

Town of New Portland

Comprehensive Plan

2017 Update

Adopted March 4, 2017

New Portland Comprehensive Plan 2017 Update

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Introduction

The updated New Portland Comprehensive Plan has been developed by a committee appointed by the New Portland Board of Selectmen in January, 2013. This committee accepted the mission of developing the details of the plan and the members have been holding open meetings once a month. In an effort to complete their work, members have also been working from home devoted to research and complement of documents which have been completed for inclusion in the plan. The original plan was developed in 1992, and updated for the first time in 2004. This is the second update.

Throughout the process many citizens were involved in providing information and insights by participating in meetings and public opinion surveys. This community involvement in formulating the plan has been instrumental in its development. One important element that came out of committee discussions and the public opinion survey was an overall vision for the future of New Portland. This vision is equivalent to a business plan for a small business, in that it guides our everyday decision-making and provides an overarching goal. The vision describes what we want to see from New Portland in the next 10-20 years.

Our vision for New Portland is: *A town where residents and businesses have the freedom to pursue their various enterprises while respecting the rights of others to do the same; where we have village life, country living, successful small businesses and quality housing; where the cost of living and taxes are low, but the quality of life is high.*

Updating the Comprehensive Plan resulted in updated history, population changes, changes in housing and the local economy, a public services inventory, and identifying any problems and changes. This information helps the town to apply for State Grants and helps put in place and support ordinances. The updating also helps give direction for the Town to operate effectively.

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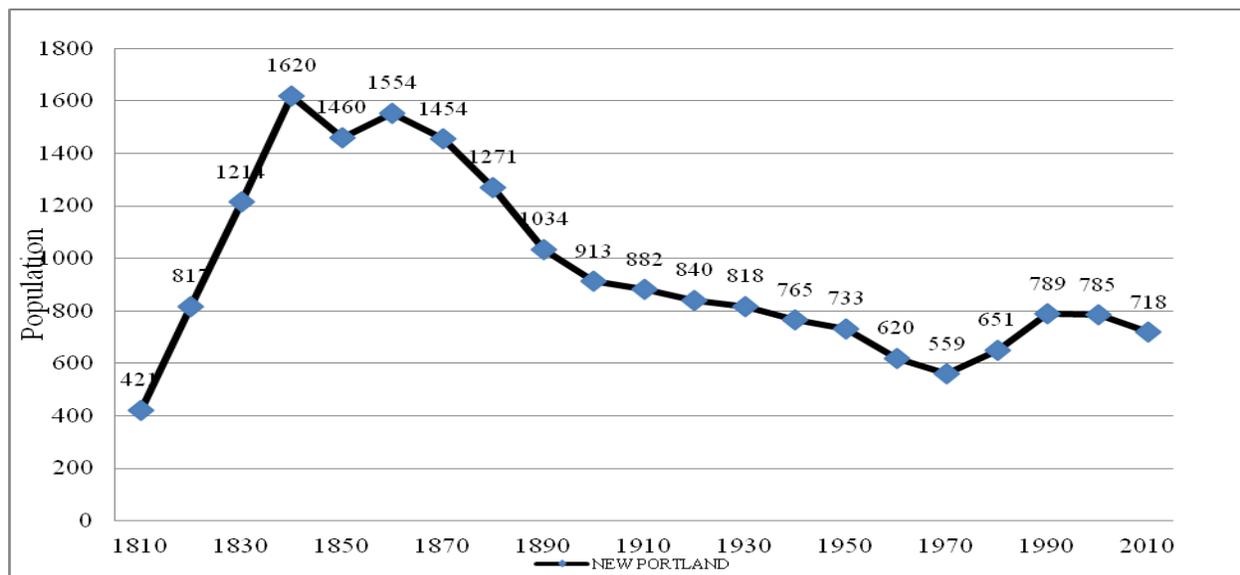
Andrea Reichert

Chapter 1: A Profile of New Portland

This chapter creates a picture of the town of New Portland, using population and other data from State and Federal sources. While statistics cannot draw a complete picture of the community, it can identify trends and relationships that the town can look at in planning. This chapter will essentially take us from the past into the present and on to the future.

Any plan for the future must begin with a look at how we got where we are today. The trends leading up to the present day are likely to continue. The most easily-measured of these trends is New Portland's population.

Figure 1-1: Historical Population Trends



The chart above shows the trend in the town's population from 1810 (two years after incorporation) until 2010, according to the decennial US Census. The population changes illustrate the development history of New Portland. In the early part of the 19th Century, the population grew rapidly, as homesteaders from southern New England as well as Europe flocked to a newly-opened settlement area. In just thirty years, the town's population quadrupled, hitting an all-time high more than twice the current numbers.

The "second stage" of New Portland's development began with the Civil War. Following the war, vast new territories opened up for development in the West. Probably not a few homesteading families got tired of farming rocks on New Portland's hills and were lured to the deep, flat farm soils of the Midwest. Add to that the industrial revolution of the late 19th century, when America went from a rural farm society to an urban, wage-earning one, and New Portland's population dropped from over 1,500 in 1860 to just 559 by 1970.

The town's population enjoyed a brief renaissance between 1970 and 1990. This was an era when a lot of young people were rediscovering their rural roots and rejecting urban and suburban living. In addition, the availability of the automobile and cheap gas helped to persuade people that they could live further away from jobs and services where land was cheaper. New Portland's population grew 41 percent in just 20 years. Almost every small town in western Maine saw the same jump in population.

New Portland is not an island, and functions as part of a larger community. The towns adjoining New Portland interact with us to some degree, exchanging jobs and, often, households. Some towns have different population or development dynamics. Kingfield and Madison are both employment and commercial centers, while a town like Embden consists largely of seasonal residents.

New Portland has experienced a slight population loss since 1990. Since 1990, New Portland has lost nine percent of population. Somerset County during the same period gained five percent and Franklin County gained six percent. Table 1-1, below, shows how New Portland compares with neighboring towns. (Lexington and Freeman are not tallied separately by the census, so are not included in these comparisons.) New Portland and Kingfield are the only towns to have lost population during this period, suggesting that there were local causes for this decline. Embden, Industry, and New Vineyard were all smaller than New Portland in 1990, but are larger now.

Table 1-1: Total Population by Town and Year

Town	1990	2000	2010	Net Change (%)
Anson	2382	2583	2511	5.4 %
Embden	659	881	939	42.5
Industry	685	790	929	34.5
Kingfield	1114	1103	997	-10.5
New Portland	789	785	718	-9.0
New Vineyard	661	725	757	14.5

Source: US Census

Embden and Industry both show surprising jumps in population. These towns seem to have little in common other than a sizeable and attractive lake. It is possible that the two towns have seen a trend of lakefront housing, formerly camps, being converted to retirement or full-time homes.

The town's population decline is in part due to the loss of local employment opportunities. Part may also be due to an aging population. This illustrates the two driving forces of local population change: *migration* and *natural change*.

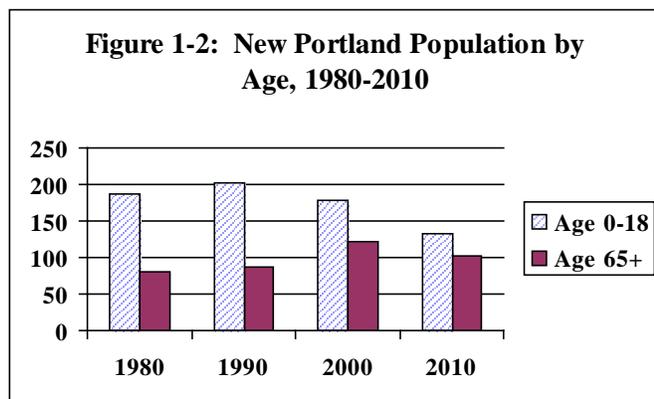
Natural change is the difference between births and deaths within the community. Obviously, a town with a lot of young couples will see a lot of births, thus a natural *increase*. A town with a lot of elderly is likely to see a natural *decline*. Between 1990 and 2000, New Portland saw fifteen more births than deaths. But between 2000 and 2010, there were

twelve more deaths than births. So for the 20-year period, natural change has been minimal. Minimal data available since 2010 indicates a slight positive change of +6.

That means the population decline of 71 since 1990 is almost entirely due to an *out-migration*. Out-migration means people moved away from town. This trend is almost always due to an economic trigger, such as job loss, but another factor may be older people leaving New Portland to live in senior housing or with their children, or people moving to a better job or more affordable place to live.

An *aging population* is a significant factor in many places in Maine. The “baby boomers” (children born in the decade after WWII) have been the dominant characteristic of the American population since 1950, and as the boomers age, they pull the community along with it. When baby boomers were young, we needed many more schools; when they were a little older, they forced the creation of suburbs, now they are nearing retirement, we need to plan for more elderly housing, health care, and senior services. Twenty years ago, the boomers were in their prime child-bearing years, and created a little “boomlet” of children, but now school enrollments are declining everywhere.

Figure 1-2, to the right, shows recent trends among the critical age groups. The number of residents under 18 has dropped from 203 to 132 since 1990. The number of elderly jumped 37 percent between 1990 and 2000, dropped a little to 2010, but has increased since. US Census estimates as of 2014 indicate that there were 126 persons under 18 and 203 over 65. That means there are, for the first time, more people over 65 in New Portland than under 18.



And the baby boomers haven’t even fully arrived yet. The very oldest baby boomer was 64 at the last census. As of 2014, there were another 85 residents between the ages of 60-64. At the next census, all of them will be over 65. That is over 1/3 of New Portland’s population, even allowing for some attrition. And the decade after that is another 94 people. The town will be dealing with an increasing elderly population for quite a while.

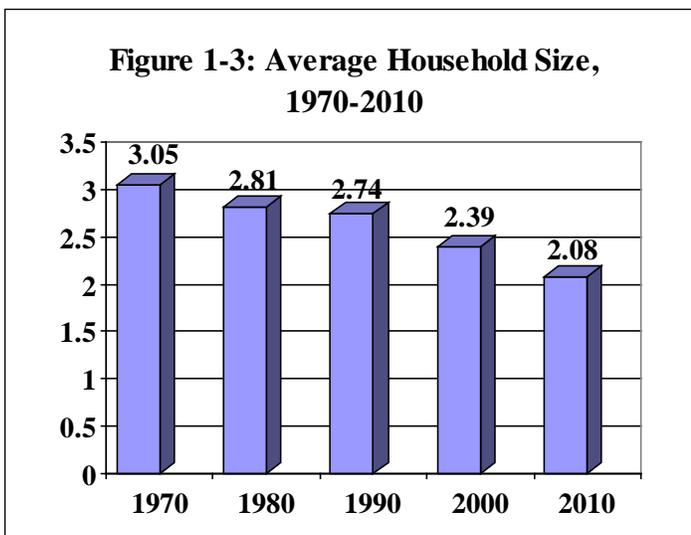
The overall shift in the age of the population is reflected in the *median age*. The median age is the point at which half the people are younger; half are older. In 2014, New Portland’s median age was 52.5, compared to 48.9 in 2010. In 2000, the median age was only 42, and in 1980, the median was 31. That makes New Portland a lot older than Somerset County. Back in 1980, the town and county were almost exactly the same age, but in 2010, the median age of the county was only 43.6.

New Portland’s median age increased by 3.3 years in ten years, to 45.6 in 2010. In comparison, Embden’s increased by 5.3 years, to 47.7. New Vineyard’s median age went

from 39.1 in 2000 to 46 in 2010, a jump of 6.9 years. In 2010, Anson's median age was 38.9, Industry's was 44.4, and Kingfield's was 45.2.

An aging population also has an impact on the *average number of people in a household*, though other factors come in to play, also. The average household size is a powerful statistic, because it suggests the need for specific housing types (as will be discussed in the *Housing Chapter*). Household sizes have been dropping for many reasons nationwide: increased divorce rates, smaller families, young people living on their own longer before having families, and older people able to live on their own for longer.

New Portland's average home in 1970 held 3.05 people. By 1990, the average had dropped to 2.74 people, and by 2010, it had dropped all the way to 2.08. In 2014, it was estimated to have dropped to 1.99. The average home has only 2/3 as many people as it had forty years ago.



With an average of about two people per household, the logical conclusion is that at least half of the homes in New Portland have only one or two people in them. In fact, this is calculated by the census and it turns out to be far more. Out of the 346 households in 2010, only 63 of them are families with children. Only 39 of them – or only about one out of every nine – consist of a husband and wife with children. One hundred ten households consist of only one person – 67 men and 43 women. Forty one houses in town have one person over age 65 living in them. Since there are exceedingly few housing units suited to single, elderly people, we have to ask whether there is a disconnect between the supply and demand for housing. And that is before accounting for the anticipated double the number of elderly in the next decade.

New Portland has the fewest people per household of any town in Somerset County, with the exception of Caratunk. However, this is not a new circumstance. As far back as 1970, only Bingham and Moose River had smaller household sizes. Smaller household sizes are generally associated with older populations, but not always. Embden's average household size is still 2.28 and Industry's is 2.47, compared to New Portland's 2.08.

The dynamics of the population feed into *projections for the future population*. The future population of New Portland will change as a result of factors like the local economy, price and availability of housing, and the age of current residents. We can make a mathematical estimate of future population, but in a town as small as New Portland one blip on the radar (e.g. a business closing or a new subdivision) can make a significant difference. However, it is nice to have a target, since a lot of planning revolves around it.

Mathematical projections tend to be based on two things: past growth and the survival rates of various segments of the population. Because New Portland has a generally older population and a recent history of loss, it is not surprising to see estimates of that loss continuing. The official projections from the State of Maine estimate that New Portland's population will be 661 in 2020 and 586 in 2030. That is an average loss of 6 ½ residents per year. Kennebec Valley Council of Governments does a different set of projections, and estimates a 2030 level of 650, a loss of about 3 ½ per year.

The best measuring stick for future population is the growth of new housing units. As will be discussed later in this report, the census reported that the town had 346 occupied housing units in 2010, compared to 329 in 2000. This prompts the question: how can we have lost 67 residents in ten years and still gained 17 households? The answer, as illustrated on the previous page, is that there are now fewer people per household. A drop from 2.39 per household in 2000 to 2.08 in 2010 means that we would have had to build 54 new houses instead of the 17 we did build, to maintain our original population.

What this means is that the population will only grow if more houses are built, but just having new houses does not mean that it is growing. In the 2000's, it would have required more than 5.4 new houses per year to see an actual growth in population. The chances are that the average household size will not shrink anywhere near as fast over the next 20 years; older populations tend to stabilize the household size and you can't go below one person per household anyway. But even if we leveled out at an average household size of 1.95 in 2030, that means we would need a net gain of 22 housing units to "break even" at the 2010 population of 718.

Between the census count on April 1, 2010 and April 1 of 2015, New Portland's assessor has reported a net increase of 12 housing units. (Houses burned, demolished, or moved out – in the case of mobile homes – must be deducted.) Since this is a fairly healthy increase, it can be assumed that the town had a slight jump in population (KVCOG estimates a net gain of 12). However, seven of those were in 2010, and only five since. The bottom line is that we need to see at least one or two new homes built every year to be confident that the population of New Portland will not continue to decline.

There is no census information available that allows us to identify which of New Portland's three villages are changing in relation to the others.

Chapter 2: The Historical Perspective and Preserving it

The three villages making up the Town of New Portland are located in Somerset County in the State of Maine. The Town is bounded on the north by Kingfield and Lexington; on the east by Embden; on the south, it joins North Anson and New Vineyard; and on the west, it is bounded by Freeman. The western border also constitutes the county line between Somerset and Franklin Counties.

