenty of demand for cycling in-town, but it has not materialized into projects. Preliminary discussions on developing and increasing bike-ability have taken place between Bingham and the Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway, though nothing has come to fruition yet.

The town should consider identifying bicycle-friendly destination points and prioritize them for storage facilities. Any significant new developments near the downtown should be required to provide convenient bicycle and pedestrian access.

Ideally, newly implemented bike routes would connect destinations of particular importance and interest throughout town and the bike corridors would be stand-alone, not just extensions of highway shoulders. Currently, Bingham does not have any stand-alone bike corridors. As bicycle touring is a growing component of tourism, consideration should be given to promoting bicycling throughout Bingham in the future.

Currently, local road design standards do not support bicycle or pedestrian transportation; however, in the last decade the town has taken significant efforts to set aside funding for sidewalk maintenance.



### Sidewalks:

There is an extensive sidewalk system in Bingham Village and throughout the downtown area, which the town has taken great strides in maintaining and improving. Bingham has a capital fund designated for future sidewalk projects and designates approximately \$2,000 a year for sidewalk maintenance alone (\$1,000 through taxes and the Capital Fund, and \$1,000 through the TIF district).

The recently redone sidewalk by the high school extends all the way to the recreation field. Additionally, the sidewalks along Main Street were redone to improve walkability. Overall, the sidewalk system does a sufficient job of connecting points of interest, such as the high school, recreation field, residential neighborhoods along Main Street and all Main Street.

There are, however, parts of the downtown area that are lacking sidewalks. From Goodrich Road south along Rt 201 (Main Street), there are no sidewalks. This part of town includes apartments and Jimmy's Market, the local grocery store, both of which attract foot traffic. Due to the logging trucks traveling along this main corridor, walking on the shoulder of the road is dangerous.

There are also numerous off-roads trails that cross throughout Bingham. These trails are accessible via bike, foot, snowmobiles, and all-terrain vehicles and provide connections to many different points of interest, including neighborhoods, waterfront, schools, and more. Depending on ownership, these trails could be maintained in several ways. Though they are less conspicuous than the network of sidewalks, they are well-known amongst locals.

### Airports:

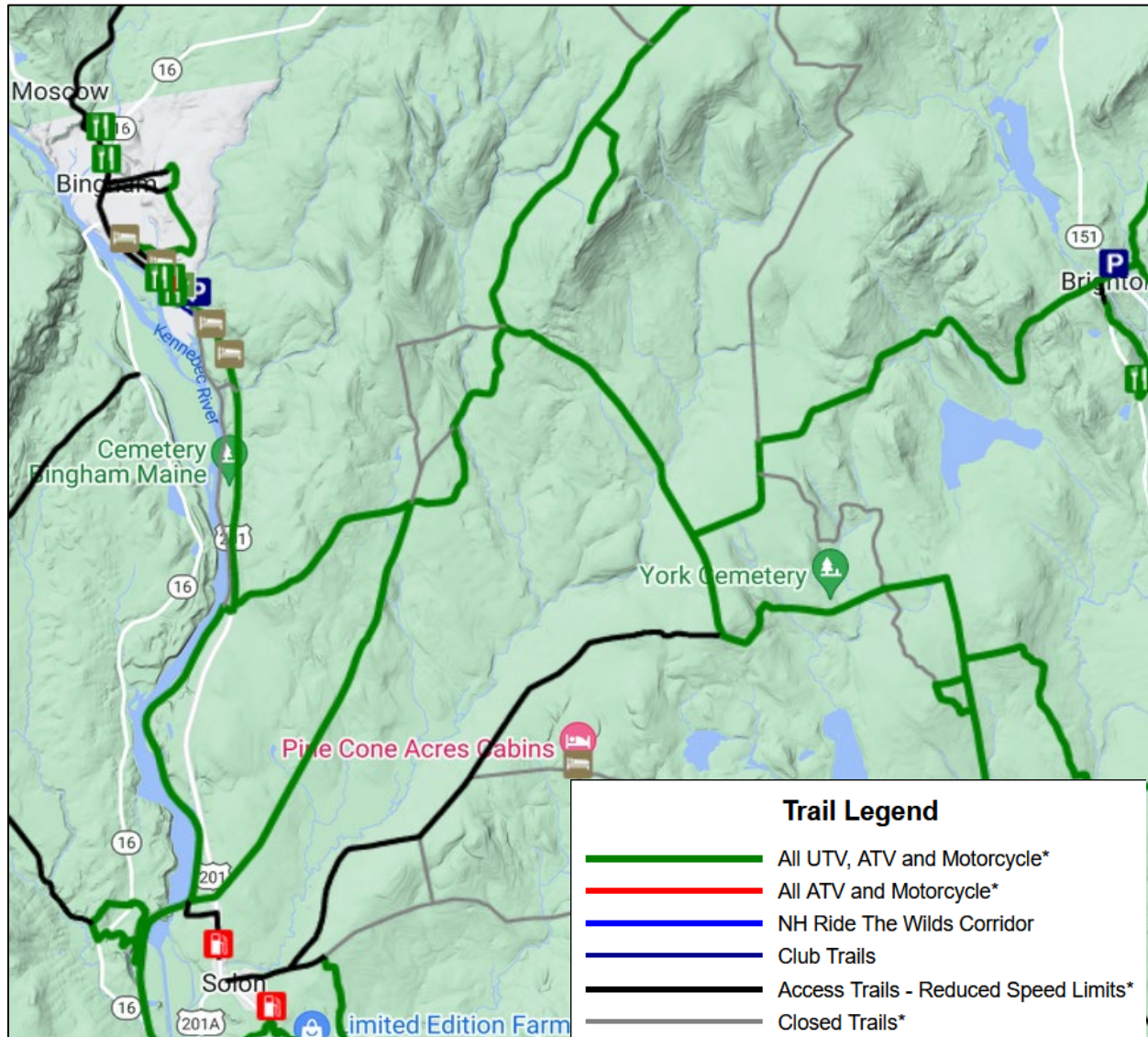
Bingham is the site of the Gadabout Gaddis Airport, located just north of Bingham Village. This is a privately owned and operated airport, and as such, it is not part of the state-sponsored airport network. It is used exclusively for recreational access; although Bingham has a longstanding agreement allowing the town use of the airport, as needed, in perpetuity.

The Town of Bingham has a good relationship with the owners of the airport and all needs of either party are communicated and accepted readily. Since the Gadabout Gaddis Airport is a private airstrip with public use, little coordination on behalf of the town is required. As such, Bingham does not have or need any airspace ordinances or airport zoning.

### All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs):

Bingham hosts a robust seasonal population and attracts a plethora of tourists for the town's abundant outdoor recreational offerings during all four seasons, one of which is the extensive Interconnected Trail System (ITS) for all-terrain vehicles (ATVs). See Figure 2 below. In addition to these formal trails, there are numerous, lesser-known trails through town.

**FIGURE 2: TRAIL MAP OF BINGHAM**



Source: 201 Power Sports

While the town does not want to limit ATV access, concerns have been raised about road safety and lack of signage for sharing roads with ATVs. Signage to regulate ATV speed, direction of travel, flow of traffic, and other standard road safety signs would be beneficial to those traveling by car, truck, and ATV. In other towns where roads are shared with ATVs as frequently as they are in Bingham, signage is much more prevalent.

In addition to the need for more traffic signs for ATVs, there is an increasing need for traffic law enforcement for ATVs. Too often, tourists visiting the area while on vacation to access the trail system take for granted that they are sharing the road with cars and trucks. To prevent any type of catastrophic tragedy, there is a need for increased law enforcement presence to encourage people in cars, trucks, and ATVs to obey signage and traffic laws.

## ***Parking***

While parking is traditionally provided by the entity responsible for generating demand, downtown areas such as Bingham's were built before motor vehicles existed and have little space available for parking.

Parking has historically been inadequate in the village area resulting in on-street parking. The shoulder of Rt 201 is wide enough to accommodate on-street parking, although that was not the original intent or design of the wide shoulders. The 2000 Comprehensive Plan notes that it was estimated that there were approximately 120 parallel parking spaces along Route 201 in the village area and about 210 spaces would be needed to accommodate parking demand if all commercial buildings were occupied.

Bingham has a Parking Ordinance that regulates on-street parking, although the ordinance is out of date and needs an update. In addition to the Parking Ordinance, there is a parking ban along Rt 201 during snowstorms for snow removal purposes. Unfortunately, neither the Parking Ordinance nor the parking ban are adequately enforceable for several reasons. The Parking Ordinance does not include any enforcement action with which to leverage compliance, such as imposing penalties. If this ordinance is updated, clear consequences and repercussions should be included.

The parking ban is ineffective for much the same reasons; although the town has a plan to remediate these issues beginning in 2025. The issue is compounded by the town's inability to find a towing company to tow vehicles that were not removed during snowstorms to accommodate the plow truck because tow truck operators feared doing so would have negative connotations for their business. Ideally, language should be added to the existing Parking Ordinance that would include the parking ban during snowstorms. This language should detail specific enforcement actions such as setting a fine as a penalty for those who do not adhere to the specified parking requirements.

Aside from the Parking Ordinance and parking ban during snowstorms, there are no parking standards which would limit or discourage development in the downtown area.

Parking in the downtown area causes challenges in both the winter and summer for several reasons. Since the parking along Main Street is on-street, the town requires vehicles to be moved off the street for snow removal, but this mandate is often ignored making snow removal difficult or impossible. In the summer months, parking is even more limited due to the number of tourists visiting the area.

To remediate these parking issues, Bingham has made off-street parking available on several side roads and around the municipal office, but few people choose to use this off-street parking as it requires parking then walking to Main Street.

The town has worked to reduce the parking issues in the downtown area as much as possible. More parking has been made available along roads just off Main Street but not many people use these parking areas because they do not want to walk. There is little else the town can do to fix the parking issue.

### **Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway**

The Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway traverses 78 miles of Route 201, starting south of Bingham in the Town of Solon and running to the Canadian border. As such, Bingham is part of the Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway. The Byway offers stunning scenic views, pull offs, informational kiosks, and historic markers.

Designated as a National Scenic Byway in 2000, the Old Canada Road is a prominent tourist attraction and as a town on the Byway, Bingham is perfectly situated to entice visitors traveling the route to shop at local businesses. See Figure 2 below for map of the Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway.



**FIGURE 2: OLD CANADA ROAD NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY MAP**



Bingham collaborates with the Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway on projects such as developing and increasing bike paths and trails through town.

### Summary of Analysis

Bingham's two main travel corridors are Route 201 and State Route 16, both of which are maintained by the state. Both routes are in good condition as they travel through Bingham. Where SR 16 and Rt 201 converge through Bingham Village is called Main Street. In this location, there are issues with congestion, truck traffic, parking, and speeding which are exacerbated by on-street parking.

Traffic speed on Main Street is a concern, predominantly with truck traffic. The town worked with MDOT to lower the speed limit in the southern part of town, but without additional police enforcement, there is little that can be done to reduce traffic speed. Traffic control measures in this area consist of multiple crosswalks. The amount of truck traffic makes other traffic control measures impossible. Bingham should continue to

collaborate with MDOT in exploring ways to slow truck traffic in this area.

Parking has long been an issue in the downtown area and while the town has taken measures to provide off-street parking on roads off Main Street, few people take advantage of them. Bingham has a Parking Ordinance; however, it is out of date and needs to be updated. The town also has a parking ban along Main Street during snowstorms for snow removal; however, few people obey this parking ban. Bingham should consider updating the existing Parking Ordinance to include the parking ban and adopt appropriate enforcement action to gain compliance.

Bingham budgets for road maintenance each year and maintains a running list of town roads, their condition, and upcoming needs. The roads in the worst condition receive priority maintenance, time and money permitting. Road maintenance is contracted on a yearly basis. An outside entity provides all road maintenance, including snow removal on a contract basis, culvert inspection and maintenance, and ditching in the spring and fall.

Sidewalk projects and maintenance have their own budget through a capital improvement fund. Maintenance for the network of sidewalks throughout town is provided under the sidewalk budget. Bingham's sidewalks provide adequate connectivity to multiple points of interest throughout town. There is a need for continued connectivity of sidewalks south of Goodrich Road. Apartments and Jimmy's Market result in foot traffic along Main Street, which can be dangerous due to the traffic volume, speed, and logging trucks.

There are a plethora of off-street trails available throughout town for walking or bicycling. Additional bike paths and trails will be created soon as part of a collaborative effort between Bingham and the Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway.

Bingham's reputation for excellent outdoor recreation, specifically ATV trails, means that roads are often shared between cars, trucks, and ATVs. Better traffic signage and traffic enforcement is needed to reduce the chances of any accidents.





## 8: Recreation





Recreation is an invaluable element of community life, particularly in an evolving town such as Bingham, which offers an abundance of diverse recreational opportunities.

Most forms of recreation can generally be classified into one of two categories: organized, or “active,” recreation —examples include activities usually supported by developed facilities and programs. The other category is unorganized, or “passive,” recreation, which includes activities that may have supporting facilities, but are more often independent or family pursuits; not necessarily activities that have structured programs.

Bingham has a balance of developed recreational infrastructure, such as cooperative recreation providers, as well as unorganized recreational opportunities, including vast expanses of undeveloped open space and water-based recreation.

For either active or passive recreation, Bingham is an ideal geographical location, situated at the point where the Kennebec River emerges from the mountains, providing access to a wide variety of experiences.

### **Organized or “Active” Recreation**

Bingham provides a variety of organized outdoor recreation opportunities predominantly for young people. Some of these offerings are school sponsored, such as team sports, while other offerings are programs through the Bingham Recreation Department.

Bingham’s Recreation Department offers the following public recreation activities: soccer, basketball, softball, baseball, arts and crafts, tennis, family movie nights in the park, and dances. The town already has plans to increase their offerings, such as the Cal Ripken League next spring. These activities utilize the town’s field on Milford Avenue, the gymnasium and field at Moscow Elementary, and the gymnasium at Upper Kennebec Valley Jr/Sr High School.

#### ***Bingham Recreation Department***

A dedicated volunteer Recreation Director runs Bingham’s Recreation Department as well as multiple volunteer coaches. The Rec Department strives to provide an array of recreational opportunities for school-aged children. Multiple sports programs are offered as well as family events. The Department also participates with the town in Bingham’s Community Family Days.

Generally, these programs are for Bingham residents, but children from neighboring towns can also request to be part of any of the programs. For organized recreational pursuits, the town has either its own recreational facilities, cooperates with neighbors to access their facilities, or uses regional recreational facilities.





Quimby Field, which is an open field on Milford Avenue and owned by the town, is used for most Recreation Department programs. This site offers a baseball/softball field, basketball court and tennis court, which the public can use any time before dark. The Recreation Department equipment for those sports is only available during program times, as the equipment is stored in a locked building the Department shares with the town on site. The parking area for this field is along Milford Avenue. Portable Toilets are brought on site but removed during winter months.

Maintenance of the field and courts is primarily the responsibility of the Recreation Director, and a member of the town's select board. The Rec Director is also responsible for improving and introducing new recreation opportunities. The Rec Director was previously supported in pursuing new recreation opportunities and field maintenance by a Conservation and Recreation Commission; however, this commission is no longer in existence.

Sports programs offered through the Recreation Department include fall soccer, winter basketball, spring baseball, softball, and tennis, and summer soccer, basketball, baseball, and softball clinics. These programs are free to participants and are based on volunteer availability. The programs and events offered through the Bingham Recreation Department are all based on community need and participation. Each program is designed around participation level and volunteer coaches; therefore, existing recreation facilities and programs through the Recreation Department are anticipated to meet the projected demand.

The tennis courts and baseball/softball field are both in need of repairs. For example, the baseball/softball fields need new infield dirt and to be leveled, and the tennis courts need to be resurfaced. The town is currently looking into putting in a pickleball court on one half of the existing tennis court while maintaining the existing tennis court on the other half, all with an eye towards maintaining ADA compliance.

The Bingham Recreation Department has a vision of these upgrades in the future. Other long-term plans include a separate, designated building for storage of the Recreation Department equipment, as the Department does not currently have its own space. Other future improvements under consideration include adding a beach volleyball area in the location of the old playground.

### ***Other Organized Youth Recreation***

Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIF&W) offers a camp program called Camp North Woods for youth in the area, too. Camp North Woods is an overnight camp for youth to learn lifelong outdoor skills as well as the importance of sustaining Maine's natural resources. This camp is hosted through a collaborative effort by MDIF&W, Maine Game Wardens, University of Maine 4-H Camp and Learning Center at Bryant Pond.

The Bingham area schools offer Varsity golf, Cross Country, Math Team, and E-Sports for both Varsity and Middle School that include baseball, softball, soccer, and basketball. The Upper Kennebec Valley High School also offers outdoor education programs and classes, like canoeing and Maine Woodsman Certification.

Several of the outfitters that offer guiding services do guide training for new employees and future guides to become certified.

Several other programs are offered in nearby towns. For example, Skowhegan Outdoor, in Skowhegan, has programs to teach kids whitewater kayaking as well as other outdoor activities.

Since these programs are operated by independent entities, there is no way to determine if the recreational facilities are adequate to meet future demand or if there is a need for upgrades. However, the overall recreational offerings provided by these private entities, Bingham area schools, and the Recreation Department seem to fulfill the demand for youth recreation. The need for certain types of youth recreation that is not already offered in or around Bingham has not been expressed.

### ***Adult and Age Friendly Recreation***

As with many towns in central Maine, Bingham has few opportunities for organized adult recreation within the town. Opportunities for passive or unorganized recreational activities are abundant, such as hunting, fishing, and hiking, but generally, adults seeking organized recreational activities must travel out of town.

While the Bingham Recreation Department does not currently offer any adult programs, Quimby Field and the courts are available for public use. The town itself offers events for all ages, such as Bingham's Community Days, which is a week-long during the summer. Additionally, Baker Mountain offers adult skiing.

In addition to these organized recreational opportunities provided directly by the town or in collaboration with nearby towns, other recreational opportunities are also available through private entities.

For example, although not sponsored by the town or the Recreation Department, there is a group of men that do men's ball on Sunday nights at the school's gym.

The Valley Riders Snowmobile Club provides an outlet for winter activities for adults. The Club maintains a trail network in the region, including portions of the ITS national trail system and the Kennebec Multi-use Trail. The club is active in expanding the trail network and set up better winter accommodations. One identified need is a Kennebec River crossing point.

For adults looking for fast-paced adventure, both ATV and Snowmobile clubs host group rides periodically, a few times a season.

Other miscellaneous activities available include a Trapper's Education class held in Bingham for adults who want to learn to trap, offered by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIF&W).

Just outside of Bingham in Pleasant Ridge Plantation, the Pine Grove Lodge and Cabins hosts an annual ice fishing derby yearly on Wyman Lake as well as holding a veterans' hunt, annually.

The closest town that offers adult education classes is Skowhegan. Bingham currently does not partner with any other towns for adult recreational activities, although the Recreation Department does share information about happenings if they are aware of them.

With the increasing age of the general population in Bingham, future consideration should be given to increasing age-friendly offerings for organized recreation, either through the Recreation Department or provided by outside entities. Bingham's existing recreational facilities and programs for passive adult and age friendly recreation are anticipated to meet the projected demands and changes in the community.

A need has been identified for sharing information with new residents about local attributes. For example, Tibbets Pond is known for easy access for both youth and older anglers and for swimming, Lily Pond is easily handicapped accessible and a great place for fishing. There are also abundant hiking and walking trails in and around Bingham. But for newer residents, they are not easy to find.

The town should explore options for making this type of information available to new residents. One option is to put together a map showing these locations in and around town and have copies of paper maps at the town office and make them available on the town's website. This would ensure that Bingham's abundant resources could be enjoyed and appreciated by all.

### **Unorganized or "Passive" Recreation**

Unorganized recreation typically refers to outdoor facilities or properties that are open for public use but generally do not have structured hours or specific programs. This type of recreation ranges from community beaches and parks to solitary pursuits like hunting, fishing, and hiking.

Bingham benefits from its physical location when considering passive recreation. Situated at the point where the Kennebec River emerges from the mountains, the town has access to a broad reach of wilderness experiences. Big-game hunting, back country hiking, fishing, and whitewater rafting are just a few of the attractions in the Bingham area. Restaurants, lodging places, guide services, and rafting companies provide local employment and contribute significantly to the local economy.

Another huge draw for Bingham's outdoor recreation is the massive expanses of undeveloped land, most of which is operated as a working forest, and generally open to the public, although recently this is becoming less common.

Bingham is far from lacking any offerings for outdoor, passive recreation. The only area for potential improvement would be increasing information dissemination. Newer residents are less familiar with the town, and many are not aware of where or how to access Bingham's extraordinary outdoor opportunities, as detailed above.

### ***Water Access and Activities***

The Kennebec River provides many recreational activities, most notably boating, whitewater rafting, and fishing.

The public has access to each of the significant waterbodies in Bingham. For example, there are multiple boat landings available for Wyman Lake, Austin Stream, as well as the Kennebec River. These boat landings are all handicapped accessible. The town partners with Brookfield Renewable in maintaining a boat landing on the Kennebec River off Lander Avenue, past the old mill. There are multiple points of walk-in access to Austin Stream in Bingham.



There is also a public boat launch and swimming area on Wyman Lake, although it is in Pleasant Ridge, and another public boat launch in Moscow on Wyman Lake.

### ***Fishing***

Bordered to the west by the Kennebec River, Bingham is ideally located for exceptional fishing opportunities. The Kennebec River has long been known for its above average fishing. The cold water flowing from Wyman Dam makes this location on the Kennebec River world renowned for fly fishing. In addition, the part of the Kennebec River that travels through Bingham also provides a wonderful scenic attraction with picturesque views of historical importance.



Other popular places to fish besides the Kennebec River include Wyman Lake, Austin Stream, Lily Pond, and Tibbets Pond.

Wyman Lake, north of Bingham, has multiple access points for the public including the boat launch and swimming area in Pleasant Ridge Plantation and the boat launch off Rt 201 in Moscow. Austin Stream is another popular stream within walking distance from the center of town that is a favorite fishing spot with public access. The Kennebec River has a boat launch off Lander Avenue, where the public can fish from the shore. Another access point for the Kennebec River is off Rt 201 near Goodrich Road. There is a break in the guardrail for walking to the river for fishing.

### ***Land-Based Activities***

Land-based recreation consists of activities such as hunting, hiking, birdwatching, snowmobiling, ATVing, cross-country skiing, cycling, and many more. These activities take place throughout town, but many depend in large part upon public access to the tracts of undeveloped land. In Bingham, the most common type of land access is landowner agreements, which permit public use of private land, such as with snowmobile trails. Continued access to these opportunities is contingent upon the continuing goodwill of landowners, of which most in Bingham are the owners of the large tracts of commercial forest properties.

### ***Trail System***

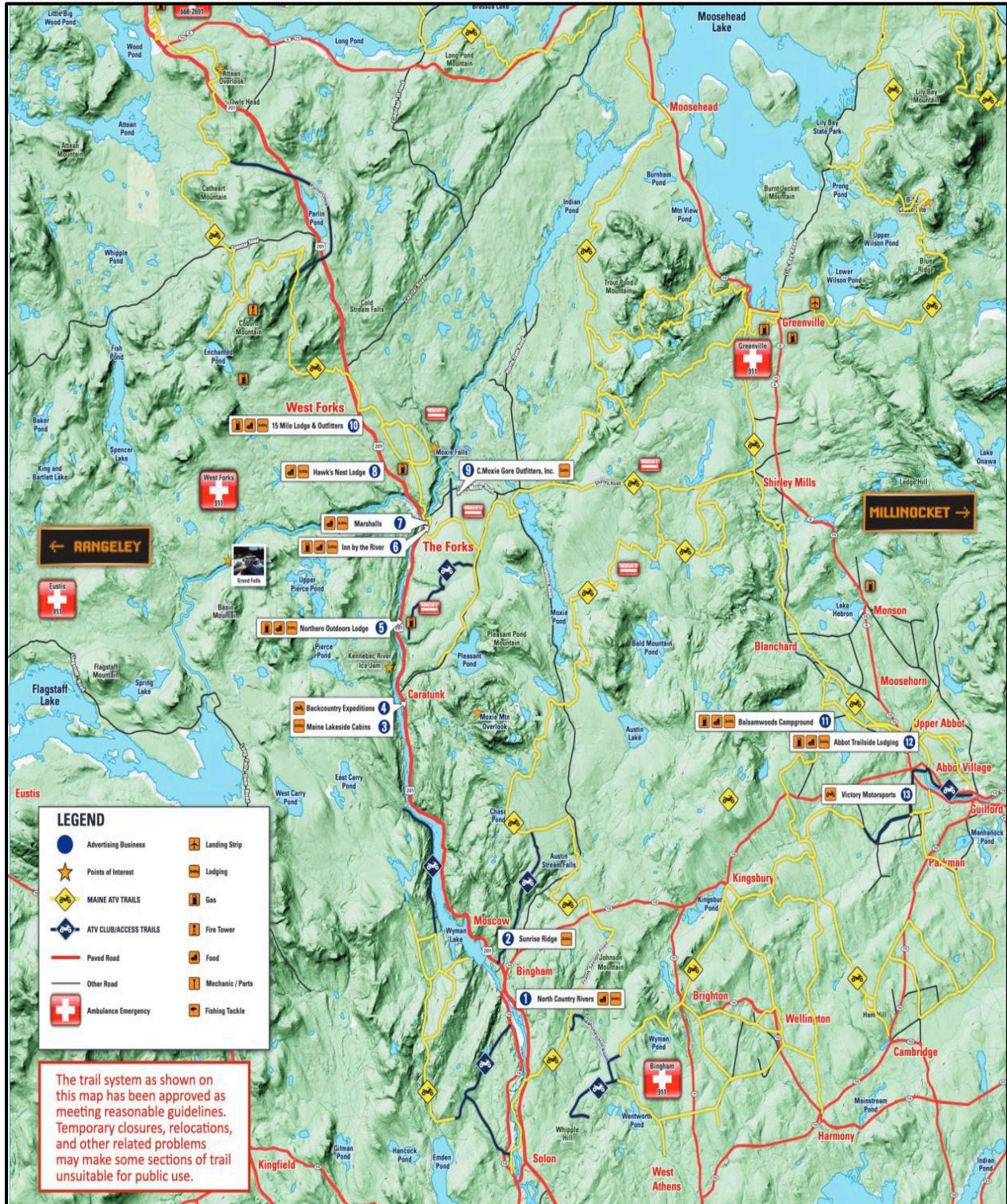
Walking, hiking, and biking are likely the simplest versions of passive recreation. Bingham's trail system includes formal walking trails such as the Multi-Use Trail, as well as numerous hiking trails in more remote parts of town. In short, Bingham has a robust trail system consisting of many types of trails.

The local snowmobile club known as the Valley Riders SC maintains roughly 100 miles of trails connecting Greenville, The Forks, West Forks, Jackman, Kingsbury, Embden, Solon, and beyond (Figure 2). Many of the hiking/walking trails double as snowmobile trails in the winter.

Moose Alley Riders is an ATV club in Bingham. Figure 1 below shows the elaborate ATV trail system accessible from Bingham. 201 Powersports has an interactive trail map available through their website as well (<https://www.gpstrailmasters.com/content/goomap/atv-map.html>). Both the snowmobile trails and ATV trails are accessible through the goodwill of private landowners. Without landowner agreement, these trails would generally not be accessible.



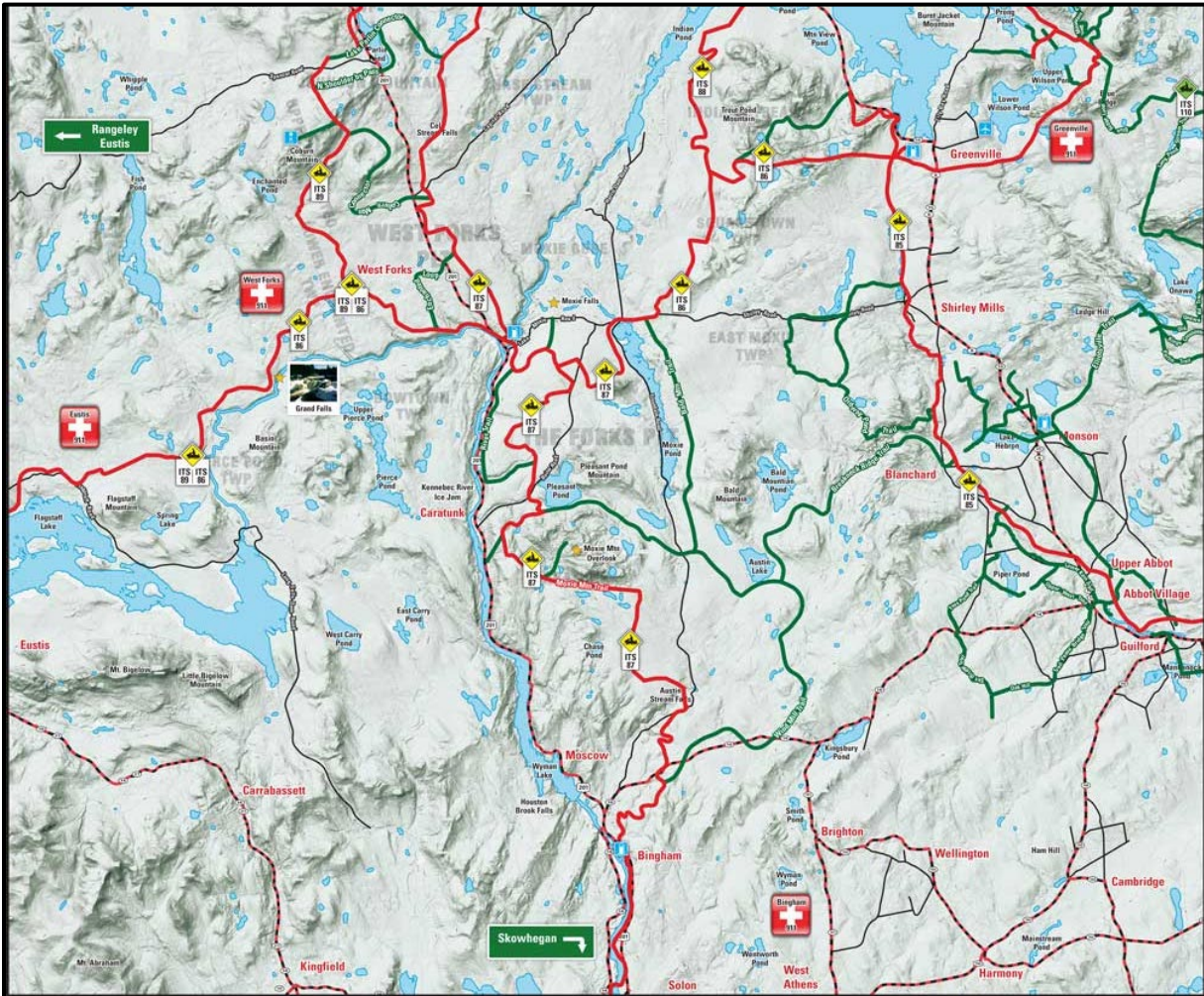
**FIGURE 1: ATV TRAILS IN AND AROUND BINGHAM**



Source: 201 Powersports



**FIGURE 2: SNOWMOBILE TRAILS ACCESSIBLE FROM BINGHAM**



Source: 201 Powersports

The trail system in and around Bingham is adequately maintained by the snowmobile and ATV clubs. There are no conflicts of use between snowmobiles, ATV, people on foot, or other regular uses of the trails.

Aside from the snowmobile/ATV clubs there are no formal organizations or conservation organizations that provide trail maintenance in Bingham.

## ***Public Use of Private Land***

A sizable portion of outdoor recreation throughout Maine occurs on private land with the generous permission of private landowners. Maine has a strong tradition of allowing access to private land for recreational purposes, as well as traditional beliefs of how individuals should respect private land. Unfortunately, in some circumstances people have abused this tradition and caused property damage.

Landowners often feel that they must post their land to prevent being taken advantage of. This results in many areas that are now off limits to the public. Another cause for land posting is residential development in rural areas. As new people move in and buy land in rural areas, they tend to be more likely to put up posted signs.

But Bingham is unique in that most of the large tracts of land that make up the town are working forests. Unfortunately, there has been an increasing trend of timber companies posting their private land to prevent public access. Posting can include signage, purple paint on trees, or gating logging roads.

There has been an upswing in vandalism, theft, destruction of property, destroying logging roads, dumping trash, concerns about squatters, breaking into camps, and other forms of general disrespect, which has resulted in the restriction of access to private property.

A conservative estimate on the amount of property that has been restricted is 40% in the last few decades. Just 20 years ago, gated roads, no hunting signs, and restricting property in any other way was unheard of in Bingham.

## **Hunting**

The posting of private land is a trend statewide, particularly in towns that are more built up, with large parcels that have been subdivided. The posting of property in Bingham is not related to large subdivisions, though, as detailed above. Large timber companies and private landowners own the commercial forest that covers much of the town. And, while the owners of these vast forests appreciate the role their properties play in drawing tourists to the area and how crucial tourism is to Bingham's economy, they have been forced to restrict access in some areas.

The availability of land to hunt and the abundance of hunting opportunities is a contributing factor in Bingham's tourist industry. Bingham and the surrounding areas are ideally situated for a variety of hunting pursuits. In addition, visitors hunting in nearby towns often go to Bingham to stock up on supplies since it is the closest service area.

For many Bingham residents, hunting is a way of life. They grew up hunting certain parcels that allowed public access. These secret hunting spots are often handed down through generations. The impact of restricting public access on private property affects more than just the tourism industry.



There is no statistical data available on the percentage of land in Bingham that is open to the public for hunting, making it difficult to track or quantify the amount of land that has been restricted. However, it is undeniable that disallowing public access to private properties is increasing.

### ***Regional Recreation Resources***

Residents have access to many public and private recreational facilities in the immediate area. Recreational opportunities include:

- Baker Mountain Ski Area
- Numerous outfitters for whitewater, hunting, and fishing
- Lodging
- ATV/Snowmobile rentals
- Guide services
- Skowhegan Outdoors
- Pine Grove Lodge and Cabins
- North Country Flying Service

### **Community Partners**

While the Bingham Recreation Department is the primary provider of recreational opportunities within Bingham, there are also a few others.

The Bingham Improvement Trust Fund has assisted local recreation and civic improvement ventures financially for many years. The Trust pays for projects using the interest received from donation investments made over the years.

The towns of Bingham and Moscow jointly operate Baker Mountain Ski Area, with additional contributions from Athens, Caratunk, The Forks, West Forks, Pleasant Ridge, Solon, and Embden. Baker Mountain Ski Area offers a locale for family-oriented wintersport and is continually improving. The town contributes about \$7,000 a year to the maintenance and operation of these facilities. Baker Mountain Ski Area is a 501(c)3 non-profit group made up of members from the area.

Other less obvious partners include Bridgewater Renewable and Weyerhaeuser Company. Bridgewater owns the dams along the Kennebec River and owns a certain amount of the riverbanks, as well. Many of these areas are open for public use. This company partners with towns along the Kennebec River and the Old Cananda Road National Scenic Byway on various projects. Additionally, the release of some dams along the Kennebec River contribute significantly to the whitewater rafting guide services.

Weyerhaeuser is the largest landowner in Bingham. While restricting public access is becoming increasingly common as detailed above, Weyerhaeuser has historically been generous with allowing public access to their private property for recreational pursuits.

## **Conserved Lands**

Although Bingham is popular with outdoor enthusiasts for its vast expanses of undeveloped, unfragmented blocks of land, these large parcels are almost entirely privately owned and not protected by easements or conserved in any formal way. In fact, the only formally conserved piece of property in Bingham is where Austin Stream empties into the Kennebec River, in the northwest part of town. This 35-acre parcel is conserved via an easement held by Maine Bureau of Parks and Land, acquired in 2001 for the purpose of protecting the area around Wyman Dam. This parcel's status is permanently secured for multiple uses and in natural cover. The part of this parcel that extends into Bingham is only a small fraction of the 35 acres that extends into Moscow alongside the Kennebec River.

Even though the large parcels throughout Bingham are not officially protected, most are privately owned by large timber companies or privately owned forestry operations. For this reason, these properties are provided with an unofficial level of protection from development or subdivision, unless they are sold in part or entirely. Restrictions to this type of land are becoming more frequent, though.

The largest timber company in Bingham, Weyerhaeuser, owns 13,569 acres of land. This holding accounts for 60 percent of the land area of the town. Essentially, even though Bingham does not have significant land protected through formal arrangements, the town is in a mutually beneficial situation with those who own these large tracts of undeveloped land.

Bingham does not currently have an open space fund for the acquisition of property. At present, there does not appear to be a need for such a fund.

## **Community Partners in Preserving Land**

The Town of Bingham's efforts to preserve and conserve land, provide recreational opportunities, and continue to offer desired recreation are an effort that spans multiple entities. Interested parties include:

- Weyerhaeuser
- Bridgewater Renewable
- Valley Riders SC
- Moose Alley Riders
- Numerous guide services
- Lodges and Camps
- Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway

## **Analysis and Key Issues**

Bingham currently has excellent options, both for organized and unorganized recreational opportunities for area youth and active adults. For organized recreation, the existing facilities and Recreation Department can continue to provide desired recreational

opportunities. For the unorganized recreational opportunities, Bingham's proximity to the Kennebec River, abundant trails, and undeveloped land will also continue to provide recreational destinations. In these areas, it is only a matter of anticipating demand and coordinating activities.

As Bingham evolves and develops, consideration must be given to desired recreational opportunities compared with existing recreational offerings. Currently, Bingham has done an exceptional job of providing plentiful recreational opportunities for youth and more active adults. As the town's demographics are trending toward an older population, the town should consider adding age-friendly organized recreational offerings to meet future demand.

An aging population means more demand for different types of recreation. Some active seniors will prefer outdoor activities, such as boating, cycling, and hiking, of which Bingham has plenty of opportunities. However, there may be an increasing demand for less active recreational opportunities, such as senior center types of programs, as well.

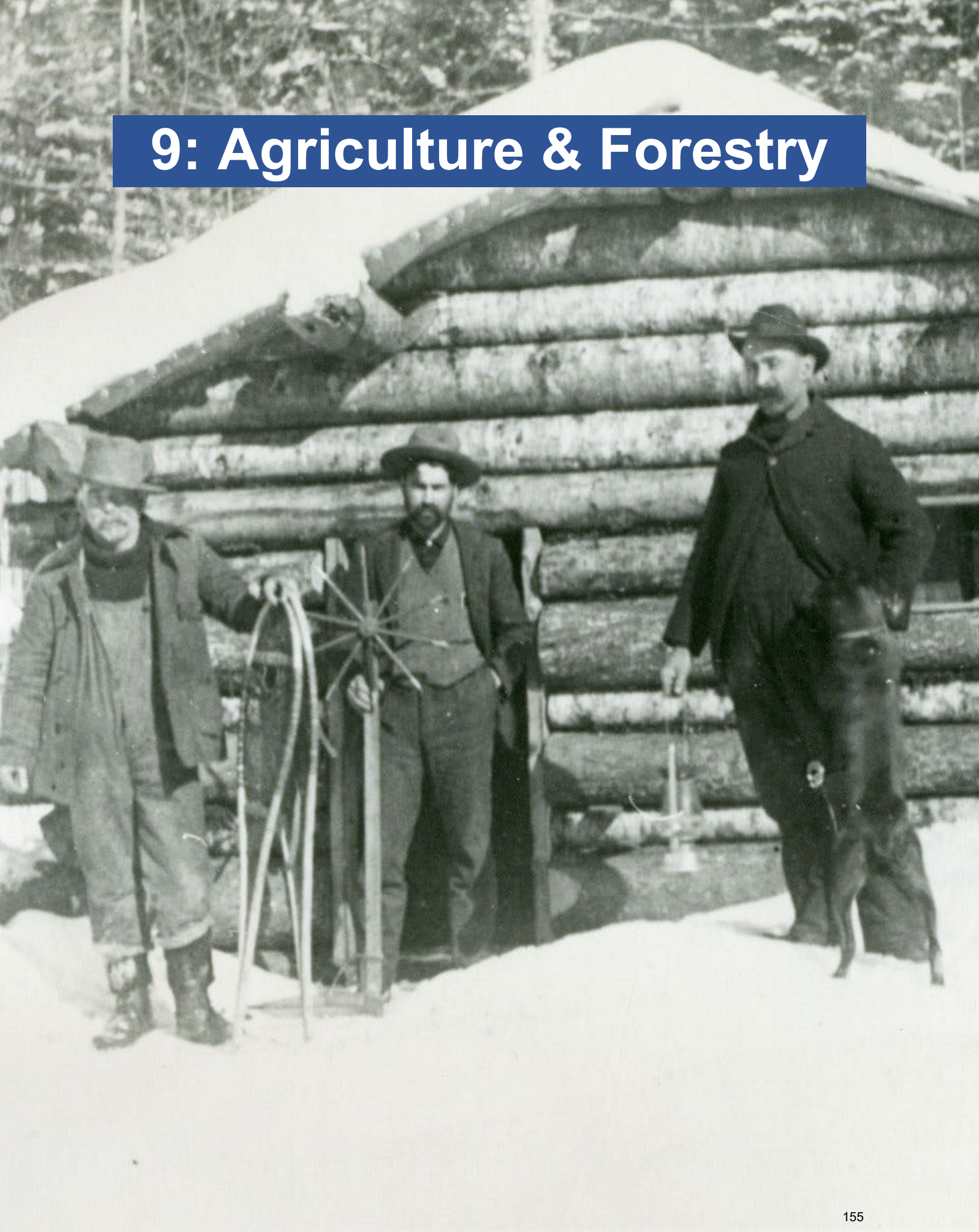
Recreational offerings for all ages must be balanced with the need driven by the influx of new, younger residents and youth. Recently Bingham has seen an increase in new, younger residents. To continue to attract new residents, thought should be given to what recreational opportunities are already available and what is desired.

For new residents who are less familiar with Bingham and the surrounding area, the town could create an information source such as a map or page on the town's website with local recreational information such as locations for fishing, hiking, and swimming. If posted on the town's website, local happenings, outdoor recreational outfitting services, and restaurants could be included.

Along with new, younger residents comes children. Consideration must be given to the adequacy of youth programs, through both the schools and the Recreation Department. The Bingham Recreation Department has noticed that the current programs are continuing to grow and there is a need to plan more programs geared toward outdoor recreation, rather than just sports.

To continue to meet the demand for organized youth recreation, upgrades to the ball fields and equipment storage building are necessary. The Recreation Director is aware of deficiencies and necessary improvement to the facilities as well as to program offerings. Steps are already in progress towards these improvements. However, as the programs offered by the Recreation Department increase, so will the workload for the entirely volunteer Recreation Department. The town should consider hiring a staff person to oversee some of the operations of the Recreation Department in addition to the volunteer staff.

## 9: Agriculture & Forestry





## Introduction

In Maine, agriculture and forestry were the traditional economic backbones and the original engines that drove the local economy, and in many ways, they still do. Farm Credit East's Northeast Economic Engine report, completed in 2020, calculated that Maine's agriculture industry contributes over \$3.6 billion in economic impact and supports approximately 27,000 jobs statewide. Even today, particularly in Bingham, dozens of families rely on forestry related industries for employment or on revenues from their woodlots. Farm and forest land also provides open space, wildlife habitat, and aesthetics, all which Bingham residents consider elemental to their community's rural character and critical to outdoor recreation.

This chapter profiles the current state of farming and forestry in Bingham, as well as the resources for supporting these activities.



*Quimby Mill circa 1960s*

## Agriculture in Maine

Maine has ranked number one in the United States for wild blueberry production since the 1950s. As of 2020, Maine ranked 3rd in the production of maple syrup and 9th in potato production.

**TABLE 1: MAJOR LAND USES IN MAINE**

Census of Agriculture	2007	2012	2017
Farms (number)	8,136	8,173	7,600
Approximate total land area (acres)	19,745,809	19,739,717	19,740,213
Farmland (acres)	1,347,566	1,454,104	1,307,613
Farmland in total land area (percent)	6.8	7.4	6.6
Cropland (acres)	529,253	477,343	472,508
Cropland in farmland (percent)	39.3	32.8	36.1
Cropland used as pasture (percent)	7.0	2.1	2.4
Cropland irrigated (percent)	3.9	6.5	6.7
Harvested cropland (percent)	74.4	84.0	76.3
Woodland (acres)	660,679	773,652	685,529
Woodland in farmland (percent)	49.0	53.2	52.4
Woodland in pasture (percent)	4.0	3.5	3.1
Permanent pasture and rangeland (acres)	62,014	81,707	62,369
Pastureland in farmland (percent)	4.6	5.6	4.8
Land in house lots, ponds, roads, wasteland, etc. (acres)	95,620	121,402	87,207
Land in house lots, ponds, roads, wasteland, etc. in farmland (percent of total farms)	7.1	8.3	6.7

*Source: USDA, Economic Research Service, 2023*

The USDA breaks down the major land uses for Maine's farmland based on the type of commodity produced (Table 1). Even though agriculture is not the thriving industry it once was in Maine, from Table 1, it is evident that Maine is still very much a farming state. While the number of farms has decreased since 2007, the approximate total acreage changed little in the decade between 2007 and 2017.

The data in Table 1 shows that the type of farms have changed. Most notably, the acreage used for cropland decreased by 11 percent, cropland used as pasture decreased by 66 percent, and irrigated cropland increased by 72 percent.

## Agriculture in Somerset County:

The USDA conducts a county-by-county census of farms every five years. The data from the 2017 Census of Agriculture (most recent survey data available) shows that out of the 16 counties in Maine, Somerset County ranked second out of the top five for agricultural production.

**FIGURE 1: SOMERSET COUNTY'S STANDING IN AGRICULTURAL SALES**

Top 5 counties in agricultural sales, 2017		Total receipts percent of State	Total receipts 1,000 dollars
Total receipts			
1. Aroostook County		30.3	201,974
2. Somerset County		12.6	83,931
3. Washington County		10.4	69,253
4. Penobscot County		7.6	50,915
5. Kennebec County		7.3	49,007
State Total			666,962

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service, 2023

## Farms in Bingham

Out of necessity, many of Bingham's first citizens in the early 1800s were farmers, due to the need to be self-sufficient and produce their own food. Bingham's topography, soil, distance to market and low population have historically made farming especially challenging. Many of the early farms were on poor, rocky soil and were quickly abandoned during westward expansion or in favor of working in the mills. Farming was never a dominant industry in Bingham. In fact, there are still minimal large farms today. Table 2 shows farms in Bingham, although this may not be a complete list.

**TABLE 2: LOCAL FARMS IN BINGHAM**

Farm Name	Product/Specialty
Cooke Aquaculture, LLC Fish Hatchery	Salmon
2 Brook Farm LLC	Cheviot Sheep, fibers, meats

Source: Bingham Planning Board

In recent years, Bingham has seen an increase in small-scale farms, producing niche items as well as family homesteaders raising a variety of food for their families. When these types of farms have extra or leftover products, they often generously donate to the food cupboard for those who are in need.

Bingham currently does not have a farmers' market, community garden, or any Community Supported Agricultural program; though surrounding towns have farmers' markets. Bingham does, however, has vendors who come from other towns, such as Winslow and Concord, to sell their produce and other goods. The town should consider evaluating if there is a need and desire for a farmers' market. As a regional hub and service center, there is the potential that vendors from more rural towns, as well as producers in Bingham would appreciate the opportunity to sell or buy goods locally. It would also provide an opportunity for residents to meet the people who dedicate the time to producing these items.

Since the farmsteads in Bingham are small-scale and often family owned and operated, they are not under any immediately identifiable threat. In fact, the number of small-scale family farms is increasing not only in the rural areas of town, but also in the village area. With the influx of new residents (detailed in the Community Profile chapter of this Plan), there is a noticeable trend towards family homesteads. This includes not just large gardens and crops, but also small-scale animal production, aimed at producing enough to feed a family.

Cooke Aquaculture LLC is perhaps Bingham's most well-known commercial farm, though it is not a traditional farm. This aquaculture commercial farm raises pen-raised Atlantic salmon for commercial distribution.

### **Farmland and Open Space Tax Law Program**

The state offers multiple tax programs aimed at improving and protecting agriculture and forestry operations. There are three current-use tax programs that relate to forestry or agriculture in Bingham: Farmland Tax Law, Open Space Tax Law, and Tree Growth Tax Law (Tree Growth will be addressed later in this chapter). The Maine Legislature declared in the Farm and Open Space Tax Law (Title 36, MRSA, 1101 et. seq.), that "it is in the public interest to encourage the preservation of farmland and open space land in order to maintain a readily available source of food and farm products close to the metropolitan areas of the state." These programs are detailed below.

- **Farmland Tax Law:** This tax law was adopted to encourage the preservation of farmland and open space land and to protect these lands from competition from higher-valued uses. The farmland program provides for the valuation of farmland based on its current use as farmland, rather than based on its fair market value for other potential uses. This reduced land valuation results in lower property tax bills for the owner. Lower taxes are intended to incentivize the preservation of Maine's farming communities. In addition to reducing the farmland owner's tax burden, the municipality avoids costs associated with development and state subsidies are positively impacted.



- **Open Space Tax Law:** This law provides for the valuation of land based on its current use as open space, rather than its highest and best use. To qualify for open space classification, land must be preserved or restricted for uses providing a public benefit. This classification encourages landowners of open, undeveloped land to prevent or restrict its use from development by conserving scenic resources, enhancing public recreation, promoting game management, or preserving wildlife, and/or wildlife habitat. This is mutually beneficial, as the landowner's proportionate tax burden is reduced, the municipality avoids costs associated with development, and state subsidies are positively impacted.

**TABLE 4: PARCELS OF LAND IN BINGHAM ENROLLED IN THE FARMLAND TAX LAW**

	2010	2022
<b>Number of Parcels</b>	0	0
<b>Acres First Classified</b>	0	0
<b>Farmland Acres</b>	0	0
<b>Farmland Valuation</b>	\$0	\$0
<b>Woodland Acres</b>	0	0
<b>Woodland Valuation</b>	\$0	\$0

*Source: Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary*

**TABLE 5: PARCELS OF LAND IN BINGHAM ENROLLED IN THE OPEN SPACE TAX LAW**

	2010	2022
<b>Number of Parcels</b>	0	0
<b>Acres First Classified</b>	0	0
<b>Total Acres</b>	0	40
<b>Total Valuation</b>	\$0	\$25,560

*Source: Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary*

The lack of enrolled parcels in both the Farmland and Open Space Tax Law Programs underscores the difficulties of large-scale farming in Bingham due to geographical and environmental factors. No parcels were enrolled in the Farmland Tax Law Program, in both 2010 and 2022, while only 40 acres were enrolled in the Open Space Tax Law Program in 2022. No acreage was enrolled in the Open Space Tax Law Program in 2010.

### **Challenges and Threats to Farmland and Farms**

Aside from the Cooke Aquaculture LLC, there are no traditional commercial agricultural farms in town; however, there are a few smaller parcels used for pastureland or hay and small homestead farms have established throughout town. Forestry, however, continues to play a significant role in Bingham's economy. Bingham's forest industry is detailed below.

One of the biggest threats to farms and farmland is the development of solar farms on farm fields. Other threats include the conversion of use from agricultural land to commercial or residential land uses. This is a tradeoff, as residential development contributes to the town's housing stock and commercial development contributes to the town's tax base. To ensure Bingham's rural character is maintained, a balance must be struck between the development of land that was previously used for hay production or tree growth and retaining those agricultural and forestry land uses.