Early Development:

The fine agricultural land along the banks of the beautiful Carrabassett River attracted the first settlers to New Portland in March of 1783.

A band of Chief Piepole's Norridgewock Indians were encamped on an intervale nearby and local histories state that the Indians were friendly to our pioneers, with few exceptions. The many fierce wild animals, bears in particular, were a troublesome problem with which to contend.

What is now New Portland was granted by Massachusetts Bay Colony to escapees from the burning of Falmouth (now Portland) in 1775. The first log house was built by David Hutchins, of Chelmsford, Massachusetts, in what is now East New Portland in 1783. He was followed by Captain Josiah Parker, who built the first frame house (now the William Emery house) in East New Portland. Ebenezer Richardson, a revolutionary soldier of the 4th Regiments, Massachusetts Militia, came from Sedgwick that same year.

They cleared the intervale land for farming, using the virgin wood to build their homes and kindle their fires. The soil of clay and sandy loam supported their plan to make of the virgin forest one of the very best farming towns in Somerset County.

New Portland was incorporated in 1808. Many of the original families persevered through subsequent near-famine years, but this no doubt encouraged the start of migration to the west. By 1860, New Portland's population numbered 1,554, of which over 115 men went off to war. Following the war, New Portland was at its most prosperous. However, in 1883, railroad location decisions deprived New Portland of the accruing advantages of the "iron road", so important during the latter Nineteenth Century.

Twentieth Century Development:

The "1902 New Portland Register" shows the level of New Portland's self-sufficiency: It list some 50 businesses within the Town, including four general stores, two hotels, harness shops, blacksmiths, three doctors, boot and shoe shops, tailors, a canning factory, a dairy, and others. There were large farms, big cattle ranches, and New Portland Hill and Millay Hill orchards were considered the best in the State.

As with all towns of the period, fires took their toll. In March, 1918, the main part of the North Village was destroyed; in 1962, the Chase and Hewett Mill on the north bank of the Carrabassett burned; and in 1967, the same fate overtook the mill in the North Village. In May, 1985, the old Kilburn Store in that same village and the only building in the center of town to survive the disastrous fire of 1918, also burned.

By 1900, our pioneer town, like so many other small western Maine towns, had lost 40% of its 1860 population of industrious, active people.

Today, our population numbers almost 800 -- up from 651 recorded in the 1980 census. Our year-round dwellings total over 300; including seasonal homes, the total rises to 465. Few of our people engage in agriculture beyond the family garden plot. Probably 70 percent of our land is covered with mixed second growth and scrub. In the changing world, our Town has become primarily a residential community.

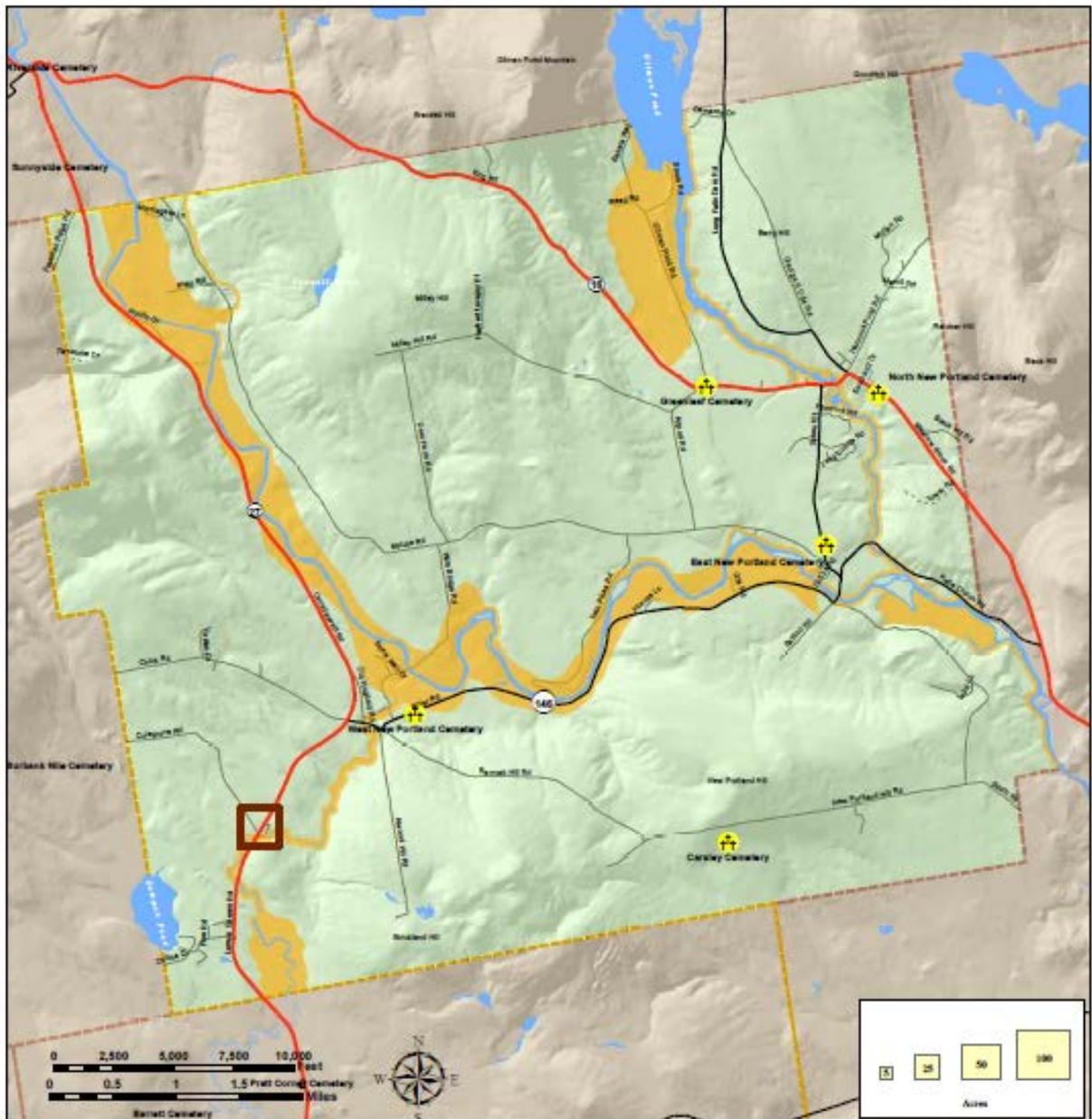
Preservation of our Heritage:

Some of the indicators of our past still survive, mostly in the East Village. The original settler's graves are still marked, as is the original cabin site in the village. The Emery House (original Captain Parker House) is the oldest surviving frame house, but has been added and altered over the years. There are few other century-old structures (church at N. New Portland (1869), Union Church (1838), original grange, old Green Schoolhouse). The Green Schoolhouse in the East Village is the meeting place for the town's Historical Society. The Great Works mill dam is the only identified area of historical archeological interest (*see* Map, following page).

The Wire Bridge is the most famous historic landmark in New Portland. Completed in 1842 (at a cost of \$2,200), it spans 185 feet of the Carrabassett River and was designated in 1990 as Civil Engineering Historical Site and is of course listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

No pre-historic archeological sites have been identified along the Carrabassett River, though there are bound to be a few show up in time. The riverbed, as well as the plain below Gelman Pond, as identified as "sensitive" for archeology. The town's shoreland zoning ordinance provides that development proposals along the shore evaluate potential for archeological significance.

New Portland's history is celebrated and preserved through the efforts of the New Portland Historical Society. The historical society operates out of the former Green Schoolhouse and maintains archives of historical photos and records. The society assists with community events, such as the bicentennial in 2008, and participates in the Maine Community Heritage Project jointly with the New Portland Community Library. *A History of the New Portlands of Maine* was written by Roland Foss and published in 1977.



Town of New Portland
Somerset County, Maine
Historic and Archeological Resources Map
2017 Comprehensive Plan



Map Legend	
	Cemeteries
	Known Historic Archeological Site
	Areas sensitive for prehistoric archaeology
	Lakes, Ponds & Rivers
	Town Boundary
	County Boundary
	State Highway
	Major Town Roads
	Town Roads
	Private Roads

Neither KVCOC nor the Town of New Portland assume any liability for the data delineated herein. All information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only and non-regulatory. Boundary data is based on digital sources and may differ from ground-based observations.
 Data Sources: Maine Office of GIS, Maine DOT Created 01-2017 by JG

Chapter 3: New Portland's Land Use Patterns

General:

The Town of New Portland is located in the "Recreation Belt" of the State of Maine. To the north-northwest lies Sugarloaf Mountain Ski Area, accessible by way of State Highways 27 and 16 which run through the town; and the Bigelow Range, accessible at the west end by way of Highway 27 and at the east end by way of the Long Falls Dam Road through the northeast portion of the Town. The Appalachian Trail traverses these mountains.

The Sugarloaf Mountain Ski Area has already had a strong influence upon the Town of New Portland as a result of the acquisition of land by non-resident buyers for seasonal occupation or speculation. The Bigelow Range was declared a State Park in 1984. The impact of these major influences will unquestionably be a factor in planning for the Town of New Portland, which sits at the junction of the two access roads.

Village Living:

Our town lies in the Carrabassett River Valley. Settlement has historically been focused in three separate villages. Though all are now primarily residential, each has a history of some commercial importance.

The West Village is situated along Lemon Stream near its juncture with the Carrabassett River, and at the intersection of Routes 146 and 27 – the latter the most heavily travelled route from the south to Sugarloaf Mountain. There is a church, a thrift shop operated by the church, J&R Davenport Trucking Company, and JR Fabrication. The old dam on Lemon Stream once provided power for several mills, but collapsed long ago. The Wire Bridge, built in the early 1800's across the Carrabassett River, is a tourist attraction gaining in popularity. The Wire Bridge connects the West Village to the Middle Road. On Atwood Hill is a maple syrup business and greenhouse. On the Lemon Stream Road (Route 27) a Crane Mat Mill opened for business in 2011. This was an old farm that was converted to a business in 2000. Nowetah's Indian Museum is located just off Route 27.

The settlement of Great Works is located about two miles south of the West Village on Route 27. Named after one man's dream of building a mill, which never materialized, it was once a vigorous community, but now consists of a few year-round and seasonal dwellings. There is one active development, and probably other projects under consideration, along this portion of the highway.

Re-routing of Highway 27 north of the West Village resulted in natural overlook areas where the old highway was located, providing motorists passing through New

Portland with a very scenic route along the banks of the Carrabasset River. Poulin's Garage was built and opened for business in 1991. Western Mountain Baptist Church was built in 2010. Many seasonal dwellings and a few permanent ones are located on Chick Road, which extends west from Route 27 at the West Village. This also the site of a subdivision located directly off Chick Road on Heather Road.

Five miles downstream on the Carrabasset River and on scenic River Rd. (Route 146), is the East Village. Lying close by the bridge are the remains of another mill, which burned in 1962. The land has recently been purchased and a home is now built on this site. A dam, now gone, originally serviced a power plant. The only building other than residences is a former church, now the home of the Fernwood Grange. In this village, one can access parts of New Portland Hill, the town's most prominent landmark at about 1,110 feet above sea level. The Katie Crotch Road runs along the north side of the Carrabasset River and connects the East Village with Route 16, to the east and below the North Village. A few seasonal camps have been constructed and in 2002 new construction along this road increased. Lucky Dog Kennels was established in 2010 located on the New Portland Hill Road.

Following School Street (Route 146) as it swings north from the East Village, it meets Route 16 (The Bog Road) within the limits of the North Village. The Fairgrounds, site of the famous New Portland Fair and other recreational activities, is on the road between East and North Villages.

The dam below the Route 16 Bridge, crossing Gilman Stream, was operated by a woodworking mill, which burned in 1967. This dam, which is privately owned, still controls water originating in the Carry Ponds area to the north, flowing down Sandy Stream, through Gilman Pond (part of which is in the Town boundaries), and down Gilman Stream to a junction with the Carrabasset River just below East Village.

Once the site of vigorous business activity, the North Village today is also mostly residential. Chase Memorial Hall (the Lions Hall) used to accommodate civic functions and school activities. In 1985, a new Post Office was constructed; and the North Village Water District replaced its aging water distribution lines.

There is a church, the new Post Office, a general store with a diner, a commercial business, Ace Electric & Solar. A wood pellet manufacturing business is starting up in this building. In 1988, the Rural Living Center, now defunct, and a new community public library was built in 2005 and is located next to the Town Office.

Rural Roads:

Just north of East Village, the Middle Road Branches off Route 146 and travels generally north and along the east side of the Carrabasset River to its termination at Route 16 in Kingfield. This road provides perhaps the greatest attraction to new development, sporting a number of newer year-round homes. The road also provides access to the private

campes along the Carrabassett River. The section north of Wire Bridge Road also has an orchard and one of the remaining farms in town.

Long Falls Dam Road, or the Lexington Road, gives access to the east end of the Bigelow Range and the dam at the east end of Flagstaff Lake, as well as the Appalachian Trail; it is only accessible at its intersection with Route 16 in the middle of North Village. The road is located along the east side of Gilman Stream and Gilman Pond on its way to Lexington to the north, a bordering unorganized township.

The only access to Hancock Pond to the east, the site of many summer camps, is by way of a town road starting in North Village. East of Hancock Pond Road and on the side of Black Hill are one concrete and one granite reservoir that formerly served the North Village Water District. On Route 16 between North Village and Kingfield is a private airfield that is now closed, year-round residences and seasonal dwellings.

The George Cole Road, off the Long Falls Dam Road about one-half mile north of the center of North Village, rejoins Long Falls Dam Road just above the Lexington Line. Seasonal and permanent homes are located on this road, which is also the access to Berry Hill. The 3 Springs Greenhouse is located on this road.

Gilman Pond Road, one mile north of North Village and west off Highway 16, leads generally along the west side of Gilman Stream. What was once the only dairy farm in New Portland is now Cold Spring Ranch. They raise grass fed beef. A campground was constructed on the shores of Gilman Pond off this road, but at this time it is not open to the public. Flowage is unrestricted until it reaches the dam at North Village. Continued upkeep and maintenance of the privately owned dam in the North Village is vital to this area.

Opposite Gilman Pond Road and west off Highway 16 is the Airport Road connecting to Middle Road. A fork off Airport Road and bordering the private airstrip to the east gives access to Millay Hill on which there are still a few homes.

The Seasonal Impact:

There are numerous seasonal dwellings within the Town, ranging from mobile homes and the smallest of camps to modest winterized residences. Summer residents enjoy the mild temperatures and fishing, swimming, hiking, and boating. In the winter, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, and other winter sports still draw others to their camps. Through late fall and winter, many non-residents use their camps and cabins as bases for hunting, as well as to enjoy the glorious fall colors.

There is a ball field that has been built for public recreation or family use, a picnic area that is along the Carrabassett River next to the Wire Bridge has been set up, and public swimming is available in this area. And the other area with limited boating and swimming facilities on Gilman Pond, which, as a man-made pond, is quite shallow. Also, available

along the Carrabassett River, situated on River Road is Seven Falls Cabin rentals, which is currently closed.

Along the banks of the Carrabassett River above the West Village and along Route 27, much of the shore land is owned by non-residents. From the West Village to the East Village, perhaps a third of the ownership is non-resident.