## **Importance of Forestry in Maine**

Maine has the largest contiguous block of undeveloped forestland east of the Mississippi River. Forestry has been a dominant industry in Maine for the last 200 years; however, 90 percent of the state, nearly 12 million acres, remains forested, the highest percentage in the country, counterintuitive to the harvesting operations.

Additionally, even though Maine has undergone years of timber harvesting, the state has managed to largely maintain its forest biodiversity with 39 commercial tree species. Even though timber harvesting has been occurring in Maine for over 200 years, the state has more forest cover today than it did 100 years ago. This is, in part, because much of the southern and central parts of Maine was cleared for farming during the 1700s and 1800s. And as is the case with Bingham, agriculture operations declined in the 1800s and the cleared land reverted to forest.

Of the 12 million acres of forestland throughout the state, about 95 percent is privately owned, 33 percent is owned by family forestland owners, 61 percent is owned by private companies, and the federal government owns a scant one percent.

Even though global economic changes have hurt Maine's forest industry, forest products are still an essential part of the state's economy. Maine has approximately 200 forestry products businesses, employing around 24,000 people. The forestry products industry directly contributes about \$1.8 billion to Maine's economy each year. Maine is the second largest paper producing state in the United States, behind Wisconsin.

Maine's second largest industry is outdoor recreation. The state's abundant outdoor recreational opportunities are a significant tourist attraction, contributing to the state's local economy. Fishing, hunting, hiking, whitewater rafting, kayaking, skiing, snowmobiling, mountain biking, moose watching, and fall foliage touring, to name only a few, draw tens of thousands of people to Maine's forests each year. It is estimated that Maine's outdoor recreation revenues contribute approximately \$1 billion to the state's economy each year.

## Forestry in Bingham

Forestry is by far the largest resource-related industry in Bingham. Timber harvesting and related activities are under the purview of the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF), which includes Maine Forest Service as well as the Department of Conservation. Timber company giant, Weyerhaeuser, owns approximately 13,569 acres of the total 22,342 acres which make up the town of Bingham. Weyerhaeuser's holding is around 60 percent of the town's total acreage. The remaining land area is largely forested and owned by individuals or small businesses.

This industrial forestland supplies much of Bingham's tax base, and a large portion of the employment for residents. There are also private residents who own large tracts of forestland but do not harvest the timber. In fact, the 2022 Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary shows 13,287 acres enrolled in the Tree Growth Tax Law. There are also several private landowners who do not participate in the Tree Growth Tax Law Program, and thus, are not counted here.

Woods operations such as timber and pulp wood support landowners like Weyerhaeuser, while the forested land supports hunting, hiking, mountain biking, fishing, and the other outdoor recreational activities for which Bingham is known. The abundant forests are an aesthetic draw for tourists, seasonal homeowners, and those in the outdoor recreation industry in Bingham.

From an environmental perspective, forested areas collect and hold water in the landscape during precipitation events, which reduces the volume and rate of runoff, leading to reduced soil erosion and phosphorous loading in waterbodies. Forested areas have a multitude of environmental benefits, such as purifying the air, providing habitat and travel corridors for wildlife, and providing outdoor recreational areas, to name a few.

Bingham's tree coverage, depicted in the *Land Cover Map* and the *Agriculture and Forestry Map* in the Appendix, shows a significant forested area across the town. Wooded areas are divided into coniferous softwoods, deciduous hardwoods, and mixed forests of both conifers and deciduous trees. Wooded areas may also include tree plantations, managed and unmanaged forests, and some developed areas where a closed canopy obscures the view of urbanization and is indicative of lower density development.

In addition to Weyerhaeuser's holdings of large parcels of commercial forest and other forested parcels throughout town, the Town of Bingham owns several woodlots of varying sizes.

**TABLE 6: SUMMARY OF TIMBER HARVEST INFORMATION**

YEAR	Selection harvest, acres	Shelterwood harvest, acres	Clearcut harvest, acres	Total Harvest, acres	Change of land use, acres	Number of active Notifications
1991	132	0	243	375	0	4
1992	316	0	137	453	0	8
1993	485	25	257	767	0	9
1994	484	110	485	1079	0	9
1995	407	0	165	572	7	7
1996	264	203	308	775	0	9
1997	514	125	86	725	10	12
1998	1357	390	173	1920	0	15
1999	574	68	446	1088	0	20
2000	761	319	285	1365	0	23
2001	508	352	90	950	0	13
2002	498	469	13.76	980.76	0	15
2003	806	507	96	1409	0	13
2004	347	807	338.2	1492.2	31	13
2005	62	511	286.3	859.3	0	7
2006	134	218	159	511	0	7
2007	160	319	12	491	0	14
2008	444	390	182.1	1016.1	0	11
2009	187	0	160	347	0	8
2010	150	489	407	1046	0	10
2011	217	180	0	397	0	9
2012	191.5	64	0	255.5	2	10
2013	50	287	0	337	0	9
2014	195.5	401	0	596.5	0	14
2015	295.18	682.52	0	977.7	0	10
2016	163.5	96	0	259.5	0	7
2017	57.5	180	23	260.5	0	8
2018	159	1007	0	1166	4.9	12
2019	48	354	87	489	0	7
2020	49	195	8	252	1	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,016</b>	<b>8,749</b>	<b>4,447</b>	<b>23,212</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>320</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>

*Source: Data compiled from Confidential Year End Landowner Reports to Dept. of Agriculture Conservation and Forestry- Maine Forest Service.*

Table 6 shows the forestry harvest data from 1991 to 2020, along with totals and averages from each category. Notably, the “Change of Land Use, Acres” column shows only 56 acres were changed to another land use from timber harvested land, for an overall average of two acres across the 29-year period. Also notable, the number of clearcut acres has decreased since 1991, as harvesting practices change and become more focused on sustainability.

## **Land Use Policies**

Aside from the state mandated Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, Bingham does not have ordinances that regulate land uses such as farming or forestry practices. While the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance sets standards for farming and logging operations, the town has no other means of protecting existing farms or forestry operations, nor can it prohibit farming or forestry practices in any location.

The Department of Conservation regulates industrial forestry operations, but on a municipal level, there are no regulatory or non-regulatory measures being taken to protect forestry lands. In short, Bingham has no way to prevent incompatible land uses from occurring next to each other.

Bingham does not partner with any conservation organizations or land trusts to protect farms or forest operations.



*Early view of Bingham from Goodrich Road*

## Tree Growth Tax Law Program

As of 2022, 44 parcels in Bingham were classified as Tree Growth properties under the State's Tree Growth Tax Law Program (Table 7). This program, like the Farmland Tax Law Program and Open Space Tax Law Program, provides landowners with an opportunity to have their land valued for its productivity rather than its market value. Over the course of the last 12 years, there has been a 42 percent increase in the number of parcels enrolled in this program. Although no acreage was withdrawn in 2022, there has been a decrease in the total acreage enrolled in the Tree Growth Tax Law Program by 18 percent since 2010.

Other notable data includes an increase in the amount of softwood acres and a decrease in the number of hardwood acres enrolled in this tax program. The total value of land enrolled in this tax law program has increased by 15 percent in the last 12 years.

**TABLE 7: BINGHAM PARCELS ENROLLED IN THE TREE GROWTH TAX LAW PROGRAM**

	2010	2022	% Change
# Of Parcels	31	44	42%
Softwood Acres	2,676	3,430	28%
Mixed Wood Acres	7,787	9,013	16%
Hardwood Acres	5,778	3,844	-33%
Acres Withdrawn	0	0	0%
Total Acres	16,241	13,287	-18%
Total Value	\$1,937,506	\$2,232,484	15%

*Source: 2010 & 2022 Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary*

In contrast to the Farmland Tax Law and the Open Space Tax Law programs, the State reimburses municipalities for a portion of lost tax revenues from properties enrolled in the Tree Growth Tax Law Program. Additionally, local participation is typically higher because this tax law allows multiple uses on the enrolled property, as long as the parcel remains primarily used for the growth of trees to produce forest products that have commercial value. As with the Farmland Tax Law and the Open Space Tax Law programs, land withdrawn from the Tree Growth Tax Law Program before maturity is subject to financial penalties.

## Challenges and Threats to Forestry Operations

With forestry as the major industry in Bingham, logging truck traffic can present a challenge for several reasons. The heavy logging trucks result in increased town road maintenance. In the village area, although the road is maintained by the state, Route 201 bisects the village and big logging trucks traveling through the area decreases walkability of the downtown. The speed of the logging trucks is often an issue, as well. However, it is undeniable that the benefits to Bingham of being a logging town outweighs the challenges. In fact, the forest industry in Bingham has long been a staple of the economy.

The forest industry is currently stable but slowly declining. There are many potential and immediate threats to the future success of forestry operations in and around Bingham.

- Invasive species or newly emergent pests of any kind, such as the emerald ash borer, Hemlock woolly adelgid, fungal infections, and many other threats can have devastating effects on woodlots. These pests (insects, fungi, blight, disease, etc.) can damage, kill, or even destroy a crop of trees. And with new pests, there is little or no way to prevent this from happening.
- Poor management practices can compromise tree growth. Poor management practices can include examples such as overharvesting trees and replanting them with the same species of trees. This practice results in the soil becoming depleted due to this monoculture and continued harvesting. Eventually, the soil will become too poor to sustain tree growth.
- Timber harvesting technology has increased greatly in the last few decades, to the point where it is predominantly mechanical. Timber can be harvested faster and more efficiently than ever before, while requiring fewer crews of workers. Trees only grow at a certain pace, and the advances in technology have outpaced the rate at which they grow. This results in harvesting smaller trees on smaller woodlots for less profit.
- The cost of harvesting timber is often less lucrative than just selling the land, particularly when timber prices drop. In the recent past, Weyerhaeuser has sold off some of its outlying parcels along Iron Gate Road, Pat Cassidy Road and Mahoney Hill Road for residential development. There has been discussion about subdividing and selling other large parcels containing between 500-1,000 acres.

These challenges and threats to the timber industry are of significant concern to Bingham's rural community and way of life. For example, if Weyerhaeuser were to stop harvesting timber and sell their enormous tracts of land, development in Bingham would increase dramatically. This sharp increase in development would impact the town in just about every way, from the town's character to the transportation system, to the economy, and the town's fiscal capacity, to name a few.

As detailed above, timber companies have already been selling off large parcels of land. This has led to increased development in parts of town that were previously rural and wooded. It has also led to an increase in people living off-grid. Providing any level of municipal services to areas of the town far from the village is cost prohibitive. Consideration should be given to ways to direct future development to areas of town that are already developed to reduce sprawl and reduce the cost of expanding municipal services.

New development in the rural areas also has potential to conflict with the existing logging operations. If a new development is created in an area surrounded by working forest, the future homebuyers may not understand the full implications of what that means, such as the noise of harvesting timber and proximity of logging trucks. While this is not yet an issue, it is something for the town to be aware of and consider when approving future developments.

That is not to say that all new developments in the rural area should not be allowed. If development is done with the proper precautions and in the right location, appropriate land uses would not only be beneficial, but they would also be harmonious with Bingham's character. For example, new campgrounds and camps would provide new jobs and recreation opportunities. Campgrounds on Mahoney Hill Road and Murray Road were created under these circumstances when Weyerhaeuser sold parcels of land to the current owners.

## **Analysis**

While farming was never the economic driver that forestry is in Bingham, the town's initial settlers farmed out of necessity. Today, there has been a resurgence in small-scale farms and family homesteads. Bingham should evaluate the need and desire for the creation of a farmers' market to support the farming efforts and provide a place to buy and sell locally produced goods.

Bingham's long history and reliance on forestry and logging have shaped the town's economic growth since the town was established. In early years, Bingham's status as a service center was due to the town's proximity to working commercial forestry operations, the Kennebec River, and ease of access to transportation.



# 10: Environmental Resources



## **Introduction**

Bingham is fortunate to be surrounded by exceptional natural beauty and a high-quality environment. Bingham consists of 22,604 acres, of which roughly 262 acres are water. Bingham's natural resources are responsible for the abundant productive forest covering most of the town, clean water, and copious amounts of wildlife habitat.

Bingham's land, water, and forest resources provide the base for an income for many of the town's residents, as well as for growth and development. Preserving these resources equates to maintaining productive forests, clean water, wildlife habitat, tourism, and the natural beauty of the area.

Perhaps the most prominent natural features in Bingham are the presence of the Kennebec River and the two peaks in town over 1,200 feet in elevation. The resulting change in elevation between the tall peaks and the Kennebec River presents unusual challenges unique to the town but also provide rich natural beauty.

One of the functions of this plan is to ensure that growth and development can occur concurrently without diminishing the natural environment. While achieving this balance is possible, it does require some foresight. Some parts of town are more suitable for development than others, likewise some forms of development have more of an environmental impact than others. It is in the town's best interest to consider future development and ensure it is in an appropriate area to best maintain the environment and minimize any negative impacts.

This chapter identifies and documents Bingham's natural and water resources and identifies the physical limitations the natural environment imposes on the planning process for future development.

## Natural Land Resources

### ***Geology and Soils***

Topography and soil unsuitable for building are possibly the biggest constraints to development in Bingham. They do not just present a challenge in construction; they also present financial challenges. Additionally, the town's soil and the rock that supports them influence the topography, type of vegetation, and were detrimental to early endeavors of farming.

### ***Topography***

The topography of an individual site accounts for much of the cost, difficulty, and potential adverse impact of land development. Development on slopes greater than 15 percent accelerates stormwater runoff velocity, erosion, and sedimentation, particularly in sensitive watersheds. The state Plumbing Code limits the installation of septic systems to land with an original slope of 20 percent or less. Road construction on steep slopes becomes expensive and road maintenance costs increase significantly. Therefore, large contiguous areas with slopes of more than 20 percent are impractical for new construction.

Bingham's topography is courtesy of the town's position at the gateway to the mountains of Maine. The town's challenging topography can be seen on the *Topographic Map* in the Appendix of this Plan. Mahoney Hill, in the center of town, reaches a peak height of 1,230 feet of elevation, while Johnson Mountain in the northeast corner of town rises to a height of 1,550 feet of elevation. In contrast, the lowest point of elevation in town, the location where the Kennebec River exists, is around 352 feet above sea level.

The drastic elevation differences seen in Bingham mean increased likelihood of construction in locations with steep slopes. Areas of slope exceeding 20 percent (20-foot rise for every 100 feet horizontal run) show up on topographic maps, but those are only as accurate as the scale of the map. On slopes over 30 percent grade, it becomes difficult to put in a foundation, and the chances of erosion and slumping increase considerably. Bingham's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance classifies areas of two or more contiguous acres, with sustained slopes of 20 percent or greater, as a Resource Protection District. Resource Protection Districts fall under the state's mandatory Shoreland Zoning guidelines, which include standards governing allowable land uses for these areas.

Slopes that exceed these parameters can be found in several locations in Bingham, primarily in the back country in the rural parts of town. Due to the elevation of Mahoney Hill, steep slopes can be found here and on the southeast slope of Johnson Mountain. While these locations are not accessible and present no concern, there are other areas in town that are accessible and have steep slopes.

Another area known for its steep slopes is along Route 201. For approximately a mile north of the Frank Savage Road, the land above the roadway is too steep for development, as is the land on the opposite side of the road, going towards the Kennebec River. These features impose a definite limitation on development along the town's main economic corridor.

The topography of the land results in lakes, waterbodies, drainage basins or watersheds. A watershed is the area of land within which all precipitation drains to a single water body. The delineation of watersheds (*Water Resources Map*) shows how water runs off the land, where it accumulates, and how it collects into larger bodies of surface water. Bingham is within the watershed of the Kennebec River.

Since planning for water quality is closely integrated with watershed planning, information on watersheds can be found in the analysis of each waterbody below.

## ***Soil***

The historic advance and subsequent retreat of glaciers molded Bingham's landscape. As glaciers advanced, the ice mass scoured the ground. Retreating, they left a mixture of sand, silt, gravel, clay, and stones. Today, much of Bingham is covered by this glacial till, consisting of a heterogeneous mixture of a variety of soil types, shown on the *Soil Map* in the Appendix of this Plan. Till usually overlies bedrock but may underlie or include sand and gravel. Additionally, glacially formed hills may consist of till deposits over 100 feet thick.

The soils of Bingham are as important to development as topography. Soils are, quite literally, the basis for all development. There are some soils which are prohibitive, in terms of constructing septic systems, foundations, and roads. Others, for example well-drained loams, are not only good for building but significantly less expensive to build on. Further complicating the issue, some soils are clearly better than others for growing -- farming and timber-growing. Ironically, the best soil for growing are also the best for building. So, every acre of good, productive land that is developed is an acre less for producing timber.

It is immediately apparent that flat, well-drained land is good for both farming and forestry practices, as well as development, resulting in an inherent conflict between the competing land uses. Due to its more lucrative nature, development usually wins out over farming and forestry.

Soil types vary widely within Bingham. Some are very gravelly, some are rich, deep loams, some are rocky or hardpan clay. This is a result of how they were formed. The Kennebec River valley, for example, was the prehistoric location where the glaciers met the sea. Much of the Kennebec River shore has marine sediments and glacial debris. The hill just to the east of downtown is a glacial esker. Glacial eskers are defined as ridges made up of sand and gravel, deposited by glacial meltwater that flowed through tunnels within and underneath glaciers, or through meltwater channels on top of glaciers. Over time, the channel or tunnel became filled up with sediments. As the ice retreated, the sediments were left behind as a ridge in the landscape.

The mouth of Austin Stream is an ocean delta formed after the glaciers had retreated. Elsewhere, the soil basically reflects how exposed the topography was to the glacier. The northern half of town is a thin drift (10 feet or less) of soil over bedrock, where the glaciers scraped material off the surface. The remainder is a glacial till, where more material was deposited than removed by the glaciers.

Soil characteristics are particularly important to farming/forestry practices, roadbuilding, construction, and septic system installation.

The prominent soils in Bingham are Dixmont variants, Monarda variants, Plaisted Loam, and Thorndike variants.

The State Plumbing code also has its list of soils that are unsuitable for subsurface waste disposal. The plumbing code concentrates on those soils in which septic systems will not function, because water is too near the surface, or the slope is too steep. Soils with water too near the surface include:

Biddeford silt loam  
Leicester stony loam

Monarda silt loam  
Peat and muck

Walpole fine sandy loam  
Limerick silt loam

There are several pockets of the soil determined to be unsuitable for subsurface waste disposal scattered throughout Bingham. Bingham's *Soil Map* (Appendix) shows soils by type and location. Maps of these soils involve a degree of generalization. A mapped area of poor soil does not by itself exclude development; however, it does make potential developers aware of challenges.

Regardless of soil type, when cleared of vegetation, all soils are subject to accelerated erosion. Eroding soil contributes to the degradation of water quality. Silt can reduce visibility, harm fish populations, and contribute phosphorus and other destabilizing nutrients into waterbodies. Phosphorus is a naturally occurring nutrient that, when present in high concentrations, can cause algal blooms. Eroding soil and unmanaged stormwater runoff have been documented as the primary source of increased phosphorus levels in Maine's lakes, resulting in reduced property values and recreational opportunities.

Bingham's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance includes the state's minimal regulatory requirements to prevent soil erosion and manage stormwater during before, during and after construction.

## **Scenic Resources**

Topography and geography are the primary components of scenic vistas and resources. While it is said that the quality of a scenic view is "in the eye of the beholder," it is often the case that varied topography and overlooking perspectives rank consistently high. Bingham's large expanse of undeveloped land and proximity to the Kennebec River ensure there is a plethora of scenic resources.

Below is an incomplete list of noteworthy views:

- The view of the Kennebec River from the Route 16 bridge,
- The view of the Kennebec River from several points along Route 201,
- The mountain view from several points along Route 201,
- The stretch of Route 201 from Solon to the Canadian border a National Scenic Byway, which includes the entire town of Bingham,
- There are numerous trails or seasonal roads to the mountain peaks in or near Bingham that offer scenic views.

All these locally important views originate from private property owned by Weyerhaeuser, and none are threatened by development.

## **Water Resources**

### ***Floodplains***

A floodplain is an area adjacent to a water body that is subject to periodic flooding. Historically, much of Bingham's village area was subject to flooding; however, after the construction of the Wyman Dam flooding in this area is no longer an issue.

Currently in Bingham, the only areas located in a floodplain are around the mouth of Austin Stream. The remaining floodplain is entirely west of Route 201 and the abandoned railroad bed. The floodplains in Bingham do not contribute significantly to constraints on development. Bingham can thank its naturally hilly topography for minimizing the number of floodplains adjacent to its larger waterbodies.

Bingham's 100-year floodplains are depicted on the *Critical Natural Resources Map* in the Appendix. A 100-year flood is one in which there is a one percent chance of flooding in any given year. The 100-year designation is significant because federal law requires local regulation of 100-year floodplains. Bingham has a local Floodplain Management Ordinance, and while it is enforced, it is outdated and needs to be brought up to state and federal standards.

## **Groundwater**

Enough groundwater exists in Bingham, as throughout Maine, to support residential uses. Larger supplies of groundwater exist in underground aquifers in sand and gravel deposits. These supplies are large enough to fuel a municipal water supply or a community system for a mobile home park, or a substantial number of residential wells near each other.

A “significant aquifer” provides a water supply in large enough volumes for commercial use, but all groundwater in the town should be protected from potential contamination by oil, chemicals, or other sources. Because of the abundance of water, and the fact that aquifer-related soils tend to be good for septic systems, aquifers tend to be good places to build. But development itself puts the aquifer at risk, not from depletion of the resource, but from pollution. Industrial and commercial development risks polluting groundwater with chemicals or petroleum products. To a lesser extent, a high density of residential septic systems could contaminate the aquifer, but those densities are not approached in Bingham.

Bingham protects the groundwater, surface water supplies, and their recharge area by maintaining an extensive wastewater system in the village area. There is also a stormwater drainage system in place. Groundwater and the aquifer are further protected to the greatest extent by state regulations. Bingham currently does not have an ordinance to specifically protect the aquifer. Such regulation would most likely only control the type of commercial and industrial development that would be using chemicals that could enter and contaminate the groundwater. Bingham’s groundwater protection is limited to the standards in the Shoreland Zoning and Subdivision ordinances.

Bingham's aquifer lies in the gravel deposits along the Kennebec River. Most of the village area west of the old railroad bed as far south as the sewage treatment plant, overlies an aquifer that is projected to yield over 50 gallons per minute. One of the land uses that overlies a portion of the aquifer is the airport. The aquifer also runs adjacent to Austin Stream, including the site of the old town well which is no longer in use. It then bulges out at the southern end of town. This aquifer is naturally self-replenishing during precipitation events.

Currently, Bingham gets its water from a well in Concord, which taps the same aquifer that underlies Bingham. Details of the public supply well from the acquirer, as reported by the Maine Department of Human Services, Bureau of Health Drinking Water Program, which regulates public water supplies, are as follows:

PWSID#: ME0090180

PWS Name: Bingham Water District

PWS: Community

Source ID#: 9180201; 9180202

The Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau of Health, Division of Health Engineering, oversees the Drinking Water Program (DWP), based on the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). The SDWA requires each state to complete an assessment for each public water source, which identifies and describes conditions that may threaten the quality of water available. The DWP is responsible for these assessments through the Maine Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP), which include current and potential future risks to public water supply sources.

The Maine Drinking Water Program Annual Compliance Report for 2022 noted Bingham had one violation of the Lead and Copper Rule; however, the violation was not that there were any contaminants found in the water. Instead, the violation was due to failure to conduct follow-up/routine tap sampling.

The Bingham Water District Well's 2023 Compliance Sample Results Report showed data collected monthly. None of the data collection results exceeded the allowable limits. The 2024 Compliance Sample Results Report showed data collected up until May 2024, all of which were acceptable, as well.

In short, the well from which Bingham Water District acquires water is in excellent condition with consistently high-water quality.

### ***Surface Water***

An interconnected system of surface waters begins as brooks and flow through a system of streams, ponds, and wetlands, eventually reaching the sea. Wetlands and lakes are critical points along this network of surface waters. Wetlands serve important natural functions such as wildlife habitat and stormwater regulation and are particularly susceptible to development. Lakes and rivers contribute to the natural beauty of any area. They are an attraction for residents, economic development, and outdoor recreation. All waterbodies are vulnerable to pollution and overuse, which in turn lowers property values.

The surface water resources in Bingham are a critical factor in environmental quality. Not only do they provide an essential element in the natural beauty of Bingham, but they also contribute considerably to the health and welfare of the town's residents and wildlife alike.

Many land-use practices can impact surface water quality. For example, improperly functioning or unsuitably located wastewater disposal systems may cause bacteria to contaminate surface waters. Poor agricultural practices can result in nutrient enrichment of waterbodies (e.g., phosphorus). Construction activities create erosion and siltation, potentially reaching waterbodies. Any improperly managed land use or land-based activity can accelerate degradation of water quality. The first step in managing the community's surface waters is to understand the systems, their existing quality, and factors that influence their quality.



All water bodies are required by state law to be locally protected through the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance. Bingham has a 250-foot shoreland area established under the state guidelines, along its larger wetlands, rivers, and streams. These restrictions affect what people may do with their land in the immediate vicinity of the shoreland to protect water quality.

### ***Rivers and Streams***

There are several perennial streams in Bingham; however, because the Kennebec River is the primary focal point, the streams are less conspicuous. Over the years, streams have only played a minor role in the development of Bingham. The principal stream is Austin Stream, which runs through the upper part of the village. Austin Stream is primarily located in Moscow – only a small portion cuts through the northwestern corner of town. An artificial channel was created for Austin Stream years ago to assist in flood control and highway reconstruction, although the channel currently needs reconstruction.

Other streams in town include Jackson Brook, Johnson Brook, and Fall Brook. Jackson Brook flows into the Kennebec River just below the village. Johnson and Fall Brooks join up in the southern part of town before flowing into Solon. Austin Stream and Jackson Brook are notable for providing a fish spawning habitat for the Kennebec River.

The Kennebec River is the prominent surface water feature in Bingham, forming the western boundary of the town. The segment of the Kennebec River that forms Bingham's boundary begins just short of the Wyman Hydroelectric Dam and flows past the village heading south.

Several studies associate this portion of the Kennebec River with high geological, historic, and ecological values. It also provides numerous economic opportunities, with excellent fishing, boating, and scenic viewsheds. Fisheries include brook and rainbow trout and landlocked salmon. Unfortunately, bass have been introduced into the Kennebec River as an invasive species, as well. Overall, fish populations are affected by the variability in volume of releases from the dam.

The lower part of the Kennebec River in Bingham is impounded by Williams Dam in Solon.

The state has four classifications for freshwater rivers, streams, and brooks: AA, A, B, and C. The classification system should be viewed as a hierarchy of risk more than for use or quality assessment. Ecosystems that are more natural in their structure and function can be expected to be more resilient to new stressors and to show more rapid recovery. The classifications are detailed below.

- **Classes AA** involve little risk since activities such as waste discharge and impoundment are prohibited. The expectation to achieve natural conditions is high and degradation is unlikely.
- **Class A** waters allow impoundments and very restricted discharges, so the risk of degradation, while quite small, does increase since there is some small human intervention in the maintenance of the ecosystem.
- **Classes B** has fewer restrictions on activities but still maintain high water quality criteria. Class B is considered more at risk than a Class A stream. The risk is the possibility of a breakdown of the ecosystem and loss of use due to either natural or human-caused events.
- **Classes C** has the least restrictions on use and the lowest (but not low) water quality criteria. Classes C waters are still good quality, but the margin for error before significant degradation might occur in these waters in the event of an additional stress being introduced (such as a spill or a drought) is the least.

Austin Stream, in the portion that runs from approximately Rt 201 to the Kennebec River is a Class B stream. The portion of Austin Stream from Rt 201 northeast is a Class A waterbody. The Kennebec River is a Class A waterbody. All other rivers and streams in Bingham, including Jackson Brook, Johnson Brook, and Fall Brook are Class B waterbodies.

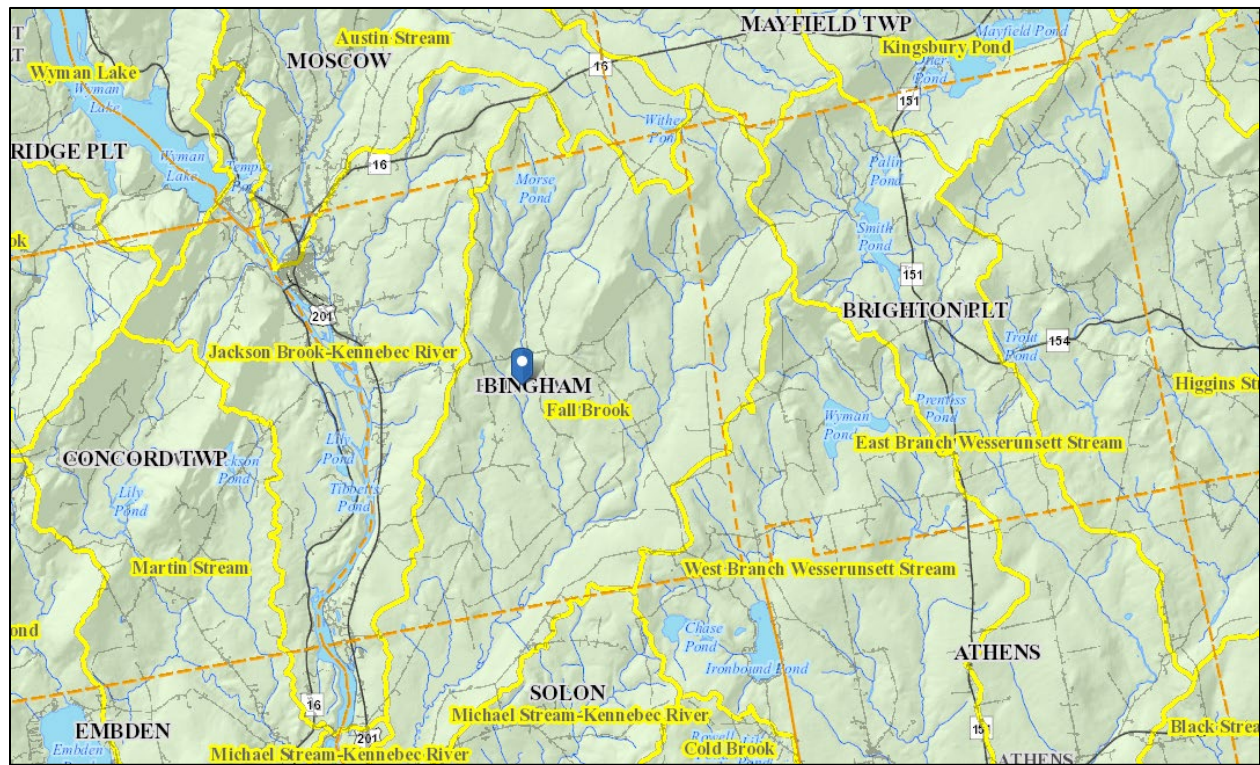
Class B waterbodies are suitable for drinking water supply, recreation in and on the water, fishing, industrial processes and cooling water supply, hydroelectric power generation, navigation and unimpaired habitat for fish and other aquatic life.

The *Water Resources Map* (Appendix) shows Bingham's streams, lakes, ponds, and wetlands. Most streams are bounded by the Stream Protection District, as set forth in the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance. The Stream Protection District establishes a 75-foot building setback from the stream high-water mark (see Bingham's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance for more information).

## Watersheds

A watershed is a natural drainage basin that collects precipitation and sends it to a body of water through an interconnected system of streams, brooks, and other wetlands. Unmanaged or improper human activities in any part of a watershed can negatively affect the water quality of the waterbody into which the watershed drains. The watersheds in Bingham are depicted in Figure 1.

**FIGURE 1: DRAINAGE DIVIDES IN BINGHAM**



*Source: Beginning with Habitat*

Bingham is bisected north to south on a slight diagonal between the two predominant watersheds in town: the Jackson Brook-Kennebec River Watershed to the west and Fall Brook Watershed to the east. Austin Brook Watershed claims a small amount of land in the northeast and northwest corners of Bingham, and West Branch-Wesserunsett Stream claims the southeast corner of town. A miniscule portion of the Michael Stream-Kennebec River Watershed is located on Bingham's southern border with Solon.

Bingham shares the Jackson Brook-Kennebec River Watershed primarily with Concord Township, and minimally with Moscow, Solon, and Embden. The Fall Brook Watershed is in Bingham, Solon, Brighton Plantation, Moscow, and Mayfield Township. The other watersheds are mainly in other towns.

## **Wetlands**

Wetlands are essential parts of a healthy environment. As natural low points, they absorb flood waters. As a lush and moist habitat, they are the best and sometimes only breeding areas for fish and wildlife, including most waterfowl. They have been proven to hold sediments and nutrients from water before they reach streams, straining out pollutants. Wetlands also serve as important travel corridors for many species of wildlife and provide open space for some forms of recreational enjoyment and/or aesthetic appreciation.

While a precise definition of a wetland is not universally accepted, making it difficult for local authorities to enforce the laws, wetlands share three essential elements. They all have non-permeable soils, a water table at or near the surface, and there is a presence of water-loving vegetation (rushes, cattails, red maple).

There are at least 10 such wetlands in Bingham (*Water Resources Map, Critical Natural Resources Map* in the Appendix). The most significant wetlands are often associated with open water. The Kennebec River and other small lakes and ponds all have at least some wildlife wetlands connected to them. Although not all meet the state criteria for protection under Shoreland Zoning, those that do not are still protected through the National Resource Protection Act.

There is a sizable wetland area on Bingham's southern border with Solon. The wetland is part of Fall Brook, and part of an unnamed tributary originating from an unnamed pond between Lake Road and Frank Savage Road. This wetland area is home to an endangered species who is unidentified to the public for its protection.

Among other standards, the Bingham Shoreland Zoning Ordinance provides protection of wetlands through setback requirements consistent with the mandatory Shoreland Zoning Ordinance. The town is in the beginning stages of discussions on updating their Shoreland Zoning Ordinance and Shoreland Zoning Map. Reduced or relaxed protections for wetlands that were previously protected have spurred the town to consider adopting standards above and beyond the minimal state mandates.

## ***Vernal Pools***

A vernal pool is defined as a naturally occurring, temporary to permanent inland body of water that forms in a shallow depression and typically fills during the spring or fall and may dry during the summer. Vernal pools contain no viable populations of predatory fish, and it provides the primary breeding habitat for wood frogs, spotted salamanders, blue spotted salamanders, and fairy shrimp. The presence of any one or more of these species is usually conclusive evidence of a vernal pool.

Vernal pools do not fall under the protection provided to wetlands by the Maine Natural Areas Program, a facet of the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry that maintains a database of areas designated as ecological reserves. But, as of September 2007, significant vernal pool habitats are protected under the Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA). A vernal pool is considered “significant” if it has a high habitat value, either because 1) a state-listed threatened or endangered species uses it to complete a critical part of its life history, or 2) there is a notable abundance of specific wildlife. This regulation protects areas within a 250-foot radius of the spring or fall high-water mark of a significant vernal pool, which is considered critical terrestrial habitat. Any activity on, in, or over these areas must be approved by the Maine DEP and requires either a Permit by Rule or individual NRPA approval.

To date, significant vernal pools have yet to be mapped in Bingham. And unfortunately, the Beginning with Habitat data does not have significant vernal pools information for every town, Bingham included.

With new attention to their importance in the ecosystem, the town should consider conducting a vernal pool survey and incorporating some protection for vernal pools into its development standards. Extra protection through the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance is a consideration for these sites, as well.

Currently, there are seven known vernal pools in Bingham, which have been mapped and surveyed in the field. These vernal pools have been classified as ‘not significant’; however, that classification does not mean they do not warrant protection.

## ***Lakes and Ponds***

Bingham's lakes and ponds are overshadowed by the presence of the Kennebec River, which is the defining feature of the town's landscape. There are lakes and ponds scattered throughout Bingham; however, they are far less prominent. In fact, many are unnamed or known only to locals who are familiar with the area.

The quality of water in any lake or pond depends on many factors, including the surface area and depth of the lake; the flushing rate of the lake; the size of the watershed surrounding the lake; the extent of development along the shore; the extent of agricultural activity in the watershed; and the degree to which obvious sources of pollution, such as septic effluent, sewage, agricultural fertilizers, and manure are kept from entering the water body.

The state designates waterbodies encompassing 10 acres or more as Great Ponds. Great Ponds and their shorelands are subject to special regulations through Shoreland Zoning and Maine's Natural Resources Protection Act. The state has one standard of classification for both Great Ponds and natural lakes and ponds less than 10 acres in size; this classification is GPA. The water quality attainment goal for Class GPA waterbodies is that they are suitable for drinking water, recreation, fishing, hydro-electric power generation and as natural habitat for fish and other aquatic life. If a water body is not meeting its attainment goal, it is described as a "nonattainment" lake.

Bingham does not have any waterbodies large enough to classify as Great Ponds. The only pond with any water quality information available in Bingham is Morse (Moss) Pond. The information available for Morse Pond did not include the classification status.

### **Morse (Moss) Pond**

Area: Approximately 2 acres  
Maximum Depth: No Information  
Mean Depth: No Information  
Perimeter: 0.3 miles  
Invasive species: unknown  
Fisheries management: unknown  
Dams on Lake: 0

While no information is available on water quality, flora, or fauna found in Morse Pond, it is drained by Johnson Brook, which is a Class B waterbody.

## **Threats to Bingham's Water and Natural Resources**

Threats to natural resources in Bingham are not immediate, but potentially include logging, spreading of sludge, and any of the power line corridors directly over the aquifer. This is not a complete list, for obvious reasons.

The single greatest threat to water quality at present is the introduction of phosphorus through runoff from within the watershed. Phosphorus is a naturally occurring element and a plant nutrient; however, in excess, phosphorus is responsible for causing nuisance algae blooms and extreme aquatic plant growth. Algal blooms can result in reduced dissolved oxygen levels which lead to fish die-offs.

The level of phosphorus entering a waterbody is a direct function of disruption in the watershed, primarily from human-induced activities. Since most of Bingham falls in either one of two major watersheds- the Jackson Brook-Kennebec River Watershed to the west and Fall Brook Watershed to the east, there is potential for pollution introduction through development.

Sources of potential threats to water quality are too numerous to list extensively, but a few include increased and poorly managed development, impervious surfaces related to development, faulty or failing septic systems, agricultural fertilizers, poor stormwater management, erosion, and much more. Typically, the erosion related to poorly maintained camp roads and gravel driveways within watersheds are the biggest contributors to runoff and increased phosphorus intake in waterbodies.

Impervious surfaces can cause runoff and result in erosion during precipitation events if not effectively managed. When the water runs off impervious surfaces, it collects pollutants that end up in stormwater drains and eventually find their way into waterbodies.

Faulty or failing septic systems in older or seasonal homes in the Shoreland Zone are another threat to water quality. Many seasonal homes that have been converted to year-round use may have septic systems that are inadequate. Many older homes may have faulty septic systems.

The state now has a requirement of filing a septic inspection report for any transfer of title within a Shoreland Zone. The purpose of this requirement is to provide proof of inspection to ensure adequate subsurface waste disposal systems in Shoreland Zones to prevent water quality degradation. This septic inspection requirement has limitations, however. One example is when a property within the Shoreland Zone is passed down generationally without the benefit of officially changing documented ownership, the requirement of a septic inspection is not triggered. While some towns require that a copy of the inspection report also be submitted to the town, Bingham does not yet have such a requirement.

Fertilizer associated with agricultural activities or used on lawns can run off land into surface water, resulting in algal blooms. If severe enough, algal blooms can drastically reduce water quality. The lack of natural, vegetative buffer from lawn to waterbody is known to cause serious water quality degradation.

Work on public infrastructure near and in the water is managed to avoid erosion and sedimentation. Careful consideration must be given to the miles of ditching, and hundreds of road culverts that are town-maintained. Bingham has plans for the construction of a DEP-approved salt and sand shed to store erodible materials away from drainage areas and waterbodies. This structure will be covered to prevent erosion. Currently, Bingham takes delivery of salt and sand one truckload at a time so there is not usually an excessive amount of salt or sand stored for long periods of time.

Best Management Practices (BMPs) for activities such as culvert replacement, street sweeping, public works garage operations, and salt/sand pile maintenance are essential in protecting water quality. BMPs and strategies are gathered and utilized from many sources but primarily from Maine DOT. Bingham's Public Works Department takes careful measures to incorporate BMPs into their daily work routines. The public works building was constructed in 2014, and it is in good working order.

An increasing concern in relation to water quality is the threat of invasive water plants. Maine, for years isolated from the plague of milfoil, is now seeing increasingly frequent occurrences. Fortunately, no invasive aquatic species have been identified in Bingham yet.

## **Point and Nonpoint Sources of Pollution**

Point Source Pollution can be linked back to one location, or point, such as a leaking oil tank. Point sources come from a direct source and are easily identified and managed.

Nonpoint Source Pollution (NPS pollution) cannot be traced to one sole source. One example is stormwater runoff. Stormwater can come from anywhere, especially impervious surfaces. Stormwater is water that does not soak into the ground during a precipitation event, but flows on top of the ground instead, to a body of water. As this water travels across the surface of the ground, it collects pollutants such as petroleum products, heavy metals, fertilizers, and manure, which can originate from any location within a watershed. Where stormwater runoff erodes soil, the soil itself transports phosphorus into waterbodies.

According to the DEP, there are no known nonpoint sources of pollution in Bingham, nor are there NPS priority watersheds or NPS impaired watersheds. There are currently no known point sources of pollution in Bingham, either.



Bingham has two wastewater facilities, considered to be minor facilities by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). One is operated by Cooke Aquaculture USA, Inc. This facility has two permitted, active outfalls into the Kennebec River, slightly downstream from the mouth of Austin Stream. The other is Bingham Wastewater Treatment Facility, with one permitted, active outfall on Jackson Brook.

Bingham does not have any other regulatory protection aside from the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, which sets standards and requirements for any activity within the Shoreland Zone.

### **Remediation sites**

Bingham has 2 remediation sites listed by the DEP. They are as follows:

Location: Clarks Hardware, 406 Maine Street  
Program: VRAP  
Status Date: 09/02/2020  
Status: Investigation Stage- Need (awaiting resources)

Location: Quimby Mill, Landler Avenue  
Program: Brownfields  
Status Date: 04/30/2019  
Status: Investigation Stage- Ongoing

### **Wildlife Habitat in Bingham**

Waterbodies, watercourses, and wetlands are necessary habitats for the continued survival of many wildlife species. Unfragmented blocks of land are as essential to high-quality habitat as are the many watercourses and wetlands found in Bingham because they provide sanctuary for woodland birds, and other wildlife species, including critical habitat for some rare or endangered species.

The extent and quality of wildlife habitat is an indicator of not just the richness and diversity of the flora and fauna in Bingham, but the overall health of the ecosystem. The availability of high-quality habitat for plants, animals, and fish is essential to maintaining abundant and diverse populations for ecological, economic, and recreational purposes.

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIF&W) administers a program called Beginning with Habitat (BwH) to identify significant wildlife habitat and critical natural areas under the National Resources Protection Act.

BwH, a collaborative program of federal, state, and local agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations, is a habitat-based approach to conserving wildlife and plant habitat on a landscape scale. The goal of the program is to maintain sufficient habitat to support all native plant and animal species currently growing and breeding in Maine. BwH compiles habitat information from multiple sources, integrates it into one package, and makes it accessible to towns, land trusts, conservation organizations, and others to use in a proactive approach to conservation via their webpage (<https://www.maine.gov/ifw/fish-wildlife/wildlife/beginning-with-habitat/maps/index.html>). This information can be seen on Bingham's *Critical Natural Resources Map* in the Appendix, with descriptions of essential features below.



Significant habitats, as defined by MDIF&W, includes species appearing on the official state or federal list of endangered or threatened species, high and moderate value deer wintering areas, and high and moderate value waterfowl and wading bird habitats.

Before conducting any activities in, on, or over significant wildlife habitats, a National Resources Protection Act (NRPA) permit must be obtained. Activities include construction, repair, or alteration of any permanent structure; dredging, bulldozing, removing or displacing soil, sand, or vegetation; and drainage or filling. The standard for protecting significant habitats highlights mitigation and compensation. Actions must be taken to A) avoid negative impacts on habitats, B) minimize the impacts if unavoidable, C) restore or rehabilitate impacted habitats, D) reduce an impact over time, or E) replace the affected habitat.

In Bingham, except for the cleared area developed portion of the Kennebec valley along Route 201, the town is nearly entirely forested. A significant portion of the forested land is privately owned and actively managed and harvested. Due to the vast undeveloped, forested area and unpolluted water, Bingham has an abundance and variety of wildlife. Deer, bear, and moose are common, as are all species of small game and fur-bearing animals and waterfowl.

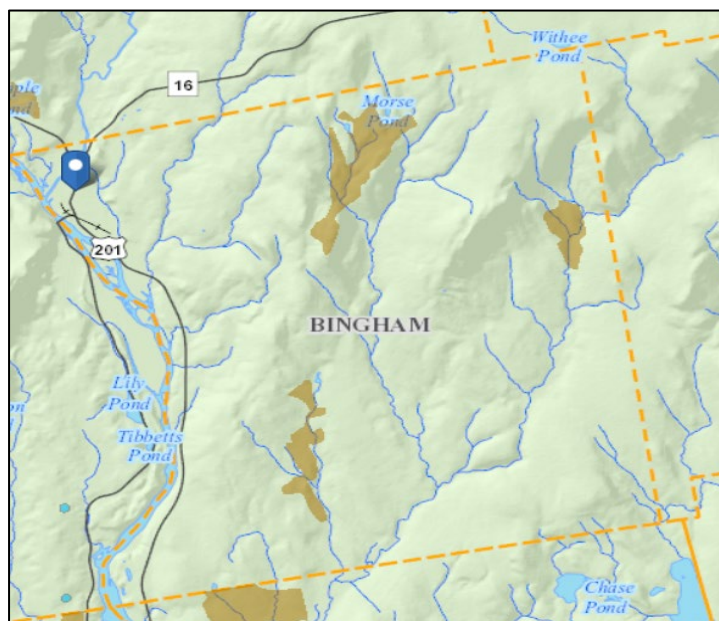
Wildlife is an economic as well as natural resource, as evidenced by the number of tourists and hunters that frequent Bingham. There is a direct correlation between the proportion of undeveloped land and quality habitat with the amount of wildlife; however, each species has its own requirements. Those are detailed further below.

## Deer Wintering Areas

Although white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) are common in Bingham, their existence is predicated on sufficient habitat. Summer habitat is commonly referred to as “edge habitat,” which includes farm fields, orchards, and open areas adjacent to forested lands. The habitat limitations for deer occur in the winter when there is heavy snow and extreme cold. Deer wintering areas (DWA) are defined as a forested area used by deer when snow depth in the open/hardwoods exceeds 12 inches; deer sinking depth in the open/hardwoods exceeds eight inches and mean daily temperatures are below 32° F. Non-forested wetlands, non-stocked clear cuts, hardwood types, and stands predominated by Eastern Larch are included in DWAs only if less than 10 acres in size. Agricultural and development areas within DWAs are excluded regardless of size. Deer wintering areas that have yet to be confirmed through professional survey are considered “Candidate Deer Wintering Areas” until otherwise verified through a survey.



**FIGURE 2: CANDIDATE DEER WINTERING AREAS IN BINGHAM**



*Source: Beginning with Habitat*

Bingham has approximately three “Candidate Deer Wintering Areas,” either entirely or partially within town boundaries, shown in brown on Figure 2 (also depicted on the *Critical Natural Resources Map* in Appendix). The status of these “Candidate Deer Wintering Areas” is unknown, as there has been logging activities in and around these areas.

## Other Wildlife

Raccoons, beavers, and red fox are the most abundant species of furbearers in Bingham. Other abundant species include mink, fisher, coyote, and otter.

Bingham is also home to various waterfowl; however, accurate or even estimated population counts for waterfowl populations are not available, aside from the loon survey by the Maine Audubon Society. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife has been conducting an ongoing survey of wild duck populations, of which the information is not yet available.

Other than generalized habitat protection measures, primarily for wetlands, the state has no coordinated program for maintaining species populations. Various conservation groups engage in programs to promote local populations such as putting out nesting boxes for ducks or platforms for loons.

There are two waterfowl and wading bird habitats in the center of Bingham, varying in size. Both these waterfowl and wading bird habitat areas are on the unnamed tributary feeding Fall Brook. These habitats provide breeding, migration, and wintering grounds for a multitude of bird species. Since 2006, Maine's Shoreland Zoning Regulation requires that waterfowl and wading bird habitats, as designated by MDIF&W, must be protected by a 250-foot buffer.

These known inland waterfowl/wading bird habitats have been designated by MDIF&W and can be seen on the *Critical Natural Resources Map* in Appendix.

The BwH maps also show an abundance of wetland areas, predominantly along the Kennebec River but also throughout town, which are valuable for wildlife that are not regulated as inland waterfowl and wading bird habitats, so they are not afforded the protection of the 250-foot buffer.

There are numerous locations throughout Bingham that have been delineated by the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI). The NWI uses aerial photography to approximate wetland locations; it is not a comprehensive mapping wetland resources and typically under-represents the presence of wetlands on the landscape. Because of this, the presence of wetlands needs to be determined in the field prior to conducting activities that could result in wetland disturbance.

## Rare, Endangered, and Valuable Species and Habitats

Beginning with Habitat compiles data on rare, endangered, and valuable species and habitats in Bingham (see *Critical Natural Resources Map* in Appendix). This information includes rare, threatened, or endangered wildlife, rare or exemplary plants and natural communities, essential wildlife habitats, and significant wildlife habitats. This information is based on field observations. The names of some species is marked as 'Rare Plant' for further protection.

The 2000 Comprehensive Plan lists the long leaved bluet (*Houstonia Longifolia*) as an "imperiled" species found in Bingham at the time. It was discovered along the bank of the Kennebec River, north of Austin Stream. Today, BwH maps show the long leaved bluet still just north of Austin Stream, but located in Moscow, not Bingham.

BwH delineates one area providing habitat for a rare, threatened, or endangered species, whose name has been withheld to provide the utmost protection. Endangered or Threatened fish and wildlife species in Maine are afforded protection either under Maine's Endangered Species Act (MESA) or the U.S. Endangered Species Act (ESA), or both. Species listed under MESA receive state protection; species listed under ESA receive federal protection; and species listed under both state and federal protection.

There are currently 26 inland fish species and wildlife species listed and as Endangered and 31 listed as Threatened under Maine's Endangered Species Act, some of which are also listed under the U.S. Endangered Species Act.

The location for the rare, threatened, or endangered species is the southern part of town, along the unnamed brook that flows into Fall Brook, and partially along Fall Brook. The habitat continues along Fall Brook into Solon. The unnamed tributary to Fall Brook in this part of town is a Candidate Deer Wintering Area, although it has been logged, and habitat to inland waterfowl and wading bird.

### **Brook Trout Habitat**

Maine supports the most extensive distribution and abundance of wild brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) in their native range within the United States; more than 1,200 lakes and ponds are managed for brook trout, of which approximately 60 percent are sustained by natural reproduction. In addition, brook trout occur in an estimated 22,248 miles of stream habitat, the vast majority of which are wild. Although brook trout populations are declining across their historic range within the United States (Maine to Georgia), a 2006 range-wide assessment by the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture found that Maine is the only state with extensive, intact populations of wild, self-reproducing





brook trout in lakes and ponds, including some lakes over 5,000 acres in size. Lake populations of brook trout are intact in 185 sub-watersheds (18 percent) of their historic range in Maine, and only six intact watersheds throughout the 16 other states. Maine is the last true stronghold for stream dwelling populations of wild brook trout, supporting more than twice the number of intact sub-watersheds as the other 16 states in the eastern range combined.

In Bingham, there are several streams delineated by BwH that are wild brook trout priority areas. They include Fall Brook, Johnson Brook, Jackson Brook, Austin Stream, and their numerous tributaries. These habitat areas are priority conservation areas for wild brook trout and include a recommended 100-foot, no disturbance buffer around the waterbodies on either side. These areas may also be candidates for instream habitat restoration actions and/or stream connectivity enhancement.

Consideration should be given to providing the utmost protection to these valuable resources. With Bingham's reliance on outdoor recreation and tourism, protecting these areas and the wildlife that depends upon them should be paramount. When updating the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, stricter standards of protection should be discussed and considered.

### **Important Habitat**

Also noted by BwH is a Rare/Exemplary Natural Community, with the common name **Upper Floodplains Hardwood Forest** (scientific name: Hardwood River Terrace Forest), that has been identified on Big Island in the Kennebec River, in the northern part of Bingham. Two other occurrences of this community have been identified along the banks of the Kennebec River slightly south of Big Island.



**Community Description:** An almost complete canopy is dominated by sugar maple, red oak, or yellow birch, with red maple and ash often common and basswood or black cherry occasionally. The understory is open, and shrubs are sparse. The lush carpet of herbs changes from spring ephemerals such as trout lilies and bloodroot to variable cover of mixed graminoids and forbs in summer. Bryoid cover is minor.

**Soil and Site Characteristics:**

Sites occur on slightly elevated terraces flanking low-gradient rivers at elevations typically <1,000'. Flooding is occasional, sometimes less frequent than annually. These forests have lower frequency and duration of flooding than silver maple floodplain forests. Most known examples are along medium to larger rivers. Soils are fine sand or silt, usually with good drainage capacity and relatively high nutrient levels; pH is 5.0-6.2.



**Diagnostics:** Sites occupy floodplain or river terrace settings with mineral soil. The canopy is dominated by sugar maple, red oak, or yellow birch. Silver maple and red maple may be present. A dense herb layer that includes species not typical of wetlands (e.g. starflower, zig-zag goldenrod, big-leaved aster, silvery spleenwort). Sensitive ferns are often present but not dominant. Spring ephemerals are often abundant.

**Upper Floodplains Hardwood Forest Conservation and Management:** Virtually all these forests have been harvested, and many have been converted to agriculture. Non-native plant species such as Japanese knotweed and Asiatic bittersweet, which may displace those native to our area, represent a threat to the integrity of these forests and have degraded at least some Maine examples.

The northern waterthrush, barred owl, belted kingfisher, bank swallow, scarlet tanager, and green heron are associates of this community type. Wood turtles overwinter in river channels and forage in floodplain forests where they may feed on amphibian egg masses in vernal pools. The silver-haired bat often roosts in riparian habitats in trees with loose bark. Fairy shrimp may also occur in isolated vernal pools. Wood turtles are rare animals often associated with these communities.

This forest type has a state ranking of S3, which means it is vulnerable in Maine, and at moderate risk of extirpation due to a fairly restricted range, relatively few populations or occurrences, recent and widespread declines, threats, or other factors.

## Undeveloped Habitat Blocks, Connectors, and Conserved Land

There is a distinct, direct relationship between the quantity and variety of wildlife and the size of their habitat. Of course, there is urban wildlife such as skunks and mourning doves that do not require significant portions of land to thrive. However, many other types of animals are much less conspicuous and depend upon unbroken stretches of forest for survival. As roads, farms, and houses intrude on the habitats of these creatures, the large habitat blocks become fragmented, displacing the wildlife that relies on them.

Development in rural areas often causes these fragmentations, reducing the land's value as wildlife habitat. Wildlife travel corridors linking individual habitat blocks together are critical to accommodate animal movement. Ensuring wildlife travel corridors helps preserve the region's biodiversity and maintains rural community character. Limiting development at the edges of unfragmented habitat also helps maintain environmental integrity by giving forest-dwelling creatures a natural buffer.

The Beginning with Habitat program maps these unfragmented habitat blocks. If the parcel is permanently protected, the BwH maps include information such as who owns the habitat block and how it is conserved (federally protected, state protected, municipally owned and protected, or through conservation easement). The *Critical Natural Resources Map* in the Appendix shows these unfragmented blocks, as well. However, not all unfragmented blocks are conserved or protected, as is the scenario with most of the land in Bingham.

Bingham has remained relatively undeveloped, in large part because so much of the land is privately owned by forestry operations and managed for optimal timber production. The only piece of land formally preserved through an easement held by the Maine Bureau of Parks and Land is a 35-acre parcel adjacent to Wyman Lake.

The largest parcel of unfragmented land, containing 9,002 acres and approximately 2,000 acres larger than any other block, is in the northeast part of town and extends across the town line into Brighton Plantation. The second largest is in the northern part of town, along the Moscow border; it is 7,154 acres. The third largest unfragmented block is 3,489 acres and extends into the town of Solon. The other unfragmented parcels range in size from 1,121 acres to as few as 108 acres. They are scattered throughout town in no distinct pattern.



## Regulatory Protection

Currently, none of Bingham's natural resources are threatened by development, overuse, or other activities.

In addition to state and federal standards to protect water quality, Bingham's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance includes language to provide further protection of natural and water resources. The latest amendment to the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance was in 2008 and the state's most recent amendment to their mandatory shoreland zoning guidelines was in 2015. Bingham's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance should be updated to be consistent with and reflect the most recent amendment by the state, at a minimum. Bingham's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance are consistent to the extent possible with the standards for shoreland zoning in neighboring communities.

The town's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance designates three zoning districts for the purpose of protecting water resources:

- Resource Protection
- Stream Protection
- Commercial Fisheries

And four districts in which to direct development:

- Limited Residential
- Limited Commercial
- General Development I
- General Development II

*Resource Protection District (RP):* The Resource Protection District includes areas in which development would adversely affect water quality, productive habitat, biological ecosystems, or scenic and natural values. This district shall include the following areas when they occur within the limits of the shoreland zone, exclusive of the Stream Protection District, except that areas which are currently developed and areas which meet the criteria for the Limited Commercial or General Development I Districts need not be included within the Resource Protection District.

- (I) Areas within 250 feet, horizontal distance, of the upland edge of freshwater wetlands, and wetlands associated with great ponds and rivers, which are rated "moderate" or "high" value waterfowl and wading bird habitat, including nesting and feeding areas, by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIF&W) that are depicted on a Geographic Information System (GIS) data layer maintained by either MDIF&W or the Department as of May 1, 2006. For the purposes of this paragraph "wetlands associated with great ponds and rivers" shall mean areas characterized by non-forested wetland vegetation and hydric soils that are contiguous with a great pond or river and have a surface elevation at or below the water level of the great pond or river during the period of normal high water. "Wetlands associated with great ponds or rivers" are considered to be part of that great pond or river.

- (II) Floodplains along rivers and floodplains along artificially fanned great ponds along rivers, defined by the 100-year floodplain as designated on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps or Flood Hazard Boundary Maps, or the flood of record, or in the absence of these, by soil types identified as recent floodplain soils.
- (III) Areas of two or more contiguous acres with sustained slopes of 20% or greater.
- (IV) Areas of two (2) or more contiguous acres supporting wetland vegetation and hydric soils, which are not part of a freshwater wetland as defined, and which are not superficially connected to a water body during the period of normal high water.
- (V) Land areas along rivers subject to severe bank erosion, undercutting, or riverbed movement.

*Stream Protection District (SP):* The Stream Protection District includes all land areas within seventy-five (75) feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high-water line of a stream, exclusive of those areas within two-hundred and fifty (250) feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high-water line of a great pond, or river, or within two hundred and fifty (250) feet, horizontal distance, of the upland edge of a freshwater wetland. Where a stream and its associated shoreland area are located within two-hundred and fifty (250) feet, horizontal distance, of the above water bodies or wetlands, that land area shall be regulated under the terms of the shoreland district associated with that water body or wetland.

*Commercial Fisheries District:* The Commercial Fisheries District includes areas where the existing predominant pattern of development is consistent with the allowed uses for this district as indicated in the Table of Land Uses, Section 14, and other areas which are suitable for functionally water-dependent uses, taking into consideration such factors as:

- (I) Shelter from prevailing winds and waves;
- (II) Slope of the land within 250 feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high-water line;
- (III) Depth of the water within 150 feet, horizontal distance, of the shoreline;
- (IV) Available support facilities including utilities and transportation facilities; and
- (V) Compatibility with adjacent upland uses.

Bingham's Shoreland Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances are the first lines of protection for watersheds and water quality, since development and other human-related activities within a watershed are the largest contributors to degraded water quality. Development can be designed to minimize phosphorus runoff, by mandating BMPs for construction and Low Impact Development (LID) design criteria (*LID Guidance Manual for Maine Communities, Approaches for Implementation of Low Impact Development Practices at the Local Level*, 2007). LID describes land planning and engineering design approaches to manage stormwater runoff that mimics natural processes, resulting in the infiltration, evapotranspiration, or use of stormwater to protect water quality and associated aquatic habitats.

To preserve and protect water quality, it is imperative that the Shoreland Zoning and Subdivision ordinances are reviewed and updated regularly. Currently, both ordinances are out of date and do not reflect the most recent state requirements. Regular updates will ensure the most current standards and practices are included, such as LID and BMPs for phosphorus control and stormwater management.

## **Local and Regional Coordination**

The Town of Bingham recently upgraded their pump station and their wastewater treatment facility proactively, to mitigate a potential source of pollution. Given Bingham's reliance on tourism, continued vigilance in protecting natural resources is essential to the town.

### Local Partners:

In the past, Bingham partnered with Trout Unlimited to dredge waterways and save fish. The town currently does not have any regional or local projects that need collaboration, although the town is open to potentially partnering and collaborating on future projects.

### Regional Partners:

Bingham has partnered with the Old Cananda Road National Scenic Byway on several projects in the past and continues discussions on future projects.

## **Analysis**

Bingham is a place of abundant, well-preserved natural beauty which leads to numerous outdoor recreational opportunities. The town has remained well-forested with large parcels of undeveloped, unfragmented habitat blocks without any formal protection necessary. This, in turn, has created an area rich in wildlife and nature.

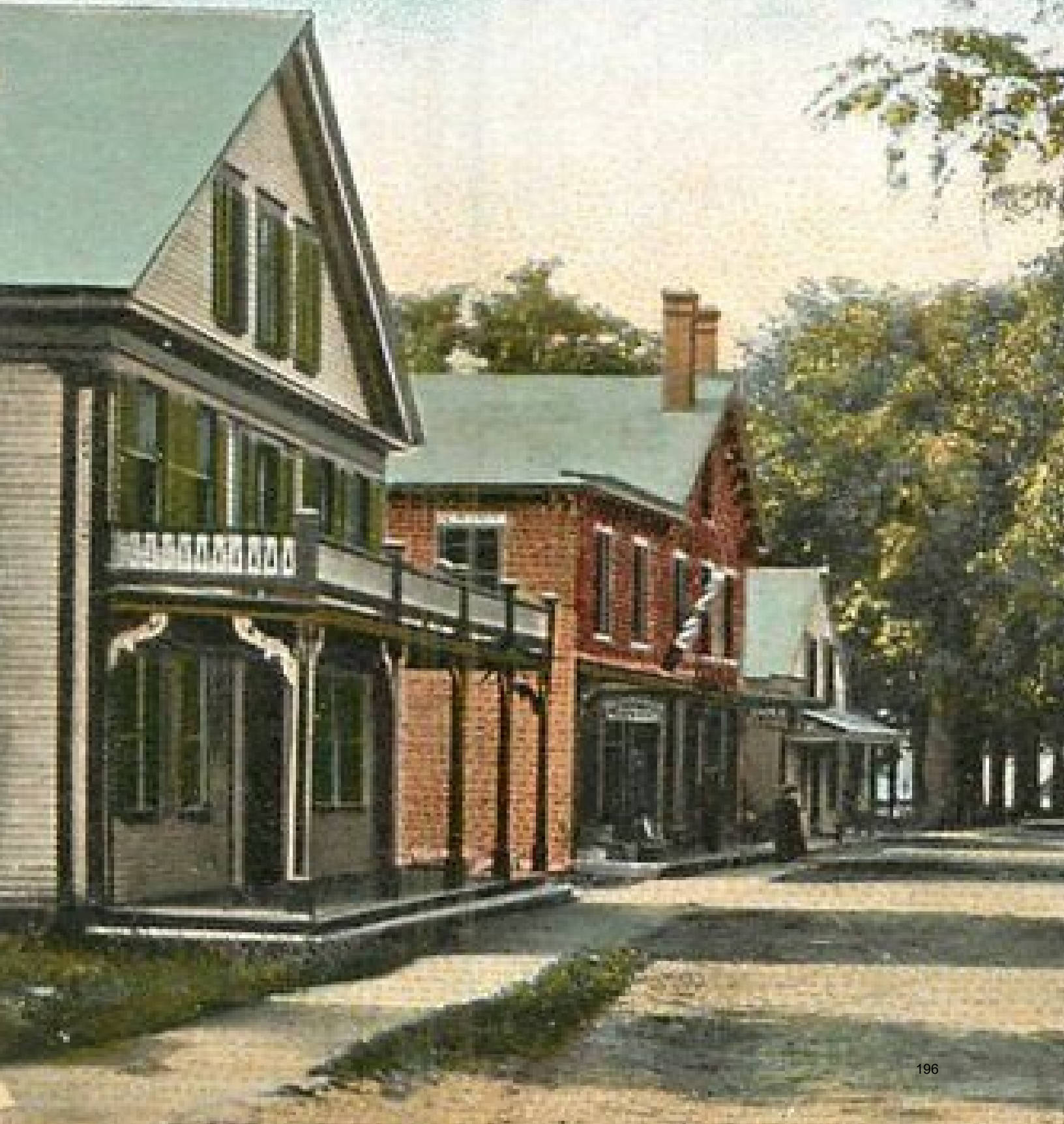
Bingham's economy is dependent on the constant stream of tourists, drawn to the area for wildlife and natural beauty, so preservation of these limited resources is essential. For this reason, consideration should be given to updating the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance. The Building Permit and Lot Requirement Ordinance should be reviewed for areas where it may need updating as well to provide further protection of the environment.

Bingham is home to one rare, threatened or endangered species, has three Candidate Deer Wintering Areas, numerous waterfowl habitats, rare forest community, and several brook trout priority streams. And these are only the areas documented by Beginning with Habitat. There is, no doubt, other fragile resources that need protection, as well.

The biggest threat to natural resources is residential development, particularly in rural areas or open spaces. The town has little in the way of nonregulatory incentives to encourage development in appropriate, designated growth areas. This is explored more extensively in the Existing and Future Land Use chapters. Bingham will need to find a balance between the need to draw people to town, economic development pressures, and the importance of preserving the essential natural resources outlined here.

Additionally, natural resources do not stop at the town's boundaries, nor are they the exclusive responsibility of the town. Successful protection of valuable resources depends on cooperation with neighboring towns, conservation organizations, and private landowners.

# 11: Existing Land Use



## Bingham's Vision Statement

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*Offering small town hospitality and charm, Bingham provides residents and visitors alike with a safe community, access to local, quality healthcare, and the support only found in a close-knit town. The town will strive to provide modern and appropriate housing and employment opportunities. As a regional hub, Bingham will prioritize offering the youth of the town an exceptional education and robust development programs. Bingham will continue to embrace its history and pristine natural resources, to preserve and protect those resources for the enjoyment of generations to come.*

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Existing land use patterns and future land use considerations are key elements in a community's Comprehensive Plan. In fact, every chapter of the Comprehensive Plan can be tied into both the Existing and Future Land Use sections. As such, relating the community's Vision Statement into the Existing Land Use chapter and Future Land Use Plan is a fundamental practice in ensuring alignment throughout the plan.

A vision is only as good as a community's commitment to work toward it. This work is broken down into a series of policies and strategies, ranging from recommendations for regulatory changes to ideas for better interlocal and public-private collaboration. In addition to ideas, there must be a plan for priorities and implementation to support a successful vision.

### Introduction

Patterns of land use and development form the visual landscape of a town. How a town "feels," whether it feels like a small-town, a bedroom suburb or an urban center, is as much a function of development patterns as overall population.

As a community grows, its character is defined by the use of its land area. The community's self-image as a small city, farm town, or a suburb is molded by the actions of its residents in the development of their various enterprises.

Most people live in a certain area because they appreciate the character of the community. However, a community's character can shift over time. The shift needs to be managed to ensure it remains desirable. This often means walking a fine line between enacting regulations and allowing personal preferences.

Trends that will not be welcomed, such as loss of open space, loss of productive farmland, increasing cost of public services, or lack of vitality in the village center, can be addressed through proper management of growth.

The Existing Land Use chapter serves to review the land use patterns and development in Bingham. Like many rural municipalities in Central Maine, Bingham can be characterized as a rural, residential community within commuting distance to larger, regional hubs, including Skowhegan and Madison. Bingham remains committed to providing residents with high-quality housing at affordable prices, ensuring the elderly can age in place, offering appropriate economic development opportunities, protecting natural resources, and maintaining the community character of the town, consistent with the vision statement.

## **Settlement Patterns**

The Town of Bingham comprises about 22,342 acres, of which 1.16 percent is water. The town's landscape is mostly forested, with small farms scattered throughout, and scenic views of the Kennebec River and mountains, which contribute to the rural character.

Bingham is a unique town in that it is both a regional hub and a rural community. With a population of less than 900 residents, it qualifies as a rural town, but with most of the population and nearly all the commercial development clustered in the village area, it feels like a much larger town. The convergence of Route 201 and Route 16 allow easy access to Bingham from surrounding towns, adding to its role as a service center.

Like most towns in this area, Bingham originated as a river settlement along the Kennebec River, from which farmers and loggers fanned out to settle and work in the surrounding areas. Where Bingham's history differs from other towns is that, in the last half of the 19th Century when many towns experienced decreasing population due to farmers heading west, Bingham developed waterpower, an industrial base and the employment opportunities that go along with it. Much of the farmland reverted to forest, but most of the population stayed or were replaced with new families as mills developed and grew, based on the seemingly infinite supply of forest land to the north.



At the turn of the century, Bingham established itself as the business and employment center for the surrounding areas and has remained as such. Development of the public water and sewer system contributed to Bingham's historical development, as did the emergence of Route 201 as a major highway, and the construction of Wyman Dam.

In recent years, Bingham has struggled to maintain its role as a service center. The highway, once a means of bringing trade and raw materials to town, now serves as a convenient route to Skowhegan and other larger service centers.

At the same time, Bingham is too far from major employment centers to be regarded as a commuter suburb. The loss of the railroad spur was a serious blow to the type of heavy manufacturing that built the town. Bingham is left with a large village bisected by a major highway and a rural resource base which is mostly shipped out of town for processing.

However, even more recently, Bingham has seen an increase in population as people begin to move into town. The availability of high-speed internet through fiber optics has allowed connectivity for those who work from home, resulting in an influx of new residents who want to live in Bingham for its ideal location close to environmental resources, outdoor recreation, and quality of life.

### **Characteristics of Bingham's Land**

Bingham has an abundance of natural resources, outlined further in the Natural Resources chapter. When considering land-use planning, it is imperative to plan with consideration for these fragile, natural resources, if not just for their inherent values, then also for Bingham's property values.

Bingham is fortunate that many of its natural resources have been well maintained and preserved. This is in part due to lack of development, but also because many of the people who choose to live in Bingham are aware of the integral value of the area's resources as well as their benefit to the town's economy for both the tourist industry and the forestry industries. To continue to protect these resources, it is imperative that they be incorporated whenever and wherever possible in future land use planning.

Bingham collaborates with the Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway on projects for both preservation as well as promoting natural resources.

### **Residential Land Uses**

New housing construction is primarily a function of economic factors, including the availability of land, public sewer and water, and roads. The supply of land in the rural areas of town is the chief influence on siting new homes.

Presently, residential land uses are most concentrated in the village due to smaller lot sizes, ease of access, and connectivity to public water and sewer. The village is built up and at or near capacity. As a result, land for new residential construction is limited, if available at all. For that reason, any new homes constructed are outside of the immediate village, but still in keeping with the community's vision for the town.

According to the 2000 Comprehensive Plan, residential development was encouraged in or adjacent to existing built-up areas, including the village area, Goodrich Road, and south along the Route 201 corridor as the area in which growth was encouraged. Residential development was also encouraged on environmentally safe sites with direct access to Route 201.



More recently, the areas where development has been occurring have been Mahoney Hill Road and Brighton Road, which are logical extensions of the previous residential growth area designated in the 2000 Comprehensive Plan. Further, the locations where new development is occurring are the areas that will be proposed as the newly designated growth area in the Future Land Use Plan. All the new residential development in Bingham is occurring lot by lot, rather than in approved subdivisions or developments.

In the rural areas, most of the land is privately owned by the timber company Weyerhaeuser, or other private timber companies. Although they sell individual parcels periodically, the lack of public roads, electricity, and other services results in most of the new development in these areas only being seasonal camps.

Since Bingham does not have zoning aside from Shoreland Zoning, there is little the town can do to influence the location or types of future residential development.

### **Subdivision Developments**

New subdivisions typically reflect patterns of development throughout town and beyond. Subdivisions are regulated in Bingham by the Subdivision Ordinances. Bingham's current Subdivision Ordinance does not have an adoption date and does not appear to have been updated recently. It would benefit from updating to reflect current standards and state legislation.

There have been minimal subdivisions created in Bingham. The cost of building supplies and other related expenses are the most likely roadblock for developing existing subdivisions or creating new ones.

Bingham only has two true subdivisions: Tanglewood Drive Subdivision off Route 201 and Snocap Subdivisions, off Brighton Road. Neither subdivision is at capacity. Tanglewood Drive is in the designated growth area determined by the previous comprehensive plan. Snocap Subdivision is in the newly designated growth area, as proposed by this comprehensive plan.

The analysis and statistics on the number of subdivisions in Bingham is based on the state definition of "subdivision." Maine defines subdivision as:

*The division of a tract or parcel of land into three or more lots within any five-year period that begins on or after September 23, 1971. This definition applies whether the division is accomplished by sale, lease, development, buildings or otherwise. The term "subdivision" includes the division of a new structure or structures on a tract or parcel of land into three or more dwelling units within a five-year period, the construction or replacement of three or more dwelling units on a single tract or parcel of land and the division of an existing structure or structures previously used for commercial or industrial use into three or more dwelling units within a five-year period.*

For comparison, the state does not consider the following to be subdivisions:

1. Gifts to [of land] relatives,
2. Transfer to governmental entity,
3. Transfer to conservation organizations,
4. Transfer of lots for forest management, agricultural management, or conservation of natural resources,
5. Unauthorized subdivision lots in existence for at least 20 years.

The specific details relating to what constitutes subdivision and what does not are outside the scope of this plan. For a deeper understanding, review the enabling statutes (MRS Title 30-A §4401 et seq. Municipal Subdivision Law, and MRS Title 12, §682-B. Exemptions from Subdivision Definition).

### **Industrial and Commercial Development**

Bingham's current day industrial development is primarily related to forestry operations and the working forest that covers most of the town. Though Bingham was historically a mill town, there are no operable mills left, although the town has been working with a company on the redevelopment of a new business in the old Quimby Mill. If everything goes as proposed, Maine Plywood USA will be in operation soon.

As recently as just a few decades ago, Bingham had a bustling village area, boasting a variety of store fronts where residents could easily meet all their needs without leaving town. Currently, Bingham has a significant number of vacant stores and buildings in the downtown area; although the town has made substantial progress in removing or remodeling many of these buildings. Most of the old buildings previously housed commercial or industrial businesses and have potential to do so again.

The loss of businesses in Bingham did not happen overnight; it was a gradual process that began with the closing of the Quimby Mill, roughly between the 1980s-1990s. Before this time, there were drug stores, multiple gas stations, a movie theater, bowling alley, rec centers, pool hall, hotels, restaurants, coffee shops, numerous churches and more. Most businesses were merchant or retail stores. This variety of businesses that provided necessary services and goods was what led to Bingham's status as a service center for the region.



As a result, most Bingham residents commute out of Bingham for employment and travel to larger service areas, such as Skowhegan or Madison. That does not change the fact that Bingham still serves as a regional hub for other smaller, more rural communities and acts as a bedroom community for those who commute to other towns for employment.

Today, Bingham's Route 201 corridor and the village area is the primary location for any industrial and commercial development, both new and old. The location earmarked by the 2000 Comprehensive Plan for commercial development was the downtown area, south of Austin Stream and north of Route 16 west, along Route 201.

New commercial development was encouraged on or with access to Main Street and access to public water and sewer connections.

Continued growth and redevelopment of commercial and industrial businesses in this area is expected since it is served by public water and sewer connections, is easily accessible. There are plenty of options for places new businesses can locate, though redevelopment of existing buildings is necessary due to the limited availability of developable land left in this area. Additionally, the availability of high-speed internet is anticipated to increase the draw of commercial and industrial development.

While some national and regional chains have a presence in Bingham, most of the businesses are primarily small businesses, lending to the town's unique character and appeal of buying locally. Many of the small businesses and home occupations in Bingham are internet sales only, making them inconspicuous. Continued encouragement of small businesses and home occupations is keeping with the community's vision as it promotes character, drives the economy, and increases available services in town.

The largest economic factor in Bingham besides forestry is outdoor recreation and the tourism industry. Recreational outfitters in Bingham offer rafting, ATVing, snowmobiling, guided fishing and hunting, and other services. Tourists visit Bingham in all four seasons to take advantage of the excellent outdoor recreation opportunities.

Increasing the mixture of diverse business options including both commercial and industrial in appropriate areas is in keeping with the community's vision as this type of development will continue to support employment and supply services for both residents, those in neighboring towns, and tourists passing through.

### **The Institutional and Service Sector**

A range of businesses and municipal services in Bingham, all conveniently located in the village area, provide critical services to people throughout the town and the region. The Town Office, Bingham Fire Department, Bingham Union Library, Upper Kennebec Valley High School, the town garage, public utilities, the Upper Kennebec Valley Ambulance Service, and the health care facilities are near the town's center.

The only necessity that is not in the village area is Bingham Transfer Station, which is in Concord Township.

## **Land Use Trends**

Most new developments have predominantly been for residential uses in the past several years. All new housing construction has been spread throughout town, on a lot-by-lot basis, and most of it has been outside of the previously designated growth area because it is at or near capacity. The locations where most new development has occurred is proposed as an expansion to the existing designated residential growth area in the Future Land Use Plan. For that reason, the growth Bingham is currently experiencing is in keeping with the town's vision.

Residential development is more challenging to direct into growth areas than commercial development because there are fewer regulatory and nonregulatory incentives. For example, most new commercial development would opt for a location served by public water and sewer connections (a nonregulatory incentive); however, this is rarely a consideration for residential development.

The lack of land use regulations or incentives coupled with the lack of available land in the village area and Route 201 corridor has led to new residential construction outside of the designated growth area. The village only has room for new development if existing buildings are remodeled or converted from another use.

Development along Brighton Road and parts of Mahoney Hill Road has increased in the past decade, in part because there are few other viable options for places to build new houses. But this is also in part because some people choose to move to Bingham due to the town's rural nature.

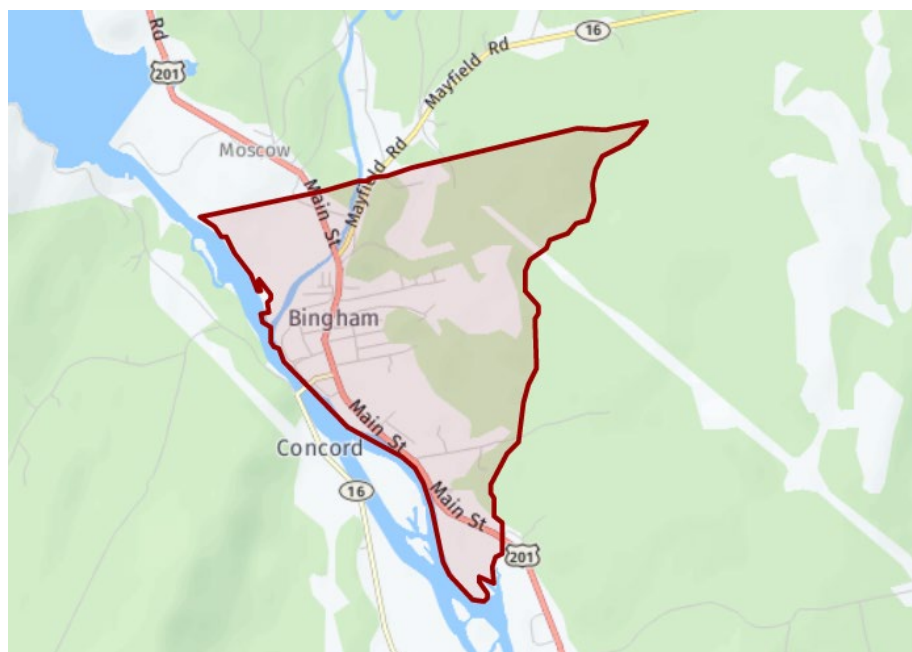
Bingham does not have an online permit tracking system. The approved permits are documented and tracked by the Chairman of the Planning Board. The application records, approvals, and denials are maintained in the town office. As the town grows, this may not be the most efficient method of record maintenance. The town should consider future options to improve and simplify tracking of permit application.

## **Census Designated Place**

Bingham has the notable feature of having a Census Designated Place or CDP. A CDP is a concentration of population defined by the United States Census Bureau for statistical purposes only. A CDP is different from a town; it is a location delineated by the Census Bureau based on population density in that area.

Bingham's Census Designated Place had a population of 708 as of July 1, 2023. The boundaries of the CDP are comprised of the primary, original settlement in Bingham and consists of approximately 2.27 square miles. Bingham is classified as U1 Census Class Code, which means it is a Census Designated Place with an official federally recognized name. In Figure 1 below, outlined and shaded in red is the official, federally recognized Census Designated Place in Bingham. The CDP is only the more densely populated and developed portion of town. Bingham's entire town population, per the 2020 Census is 866; approximately 82 percent of the population in Bingham live within the CDP. Bingham's CDP ranks 125th for total population and 108<sup>th</sup> for population density when compared to the 153 other CDPs throughout the State of Maine.

**FIGURE 1: BINGHAM'S CENSUS DESIGNATED PLACE BOUNDARY**



*Source: 2020 Census*

## **Land Use Regulation**

The Town of Bingham employs a part-time, fully certified Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) to work with the Planning Board. The Town's Planning Board consists of seven members and two alternates, who are involved and care about what happens in their community. The town's administrative capacity is adequate for managing land uses.

Bingham does not have zoning regulations, although the town has the following ordinances:

- Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, adopted in 2008,
- Subdivision Ordinance, no date,
- Floodplain Management Ordinance, adopted in 1995,
- Building Permit and Lot Requirements Ordinance, adopted 1990, amended through 2008.

The state guidelines for Shoreland Zoning has been updated since 2008, so Bingham should update their Shoreland Zoning Ordinance to reflect the latest amendment.

The Subdivision Ordinance requires Planning Board review for creation of new lots but lacks contemporary standards that would more effectively ensure efficient development while protecting public values and natural resources, such as up-to-date stormwater management and engineering standards. It offers a minimal level of regulatory oversight regarding the environmental impacts of development. If updated, consideration should be given to include standards for low impact development design, cluster subdivisions, and other standards aimed at improving protection of natural resources while providing the Planning Board with the tools and oversight in approving future development.

The Subdivision Ordinance does not have an adoption date, nor an amendment date, but it is outdated and would benefit from an update to reflect the most current version of State Statute.

The Floodplain Management Ordinance, adopted by the town in 1994, is out of date and inconsistent with the most recent changes to the state's model floodplain ordinance. Although FEMA has not updated the floodplain maps for Somerset County recently, Bingham should consider updating their Floodplain Management Ordinance to reflect the current standards in the state's model ordinance.

The town participates in the National Flood Insurance Program and agrees to comply with the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (P.L. 90-488, as amended) as outlined in the Floodplain Management Ordinance, adopted in 2011. Maps are updated with federal data releases. Bingham's Floodplain Management Ordinance needs to be updated to reflect the most recent standards, though it is enforced consistently.

The Building Permit and Lot Requirements Ordinance includes setback requirements, lot ratio requirements, and minimum road frontage requirements, as detailed below:

**Minimum Lot Size:**

- With Municipal Sewer Connection: 10,000 square feet
- Without Municipal Sewer Connection: 40,000 square feet

**Setback Requirements:**

- At least 25 feet from any road right-of-way;
- At least 10 feet from any property line

**Lot Ratio:**

- No lot shall have a frontage to depth ratio that exceeds:5 (depth shall not exceed five times the frontage).

**Minimum Road Frontage:**

- With Municipal Water and/or Sewer Connection- at least 60 feet
- Without Municipal Water and/or Sewer Connection- at least 150 feet

Exemptions from these requirements include those lots and/or structures in existence prior to the enactment of this Ordinance.

Bingham's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance breaks the town into seven Shoreland Districts:

- (1) Resource Protection
- (2) Limited Residential
- (3) Limited Commercial
- (4) General Development I
- (5) General Development II
- (6) Stream Protection
- (7) Commercial Fisheries

These Shoreland Districts are detailed below; however, since they are Shoreland Zones, they are not intended to directly influence development patterns.

**Resource Protection District-** The Resource Protection District includes areas in which development would adversely affect water quality, productive habitat, biological ecosystems, or scenic and natural values. This district shall include the following areas when they occur within the limits of the shoreland zone, exclusive of the Stream Protection District, except that areas which are currently developed and areas which meet the criteria for the Limited Commercial or General Development I Districts need not be included within the Resource Protection District.

- (1) Areas within 250 feet, horizontal distance, of the upland edge of freshwater wetlands, and wetlands associated with great ponds and rivers, which are rated "moderate" or "high" value waterfowl and wading bird habitat, including nesting and feeding areas, by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIF&W) that are depicted on a Geographic Information System (GIS) data layer maintained by either MDIF&W or the Department as of May 1, 2006. For the purposes of this paragraph "wetlands associated with great ponds and rivers" shall mean areas characterized by non-forested wetland vegetation and hydric soils that are contiguous with a great pond or river and have a surface elevation at or below the water level of the great pond or river during the period of normal high water. "Wetlands associated with great ponds or rivers" are considered to be part of that great pond or river.
- (2) Floodplains along rivers and floodplains along artificially formed great ponds along rivers, defined by the 100-year floodplain as designated on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps or Flood Hazard Boundary Maps, or the flood of record, or in the absence of these, by soil types identified as recent floodplain soils.
- (3) Areas of two or more contiguous acres with sustained slopes of 20 percent or greater.

- (4) Areas of two (2) or more contiguous acres supporting wetland vegetation and hydric soils, which are not part of a freshwater wetland as defined, and which are not surficially connected to a water body during the period of normal high water.
- (5) Land areas along rivers subject to severe bank erosion, undercutting, or riverbed movement.

**Limited Residential District-** The Limited Residential District includes those areas suitable for residential and recreational development. It includes areas other than those in the Resource Protection District, or Stream Protection District, and areas which are used less intensively than those in the Limited Commercial District or the General Development Districts.

**Limited Commercial District-** The Limited Commercial District includes areas of mixed, light commercial and residential uses, exclusive of the Stream Protection District, which should not be developed as intensively as the General Development Districts. This district includes areas of two or more contiguous acres in size devoted to a mix of residential and low intensity business and commercial uses. Industrial use is prohibited.

**General Development I District-** The General Development I District includes the following types of existing, intensively developed areas:

- (1) Areas of two or more contiguous acres devoted to commercial, industrial, or intensive recreational activities, or a mix of such activities, including but not limited to the following:
  - (a) Areas devoted to manufacturing, fabricating or other industrial activities;
  - (b) Areas devoted to wholesaling, warehousing, retail trade and service activities, or other commercial activities; and
  - (c) Areas devoted to intensive recreational development and activities, such as, but not limited to, amusement parks, racetracks, and fairgrounds.
- (2) Areas otherwise discernible as having patterns of intensive commercial, industrial, or recreational uses.

**General Development II District-** The General Development II District includes the same types of areas as those listed for the General Development I District. The General Development II District, however, shall be applied to newly established General Development Districts where the pattern of development at the time of adoption is undeveloped or not as intensively developed as that of the General Development I District.



Portions of the General Development District I or II may also include residential development. However, no area shall be designated as a General Development I or II District based solely on residential use. In areas adjacent to great ponds classified GPA and adjacent to rivers flowing to great ponds classified GPA, the designation of an area as a General Development District shall be based upon uses existing at the time of adoption of this Ordinance. There shall be no newly established General Development Districts or expansions in an area of existing General Development Districts adjacent to great ponds classified GPA, and adjacent to rivers that flow to great ponds classified GPA.

**Stream Protection District-** The Stream Protection District includes all land areas within seventy-five (75) feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high-water line of a stream, exclusive of those areas within two-hundred and fifty (250) feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high-water line of a great pond, or river, or within two hundred and fifty (250) feet, horizontal distance, of the upland edge of a freshwater wetland. Where a stream and its associated shoreland area are located within two-hundred and fifty (250) feet, horizontal distance, of the above water bodies or wetlands, that land area shall be regulated under the terms of the shoreland district associated with that water body or wetland.

**Commercial Fisheries District-** The Commercial Fisheries District includes areas where the existing predominant pattern of development is consistent with the allowed uses for this district as indicated in the Table of Land Uses, Section 14, and other areas which are suitable for functionally water-dependent uses, taking into consideration such factors as:

- (1) Shelter from prevailing winds and waves;
- (2) Slope of the land within 250 feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high-water line;
- (3) Depth of the water within 150 feet, horizontal distance, of the shoreline;
- (4) Available support facilities including utilities and transportation facilities; and
- (5) Compatibility with adjacent upland uses.

The 2000 Comprehensive Plan delineated the designated growth area as the village area and along the Route 201 corridor, which can be seen on the *Existing Land Use Map* in the Appendix of this Plan. Although Bingham has little in the way of official regulatory measures to direct growth into the designated growth areas, there are other non-regulatory measures for directing growth.

Growth Areas Explained: The Maine Growth Management Act requires towns to prepare Comprehensive Plans to designate areas preferred for new development, called “growth areas,” and areas where new development is not encouraged, termed “rural areas.” This approach directs new development to parts of town with amenities and capacity for growth and away from areas with environmental or other constraints. The purpose of the Growth Management Act is to prevent sprawl. Sprawl in rural areas increases the town’s expense in road maintenance and other municipal services. It also has a negative environmental impact on natural resources, such as habitat, biodiversity, water quality, and loss of farmland.

## **Non-Regulatory Measures**

In addition to the ordinances detailed above, Bingham also has a few non-regulatory means for directing growth to desired areas. The most obvious non-regulatory measure is the public sewer and water connectivity in the village area and extending south to Gateway Cabins. The availability of municipal water and sewer lowers development costs in the designated growth areas and helps to locate future development where desired. Although expansion of either system is not feasible, both have capacity for an increased number of users.

Another non-regulatory means to ensure growth occurs where it is desired is the availability of electricity. Most people would prefer to live in a house that has electricity; therefore, locations that are off grid will be less developed and will remain rural.

Besides municipal sewer and water and electricity, Bingham has already acted on other non-regulatory measures to encourage appropriate development in desired areas. For example, Bingham has been in the process of revitalizing its downtown area, including improving aesthetics, planting trees, sidewalk maintenance, creating green space in the village, and working with the state to lower the speed limits through town. By promoting the downtown area through revitalization, beautification, and increasing green space, Bingham emphasizes the importance of the village and provides a location for people to gather. In addition, all these measures encourage walkability and bicycle access in the village area, which creates a sense of place for residents and visitors alike.

Most of the rural land outside the village area is working forest and privately owned. This is an unintentional non-regulatory measure that will prevent sprawl and development in the rural areas unless Weyerhaeuser sells portions of its holdings. Essentially, the historical development pattern of Bingham acts to direct growth to the already developed areas within town.

All these non-regulatory measures, intentional or unintentional, work to direct future growth and development into the designated growth areas, while protecting the town's rural areas, preserving natural resources, reducing the impact of sprawl, and reducing the cost of supplying municipal services to areas outside of the town's center. Directing growth into areas that are already developed and preserving the rural character of the town are in keeping with the community's vision statement.

## **Forestry and Agriculture**

As forestry, and to a lesser extent, farming were the historical economic cornerstones of the community, these resource-based practices should be supported and afforded protection. Particularly because Bingham still relies heavily on the forest industry even today.

Enrollment in the Open Space, Farmland, and Tree Growth Tax Law are encouraged for property owners to reduce property tax valuations. The amount of acreage in Bingham enrolled in the Tree Growth Tax Law alone adds up to 13,287 acres (59 percent) out of the 22,342 acres which make up the town of Bingham.

To underscore the importance of forestry in Bingham, timber company giant Weyerhaeuser, currently holds approximately 13,569 acres of working forest land in Bingham. They are the largest landowner in town. For further information on agriculture and forestry in Bingham, see the Agriculture and Forestry Chapter of this Plan.

## **Bingham's Rural-Urban Balance**

The size of Bingham's rural area far surpasses the size of the village area or growth area. The Census Designated Place accounts for only about 0.01 percent of the town's total land base and houses more than 80 percent of the population, highlighting the increased density in this area. With about 60 percent of the town's land base in the Tree Growth Tax Law Program, and 80 percent of the town's population residing in the 2.27 square mile CDP, Bingham provides its residents with rural life along with most of the benefits associated with a much larger town.

Bingham's more rural areas are less likely to see any high-density development simply because they lack public utilities, electricity, or even roads to access them. In addition, most of the rural areas are privately held by timber companies who are unlikely to part with their land.

## Projections

### Population and Housing Projections

Referring to the population projections in the Community Profile and Housing chapter, it is difficult to anticipate significant future demand for housing.

- The **State Economist's Office** predicts a population of 974 people by 2038- an increase of 108 people (12.5 percent increase).
- **KVCOG** predicts a population of 799 people by 2030- a decrease of 67 people (7.7 percent decrease).

Obviously, these are quite different scenarios and emphasizes the undependable nature of population projections. Neither prediction has factored in the effects of the global pandemic COVID 19, on population fluctuation, either.

It is also important to note that neither projection considers changes to household size: declining household size requires additional housing to accommodate individuals living alone, whereas increasing household size means less houses required to accommodate a larger population of individuals sharing living quarters. Bingham's average household size has been decreasing steadily since the 1980s, reaching an all-time low of 1.95 in 2010. In 2021, the household size rebounded slightly to an average of 2.22 people per household. On Table 1 below, the data is detailed and explained by rows.

**Highlighted in Green:** With Bingham's current population of 866 people and current average household size of 2.22, the existing, year-round housing stock of 460 units is adequate for accommodating this population. In fact, according to household size data and housing stock data from the American Community Survey, there is a surplus of housing stock by 70 units.

**Highlighted in Gold:** Based on the State Economist's population project of an increased population to 974 people, combined with the current average household size of 2.22, Bingham's current housing stock would be sufficient to accommodate this increase. This population increase would require approximately 440 housing units and Bingham's existing housing stock is 460 housing units.

**Highlighted in Orange:** Based on the State Economist's population project of an increased population to 974 people, combined with a (hypothetical) decreased average household size of 1.95 people per household, Bingham's current housing stock would be short 40 houses. This projected population and smaller average household size would require approximately 500 housing units and Bingham's existing housing stock of 460 housing units would not be sufficient.

**Highlighted in Blue and Gray:** Based on KVCOG's decreased population projection of 799, regardless of the average household size (current and hypothetical), Bingham's current housing stock would be sufficient to accommodate the decreased population.

**TABLE 1: POPULATION PROJECTIONS AND HOUSING NEEDS, BASED ON HOUSEHOLD SIZE**

	Population Projection	Total Current Housing Units (Minus Seasonal)	Average Household Size	Amount of Housing Needed	Deficit?
Current	866	460	2.22	390	N/A
State Economist's Population Projection	974	460	2.22	440	No
State Economist's Population Projection	974	460	1.95	500	Yes, 40 houses
KVCOG's Population Projection	799	460	2.22	360	No
KVCOG's Population Projection	799	460	1.95	410	No

Based on Table 1, Bingham would only need additional housing to accommodate its residents if the population projection by the State Economist is attained and only if the average household size decreased down to 1.95 people per household. If the State Economist's population projection is reached and Bingham's average household size stays at 2.22 people per household, then the current housing stock is adequate, although just barely.

It is essential to bear in mind that these population projections are based on past trends, not current circumstances. Bingham's observed current trends for the past few years are of a steadily increasing population; an influx of new residents moving to Bingham from elsewhere.

It is also essential to understand that even with slow population growth, the components of the population will most assuredly change. The aging population and the trend towards decreased average household size will undoubtedly impact the need for certain housing types. Eventually, the decline in household size will plateau if it has not already, but the median age will likely continue to increase for some time, based on the Baby Boom generation.

The aging population is a necessary consideration. This demographic has a specific set of requirements, such as handicapped accessible homes so residents can age in place, the construction of more one-story homes, appropriately sized homes, and elderly housing facilities. Additionally, with the increase in residents, both younger and seniors living alone, the demand for smaller homes will increase. In short, the population may not be growing drastically, but the changes in the demographics of the population will result in the need for more homes or different types of homes.

Regardless of population projections, population fluctuation, and existing housing stock, it is unreasonable to assume no new houses will be built. The construction of new houses will consume more land for development. Since Bingham does not have zoning, the minimum lot size requirements are determined by the availability of public water and sewer connections, as set by Bingham's Building Permit and Lot Requirement Ordinance. For lots that can be connected to the town sewer, the minimum lot size is 10,000 square feet. For lots without a connection to the town sewer, the minimum lot size is 40,000 square feet.

Under the State Economist's population projection and a hypothetical decreased household size to 1.95 people per household (Table 1- row in orange), Bingham would need to add approximately 40 housing units to accommodate the population increase. Theoretically, if those houses were built in an area with access to the town sewer, those 40 houses would only take up 40,000 square feet or slightly less than one acre. This estimation does not include other necessities such as driveways, roads, or utilities which would take up more land.

Conversely, if all 40 hypothetical houses were built in other parts of town that are not served by public water and sewer, the minimum lot size is 40,000 square feet. Even on minimum lot sizes, these additional houses would take up 1,600,000 square feet of land or approximately 37 acres. Again, this does not take into consideration other necessities such as driveways, roads, or utilities which would take up more land.

Ideally, new homes would be built within Bingham's designated growth area, which is consistent with the town's vision, as well as with comprehensive planning guidelines.

#### *Institutional, Industrial, and Commercial Projections*

New commercial and industrial development in the last 10 years has been minimal in Bingham. That is not to say there has not been new businesses coming into Bingham; new businesses coming in take up residence in existing buildings, rather than developing or constructing new buildings. This is largely because the commercial growth area is at or near capacity with not much land available for new construction, requiring new businesses to redevelop existing buildings.

An Increase in growth for the industrial and commercial sectors is anticipated for the next 10 years. This is due to several factors. The green energy provided by the windmills and solar fields have been noted to draw in businesses, as well as people who work on these projects. The upgrades to the municipal sewer and water supplies are also a draw to businesses. And, once the plywood mill is in operation and production, it is expected to potentially bring 120 new jobs to the area. There are other employment draws, as well, such as the Central Maine Power Corridor, and various tree projects for the timber industries in and around Bingham.

With new job opportunities comes new residents and an increased need for housing. Bingham has already experienced this to some degree and is poised to continue to meet future demand.

New institutional development is not currently anticipated; although, if Bingham's growth continues to increase, then the town will have to consider the adequacy of existing institutional offerings.

## **Analysis**

Bingham is undeniably changing. The town will need to find ways to protect its natural resources and rural areas to prevent negative impacts related to growth and development as the town continues to grow and change.

The town will need to continue to monitor growth and development to ensure the availability of right-sized housing and the availability of housing in general meets demand. As the senior population continues to grow, the town may need to consider options to encourage the construction of specific types of homes, such as one-story houses, handicapped-accessible houses, or senior housing.

Bingham should remain aware of population trends and continually review and evaluate the municipal ordinances for effectiveness in managing land uses and protecting natural resources. The Subdivision Ordinance, Floodplain Management Ordinance, and Shoreland Zoning Ordinance are out of date and need to be reviewed and updated to ensure they comply with the state's requirements, at minimum. The Building Permit and Lot Requirement Ordinance would also benefit from a review and update to ensure it provides the utmost protection to natural resources and sets the most current standards.

If Bingham continues to grow, there should be consideration given to taking small, incremental steps towards adopting minimal zoning regulations to continue to protect the town's natural resources and rural character.

## Recommendations

- I: General Recommendations
- II: Land Use Plan
- III: Capital Investment Planning Process
- IV: Regional Coordination



## Recommendations Part I: Policies and Strategies

This section of the Plan lists general recommendations, in the form of policies and strategies, for each element of the plan. These recommendations are intended to address the issues raised in the review and analysis of the chapters in the *Community Assessment* section. The matrix also shows a suggested implementation timing and responsible party.

For this section, the implementation priority is divided into near-term, mid-term, long-term, and ongoing, defined as the following:

- **“Short term”** is presumed to be activities which can be completed within two years. These are primarily changes to Zoning and other ordinances and are easily achievable actions.
- **“Mid-term”** activities will be commenced and/or completed between two and five years after adoption of the plan. These consist of lower-priority activities or those which require additional planning or preparation to accomplish.
- **“Long-term”** activities are those which are more nebulous, and for which the path to implementation has not yet come into focus.
- **“Ongoing”** is used to identify strategies which are currently in place and should continue.

### Implementation Mechanism and Evaluation Measures:

Bingham’s Select Board should consider implementing an approach to monitor the progress of the Comprehensive Plan. The town should continue tracking and monitoring growth and development by tracking and documenting permits issued. The Code Enforcement Officer (CEO), in conjunction with the Chairman of the Planning Board are instrumental in tracking permits issued, providing insight into current land use issues, analyzing the effectiveness of Bingham’s ordinances, and tracking subdivision applications.

The Planning Board and town officials should mandate a regularly scheduled, comprehensive review of the Building Permit and Lot Size Requirement Ordinance to ensure it reflects the town’s changing needs. These reviews should be in conjunction with the annual town budget process.

The Planning Board will prepare a written report for each calendar year, containing the data from the permit tracking history. The report will be shared with the Select Board and Town Manager for review and discussion.

If the evaluation concludes that portions of the Comprehensive Plan and/or its implementation are not effective, the Select Board and Town Manager could propose changes.

Tracking the following applications is recommended:

- The location of new residential structures.
- The location of new commercial structures/land uses.
- Redevelopment of existing buildings for commercial/industrial uses.
- Conversions from seasonal camps to year-round residences.