Agricultural Activity:

New Portland was founded by homesteaders, but the soil and topography are simply not conducive to conventional farming. Dairy farming was viable for most of the twentieth century, but that was mostly discontinued when the processors ceased milk runs to the area. The remaining farms are small and specialized. They include: Cold Spring Ranch (grass-fed cattle), Agren's Maple Syrup, and Atwood's Greenhouse.

Forest Activity:

In contrast to farming, forestry is a dominant land use in New Portland. It is estimated that there are 21,700 acres of forest land in New Portland. (Based on Maine Forest Service satellite analysis done in 2004.) This is 77 percent of the 28,300 acres that make up the town.

The present areas of woodland arose from cut-over original forests and from areas that naturally reseeded following the decline in cleared land after the Civil War. Forest parcels cover a range of stocking density, from clear-cut to mature forest and range in size up to hundreds of acres. Timber land is in the hands of commercial owners in the forestry business and absentee and resident land owners holding the land for esthetic and investment purposes. As a very rough reference point, there are 36 acres of timber land per housing unit. This number alone indicates the importance of forests to the character of the town.

In terms of worth, the stumpage value of the town's timber (derived from Forest Service data) is estimated to be about \$700 per acre, or a total of about \$15,000,000. Market value of timber land, (including the land itself), depends strongly on factors beyond stumpage, such as location, views, access, suitability for subdivision, parcel size, tree growth status and so on. A rough value for parcels in the 50 to 100 acre range, based on sales and asking prices might be between \$1,000 and \$1,500 per acre. Larger parcels would tend to be less per acre, while smaller parcels, whose price is likely be governed by non-timber considerations, might be significantly more per acre. A value of \$1,250 per acre would value town forest land at \$27,100,000.

As a frame of reference, a stumpage value of \$15,000,000 is roughly 22 percent of the current town assessment of some \$67,000,000, while a market value of \$27,100,000 is more like 40 percent. Neither of these figures is actually reflected in the current assessment because a major portion of forest acreage is in tree growth. This reduces the actual assessed value of timber land and standing timber in exchange for following a management plan and refraining from other development.

Table 3-1: Tree Growth Acreage

<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Number of Landowners</u>	<u>Number of Parcels</u>	<u>Acreage per Parcel</u>	<u>Year</u>
13,400	113	160	84	2008
13,700	117	163	84	2013
13,740		167	82	2015

A table of tree growth acres is shown on Table 3-1. Total tree-growth acreage of 13,740 is 63 percent of the 21,700 acres of total forest. This percentage has remained stable over recent decades and would be expected to remain more or less constant in future years. There are 167 parcels in tree growth, for an average of 82 acres per parcel. (There are 117 acres per owner, indicating significant ownership of multiple parcels.) The breakdown – which probably reflects the character of the forest as a whole – is 10.6 percent softwood, 32 percent hardwood, and 57.3 percent mixed wood.

The size of tree growth parcels is undoubtedly larger than the size of non-tree-growth parcels. Tree growth parcels have to be at least 10 acres and there are fewer non-tree-growth acres spread over more owners; however, no explicit data are readily available. The assessed value of the tree-growth land is about \$132 per acre, or some \$1,810,000 for the whole town. This is only 2.7 percent of the town’s assessment. The valuation of \$132 per acre is well below the stumpage value of \$700 per acre and the market value of \$1,250 per acre mentioned above

Tree growth classification maintains the forest atmosphere of the town and reduces the pressure on owners to develop forest land. The intent is for the state to reimburse the town for lost tax revenue but this has not always worked as well as might be hoped. The state tree growth reimbursement (\$39,000 in 2013) pays only a portion of tax revenue that would be generated if the tree growth land were taxed at market value. The fact that such taxing would greatly, and probably adversely, influence land use is, of course, a primary motivation for the law.

Under Town Ordinance, rules governing forest operations are set by the state. The town’s role is primarily that of monitor and enforcer. Information on state rules, regulations and available assistance related to the town’s forests should be maintained by the appropriate town entity- select board, town manager, code enforcement officer, assessors agent or planning board. The responsible entity should be clearly established. A list of information and responsibility shall be maintained and, as appropriate, notices of general interest placed on the town’s website or printed in the New Portlander.

To guide forest policies, the town should encourage local initiatives related to its forests. This implies a willingness to propose, analyze and implement such initiatives. Among the possibilities are cooperation with and examination of what neighboring towns have done, discussions with recreational groups and the active elicitation of options through programs like question-of-the-month (online and in the New Portlander). The town should increase its statistical knowledge of its forest resources.

From year-to-year, timber harvests provide jobs cutting and hauling harvested timber, plus income from stumpage. Significant portions of this income leave the town. Estimating the total value, let alone where it goes is tricky, to say the least, but there is some data for total stumpage. The number of acres harvested per year in New Portland as tallied by the Maine Forest Service and is shown on Table 3-2.

Table 3-2: Harvested Acres in New Portland

<u>Year</u>	<u>Acres Harvested</u>	<u>Percent of Total Timber Land</u>	<u>Number of Harvests</u>	<u>Acres per Harvest</u>
2003	855	3.9	45	19.0
2004	1348	6.2	56	24.1
2005	785	3.6	41	19.1
2006	795	3.6	35	22.7
2007	703	3.2	44	16.0
2008	1043	4.8	40	20.6
2009	804	3.7	39	20.6
2010	847	3.9	37	22.9
2011	564	2.6	39	14.5
2012	943	4.3	44	21.4
10 yr.	868.7	4.0	42	20.7 Average

All of the measures of Table 3-2 have remained relatively stable over the years. The four percent of total timberland harvested per year would imply a not unreasonable cutting interval of 25 years. This, plus the stability of the numbers, (which goes back beyond those years shown) implies that harvesting has probably been carried out at a sustainable rate.

Separate, related data for the area around New Portland indicates that the average value of a harvest is \$395 per acre. Multiplying this by the 10 year average number of acres cut yields a yearly stumpage value of about \$343,000 for the whole town. A slightly different approach would consider the growth of timber in cords per year. Using a widely used figure of one half a cord per acre per year and assuming a conservative growth value of \$30 per cord yields a sustainable yearly yield of \$326,000 for the town's forest. The dollars per growth-cord depends on the age and composition of the forest and will vary considerably. These are rough figures, obviously, but they do indicate that timber revenue, while significant, is not a large portion of the town's everyday economy.

The overall question in regard to the comprehensive plan is: what can the town do to more positively integrate forests into the structure of the town? It is dealing with a high value very long term investment with a lot of esthetic, land use and recreational implications- owned by a diverse group of people.

The Town of New Portland wishes to insure that the town's forests contribute effectively to the overall wellbeing of the town – its recreational opportunities, economy and esthetic appearance. It can do this in a number of ways:

Tracking Forest Statistics

The town has the capacity to use tax data to obtain a breakdown of its forest land by lot size, ownership, tree growth status, valuation and location. (ideally, in a way that could be dealt with digitally. e.g. in the form of a data base.). Alternatively a one-time manual breakdown could be undertaken. The results would not change greatly from year to year and would provide a base line view. These data and any changes in it would be valuable in determining town action.

Recreational

Promote general public access to private forest land by:

- Publicizing good landowner relations
- Making less restrictive signage available (e.g. “No Vehicles” or “No Hunting” instead of “No Trespassing”)
- Organizing help dealing with dumping or vandalism on forest property

Promote the use of private forest land for recreational trails for walking, running, skiing, snow shoeing, snowmobiling, and ATVs. Such trails involve everyone and inevitably make use of forest land. Some considerations:

- Use existing roads from prior cutting as a base for trails
- Form a committee to coordinate plans, initially based on existing groups
- Get forest landowners in early
- Look at tax incentives for participation?
- Develop and maintain an evolving trail map (an overlay on existing town maps)
- Develop rules for use and liability

Economic

Expedite intra-town economic activity involving forest land. Consider, for example:

- Promoting market for boughs, maple syrup, fiddle heads etc. through lists of potential buyers and sellers
- Holding instructional classes in harvesting the above
- A central firewood exchange on town land
- A list of areas where firewood might be scavenged.

Forest Esthetics

Visually, forest land has a big impact on the look of the town. Scenic viewpoints can be improved dramatically by strategically cutting trees. Potential town actions:

- Establish list of possible locations
- Tax incentives or subsidies to remove trees
- Ease conservation restrictions.
- Seek grants, donations and volunteers

The forests themselves are scenery from the roads. How they look from the town's roads becomes important to the town's image. The town can insure that bushing and tree felling along road right-of-ways consider the appearance of the woods and roadside after the work is done in regard, for example too tall stumps, branch stubs and brush.

Future Land Use Challenges:

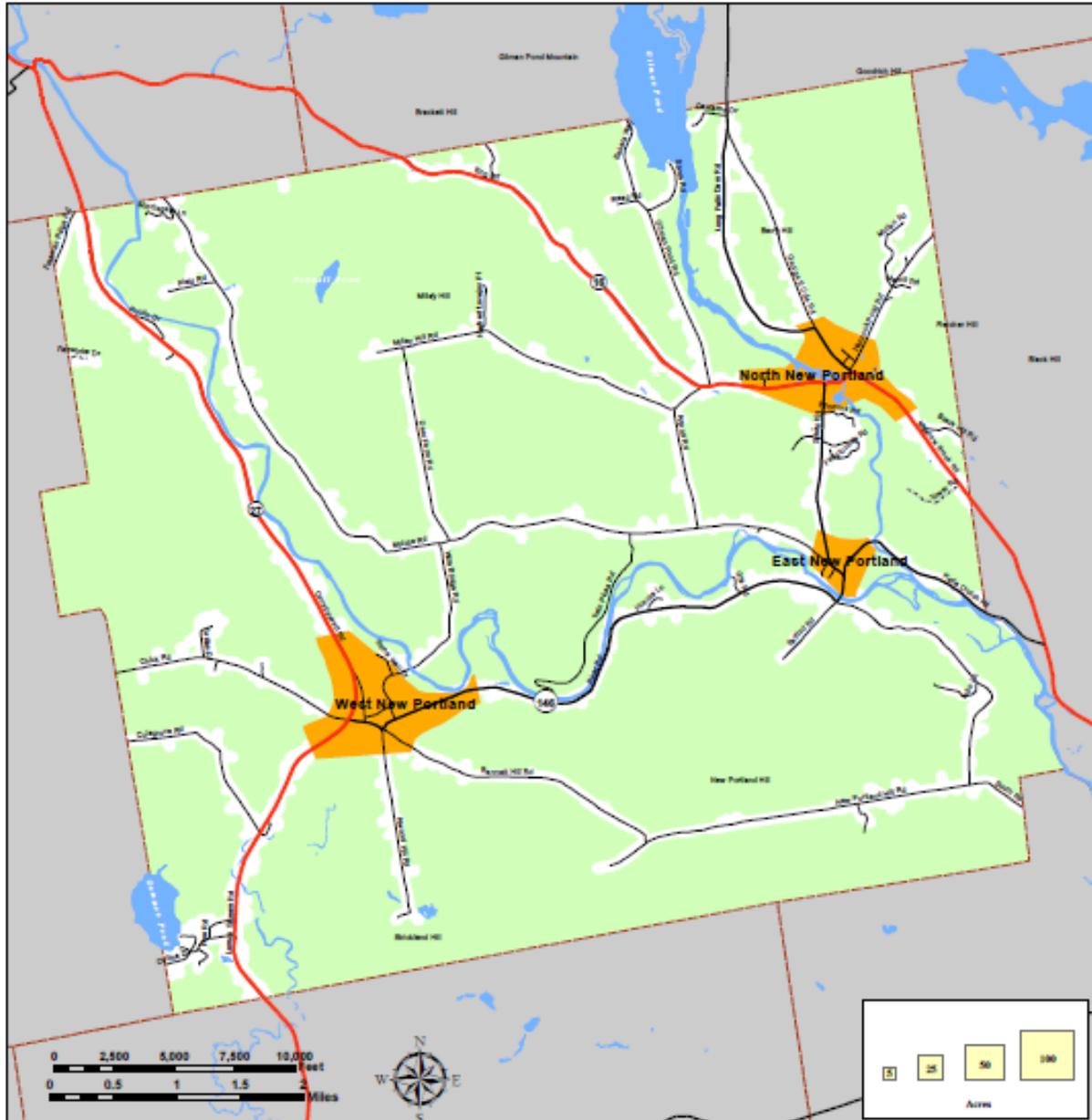
The changing face of New Portland has many aspects. The impact of skiing and other outdoor activities has induced an influx of population into the area. A desire to get out of the big cities has brought new families into our Town. Retired people are among those choosing to live in the Town. All this has resulted in increasing pressure on real estate prices, which makes ownership of the land by local residents increasingly difficult. Our young people find it difficult to acquire land and find jobs in Town.

New Portland has seen subdivision development increase since 1973. Over the span of 42 years we now have 22 listings in the subdivision inventory.

A pattern that some have followed is to sell their homes or farms and replace them with a mobile home on a small plot of ground. The result is an increase in the number of mobile homes, while many of their former residences assume the role of unattended seasonal dwellings. Some of these seasonal dwellings, it should be pointed out are well tended and an asset to the community. It is not only seasonal dwellings that are sometimes unimproved. However, as the income of the townspeople permits, improvements to their property are also made. Usually each year shows some improvements.

As property owners of the town, we all are fully aware of the rights of other property owners. We must also be aware that these rights cannot be so unlimited as to impair or destroy the values of our neighbor's property by creation of a nuisance. We must share in the responsibility for protecting the property rights of all.

If our Town is to retain one of its major economic assets - its beauty and scenic serenity, the townspeople must unite to keep it so. If our Town is to have a desirable future under the shadow of Sugarloaf Mountain and the Bigelow Mountain Range, we must make it so. It must be planned.



Town of New Portland

Somerset County, Maine
 Existing Land Use Map
 2017 Comprehensive Plan



Map Legend	
	State Highway
	Lakes, Ponds & Rivers
	Major Town Roads
	Town Roads
	Private Roads
	Town Boundary
	Undeveloped Blocks (Rural)
	Village Areas

Neither EVCOG nor the Town of New Portland assume any liability for the data delineated herein. All information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only and non-regulatory. Boundary data is based on digital sources and may differ from ground-based observations.
 Data Sources: Maine Office of GIS, Maine DOT Created 01-2017 by JG

Chapter 4: New Portland's Economic Climate

The state of the local economy helps the community in planning for future growth or change. Though New Portland is not an employment center, some of the local data can give the town an indication of how the community responds to development in other towns, and how the town is situated to respond in the future.

The Statistical Perspective:

Table 4-1, below, provides a profile of the *workforce and employment* in New Portland. The “workforce” includes both those currently with a job and those unemployed. It is often viewed as a subset of the “working-age population,” which includes everyone over age 16, including retired and disabled.