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Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p><b>HISTORIC RESOURCES:</b></p> <p>Bingham has an abundance of historic buildings and sites, many of which have been well maintained and preserved. Bingham is home to the Old Canada Road Historical Society which strives to preserve the town's valued heritage and culture, as well as the Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway, a scenic corridor that is also rich in history.</p> <p>Historic buildings that are privately owned present a challenge in preserving and restoring, and as such some historic buildings have fallen into disrepair over the years. The town currently has no requirements above the state requirements for site assessment for historic artifacts.</p> <p><b>State Goal: To preserve the State's historic and archeological resources.</b></p>		
Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p>1. Protect to the greatest extent practicable the significant historic and archaeological resources in the community.</p>	<p>1.1 For known historic archeological sites and areas sensitive to prehistoric archeology, through local land use ordinances require subdivision or non-residential developers to take appropriate measures to protect those resources, including but not limited to, modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, and/or extent of excavation.</p> <p>1.2 Adopt or amend land use ordinances to require the planning board (or other designated review authority) to incorporate maps and information provided by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission into their review process.</p> <p>1.3 Work with the local or county historical society and/or the Maine Historic Preservation Commission to assess the need for, and if necessary, plan for, a comprehensive community survey of the community's historic and archaeological resources.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Planning Board, Old Canada Road Historical Society CEO. Mid-term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
2. Continue efforts to preserve Bingham's history.	<p>2.1 Support and encourage the Old Canada Road Historic Society in their endeavors to preserve Bingham's history.</p> <p>2.2 Continue to seek more volunteers and town representation to collaborate with the Old Canada Road Historic Society.</p> <p>2.3 Assist in nominating buildings/sites for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.</p> <p>2.4 Seek ways to engage younger residents and involve them in the Old Canada Road Historic Society.</p> <p>2.5 Require new developments in sensitive areas to perform an analysis of possible archeological impacts prior to construction.</p> <p>2.6 Continue to seek funding sources, such as grants aimed at historical preservation.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Old Canada Road Historical Society. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, Old Canada Road Historical Society. Long term.</p> <p>Old Canada Road Historical Society. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, Old Canada Road Historical Society, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Old Canada Road Historical Society. Ongoing.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
	<p>2.7 Establish a preservation program for identification and publication of Bingham's historic assets.</p> <p>2.8 Develop/create self-guided tours to engage tourists and residents alike.</p> <p>2.9 Conduct a comprehensive inventory of historical buildings in Bingham for potential identification and inclusion on state or federal historic listings.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Old Canada Road Historical Society. Mid-term.</p> <p>Old Canada Road Historical Society. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Old Canada Road Historical Society. Mid-term.</p>
<p>3. Continue to support the efforts of the Old Canada Road Historical Society to raise awareness and interest in town history.</p>	<p>3.1 Consider options for and explore interest in fundraisers, historical walking tours, lecture series, family events, active social media postings and more to create excitement and involvement about Bingham's history to engage the community to be more involved in the town's history.</p> <p>3.2 Contact MHPC to obtain relevance of findings, video interview, and request allowance to temporarily display for locals to witness.</p> <p>3.3 In situations where significant historic or archaeological resources may be impacted, require that the Maine Historic Preservation Commission and the Old Canada Road Historical Society be given an opportunity to review and comment on the development early in the permitting process.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Old Canada Road Historical Society. Mid-term.</p> <p>Old Canada Road Historical Society. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, Old Canada Road Historical Society, CEO. Mid-term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
	<p>3.4 Work with the Old Canada Road Historical Society and/or the Maine Historic Preservation Commission to assess the need for, and if necessary, plan for, a comprehensive community survey of the community's historic and archeological resources.</p> <p>3.5 Seek funding from the Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC), Maine State Archives and other sources to complete the inventories of significant archaeological and historic resources.</p> <p>3.6 Establish a historical marker program for locally identified historical sites and buildings in Bingham.</p> <p>3.7 Consider promoting the Old Canada Road Historical Society by adding a link to their webpage on the town's official website.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Old Canada Road Historical Society. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Old Canada Road Historical Society. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Old Canada Road Historical Society. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Old Canada Road Historical Society. Short term.</p>
<p>4. Consider the adoption of a Historic Preservation Ordinance or land use standards to protect historically significant properties.</p>	<p>4.1 Investigate the possibility of adding a provision to an existing ordinance or creating a stand-alone ordinance that would enhance protection of potential historic and archeological resources.</p> <p>4.2 Consider the development of an Ordinance to protect Listed and Eligible Historic buildings.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
<p>5. The town will strive prevent disturbance of archeological resources by regulating development in areas likely to contain those resources and requiring surveys before construction activity.</p>	<p>5.1 Make Maine Historic Preservation Commission information and map of areas with high archeological potential widely available.</p> <p>5.2 Explore ordinance provisions or building standards that require applicants to identify and protect archeological resources in sensitive areas. Make building permits conditional with appropriate use.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Old Canada Road Historical Society. Short-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, Old Canada Road Historical Society CEO. Mid-term.</p>



Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p><b>LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:</b></p> <p>Bingham's local economy is an important contributor to the health and vitality of the town and is directly linked to the town's success and tied to town policy. Like many other communities, Bingham is facing challenges due to lack of investment capital.</p> <p>But Bingham has many assets as well – the town's location along the Kennebec River, abundant recreational opportunities, low unemployment rates, and a good quality of life.</p> <p>The town should continue to promote these assets, cooperate with private businesses and regional economic players, and maintain a focus on suitable economic development to succeed in building a more robust economy.</p> <p><b>State Goal: To promote an economic climate which increases job opportunities and overall economic well-being.</b></p>		
Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p>1. To support the type of economic development activity the community desires, reflecting the community's role in the region.</p>	<p>1.1 If appropriate, assign responsibility and provide financial support for economic development activities to the proper entity (e.g., a local economic development committee, a local representative to a regional economic development organization, the community's economic development director, a regional economic development initiative, or other).</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.</p>
	<p>1.2 Explore ways to help existing businesses stay in Bingham.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.</p>
	<p>1.3 Promote and support the historical museum and other similar tourist destinations in Bingham.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Old Canada Road Historical Society. Ongoing.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
<p>2. To make a financial commitment, if necessary, to support desired economic development, including needed public improvements.</p>	<p>2.1 Enact or amend local ordinances to reflect the desired scale, design, intensity, and location of future economic development.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p>
	<p>2.2 If public investments are foreseen to support economic development, identify the mechanisms to be considered to finance them (local tax dollars, creating a tax increment financing district, a Community Development Block Grant or other grants, bonding, impact fees, etc.)</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board. Long Term.</p>
	<p>2.3 Explore grant opportunities for appropriate economic development.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.</p>
	<p>2.4 Investigate and consider all opportunities to continue to revitalize the village area.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Ongoing.</p>
	<p>2.5 Explore options for adaptive reuse of underutilized/historic buildings to develop a strategy for their rehabilitation and reuse.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p>
	<p>2.6 Upon the availability of high-speed internet, consider ways to establish Bingham as an ideal location for remote work, such as providing public internet access in areas where people congregate.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
3. To coordinate with regional development corporations and surrounding towns as necessary to support desired economic development.	3.1 Participate in any regional economic development planning efforts.	Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.
	3.2 Explore options to coordinate with the regional school system for training opportunities for young workers.	Town Manager, Select Board. Mid-term.
4. Consider long term strategies for continued economic viability and resiliency.	4.1 Continue to promote and encourage home occupations and small home businesses throughout town.	Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.
	4.2 Consider creating and maintaining a business directory on the town website or accessible via a link on the town website.	Town Manager, Select Board. Mid-term.
	4.3 Explore the need for a Site Plan Review Ordinance to give the Planning Board oversight to set conditions and ensure future development does not harm natural resources.	Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.
	4.4 Explore strategies to increase the draw to tourists by utilizing Bingham's historic and recreational assets.	Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, Old Canada Road Historical Society. Ongoing.

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
	<p>4.5 Continue to support good management of natural resources.</p> <p>4.6 Improve and promote the availability of multi-use trails, snowmobiling, and other recreational assets in the Bingham area through literature, town website, and other internet outlets.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.</p>
<p>5. Continue to improve and promote Bingham's downtown.</p>	<p>5.1 Continue to promote pedestrian safety and walkability in the downtown area.</p> <p>5.2 Establish community gateways, such as signage, at both ends of Main Street to better define the village area.</p> <p>5.3 Continue to work to maintain existing parks or green spaces in the downtown area.</p> <p>5.4 Continue to improve infrastructure on Main Street, to make it a more attractive place to visit.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.</p>

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p><b>HOUSING:</b></p> <p>Bingham has a stable housing stock in the village area, where most of the population lives. The rural part of Bingham is less populated, and year-round homes are dispersed amongst seasonal homes. Bingham Village is served by public water and sewer and is the logical location for any new development. By directing potential development to the village, the town can preserve its rural character and promote the historic village center while simultaneously reducing the cost of providing services to areas further from the town center.</p> <p>The town can anticipate a need for more rental housing and senior housing due to changing demographics. Affordability is an issue for both owner-occupied homes, as well as for rental properties.</p> <p>Bingham's only land use regulation is through Shoreland Zoning and the Building Permit and Lot Requirement Ordinance.</p> <p><b>State Goal: To encourage and promote affordable, decent housing opportunities for all Maine citizens.</b></p>		
Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p>1. Encourage and promote adequate affordable and workforce housing to support the community's and region's economic development.</p>	<p>1.1 Maintain, enact or amend growth area land use regulations to increase density, decrease lot size, setbacks and road widths, or provide incentives such as density bonuses, to encourage the development of affordable/workforce housing.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Long term.</p>
	<p>1.2 Maintain, enact or amend ordinances to allow the addition of at least one accessory apartment per dwelling unit in growth areas, subject to site suitability.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p>
	<p>1.3 Create or continue to support a community affordable/workforce housing committee and/or regional affordable housing coalition.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
	<p>1.4 Designate a location(s) in growth areas where mobile home parks are allowed pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A. §4358(3)(M) and where manufactured housing is allowed pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A. §4358(2).</p> <p>1.5 Explore options for another Tax Increment Finance district, where feasible.</p> <p>1.6 Make financial and technical assistance available to residents for improvement of housing stock.</p> <p>1.7 Seek out CDBG and other grant opportunities for improvements to housing stock, including vacant homes and rental units.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.</p>
<p>2. To ensure that land use controls encourage the development of quality affordable housing, including rental housing.</p>	<p>2.1 Support the efforts of local and regional housing coalitions in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.</p> <p>2.2 Provide training for the Code Enforcement Officer, Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals, aimed at providing town staff and volunteers with relevant knowledge in their subject areas to ensure they are equipped to make decisions and implement policy.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Ongoing.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
	2.3 Ensure municipal ordinances, including but not limited to the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance and the Building Permit and Lot Requirement Ordinance, encourage the development of high-quality affordable housing, including rental housing.	Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.
	2.4 Investigate and promote opportunities to provide energy-efficiency improvements to reduce home ownership costs.	Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Ongoing.
	2.5 Schedule bi-annual reviews and updates of all ordinances to keep them in sync with current legislation.	Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.
	2.6 Work with local hospitals/senior organizations to develop a plan for senior/assisted housing within the community or region.	Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Long term.
	2.7 Continue to explore grant opportunities to improve the quality of the existing housing stock.	Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.
3. To encourage and support the efforts of the regional housing coalitions in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.	3.1 Seek to achieve a level of at least 10% of new residential development built or placed during the next decade be affordable.	Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.
	3.2 Explore options to encourage workforce housing development to support community and regional economic development.	Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
	3.3 Identify unutilized or underutilized buildings throughout town that could be redeveloped to provide a variety of housing options, styles, and locations.	Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Ongoing.
4. Make sure Bingham's municipal ordinances regulating, related to, or impacting housing are reviewed regularly, kept up to date, and do not create unnecessary barriers in housing development.	<p>4.1 Ensure all ordinances are up to date and comply with related, current Maine Statutes.</p> <p>4.2 Encourage multi-family housing within existing and newly created housing units in locations where it is appropriate.</p> <p>4.3 Explore options where the development of multi-family housing would be appropriate and in keeping with the town's character.</p> <p>4.4 Review and amend Bingham's Subdivision Ordinance and other ordinances to favor well-planned new development and/or redevelopment.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p>
5. Investigate and assess the condition and environmental impact of seasonal waterfront housing stock on the Kennebec River.	<p>5.1 Track seasonal homes and their current condition and proposed use (year-round, seasonal, rental, etc.)</p> <p>5.2 Evaluate provisions of the municipal ordinances related to standards governing the conversion of seasonal into year-round dwellings and single-family into multi-family (or accessory) units and propose revisions as appropriate.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Planning Board, Select Board, CEO. Short term.</p>



<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
	<p>5.3 Through tracking, evaluate the condition of existing wastewater disposal system of seasonal properties to ensure compliance with state standards and to prevent negative environmental impacts.</p> <p>5.4 Explore tracking methods for short-term vacation rentals to evaluate possible impacts on the environment and town related to short term rentals.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Long Term.</p>
6. Implement ways to ensure new housing development meets the current and future needs of Bingham's changing and aging population.	<p>6.1 Consider forming an Age Friendly Committee to work towards increasing the development of senior housing options.</p> <p>6.2 Explore the feasibility of forming a Housing Committee, with volunteers who will act to ease the permitting process for developers, keep informed of current housing issues in Bingham, and collaborate with relevant town staff, boards, and other committees.</p> <p>6.3 Identify Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA) programs that may be of use to current or prospective residents and make information available through the town office.</p> <p>6.4 Investigate methods of promoting and encouraging the creation of and development of senior housing throughout town.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p>
7. Protect all natural resources and Bingham's rural character, both of which attract tourists to town, while promoting housing development.	7.1 Implement a permit tracking system to determine the quantity of new developments in the designated growth area.	Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p><b>PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES:</b></p> <p>Bingham provides adequate public services to its residents. The town is responsible for the fire department, public sewer, public works, and cooperates with the school district on education.</p> <p>Public water and sewer connections are available in the village area and are adequate to accommodate expanded usage, though not expansion of the system.</p> <p>The town is in a good position to accommodate the future population with adequate, well-maintained public facilities and services. Emergency services are sufficient and well suited to the community.</p> <p><b>State Goal: To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.</b></p>		
Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p>1. To efficiently meet identified public facilities and service needs.</p>	<p>1.1 Identify any capital improvements needed to maintain or upgrade public services to accommodate the community's anticipated growth and changing demographics.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.</p>
	<p>1.2 Locate new public facilities comprising at least 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments in designated growth areas.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.</p>
	<p>1.3 Continue to work toward making all public buildings and properties ADA compliant and accessible.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p>
	<p>1.4 Consider options for the creation of new cemeteries or expansion of existing ones, as Bingham's current cemeteries are at capacity.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Long Term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
2. To provide public facilities and services in a manner that promotes and supports growth and development in identified growth areas.	2.1 Encourage local sewer and water districts to coordinate planned service extensions with the Future Land Use Plan.	Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.
	2.2 If public water supply expansion is anticipated, identify, and protect suitable sources.	Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.
	2.3 Explore options for regional delivery of local services.	Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.
3. Encourage citizen participation in community affairs by keeping residents informed of town activities and opportunities.	3.1 Explore ways to encourage residents to volunteer for local boards, committees, and activities.	Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Short term.
	3.2 Publish an annual directory of all local officials, organizations, businesses, and services, perhaps as a pullout section in the Town Report.	Town Manager, Select Board. Mid-term.
	3.3 Consider options for implementing an e-newsletter to complement the town website and annual Town Report.	Town Manager, Select Board. Mid-term.
	3.4 Ensure the town website includes information such as offerings at the library, and historical, and cultural opportunities and events.	Town Manager, Select Board. Short term.

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
	<p>3.5 Update the town's website to promote opportunities for residents to volunteer in any capacity throughout town.</p> <p>3.6 Investigate the formation of an Economic Development Committee to promote, encourage, and assist local, small businesses in Bingham.</p> <p>3.7 Announce important community information and events on the new electronic sign.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board. Short term.</p>
<p>4. Improve and encourage citizen participation in town government and community affairs.</p>	<p>4.1 Explore ways to encourage residents to volunteer for local boards, committees, and activities.</p> <p>4.2 Establish a "people resource" bank of volunteers with special skills. Promote this through a 'sign up' page on the town's website.</p> <p>4.3 Annually recognize individual volunteers who have made significant contributions of their time.</p> <p>4.4 Investigate the pros and cons of including other historic buildings, monuments, etc. in Bingham under the umbrella of the Old Free Meeting House Committee.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Old Free Meeting House Committee, Select Board. Short term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
5. Continue to hold annual community events/festivities/programs to foster community spirit and reinforce the rural character of the town.	5.1 Encourage participation and elicit feedback and suggestions for ways to improve and revitalize various community events from residents.	Town Manager, Select Board. Short term.
	5.2 Consider the creation of one committee to oversee all community events, including the Christmas celebration.	Town Manager, Select Board. Mid-term.
6. Continue to maintain taxes as low as possible.	6.1 Improve planning for capital expenditures through an annual Capital Improvements Program (CIP) based on the Capital Investment Plan.	Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.
	6.2 Work with the school board to undertake long-term school facilities planning.	Town Manager, Select Board, School Board. Ongoing
	6.3 Receive from the Fire Department an annual assessment of the adequacy of and need for future replacement of fire equipment.	Town Manager, Select Board, Fire Department. Mid-term.
	6.4 Continue to maintain a long-term plan for road improvements and construction needs using a system such as Road Surface Management System.	Town Manager, Select Board, Public Works. Ongoing.
	6.5 Continue to plan for long-range solid waste disposal and recycling needs.	Town Manager, Select Board, Public Works. Ongoing.

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
	<p>6.6 Reduce potential future town expenses by encouraging redevelopment, when feasible, in locations close to existing public facilities and services.</p> <p>6.9 Investigate non-tax sources of revenue to support and promote desirable amenities for recreation.</p> <p>6.10 Continue to promote tourism by offering desirable recreational amenities.</p> <p>6.11 Continue to finance existing and future facilities and their maintenance in a cost-effective manner.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.</p>
7. Continue to seek increased opportunities for regional cooperation with neighboring towns.	<p>7.1 Establish a protocol to look at opportunities for equipment sharing, including purchases of new equipment.</p> <p>7.2 Engage neighboring towns in planning for disaster mitigation.</p> <p>7.3 Continue contacts and discussions with neighboring towns and regional entities on new ways to provide more efficient services.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.</p>
8. Work with state and county officials to increase enforcement of traffic laws, especially in residential areas along Route 201.	8.1 Investigate the possibility of contracting a sheriff's deputy for dedicated, part-time coverage during tourist season when traffic volume is increased.	Town Manager, Select Board. Mid-term.

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
<b>FISCAL CAPACITY:</b>  Bingham is in acceptable financial condition, with no debt and sound financial management. In general, revenues have been reasonable stable in the last decade. The Town Manager and Select Board are committed to achieving a balanced budget with respect to the municipal side and seek innovative and sustainable solutions to that end.  <b>State Goal: To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.</b>		
<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
1. To finance existing and future facilities and services in a cost-effective manner.	1.1 Formalize, review, and update the Town's Capital Improvement Plan on an annual basis, incorporate improvements into the annual budget, and expand its scope to 10 years into the future.	Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.
	1.2 Support legislative initiatives to increase state financial support to towns and schools.	Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.
	1.3 Explore grant opportunities available to assist in the funding of capital investments within the community.	Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.
2. To explore grants available to assist in the funding of capital investments within the community.	2.1 Maintain a working knowledge and listing of grants and deadlines for financing special projects.	Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.
	2.2 Explore educational budget alternatives and ways to reduce the per student cost.	Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
	2.3 Maintain a working knowledge and listing of grants and deadlines for financing special projects.	Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.
3. To reduce Maine's tax burden by staying within LD 1 spending limitations.	3.1 Explore opportunities to work with neighboring communities to plan for and finance shared or adjacent capital investments to increase cost savings and efficiencies.	Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.
4. Explore options to encourage and manage appropriate development outside municipal tax dollars.	4.1 Explore opportunities to provide financial support other than tax dollars, such as CDS, to fund projects that would be beneficial to the community at large.	Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.



<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
<p><b>TRANSPORTATION:</b></p> <p>Transportation is an essential element to the local economy and community. At its simplest, it provides access to jobs, services, and supplies. Without transportation and road access, a community could not exist.</p> <p>Bingham's road network is generally in good condition, but with no close access to the interstate system and no direct access to public transportation. The town maintains an annual budget for road maintenance. Winter maintenance is provided by a contractor and summer road maintenance is also provided by outside entity.</p> <p>The Transportation chapter serves to identify issues within the transportation system so they can be addressed where feasible.</p> <p><b>State Goal: To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.</b></p>		
<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
1. To prioritize community and regional needs associated with safe, efficient, and optimal use of transportation systems.	1.1 Develop or continue to update a prioritized improvement, maintenance, and repair plan for the community's transportation network.	Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.
2. To safely and efficiently preserve or improve the transportation system.	2.1 Initiate or actively participate in regional and state transportation efforts.	Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.
	2.2 Work with MDOT to improve the existing transportation system.	Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.
	2.3 Take into consideration scenic road corridors when planning, designing, and executing roadway improvements.	Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Ongoing.
	2.4 Ensure that road maintenance and improvement operations minimize erosion, phosphorus runoff, protect groundwater and maintain safety.	Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Ongoing.

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
	<p>2.5 Evaluate and update the Parking Ordinances to ensure viability.</p> <p>2.6 In the Parking Ordinance, include language for the parking ban during snowstorms to alleviate issues with snow removal.</p> <p>2.7 When evaluating and updating the Parking Ordinance, include language that provides the town with a means of enforcement action, such as enacting fines, for those who do not obey the parking ban, or park illegally.</p> <p>2.6 Investigate the demand for installing Electronic Vehicle charging stations.</p> <p>2.7 Continue to seek grants to install Electronic Vehicle charging stations.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.</p>
<p>3. To promote public health, protect natural and cultural resources, and enhance livability by managing land use in ways that maximize the efficiency of the transportation system and minimize increases in vehicle miles traveled.</p>	<p>3.1 Explore options for connecting points of interest, such as schools and other public areas, to make them more accessible and safer for walking and bicycling.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
<p>4. To meet the diverse transportation needs of residents (including children, the elderly and disabled) and through travelers by providing a safe, efficient, and adequate transportation network for all types of users (motor vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists).</p>	<p>4.1 Maintain, enact or amend local ordinances as appropriate to address or avoid conflicts with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Policy objectives of the Sensible Transportation Policy Act (23 M.R.S.A. §73);</li> <li>○ State access management regulations pursuant to 23 M.R.S.A. §704; and</li> <li>○ State traffic permitting regulations for large developments pursuant to 23 M.R.S.A. §704-A.</li> </ul>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p>
	<p>4.2 Explore feasible options that would provide transportation for elderly, disabled, or low-income community members.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board. Short term.</p>
	<p>4.3 Increase the amount of signage in locations where the roadway is shared with ATVs.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board. Short term.</p>
	<p>4.4 Ensure traffic safety signage for ATVs regulates speed, direction, flow of traffic, etc., to prevent confusion and the potential for accidents.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board. Short term.</p>
	<p>4.5 Explore options to increase law enforcement presence and enforce traffic laws for ATVs on shared roadways.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
5. To promote fiscal prudence by maximizing the efficiency of the state or state-aid highway network.	5.1 Maintain, enact or amend ordinance standards for subdivisions and for public and private roads as appropriate to foster transportation-efficient growth patterns and provide for future street and transit connections.	Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Mid-term.
6. Increase the availability of pedestrians, bike paths, and multi-use trails throughout town.	<p>6.1 Continue collaboration with Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway in developing bike paths.</p> <p>6.2 Promote the availability of multi-use trails, snowmobiling, and other recreational assets through literature, internet, and other outlets.</p> <p>6.3 Evaluate the sidewalks for connectivity and work to improve any known issues, such as the lack of sidewalks past Goodrich Road south to Jimmy's Market.</p> <p>6.4 Evaluate the sidewalks for ADA compliance.</p> <p>6.5 Continue to budget for sidewalk maintenance.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Planning Board. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.</p>
7. Continue to address traffic speed and pedestrian safety on Main Street with the intent of making the downtown more pedestrian friendly.	<p>7.1 Explore grant options to continue to improve the downtown area.</p> <p>7.2 Consider the feasibility of a traffic study or downtown study aimed at improving the walkability, pedestrian safety, parking, and areas for improvement along Main Street.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board. Long term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
	<p>7.3 Work with MDOT to implement pedestrian safety improvements including flashing crosswalk signs along Main Street.</p> <p>7.4 Establish village markers, such as signage, to better define the village area and make visitors aware they're entering Bingham Village.</p> <p>7.5 Ensure crosswalks are highly visible, either with fresh paint or other measures.</p> <p>7.6 Engage MDOT in exploring options to increase pedestrian safety on Main Street, such as flashing crosswalk signs, additional signage, speed limit signs that photograph license plates of vehicles traveling above the posted speed limit, etc.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.</p>

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p><b>RECREATION:</b></p> <p>Bingham is a recreational hub for the region, providing an abundance of opportunities for both active and passive recreational activities, across both public and private entities.</p> <p>While minimal land is formally protected, more than half of the town is privately owned by timber companies, and maintained as working forests, resulting in unofficially protected open space and good environmental management practices.</p> <p>As the town continues to attract new residents, the adequacy and sufficiency of recreational offerings should continue to be monitored to ensure demands are met.</p> <p><b>State Goal: To promote and protect the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities for all Maine citizens, including access to surface waters.</b></p>		
	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p>1. To maintain/upgrade existing recreational facilities and public water resources as necessary to meet current and future needs.</p>	<p>1.1 Create a list of recreation needs or develop a recreation plan to meet current and future needs. Assign a committee or community official to explore ways of addressing the identified needs and/or implementing the policies and strategies outlined in the plan.</p>	<p>Town manager, Select Board. Mid-term.</p>
	<p>1.2 Continue to support the town's community parks, ballfields, tennis courts, and community buildings, as well as looking for opportunities for expansion.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board Rec Director. Ongoing.</p>
	<p>1.3 Investigate the possibility of coordinating with neighboring towns in the development of a shared community building to serve all ages.</p>	<p>Town manager, Select Board, Rec Director. Mid-term.</p>
	<p>1.4 Continue to improve school-based recreation facilities.</p>	<p>Town manager, Select Board, Rec Director, School Board. Ongoing.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
	<p>1.5 Continue to support the Recreation Director in their pursuits and needs.</p> <p>1.6 Explore options for the construction of a new building, separate from the existing one at the field, for the storage of Recreation Department equipment used for Rec programs.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board Rec Director. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board Rec Director. Short term.</p>
2. To preserve open space for recreational use as appropriate.	<p>2.1 Work with public and private partners to extend and maintain a network of trails for motorized and non-motorized uses. Connect with regional trail systems where possible.</p> <p>2.2 Work with an existing local land trust or other conservation organizations to pursue opportunities to protect important open space or recreational land.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board. Mid-term.</p>
3. To seek to achieve or continue to maintain at least one major point of public access to major water bodies for boating, fishing, and swimming, and work with nearby property owners to address concerns.	3.1 Provide educational materials regarding the benefits and protections for landowners allowing public recreational access on their property. At a minimum this will include information on Maine's landowner liability law regarding recreational or harvesting use, Title 14, M.R.S.A. §159-A.	Town Manager, Select Board. Mid-term.
4. Investigate opportunities to promote, protect, and support a wide range of public recreation activities and programs, both indoor and	4.1 Consider what deficiencies the town currently has in meeting the future needs of older citizens and anticipate ways to fulfil those deficiencies.	Town manager, Select Board, Rec Director. Ongoing.

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
<p>outdoor, for all ages, particularly elderly.</p>	<p>4.2 Consider recreational options for middle school and high school age students outside of school-sponsored offerings.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, School Board, Rec Director. Ongoing.</p>
	<p>4.3 Continue to encourage participation and improve volunteer coordination, while supporting and expanding town recreation programs.</p>	<p>Town manager, Select Board, Rec Director. Ongoing.</p>
	<p>4.4 Consider including links on the town's website for snowmobile trails maps, snowmobile and ATV clubs, local outfitters, camps, lodges, town happenings, and other entities that offer outdoor recreational pursuits.</p>	<p>Town manager, Select Board, Rec Director, Snowmobile and ATV clubs. Short term.</p>
	<p>4.5 Continue to collaborate with the Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway in improvement initiatives.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p>
	<p>4.6: Consider feasible ways to make new residents aware of recreational opportunities by adding a QR code in places where people gather frequently. Link the QR code to the town's website or map with important recreational locations.</p>	<p>Town manager, Select Board, Rec Director, Snowmobile and ATV clubs. Mid-term.</p>



<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
5. Work to establish and expand the year-round community events.	5.1 Incorporate town events into promotional literature, town newsletters, and websites.	Town manager, Select Board, Rec Director. Short term.
	5.2 Explore the creation of a brochure, for both the town website and to have in the town office, that details locations around Bingham ideal for swimming, hiking, fishing, boating, and scenic vistas.	Town manager, Select Board, Rec Director. Short term.
	5.3 Investigate the creation of a caricature or cartoon map that shows points of interest and unique locations in town, such as easy to access water bodies, boat launches, places to swim, etc.	Town manager, Select Board, Planning Board, Rec Director. Mid-term.
	5.4 Continue to improve the town's website by updating the information and links regularly.	Town manager, Select Board. Ongoing.
6. Continue to maintain and improve green spaces and small parks in the downtown area for those who wish to recreate with limited time.		Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Ongoing.
7. Ensure public buildings and recreation facilities meet current ADA standards to provide handicapped access to people of all ages.	7.1 The town should continue an assessment of town-owned buildings and properties to determine ADA accessibility.	Town manager, Select Board. Ongoing.
8. Plan and develop a townwide system of interconnected trails for multiple forms of recreational use, considering landowner relations, environmental protection and public safety.	8.1 Seek options to pursue and maintain increased trail connectivity, such as connecting with regional trail systems, where possible. Formalize these arrangements with easements or licenses where applicable.	Town manager, Select Board, Rec Director, Snowmobile and ATV clubs. Ongoing.

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
	<p>8.2 Continue to support expansion and maintenance of the snowmobile trail network through designation of registration fee revenue, donations from individuals and businesses and state and federal grant funding.</p> <p>8.3 Maintain communications with owners of private recreation resources and work cooperatively to address issues of public use.</p>	<p>Town manager, Select Board, Rec Director, Snowmobile and ATV clubs. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town manager, Select Board, Rec Director, Snowmobile and ATV clubs. Ongoing.</p>
9. Continue to maintain and improve access to the Kennebec River.	9.1 Continue to maintain the parking lot and boat landing by cutting trees, trimming vegetation, mulching and other general yearly improvements.	Town manager, Select Board, Public Works. Ongoing.

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementation:
<p><b>AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES:</b></p> <p>Forestry was Bingham’s first form of economic development and is still the largest industry in Bingham today, rivalled only by tourism. Agriculture has a long history in Bingham; however, it was far less productive than the commercial forestry operations, both past and present.</p> <p>Forest management is supported by markets for wood products that are beyond local control, but since forests gain value from one year to the next, they can generally withstand temporary fluctuations.</p> <p><b>State Goal: To safeguard the State's agricultural and forest resources from development which threatens those resources.</b></p>		
Policies:	Strategies:	Implementation:
<p>1. To safeguard lands identified as prime farmland or capable of supporting commercial forestry.</p>	<p>1.1 Consult with the Maine Forest Service district forester when developing any land use regulations pertaining to forest management practices as required by 12 M.R.S.A. §8869.</p> <p>1.2 Consult with Soil and Water Conservation District staff when developing any land use regulations pertaining to agricultural management practices.</p> <p>1.3 Amend land use ordinances to require commercial or subdivision developments in critical rural areas, if applicable, maintain areas with prime farmland soils as open space to the greatest extent practicable.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Ongoing.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
	<p>1.4 Limit non-residential development in critical rural areas (if the town designates critical rural areas) to natural resource-based businesses and services, nature tourism/outdoor recreation businesses, farmers' markets, and home occupations.</p> <p>1.5 Consider making cluster subdivisions mandatory where applicable to preserve critical rural land.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p>
<p>2. To support farming and forestry and encourage their economic viability.</p>	<p>2.1 Encourage owners of productive farm and forest land to enroll in the current use taxation programs.</p> <p>2.2 Permit land use activities that support productive agriculture and forestry operations, such as roadside stands, greenhouses, firewood operations, sawmills, log buying yards, and pick-your-own operations.</p> <p>2.3 Include agriculture, commercial forestry operations, and land conservation that supports them in local or regional economic development plans.</p> <p>2.4 Engage agricultural and forestry organizations in supporting and expanding forestry operations, such as Maine Woodlot Owners, New England Forestry Foundation, National Association of State Foresters, or Sustainable Forest Initiative.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Long term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
	<p>2.5 Include forestry/agricultural-oriented activities and events on the town calendar, such as farmers markets, or open farm days.</p> <p>2.6 Continue to partner with Weyerhaeuser to protect the forest resource, maintain communications, and to stay informed about future policy changes.</p> <p>2.7 Continue to make new residents aware of the benefits of enrolling in any of the three state tax law programs.</p> <p>2.8 Include information on the website and in the town office about commercial forest operations and best management practices to dispel common misconceptions.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p>
<p>3. Investigate ways to encourage youth education and participation in agriculture, forestry, and farming.</p>	<p>3.1 Explore options to engage schools and the youth in learning about opportunities in both agriculture and forestry through education programs centered around internships with local farms.</p> <p>3.2 Work with schools to encourage partnerships with local farms by procuring locally grown food.</p> <p>3.3 Engage sources to assist in the development of a forestry curriculum such as the Maine Tree Foundation, Project Learning Tree, Maine Audubon, and Professional loggers and contractors.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, School Board. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, School Board. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, School Board. Long term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
	3.4 Engage students and faculty from the regional schools in a forestry curriculum & paid internships with local loggers, sawmills and supporting industries.	Town Manager, Select Board, School Board. Mid-term.
4. Review and update the town ordinances regularly to reflect the most up to date environmental requirements and ensure ordinances are still relevant.	<p>4.1 Use the most current standards available for erosion and stormwater control, site reclamation and vegetative buffers in approving mineral extraction operations.</p> <p>4.2 When possible, promote the use of best management practices for timber harvesting and agricultural production.</p> <p>4.3 Evaluate the need for a campground ordinance.</p> <p>4.4 Evaluate the need for adopting minimal land use regulations to protect natural resources, working forests, the rural character of the town, and prevent over development in rural areas.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p>
5. Explore the desire and options for developing a farmers' market in Bingham.	<p>5.1 Consider assigning an existing committee or board to oversee the farmers market or develop a new committee or board for such purposes.</p> <p>5.2 Involve the Maine Federation of Farmers' Markets in the development of Bingham's farmers market, as necessary. (<a href="https://mainefarmersmarkets.org/">https://mainefarmersmarkets.org/</a>)</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementation:</b>
6. Explore and consider adopting ordinances that support locally produced agriculture.	<p>6.1 Investigate the need and support for the development of a “Right to Farm” ordinance.</p> <p>6.2 Explore the establishment of a Voluntary Municipal Support Program to develop a system of “farm support arrangements” with eligible farmland owners. (See Winslow as an example.)</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p>

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p><b>ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:</b></p> <p>Each year, tourists flock to Bingham's pristine woods and waterways, contributing greatly to the local economy. Thus, protecting these delicate resources is essential to the success of the town, if not just for the inherent importance of these assets.</p> <p>Identifying and providing possible ways for the town to protect its natural resources is an important function of this Plan.</p> <p><b>State Goal for Natural Resources: To protect the State's other critical natural resources, including without limitation, wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, sand dunes, shorelands, scenic vistas, and unique natural areas.</b></p> <p><b>State Goal for Water Resources: To protect the quality and manage the quantity of the State's water resources, including lakes, aquifers, great ponds, estuaries, rivers, and coastal areas.</b></p>		
Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<b>Natural Resources Policies and Strategies</b>		
1. To conserve critical natural resources in the community.	1.1 Ensure that land use ordinances are consistent with applicable state law regarding critical natural resources.	Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.
	1.2 Designate critical natural resources as Critical Resource Areas in the Future Land Use Plan.	Town Manager, Planning Board. Short term.
	1.3 Through local land use ordinances, require subdivision or non-residential property developers to look for and identify critical natural resources that may be on site and to take appropriate measures to protect those resources, including but not limited to, modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, and/or extent of excavation.	Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.



<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
	<p>1.4 Through local land use ordinances, require the planning board (or other designated review authority) to include as part of the review process, consideration of pertinent BwH maps and information regarding critical natural resources.</p> <p>1.5 Educate the public about the town's natural resources to raise awareness and improve protection efforts.</p> <p>1.6 Require additional biological information and/or studies in the application process when critical natural areas or species may possibly be affected by proposed development.</p> <p>1.7 Minimize the fragmentation of large parcels of undeveloped land, seek to preserve a variety of different habitats and seek to ensure that wildlife travel corridors connect wildlife habitats.</p> <p>1.8 Ensure the Floodplain Management Ordinance and related map receive regular review and is updated to keep current with state and federal guidelines with specific attention to protecting natural resources.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
	<p>1.9 Explore options for protecting the numerous watercourse and wetlands throughout town, including stronger Shoreland Zoning regulations above the minimum requirements.</p> <p>1.10 Consider increasing environmental protection standards in the Building Permit and Lot Requirement Ordinance for areas near streams and wetlands.</p> <p>1.11 Update the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance and Shoreland Zoning Map to reflect, at minimum, the latest requirements from the State.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p>
2. To coordinate with neighboring communities and regional and state resource agencies to protect shared critical natural resources.	<p>2.1 Initiate and/or participate in interlocal and/or regional planning, management, and/or regulatory efforts around shared critical and important natural resources.</p> <p>2.2 Pursue public/private partnerships to protect critical and important natural resources such as through purchase of land or easements from willing sellers.</p> <p>2.3 Distribute or make available information to those living in or near critical or important natural resources about current use tax programs and applicable local, state, or federal regulations.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
	2.4 Investigate potential grants and other tools aimed at the removal/eradication of invasive species.	Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Ongoing.
3. Provide education and outreach to the community to work towards improving habitat.	<p>3.1 Offer a minimum of two public field trips annually focused on contemporary conservation related issues such as optimizing pollinator habitat and identifying, controlling, or eradicating invasive species.</p> <p>3.2 Encourage resource protection on important lands in town by coordinating with private landowners to assess areas identified as resource protection zones as candidates for Earth Day community cleanup / remediation.</p> <p>3.3 Organize workdays for students focusing on municipal conservation work.</p> <p>3.4 Consider creating a Conservation Commission that strives to protect natural resources and evaluates areas in town for their priority in preservation, such as the back country.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, School Board, CEO. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, School Board. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
	<p>3.5 Explore options to purchase these priority areas should they become available.</p> <p>3.6 Continue to seek ways to protect wildlife habitat of both land and water, and rural areas, such as incorporating natural resource constraints for flood plains, aquifers, steep slopes, and wildlife habitat into planning for new development.</p> <p>3.7 Consider updating Bingham's ordinances with an eye on protecting natural resources from future development, such as requiring Low Impact Development design.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p>
<p>4.0 Preserve the Kennebec River corridor for scenic, recreational, and environmental purposes.</p>	<p>4.1 Implement recommendation from the Route 201- Old Cananda Road National Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan regarding scenic and recreational ties to the Kennebec River.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p>

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
Water Resources Policies and Strategies		
1. To protect current and potential drinking water sources.	1.1 Adopt or amend local land use ordinances as applicable to incorporate stormwater runoff performance standards consistent with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Maine Stormwater Management Law and Maine Stormwater regulations (Title 38 M.R.S.A. §420-D and 06-096 CMR 500 and 502).</li> <li>○ Maine Department of Environmental Protection's allocations for allowable levels of phosphorus in lake/pond watersheds.</li> <li>○ Maine Pollution Discharge Elimination System Stormwater Program</li> </ul>	Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.
	1.2 Maintain groundwater protection standards for use and storage of toxic or hazardous materials and mineral extraction.	Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Ongoing.
2. To protect significant surface water resources from pollution and improve water quality where needed.	2.1 Consider amending local land use ordinances, as applicable, to incorporate low impact development standards.	Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.
	2.2 Where applicable, develop an urban impaired stream watershed management or mitigation plan that will promote continued development or redevelopment without further stream degradation.	Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Long term.

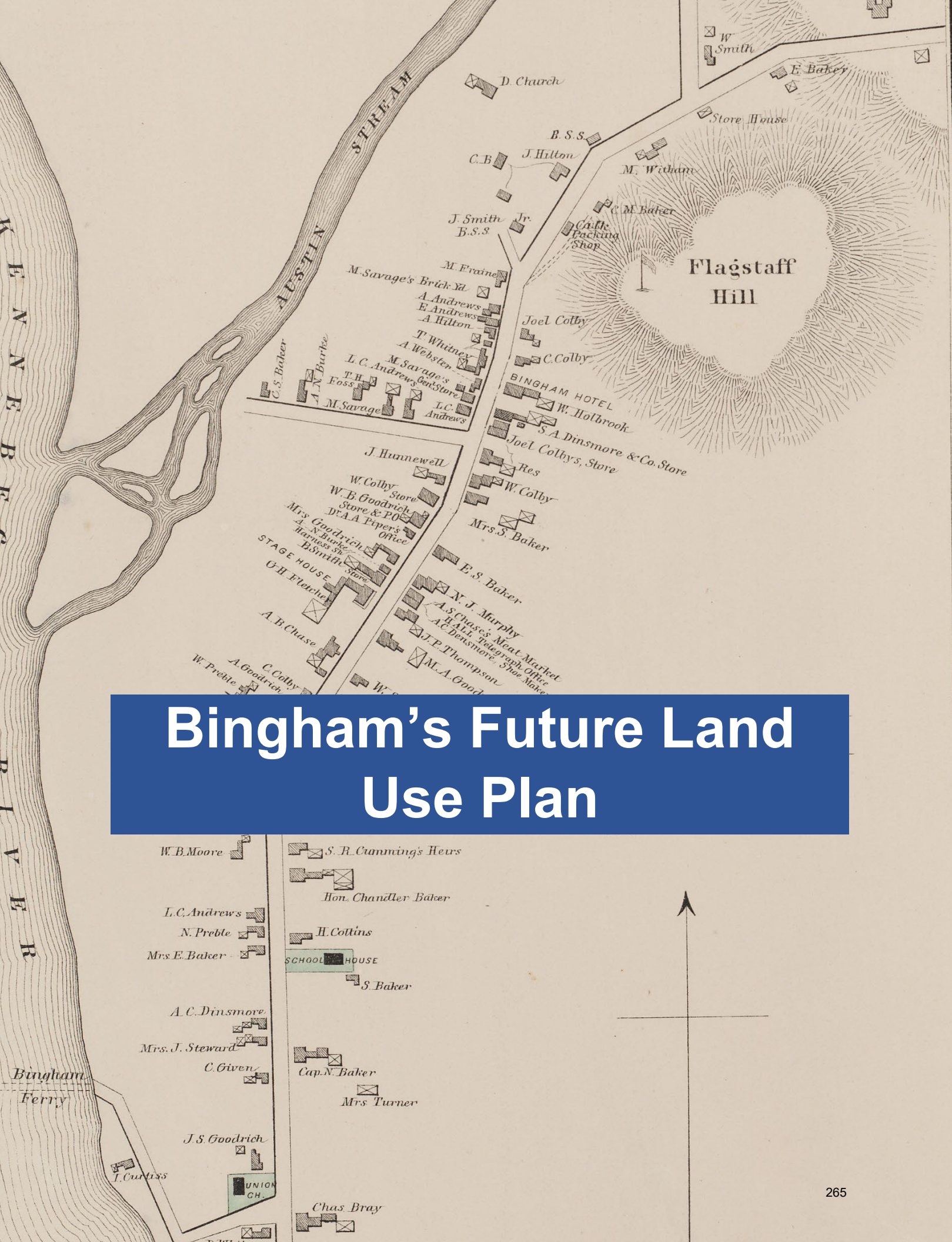
<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
	2.3 Work toward surveying and mapping the town to identify significant vernal pools.	Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Long term.
3. To protect water resources in growth areas while promoting more intensive development in those areas.	3.1 Maintain, enact, or amend public wellhead and aquifer recharge area protection mechanisms, as necessary.	Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Long term.
	3.2 Encourage landowners to protect water quality. Provide local contact information at the municipal office for water quality best management practices from resources such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Soil and Water Conservation District, Maine Forest Service, and/or Small Woodlot Association of Maine.	Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Long term.
	3.3 Consider amending local land use ordinances, as applicable, to incorporate Low Impact Development (LID) design standards.	Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	<p>3.4 Maintain up-to-date and flexible regulatory standards for land-use activities to protect the water quality of the Kennebec River. Such standards could include measures such as buffers, erosion and stormwater runoff controls, and Low Impact Development (LID) design standards to minimize phosphorus contamination.</p> <p>3.5 Incorporate LID standards into the Building Ordinance to manage stormwater runoff.</p> <p>3.6 Maintain standards for earth-moving and land-clearing activities in lake watersheds.</p> <p>3.7 Utilize the Department of Environmental Protection's handbook, <i>Phosphorus Control in Lake Watersheds</i>, to aid in establishing density, design, and development standards to maintain water quality.</p> <p>3.8 Limit construction on steep slopes and wetlands (hydric soils) through regulation of building sites in the rural areas of town.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
4. To minimize pollution discharges through the upgrade of existing public sewer systems and wastewater treatment facilities.	4.1 Adopt water quality protection practices and standards for construction and maintenance of public and private roads and public properties and require their implementation by contractors, owners, and community officials and employees.	Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.
	4.2 Seek funds to assist homeowners in voluntary upgrading of inadequate septic systems.	Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.
5. To cooperate with neighboring communities and regional/local advocacy groups to protect water resources.	5.1 Participate in local and regional efforts to monitor, protect and, where warranted, improve water quality.	Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.
	5.2 Provide educational materials at appropriate locations regarding aquatic invasive species.	Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.



## Recommendations Part II: Future Land Use Plan



# Bingham's Future Land Use Plan

## Bingham's Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement

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*Offering small town hospitality and charm, Bingham provides residents and visitors alike with a safe community, access to local, quality healthcare, and the support only found in a close-knit town. The town will strive to provide modern and appropriate housing and employment opportunities. As a regional hub, Bingham will prioritize offering the youth of the town an exceptional education and robust development programs. Bingham will continue to embrace its history and pristine natural resources, to preserve and protect those resources for the enjoyment of generations to come.*

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### Overview

As the Comprehensive Plan vision relates to future land use, this section seeks to highlight the steady growth and change in Bingham over the last decade, while plotting a path to preserve and improve the qualities residents appreciate and cherish. Ensuring sustainable growth and protection of natural resources is paramount and can be achieved through proper land-use strategies and planning with the future in mind, as can preserving the small town feeling and charm.

Neighboring towns look to Bingham as a regional hub and a service center. Bingham can expect to carry a burden of not just commercial growth but also employment growth. Care must be taken to meet these needs, but a balance must be struck between meeting these needs and protecting Bingham's abundant and critical natural resources and important historic landmarks. Bingham's future land use requires continued focus to meet economic, commercial, and housing demands, as well as to preserve and secure valuable natural resources for future generations.

### Future Growth

A Land Use Plan consists of a map and narrative describing Bingham's future designated growth areas and rural areas. It includes recommendations and suggested strategies—both regulatory and non-regulatory—to guide development in a desirable way. This Land Use Plan will be built upon the 2000 Comprehensive Plan, and the existing municipal ordinances.

An essential part of Bingham's future is its plan for growth. This Plan is based on many assumptions that support continued growth while striving to maintain the town's rural character, small town charm, and natural resources. Examples of assumed future growth include increased and additional economic development, expansion of public services, new home construction, and increased job opportunities. The physical impacts that are a direct result of projected future growth and development are the primary focus of this chapter.

A crucial consideration for future growth is that public services are more costly to provide to development spread throughout town, rather than to village areas or other high-density locations. This includes not just roads, but also schools, buses, utilities, fire protection, and other public services. To prevent unnecessary expenditure and ensure sustainability, a balance must be met between the existing growth trends, trends of development in rural areas, and Bingham's historic growth patterns. This can be achieved by guiding future development with careful intent and providing cost-effective public services. All of which is in keeping with the community's vision for embracing the town's history and protecting natural resources.

## **Explanation of the Future Land Use Plan & Designated Growth Areas**

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan as a whole, and ultimately the Future Land Use Plan, is to highlight issues raised by the Town of Bingham and its residents, determine desirable outcomes, and chart possible strategies to accomplish these outcomes in appropriate sections of this Plan. The Plan is not intended to implement or direct any specific regulatory or policy changes, as that would be too narrow a focus and outside the scope of the Plan. Implementation of the provisions of this Plan would be accomplished within the context of the town's established administrative procedures and policies -- for example, formal adoption of ordinance revisions, Select Board consideration, and public participation.

When considering designating future growth areas, location must be top of mind. Particularly, the location of a growth area needs to make sense in relation to public services. Some services are directly location-sensitive, such as public water and sewer services, and road access. Others are less location sensitive, such as proximity to fire stations, recreation areas, or schools. Ideally, development should be encouraged in locations that have easy access to public water and sewer, well-maintained roads, schools, and other existing municipal services. Secondary considerations when locating growth areas include proximity of wetlands, watersheds, or other natural restrictions.

If new growth areas are determined, they should be a logical extension of current, existing growth areas. Care must be taken not to create a growth area so large that it would make the designation meaningless. The size must be limited and dictated by expected, future growth and natural constraints.

Properly managed land uses provide a layer of protection for Bingham's numerous natural resources and the character of the town. The policies and strategies to manage future land use are detailed further in the Policies and Strategies section of the Future Land Use Plan.

A fundamental strategy when promoting a designated growth area is to direct a minimum of 75 percent of municipal growth-related capital investments into these locations. This strategy demonstrates the town's commitment to using public investments and land use regulations to reduce or discourage development pressure in other areas, while encouraging it in the designated growth areas.

It is important to note that road maintenance and other maintenance-type expenditures in designated rural areas would not count as a “growth-related” expenditure.

### **The 2000 Comprehensive Plan’s Designated Growth Areas**

The 2000 Comprehensive Plan delineates Bingham’s growth area generally as the downtown, village area, and the Route 201 corridor. It separated out the growth areas in terms of commercial or residential growth (see the *Existing Land Use Map* in the Appendix). Unfortunately, the 2000 Comprehensive Plan only explained the growth areas in approximate terms and did not detail their specific boundaries.

As best it could be determined, the location for **commercial growth** in the 2000 Comprehensive Plan was the downtown area; roughly south of Austin Stream and north of Route 16 west, along Route 201 corridor. Where the downtown lots were too small, the Plan recognized the importance of access to Route 201 and public water and sewer. This commercial growth area did not include or apply to commercial development where the primary business is related to recreation or commodity values of the rural areas, such as gravel pit, log yard, or guide service.

For **residential growth**, the growth area in the 2000 Comprehensive Plan appears to include the village and Route 201 corridor south of the airport. The Plan notes the numerous opportunities to restore or replace vacant, rundown homes, or to add accessory apartments onto existing homes in the village. As the village was reaching capacity at the time, the Plan notes that land adjacent to the village is available to be built upon, and that most of these still have access to public water and sewer. The 2000 Comprehensive Plan states that building new homes on Route 201 north of the airport would likely result in conflicts of use with commercial development.

The area designated for residential growth extends south from approximately the airport along Route 201, on both sides of the road, where feasible.

The current growth areas for both commercial and residential growth are predominantly served by public utilities and encompass a sizable portion of land along Route 201, a location already developed (see *Existing Land Use Map* in the Appendices).

## **Existing Growth Areas**

The 2000 Comprehensive Plan set forth a plan to direct development and growth in specific areas. These designated growth areas are detailed below:

- Commercial redevelopment was encouraged in the downtown area, south of Austin Stream and north of Route 16 west, along Route 201,
- New commercial development was encouraged on, or with access to Main Street and access to public water and sewer services,
- Residential development was encouraged in or adjacent to existing built-up areas, including the village area, Goodrich Road, and south along Route 201,
- Residential development was encouraged on environmentally safe sites with direct access to Route 201.

Due to the age of the previous Plan, the designated growth area's delineation is not as clear as it should be.

Directing growth to the previously designated growth areas was successful, to the point that both the commercial and residential growth areas are mostly at capacity. The few lots left in these areas are not enough to accommodate anticipated growth. For that reason, the designated growth area will need to be expanded.

## **Delineating Future Growth Areas**

Since the 2000 Comprehensive Plan, Bingham's anticipated future growth is predominantly expected in residential land uses. Keeping the previously designated growth areas, clarifying delineation, and expanding the residential growth area where feasible, is logical when considering future growth.

Bingham is faced with unique challenges when considering the expansion of the existing growth area. Not only is public water and sewer connectivity limited, but in many places, so is electricity. In some places, steep slopes on the east side of Route 201 limit development potential.

Perhaps the biggest limiting factor in expanding the growth area is that most of the land in the eastern part of town is privately owned by large timber companies. For this reason, development potential is severely limited, as is road access and electricity. Aside from a few off grid seasonal camps scattered throughout the working forest, the eastern half of the town is predominantly undeveloped.

The proposed designated growth area expands on the growth area described in the 2000 Comprehensive Plan. Since most of the growth is anticipated to be in residential land uses, access to the Route 201 corridor, and public water and sewer should not be as much of a limiting factor as they would for commercial development.



### *Commercial Designated Growth Area:*

Since the 2000 Comprehensive Plan, the commercial designated growth area, north of the airport on Route 201 has been significantly developed and is near capacity, as there are few buildable lots still available. In fact, the amount of development in this location has roughly tripled. Since the 2000 Comprehensive Plan, development in this area includes (but is not limited to) a grocery store, a car wash, an ATV sales and rental shop, and two storage unit buildings.

Nearly all the lots that are still available are smaller lots, privately owned, or not appropriate for commercial development. However, for ease of transportation access, and access to public water and sewer, the Route 201 corridor is the only option to accommodate these types of development and land use.

Allowing higher intensity commercial or industrial land uses outside of the area served by public water and sewer would not be prudent. To protect natural resources, the commercial designated growth area will remain the Route 201 corridor north of the airport and the downtown area where connection to public water and sewer is feasible.

Since there is limited capacity in this area for new construction, the town will have to find ways to incentivize new businesses onto lots with existing buildings that may need repair, redevelopment, or removal. Redeveloping, repairing, or tearing down and rebuilding structures downtown is in keeping with the vision of providing a safe, charming community. In the past few years, the town has taken great strides in remediating the run-down or abandoned buildings in the downtown area, so maintaining the commercial designated growth area to encourage backfill of empty building would solidify those efforts.

Further, maintaining the commercial designated growth area as the area north of the airport along Route 201 and the downtown aligns with the town's vision by providing services and potential employment to both residents and people from neighboring towns.

One example of a commercial building that has redevelopment potential is the old nursing home. This would be a logical location for redevelopment or a new business. This property is privately owned, and currently empty and for sale. The town should consider ways to work with the current owner to try to encourage a desirable business in this building.

### *Residential Designated Growth Area:*

The residential designated growth area proposed by this Plan will include the existing residential growth area of the village, the area south of the airport on both sides of Route 201, and adjacent to existing built up areas. However, the residential designated growth area will need to be expanded to accommodate anticipated growth.

Since the 2000 Comprehensive Plan, most of the residential growth has occurred outside of the village area. The locations that saw the most residential development were along the Route 201 corridor, in the area between Route 201 and the Kennebec River, Mahoney Hill Road, and Brighton Road.

While the development along the Route 201 corridor was in the previously delineated residential growth area, development on Mahoney Hill and Brighton Road was not.

Buildable land in the previous Plan's residential growth area is limited, particularly in the downtown area, which is near capacity. The town's two subdivisions, Tanglewood and Snocap are not at capacity; however, while Tanglewood was in the designated growth area, Snocap subdivision on Brighton Road was not. For that reason, the part of Brighton Road that has electricity, traveling northeast from Solon, is proposed to be included as part of the residential growth area.

This Plan also proposes to expand the residential growth area to include the paved part of Mahoney Hill Road. While electricity does not run the entire length of the paved portion of this road, significant residential development has occurred in this area, and it is anticipated that eventually electricity will be extended to this point. Counterintuitively, the increased number of people living off grid on Mahoney Hill Road increases the likelihood that either Central Maine Power will eventually run electricity to this growing part of the town, or it will be run by an individual living in this area who tires of living off grid.

Including a portion of Mahoney Hill Road as part of the residential growth area is an untraditional approach for several reasons. Until recently, Weyerhaeuser owned most, if not all the land along this road, but the company sold off multiple parcels on which people have built year-round houses and are living off grid due to lack of electrical service. This non-traditional type of development is due, in large part, to the area's natural features and abundant recreational opportunities. The people who move to this area to take advantage of rural living are those who appreciate that they will not purely be using municipal resources. This is evidenced by the increased housing construction along this road.

*Designated Growth Area for Commercial Land Uses:* Includes the corridor along Route 201 north of the airport and downtown area where public sewer and water connection is available, which is south of Austin Stream and north of Route 16 west, along Route 201,

*Designated Growth Area for Residential Land Uses:* Includes the village, the Route 201 corridor south of the airport, Goodrich Road, the portion of Brighton Road served by electricity, and the paved portion of Mahoney Hill Road.

**For more accurate details on the exact location of the designated growth areas, please see the *Future Land Use Map* in the Appendix of this plan.**

The designated growth area does not include any locations in the Shoreland Zones. The areas chosen for the designated growth area were selected only after significant consideration and deliberation and have been so designated because they are already predominantly developed or are areas where town officials believe future growth should and could occur.



Bingham's future land use plan and the delineation of growth areas is in keeping with the community's vision because it builds upon the original village and downtown area, which preserves the town's character and charm. Encouraging residential growth in the designated growth area will expand on the existing development trends and will encourage housing development in areas that are being built up. Redevelopment of existing storefronts and other commercial buildings in the commercial designated growth area also aligns with the community's vision by providing services and employment opportunities.

## **Features That Shape the Growth Areas**

The future land use plan and the designated growth areas have been delineated based on recent development trends and anticipated future growth. The expansion of the residential growth area onto Brighton Road and Mahoney Hill Road coincides with existing development in these areas. Since developable land is limited in most parts of town or has other challenges related to topography or access, future development is anticipated to continue in these locations.

The areas chosen as designated growth areas coincide with the historical development patterns of the town. These areas are characterized by road access, proximity to public facilities, and proximity to other development.

The designated growth areas of the future land use plan are shaped by both natural opportunities and constraints. There are two basic categories of constraints on development: environmental constraints and public service constraints.

Environmental constraints are covered in the Natural Resources chapter of this Plan. The main constraints are wetlands, steep slopes, groundwater protection, and floodplains. The *Topographic Map*, *Water Resources Map*, and *Critical Natural Resources Map* in the Appendix of this Plan show the locations of many of these constraints.

Wetlands are not a significant concern in Bingham, as there are not many wetlands in developable areas. Steep slopes are a limiting factor on parts of the Route 201 corridor by the intervalle, requiring limited or thoughtful development. But in other areas of town, steep slopes are not a concern.

However, both floodplain and groundwater aquifers are located along the Kennebec River and the Route 201 corridor. The town's Floodplain Management Ordinance is intended to protect the floodplain from development, but there is nothing to protect the aquifer. An ordinance that was intended to protect the aquifer would likely only control the types of commercial and/or industrial development that used chemicals that could potentially seep into the groundwater.

While certain soils are preferable for septic systems and for supporting foundations, poor soils can be engineered to support development, though this is more costly. The *Soil Map* in the Appendix shows the pattern of soil throughout town.

Aside from the constraints detailed above, there are no extraordinary environmental constraints in the designated growth areas that would limit their potential for development.

The Route 201 corridor is the main transportation system in and out of Bingham. There are other smaller roads in and around the village area, but the eastern part of town is constrained by limited road access. For this reason, and because most of the land in the eastern part of town is privately owned, this part of town is considered the rural area.

With the Kennebec River creating the town's western border and a sizable portion of land in private ownership in the eastern part of town, the logical location for any development is along the Route 201 corridor and roads off Route 201 that have electricity. Most of the development in Bingham has historically been shaped by the public service constraints of access to electricity, public sewer, public water, and Route 201. More recently, access to electricity has been the main constraint.

There are, however, numerous natural opportunities for development in the designated growth areas, including historic growth patterns, numerous road junctions, and public utilities. The designated growth area consist of locations with suitable land for development and are home to many if not all public facilities. The growth area is the most developed part of town, and any expansion adjacent to this area would be logical and in line with the community's vision.

### **Current Land Use Regulation and Patterns**

Aside from the Building Permit and Lot Size Requirement Ordinance, the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, and Floodplain Management Ordinance, Bingham does not regulate land uses. The town has not adopted district designations for certain land uses (i.e. commercial vs. residential), or districts with different minimum lot sizes. Bingham's ordinances are detailed further in the Existing Land Use chapter, but summarized here:

- The Shoreland Zoning Ordinance breaks the town into seven Shoreland Districts, each with its own intended purpose.
- The Building Permit and Lot Requirements Ordinance regulates minimum lot sizes in areas that have both public water and sewer, setback requirements, lot ratio requirements, and minimum road frontage requirements.
- The Subdivision Ordinance regulates the division of land into subdivisions, as approved by the Planning Board.
- The Floodplain Management Ordinance regulates how land designated as floodplain can and cannot be used.

Combined, these ordinances work toward guiding and directing development so it will not conflict with natural resource protection, public health, safety, flood damage prevention, and economic well-being. Existing land-use controls are intended to preserve the rural character of the town with the intention of directing growth into appropriate, predetermined locations, and away from rural areas.

The Local Economy chapter of this Plan details existing commercial, industrial, and retail development throughout Bingham. Because of the accessibility of public water and sewer and the roads, all this type of development has been within Bingham's growth area.

Bingham's village was the initial, historic settlement of the town. Today, the village has mixed land uses, including retail, commercial, residential, municipal and more. This area is served partially by public sewer and water services, allowing an increased density of development on smaller lot sizes. The town has been working to revitalize the village, including planting street trees, removing, redeveloping, or replacing older houses and buildings, and creating small parks.

### **Village:**

Bingham's one remaining village area is the most densely developed part of town and embodies the initial historic settlement. It was originally defined by this existing dense development pattern and infrastructure. The configuration of the village has been shaped since Bingham's early days when settlements were predominantly established near mills and people traveled mostly by train. The village has multiple road junctions, with several primary roads into and out of the area.

Today, the village has mixed land uses, including retail, commercial, residential, municipal and more. This area is served partially by public sewer and water services, allowing an increased density of development on smaller lot sizes. The town has been working to revitalize the village, including planting street trees, removing, redeveloping, or replacing older houses and buildings, and creating small parks.

The village area as a growth area strives to promote a compact and dense (rather than sprawling) pattern of development, by allowing mixed land-use patterns on smaller lots. In areas of the village served by public water and sewer, the minimum lot size is 10,000 square feet, promoting a more compact pattern of development. This location seeks to ensure proposed development and land uses are compatible with existing land uses, while maintaining the historical integrity and village character.

Designating the village as a growth area is in line with the community's vision as this area is the ideal and logical location for the town's continued growth of mixed-uses, including commercial and residential land uses at a higher density than in other locations. Development in this area, if done properly, will minimize sprawl in rural areas and protect natural resources, while encouraging a walkable, historic downtown.

The village is built up, necessitating the remodeling or redevelopment of existing buildings to allow for future development. Encouraging new businesses in empty buildings or the remodeling of existing buildings promotes and preserves the historic charm of the town.

## **Route 201 Corridor**

Route 201 extends the entire length of the town, running north to south. As this has historically been a major travel corridor, this area is already developed; although land is still available for future development. This area is partially served by public water and sewer. The Route 201 corridor is characterized by existing residential uses and some commercial uses at the northern end of the corridor.

Since the 2000 Comprehensive Plan, the southern part of Route 201 has undergone significant residential development, primarily between Route 201 and the Kennebec River. The side east of Route 201 has steep slopes in some areas, making it more challenging to develop.

There is still land area available for future residential development in and around the Route 201 corridor, though it is mostly privately owned.

## **Rural Areas**

The Shoreland Zoning Ordinance identifies and describes seven land-use districts outside of the designated growth areas, outlined in the 2000 Comprehensive Plan. These districts are detailed below.

- (8) Resource Protection
- (9) Limited Residential
- (10) Limited Commercial
- (11) General Development I
- (12) General Development II
- (13) Stream Protection
- (14) Commercial Fisheries

These Shoreland Districts are detailed below:

**Resource Protection District-** The Resource Protection District includes areas in which development would adversely affect water quality, productive habitat, biological ecosystems, or scenic and natural values. This district shall include the following areas when they occur within the limits of the shoreland zone, exclusive of the Stream Protection District, except that areas which are currently developed and areas which meet the criteria for the Limited Commercial or General Development I Districts need not be included within the Resource Protection District.

- (1) Areas within 250 feet, horizontal distance, of the upland edge of freshwater wetlands, and wetlands associated with great ponds and rivers, which are rated "moderate" or "high" value waterfowl and wading bird habitat, including nesting and feeding areas, by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIF&W) that are depicted on a Geographic Information System (GIS) data layer maintained by either MDIF&W or the Department as of May 1, 2006. For the purposes of this paragraph "wetlands associated with great ponds and rivers" shall mean areas characterized by non-forested wetland vegetation and hydric soils that are contiguous with a great pond or river and have a surface elevation at or below the water level of the great pond or river during the period of normal high water. "Wetlands associated with great ponds or rivers" are considered to be part of that great pond or river.
- (2) Floodplains along rivers and floodplains along artificially formed great ponds along rivers, defined by the 100-year floodplain as designated on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps or Flood Hazard Boundary Maps, or the flood of record, or in the absence of these, by soil types identified as recent floodplain soils.
- (3) Areas of two or more contiguous acres with sustained slopes of 20% or greater.
- (4) Areas of two (2) or more contiguous acres supporting wetland vegetation and hydric soils, which are not part of a freshwater wetland as defined, and which are not surficially connected to a water body during the period of normal high water.
- (5) Land areas along rivers subject to severe bank erosion, undercutting, or riverbed movement.

**Limited Residential District-** The Limited Residential District includes those areas suitable for residential and recreational development. It includes areas other than those in the Resource Protection District, or Stream Protection District, and areas which are used less intensively than those in the Limited Commercial District or the General Development Districts.

**Limited Commercial District-** The Limited Commercial District includes areas of mixed, light commercial and residential uses, exclusive of the Stream Protection District, which should not be developed as intensively as the General Development Districts. This district includes areas of two or more contiguous acres in size devoted to a mix of residential and low intensity business and commercial uses. Industrial use is prohibited.

**General Development I District-** The General Development I District includes the following types of existing, intensively developed areas:

- (1) Areas of two or more contiguous acres devoted to commercial, industrial, or intensive recreational activities, or a mix of such activities, including but not limited to the following:
  - (a) Areas devoted to manufacturing, fabricating or other industrial activities;
  - (b) Areas devoted to wholesaling, warehousing, retail trade and service activities, or other commercial activities; and
  - (c) Areas devoted to intensive recreational development and activities, such as, but not limited to, amusement parks, racetracks and fairgrounds.
- (2) Areas otherwise discernible as having patterns of intensive commercial, industrial or recreational uses.

**General Development II District-** The General Development II District includes the same types of areas as those listed for the General Development I District. The General Development II District, however, shall be applied to newly established General Development Districts where the pattern of development at the time of adoption is undeveloped or not as intensively developed as that of the General Development I District.

Portions of the General Development District I or II may also include residential development. However, no area shall be designated as a General Development I or II District based solely on residential use. In areas adjacent to great ponds classified GPA and adjacent to rivers flowing to great ponds classified GPA, the designation of an area as a General Development District shall be based upon uses existing at the time of adoption of this Ordinance. There shall be no newly established General Development Districts or expansions in an area of existing General Development Districts adjacent to great ponds classified GPA, and adjacent to rivers that flow to great ponds classified GPA.

**Stream Protection District-** The Stream Protection District includes all land areas within seventy-five (75) feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high-water line of a stream, exclusive of those areas within two-hundred and fifty (250) feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high-water line of a great pond, or river, or within two hundred and fifty (250) feet, horizontal distance, of the upland edge of a freshwater wetland.

Where a stream and its associated shoreland area are located within two-hundred and fifty (250) feet, horizontal distance, of the above water bodies or wetlands, that land area shall be regulated under the terms of the shoreland district associated with that water body or wetland.

**Commercial Fisheries District-** The Commercial Fisheries District includes areas where the existing predominant pattern of development is consistent with the allowed uses for this district as indicated in the Table of Land Uses, Section 14, and other areas which are suitable for functionally water-dependent uses, taking into consideration such factors as:

- (1) Shelter from prevailing winds and waves;
- (2) Slope of the land within 250 feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high-water line;
- (3) Depth of the water within 150 feet, horizontal distance, of the shoreline;
- (4) Available support facilities including utilities and transportation facilities; and
- (5) Compatibility with adjacent upland uses.

These land-use districts, not included as growth areas, are designated to protect natural resources, public drinking water supplies, and the character of the town by directing development into more appropriate areas. Protecting rural areas and natural resources aligns with the community's vision statement.

### **Anticipated Growth**

At the conclusion of the Existing Land Use and Housing chapters of this plan, population projections, and land consumption estimates were presented based on current and historic trends, ordinances, and minimum lot sizes. One projection predicts Bingham's population to increase by 108 residents, while the other predicts a decrease of 67 residents. While neither population projection anticipates a large population change, there is an undeniable need for additional housing, more specifically, right-sized housing for the growing trend of smaller-sized households, single-family households, and the increasing population age.

Detailed more thoroughly in the Housing chapter, the most probable scenario for Bingham is slow population change in terms of numbers. Likely, the population's median age will continue to increase, the influx of new residents will continue, and these circumstances combined with the smaller average household size will result in a need for additional housing, such as low to moderate income housing (starter homes) and senior housing. Decreasing household size and new, younger residents result in a demand for right-sized housing to accommodate smaller household sizes and those living alone.

Currently, Bingham has a total housing stock of 560 total housing units, with 85 seasonal housing units, and approximately 162 vacant housing units (classified at time of 2020 Census). Due to housing unit prices and general shortages of housing units in the region, Bingham could likely add 10 or more housing units to its housing stock and there would still be a need for additional housing.

However, it is important to bear in mind the *style* and *type* of housing unit that is needed. What appears to be in highest demand are right-sized housing units for seniors looking to downsize, single-person households, or small families just starting out. Currently, there seems to be less need for large, 3- to 4-bedroom houses on large lots.

The desirable, logical locations for new housing would either be the village area, as redevelopment of existing structures, or along the Route 201 corridor since both locations are in the designated growth area and near municipal services. Other ideal locations for residential development are in either the Tanglewood or Snocap subdivisions, on the paved part of Mahoney Hill Road, or where electricity is available on Brighton Road, as these areas are within the residential growth area.

In and around the village, lots served by public sewer and water have a minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet, increasing development density. While developable land is in short supply directly in the village, there are buildable lots along the Route 201 corridor; some of which are served by municipal sewer and water, while some are not. Lots that do not have connectivity to municipal sewer and water have a minimum lot size of 40,000 square feet.

Since residential growth is more challenging to direct than commercial, new houses will likely continue to be built in the rural areas of Bingham for either year-round or seasonal use. Without zoning or land use regulations, Bingham has little regulatory oversight over any future development, regardless of location or land use type.

New commercial and industrial developments are more difficult to predict, though easier to direct. With Bingham's public water and sewer accessibility, and location along the Route 201 corridor, new businesses will undoubtedly come to town. Depending on the level of intensity and impact, new commercial development could locate in any part of the designated growth area. The most likely scenario for new commercial businesses coming to Bingham would be for them to locate in empty or underutilized, existing buildings, or redevelop existing buildings, based on recent trends. The downtown area offers easy access to main roads and connectivity to public water and sewer, making this area an idea choice.

The town should consider ways to attract new businesses to the commercial designated growth area and encourage new businesses to set up in existing buildings. This would not only revitalize the downtown area, but it would increase the tax base, offer employment options, and provide goods and services to both Bingham residents and those in neighboring towns.

The town may want to consider creating a Site Plan Review Ordinance to provide the Planning Board with the utmost oversight when reviewing and approving applications for new commercial or industrial development. This would enable the town to review the location and specifics of the proposed development or land use and set conditions as deemed necessary for the town and protect natural resources when approving applications.



## **Comprehensive Plan Implementation**

The challenge in the creation of this Plan is to work with the current rate of development and to manage it in such a way as to reduce the impacts it may have on the town's rural character, natural resources, and on town services. The best way to accomplish this is by encouraging new development to locate close to existing public services and near each other, rather than in rural areas. Bingham's designated growth area fits the criteria for directing new development into more densely settled areas and close to existing town services, but the town needs to find a way to successfully encourage most new development to locate in the designated growth areas, either through regulatory or non-regulatory measures, to realize the town's vision.

The town should continue tracking and monitoring growth and development by tracking and documenting permits issued. The Code Enforcement Officer (CEO), in conjunction with the Chairman of the Planning Board are instrumental in tracking permits issued and subdivisions.

Permit trends should be analyzed on an annual basis to ensure growth is happening in the appropriate locations. If it becomes apparent that growth is occurring beyond expected levels or does not align with the community's vision, this should trigger an appropriate response, as determined by the town.

Tracking the following applications is recommended:

- The location of new residential structures.
- The location of new commercial structures/land uses.
- Redevelopment of existing buildings for commercial/industrial uses.
- Conversions from seasonal camps to year-round residences.

The Planning Board will prepare a written report for each calendar year, containing the data from the permit tracking history. The report will be shared with the Select Board and Town Manager for review and discussion.

The Planning Board and town officials should mandate a regularly scheduled, comprehensive review of the Building Permit and Lot Size Requirement Ordinance to ensure it reflects the town's changing needs. These reviews should be in conjunction with the annual town budget process.

The effectiveness of land use planning is typically not vastly different across town lines. Therefore, this plan recommends the town make efforts to meet periodically with neighboring communities to coordinate land-use designations and regulatory and non-regulatory strategies.

## **Future Land Use Plan Policies and Strategies**

On the following page.

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p><b>Land Use Plan:</b>  Bingham's Building Permit and Lot Requirement Ordinance includes minimum lot sizes for areas served by public water and sewer, as well as setback requirements to reduce conflicts. The town's other land use-related ordinances work together to manage growth, protect the town, and reduce the impact on natural resources.</p> <p>Because Bingham has limitations in expanding its designated growth areas, careful consideration will have to be given to future development and ways to maximize the land area available. The town will have to carefully balance a growing population, an increased need for additional housing, and current municipal services.</p> <p>Bingham's local economy also is changing as the population changes. The town will have to find a way to keep existing businesses, while attracting those desired by residents. Ideally, new businesses would be situated in existing buildings, as the designated growth areas for commercial and industrial development are nearing capacity with no room for expansion.</p> <p>The town will have to stay vigilant about evaluating and balancing growth with protecting the area's important natural resources that continue to draw in tourists.</p> <p><b>State Goal: To encourage orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of each community, while protecting the state's rural character, making efficient use of public services, and preventing development sprawl.</b></p>		
Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p>1. To coordinate the community's land use strategies with other local and regional land use planning efforts.</p>	<p>1.1 Assign responsibility for implementing the Future Land Use Plan to the appropriate committee, board or municipal official.</p> <p>1.2 Meet with neighboring communities to coordinate land use designations and regulatory and non-regulatory strategies.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board. Mid-term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
<p>2. To support the locations, types, scales, and intensities of land uses the community desires as stated in its vision.</p>	<p>2.1 Using the descriptions provided in the Future Land Use Plan narrative, maintain, enact or amend local ordinances as appropriate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Clearly define the desired scale, intensity, and location of future development;</li> <li>b. Establish or maintain fair and efficient permitting procedures, and explore streamlining permitting procedures in growth areas; and</li> <li>c. Clearly define protective measures for critical natural resources and, where applicable, important natural resources.</li> <li>d. Clearly define protective measures for any proposed critical rural areas and/or critical waterfront areas, if proposed.</li> </ul>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p>
	<p>2.2 Periodically (at least every five years) evaluate implementation of the plan in accordance with Section 2.7 of the Chapter 208 Comprehensive Plan Review Criteria Rule.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Ongoing.</p>
	<p>2.3: Foster, promote, and encourage recently established businesses in appropriate areas to allow for more services for residents.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
	<p>2.4: Investigate possible grant opportunities to extend public sewer and water lines to designated as growth areas.</p> <p>2.5: Explore the need to develop a Site Plan Review Ordinance.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p>
3. To support the level of financial commitment necessary to provide needed infrastructure in growth areas.	<p>3.1 Direct a minimum of 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments into designated growth areas identified in the Future Land Use Plan.</p> <p>3.2 Include in the Capital Investment Plan anticipated municipal capital investments needed to support proposed land uses.</p> <p>3.3 Incorporate future potential for agriculture and forestry into the town's economic development planning and strategies.</p> <p>3.4 Look to develop and expand usage of village area parks generally, incorporating public spaces and places to hold community events.</p> <p>3.5 Clean up existing sidewalks and walking paths in the village area and look to make more areas accessible on foot.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
	<p>3.6 Continue to market any available land and existing buildings for commercial development.</p> <p>3.7 Develop areas as a gateway to the community, with improved entry signs at village area and town lines.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p>
4. To establish efficient permitting procedures, especially in growth areas.	<p>4.1 Provide the Code Enforcement Officer and Planning Board with the tools, training, and support necessary to enforce land use regulations, and ensure that the Code Enforcement Officer is certified in accordance with 30-A M.R.S.A. §4451.</p> <p>4.2 The CEO/Planning Board chairman should continue summarizing the findings from tracking permits in a yearly report, shared annually with the Select Board. The results of this report should be considered with the goals, policies, and strategies of the Comprehensive Plan.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Ongoing.</p>
5. To protect critical rural and critical waterfront areas from the impacts of development.	<p>5.1 Continue to track new development in the community by type and location.</p> <p>5.2 Add a copy of the current Shoreland Zoning Map to the town's website.</p>	<p>Planning Board, CEO. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
	5.3 Consider reviewing and updating tax maps annually. Make updated tax maps available to the public via the town website and paper copies in the Town Office.	Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Ongoing.
6. Encourage development (large scale housing or non-natural resource commercial development) to occur within the town's designated growth area.	6.1 Consider revising the existing Subdivision, Shoreland Zoning, Floodplain Management and Building Permit and Lot Size Ordinances to ensure that they encourage appropriate development within the designated growth area.	Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.
	6.2 If changes to existing Ordinances are deemed insufficient to encourage development in the growth area and protect natural resources, decide whether any new Land Use Regulations should be considered by the town.	Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.
	6.3 Identify infrastructure and parking improvements, façade improvements, and amenities for the designated growth area.	Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.
	6.4 Explore incentives to encourage the redevelopment/revitalization of existing vacant or underutilized structures in the downtown area.	Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Ongoing.

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
	<p>6.5 Explore options for increasing the availability of right-sized housing to include housing for a variety of citizens' needs such as work force housing, senior housing, and housing for singles.</p> <p>6.6 For newly developed housing units, consider encouraging that a certain number or percentage be designated specifically for seniors.</p> <p>6.7 Promote senior housing in locations with easy access to stores, health services, and other needed services.</p> <p>6.8 Encourage the construction of additional, right-sized dwelling units to meet a variety of housing needs.</p> <p>6.9 Explore options to encourage mixed-use housing in the village area, specifically in existing, underutilized buildings.</p> <p>6.10 Explore ways to encourage desired and needed businesses in existing buildings.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p>

<b>Policies:</b>	<b>Strategies:</b>	<b>Implementing Party/Timeframe:</b>
7. Continue to promote and market Bingham has a regional service center and outdoor recreational destination.	<p>7.1 Continue to work with the Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway organization and the numerous outdoor recreational outfitters throughout town.</p> <p>7.2 Seek ways to collaborate with various, appropriate committees, boards, citizens, etc., on the creation, promotion, expansion, and maintenance of outdoor recreational opportunities.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Ongoing.</p>



## Recommendations Part III: Capital Investment Planning Process

### Description of Existing Process:

The Capital Investment Plan (CIP) component of the Comprehensive Plan identifies growth related capital investments and a strategy for accommodating them. In Bingham, the Capital Investments Plan is sometimes referred to as the Capital Improvement Plan, or CIP. The CIP anticipates future expenses, sets priorities, and timetables, and proposes a mechanism to fund them. The plan is important because it alerts both municipal officials and citizens about future expenses and allows the town to find the most cost-effective way to finance the Improvement.

The Capital Investment Plan will include items identified in this plan which are called capital expenses. A capital expense is defined as having a cost that is not a maintenance or operating expense. Bingham is efficient in its capital planning for municipal facilities. To be thoroughly proactive, the town should continue to maintain a prioritized list of anticipated capital needs.

As the coordinators for all the town's activities, the Town Selectmen are responsible for the CIP. However, they must rely on the other town staff and committees to submit needs and cost estimates and set priorities. Thus, the CIP process should ideally be prepared alongside the annual budget, so that a portion of the annual budget is set aside to fund the CIP. This can be in the form of contributions to a reserve fund, one-time appropriations, or commitment to pay interest on a loan.

Bingham's CIP should continue to be developed by the Board of Selectmen along with the Town Manager, by incorporating the guidelines needed to reach the goals of the initial project list presented in the plan.

The revised CIP will be integrated with the budget process beginning in 2024-2025. The capital investments listed below include both those identified by this plan and other capital improvement projects that have come up in town discussions over the past five years.

### Why a CIP?

The development and maintenance of a Capital Investments Plan allows Bingham to forecast upcoming major expenses with minimal surprises. Developing a CIP presents the town with the opportunity to:

- Engage in a reasoned discussion about priorities.
- Prepare a pre-planned list that better enables Bingham to take advantage of unexpected opportunities, such as grants, low interest rates and price drops.
- Forecast, plan, and mitigate property tax impacts.

## Financing the CIP:

A source of funding for each item has been identified. The less certain the item is, the more speculative the funding can be.

- Annual appropriations: While funding a major purchase in a one-time annual appropriation can be disruptive to the budget, it works for lower-priced equipment or when a continuing monetary stream can be tapped for regular needs.
- Undesignated fund: In keeping with its fund balance policy, the town maintains at least three months of bills ahead in undesignated funds. Funds in excess of those required by the policy may be used for one-time capital expenditures or to address emergencies or even catastrophic needs that may unexpectedly arise.
- Reserve accounts: Bingham's use of saving funds in capital reserve accounts to pay for capital improvements has increased from past practice.
- Bonding/lease-purchase agreements: Bingham has not used bonding, but they have permission through the legislative body to do so, as necessary, for equipment purchases.
- Grants: Grants are competitive and cannot be relied upon. A grant is acceptable for "wish list" items, but not for essentials. A grant search should be part of the annual CIP update process.
- Sale of surplus equipment: Equipment is generally traded in towards the purchase of replacement equipment.
- Outside contributions: In many cases, other organizations may join with the town to contribute to a project of joint benefit. This may include other towns or organizations such as the National Scenic Byway. While these funding sources may be more reliable than grants, it requires coordination with timetables outside of the town's control.

Financing of the CIP may come from any number of sources, but the most crucial element is to ensure the impact on the annual town budget is spread out over time. Under this Plan, the major impacts will come from Capital Improvement Funds.

Bingham has sufficient borrowing power but has not taken advantage of this option for the last 21 years, due to successful budget planning and oversight. While borrowing is a viable option, the town would rather make purchases outright, using capital improvement funds, where feasible.

## Shared Investments

Bingham has a long history of collaborating with neighboring towns on projects and initiatives of mutual advantage, particularly in providing public services. Since Bingham is a service center community, the town hosts many public services anyway.

For example, Bingham Fire Department consists of the towns of Caratunk, and Moscow, the Townships of Mayfield, and Concord, and Pleasant Ridge Plantation. The town's Transfer Station includes Moscow, Concord and Mayfield Townships, and Pleasant Ridge Plantation (detailed further below).

Bingham is the education, employment, and financial center within a large geographic area. Because many of the people taking advantage of these services do not live in town, they do not pay property or excise taxes to Bingham, thus it makes sense to share the costs of these services with the towns to which they are provided. In addition, as the largest and centrally located town in the area, Bingham is the logical location to host such facilities as fire, ambulance, and recycling facilities.

**Fire Protection:** Bingham has a municipal fire department with volunteers paid to respond to calls. The Bingham Fire Department also provides fire protection to the neighboring towns of Moscow and Caratunk and the Townships of Mayfield, Pleasant Ridge, and Concord. Each town and township pays a percentage based on building valuation. Bingham also has a mutual, county-wide aid agreement which covers all Somerset County. Bingham charges subsidies to neighboring towns, of which a portion goes into the Capital Fund for future investments.

**Ambulance:** Upper Kennebec Valley Ambulance Service has its own facility in Bingham. They provide services for West Fork, The Forks, Caratunk, Pleasant Ridge, Concord, Mayfield, and other unorganized territories.

**Education:** Bingham is part of Regional School Unit (RSU) 83 and Maine School Administrative District (MSAD) 13 which includes Bingham and Moscow. The school district also hosts tuition students from Pleasant Ridge Plantation, Concord Plantation, and West Forks Plantation. In addition, the high school, which includes the middle school is in Bingham, and the elementary school is in Moscow.

**Public Water:** Bingham's public water supply, which supplies homes and businesses within the Bingham Water District, comes from a well in Concord Township. The Bingham Water District sells some of its water to Moscow Water District, which acts as a commercial customer.

**Transfer Station:** Bingham shares the responsibility of the transfer station with Moscow and Concord; and although the transfer station is in Concord Township, the transfer station is owned by Bingham. For this, Bingham charges a subsidy to Concord, Moscow, and Mayfield. Pleasant Ridge is included to an extent. The transfer station handles single stream recycling for these towns, as well as universal waste.

**Bingham Union Library:** The Bingham Union Library has served Bingham and the surrounding area in its current location since the 1920s. The Bingham Union Library is not a town entity, although they are tax exempt.

**Priority Level:**

L= Low

M= Medium

H= High

**EMERGENCY SERVICES:**

Department	Project/Need	Priority	Estimated Replacement Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Primary Funding Source
Fire Department	Expansion of Fire Department	M	2035	\$1 million	Grants

**PUBLIC WORKS:**

Department	Project/Need	Priority	Estimated Replacement Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Primary Funding Source
Public Works	Town Garage Upgrade	M	2024-2025	\$25,000	Capital Fund
Public Works	Salt Shed Upgrade	M	2024-2025	\$75,000	Capital Fund
Public Works	Road Maintenance Funding	H	2024-2025	\$350,000	TIF, Taxation

**UTILITIES AND TRANSFER STATION:**

Department	Project/Need	Priority	Estimated Replacement Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Primary Funding Source
Sewer Department	Pump Station	H	2024-2025	\$1 million	Sewer Revenues, Bonding, NBRC Grant
Transfer Station	Loader Replacement	M	2035	TBD	Capital Fund

**TOWN OFFICE, TOWN STAFF, ELECTED OFFICIALS:**

Department	Project/Need	Priority	Estimated Replacement Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Primary Funding Source
Town Office	Expansion of Town Office	M	2035	\$1 million	Grants

**EDUCATION AND RECREATION:**

Department	Project/Need	Priority	Estimated Replacement Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Primary Funding Source
Recreation	Bingham Recreational Field & Trail Development	M	2027	\$1 million	Grants & Taxation

## Recommendations Part IV: Regional Coordination

The benefits of regional cooperation are tangible and undeniable. This section highlights past, current, and future regional cooperative efforts for both mutual and personal interests.

Bingham has a long history of regional cooperation. As far back as 1812, the town meeting records that voters moved "to build a bridge across the main branch of Austin Stream providing that the towns above will do their proportional part in building it, and not without." As an economic development initiative, the town was one of the original stockholders in the Somerset Railroad, voting in 1868 to subscribe to the amount of \$12,000 investment.

Most of the town's regional cooperation efforts have been in public services. As the service center community, Bingham is the host for many of these. Examples include solid waste and recycling, fire protection, and ambulance services. Bingham also hosts a school for the regional school district.

Bingham cooperates with neighboring towns on recreational opportunities and projects, as well, such as Baker Mountain Ski Area and Bingham's recreational offering through the town's Recreation Department.

The town also participates in the regional provision of public safety services, with its police coverage provided by the Somerset County Sheriff's Office, and emergency dispatching coordinated through the county.

Taken together these regionally collaborative projects and endeavors represent far more opportunities for Bingham's citizens and for citizens of neighboring communities.

**Current regional activities and provisions include:**

This is not an exhaustive list.

- Bingham provides not only its residents, but also several towns in the surrounding area with public safety and health services, including fire protection and ambulance services, detailed in the Public Facilities and Services chapter.
- The Bingham Fire Department also provides fire protection to the neighboring towns of Moscow and Caratunk and the Townships of Mayfield, Pleasant Ridge, and Concord. Bingham also has a mutual county-wide aid agreement which covers all Somerset County.
- Bingham provides a location for the Upper Kennebec Valley Ambulance Service's (UKVAS) facility.
- UKVAS in turn provides services to Bingham, Caratunk, Moscow, Pleasant Ridge, The Forks, West Forks, and 11 of Somerset County's Unorganized Territories.
- Bingham utilizes shared police protection services through Somerset County.
- The region's health services and healthcare facilities are in Bingham.
- Bingham's public water comes from a well in Concord and is shared with Moscow Water District.
- Bingham's Recreation Department allows children from other towns to participate in programs and recreational activities.
- The Town is also a member of the Kennebec Valley Council of Governments (KVCOG).

Further information and details on specific regional efforts can be found in the analysis chapters of this plan. For this comprehensive plan, several of the recommendations contain a regional component. The following is an incomplete listing of those strategies:

**Local Economy**

- Policy 1. To support the type of economic development activity the community desires, reflecting the community's role in the region.
- Strategy 1.1: If appropriate, assign responsibility and provide financial support for economic development activities to the proper entity (e.g., a local economic development committee, a local representative to a regional economic development organization, the community's economic development director, a regional economic development initiative, or other).
- Policy 3. To coordinate with regional development corporations and surrounding towns as necessary to support desired economic development.
- Strategy 3.1: Participate in any regional economic development planning efforts.
- Strategy 3.2: Explore options to coordinate with the regional school system for training opportunities for young workers.

## **Housing**

- Policy 1. Encourage and promote adequate affordable and workforce housing to support the community's and region's economic development.
- Strategy 1.3: Create or continue to support a community affordable/workforce housing committee and/or regional affordable housing coalition.
- Strategy 2.1: Support the efforts of local and regional housing coalitions in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.
- Policy 3. Encourage and support the efforts of regional housing coalitions or groups with similar purposes in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.
- Strategy 3.2: Explore options to encourage workforce housing development to support community and regional economic development.

## **Public Facilities and Services**

- Strategy 2.3: Explore options for regional delivery of local services.
- Strategy 6.2: Work with the school board to undertake long-term school facilities planning.
- Strategy 6.3: Receive from the Fire Department an annual assessment of the adequacy of and need for future replacement of fire equipment.
- Strategy 6.5: Continue to plan for long-range solid waste disposal and recycling needs.
- Policy 7. Continue to seek increased opportunities for regional cooperation with neighboring towns.
- Strategy 7.1: Establish a protocol to look at opportunities for equipment sharing, including purchases of new equipment.
- Strategy 7.2: Engage neighboring towns in planning for disaster mitigation.
- Strategy 7.3: Continue contacts and discussions with neighboring towns and regional entities on new ways to provide more efficient services.
- Policy 8. Work with state and county officials to increase enforcement of traffic laws, especially in residential areas along Route 201.



## **Transportation**

- Policy 1. To prioritize community and regional needs associated with safe, efficient, and optimal use of transportation systems.
- Strategy 2.1: Initiate or actively participate in regional and state transportation efforts.
- Strategy 2.2: Work with MDOT to improve the existing transportation system.
- Strategy 6.1: Continue collaboration with Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway in developing bike paths.
- Strategy 7.3: Work with MDOT to implement pedestrian safety improvements including flashing crosswalk signs along Main Street.
- Strategy 7.6: Engage MDOT in exploring options to increase pedestrian safety on Main Street, such as flashing crosswalk signs, additional signage, speed limit signs that photograph license plates of vehicles traveling above the posted speed limit, etc.

## **Recreation**

- Strategy 1.3: Investigate the possibility of coordinating with neighboring towns in the development of a shared community building to serve all ages.
- Strategy 2.1: Work with public and private partners to extend and maintain a network of trails for motorized and non-motorized uses. Connect with regional trail systems where possible.
- Strategy 2.2: Work with an existing local land trust or other conservation organizations to pursue opportunities to protect important open space or recreational land.
- Strategy 4.5: Continue to collaborate with the Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway in improvement initiatives.
- Strategy 8.1: Seek options to pursue and maintain increased trail connectivity, such as connecting with regional trail systems, where possible. Formalize these arrangements with easements or licenses where applicable.

## **Ag & Forestry**

- Strategy 2.3: Include agriculture, commercial forestry operations, and land conservation that supports them in local or regional economic development plans.
- Strategy 2.4: Engage agricultural and forestry organizations in supporting and expanding forestry operations, such as Maine Woodlot Owners, New England Forestry Foundation, National Association of State Foresters, or Sustainable Forest Initiative.
- Strategy 3.2: Work with schools to encourage partnerships with local farms by procuring locally grown food.
- Strategy 3.3: Engage sources to assist in the development of a forestry curriculum such as the Maine Tree Foundation, Project Learning Tree, Maine Audubon, and Professional loggers and contractors.
- Strategy 3.4: Engage students and faculty from the regional schools in a forestry curriculum & paid internships with local loggers, sawmills and supporting industries.

## **Environmental Resources**

- Policy 2. To coordinate with neighboring communities and regional and state resource agencies to protect shared critical natural resources.
- Strategy 2.1: Initiate and/or participate in interlocal and/or regional planning, management, and/or regulatory efforts around shared critical and important natural resources.
- Policy 5. To cooperate with neighboring communities and regional/local advocacy groups to protect water resources.
- Strategy 5.1: Participate in local and regional efforts to monitor, protect and, where warranted, improve water quality.

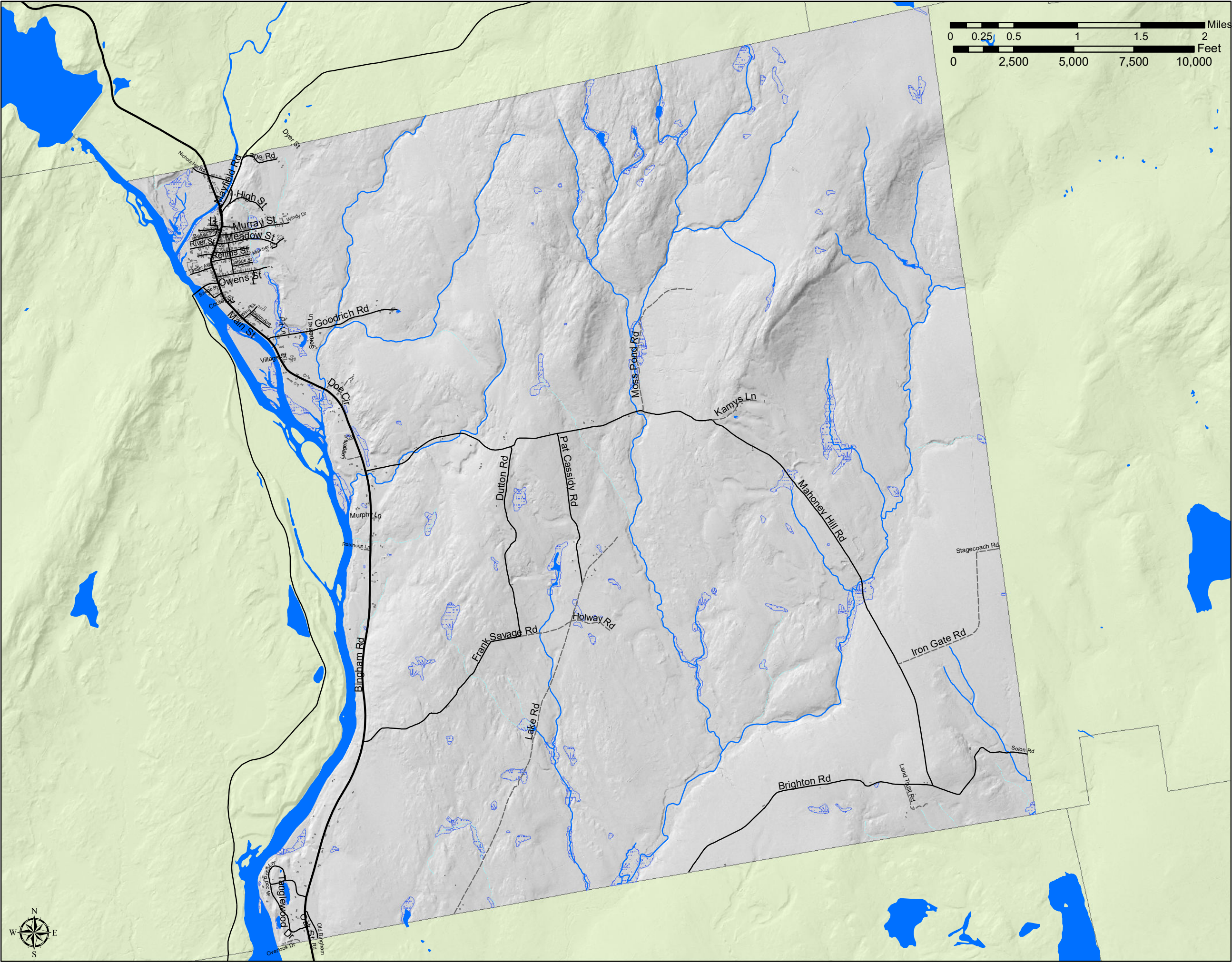
## **Future Land Use Plan**

- Policy 1. To coordinate the community's land-use strategies with other local and regional land-use planning efforts.
- Strategy 1.2: Meet with neighboring communities to coordinate land-use designations and regulatory and non-regulatory strategies.
- Policy 7. Continue to promote and market Bingham as a regional service center and outdoor recreational destination.
- Strategy 7.1: Continue to work with the Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway organization and the numerous outdoor recreational outfitters throughout town.