Table 4-1: Workforce Changes, 1990-2010

	1990	2000	Change from 1990	2010	Change from 2000
Male Working Age Population	287	291	1.4 %	362	24.4%
In Labor Force	216	201	-7.0 %	218	8.5%
Employed (April 1)	195	189	-3.1%	184	-2.6%
Female Working Age Population	285	342	20%	348	1.8%
In Labor Force	171	202	18%	201	-0.5%
Employed (April 1)	161	192	19%	182	-5.2%

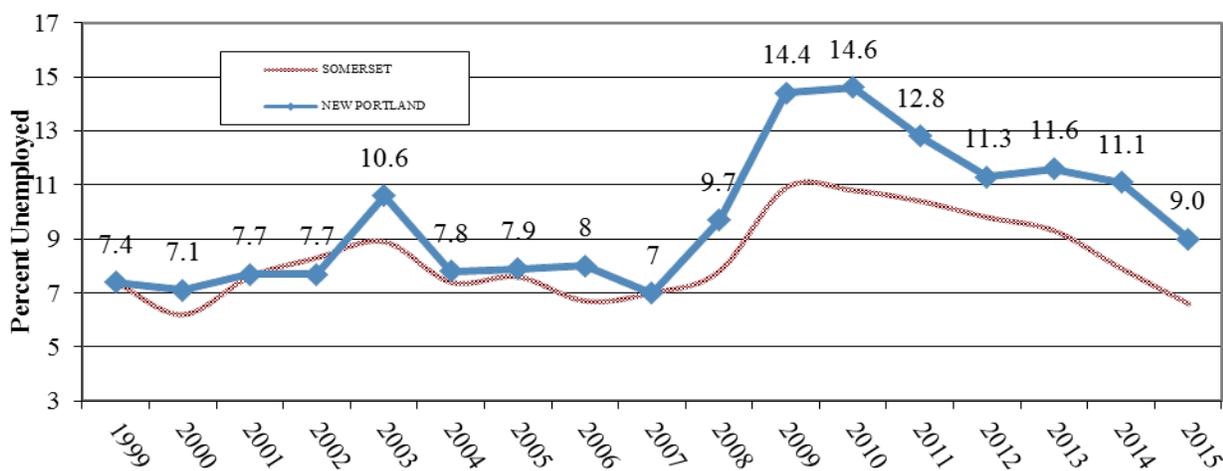
Source: US Census, American Community Survey

The working age population has increased in twenty years for both women and men, as could have been concluded from looking at the decline in children over the years. The number of people in the workforce has hardly increased at all for men. Over $\frac{3}{4}$ of men used to be in the workforce; now only 60 percent are. Many more are probably retired. Women are showing a similar trend, but slightly behind. Women in the workforce increased 18 percent in the 90's, but has since remained stable. The percentage of working-age women in the workforce actually declined a little, from 60 percent in 1990 to 57 percent in 2010.

The actual number employed declined for men and increased significantly for women. In 1990, employed men outnumbered women 55:45; in 2010, men and women are almost identical in numbers. Women showed a much lower unemployment rate, 9.5 percent versus 15.6 percent for men.

The American Community Survey as a national census is a poor estimator of actual employment in small towns, since it is the average of five years of statistical samples. More accurate and current figures are reported by the Maine Department of Labor (DOL). Figure 4-1 shows the average annual unemployment rates for both New Portland and Somerset County since 1999.

Figure 4-1: Unemployment Trends, 1999-2015



New Portland’s unemployment rate was relatively stable from 1999 up until 2007. New Portland was hit hard by the local effects of the national recession, which happened in 2008. The trend in Somerset County is similar, although it seems that Somerset didn’t take as hard a hit and has bounced back a little better, with a 6.6 percent rate in 2015.

A critical subset of the workforce analysis involves the *types of jobs* occupied by New Portland workers. Together with the education and training of local workers, knowing which sectors of the economy are active or growing gives us a good sense of the future.

Many jobs are dependent on a certain level of education. As a general rule, higher levels of education equate to higher income levels (though there are plenty of exceptions). In terms of planning, it would not make sense to plan for an engineering-heavy job base, for example, if there were no engineers available in the labor force.

The census documents the level of educational attainment in the community, figured as a percentage of the population over age 25. In 2010, there were 87 residents of New Portland with a Bachelor’s Degree or higher, 13.7 percent of the +25 population. Ninety-three percent of the +25 population – 590 residents -- were high school graduates. By way of comparison, 14.8 percent of Somerset County adults are college graduates, but only 87 percent are high school graduates. While the estimates for high school graduates are a large enough number to give us confidence that they accurately show an increase from 81 percent high school graduates in 1990, the numbers of college graduates are much smaller and show a decline from 18 percent in 1990, which is not very believable.

The census tracks the “Industry of Employment” of New Portland workers. This is intended to give a profile over time of how employment is shifting, but the census keeps re-defining the categories to make it difficult to compare.

In 2010, the biggest industry category was education/health care services. It employed 64 residents, or 17.5 percent of the workers. Second was manufacturing, with 59 employed (16.1 percent), third was recreation/accommodation/food services, with 47 (12.8 percent), and fourth was construction, with 37 (10.1 percent). In 1990, the top industry of employment was manufacturing, with 98 employees, with retail trade and education/health care services tied for second with 60 employees each. This matches up with anecdotal evidence that manufacturing has declined over the past few years, but doesn’t show any substantial growth in other sectors.

The census also reports on “Occupations.” This is a more accurate picture of the skills of the workforce. In 2010, New Portland residents were fairly evenly split amongst occupational categories (Table 4-2). There was, however, a significant dropoff in production/transportation jobs from 1990, to offset an increase in all other categories. The biggest increase in numbers came from the management and business category. Since this is the area where we would be most likely to see college graduates, it contradicts the earlier estimate of fewer graduates.

Table 4-2: New Portland Employment by Occupation, 1990 versus 2010

	1990		2010	
	Employed	Percent	Employed	Percent
Management, business, science Services	64	18	87	23.8
Sales and office	54	15.2	59	16.1
Natural resources, construction	70	19.7	87	23.8
Production and transportation	36	10.1	49	13.4
	132	37	84	23

Source: US Census, American Community Survey

Since New Portland is clearly dependent on a *regional economy* for a good portion of its jobs, a commuting analysis will tell us where residents must go for their jobs. In 2010, only about four percent of workers either walked or biked to work or worked at home. Working at home is rapidly becoming an option for workers in towns with good internet access, and even in Somerset County, over ten percent of all workers walked or worked at home.

Out of the 96 percent that commuted by car, the average travel time (one way) was 30.5 minutes, indicating that New Portland workers are forced to travel unusually far to their jobs. The average for Somerset County is only 25 minutes. This is indicative of a decline in local job opportunities, since in 1990 the average travel time was only 22 minutes.

The census reports much more specific data regarding the regional economy in terms of commuting patterns. Table 4-3, below, shows the census data on commuting patterns of New Portland workers. The table is arranged according to the top five work destinations in

1990, but by 2010, commuting had become much more dispersed, and even though there were more total workers, far fewer in the top five destinations.

Table 4-3: Residents Journey to Work Destinations, 1990-2010

Place of Work	1990	2000	2010
Anson	51	27	9
Kingfield	49	44	16
Farmington	33	33	16
Madison	21	7	10
Carrabassett Valley	15	22	17

Source: US Census, American Community Survey

Of greater concern is the job situation within New Portland itself. In 1990, 109 residents of New Portland worked here. In 2000, the number was 113. But in 2010, only 17 people both lived and worked in town. In 2010, 193 residents of other towns commuted in to New Portland to work, while 248 New Portland residents commuted out.

New Portland is part of Somerset County for economic development planning, but the Maine Department of Labor says it is in the Farmington Labor Market Area. However, according to the commuting analysis, 87 residents work in Somerset County, including those in New Portland itself, while 69 work in Franklin County, that number dropping dramatically since 2000.

A final measure of the strength of the local economy is its *income levels*. Census data can provide information necessary to develop a general profile of the town.

There are two common measures of income. Perhaps the most well-known is “per capita income.” This is an artificial figure made up of taking the entire income of an area and dividing it by the population. Its only appropriate use is comparison between populations. The other is “median household income.” The median is the point at which half of the households are above and half below, and households are the basic planning unit of the community, allowing us, for example, to determine whether housing in the town is affordable or not.

In 2010, New Portland’s estimated per capita income was \$22,055. This is a substantial increase from the 2000 estimate of \$14,596. By way of comparison, the per capita income figure for Somerset County was \$21,025 in 2010, and Franklin County’s was \$21,744. Since rural areas tend to have lower income levels than a county average, the fact that New Portland’s is higher seems to indicate that New Portland workers have somewhat better jobs than average.

Table 4-4 shows per capita income and growth since 2000. New Portland had the highest rate of income growth among the area communities between 2000 and 2010, and the second highest per capita income. Taken together with the information that New

Portland has some of the lowest housing values suggests that New Portland has much more affordable housing than any other town in this area.

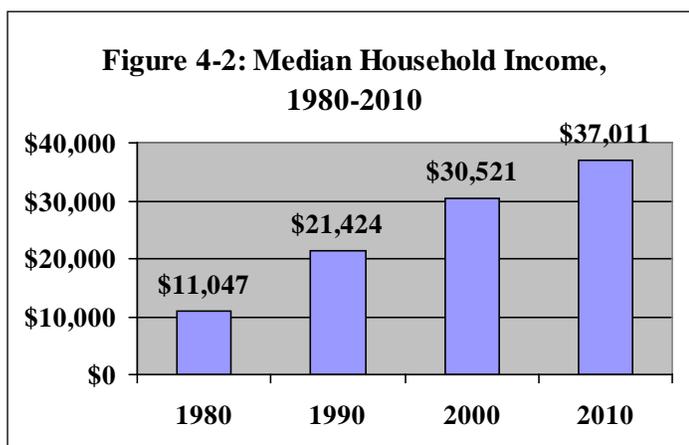
Table 4-4: Per Capita Income Growth by Town, 2000 and 2010

Town	Per Capita, 2000	Per Capita, 2010	Percent Growth
Anson	\$12,691	\$16,769	32.1
Embden	\$14,588	\$21,385	46.6
Industry	\$14,403	\$20,211	40.3
Kingfield	\$15,954	\$19,889	24.7
New Portland	\$14,596	\$22,055	51.1
New Vineyard	\$15,268	\$22,490	47.3

Source: US Census, American Community Survey

Figure 4-2 shows growth in median household income in New Portland since 1980. The median household income in 2010 was \$37,011, a 235 percent increase since 1980.

What the chart does not show is how the growth in income compares with inflation, i.e. “constant dollars”. Inflation in the 1980’s was just under 60 percent, so the jump in incomes of 92 percent put us ahead. Inflation was 32 percent for the 1990’s, almost at the level with New Portland’s 42 percent increase. Inflation for the 2000’s was 28.4 percent, so New Portland’s increase of 21.3 percent actually means we’ve fallen behind in the past decade.



The most recent estimate shows New Portland incomes in 2014 at \$39,545, a 6.8 percent increase again lagging behind the inflation rate for the period of 8 percent.

The census shows a breakdown household income levels. In 2014, there were (an estimated) 24 households in town with incomes over \$100,000, and 128 with incomes under \$25,000. In 2010, there were 28 households with incomes over \$100,000, and 146 under \$25,000. Ten years earlier, there were ten households in town with incomes over \$100,000, but only 136 with incomes under \$25,000.

A household income is not equal to the wage earned by the principal breadwinner. If there were two or more wage-earners, the income would include all. It also includes income from other sources. In New Portland, 143 out of 433 households receive social security benefits. Another 37 receive SSI. Seventy nine receive retirement income, with considerable overlap, and 85 receive public assistance (mostly food stamps). In 2000, only 96 households received social security and 19 received SSI. This probably accounts for the increase in lower-income households; the average wage earnings was \$42,000 in 2010, but the average social security/SSI household received under \$14,000.

The Local Business Picture:

New Portland's town website lists 30 local businesses, but the vast majority are one-person or family operations. We currently have only a few businesses in town that employ local people. They include:

- Enviro-mats
- JR Fabrication
- Tindall's Country Store & Dam Diner
- J&R Davenport Trucking

The list of local businesses has drastically decreased in the past 12 years. The local economy has shifted from forestry based products more towards tourism.

The town has a very small TIF area that is just the 43 acres that Enviro-mats sits on.

The town has not had any prospective entrepreneurs approach them suggesting any interest to grow a business in our community. Outside of regional efforts by organizations like Somerset Economic Development Corp. and Kennebec Valley Council of Governments, there is no focused economic development effort.

Chapter 5: Living in New Portland

This chapter covers a lot of territory: the location, quantity, and type of housing within New Portland, its physical condition, its price, and our ability to pay. The physical factors of housing are important because a better knowledge of existing development and new trends will allow us to plan town services more efficiently. But our ability to pay is equally important; with rising land prices and with incomes that just barely keep pace with inflation, it is important not just to our own future, but to that of our children, who may choose to live and raise families here in town, if they can afford it.

Location of Housing:

The Structures Map of New Portland in the 1991 plan shows a picture of development over twenty-five years ago, where nearly all the buildings are clustered in the villages of North New Portland, West New Portland, and East New Portland. More recently, development has taken place in a stretched-out pattern along existing road frontages, primarily Routes 16 and 146, along the existing local collector roads, and seasonal homes near the Carrabassett River.

The trend of building along roads rather than in the village has been made possible by the replacement of pedestrian society with an auto-based society. If you don't have to walk to the store, you don't need to live within walking distance. So ease of travel has at the same time ruined village viability and contributed to strings of houses along the roadsides. It is not likely that this trend will reverse.

It's cheaper and easier for a home builder to find a strip of rural road frontage. But for those of us who pay taxes, it is cheaper and easier to provide the expected services to the same quantity of houses bunched into a village or clustered setting. This provokes an immediate conflict between developers' best interests and the town's.

In New Portland, another trend is the amount of residential development in new subdivision. Subdivisions have traditionally been viewed as symbolic of newcomers and changes. Subdivisions are mini-villages, as opposed to roadside sprawl. From the town's perspective, they are the alternative to random development, with roads and other improvements provided by the developer instead of the town. New Portland has 21 subdivisions spread throughout the town.

Housing Variety:

As with population, the most precise data we have for housing counts is the 2010 census. The breakdown by housing and occupancy type is shown in the table below:

**Table 5-1
Housing Occupancy Characteristics, 1980-2010**

	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>(%increase)</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>(%increase)</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>(%increase)</u>
Owner-occupied	209	261	25%	298	14%	313	5%
Renter-occupied	23	28	22 %	31	11%	33	6.5%
Total Occupied	232	289	25 %	329	14%	346	5%
Vacant (yr.round)	41	50	22 %	35	-30%	35	--
Vacant (seasonal)	113	126	12 %	200	59%	224	12%
Total Vacant	154	176	14 %	235	34%	259	10%
Total Housing	386	465	20%	564	21%	605	7.3%

Source: U.S. Census

It goes without saying that the most outstanding trend was the growth in seasonal housing since the 1980's – almost doubling. This trend is expected to continue as people build vacation homes to take advantage of our rural character and proximity to the ski areas. Over the past thirty years, the town averaged 3.7 new seasonal homes per year.

Between 1990 and 2000, the average building rate was 10 units per year, dropping to about four per year between 2000 and 2010.

In 2010, 89 percent of houses were single-family, stick-built, compared with 85 percent in 2000, 84 percent in 1990 and 91 percent in 1980. The majority of the remainder were mobile homes – 9.8 percent in 2010, 12.6 percent in 2000. There were only eight multi-family units. This was a much lower percentage of mobile homes and multi-family housing than Somerset County on average. Anson has 18 percent mobile homes, Embden 19 percent. Madison has 7 percent, but also has 21 percent multi-family housing.

**Table 5-2:
New Portland Housing, by Type and Occupancy, 1970-2010**

	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>
Total Housing Units	227	386	465	564	605
Stick-built Units		249	390	469	480
Mobile Homes		40	57	71	121
Rentals	17	23	28	21	36

Source: US Census

Housing Condition and Quality:

Very little statistical data exists on the age and condition of the town's housing stock. The census does ask questions such as how old a house is and whether it has modern plumbing and heating systems, but this is based on a statistical sample (formerly the "long form," now called the American Community Survey), and the samples are so small that in a town the size of New Portland, the figure is little more than a guess.