## APPENDICES

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**Town of Bingham**  
**Somerset County, Maine**  
**General Planning Map**  
**2025 Comprehensive Plan**

**Legend**

**Roads**

- State Highway
- State Aid
- Local
- Private
- Building Footprints

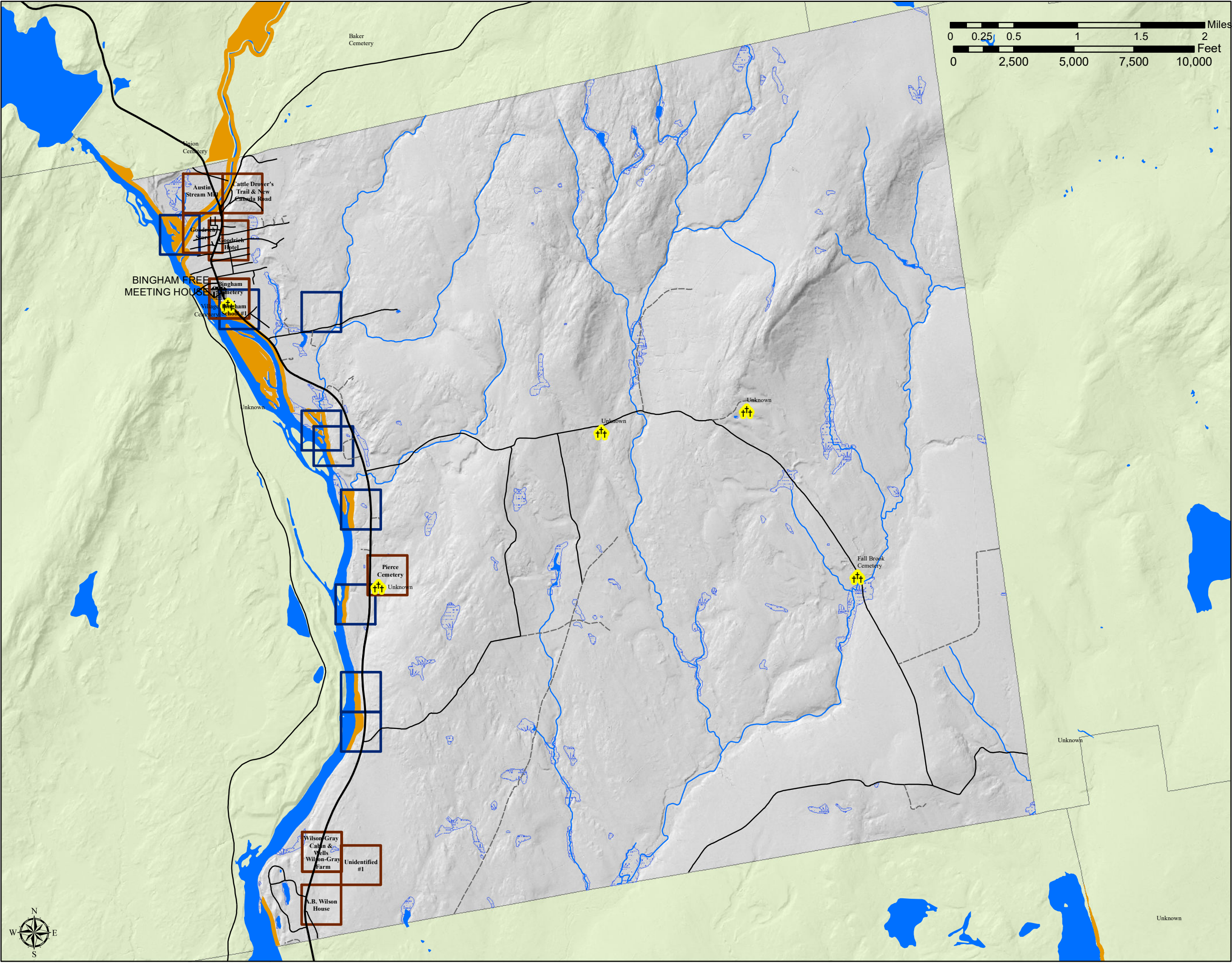
**Streams**

- Perennial
- Intermittent
- Rivers / Ponds
- Wetlands

Neither KVCOG nor the Town of Bingham assume any liability for the data delineated herein. All information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only and non-regulatory. Boundary data based on digital sources and may differ from ground-based observations.  
Data Sources: Maine Office of GIS, Maine DOT Created 04-2025 by JG







**Town of Bingham**  
**Somerset County, Maine**  
**Historic Resources Map**  
**2025 Comprehensive Plan**

**Legend**

**Roads**

- State Highway
- State Aid
- Local
- Private

**Streams**

- Perennial
- Rivers / Ponds
- Wetlands

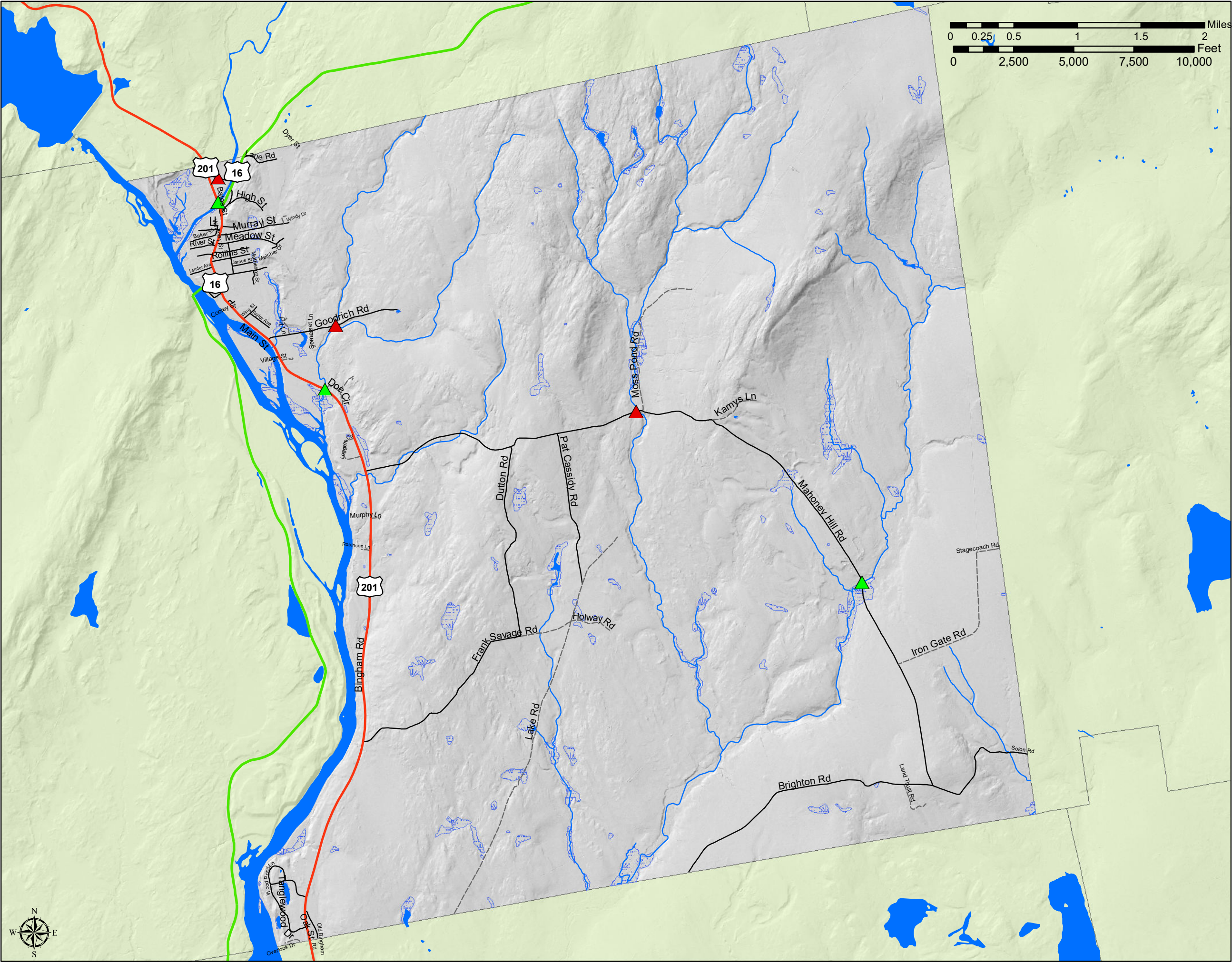
- Listed Historic Property
- Cemeteries

- Known Historic Archaeological Sites
- Known Prehistoric Archaeological Sites
- Areas sensitive for Prehistoric Archaeology

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Data Sources: Maine Office of GIS, Maine DOT Created 04-2025 by JG







**Town of Bingham**  
**Somerset County, Maine**  
**General Transportation Map**  
**2025 Comprehensive Plan**

**Legend**

**Roads**

- State Highway
- State Aid
- Local
- Private

**Streams**

- Perennial
- Rivers / Ponds
- Wetlands

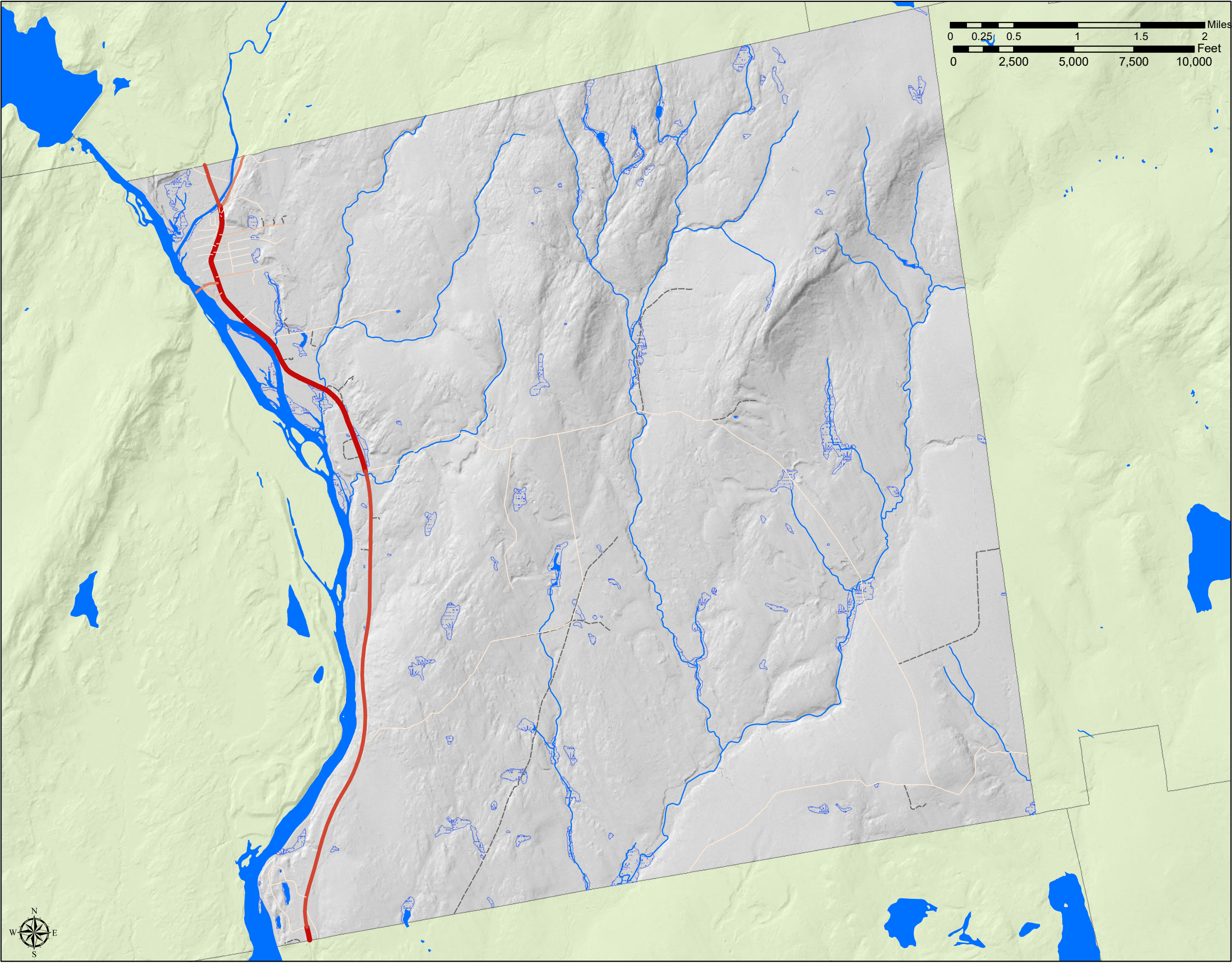
**Bridges**

- State
- Municipal

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Data Sources: Maine Office of GIS, Maine DOT Created 04-2025 by JG







**Town of Bingham**  
**Somerset County, Maine**

**Annual Average Daily Traffic**  
**Transportation Map**  
**2025 Comprehensive Plan**

**Legend**

**AADT**

3 - 250

251 - 500

501 - 2000

2001 - 4000

4001 - 5220

Private Roads

Streams

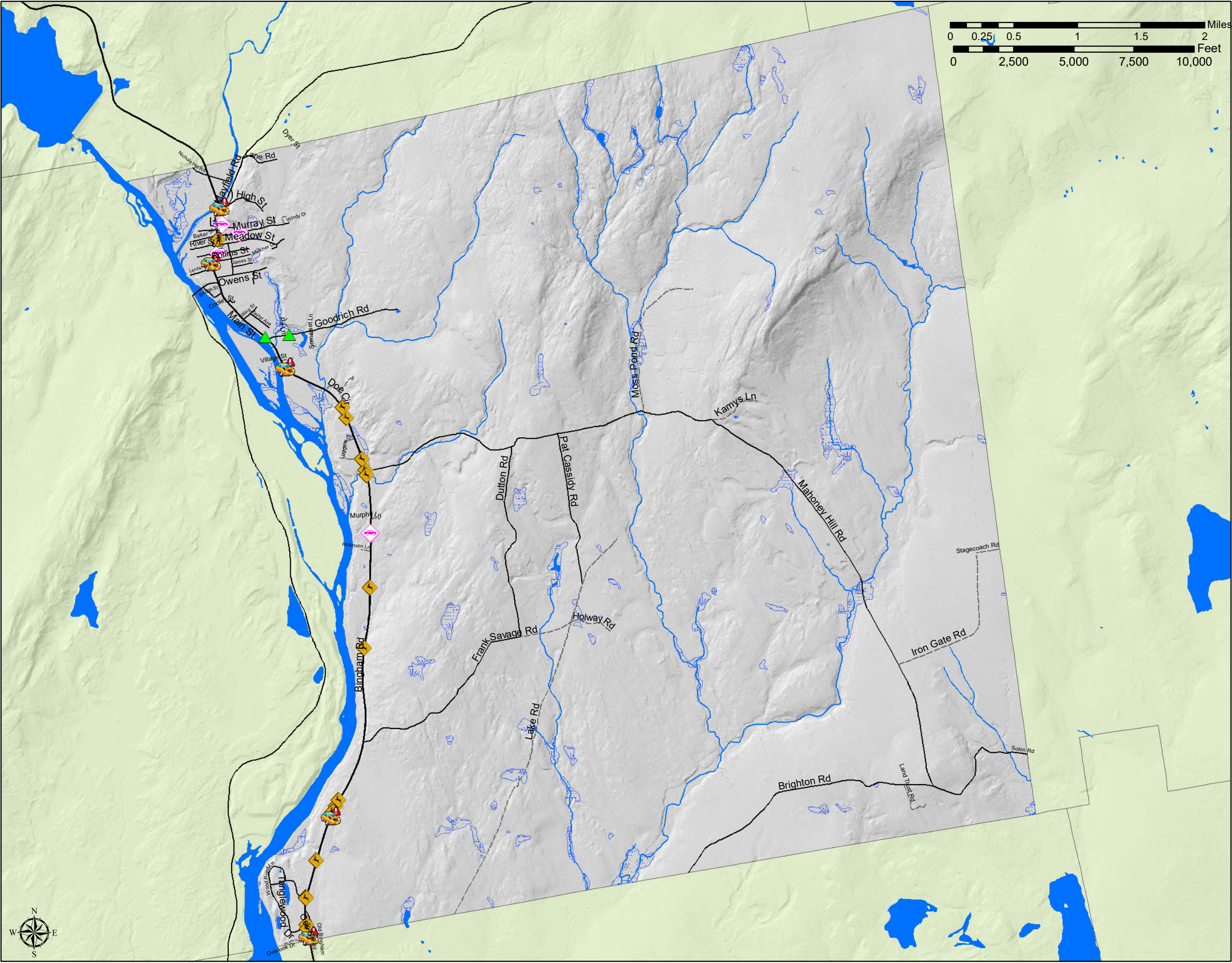
Rivers / Ponds

Wetlands

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Data Sources: Maine Office of GIS, Maine DOT Created 04/2025 by JG







**Town of Bingham**  
**Somerset County, Maine**  
**CrashTransportation Map**  
**2025 Comprehensive Plan**

**Legend**

**Roads**

- State Highway
- State Aid
- Local
- Private

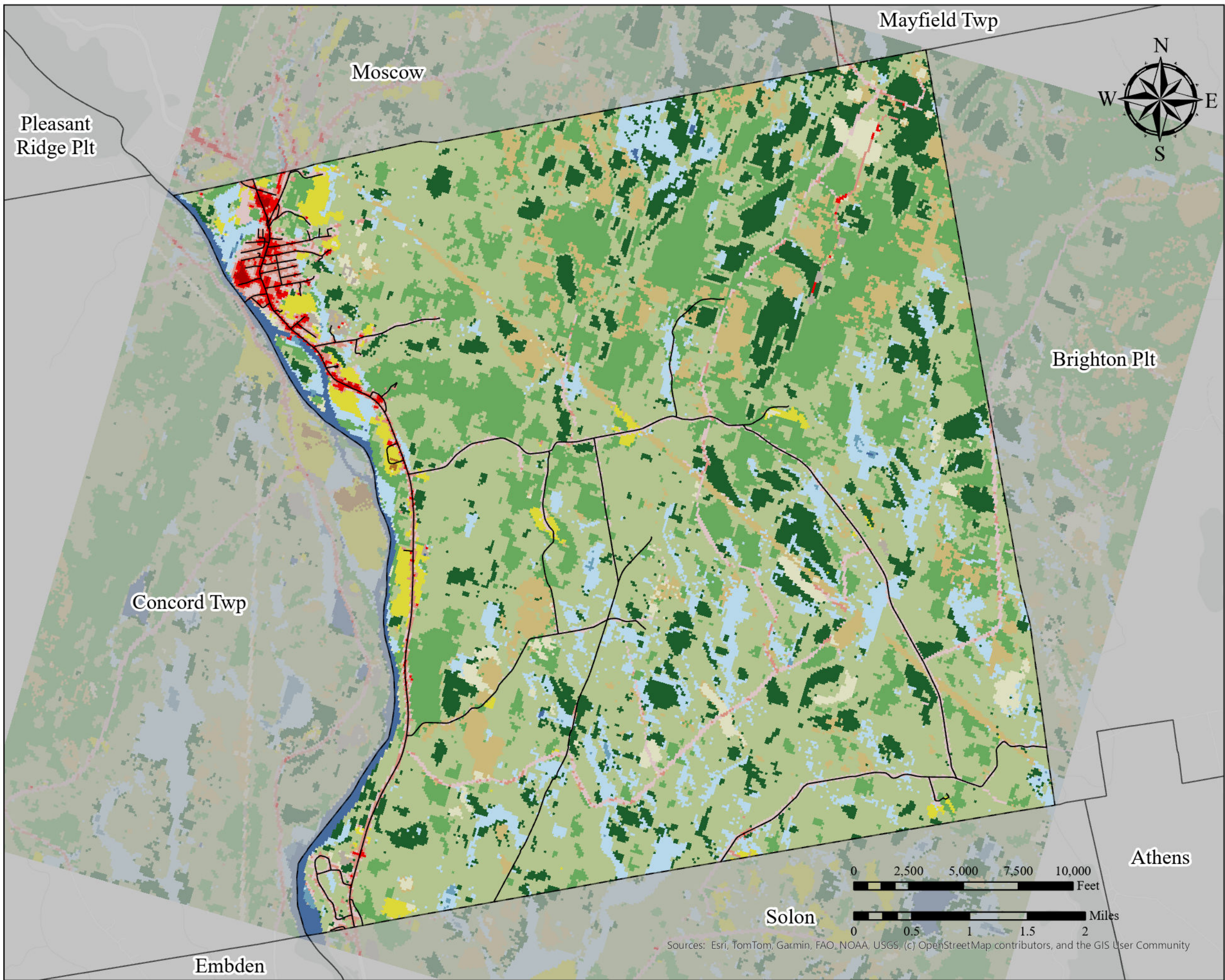
**Streams**

- Perennial
- Rivers / Ponds
- Wetlands

**Crashes by Type 2022/23**

- Deer
- Pedestrians
- Rear End / Sideswipe
- Went Off Road
- Other





# **Town of Bingham** **Somerset County, Maine**

## **Land Cover** **2025 Comprehensive Plan**

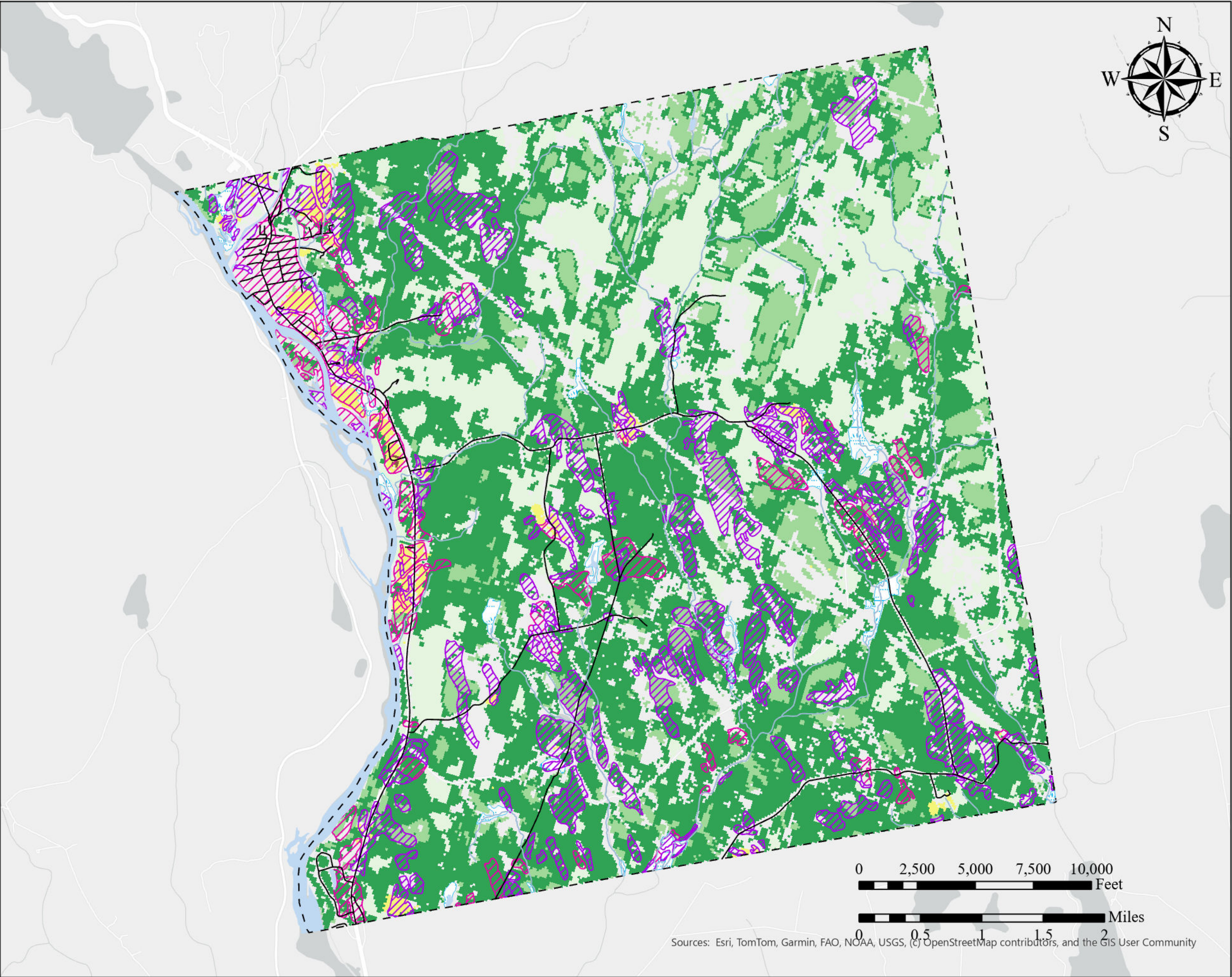
### **Map Legend**

- Roads
- Open Water
- Developed, Open Space
- Developed, Low Intensity
- Developed, Medium Intensity
- Developed, High Intensity
- Barren Land
- Deciduous Forest
- Evergreen Forest
- Mixed Forest
- Shrub
- Herbaceous
- Hay/Pasture
- Cultivated Crops
- Woody Wetlands
- Emergent
- Herbaceous Wetlands

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 Data sources: Maine Office of GIS, Maine DOT, USGS  
 Created 06-2025 by TA







Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

**Town of Bingham  
Somerset County,  
Maine**

**Agriculture and  
Forestry Map  
2025 Comprehensive  
Plan**

**Map Legend**

Roads



Streams



Lakes, Ponds, Rivers



Wetland



Farmland

All areas are prime farmland

Farmland of statewide importance

Land Cover

Hay/Pasture

Cultivated Crops

Forests

Deciduous Forest

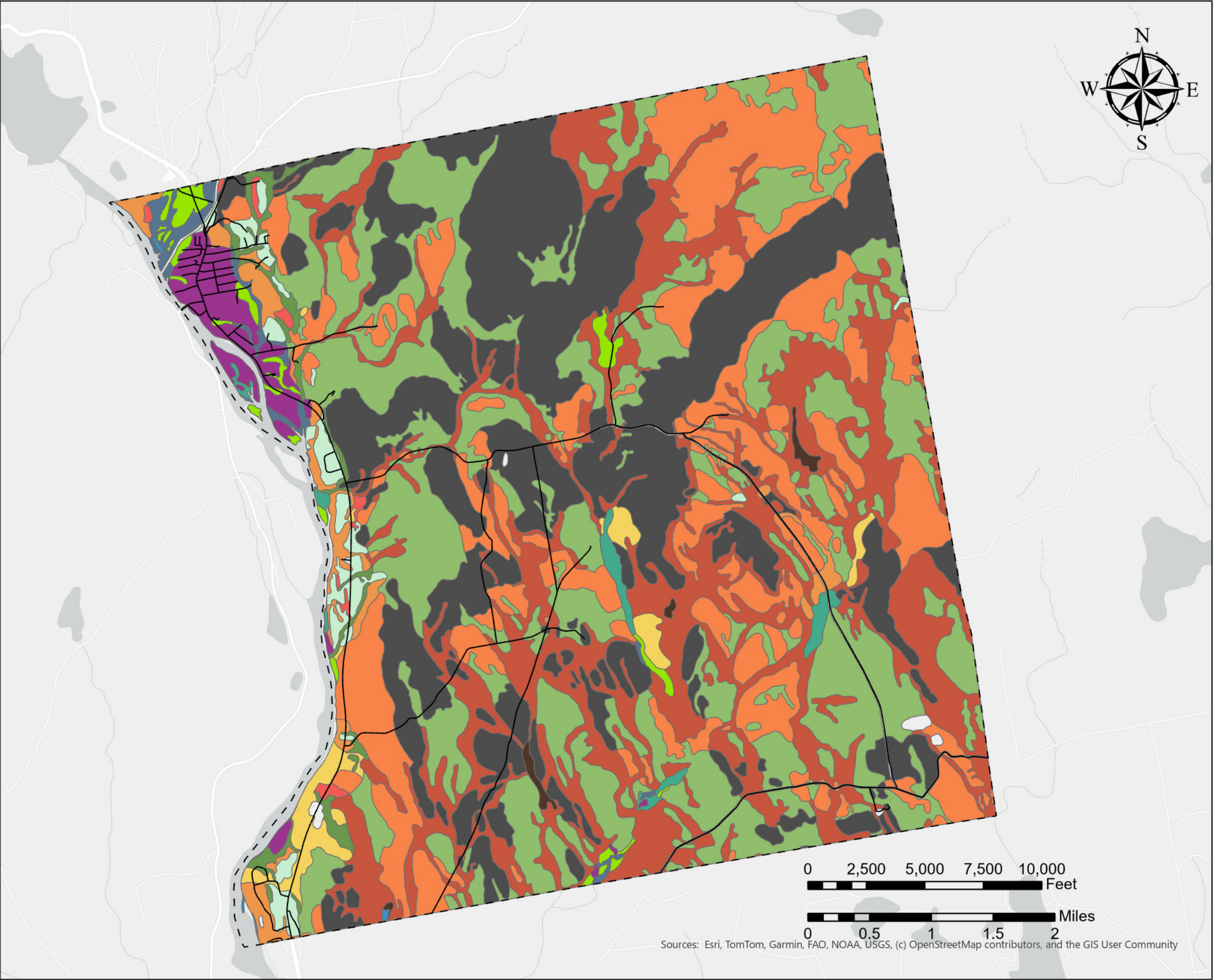
Evergreen Forest

Mixed Forest

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Data sources: Maine Office of GIS, Maine DOT, USGS  
Created 06-2025 by TA







**Town of Bingham  
Somerset County,  
Maine**

**Soil Map  
2025 Comprehensive  
Plan**

**Map Legend**

- Roads
- [ - - ] Bingham Town Boundary

**Prominent Soil  
Types**

- Soil Variant**
- Dixmont Variant
  - Monarda Variants
  - Plaisted Loam
  - Throndiike Variants

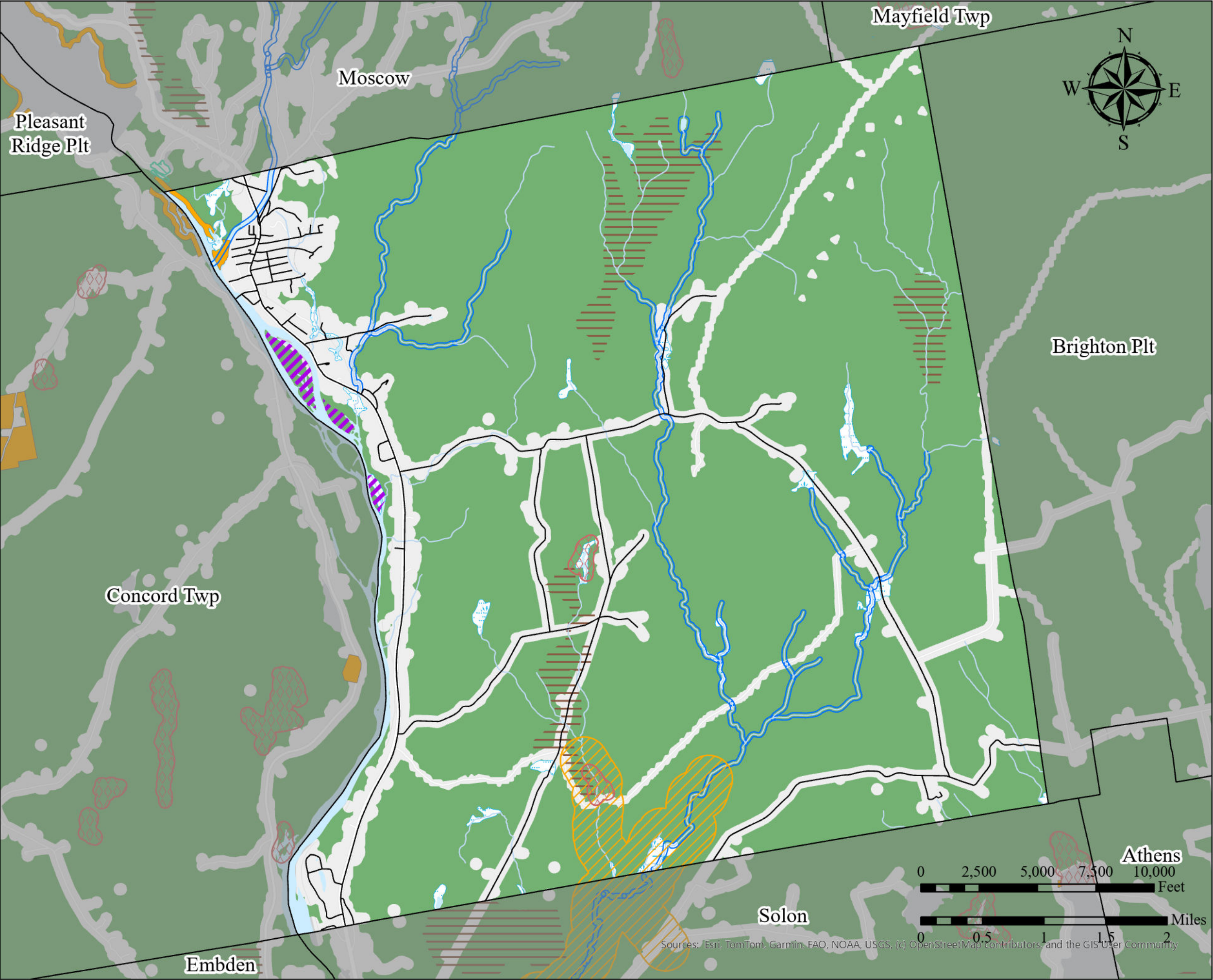
**Other Soils**

- Soil Name**
- Adams Loamy Sand
  - Colton Gravelly Sandy Loam
  - Hadley Silt Loam
  - Limerick Silt Loam
  - Madawaska Fine Sandy Loam
  - Mixed Alluvial Land
  - Peat and Muck
  - Stetson Fine Sandy Loam
  - Walpole Fine Sandy Loam
  - Water Bodies greater than 40 acres in size
  - Winooski Silt Loam

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Data sources: Maine Office of GIS, Maine DOT, USGS  
Created 07-2025 by TA







**Town of Bingham  
Somerset County,  
Maine**

**Critical Natural  
Resources  
2025 Comprehensive  
Plan**

**Map Legend**

- Roads
- Streams
- Rivers, Lakes, Ponds
- Undeveloped Blocks
- Wetlands
- Rare Plant Species
- Exemplary Natural Community
- Conserved Land
- Inland Waterfowl/ Waterbird Habitat
- Recent Location of State-listed Animals
- Wild Brook Trout Habitat
- Deer Wintering Area

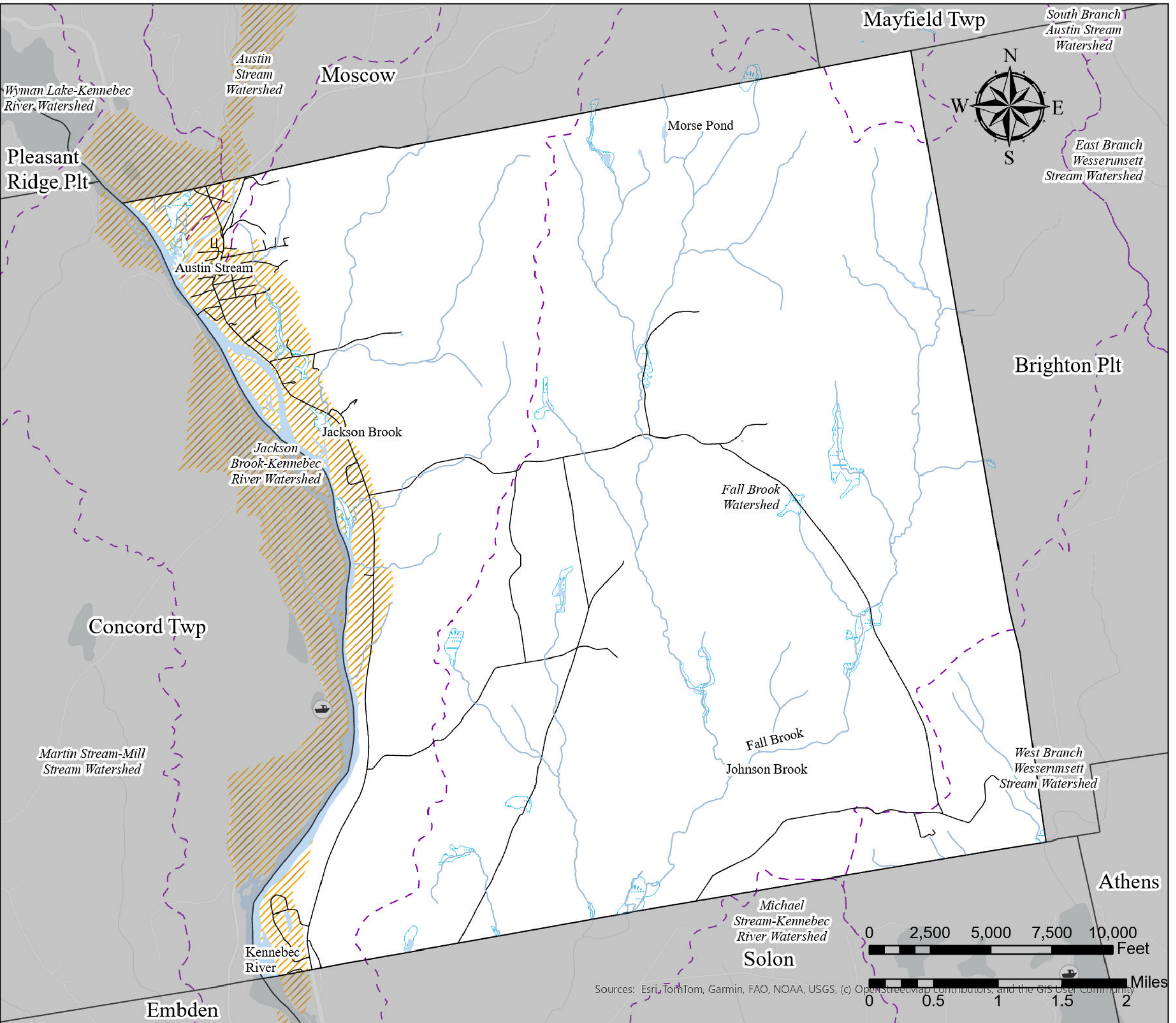
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Data sources:  
Maine Office of GIS, Maine DOT, USGS,  
Beginning with Habitat  
Created 07-2025 by TA





**Town of Bingham  
Somerset County, Maine**

**Water Resources  
2025 Comprehensive Plan**



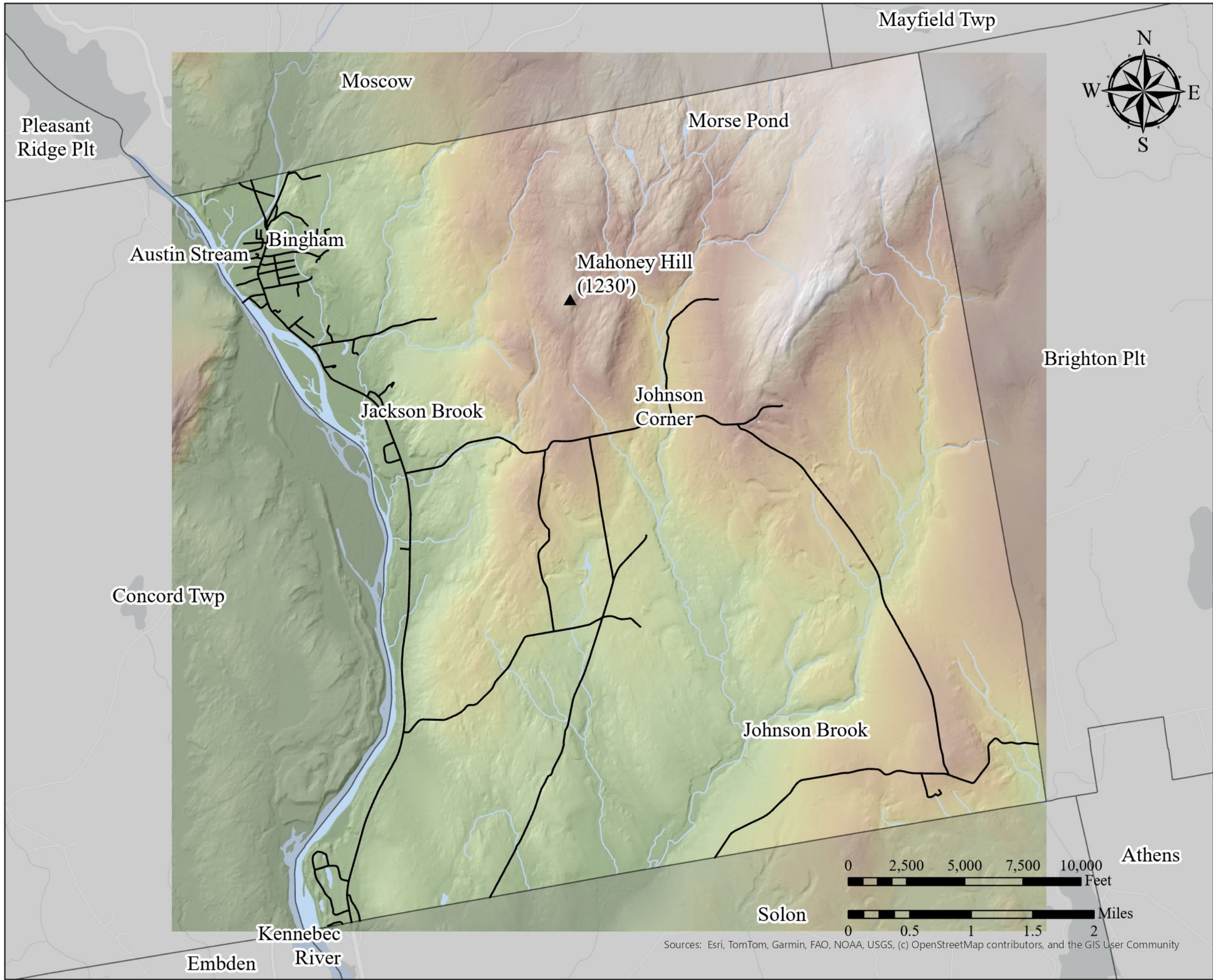
**Map Legend**

- Boat Launches
- Roads
- Class B Streams
- Rivers, Lakes, Ponds
- Wetland
- Aquifers
- Drainage Divides

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Created 07-2025 by TA







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Data sources:  
Maine Office of GIS, Maine DOT, USGS  
Created 07-2025 by TA



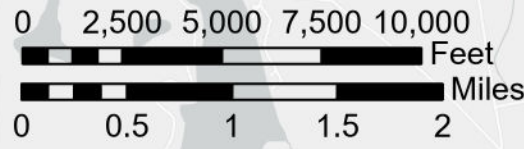
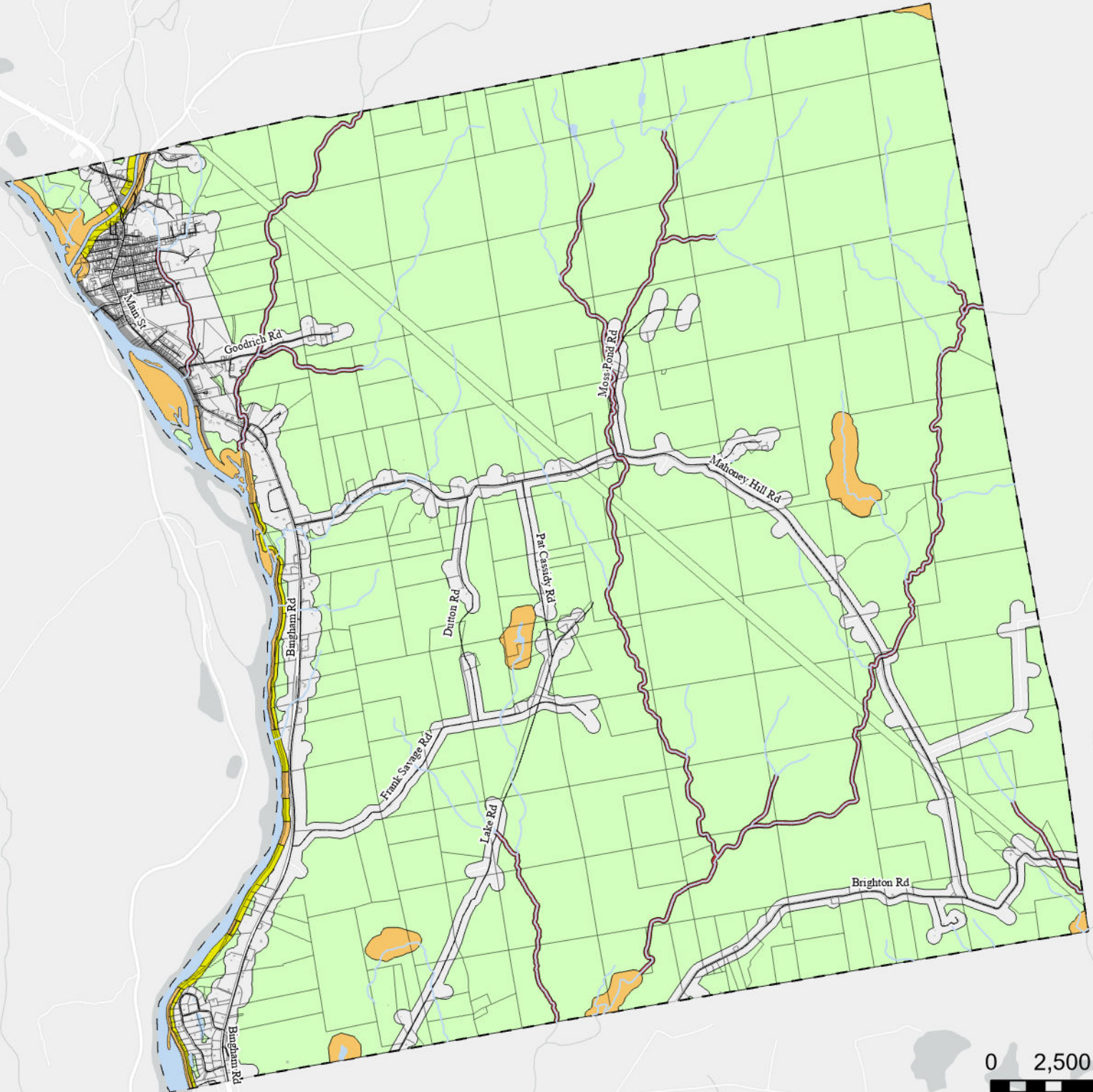


# Town Of Bingham

## Somerset County Maine

### Existing Land Use

### 2025 Comprehensive Plan



Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

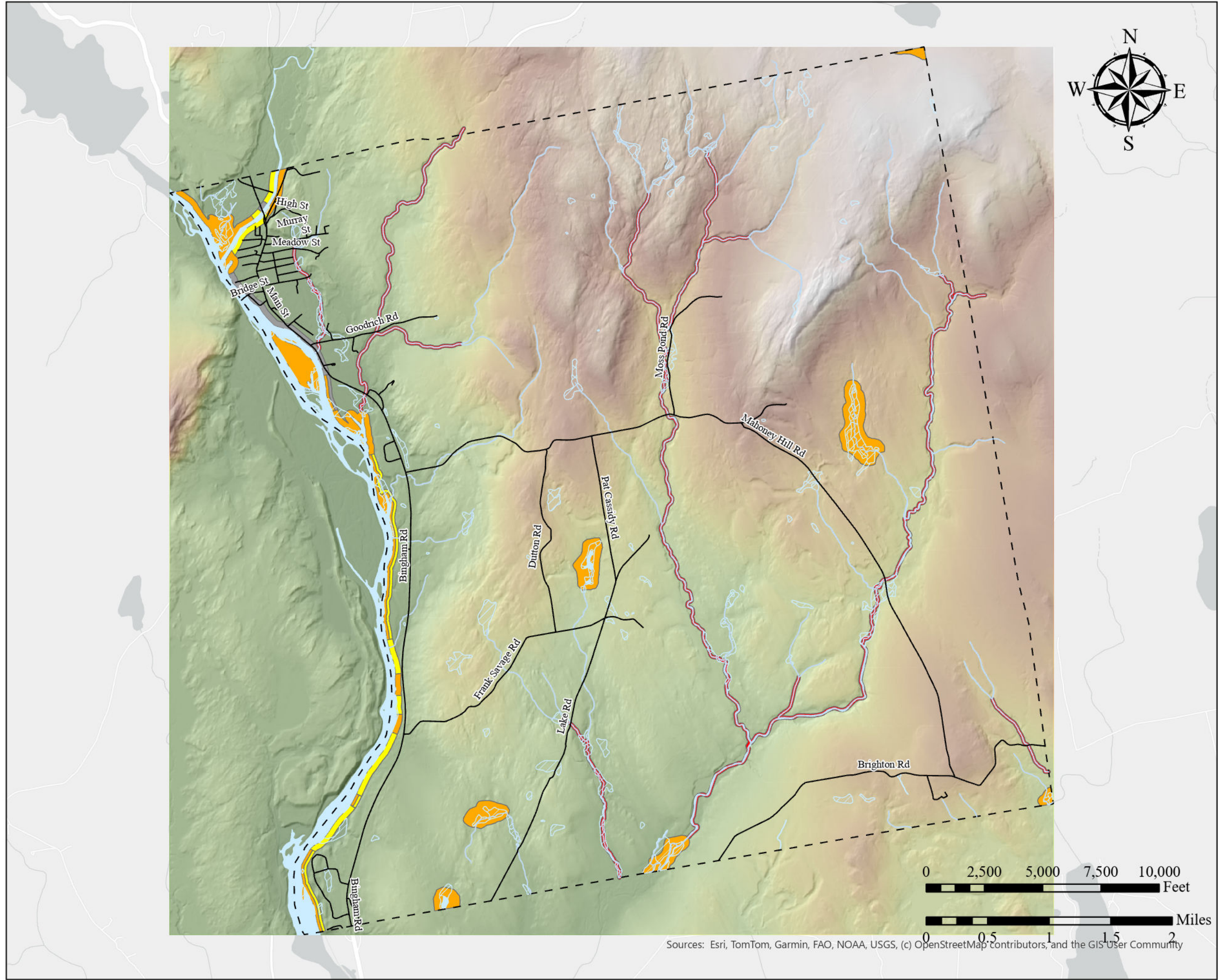
### Map Legend

- |                     |                        |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| Shoreland Zoning    | Rivers, Streams, Ponds |
| General             | Building               |
| Development         | Footprints             |
| Light               | Tax Parcels            |
| Residential         | Undeveloped Land       |
| Resource Protection |                        |
| Stream Protection   |                        |



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**Town of Bingham  
Somerset County,  
Maine**

**Shoreland Zoning  
2025 Comprehensive  
Plan**

**Map Legend**

- Roads
- Streams
- - - Bingham Town Boundary
- Rivers, Lakes, Ponds
- Wetland

**Shoreland Zoning**

- General Development
- Light Residential
- Resource Protection
- Stream Protection

**Elevation (Ft)**

- 1621.86
- 315.617

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Data sources:  
Maine Office of GIS, Maine DOT, USGS  
Created 07-2025 by TA





# Town Of Bingham

## Somerset County Maine

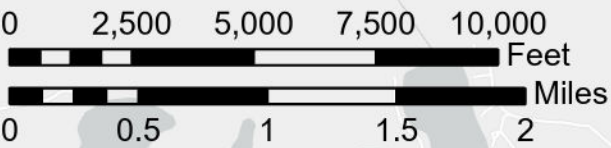
### Future Land Use

### 2025 Comprehensive Plan



#### Map Legend

Shoreland Zoning	Designated Growth Areas	Additional Features
General Development	Commercial	Rivers, Streams, Ponds
Light Residential	Residential	Bingham Footprints
Resource Protection		Tax Parcels
Stream Protection		Undeveloped Land



Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



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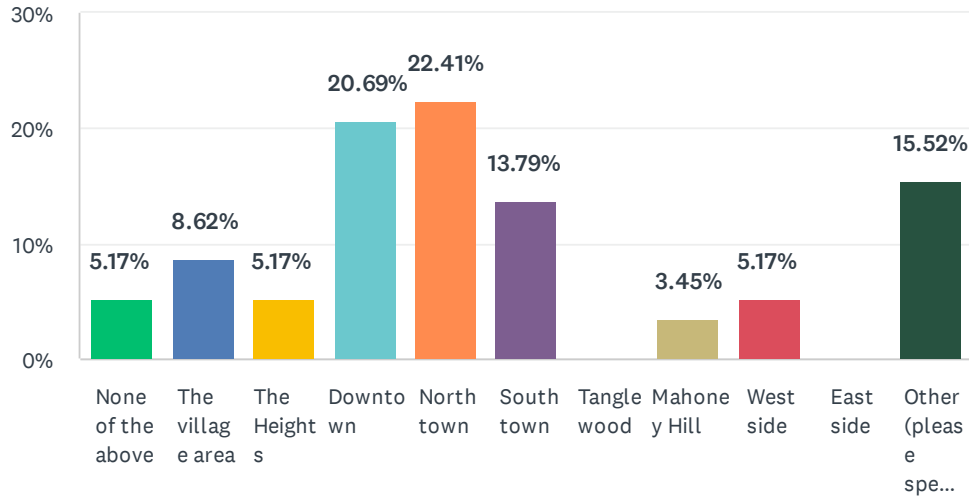
## List of Acronyms

ADA = American with Disabilities Act  
ACS = American Community Survey  
BTIP = Biennial Transportation Improvement Program  
BwH = Beginning with Habitat Program (MDIFW)  
CEO = Code Enforcement Officer  
CIP = Capital Investment Plan  
CRF = Critical Rate Factor  
DACF = Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry  
DWA = Deer Wintering Area  
DWP = Drinking Water Program  
GPA = Great Pond Standard  
HCL = High Crash Location  
LID = Low Impact Development  
LMA = Labor Market Area  
KVCAP = Kennebec Valley Community Action Program  
KVCOG = Kennebec Valley Council of Governments  
MDEP = Maine Department of Environmental Protection  
MDIFW = Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife  
MDOL = Maine Department of Labor  
MDOT = Maine Department of Transportation  
MHPC = Maine Historical Preservation Commission  
MNAP = Maine Natural Areas Program (MDOC)  
MRSA = Maine Revised Statutes Annotated  
MSHA = Maine State Housing Authority  
MUTCD = Manual Uniform Traffic Control Devices  
NRPA = Natural Resources Protection Act  
RSU = Regional School Unit  
SDWA = Federal Safe Drinking Water Act  
SWAP = Maine Source Water Assessment Program  
TIF = Tax Increment Financing

## Public Opinion Survey Results on Following Pages

## Q1 What part of town do you live in (where is your property located closest to)?

Answered: 58    Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None of the above	5.17%	3
The village area	8.62%	5
The Heights	5.17%	3
Downtown	20.69%	12
North town	22.41%	13
South town	13.79%	8
Tanglewood	0.00%	0
Mahoney Hill	3.45%	2
West side	5.17%	3
East side	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	15.52%	9
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>58</b>

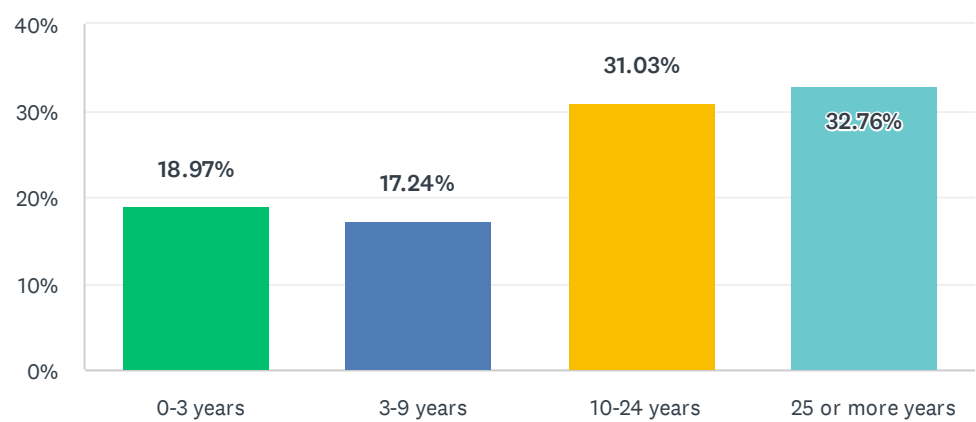
#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Rollins St.	1/22/2025 11:02 AM
2	Murray Street	11/29/2024 12:33 PM
3	Murray Street	11/29/2024 12:11 PM
4	Main and high street	10/30/2024 8:48 AM
5	Dead centerdead center	10/29/2024 7:58 PM

## Bingham's Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

6	Moscow	10/28/2024 6:48 PM
7	Moscow	10/28/2024 4:01 PM
8	Is there a map? I had no idea the town was split into these areas.	10/28/2024 3:08 PM
9	Concord	10/28/2024 9:21 AM

Q2 How many years have you lived in town?