Of the homes in New Portland, 26 percent (184 units) were built prior to 1940. That is a high percentage. This statistic could be either an opportunity or a problem. It represents a large base of potentially historic architecture, but it also implies that many may not have contemporary construction or sanitary facilities.

**Table 5-3:
New Portland Year-built**

<u>Year Built</u>	<u># of Houses</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
2010 to 2015	15	3 %
2000 to 2010	41	6 %
1990 to 1999	166	24%
1980 to 1989	87	12%
1970 to 1979	120	17%
1960 to 1969	20	3 %
1940 to 1959	21	3 %
1939 or earlier	184	26%

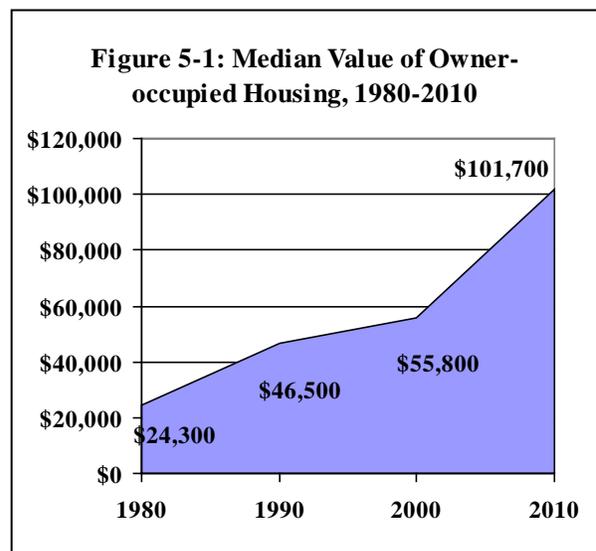
While not necessarily so, it is commonly thought that newer houses are more likely to be in better physical condition and have adequate facilities.

According to the census, there are still 21 occupied housing units in town without complete plumbing (bathroom) facilities. Ten do not have a kitchen. Thirty-six percent heat their homes primarily with wood, although the census doesn't think to ask if there is actually a central heating source to back up the wood.

Price and Affordability:

The price and affordability of housing is often a significant factor in the economic life of a town. Housing prices are generally set by the open market, but if supply and demand get out of whack it can result in insufficient housing for prospective workers or residents relocating to another town because they cannot afford local housing. For example, in some towns in northern Somerset County, businesses cannot attract employees because existing homes are not available and new housing would be too expensive to build.

Figure 5-1 charts the progression of housing values in New Portland. These are median values, meaning half are above and half below, and they are not actual sale prices but homeowners' estimates of value based on the census sample. According to these estimates, housing values rose fairly briskly during



the 80's, though that was also an era of substantial inflation. The rise was much less during the 90's, actually falling behind the pace of inflation, meaning the average home in 2000 was worth less in real dollars than it was in 1990. But it has more than made up for it since then. Between 2000 and 2010, the median home value has risen by 82 percent. The pace of inflation, as measured by CPI, was only 28.4 percent.

Actual housing prices have varied quite a bit recently as a result of the recession, and there is only a little track record to go on. The Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA) tracks housing sales in the state, and the last time there were enough sales in New Portland to estimate a median, in 2012, the estimate was \$77,500. A spot check of real estate listings online in 2016 showed a median asking price of about \$115,000.

The dramatic increase in home values, coupled with the report of population decline, provides initial evidence that New Portland's lack of growth is at least in part attributable to a lack of affordable housing.

Regardless of actual price, a home is only affordable if a person can afford to buy it or rent it based on his or her income. According to MSHA, an affordable home is between 3 and 3.4 times the annual income level, depending on the interest rate available. New Portland's median household income in 2014 was about \$39,000; an affordable house at that income level would be priced at \$112,000 to \$120,000. Under those assumptions, the average house in New Portland is still affordable, but not by much.

There is much more direct evidence affordability from the census. The rule of thumb is that a house is affordable when the all-in housing costs do not exceed 30 percent of income. The census estimates that, of 186 households with a mortgage, 75 of them (40 percent) are paying more than 30 percent of their income, therefore are living in unaffordable circumstances. That is quite a high number, considering that the figure for Somerset County is only 35.5 percent, and New Portland's 2000 figure was only 28.7 percent. It is possible that this high number is connected to the increase in elderly households in town.

The Growth Management Act requires towns to look at availability of affordable housing for a household making 80 percent or less of the median household income. In New Portland, 80 percent of the median is about \$30,000, making an affordable house somewhere in the \$90-100,000 range. About 45 percent of existing housing is in that range, but it would be difficult to build a new house for that price. Lower income families could be compensating for a lack of affordability by living in mobile homes, rentals, or out of town.

For households without adequate resources, renting is often an option. The average monthly owner cost in New Portland is \$941 (according to the census), but the average rent is only \$744. Even though an "affordable" rent would be about \$925/month, the census estimates that 25 percent of renters cannot afford their rent based on their current income. There are not enough rental units in New Portland for an accurate sample, but this indicates that the average income of a renter is considerably lower than that of a homeowner.

New Portland and Somerset County are being negatively impacted by a severe loss of manufacturing jobs and slow job growth in other categories. This situation is very typically for rural parts of our State. The town is also experiencing a rise in seasonal home construction which can drive up land and housing prices. Between 2000 and 2010 the town is estimated to have lost population due to a very slow year-round housing construction rate. Only 15 new year-round homes were reported constructed during this period. The combination of these factors will affect the affordability of housing during the next 20 years. However, another 12 houses have been built between 2010 and 2015, pointing to a slight uptick.

Using the 2010 incomes and a "growth projection" of 4 year-round houses per year, 20 of the houses built in the next decade (roughly half) should be under \$100,000, to maintain the average-income-can-afford-the-average-home balance. However, if seasonal housing construction continues to be popular this estimate will need to be adjusted.

New Portland also had 43 rental units in 2014, though only 34 paid "cash rent". Rents are going up nearly as fast as sales value. The median rent in 2014 was \$744 a month, and eight of the 34 renters are paying more than 30 percent of their income for rent. Since rental housing is usually the choice of starting families and elderly, who tend to be the most fragile economically, the small quantity and high price of rental housing is quite a problem in town.

Seasonal Dwellings:

In New Portland, 37 percent of the housing in 2010 was seasonal, versus 20.9 percent average in Somerset County. The 2010 census listed 224 non-year round homes compared to 126 non-year-round dwellings in the 1990 census and 113 units, according to the 1980 census. The structures map shows seasonal homes, mainly at points along the Carrabassett River. The town needs to keep tabs on seasonal housing construction.

Seasonal homes represent a potential source of population increase without added property valuation to support it. If 200 seasonal homes were suddenly lived-in full time, we would increase in population by close to 50 percent without any more tax base. This isn't physically possible; not all the camps and cabins in town are suitable for year-round use. The newer ones are being built to year-round standards (full plumbing, heat, insulation), though, even if they are not occupied as such.

The Future:

It must be understood that housing decisions are made by individuals faced with personal economic choices. The price and availability of housing in New Portland may not seem like a problem, but only because the people with a problem end up living elsewhere.

Town government in New Portland has the power to influence the lot size (total consumption), timing (rate of growth), quality (building code), and location (to avoid land

use conflicts) of residential development. If the housing market is not meeting the needs of our citizens, we can change it.

We must also consider the impact of housing development on the town itself. Between 2000 and 2010, New Portland has saw 41 new dwellings. A total of 24 were seasonal homes and only 17 were year-round housing. At this rate of growth, what kind of effect would that have on our open land?

If every new house was the result of a lot split off at the state's minimum lot size (1/2 acre), over the next decade another 20 acres or more would become house lots. This would be "maximum density," the case if we had village or subdivision development. But in a rural setting, new building lots more often average four to five acres. Ten years of building at that rate would consume over 200 acres. That is a significant proportion of the remaining flat, dry land now used for pasture or woods.

If development proceeds as it has over the past thirty years, nearly all of the year-round homes will be along existing, rural roads and many of the seasonal homes would be located on large lots or near the river. Can we envision another 100 houses along town roads in 2030? Is there an alternative?

The visual attractiveness of the town and its location seem to indicate that an increase in housing is inevitable. It can be assumed that some of the land in our town has been bought for speculation and will someday be a site of possible development. It CAN happen here! Though we have many vacation homes, the possibility of conversion to year-round use must be considered, along with the probability of more recreational housing in the future.

Subdivision development can only be considered as inevitable. Extreme caution should be taken in reviewing proposed subdivisions and in granting approvals. Strict standards must be applied and enforced if the town is to avoid increased general taxation and overloaded services as a result of a low-quality, poorly-planned development. Where problems with the cost of town services will take much to modify, a concentrated effort to avoid increased problems from an even more widely-scattered population should be a primary consideration.

Good maintenance, property improvement, and elimination of existing poor housing and environmental conditions will depend as much upon private effort and community pride as on municipal actions.

Adverse conditions can be avoided by adopting standards for attaining our goals, including standards for building construction, health, and the protection of the town's natural resources. We must consider the balance between population growth through permanent or seasonal homes and the cost of servicing these persons and homes with town facilities and at town cost. Growth sometimes comes only at great cost!

Chapter 6: New Portland's Natural Resources

Introduction

The town of New Portland encompasses roughly 44 mi² of land area in the western foothills. The landscape is filled with natural beauty, from the scenic waterways and bodies to the prime farmland along the river valley to the moderate hills and dense forests. The lowland, flat areas are primarily adjacent to the Carrabassett River, while the majority of the land rises from this lowland valley and contains moderately steep slopes.

It is often easy to take the natural beauty of your community for granted. This is especially true in a small town relatively free from significant development pressure. Often times, small towns fail to properly plan for and protect their natural resources before unsustainable development takes place. Therefore, it is imperative that New Portland make a concerted effort to plan, strategize, and develop policies that promote all its goals, to include not only economic development that leads to a sustainable tax base, but also the preservation of our most important natural resources. Not only are we legally obligated to do so, we should do so with a sense of purpose because this is why many of us choose to live here and it's the right thing to do. In a 2002 survey, over 80% of respondents felt it was important to protect the town's natural resources.

Some may feel that protecting natural resources often conflicts with development, but this does not necessarily have to be the case. Many people and industries across the globe have learned to accomplish both these goals with sustainable development through proper planning by analyzing potential impacts, identifying alternatives, and mitigating impacts to the largest extent possible, while still achieving the desired outcome. Particularly in New Portland, where so much of our wealth and economic potential is tied up in our natural environment, maintaining it without degradation is paramount.

As we prepare for future development, we need to ensure our natural resources are protected, not only for our immediate physical well-being, but also for the greater good of the plant and animal kingdom. We are part of a very sophisticated ecosystem that is interdependent on even the tiniest of organisms, that the depletion or worse, extinction, of just one can send ripples throughout the food chain, some of which may be irreversible. Let's face it, development is a must, we need it to sustain our way of lives, but it is imperative we ensure it meets all our goals to include the protection of our natural resources.

Water Resources

The surface water resources in New Portland include approximately 69 miles of mapped streams, the Carrabassett River and several ponds, encompassing approximately 1,356.4 acres or 2.12 mi² combined, and roughly 2,482 acres or 3.88 mi² of wetlands.

Pooling all these water resources together, they account for roughly 15-20% of the total land area of the town. All these water resources play a vital role in human and the rest of the natural world's health.

The Carrabassett River is probably our most scenic natural resource. It provides recreation in the form of swimming, fishing and canoeing/kayaking, as well as a place to just sit and relax and enjoy the natural beauty. The section of river through town is considered 'class A' in terms of water quality. Efforts need to be made to ensure it remains in this classification.

Thirteen mapped tributaries enter the Carrabassett through New Portland on its way to the confluence with the Kennebec in North Anson. The largest tributaries are Lemon Stream which enters on the west side of town just below the Wire Bridge and Gilman Stream which enters on the east side of town at Parson's Bridge. The tributaries above the Wire Bridge are also given an 'A' classification in terms of water quality, while the tributaries below are classified as 'B'. Not only do these tributaries have a direct impact on the water quality of the Carrabassett, but they also are essential to maintain habitat for invertebrates and spawning fish. The smaller the waterway the more sensitive it is to increased sediment and contaminant loads, leading to a faster decline in water quality. Stagnant, slow flowing ditches can also lead to thermal loading, which can have just as significant an impact on native aquatic species.

There are only a couple ponds of any size in New Portland -- Gilman and Gammon -- and neither is wholly contained within the town. Both provide opportunities for fishing and boating, but neither is prime for swimming. Gilman is 408 acres total with a mean depth of only six feet, while Gammon is 104 acres total with a mean depth of only seven feet. With that said, some have chosen their shores for homes or seasonal camps. Pennell Pond and Strickland Pond, at 15 and 6.3 acres respectively, are much smaller and do not suffer from development pressure, primarily due to their size, location, and lack of access. But this does not mean that they are any less significant or less worth preserving.

In both Gilman and Gammon Ponds, the outlet portion of the pond is located in New Portland, and very little of the watershed is located within town boundaries. Neither the lakeshore nor the watershed area is at all densely developed. The town's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance contains the usual protections, and the Subdivision and Commercial Development Ordinance includes standards for phosphorous control and stormwater management/erosion control.

We need to implement policies and strategies to ensure these waterways and ponds are protected. Structure development sites are often the primary focus, but we also need to be just as proactive when it comes to road, access, or driveway development. Many of the roads in town are gravel and the majority of private roads and driveways are as well. Combine that with the steepness of the topography, these are often our most susceptible areas. Suggested measures include:

- Ensuring compliance with Shoreland Zoning requirements, especially along the Carrabassett River, Gimán, Gammon and Lemon Streams;
- Adhering to Maine's Stormwater Management Law, found on the Maine DEP (MEDEP) website, Ch. 500 and 502;
- Implementing stormwater best management practices to provide for proper erosion and sediment control during the construction phase of any development and permanent stabilization once the development is completed; Erosion and sediment control fencing, mulch, hay bales and rock check dams in proper ditching, properly installed culverts, and vegetative or rock stabilization will help ensure the stormwater runoff is properly treated and handled before making its way to any tributary or river. A comprehensive guide to stormwater best management practices (BMPs) can be found here: <http://www.maine.gov/dep/land/stormwater/stormwaterbmps>
- Ensuring culverts are installed correctly, according to Stream Smart road crossing BMPs, to accommodate fish passage; Culverts should always span the stream, be set at the right elevation, the slope must match the stream, and there must be natural sediment substrate in the crossing/bottom. Improperly installed culverts lead to scouring, perched outlets and undermining which eventually ends in failure and sediment loading. Maine has approximately 95% of all natural Brook Trout habitat left in the lower 48 states, and "bad" culverts preventing migration and spawning inevitably leads to species decline. Fish are extremely susceptible to sediment loading which affects their breathing, foraging, and spawning. More information about Maine Audubon Stream Smart can be found here: <http://maineaudubon.org/streamsmart>
- Filtering stormwater over land through a forested buffer to ensure sediment, contaminant and thermal loads are minimized or mitigated before entering any tributaries or the river;
- Minimizing the input of phosphorus from developed areas by promoting phosphate-free detergents and fertilizers;
- Maintaining natural vegetated buffers between developed areas and the shoreline of ponds and waterways;
- Considering increased rules for stormwater management for new subdivisions within pond watersheds;
- Providing educational materials to residents on how to minimize their impact on the natural resources, maybe through links on the town website;
- Being proactive and educating loggers about our goals and objectives to ensure that their practices align with ours;
- Educating the residents and public about aquatic invasive species, both plant and fish, and their potential impacts on the overall water quality and native species, either by signs at boat launches, links on the town website, or both;

Wetlands by definition under the Clean Water Act are "those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs and similar areas." Wetlands are areas that feature three components: hydric

soils, hydrology (water table at or near the surface), and the presence of hydrophytic (water-loving) vegetation.

Wetlands are often disregarded as being useless areas of minimal importance, and hence used for four-wheeling or ATViing. In many cases improper forestry practices can lead to further destruction, fragmentation, and in some cases future establishment, of these resources. In other cases, landowners may fill in “wet areas” to make their property more appealing or useful, without fully knowing how to comply or if they even need to comply with state and federal regulations.

The truth is that state and federal regulations are consistent with one another and they should be adhered to whenever impacts to wetlands are being considered. The Shoreland Zoning Act differs slightly from state and federal regulations in that it only addresses non-forested freshwater wetlands that are 10 acres or larger and coastal wetlands. In most cases, low impacts to wetlands for development, roads, driveways, etc. only requires a fairly quick turnaround Permit By Rule(PBR) in accordance with the Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA). But in high impact cases, an individual (full) permit in accordance with NRPA is required. PBR eligible activities can be found on the Maine DEP website, Ch. 305, and wetland protection rules can be found in Ch. 310.

Wetlands play crucial roles in the overall health and quality of surrounding natural resources. One of the most important functions is to provide filtration for contaminants and excessive nutrient loads. Due to their stagnant flow and oftentimes lush vegetation, the nutrients and contaminants that enter via tributaries tend to settle out. These contaminants and excessive nutrient load do not make their way into rivers and ponds, maintaining the water quality and fishery. Wetlands provide essential habitat for aquatic, avian and mammalian species, for resting, breeding, feeding, and nesting. Their value cannot be understated and as New Portland continues to plan for further development, all reasonable efforts should be made to protect these valuable resources.

Since the previous version of the Comprehensive Plan was updated in 2004, vernal pools which were often recognized as wetland features or not as protected features whatsoever, have received an enormous amount of attention due to an increase in studies that highlight their significance in the environment. Although the formal definition of a vernal pool is still a bit vague, simply put they are shallow depressions that usually contain water for only part of the year. They can vary greatly in size, they usually have no defined inlet or outlet, and because they dry out on a regular basis they lack the presence of fish or other predatory aquatic species.

Because of this, several species have adapted to using vernal pools to breed. They provide breeding habitat for upland amphibian species, which play an essential role in the food chain, providing food for animals such as raccoon, mink, skunk, weasels, hawks, crows, ducks, and snakes. In some cases, depending on egg mass counts taken during specific 2-3 week windows in the spring (which vary based on the species and region of the state), vernal pools can be elevated from a valuable resource to what is considered a significant resource leading to much more stringent rules in regards to protection. The three

primary species that determine significance are the wood frog, spotted salamander, and the blue spotted salamander, which require any one of the species to be present at quantities of 40, 20, and 10 egg masses respectively to be considered significant. Any presence of fairy shrimp, an aquatic invertebrate, or any utilization by state or federally listed species will also lead to the determination of a significant vernal pool.

Significant vernal pool rules do differ between the State of Maine and the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). According to DEP, a 250 foot buffer is sufficient as a protection zone, since the species that utilize the pool for breeding live in the uplands around it. Any potential impacts to this buffer zone require an NRPA permit. According to USACE, a 750 foot buffer is necessary, but a USACE permit is only required if there are any wetland fillings occurring on the site.

In any case, these important resources should be protected at all costs. Because vernal pools are relatively 'young' in the realm of natural resource protection, in the vast majority of places across the state, most have not been identified. There have been no significant vernal pools yet identified in New Portland. For the time being, generally only those that have been associated with a project site are documented. Any future development in New Portland should survey for the presence beforehand and an effort should be made to avoid impacts if/when possible. If impacts are inevitable, the necessary permit applications need to be submitted to the state and/or USACE.

Soils

In a broad sense, the soils of New Portland vary from fine sands to loam to gravel, till and clay. Soils are one of the primary factors when establishing suitability for development, whether it be a business, home, road, or wastewater system. Soils determine how quickly surface water, nutrients, and contaminants percolate into the groundwater system. The coarser the soils the faster surface waters are able to infiltrate, while in cases of extremely fine materials such as certain clays, surface waters are not able to infiltrate at all. A map depicting the best and worst soils for development is located at the end of this chapter.

Although New Portland has suitable areas for development based on soil type, it also has many important soil resources suited for other purposes, including sand/gravel aquifers covering 2,843 acres or 4.4 mi² and "prime farmland" of roughly 14,542 acres or 22.7 mi² (roughly half the land area of the town). Currently the sand/gravel aquifer in the north village is utilized to provide drinking water for some of the residents. This resource should be protected at all costs. This means that siting for any commercial development should be evaluated for any and all potential impacts and mitigated. To a lesser extent, the same is true for residential development. A licensed site evaluator should always be used when siting wastewater septic systems.

The town should try to promote compatible uses for those areas containing prime/unique farmland soil types, which include cropland for food production, pasture lands for livestock, and forest lands for growing and harvesting trees. As a nationwide effort

is underway towards more community-based small local farms, New Portland too should take advantage of this low impact, high value form of development.

At the same time, all measures should be taken to ensure long-term sustainability of the soils for both agriculture and forestry. Minimal use of pesticides and herbicides in an effort not to contaminate the soils for future use or the adjacent waterways should be practiced. Crop rotation should also be promoted so as not to strip the soils of their essential nutrients and minerals by growing crops that rely on the same nutrients year after year. Forestry operations are already fairly common in the area. But it is often the small private landowner that undertakes a harvest on their woodlot for one of several reasons, in many cases to make money. In some cases, the harvest is not conducted in a sustainable manner, not taking into account seed trees, water resources, or erosion.

Recently some roads have been built under the guise of forestry operations, which eventually served as residential “subdivision” roads with minimal additional improvements. They were built unsustainably, e.g. straight up/down the fall line of steep slopes. The initial reason for building the road may have been exempt from any permitting requirements, but the desired end state should dictate what, if any, code enforcement measures should be considered. Good forestry practices always implement key elements such as timing (time of year the harvest is conducted), proper slash techniques and the utilization of water bars, especially on steep slopes, to prevent or at the very least minimize erosion.

Flora/fauna

Many flora and fauna resources exist in New Portland, to include several rare, threatened or endangered (RTE) species and significant habitats such as inland wading bird and waterfowl and deer wintering areas. By taking the steps mentioned in the previous sections to reduce erosion and minimize the introduction of contaminants and excessive nutrient loads, the town will have a significant impact on helping to protect these species.

In Maine, information concerning RTE species as well as other valuable habitat and natural communities is managed by the *Beginning with Habitat* Program. BWH is a collaborative effort between federal and state agencies, private organizations, and local contributors to promote a habitat-based approach to conserving wildlife and plant species. BWH provides a clearinghouse of maps and supplemental information on riparian habitat, high value plant and animal habitat, undeveloped habitat blocks, focus areas of ecological significance and locations and profiles of RTE species. Information from BWH is reproduced on maps at the end of this chapter, and should be consulted on an ongoing basis by the Town.

The most recently-available information on RTE species in New Portland includes the following: cobblestone tiger beetle and White Mountain tiger beetle in riparian Carrabassett River, brook floater and creeper in Gilman Stream.

Several other species of significance could exist without being ‘known’ due to the lack of any surveys. In some cases of rare plants, they may lay dormant for decades before

some environmental variable changes for them to reappear. For a detailed list of potential RTE species in the New Portland area, please see the Maine Natural Areas Program website at: <http://www.maine.gov/dacf/mnap/features/index.htm>.

Inland wading bird and waterfowl habitat comprises about 61 percent of the wetlands in New Portland for a total of 1,519 acres or 2.4 mi². These resources provide essential resources for all aspects - breeding, feeding, nesting - of many avian species' lives. Although protection of all wetlands is important, extra precautions should be made to preserve these habitats by identifying any potential impact to these areas during the initial planning phases for development.

New Portland also has a total of 2,102 acres or 3.3 mi² of mapped Deer Wintering Areas, primarily in the southwestern quadrant of town. These provide a safe haven and resting area for deer during the harsh winter months endured by wildlife in Maine. These areas primarily consist of Hemlock groves where the thick cover provides some degree of protection from the elements. The deer population is not only essential to the town's well-being considering many who live here are sportsmen/women or just observers/naturalists, but many others have camps here or come from away to take advantage of the great hunting opportunities New Portland affords.

Aside from unique habitat areas, many species of wildlife depend on large blocks of undeveloped land. With New Portland's extensive forest tracts and few roads, the town is host to several of these undeveloped habitat blocks. The largest of them, in the New Portland Hill area, extends over 11,000 acres into Anson and New Vineyard. Another large one, almost 4,000 acres, lies in the Millay Hill/Pennell Pond area.

While RTE species and their habitats should always be protected, invasive species should be closely monitored and measures should be made to control and/or eradicate them if their spread jeopardizes the native landscape. Invasive species can be both flora and fauna, but in New Portland's case flora species are far more of a risk. The few ponds may support small populations of native-native fish such as Bass or Pike, but for the most part, non-native fauna species are few and far between in the landscape. The real concern should focus on invasive plants, both aquatic and land-based, especially those that displace native vegetation at a rapid rate. Examples such as milfoil (aquatic), purple loosestrife (land), and Asiatic bittersweet (land) can displace and suffocate native vegetation extremely quickly by competing for and utilizing the resources quicker. When this happens, the native vegetation dissipates and eventually is displaced entirely and the fauna species that depended on those resources as a food source to survive cannot and it sends ripples throughout food chain.

Caution should always be used when planting and landscaping around homes and businesses, especially if those plants were dug up from somewhere else. In many cases it only takes the tiniest piece of a root system contained in transported soil or other plantings for the invasive species to establish itself. When boating elsewhere or in the ponds in New Portland, all plant fragments should be removed upon exit from the water so as not to transport an invasive species to another waterbody. It is the law. For a complete list of

potential invasive species in Maine, please refer to the Maine Natural Program Areas website mentioned in the previous section.

Scenic Values:

No less important is the aesthetic beauty of the town. The Carrabassett River is the dominant scenic feature. Several reaches of the river, including the section by the Wire Bridge and the east village gorge, are very accessible and the drive along Route 146 affords some magnificent views and photos. Although the east village gorge is accessible to a lesser extent than the Wire Bridge area is, efforts should be made to make them even more available to town residents and the public, as well as keeping them clean. The Wire Bridge is one of the only bridges like it in the world and the east village gorge has some of the best roadside geologic rivers features along with the North Anson Gorge in the state. Several of the hills, namely Black and Fletcher, have scenic vistas that are well worth the effort.

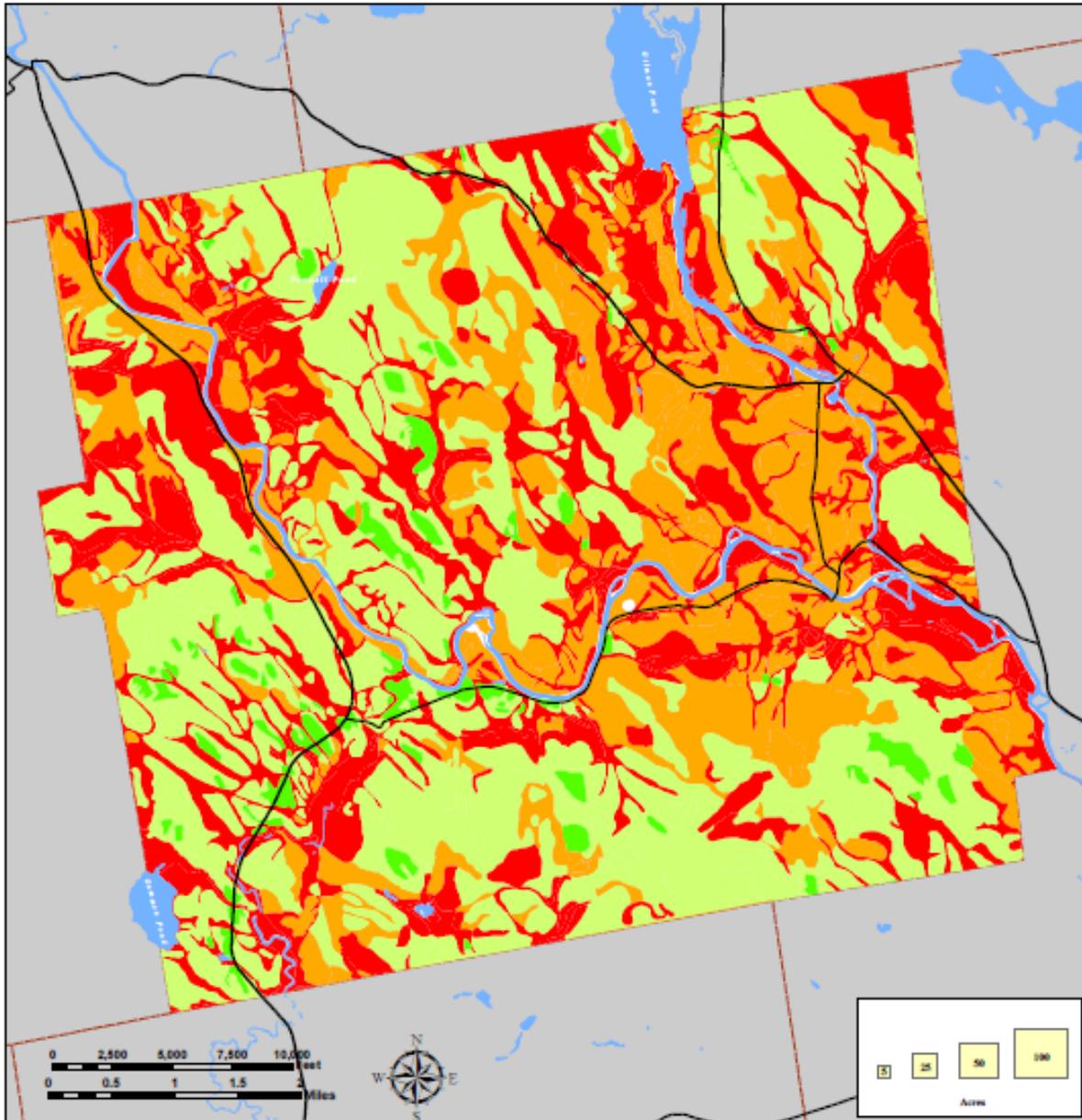
Conclusion

New Portland holds many natural resources that need to be protected for a whole host of reasons. In previous sections, the term ‘food chain’ is used as though it is a linear system, where one species is dependent on the next, and that one on the next, and so on. A much more appropriate term is ‘food web’ where many species are dependent on many other species to survive. What we may see as a small or insignificant portion of our resource base could have far reaching consequences beyond our comprehension. That people choose to live in New Portland for the natural beauty, the interaction with it, the solitude, the importance has been well documented in previous surveys. The town’s residents should be willing and proactive about protecting these resources that are important to them and their way of lives.

New Portland’s Land Use regulation provides some protection from the impacts of private land use activities. New Portland’s land use ordinances include:

- State-mandated shoreland zoning,
- Federally-mandated floodplain management,
- A wind generating facility ordinance, that incorporates environmental protection standards and requires visual impact assessment,
- A biosolids ordinance, that regulates land spreading of sludge and other biosolids,
- A subdivision and commercial development review ordinance, which regulates commercial development and subdivisions and contains performance standards covering air pollution, habitat protection, erosion control, stormwater management, and surface and groundwater quality. It also contains a development permitting system which favors more suitable development soils.