Answered: 58    Skipped: 0

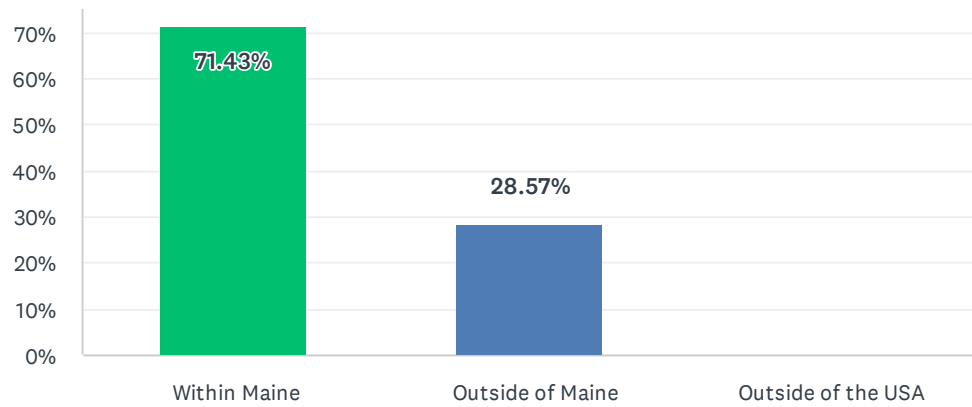


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
0-3 years	18.97%	11
3-9 years	17.24%	10
10-24 years	31.03%	18
25 or more years	32.76%	19
TOTAL		58



Q3 Where was the last place you lived before you came to town?

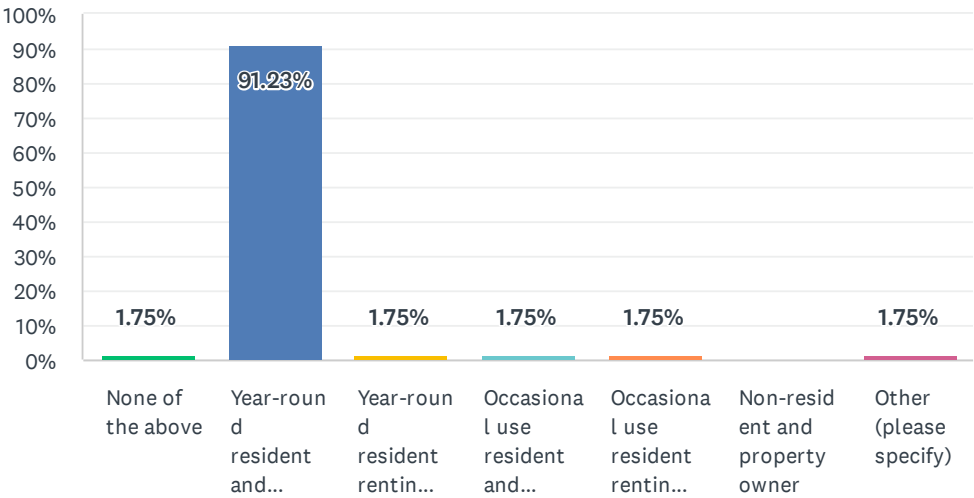
Answered: 56    Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Within Maine	71.43%	40
Outside of Maine	28.57%	16
Outside of the USA	0.00%	0
TOTAL		56

Q4 What best describes you?

Answered: 57    Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
None of the above		1.75%	1
Year-round resident and property owner		91.23%	52
Year-round resident renting property		1.75%	1
Occasional use resident and property owner		1.75%	1
Occasional use resident renting property		1.75%	1
Non-resident and property owner		0.00%	0
Other (please specify)		1.75%	1
TOTAL			57

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Brian Foran	10/28/2024 3:37 PM



## Q5 What is your age? (please write answer)

Answered: 55 Skipped: 3

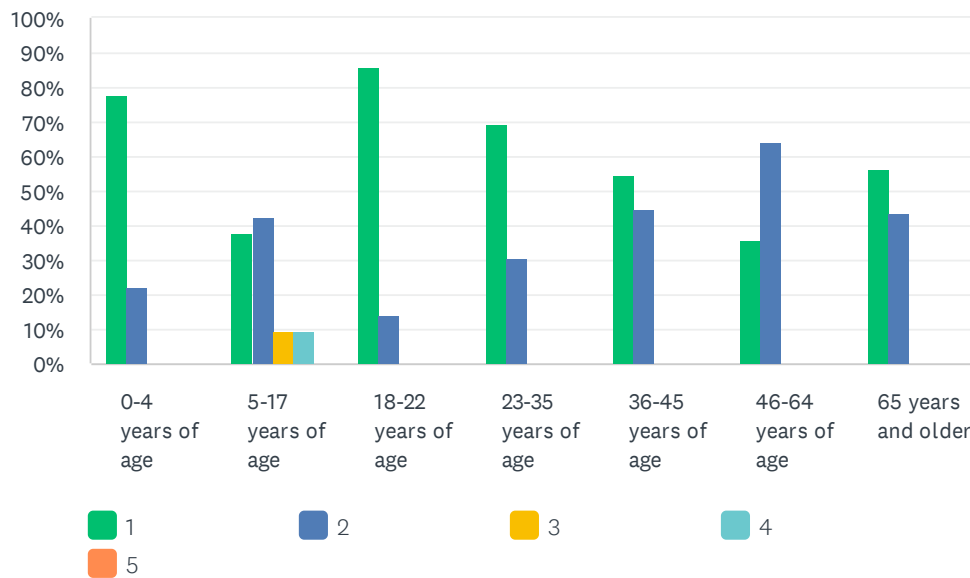
#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	43	1/22/2025 11:46 AM
2	21	1/22/2025 11:39 AM
3	22	1/22/2025 11:29 AM
4	70	1/22/2025 11:23 AM
5	39	1/22/2025 11:02 AM
6	44	1/7/2025 7:55 PM
7	41	12/3/2024 6:45 PM
8	63	11/29/2024 4:13 PM
9	21	11/29/2024 12:33 PM
10	23	11/29/2024 12:11 PM
11	56	11/12/2024 8:44 AM
12	67	11/8/2024 8:47 AM
13	59	11/7/2024 10:53 AM
14	57	11/5/2024 7:23 AM
15	43	11/3/2024 9:12 PM
16	65	11/3/2024 6:26 PM
17	67	11/3/2024 6:21 PM
18	42	11/1/2024 5:49 AM
19	71	10/30/2024 8:48 AM
20	38	10/29/2024 9:50 PM
21	69	10/29/2024 7:58 PM
22	40	10/29/2024 7:54 PM
23	60	10/29/2024 3:45 PM
24	54	10/29/2024 2:48 PM
25	64	10/29/2024 4:23 AM
26	59	10/29/2024 2:57 AM
27	34	10/28/2024 6:48 PM
28	61	10/28/2024 6:28 PM
29	33	10/28/2024 5:51 PM
30	24	10/28/2024 5:40 PM
31	69	10/28/2024 4:01 PM
32	Fifty seven	10/28/2024 3:37 PM
33	33	10/28/2024 3:08 PM

# Bingham's Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

34	47	10/28/2024 2:23 PM
35	43	10/28/2024 1:14 PM
36	36	10/28/2024 12:40 PM
37	15	10/28/2024 12:09 PM
38	57	10/28/2024 11:44 AM
39	32	10/28/2024 11:44 AM
40	85	10/28/2024 11:18 AM
41	34	10/28/2024 10:51 AM
42	28	10/28/2024 10:43 AM
43	71	10/28/2024 10:28 AM
44	65	10/28/2024 10:03 AM
45	27	10/28/2024 9:44 AM
46	57	10/28/2024 9:34 AM
47	64	10/28/2024 9:26 AM
48	60	10/28/2024 9:23 AM
49	34	10/28/2024 9:21 AM
50	74	10/28/2024 9:11 AM
51	40s, teenagers, 20s & 60s	10/28/2024 9:00 AM
52	72	10/27/2024 2:34 PM
53	19	10/25/2024 2:16 PM
54	41	10/25/2024 12:42 PM
55	23	10/22/2024 10:40 AM

## Q6 How many people in each of these age groups live in your residence?

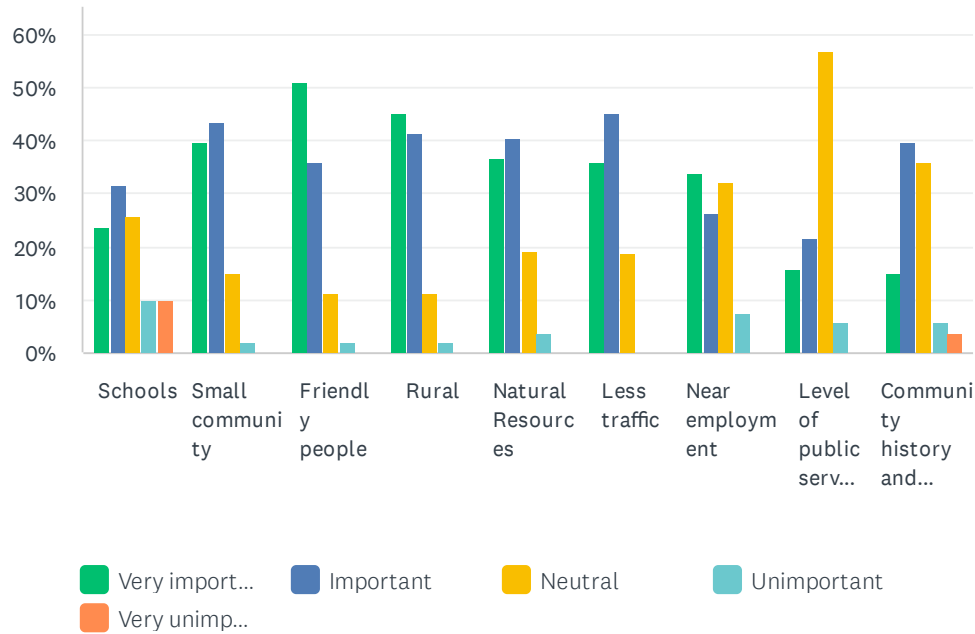
Answered: 57    Skipped: 1



	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
0-4 years of age	77.78% 7	22.22% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	9	1.22
5-17 years of age	38.10% 8	42.86% 9	9.52% 2	9.52% 2	0.00% 0	21	1.90
18-22 years of age	85.71% 6	14.29% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	7	1.14
23-35 years of age	69.23% 9	30.77% 4	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	13	1.31
36-45 years of age	55.00% 11	45.00% 9	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	20	1.45
46-64 years of age	36.00% 9	64.00% 16	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	25	1.64
65 years and older	56.25% 9	43.75% 7	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	16	1.44

## Q7 How important were each of the following when choosing to live in town?

Answered: 54 Skipped: 4

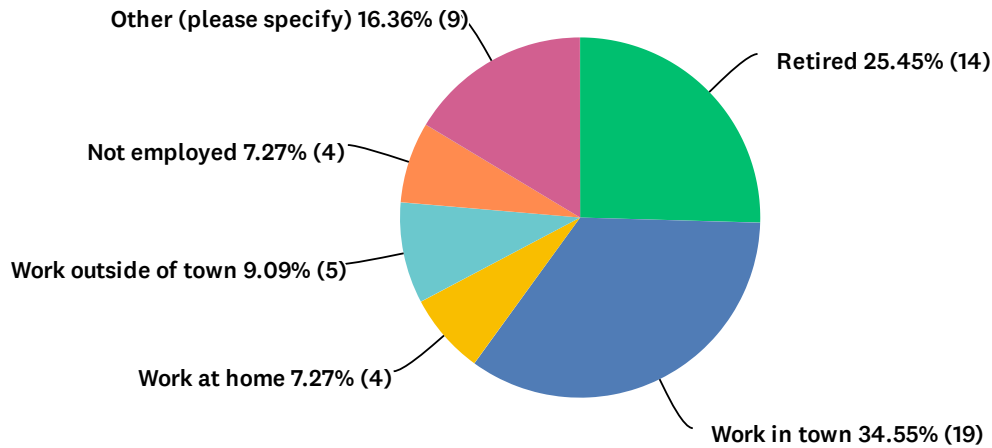


	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	NEUTRAL	UNIMPORTANT	VERY UNIMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Schools	23.53% 12	31.37% 16	25.49% 13	9.80% 5	9.80% 5	51	2.51
Small community	39.62% 21	43.40% 23	15.09% 8	1.89% 1	0.00% 0	53	1.79
Friendly people	50.94% 27	35.85% 19	11.32% 6	1.89% 1	0.00% 0	53	1.64
Rural	45.28% 24	41.51% 22	11.32% 6	1.89% 1	0.00% 0	53	1.70
Natural Resources	36.54% 19	40.38% 21	19.23% 10	3.85% 2	0.00% 0	52	1.90
Less traffic	35.85% 19	45.28% 24	18.87% 10	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	53	1.83
Near employment	33.96% 18	26.42% 14	32.08% 17	7.55% 4	0.00% 0	53	2.13
Level of public services	15.69% 8	21.57% 11	56.86% 29	5.88% 3	0.00% 0	51	2.53
Community history and historic buildings	15.09% 8	39.62% 21	35.85% 19	5.66% 3	3.77% 2	53	2.43

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Medical and dentist accessibility	10/28/2024 6:33 PM
2	Building should be torn down or fixed	10/28/2024 4:03 PM

## Q8 What is your place of employment?

Answered: 55    Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Retired	25.45%	14
Work in town	34.55%	19
Work at home	7.27%	4
Work outside of town	9.09%	5
Not employed	7.27%	4
If you work outside of town, what town do you work in? Please answer in text box below.	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	16.36%	9
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>55</b>

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Work from home(remote)	11/29/2024 4:22 PM
2	Retired but work part time in town due to the economy	11/8/2024 8:50 AM
3	Waterville	10/29/2024 2:59 AM
4	North Anson	10/28/2024 10:09 PM
5	Skowhegan	10/28/2024 5:41 PM
6	School	10/28/2024 12:11 PM
7	Skowhegan	10/28/2024 11:45 AM
8	Office in Skowhegan, travel throughout somerset county RN	10/28/2024 9:45 AM
9	Solon	10/28/2024 9:02 AM

## Q9 What type of businesses would you like to see in town? (Please write answer)

Answered: 46    Skipped: 12

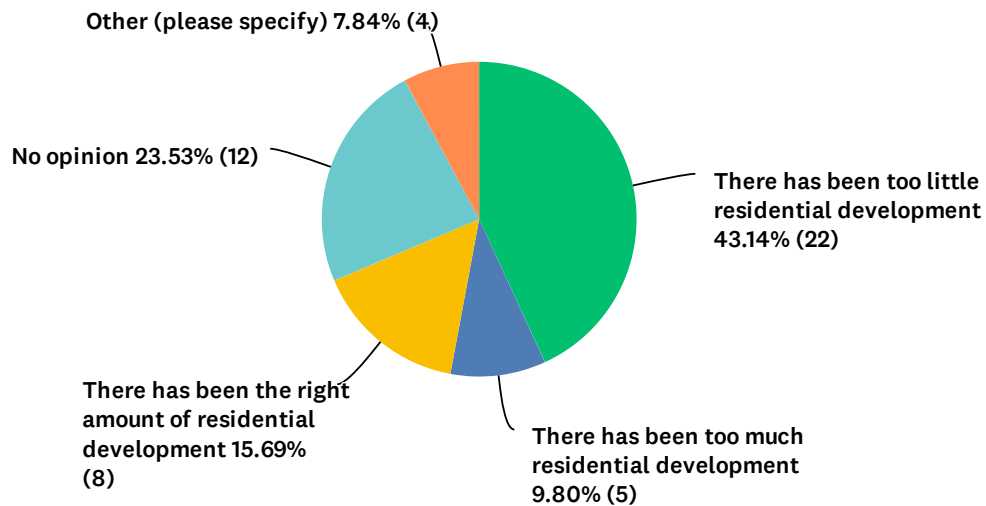
#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	factories, restaurants	1/22/2025 11:46 AM
2	bakery	1/22/2025 11:40 AM
3	arcade, card/hobby shop, bakery	1/22/2025 11:30 AM
4	Restaurants	1/22/2025 11:02 AM
5	A bakery	1/22/2025 9:14 AM
6	Pharmacy, CPA, lawyer	1/7/2025 7:57 PM
7	- any kind of mill , wood or whatever - to keep jobs for all and money coming to town - we really need a pharmacy - restaurants - dept store ie renys goodwill no more low income housing. Help bring income to us, not more poverty. Ty	12/3/2024 6:55 PM
8	Restaurants Pharmacy Renys Bedding and bath store Ice skating rink bowling alley Riverside landing with food trucks & music/entertainment summer and holidays	11/29/2024 4:22 PM
9	Game/hobby shop. An arcade. Somewhere where people (adults and children) can have FUN	11/29/2024 12:36 PM
10	Bakery	11/29/2024 12:12 PM
11	Engineering, Professional type of businesses that do not rely on population to exist.	11/12/2024 8:48 AM
12	anything would be an improvement	11/8/2024 8:50 AM
13	Bakery, Book Shop, Clothing Store, Small Businesses	11/5/2024 7:25 AM
14	Any stable type that would provide decent pay and give local people an opportunity to stay local to work	11/3/2024 6:50 PM
15	Another restaurant. Mill	11/3/2024 6:28 PM
16	Restaurants, coffee shop	11/1/2024 5:50 AM
17	Would be nice if mill opened Restaurant	10/30/2024 8:53 AM
18	Recreation and those that support/get something going in the mill	10/29/2024 8:01 PM
19	Small business owners	10/29/2024 3:47 PM
20	Manufacturing	10/29/2024 2:50 PM
21	Restaurants	10/29/2024 4:30 AM
22	More shopping stores, diners, ect	10/29/2024 2:59 AM
23	Restaurant, drug store-gift shop, farmers market,	10/28/2024 10:09 PM
24	Restaurants, something for kids to do	10/28/2024 6:49 PM
25	Restaurant	10/28/2024 6:33 PM
26	Restraunt, shooting range, recreation	10/28/2024 5:53 PM
27	NOT a power sport company. They are ruining the town. And lowering the town morall	10/28/2024 5:41 PM
28	Drugstore,,	10/28/2024 4:03 PM
29	Locally owned businesses	10/28/2024 3:11 PM

## Bingham's Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

30	antique store/bakery/barber/pharmacy/resturant	10/28/2024 2:24 PM
31	Retail	10/28/2024 1:14 PM
32	Sandwich shop	10/28/2024 12:42 PM
33	A cheap ice cream shop, indoor gym that you can pay to use for basketball, an actual restaurant	10/28/2024 12:11 PM
34	Restaurant and Rec Center for the kids, movie theater, year round activities for teens	10/28/2024 11:47 AM
35	Eat in restaurant	10/28/2024 11:45 AM
36	Pharmacy, Cafe	10/28/2024 11:19 AM
37	Coffee shop	10/28/2024 10:52 AM
38	Any other than pot shops and gas stations	10/28/2024 10:43 AM
39	Drug store	10/28/2024 10:05 AM
40	More small restaurants	10/28/2024 9:45 AM
41	Sit down restaurants. More Retail	10/28/2024 9:35 AM
42	Farmers Markets, Yoga Studio, video game lounge, restaurants, gift shops, pharmacy, doctor, dentist - multiple of each. Since the one in town is not homeopathic at all.	10/28/2024 9:02 AM
43	Similar to Logo Logic. Small and successful with local employment opportunities.	10/28/2024 8:44 AM
44	Bakery, Family restaurant, Pharmacy, Manufacturing and recreational	10/27/2024 2:45 PM
45	Sit down restaurant, Dunkin Donuts, mill, other shops in the downtown area.	10/25/2024 12:43 PM
46	Sit down restaurant	10/22/2024 10:42 AM

## Q10 What is your opinion on residential development in the past decade?

Answered: 51   Skipped: 7



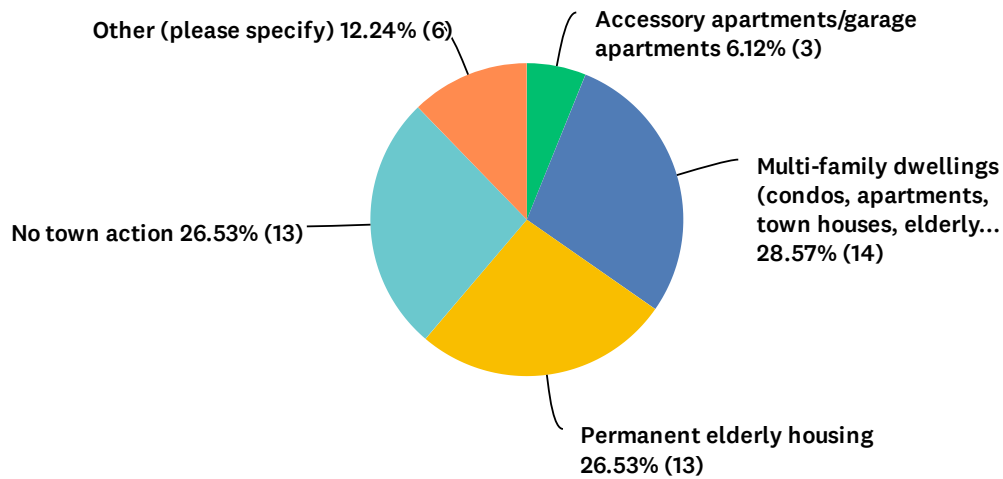
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
There has been too little residential development	43.14%	22
There has been too much residential development	9.80%	5
There has been the right amount of residential development	15.69%	8
No opinion	23.53%	12
Other (please specify)	7.84%	4
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>51</b>

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	property owners not maintaining property	1/22/2025 11:24 AM
2	You lack the jobs to support residential development	11/29/2024 4:30 PM
3	There needs to be zoning ordinances to better control development.	11/12/2024 8:52 AM
4	It's sad to see main street store fronts become low income apartments	10/28/2024 6:50 PM



## Q11 What types of housing should the town consider or pursue?

Answered: 49 Skipped: 9

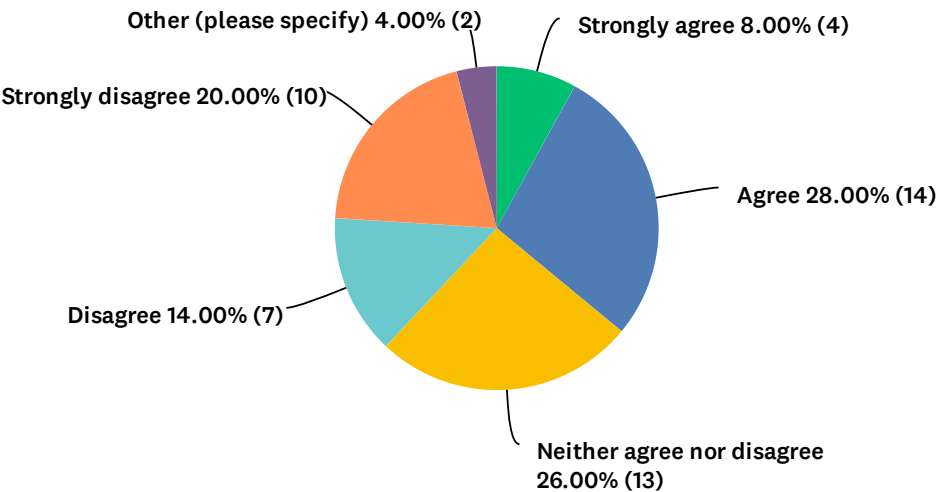


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Accessory apartments/garage apartments	6.12%	3
Multi-family dwellings (condos, apartments, town houses, elderly housing)	28.57%	14
Permanent elderly housing	26.53%	13
No town action	26.53%	13
Other (please specify)	12.24%	6
TOTAL		49

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Single family homes	1/22/2025 11:03 AM
2	There are no services or jobs to support any housing expansions listed. If jobs were to develop housing would occur naturally	11/29/2024 4:30 PM
3	Revamp all the unused housing structures throughout town. Use leveraging and matching grants to revitalize the town.	11/12/2024 8:52 AM
4	single family dwellings	11/5/2024 7:26 AM
5	Rentals should meet code	10/29/2024 8:06 PM
6	Veteran housing, hospice housing	10/28/2024 11:48 AM

Q12 How do you feel about the use of town funds in support of affordable housing plans?

Answered: 50 Skipped: 8

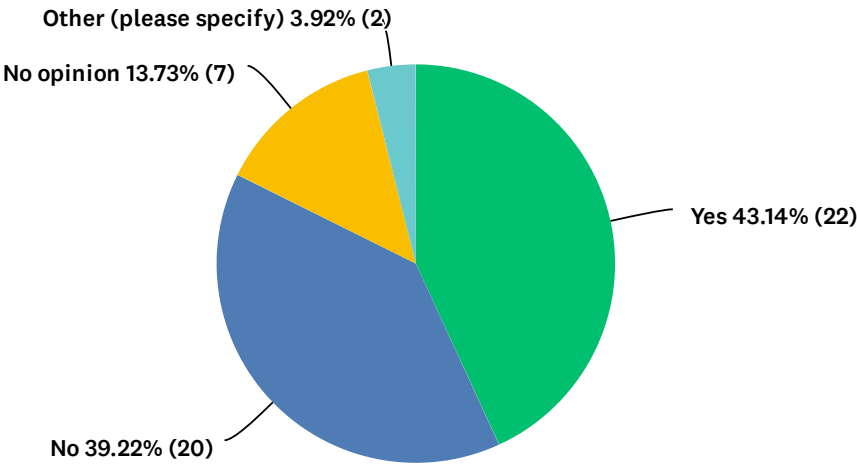


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	8.00%	4
Agree	28.00%	14
Neither agree nor disagree	26.00%	13
Disagree	14.00%	7
Strongly disagree	20.00%	10
Other (please specify)	4.00%	2
TOTAL		50

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Depends who the housing is for	10/30/2024 8:56 AM
2	That would depend on the level of support.	10/27/2024 2:45 PM

Q13 Do you feel there is a need for housing options other than single family housing in town?

Answered: 51 Skipped: 7

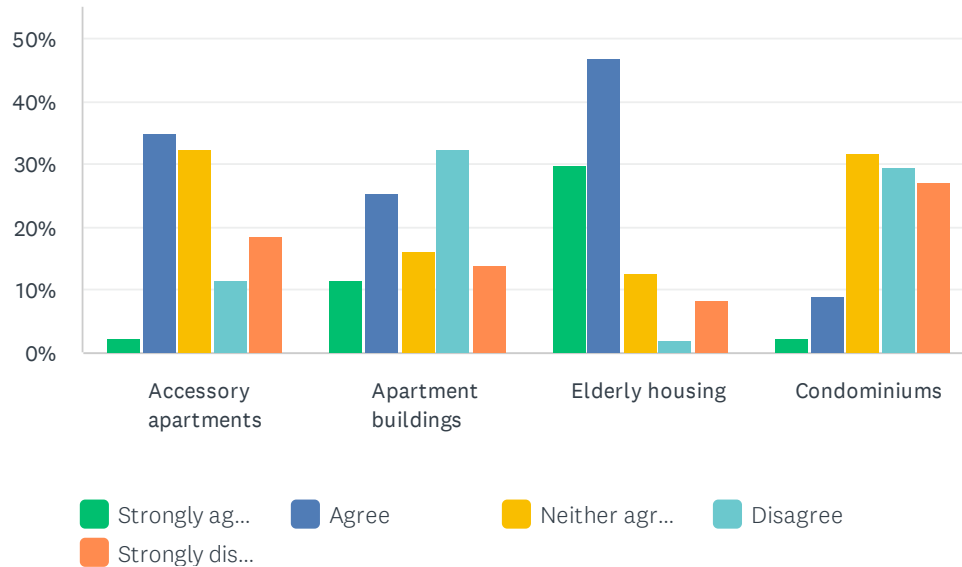


ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Yes		43.14%	22
No		39.22%	20
No opinion		13.73%	7
Other (please specify)		3.92%	2
TOTAL			51

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Some low income for elderly	1/22/2025 11:03 AM
2	No, that typically brings forth problems.	11/12/2024 8:52 AM

## Q14 If you feel there is a need for other housing types, please rate the following in terms of importance:

Answered: 47   Skipped: 11

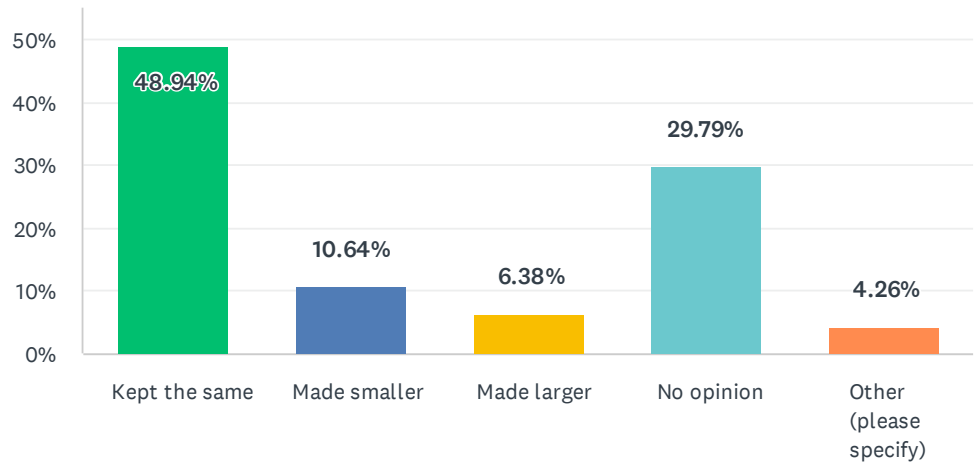


	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Accessory apartments	2.33% 1	34.88% 15	32.56% 14	11.63% 5	18.60% 8	43	3.09
Apartment buildings	11.63% 5	25.58% 11	16.28% 7	32.56% 14	13.95% 6	43	3.12
Elderly housing	29.79% 14	46.81% 22	12.77% 6	2.13% 1	8.51% 4	47	2.13
Condominiums	2.27% 1	9.09% 4	31.82% 14	29.55% 13	27.27% 12	44	3.70

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	You would be better served to write grants to facilitate business environment	11/29/2024 4:30 PM
2	veteran and hospice housing	10/28/2024 11:48 AM

Q15 For areas with connection to municipal sewer and water, the minimum lot size is 10,000 square feet; for those without connection to municipal sewer and water, the minimum lot size is 40,000 square feet. Do you think the minimum lot size in town should be:

Answered: 47    Skipped: 11

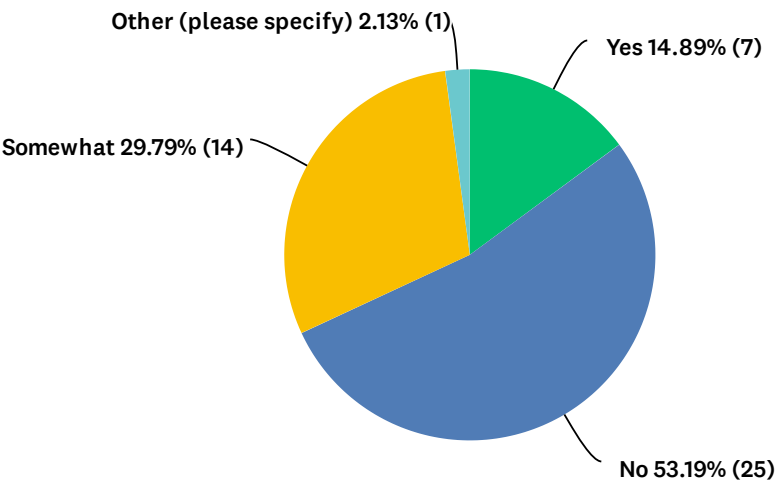


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Kept the same	48.94%	23
Made smaller	10.64%	5
Made larger	6.38%	3
No opinion	29.79%	14
Other (please specify)	4.26%	2
TOTAL		47

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Made smaller for lots not connected to water and sewer	10/29/2024 2:55 PM
2	!0,000 is fine for areas with municipal utilities. 40,000 is on the small side for onsite utilities. If subdivisions become popular that will become evident.	10/27/2024 3:03 PM

Q16 Are you familiar with the current ordinances in the town?

Answered: 47    Skipped: 11

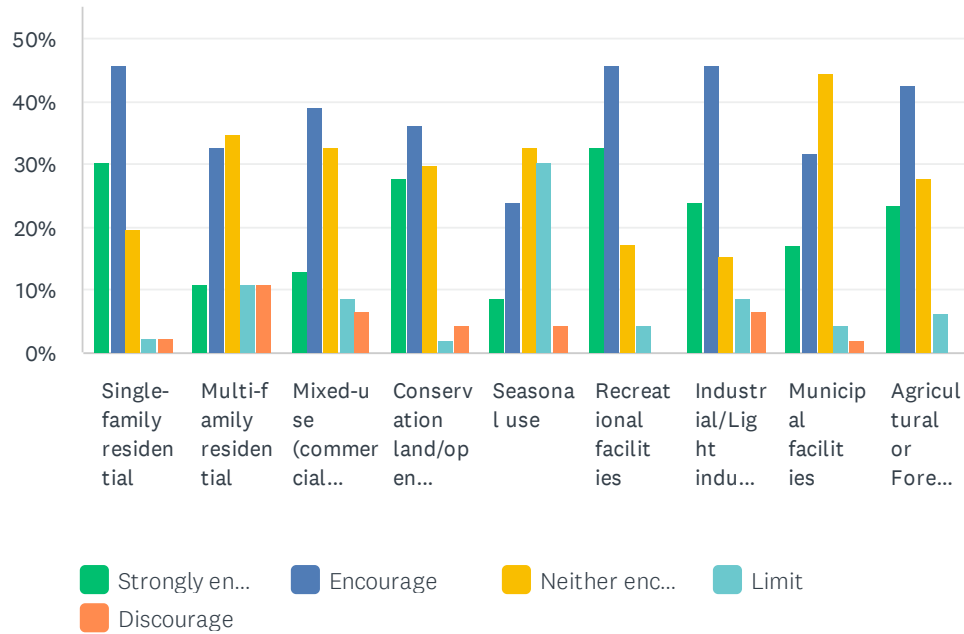


ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Yes		14.89%	7
No		53.19%	25
Somewhat		29.79%	14
Other (please specify)		2.13%	1
TOTAL			47

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	There are no ordinances that are followed	10/28/2024 9:29 AM

## Q17 Should the following land use types be encouraged, limited, or discouraged?

Answered: 47 Skipped: 11

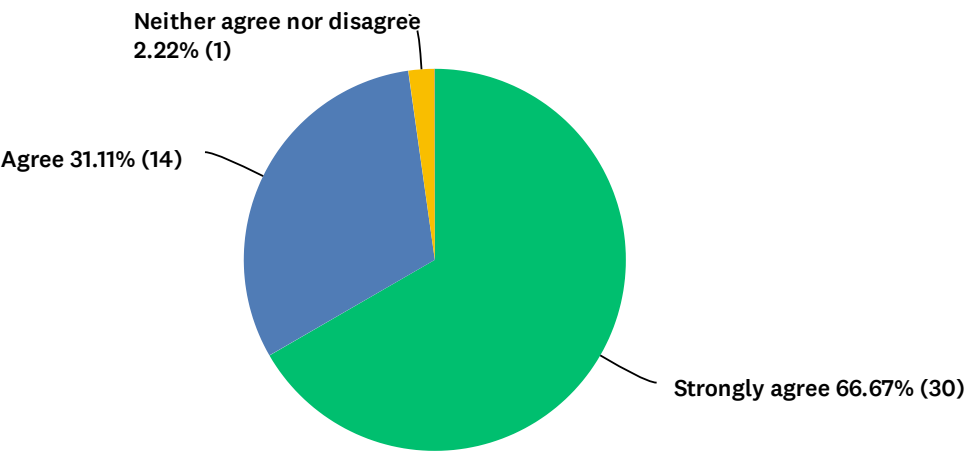


	STRONGLY ENCOURAGE	ENCOURAGE	NEITHER ENCOURAGE NOR DISCOURAGE	LIMIT	DISCOURAGE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Single-family residential	30.43% 14	45.65% 21	19.57% 9	2.17% 1	2.17% 1	46	2.00
Multi-family residential	10.87% 5	32.61% 15	34.78% 16	10.87% 5	10.87% 5	46	2.78
Mixed-use (commercial/residential)	13.04% 6	39.13% 18	32.61% 15	8.70% 4	6.52% 3	46	2.57
Conservation land/open space	27.66% 13	36.17% 17	29.79% 14	2.13% 1	4.26% 2	47	2.19
Seasonal use	8.70% 4	23.91% 11	32.61% 15	30.43% 14	4.35% 2	46	2.98
Recreational facilities	32.61% 15	45.65% 21	17.39% 8	4.35% 2	0.00% 0	46	1.93
Industrial/Light industrial, Commercial	23.91% 11	45.65% 21	15.22% 7	8.70% 4	6.52% 3	46	2.28
Municipal facilities	17.02% 8	31.91% 15	44.68% 21	4.26% 2	2.13% 1	47	2.43
Agricultural or Forestry uses	23.40% 11	42.55% 20	27.66% 13	6.38% 3	0.00% 0	47	2.17



Q18 Should the town encourage additional new businesses?

Answered: 45    Skipped: 13

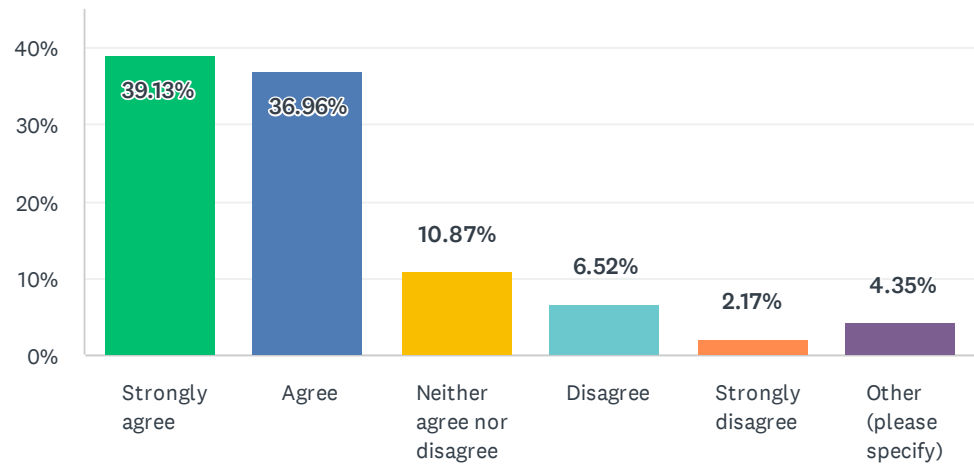


ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Strongly agree		66.67%	30
Agree		31.11%	14
Neither agree nor disagree		2.22%	1
Disagree		0.00%	0
Strongly disagree		0.00%	0
Other (please specify)		0.00%	0
TOTAL			45

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
	There are no responses.	

Q19 Should the town encourage new industrial development?

Answered: 46    Skipped: 12



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	39.13%	18
Agree	36.96%	17
Neither agree nor disagree	10.87%	5
Disagree	6.52%	3
Strongly disagree	2.17%	1
Other (please specify)	4.35%	2
TOTAL		46

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Yes, but not in residential areas. Limited development to preserve natural resources, etc.	11/12/2024 9:01 AM
2	I	11/3/2024 6:33 PM

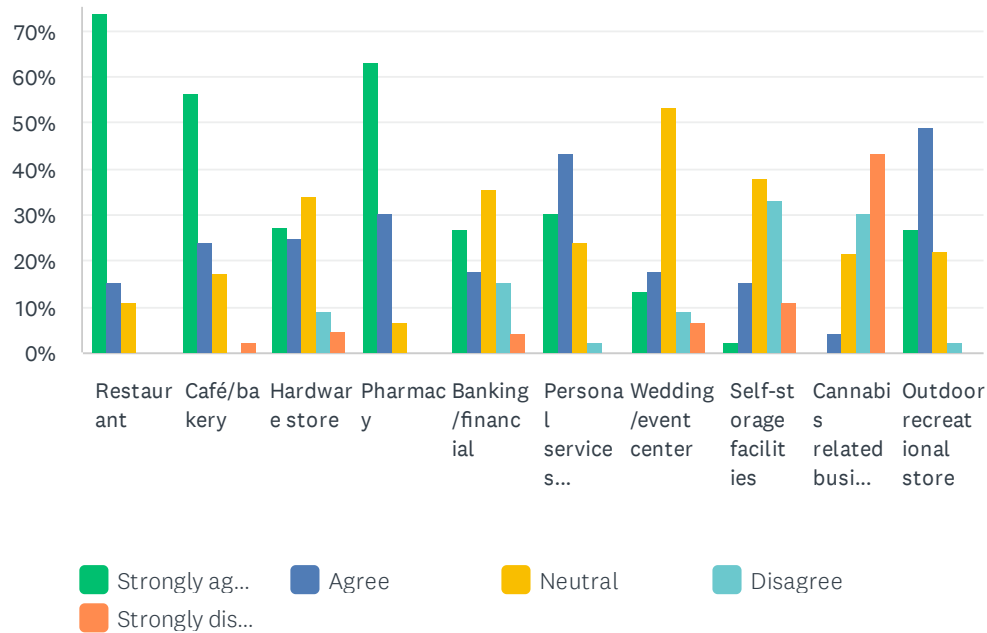
## Q20 What type of industrial development would you like to see in town? (For example: mills, quarries, etc.)

Answered: 27    Skipped: 31

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Mills, factories, any place that creates jobs	1/22/2025 11:48 AM
2	Anything that would bring jobs	1/22/2025 11:19 AM
3	NA	1/22/2025 9:16 AM
4	Mills, manufacturing	1/7/2025 8:07 PM
5	Mills	12/3/2024 7:09 PM
6	Mills, manufacturing, recreational and outdoor shops, retail, restaurants, entertainment ie things that make people stop and spend money here	11/29/2024 4:39 PM
7	The one mill that is being worked on. Thats all	11/29/2024 12:50 PM
8	Wording "in town" is not preferred. Mills or industrial development OUTSIDE of the residential area. Wood is abundant (limited) in the area, so it makes sense to focus on mills that utilize wood products.	11/12/2024 9:01 AM
9	Mills	11/8/2024 8:57 AM
10	Quimby mill?	11/3/2024 9:23 PM
11	Not mining!	11/3/2024 6:56 PM
12	Mills	11/3/2024 6:33 PM
13	Mill opening	10/30/2024 9:04 AM
14	Manufacturing	10/29/2024 8:11 PM
15	Mills	10/29/2024 2:57 PM
16	Manufacturer of durable goods	10/29/2024 3:05 AM
17	A Marden's store,	10/28/2024 10:44 PM
18	None	10/28/2024 5:57 PM
19	Any	10/28/2024 4:09 PM
20	Any	10/28/2024 3:14 PM
21	Anything that will give people in town a chance.	10/28/2024 12:00 PM
22	Mill	10/28/2024 10:55 AM
23	Any	10/28/2024 10:36 AM
24	Mills and places for residents to gets jobs.	10/28/2024 10:14 AM
25	Wood products, electronics	10/27/2024 3:12 PM
26	Mills	10/25/2024 12:46 PM
27	Solar	10/22/2024 10:52 AM

## Q21 What is your opinion regarding the need for the following in town:

Answered: 46 Skipped: 12



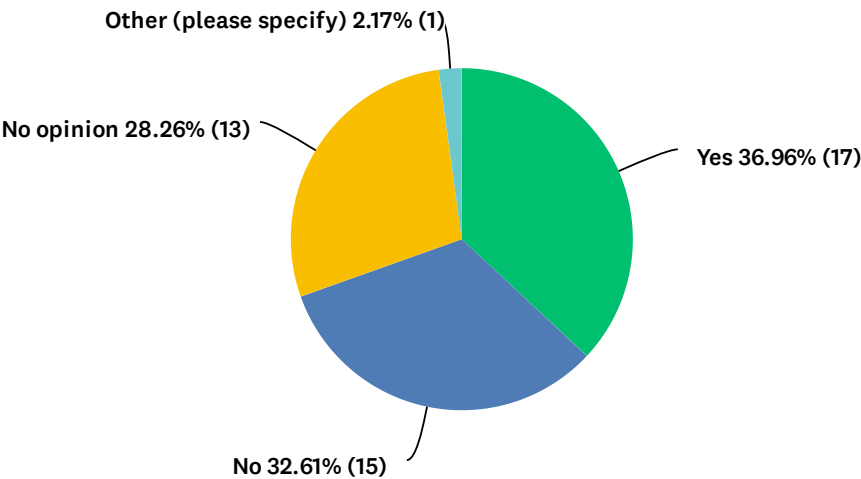
	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Restaurant	73.91% 34	15.22% 7	10.87% 5	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	46	1.37
Café/bakery	56.52% 26	23.91% 11	17.39% 8	0.00% 0	2.17% 1	46	1.67
Hardware store	27.27% 12	25.00% 11	34.09% 15	9.09% 4	4.55% 2	44	2.39
Pharmacy	63.04% 29	30.43% 14	6.52% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	46	1.43
Banking/financial	26.67% 12	17.78% 8	35.56% 16	15.56% 7	4.44% 2	45	2.53
Personal services (salons, nail studios)	30.43% 14	43.48% 20	23.91% 11	2.17% 1	0.00% 0	46	1.98
Wedding/event center	13.33% 6	17.78% 8	53.33% 24	8.89% 4	6.67% 3	45	2.78
Self-storage facilities	2.22% 1	15.56% 7	37.78% 17	33.33% 15	11.11% 5	45	3.36
Cannabis related businesses	0.00% 0	4.35% 2	21.74% 10	30.43% 14	43.48% 20	46	4.13
Outdoor recreational store	26.67% 12	48.89% 22	22.22% 10	2.22% 1	0.00% 0	45	2.00

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	arcade	1/22/2025 11:32 AM
2	Riverside landing with entertainment and food trucks and a renys	11/29/2024 4:39 PM

3	fishing/kayak	11/3/2024 9:23 PM
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Q22 Do you feel that recent development aligns with the character of the town?

Answered: 46    Skipped: 12

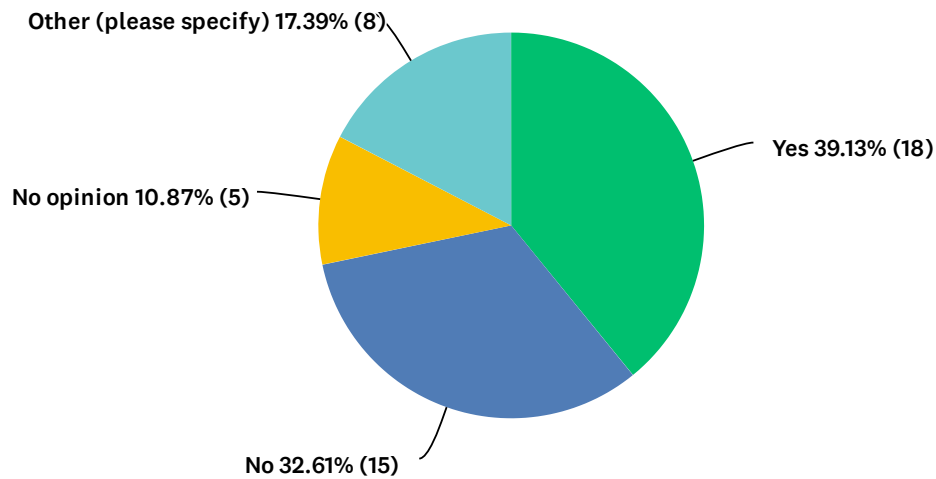


ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Yes		36.96%	17
No		32.61%	15
No opinion		28.26%	13
Other (please specify)		2.17%	1
TOTAL			46

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	What development? Not sure what is being referred to.	11/29/2024 4:39 PM

## Q23 Would you support the construction of large-scale commercial facilities (i.e. Walmart) or large-scale industrial facilities (i.e. mill or quarry) in town?

Answered: 46 Skipped: 12



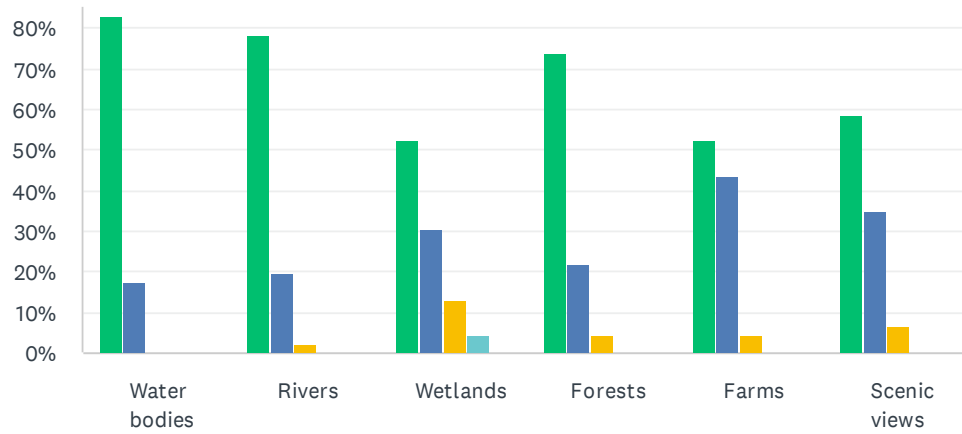
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	39.13%	18
No	32.61%	15
No opinion	10.87%	5
Other (please specify)	17.39%	8
TOTAL		46

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	only if its food or arcade related	1/22/2025 11:32 AM
2	Except a mill	11/29/2024 4:39 PM
3	McDonalds	11/29/2024 12:50 PM
4	No on Wal mart yes on Home Depot or Lowes	10/30/2024 9:04 AM
5	No quarry	10/29/2024 3:54 PM
6	Support plywood factory in process but no big box	10/28/2024 8:49 AM
7	Depends on the facility	10/25/2024 12:46 PM
8	Yes, depending on the business type.	10/22/2024 10:52 AM



## Q24 How important are each of these natural resources to you?

Answered: 46 Skipped: 12

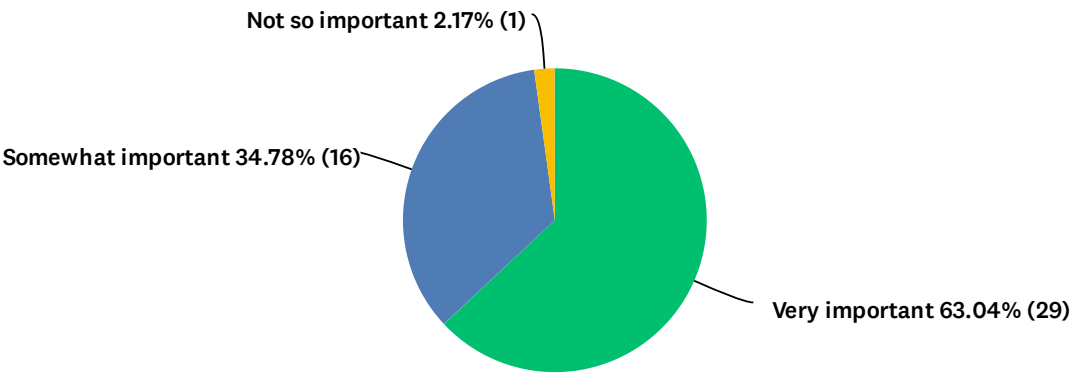


■ Very import... 
 ■ Important 
 ■ Neutral 
 ■ Unimportant 
 ■ Very unimp...