Town policies also ensure protection of the environment. Road maintenance crews are required to take training in erosion control BMPs.



Town of New Portland

Somerset County, Maine
 Soil Types Map
 2017 Comprehensive Plan

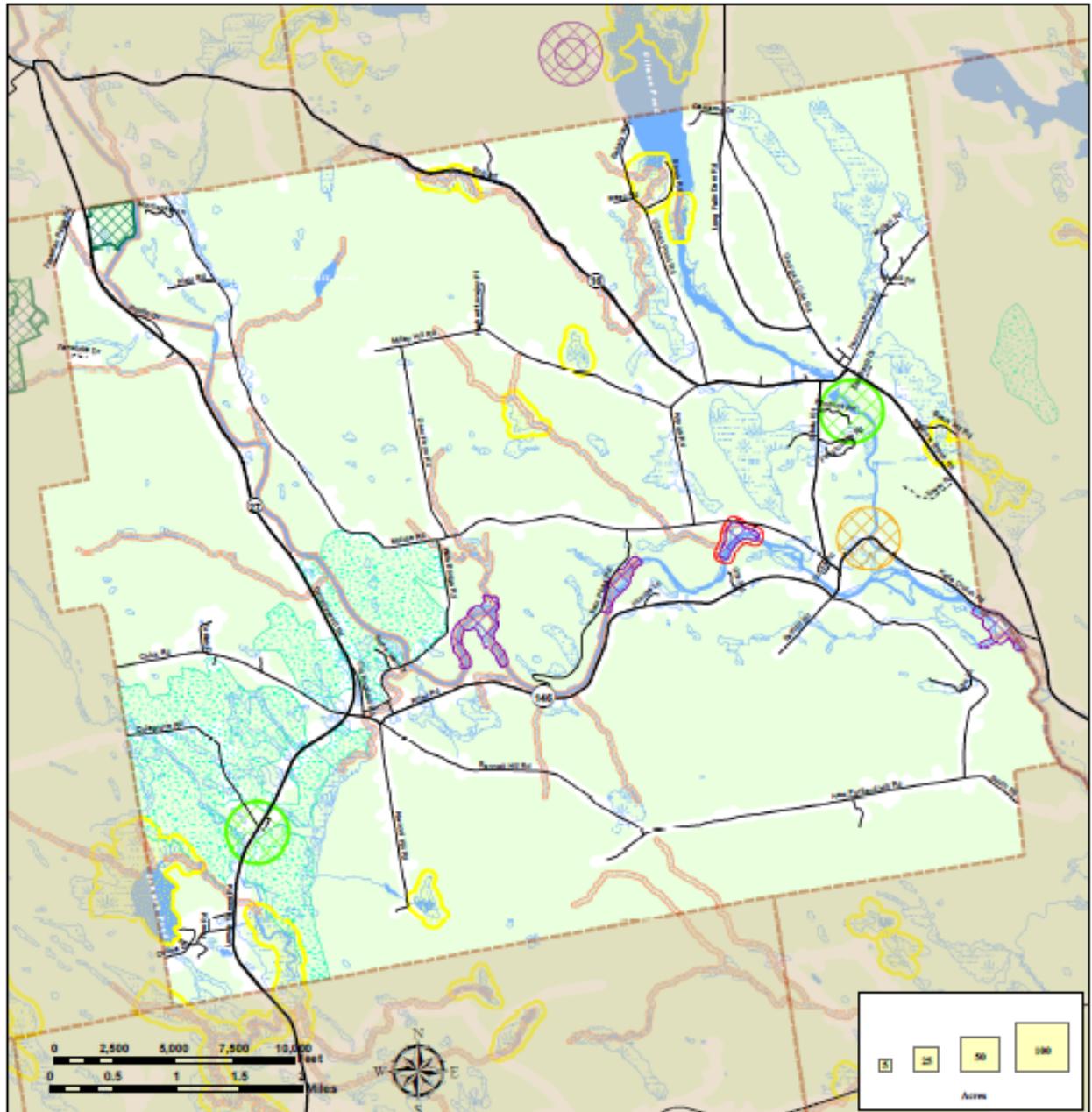


Map Legend

Soil Suitability For Low Density Development

Very High
High
Medium
Low
Very Low

Neither KVOOG nor the Town of New Portland assume any liability for the data delineated herein. All information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only and non-regulatory. Boundary data is based on digital sources and may differ from ground-based observations.
 Data Source: Maine Office of GIS, Maine DOT Created 01-2017 by JG

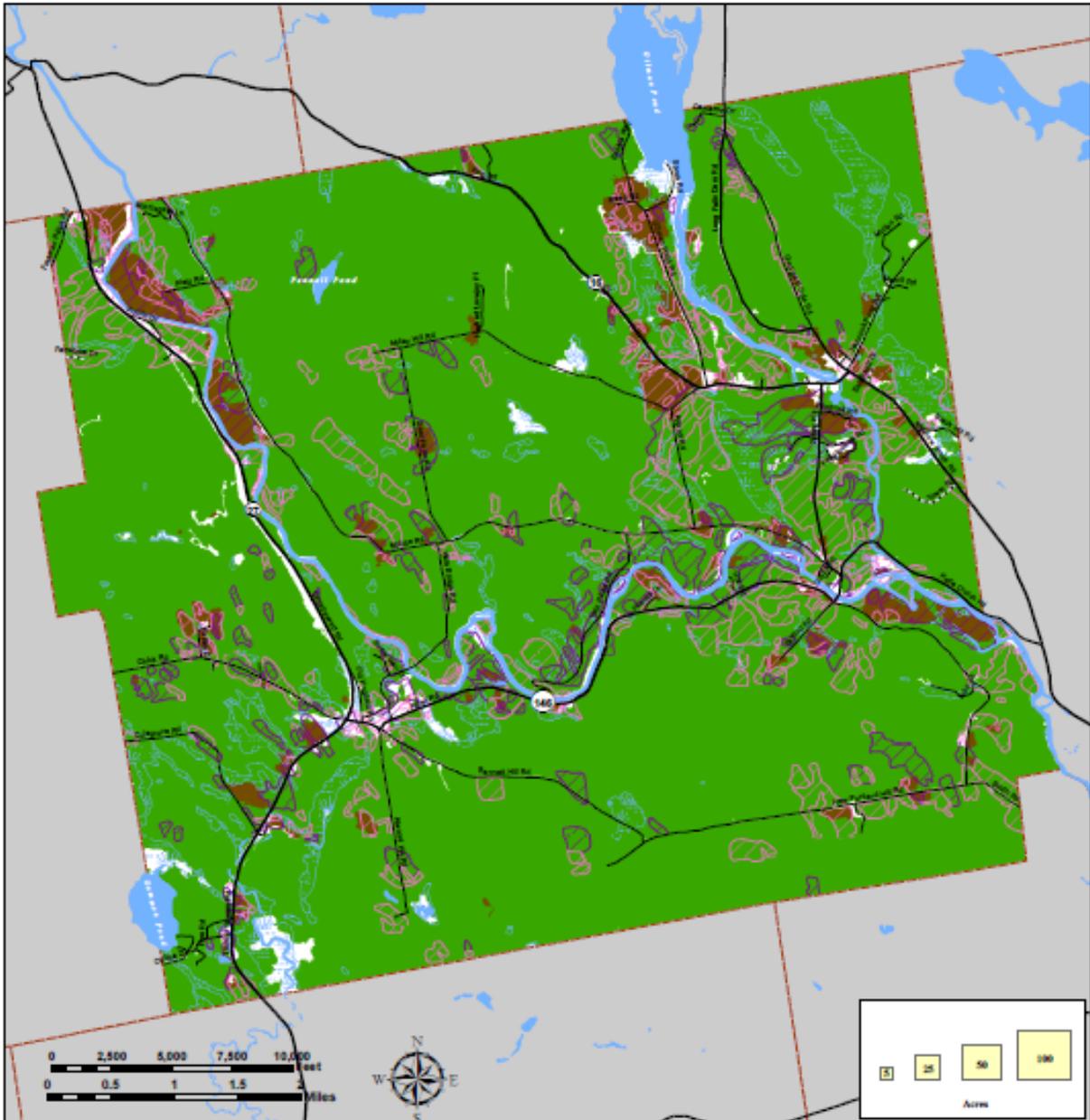


Town of New Portland
Somerset County, Maine
Critical Natural Resources Map
2017 Comprehensive Plan



Map Legend	
Species: Endangered, Threatened, or of Special Concern	
	Cobblestone Tiger Beetle
	Brook Floater
	Creeper
	White Mountain Tiger Beetle
	Deer Wintering Areas
	Undeveloped Blocks
	Conserved Lands
	Wetlands
	Brook Trout Habitats
	Inland Wading Bird and Waterfowl Habitat
	Lakes, Ponds & Rivers
Streams	
	Year Round
	Intermittent
	Town Roads

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 Data Sources: Maine Office of GIS, Maine DOT Created 01-2017 by JG



Town of New Portland
 Somerset County, Maine
Forest and Agricultural Resources Map
 2017 Comprehensive Plan



Map Legend			
	Prime Farmland		Lakes, Ponds & Rivers
	Farmland of Statewide Importance		Wetlands
	Cultivated Crops, Pasture, and Hay Land		Roads
	Forestland		
	Open/Other Land		

Neither EVCOG nor the Town of New Portland assume any liability for the data delineated herein. All information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only and non-regulatory. Boundary data is based on digital sources and may differ from ground-based observations.
 Data Sources: Maine Office of GIS, Maine DOT Created 01-2017 by JG

Chapter 7: New Portland Government and Public Services

General:

The purpose of evaluating our government and its services is to plan out the most efficient long-term use of tax dollars on these services. By looking ahead, we can predict the shifting demands of our citizenry or the inevitable demise of existing assets. We can avoid costly, last-minute decisions, we can find alternatives or other funding that may save tax money, and we can adjust to New Portland's added service needs. As the town grows, we may eventually need police protection, more fire equipment, our own road equipment, or paving of more roads. And if we think of the big picture, we can manage the rate and pattern of our growth to delay or avoid these expenditures altogether.

The major threats to the annual budget are items such as new fire equipment and upgrading roads and bridges. These are expensive, and if equipment fails and needs to be replaced on an emergency basis, it could blow up our annual budget. Fortunately, a little planning enables us to anticipate when this might happen, and spread the cost over a few years.

For example, the town has a list of all town roads, which will allow a needs assessment on each road. This will allow the town be able to monitor conditions, problems and repairs that are or will be needed in the near future or sooner. The town currently has no formal long term planning process or Capital Improvement Plan, and the road system is by far the largest municipal asset. Having an updated list of road conditions could help with upgrading and maintenance planning.

Recent town reports have contained auditor's recommendations that "the town maintain a record of its general fixed assets...all capital items, land, and building." One use of such a record would be that we could schedule replacing or upgrading them on a staggered basis to minimize the effect on the annual budget.

Road Maintenance Services:

At this time, the town contracts out its winter road maintenance each year to lowest qualified bidder. The contract for snow plowing is for 3 years. In an effort to get a larger pool of bidders, it has been suggested to have the town purchase and store the sand and salt that is used on roads.

Summer road maintenance is overseen by the Road Commissioner. Each year the town is asked to research the feasibility of having our own equipment and hiring employees to do this work. This subject has been looked at and found that it needs detailed information to see if the town could afford to maintain equipment, repairs and staff. A survey had been

done in the past and people were happy with the money raised and spent for roads, and the service has been good.

Summer roads are organized in a long term work plan. All the town roads are inventoried with the conditions of the road and the repairs that would need to be done, with repair costs (estimates) of each road improvement that would be needed. The Town budget approved for roads is reviewed and the work is then prioritized. The town is looking at a Road Surface Management System, which calculates and compares costs for grading, reconstruction or paving and prioritizes every road, based on current condition and use.

The Town has a total of 60 roads (Rt. 146, Rt. 27, Rt. 16, Long Falls Dam Rd, and Katie Crotch Rd. are state aid roads.) All the roads have been named and street signs have been put onto posts at intersections. All properties have been assigned a number for post office and 911 purposes.

See Chapter 8 for a detailed description of road facilities in New Portland.

Fire Protection:

Until 1999, the town was served by one fire station in the North Village and one fire station in the West Village, each with its own fire chief. This configuration led to conflict and confusion on many occasions. In 1998, it was decided that New Portland would have one fire department and one fire chief. The first chief of the combined department was Jethro Poulin in 2000.

Existing village fire stations were inadequate to serve the needs of the town. In 1998, the Fire Chief, along with the Municipal Advisory Committee, researched ideas to upgrade the facilities of the fire department and better meet the needs of the community within the tight budget. A Community Development Block Grant was written and received and money to meet our matching share was provided through a low interest loan from USDA Rural Development. A new fire station, located ¼ mile west of the East Village, was put into service in 2000.

The most important criteria for fire service is the response time. About three miles by road is generally considered the radius of effective response surrounding a station. Several areas of town were more than three miles by road from the New Portland Fire Stations. When the new station was built in 2000, the response time improved. It takes 5-8 minutes to either village, sometimes less if members living closer to the Station are home and can bring the necessary equipment to meet department personnel at scene. The new station could house all the trucks and equipment from all the separate departments thus lowering the cost to the townspeople. This would also allow updating of equipment as needed.

In addition to the fire department, the building houses a community room that is used to hold town meetings, selectmen's meetings and other community events.

The second criteria for fire service is equipment and training. Since the construction of the new station, we have worked on steadily updating equipment and training. We

currently have a robust volunteer roster of well trained and committed fire fighters. The New Portland Fire Department has 23 firefighters on their roster and 3 first responders for medical calls. These people have EMT licenses and proper equipment. The criteria for dispatch to tone them, is written as a protocol, so dispatch and firemen know what they can respond to. They go to the scene and assist patients until the ambulance arrives. The men have to maintain their training to keep their licenses which they renew every 3 years. Members have to maintain training with meetings and education sessions. Members have taken Fire Fighter 1 class and are certified through the state.

At the present time, there are four dry hydrants. These are hydrants that allow the firemen to pump water into their tank trucks after fighting a fire. Two of the four hydrants are now in working condition. They are located in North New Portland, Safford Road, Bog road and Middle Road. Development of improved water sources continues to be a challenge and a priority for the fire department. Plans are to continue to up-date and modernize equipment and procedures to provide still better fire protection to the community.

The equipment and training of the Fire Department are very important. The Equipment consists of one engine, three tankers, one squad truck, and a forestry truck. Town money spent on upgrading fire protection is one of the few instances where landowners can see actual cost benefits. Fire insurance premiums are based on the town's ISO fire rating. A better rating, coming from better equipment, coverage or training will immediately reduce everyone's insurance payments. In the 2002 Survey, 26 percent were very satisfied with the Fire Protection, 35 percent somewhat satisfied. As with anything, until you need it or use it, you don't know its value to you. In the 2015 Survey, a question was asked; "How much effort do you think the town should expend in the following basic areas?" Fire Department: **More money and effort (6), same as now (52), less money and effort (11)**. The town has mutual aid agreements with the departments in Kingfield, New Vineyard, Strong, Carrabassett Valley, North Anson/ Anson and Madison.