	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	NEUTRAL	UNIMPORTANT	VERY UNIMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Water bodies	82.61% 38	17.39% 8	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	46	1.17
Rivers	78.26% 36	19.57% 9	2.17% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	46	1.24
Wetlands	52.17% 24	30.43% 14	13.04% 6	4.35% 2	0.00% 0	46	1.70
Forests	73.91% 34	21.74% 10	4.35% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	46	1.30
Farms	52.17% 24	43.48% 20	4.35% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	46	1.52
Scenic views	58.70% 27	34.78% 16	6.52% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	46	1.48

Q25 How important do you feel it is to protect and promote farms and farmland?

Answered: 46 Skipped: 12

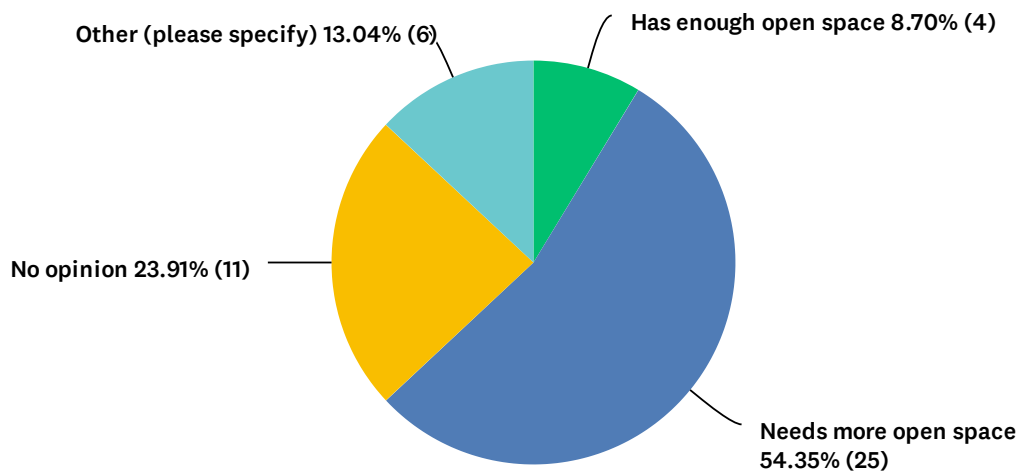


ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Very important		63.04%	29
Somewhat important		34.78%	16
Not so important		2.17%	1
Not at all important		0.00%	0
Other (please specify)		0.00%	0
TOTAL			46

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
	There are no responses.	

**Q26 Open Space** is land which is set aside, either in a natural state or for recreational and/or passive purposes and is protected from future development forever. Open space may include nature preserves (i.e. wildlife habitat, natural resource areas), wetlands (tidal and inland), farms, cemeteries, forests, parks, beaches and other recreational facilities. They may be privately owned (by a land trust or neighborhood association, for example) or publicly owned (by the town or the state). Some open space land is available for public use, while access to other land is restricted. Open space planning can link land parcels to form wildlife corridors or protect important wetland systems or provide trails for passive recreation. In your opinion, the town:

Answered: 46    Skipped: 12



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Has enough open space	8.70%	4
Needs more open space	54.35%	25
No opinion	23.91%	11
Other (please specify)	13.04%	6
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>46</b>

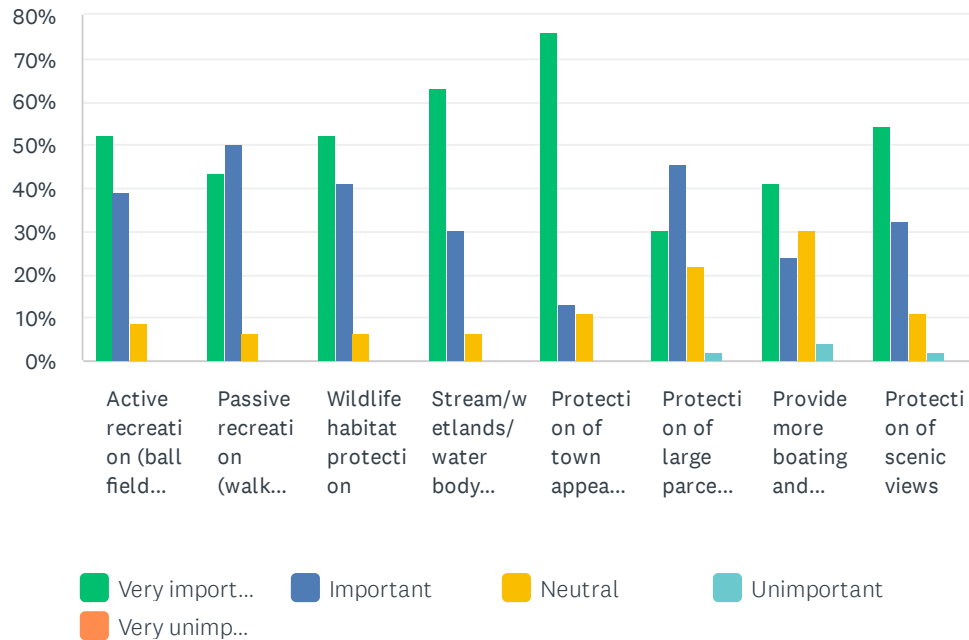
#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	This question confuses me but I do want property protected and no more bulldozing our forests	12/3/2024 7:18 PM
2	retain what the town has no solar fields!!!!	11/8/2024 8:59 AM
3	In town recreation	11/3/2024 9:26 PM
4	Open trails safely	10/28/2024 4:11 PM

## Bingham's Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

5	Open space in the right areas is key. Not in the middle of town let that be all the businesses	10/28/2024 10:48 AM
6	I don't know what the town has for available Open Space.	10/27/2024 3:17 PM

## Q27 How important are each of the following open space categories to you?

Answered: 46 Skipped: 12



	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	NEUTRAL	UNIMPORTANT	VERY UNIMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Active recreation (ball fields, sports programs, tennis)	52.17% 24	39.13% 18	8.70% 4	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	46	1.57
Passive recreation (walking, hiking, biking, nature preserves)	43.48% 20	50.00% 23	6.52% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	46	1.63
Wildlife habitat protection	52.17% 24	41.30% 19	6.52% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	46	1.54
Stream/wetlands/water body protection	63.04% 29	30.43% 14	6.52% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	46	1.43
Protection of town appearance and character	76.09% 35	13.04% 6	10.87% 5	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	46	1.35
Protection of large parcels of land	30.43% 14	45.65% 21	21.74% 10	2.17% 1	0.00% 0	46	1.96
Provide more boating and fishing opportunities/water access	41.30% 19	23.91% 11	30.43% 14	4.35% 2	0.00% 0	46	1.98
Protection of scenic views	54.35% 25	32.61% 15	10.87% 5	2.17% 1	0.00% 0	46	1.61

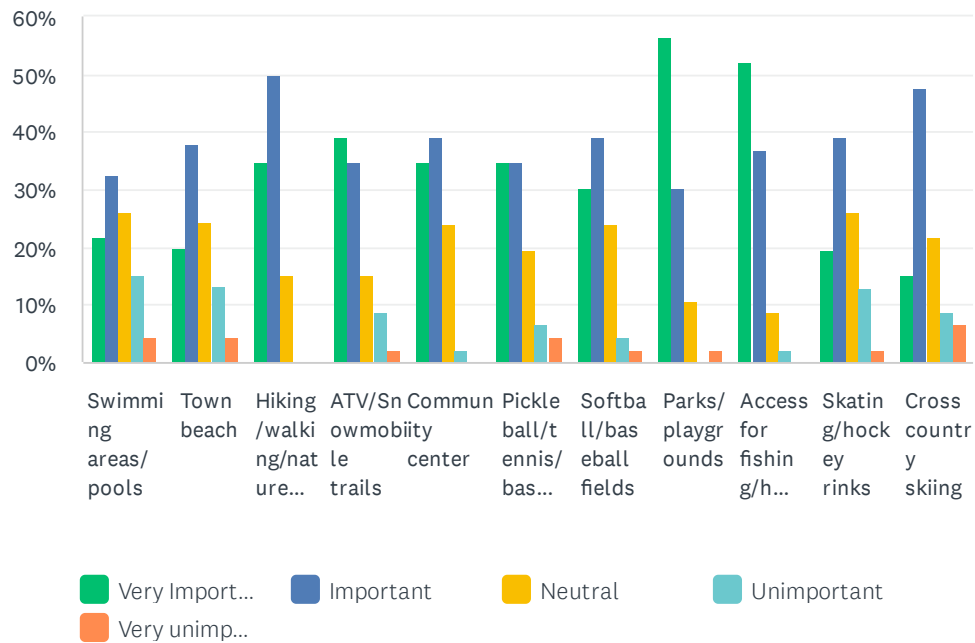
#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Railroad bed open for Atv and snowmobile	10/30/2024 9:09 AM

Bingham's Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

2	More walking/hiking trail development	10/28/2024 10:44 PM
3		10/28/2024 10:48 AM

Q28 Public facilities include schools, roads, parks and municipal buildings and other municipally owned or maintained structures. These facilities and the services they provide are paid for, in large part, through the property taxes that citizens pay. The following questions are designed to allow the town to determine what level of facility improvements would be supported. Please indicate how important each of the following recreation categories are to you.

Answered: 46 Skipped: 12





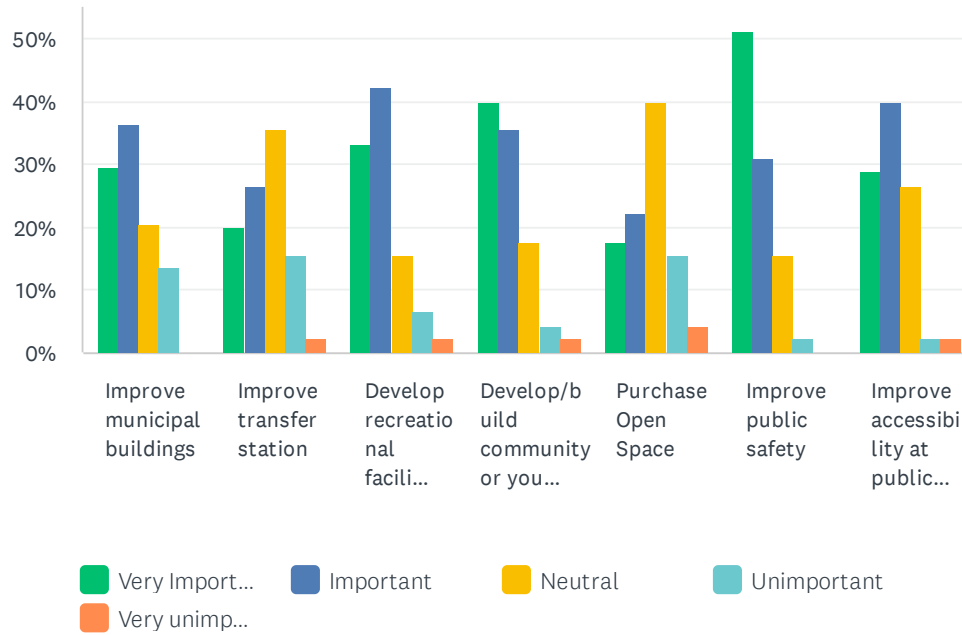
# Bingham's Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	NEUTRAL	UNIMPORTANT	VERY UNIMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Swimming areas/pools	21.74% 10	32.61% 15	26.09% 12	15.22% 7	4.35% 2	46	2.4
Town beach	20.00% 9	37.78% 17	24.44% 11	13.33% 6	4.44% 2	45	2.4
Hiking/walking/nature trails	34.78% 16	50.00% 23	15.22% 7	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	46	1.8
ATV/Snowmobile trails	39.13% 18	34.78% 16	15.22% 7	8.70% 4	2.17% 1	46	2.0
Community center	34.78% 16	39.13% 18	23.91% 11	2.17% 1	0.00% 0	46	1.9
Pickleball/tennis/basketball courts	34.78% 16	34.78% 16	19.57% 9	6.52% 3	4.35% 2	46	2.1
Softball/baseball fields	30.43% 14	39.13% 18	23.91% 11	4.35% 2	2.17% 1	46	2.0
Parks/playgrounds	56.52% 26	30.43% 14	10.87% 5	0.00% 0	2.17% 1	46	1.6
Access for fishing/hunting	52.17% 24	36.96% 17	8.70% 4	2.17% 1	0.00% 0	46	1.6
Skating/hockey rinks	19.57% 9	39.13% 18	26.09% 12	13.04% 6	2.17% 1	46	2.1
Cross country skiing	15.22% 7	47.83% 22	21.74% 10	8.70% 4	6.52% 3	46	2.4

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	GAME ARCADE AND MOVIE THEATER	11/29/2024 1:12 PM

## Q29 How important are each of the following categories to you?

Answered: 45 Skipped: 13

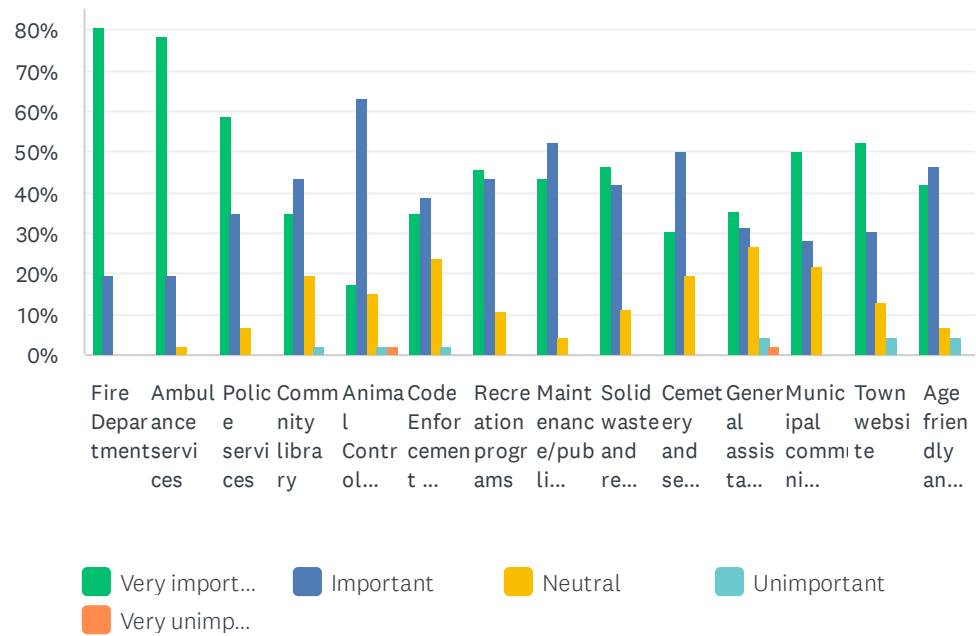


	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	NEUTRAL	UNIMPORTANT	VERY UNIMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Improve municipal buildings	29.55% 13	36.36% 16	20.45% 9	13.64% 6	0.00% 0	44	2.18
Improve transfer station	20.00% 9	26.67% 12	35.56% 16	15.56% 7	2.22% 1	45	2.53
Develop recreational facilities	33.33% 15	42.22% 19	15.56% 7	6.67% 3	2.22% 1	45	2.02
Develop/build community or youth center	40.00% 18	35.56% 16	17.78% 8	4.44% 2	2.22% 1	45	1.93
Purchase Open Space	17.78% 8	22.22% 10	40.00% 18	15.56% 7	4.44% 2	45	2.67
Improve public safety	51.11% 23	31.11% 14	15.56% 7	2.22% 1	0.00% 0	45	1.69
Improve accessibility at public properties and buildings	28.89% 13	40.00% 18	26.67% 12	2.22% 1	2.22% 1	45	2.09

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Town office is a mess stuff everywhere it needs to organized	11/8/2024 9:04 AM

Q30 How important are each of the following public service categories to you?

Answered: 46 Skipped: 12

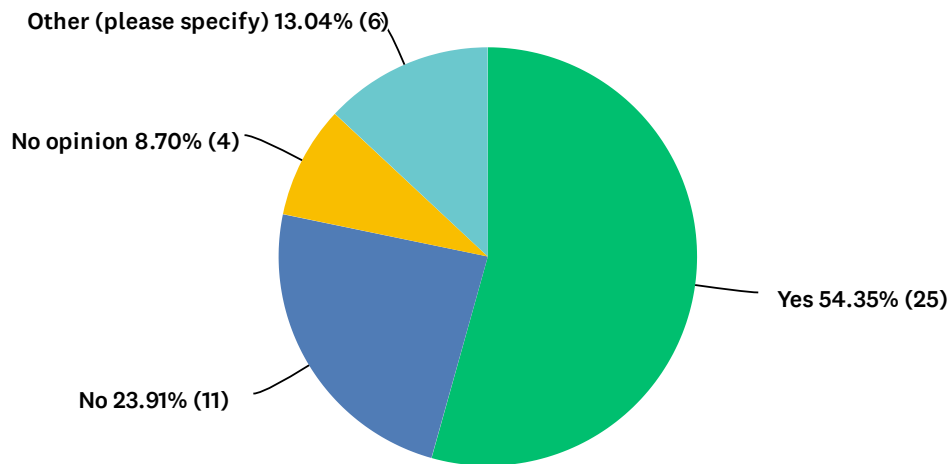


# Bingham's Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	NEUTRAL	UNIMPORTANT	VERY UNIMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Fire Department	80.43% 37	19.57% 9	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	46	1.20
Ambulance services	78.26% 36	19.57% 9	2.17% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	46	1.24
Police services	58.70% 27	34.78% 16	6.52% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	46	1.48
Community library	34.78% 16	43.48% 20	19.57% 9	2.17% 1	0.00% 0	46	1.89
Animal Control services	17.39% 8	63.04% 29	15.22% 7	2.17% 1	2.17% 1	46	2.09
Code Enforcement and community Planning services	34.78% 16	39.13% 18	23.91% 11	2.17% 1	0.00% 0	46	1.93
Recreation programs	45.65% 21	43.48% 20	10.87% 5	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	46	1.65
Maintenance/public works services	43.48% 20	52.17% 24	4.35% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	46	1.61
Solid waste and recycling services	46.67% 21	42.22% 19	11.11% 5	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	45	1.64
Cemetery and sexton services	30.43% 14	50.00% 23	19.57% 9	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	46	1.89
General assistance and heating assistance	35.56% 16	31.11% 14	26.67% 12	4.44% 2	2.22% 1	45	2.07
Municipal communications	50.00% 23	28.26% 13	21.74% 10	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	46	1.72
Town website	52.17% 24	30.43% 14	13.04% 6	4.35% 2	0.00% 0	46	1.70
Age friendly and older resident support services	42.22% 19	46.67% 21	6.67% 3	4.44% 2	0.00% 0	45	1.73

**Q31 Currently, the town's police services are provided by the County Sherriff's Department and the State Police. Do you think there is a need for additional police services in town?**

Answered: 46 Skipped: 12

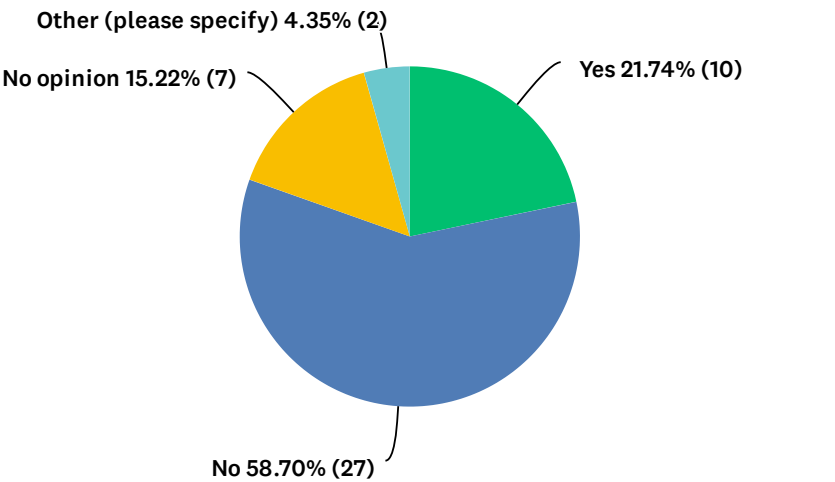


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	54.35%	25
No	23.91%	11
No opinion	8.70%	4
Other (please specify)	13.04%	6
TOTAL		46

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	If population increases and crime increases then yes	11/29/2024 4:50 PM
2	Part time	10/29/2024 4:02 PM
3	Yes we need more frequent patrols and police presence	10/28/2024 10:50 AM
4	YES!!! Never see sheriff's or state police, if called, takes about 45 mins to get here.	10/28/2024 10:27 AM
5	More regular visibility and speed control	10/28/2024 9:42 AM
6	Not if they would do there jobs.	10/22/2024 11:00 AM

Q32 Do you think there is a need for additional Emergency Medical Services (EMS)?

Answered: 46 Skipped: 12

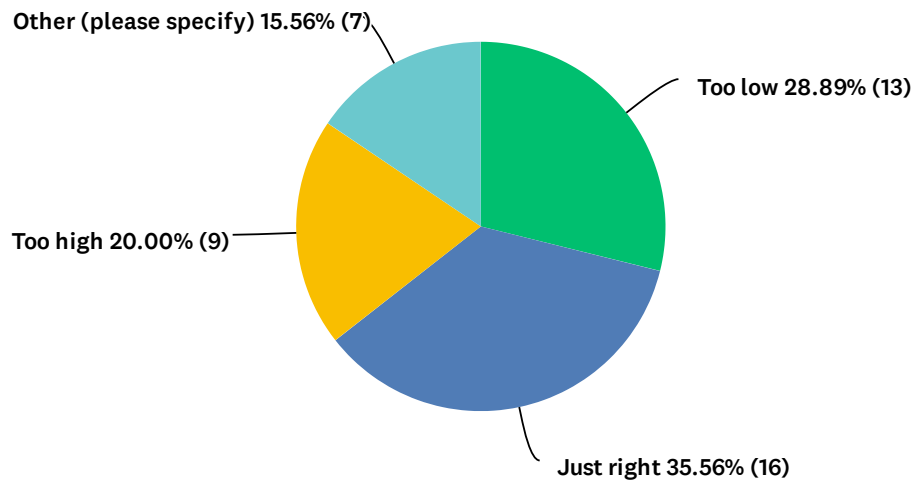


ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Yes		21.74%	10
No		58.70%	27
No opinion		15.22%	7
Other (please specify)		4.35%	2
TOTAL			46

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	If population increases then yes	11/29/2024 4:50 PM
2	Part time	10/29/2024 4:02 PM

**Q33 About 64% of your tax bill pays for education (RSU 83/MSAD 13), about 10% pays for County taxes and services, and about 26% pays for municipal infrastructure and services. Is the level of spending on municipal infrastructure and services in town:**

Answered: 45 Skipped: 13



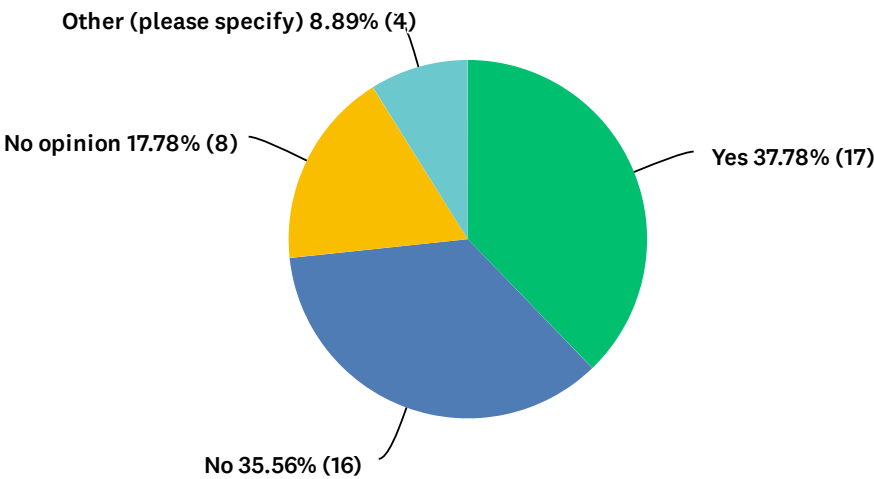
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Too low	28.89%	13
Just right	35.56%	16
Too high	20.00%	9
Other (please specify)	15.56%	7
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>45</b>

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	School is too high	1/7/2025 8:13 PM
2	not sure on this one as our taxes went up 600.00 this year we are seniors	11/8/2024 9:04 AM
3	64% is too high	11/3/2024 9:33 PM
4	The	11/3/2024 6:39 PM
5	Way too high for the school!!	10/29/2024 4:02 PM
6	No opinion	10/29/2024 4:42 AM
7	If over half pays for the school. Then the school needs better programs for at risk kids and help keeping them in school	10/28/2024 10:50 AM



Q34 Are you satisfied with the town’s network of roads?

Answered: 45    Skipped: 13

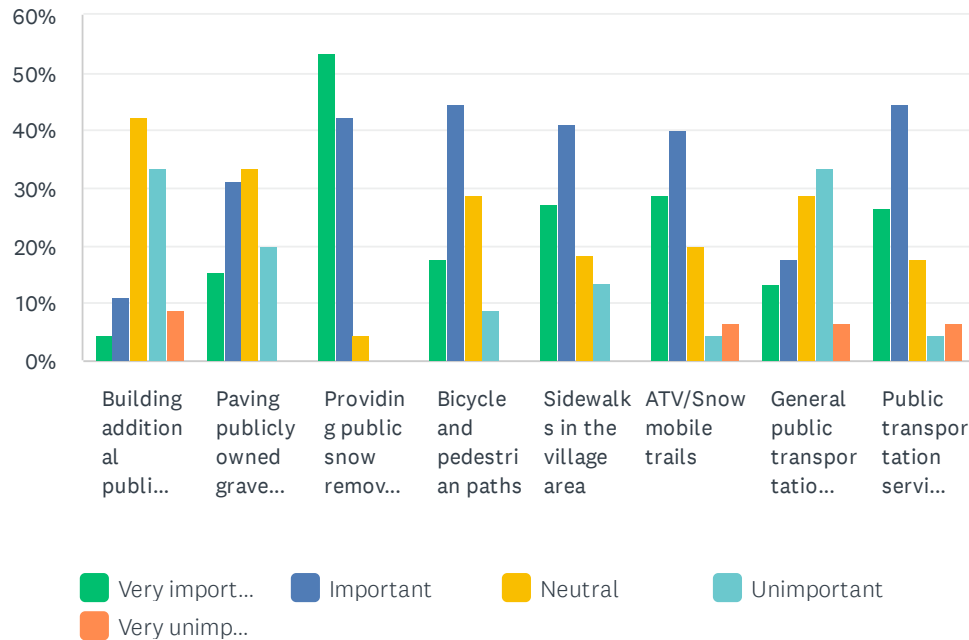


ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Yes		37.78%	17
No		35.56%	16
No opinion		17.78%	8
Other (please specify)		8.89%	4
TOTAL			45

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Could use some nice taring and smoothing on Murray Street	11/29/2024 1:18 PM
2	Some roads need work	10/30/2024 9:22 AM
3	Yes, exceptions, condition of roads need better upkeep	10/29/2024 4:05 PM
4	The roads are awful	10/28/2024 1:21 PM

## Q35 How important are each of the following areas to the future of transportation in town?

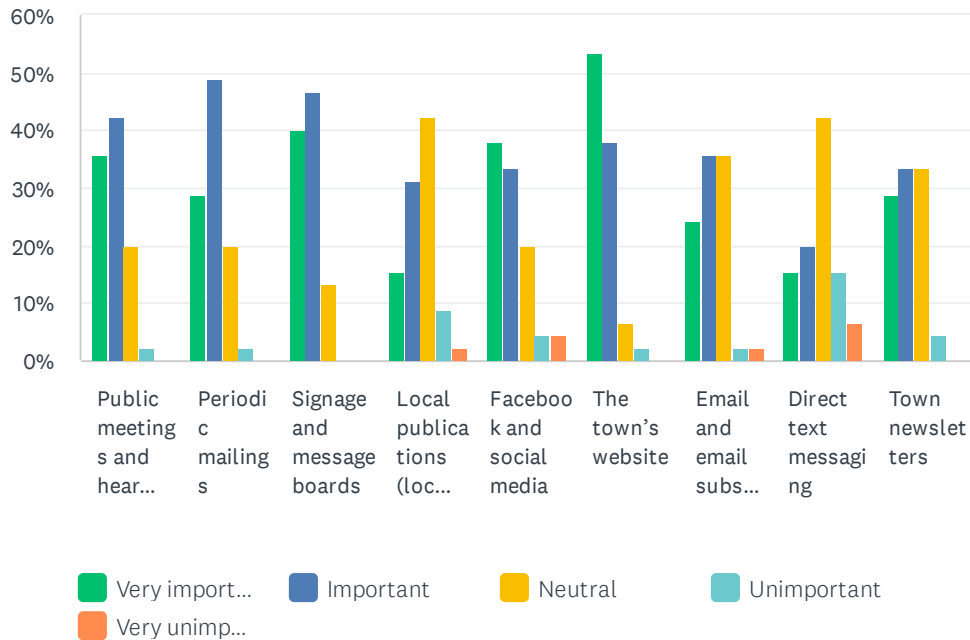
Answered: 45 Skipped: 13



	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	NEUTRAL	UNIMPORTANT	VERY UNIMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Building additional public roads	4.44% 2	11.11% 5	42.22% 19	33.33% 15	8.89% 4	45	3.31
Paving publicly owned gravel roads	15.56% 7	31.11% 14	33.33% 15	20.00% 9	0.00% 0	45	2.58
Providing public snow removal (town crew and equipment)	53.33% 24	42.22% 19	4.44% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	45	1.51
Bicycle and pedestrian paths	17.78% 8	44.44% 20	28.89% 13	8.89% 4	0.00% 0	45	2.29
Sidewalks in the village area	27.27% 12	40.91% 18	18.18% 8	13.64% 6	0.00% 0	44	2.18
ATV/Snowmobile trails	28.89% 13	40.00% 18	20.00% 9	4.44% 2	6.67% 3	45	2.20
General public transportation options like local bus services	13.33% 6	17.78% 8	28.89% 13	33.33% 15	6.67% 3	45	3.02
Public transportation services for those with limited mobility or restricted driving abilities.	26.67% 12	44.44% 20	17.78% 8	4.44% 2	6.67% 3	45	2.20

## Q36 Rate how would you like to be kept informed about happenings in the town?

Answered: 45    Skipped: 13



	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	NEUTRAL	UNIMPORTANT	VERY UNIMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Public meetings and hearings	35.56% 16	42.22% 19	20.00% 9	2.22% 1	0.00% 0	45	1.89
Periodic mailings	28.89% 13	48.89% 22	20.00% 9	2.22% 1	0.00% 0	45	1.96
Signage and message boards	40.00% 18	46.67% 21	13.33% 6	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	45	1.73
Local publications (local newspapers, etc.)	15.56% 7	31.11% 14	42.22% 19	8.89% 4	2.22% 1	45	2.51
Facebook and social media	37.78% 17	33.33% 15	20.00% 9	4.44% 2	4.44% 2	45	2.04
The town's website	53.33% 24	37.78% 17	6.67% 3	2.22% 1	0.00% 0	45	1.58
Email and email subscription lists, such as E-Alerts	24.44% 11	35.56% 16	35.56% 16	2.22% 1	2.22% 1	45	2.22
Direct text messaging	15.56% 7	20.00% 9	42.22% 19	15.56% 7	6.67% 3	45	2.78
Town newsletters	28.89% 13	33.33% 15	33.33% 15	4.44% 2	0.00% 0	45	2.13

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Quarterly newsletters go a long way to improving communication. Social media communication	10/27/2024 3:30 PM

is in my opinion a venting platform a misinformed community.

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## Q37 What do you like best about the town?

Answered: 34 Skipped: 24

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	The location	1/22/2025 11:51 AM
2	It's a quiet town.	1/22/2025 11:45 AM
3	Quiet town. Nothing happens that's crazy.	1/22/2025 11:37 AM
4	small town	1/22/2025 11:28 AM
5	Quiet	1/22/2025 9:20 AM
6	Location in proximity to outdoor recreation opportunities	1/7/2025 8:22 PM
7	The scenic views around the town, ease of access to groceries and gas, basic needs	11/29/2024 5:11 PM
8	I like that its quiet. Small community.	11/29/2024 1:37 PM
9	How quiet it is	11/29/2024 1:32 PM
10	It's small and I know many nice core families that have lived here for generations. Heritage	11/12/2024 9:16 AM
11	Kind people always reaching out when needed	11/8/2024 9:14 AM
12	Small, Old Fashioned Community	11/5/2024 7:42 AM
13	Wyman, the Kennebec, the few good neighbors that are left, raising kids to appreciate these things too	11/3/2024 9:48 PM
14	Scenic	11/3/2024 7:19 PM
15	We are by the river. Beautiful scenery	11/3/2024 6:44 PM
16	I love Bingham. Friendliness of people	10/30/2024 9:55 AM
17	Know everyone	10/29/2024 8:34 PM
18	It's quiet	10/29/2024 8:01 PM
19	Kind people, low taxes, professional & respectful employees	10/29/2024 4:22 PM
20	Low crime, recreation	10/29/2024 3:11 PM
21	Friendly people, lake/river, trails, Jimmy's market	10/29/2024 4:52 AM
22	Quite walkable streets	10/29/2024 4:52 AM
23	People are friendly & helpful	10/28/2024 10:45 PM
24	When we moved here it was the a call town atmosphere and support, but we feel that's quickly disappearing.	10/28/2024 7:01 PM
25	The people are friendly and welcoming.	10/28/2024 3:22 PM
26	Friendly and beautiful	10/28/2024 1:24 PM
27	Small town	10/28/2024 1:18 PM
28	I love that the town is small	10/28/2024 12:24 PM
29	Small town	10/28/2024 11:01 AM
30	The moose	10/28/2024 10:53 AM
31	The small town feel and community	10/28/2024 9:53 AM

## Bingham's Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

32	The people, the community, the caring.	10/28/2024 9:44 AM
33	Bingham is a lot like the town (North Berwick) I grew up in, many years ago.	10/27/2024 4:23 PM
34	Small town great people access to recreation	10/25/2024 12:52 PM

## Q38 What do you like least about the town?

Answered: 36    Skipped: 22

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Drama	1/22/2025 11:51 AM
2	Lack of small businesses in town.	1/22/2025 11:45 AM
3	No bakery run by Barbara French. Children don't have a place to be silly so they're always causing BS.	1/22/2025 11:37 AM
4	property owners not maintaining property	1/22/2025 11:28 AM
5	Focused too much on old people, not a bad thing, less on keeping young people here and no real job opportunities.	1/22/2025 9:20 AM
6	Lack of quality job opportunities. Having to travel south for pharmacy, lawyers, accountants etc.	1/7/2025 8:22 PM
7	The town itself presents terribly, more attention should be paid to Main Street and appearance of businesses and homes along it. I've heard about the pride regarding lack of zoning from oldtimers, honestly that is hurting the town tremendously.	11/29/2024 5:11 PM
8	Theres no arcade or really any place for children. It wuld be much, much better if there was a place for the kids to go so they arent bored. LOTS of kids are bored.	11/29/2024 1:37 PM
9	How fast rumors spreads	11/29/2024 1:32 PM
10	Declining services and commerce.	11/12/2024 9:16 AM
11	Maine street junk yards!	11/8/2024 9:14 AM
12	Building in town are running down, Main Street doesn't look as beautiful as it used to	11/5/2024 7:42 AM
13	Loud neighbors and ATV flying past late at night	11/3/2024 9:48 PM
14	Run down properties	11/3/2024 7:19 PM
15	Old dilapidated house on Main Street. Houses that look like junk yard	11/3/2024 6:44 PM
16	Trucks using Jake brakes in town. Kids riding dirt bikes/lawnmowers unsafely up main street	10/30/2024 9:55 AM
17	Selectmen/women	10/29/2024 8:34 PM
18	The municipal office is antiquated and poorly staffed. Staff are frequently absent and the inability to register vehicles online is ridiculous.	10/29/2024 8:01 PM
19	Too much traffic!!!! Down town needs sprucing up, make more attractive. More self owned businesses.	10/29/2024 4:22 PM
20	Lack of police	10/29/2024 3:11 PM
21	It's downtrodden appearance. Glad a few of the buildings were demolished	10/29/2024 4:52 AM
22	The pot shops and lack of law and order.	10/29/2024 4:52 AM
23	Kids out on 4 wheelers not riding safe, more destruction appearing around the town, too many pot shops, drug use	10/28/2024 10:45 PM
24	It seems to be going down hill fast. Low income housing on main street, no restaurants, all the kids on dirtbikes, atv's and lawnmowers are reckless and going to get hurt or hurt someone else.	10/28/2024 7:01 PM
25	Lack of resources and things for youth/kids to do.	10/28/2024 3:22 PM
26	School system, roads are awful, tax rates, nothing for the kids	10/28/2024 1:24 PM

## Bingham's Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

27	Not enough food places such as sandwiche shops	10/28/2024 1:18 PM
28	I don't like that there is nothing to for the kids to do.	10/28/2024 12:24 PM
29	Lack of stores, restaurants and Cafe	10/28/2024 11:01 AM
30	The amount of kinds ruining things in town like the lanterns at the benches. More police presence	10/28/2024 10:53 AM
31	Down town area. Needs a lot of improvement.i	10/28/2024 10:49 AM
32	Crime and no pharmacy to get meds. No seniors care or help. No jobs, too many young people are unemployed, but on the system.	10/28/2024 10:42 AM
33	There is not much to do and places to eat	10/28/2024 9:53 AM
34	Lack of business. The amount of 18 wheelers that speed through our town. The new signage is appreciated.	10/28/2024 9:44 AM
35	The lack of an informed public.	10/27/2024 4:23 PM
36	Main Street buildings need work, lack of economic opportunities, lack of law enforcement	10/25/2024 12:52 PM



## Q39 What problems would you most like to see local government address?

Answered: 36   Skipped: 22

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Old buildings/roads	1/22/2025 11:51 AM
2	youth support program	1/22/2025 11:45 AM
3	The lack of recreational places/places for children to play/hang out instead of being a bother.	1/22/2025 11:37 AM
4	repair Austin Stream flood berms	1/22/2025 11:28 AM
5	Roads	1/22/2025 9:20 AM
6	Encourage business opportunities and growth.	1/7/2025 8:22 PM
7	Fix up Main Street, communicate via the town website and new town sign, work to attract businesses, restaurants and a pharmacy( place a police officer substation inside it if pharmacy hesitant)	11/29/2024 5:11 PM
8	The children who are going around and being absolute hoodlums. And to make sure roads are safe and salted/plowed in the winter.	11/29/2024 1:37 PM
9	The roads	11/29/2024 1:32 PM
10	Revitalization of downtown.	11/12/2024 9:16 AM
11	Regulation on junk yards	11/8/2024 9:14 AM
12	More funding for fire department	11/7/2024 10:58 AM
13	attract more working people, willing to work and put time into the community	11/5/2024 7:42 AM
14	Safety like street lamps, crosswalks and sidewalks. Also, things for the kids like a playground and community center.	11/3/2024 9:48 PM
15	Police and housing additions	11/3/2024 7:19 PM
16	Yards that look like junk yard. Old camper that keeps moving back and forth on river street	11/3/2024 6:44 PM
17	Above	10/30/2024 9:55 AM
18	Professional Town manager/prepare for a new future.	10/29/2024 8:34 PM
19	Modernization of government services	10/29/2024 8:01 PM
20	Control kids riding motorized machines off our streets. Let them ride them.in front of their parents homes/neighborhoods. Repave the many broken roads. Reopen the Veterans Post on Meadow Street If the town removes a building on Main Street, replace it with another. We have too many empty fields on Main Street. The town looks depressed.	10/29/2024 4:22 PM
21	Punks on dirt bikes, blite	10/29/2024 3:11 PM
22	Having a police presence to deter the crime in town - too many drugs .	10/29/2024 4:52 AM
23	Criminal activities by youngsters,	10/28/2024 10:45 PM
24	Drugs, kids out of control on roads	10/28/2024 7:01 PM
25	Drug use and youth programs	10/28/2024 3:22 PM
26	More things for the kids to do	10/28/2024 1:24 PM
27	Youths not having opportunities to be busy	10/28/2024 1:18 PM
28	Get something for town kids to do	10/28/2024 12:24 PM

## Bingham's Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

29	Atv and snowmobile trails	10/28/2024 11:01 AM
30	The town office needs work both with the employees and the building itself. It needs to be cleaned also	10/28/2024 10:53 AM
31	Improving in town area.	10/28/2024 10:49 AM
32	Above on #38 and lower taxes.	10/28/2024 10:42 AM
33	More things for teens to do to stay out of trouble. A playground for kids	10/28/2024 9:53 AM
34	Housing issues. Speed in town. Gaining more businesses.	10/28/2024 9:44 AM
35	I believe the town should develop a long term capital improvement plan.	10/27/2024 4:23 PM
36	Increase new housing, business	10/25/2024 12:52 PM

## Q40 In a couple of sentences, describe the town in which you'd like to live.

Answered: 28   Skipped: 30

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Thriving, well working machine	1/22/2025 11:51 AM
2	A quiet town with small businesses.	1/22/2025 11:45 AM
3	Quiet, small businesses. Small community.	1/22/2025 11:37 AM
4	A nice, clean town. Properties well maintained	1/22/2025 11:28 AM
5	NA	1/22/2025 9:20 AM
6	Friendly, charming pedestrian friendly streets with dining and entertainment options for all	11/29/2024 5:11 PM
7	A town that is quiet and has a fun, safe enviroment. And an arcade that kids and myself can throttle their quarters into as well as a bakery ran by Barbara French and ONLY Barbara French.	11/29/2024 1:37 PM
8	A quiet and quaint place to live with friendly neighbors, and healthy community.	11/29/2024 1:32 PM
9	Here	11/8/2024 9:14 AM
10	small, friendly, hard working, clean. The way life in Maine used to be	11/5/2024 7:42 AM
11	Promoting non motorized recreation for the kids and so more vacationers have a reason to stay in Bingham in the summer.	11/3/2024 9:48 PM
12	Businesses thriving ,people having quality housing opportunities,buildings on main street fixed up.And a better handle on police patrols.And putting the town office back on Main Street/.	11/3/2024 7:19 PM
13	Scenic Main Street. Town feel	11/3/2024 6:44 PM
14	I'm living in it	10/30/2024 9:55 AM
15	Where a smug first selectman will not blame you for the towns short comings.	10/29/2024 8:34 PM
16	An attractive if not a beautiful town. Lots of flowering trees, plants. Down town buildings should be well maintained, sidewalks and curbside should be inviting, flowering trees, attractive modern - antique lighting. A attractive updated beautiful download.	10/29/2024 4:22 PM
17	Clean, quiet and safe	10/29/2024 3:11 PM
18	Employment opportunities, community gatherings	10/29/2024 4:52 AM
19	Community orientated with programs for all age groups	10/29/2024 4:52 AM
20	A safe place to walk day or night summer or winter able to walk to work	10/28/2024 10:45 PM
21	Quite, friendly, lower drug rate, more activities & safety for the children.	10/28/2024 7:01 PM
22	The town I would like to live in has programs for people of all ages to come together and be a community. I also feel safe in the town.	10/28/2024 3:22 PM
23	A place that kids have options on where they can go and what they can enjoy doing.	10/28/2024 1:24 PM
24	I would like to live in a town where people don't have to be afraid of walking around town. I would like to see main street properties revived.	10/28/2024 12:24 PM
25	Small local restaurant places for kids to fish and enjoy playing outside	10/28/2024 10:53 AM
26	Like Mayberry or a Hallmark movie.	10/28/2024 10:42 AM
27	A town in which the bulk of the population can meet their daily needs. Food, healthcare, and social needs.	10/27/2024 4:23 PM



## Q41 What is something you appreciate in our community today that exists thanks to the decisions and efforts of people who lived here more than 10 years ago?

Answered: 26   Skipped: 32

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	D.G.	1/22/2025 11:51 AM
2	Appreciate current businesses.	1/22/2025 11:45 AM
3	I appreciate being born? Dollar General was pretty cool, too. And snow removal.	1/22/2025 11:37 AM
4	Dollar General store	1/22/2025 11:28 AM
5	New businesses	1/22/2025 9:20 AM
6	Town seems to be financially stable. Boat launch upgrades.	1/7/2025 8:22 PM
7	The jimmys expansion seems to have been successful	11/29/2024 5:11 PM
8	My dad :) and dollar general	11/29/2024 1:37 PM
9	More businesses	11/29/2024 1:32 PM
10	The field behind Quimby School is very important to maintain as a public recreation area. The Quimby School should be part of the public area too...	11/12/2024 9:16 AM
11	The well maintained cemetery, the beautiful old houses,	11/5/2024 7:42 AM
12	1st Congregation	11/3/2024 9:48 PM
13	I think we have been coasting for far too long ,and the end result has been no real plans going forward.If we don't look to improve we are slipping backwards.	11/3/2024 7:19 PM
14	The care they are showing to make Bingham look more inviting	11/3/2024 6:44 PM
15	Thrift store. Food pantry. Community events	10/30/2024 9:55 AM
16	We have missed alot of opportunities because of past leadership.	10/29/2024 8:34 PM
17	-The Community Thrift Store -Senior Lunch Program -Community Gym	10/29/2024 4:22 PM
18	Snowmobile club, good schools, baker mountain	10/29/2024 3:11 PM
19	The continued use older homes that are kept up.	10/29/2024 4:52 AM
20	Sharing of the town's history, keeping nature with/in walking distance for people living in town	10/28/2024 10:45 PM
21	The library	10/28/2024 3:22 PM
22	River	10/28/2024 1:24 PM
23	I think the Moose mascot is great	10/28/2024 12:24 PM
24	Nothing at all except snow mobile riding and ATV riding, which has been a huge problem in the past year because of one group of land owners on the rail bed.	10/28/2024 10:42 AM
25	I really don't know enough about the history of the town to make that assessment.	10/27/2024 4:23 PM
26	Access to recreation and starting to develop Main Street again	10/25/2024 12:52 PM

## Q42 What might we choose to do today that will be appreciated by people who will live here 10 or more years from now?

Answered: 28   Skipped: 30

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Upgrades to infrastructure	1/22/2025 11:51 AM
2	Addition of a bakery in town.	1/22/2025 11:45 AM
3	Add a bakery and arcade.	1/22/2025 11:37 AM
4	Police patrol Enforce property upkeep	1/22/2025 11:28 AM
5	More job opportunities	1/22/2025 9:20 AM
6	Make Main Street look nice.	1/7/2025 8:22 PM
7	Riverside landing with entertainment. Restaurant, pharmacy on an improved Main Street	11/29/2024 5:11 PM
8	Adding an arcade, a bakery, and to continue beautifying the town.	11/29/2024 1:37 PM
9	Having more jobs/ housing available	11/29/2024 1:32 PM
10	Preservation of the historical society of Bingham.	11/12/2024 9:16 AM
11	make the town center pretty again, add back the trees, side walks, town park	11/5/2024 7:42 AM
12	Focus on keeping our youth active and out of trouble and encouraging more families to move to the area.	11/3/2024 9:48 PM
13	Continue to improve the appearance of the town, chase after new housing, and keep adding businesses	11/3/2024 7:19 PM
14	More housing	11/3/2024 6:44 PM
15	Lower taxes	10/30/2024 9:55 AM
16	We see the changes around the country and enabled it to happen here.	10/29/2024 8:34 PM
17	-Adolescent Mentor Program Highschool to College Mentor Program -Boys Scouts -Hiking Club More outdoor activities clubs	10/29/2024 4:22 PM
18	Blight	10/29/2024 3:11 PM
19	Improve our downtown. It looks like a slum	10/29/2024 4:52 AM
20	Recreation space for older residents, community center	10/28/2024 10:45 PM
21	Open stores & restaurants	10/28/2024 7:01 PM
22	Public playground and updates to Quimby Field such as a public bathroom, replacing the tennis court, adding a Gaga ball pit.	10/28/2024 3:22 PM
23	Make it more enjoyable for the kids	10/28/2024 1:24 PM
24	Have a vibrant downtown	10/28/2024 12:24 PM
25	Make things happen that people have been wanting in this area.	10/28/2024 10:42 AM
26	"Recreation on the river, by the river. Use the river. Get a rescue boat and build water recreation"	10/28/2024 9:44 AM
27	We might choose to work together for the greater good, rather than we've never done it that way before.	10/27/2024 4:23 PM
28	Keep improving the downtown and make new housing	10/25/2024 12:52 PM

## Q43 Please include any thoughts and comments.

Answered: 19   Skipped: 39

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Love my town	1/22/2025 11:51 AM
2	NA	1/22/2025 9:20 AM
3	The natural beauty here is truly unique and a draw that can be utilized, it needs to be cherished, protected and promoted	11/29/2024 5:11 PM
4	Please my quarters crave arcade cabenets a hobby card/game shop, and a yummy bakery 🥰 💔💔💔💔	11/29/2024 1:37 PM
5	Please have a bakery	11/29/2024 1:32 PM
6	Use wind town TIF money for leveraging development. Don't just spend the X amount of revenue, but use it to bring matching money to the equation.	11/12/2024 9:16 AM
7	Maybe find someone that can write grants like block grants to improve Main street although seeing benches at the post office and some flower boxes was a start and getting the moose back...Love the marque about time we had one. I am not always on social media so I miss things. And a ceremony dedication of the Bingham/Concord bridge it was never done for a young man who served our country his family and the community deserves it, (sad) perhaps some banners on poles honoring our towns veteran's I see this in other towns.	11/8/2024 9:14 AM
8	make it a place where young hard working people would like to come to raise their families	11/5/2024 7:42 AM
9	Thank you	11/3/2024 9:48 PM
10	I love this town and we do a lot of things well,but we have to keep improving ,a bunch of small things collectively can make a big difference,that and keeping the improvements we make maintained.And chase those grants!	11/3/2024 7:19 PM
11	Keep Bingham small and personal	10/30/2024 9:55 AM
12	The town seems to be lawless now, the selectmen do not care.	10/29/2024 8:34 PM
13	The town could use some sprucing up and ordinances to prohibit the junk littering our yards - t wades car that is laying on its side on their front lawn for years.	10/29/2024 4:52 AM
14	The taxes have gotten so high and everything we feel like we moved here for is changing. We're considering leaving town.	10/28/2024 7:01 PM
15	Safety is a concern for me here. I have concerns about crime and vandalism and also about loose dogs coming after me and my pets while out walking. I should feel safe to walk around town, but I do not.	10/28/2024 3:22 PM
16	Please find more things to add to this town for the kids.	10/28/2024 1:24 PM
17	I love Bingham and would like to see more families moving in!	10/28/2024 12:24 PM
18	Hopefully people doing this survey will read the suggestions. I forgot to add a place for the military like a VFW or American Legion. Some educational for the kids that ride dirt bikes and mini bikes down main Street cutting in and out of traffic, some terrorizing people in causing havoc.	10/28/2024 10:42 AM
19	Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinion. Your job is not an easy one. I know this, I have 30+ years of experience in municipal government. Good luck	10/27/2024 4:23 PM