Emergency and Health Services:

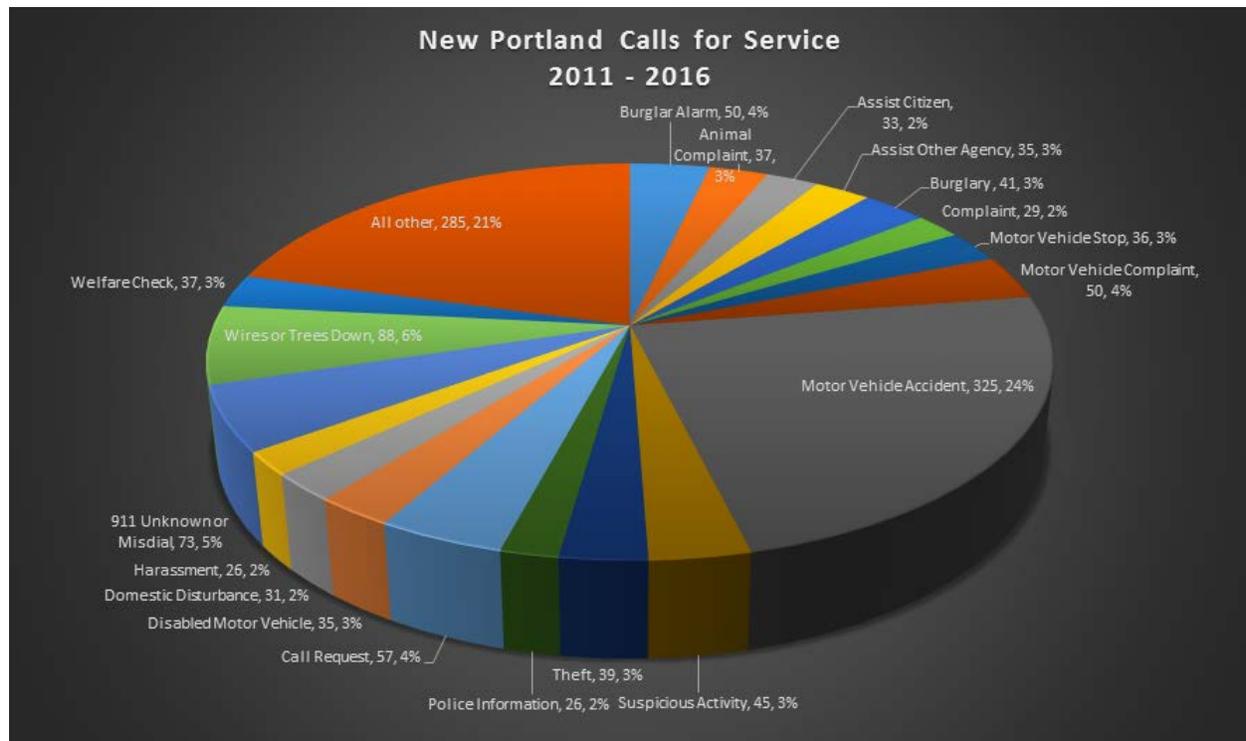
New Portland receives services from North Star Ambulance (formerly Sugarloaf Ambulance and Rescue). The service is located in Carrabassett Valley and serves seven towns and 13 townships. The response time to New Portland is 12-20 minutes with the ambulance. EMTs that live in New Portland and surrounding areas will respond and arrive sooner. The base is manned by a full-time base staff with Paramedics and EMTs, and two ambulances. The North Star Service is operated under the Franklin Memorial Hospital and has ambulances available for more support if needed.

At this time the closest health care facility is the clinic in Kingfield, Maine. The facility has a full time doctor and other healthcare providers such as a nurse practitioner and mental health providers that are available. The next closest health care facilities are in North Anson, Madison, Skowhegan, and Farmington. The area also has a pharmacy in Kingfield since 2011, other pharmacies are Madison, Skowhegan and Farmington.

The Town Health Officer as well as the Plumbing Inspector and assistant are appointed by the Board of Selectmen. They are responsible for the strict enforcement of the State Plumbing Code and certified by the state.

Law Enforcement:

New Portland police coverage is shared by county and state personnel. The nearest State Police barracks is in Skowhegan, about 30 miles away, as is the Sheriff's Office.



As can be seen from the above profile of calls for law enforcement in New Portland, the majority of calls are for motor vehicle accidents – a little over one per week. There were a whole lot of miscellaneous calls. In all, there were about 1,400 calls over a five-year period, about five per week.

Town Office:

In 1996, the Municipal Advisory Committee and Town Manager began exploring the idea of replacing the Town Office due to a lack of plumbing at the current location and lack of feasibility to install a septic system due to close proximity to Lemon Stream.

On July 17, 1998, 1.67 areas of land in the East Village were donated by Daniel & Celina Emery for the purpose of building a new Town Office. During the summer of 1999, a new 30 x 40 building was constructed and began being used in August of 1999. The building has office space for the Town Manager, Town Clerk, Tax Assessor, and Tax Collector. Previous to this time, the Town Clerk worked from and maintained records at home. File storage space was found to be inadequate and needed to be addressed. In 2010, the office spent money to make space available for storage onsite.

The Town Office is the repository of the official Tax Maps, defining the ownership and boundaries of each parcel of land within the Town. Currently a project is underway to digitize the tax maps, which will allow us to apply overlying digital layers depicting many different attributes of each property. Some of the layers available are the National Wetland Inventory, Resource Protection, Floodplain, and Shore land Zoning.

Education:

New Portland is in RSU 74, together with the towns of Anson, Embden and Solon. The Elementary School in New Portland closed in 2009, and the students were transferred to Carrabec Community School in North Anson. The overall district budget was rising for each community, and closing some of the smaller schools reduced the district’s budget.

RSU 74/MSAD 74 spends \$10,930 per year per student (2015). Sixty-two percent of students here receive reduced price lunches.

Carrabec Community School is located in North Anson. The total number of students from New Portland is 36 from grades K-8, who are part of the 300 total enrollment. The ratio of students to teachers at Carrabec Community School is 12:1. Carrabec High School (grades 9-12) is located in North Anson also, with the total number of students from New Portland attending at 29.

Madison Junior High School is one of the nearest middle schools. RSU 83/MSAD 13 is also nearby and has lesser ratings than RSU 74/MSAD 74. RSU 83/MSAD 13's rating is 3 while RSU 74/MSAD 74's rating is 4. The University of Maine at Farmington, the nearest post-secondary school, is located about 20 miles to the South.

**Table 7-1:
April 1, 2014 Resident Enrollment by Grade and Town**

Town	Pre K	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total Elem.	9	10	11	12	Total Sec.	TOTAL
Anson	18	32	26	29	14	30	19	22	20	19	229	23	29	15	31	98	327
Embden	6	5	6	10	7	5	10	10	11	7	77	7	11	11	5	34	111
New Portland		2	4	7	6	4	2	3	5	3	36	7	10	4	8	29	65
Solon	7	8	10	11	7	19	15	11	10	13	111	9	16	6	16	47	158
Total	31	47	46	57	34	58	46	46	46	42	453	46	66	36	60	208	661

Source: Me. Dept. of Education, April 1 Census

Solid Waste:

The Kingfield Landfill was closed in 1992 and New Portland entered into a joint venture through a 10 year local agreement with Kingfield and Franklin County to own and operate a transfer station on land just south of the closed landfill on Route 16 in Kingfield.

Ownership of the transfer station is 42% Kingfield, 29% New Portland, 29% Franklin County. Our share of the annual budget for operating expenses and capital improvements is based on these percentages. Governance of the Transfer Station is a Board of seven members made up of three representatives from Kingfield, three from New Portland and

one from Franklin County. In 2002 the Town of New Portland renewed their participation with a new agreement.

The transfer station has recently converted to a single sort method of recycling making it easier for residents to recycle. In the 2002 survey, 31% of New Portland residents always use the Kingfield landfill, 19% occasionally, and 22% never use it. 63% of New Portland residents favor working with area towns on recycling. 59% of residents said yes to working with area towns of landfill. Citizens felt more work needs to be done to make it an easier to use facility. Ideas were discussed on how to make recycling easier and more convenient to citizens in New Portland. More research needs to be done and information brought to the community. Recently Kingfield did reorganize the area and people seem pleased with the change and the ease of using the facility.

Library:

In 1992, the town of New Portland opened its first library as an initiative of the Rural Living Center. A small portion of the former Grange Building, located in North New Portland was made available. It was open Wednesday evenings and Saturdays.

In 1999, the Library received a grant from the Libri Foundation for \$16,500.00 to purchase the Grange Building. This was done because the library had been looking for a place to expand and the Grange had decided to sell the building and share space with the Historical Society at the old Free Will Baptist Church on School Street in the East Village. In January of 2003, the library was awarded a Community Development Block Grant for \$250,000.00 and a Rural Development (USDA) grant for \$30,652.00 to renovate the building into a modern state of the art facility.

The intent was to maintain the outward physical appearance of the building to preserve its place in history, as the old Green School House. However, upon further study, it was decided that the building was going to be too expensive to renovate and bring the building up to code and make it handicap accessible.

The library board then obtained a 99 year lease from the Town for property next to the newly constructed town office with plans to build a new library. The new library was completed in 2005, and had expanded its offerings to the town. Since the move, the board has worked tirelessly to increase circulation and programs. In addition to books and videos on loan, the library offers meeting space to many clubs and civic organizations. Authors of books come to talk about their books and have book signings. They host a monthly book club. There is a very successful program to bring the work of local artists to the library for display. Each year the library has grown and offers more to the community. The Library offered their space to several groups to hold classes. The library received a grant in 2014 to help with their storage area and curtains to keep heat in and sun out.

Town Lands:

Total acreage owned by the town comes to 15.83 acres with an assessed value of over half a million dollars. The details of the parcels are as follows:

- Town Office and Library at 901 River Road: 1.67 acres valued at \$77,000
- The old dump site located on the Middle Road: 2 acres valued at \$15,600
- The Fire Department located at 911 River Road: 9 acres valued at \$384,900
- The old fire station located on River Road: 0.15 acres valued at \$34,000
- The ball field located on the Wire Bridge Road: 2 acres valued at \$27,000

Electric Power:

Power is available in all but a few sparsely populated areas of the town. It is delivered by Central Maine Power Company. Our street lighting was updated in 1997 from Mercury vapor lights to low pressure sodium lights, because they are more powerful and efficient. We have 31 street lights in New Portland, 21 lights are 70 Watt sodium cutoff, 8 are 100 watt sodium cutoff, one is 150 watt sodium cutoff and one is a 250 watt floodlight.

Communications:

Phone service is provided by TDS. The Town is served predominately by private or semi-private lines. In addition to regular telephone service, mobile phone service, cable television service is provided in limited areas. In response to a question on the 2015 survey, 32 percent of respondents thought the town ought to put more effort into improving internet service – a substantial number considering how little the town can affect that service.

Water:

One quasi-municipal water system serves up to 60 customers in portions of the North Village. Its water source is a well on the west side of Gilman Stream that draws from a sand/gravel aquifer. The remainder of the Town is dependent upon private wells and springs. Extreme care must be taken not to pollute our water resources surface or sub-surface. This can be facilitated by installing adequate sewage disposal systems and by requiring soils evaluations before installing any system. Compliance with State plumbing codes is vital. New Portland water is not chlorinated and tested monthly. Through these tests it is confirmed that New Portland water is excellent.

Sewer:

New Portland residents have private sewage systems. Each home owner is responsible to maintain and properly have contents disposed of properly. This would be with proper companies who are licensed to pump and clean tanks and dispose in appropriate places. As a result of state grants, much was done in the past to reduce sewage running off directly into the waters of the Carrabassett River and tributary streams. There are still a few homes that may discharge into rivers. These homes are inspected by Code Enforcement Officer/ Plumbing inspector, whose job is to enforce ordinances.

Outdoor Recreation:

While outdoor recreation in and around New Portland is primarily a private and personal activity, discussion of it is included here because public lands or facilities are often involved.

The Town of New Portland is located in the "Recreation Belt" of Maine. To the north-northwest lies Sugarloaf Mountain Ski Area, accessible by way of State Highways 27 and 16 which run through the town, bringing Nordic and alpine skiers to the area. Recently, much effort has been made to make the area more attractive to mountain bikers by building world class multi-level trails throughout Carrabassett, bringing more recreationally minded people through our town.

The Appalachian Trail traverses over the Bigelow Range, accessible to the west by way of Highway 27 and north by way of the Long Falls Dam Road through the northeast portion of the Town. The Maine Huts and Trails trail network is also accessible via Long Falls Dam Road. There are also many day hikes in the area which hikers can enjoy year round.

Located near New Portland in the surrounding towns of Bingham and The Forks are several adventure rafting companies on the Kennebec and Dead Rivers. Those rivers also bring more adventurous kayakers and canoeists to the area.

Snowmobiling and ATV riding are very popular activities in most of the surrounding towns with several major trail networks for these recreational enthusiasts to enjoy.

Within New Portland, many non-residents use their camps and cabins as bases for hunting, as well as to enjoy the glorious fall colors. New Portland is home to Bounty Hunter Guide Service, located on New Portland Hill and owned by Orin Young. Mr. Young offers his guide services for hunting and fishing. The Carrabassett River and Gilman Pond and Stream provide New Portland with several good fishing locations as well as opportunities for canoeing and kayaking.

In the winter, cross country skiing, snowmobiling, and other winter sports still draw others to their camps. The driving force behind the Maine Huts and Trails Network has a vision of incorporating a multi-purpose trail network along the Carrabassett River, off the Middle Road. Many of these trails already exist and are used for running, walking, cross country skiing, and snowshoeing. ITS 84, a major snowmobile trail, travels through New Portland. The town has a very active snowmobile club. The Wire Bridge Sno-Travelers are responsible for the maintenance of both club and municipal trails. Many of these trails are used in the spring, summer, and fall as ATV trails. Maybe it is time for New Portland to have an organized ATV club as well.

The town office complex has been improved to include an outdoor basketball court and childrens' playground. There is a ball field that has been built for public recreation or family use, a picnic area along the Carrabassett River next to the Wire Bridge has been set up, and public swimming is available in this area.

There is a lack of public access to New Portland's water resources. Currently there is no public access to the Carrabassett River or either of the developed ponds. However, this has been a topic of discussion and many would like to work this into our recreation enhancement. There is some public space at the Wire Bridge, currently used as a picnic area and carry-in boat launch, but in the 2015 survey, the majority of respondents were opposed to developing a boat launch, because of the maintenance responsibility and the fact that it is normally quite shallow there.

Black Hill, located in the North New Portland village, once had hiking trails which provided more opportunities for not just hiking but also off road biking, cross country skiing, and snowshoeing. With recent logging activities it seems those trails have been abandoned.

Located halfway between East Village and North Village, the New Portland Fairgrounds offers space for public events, as well as year-round opportunity for exercise, dog-walking, etc.

One of New Portland's greatest claims to fame is the Wire Bridge. As noted above there is a ball field and a picnic area located next to the Wire Bridge. This area could be a great attraction to tourists, as we are home to the only bridge of its design in the country. If an attempt were made to improve this area and provide more of a park and picnic area the town may see more visitors and potential land/home owners. Parks also play a vital role in keeping a community healthy. Recent studies have shown that parks are a preferred destination for breaking a sweat. Improving this area could include creating opportunities for recreational activities such as biking, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, swimming, and fishing.

Maybe we should build more on what the rest of the area and organizations have been doing in regards to trails (working with large land owners to build, restore, or maintain trails, either for specific uses or as multi-use trails). With the momentum that Maine Huts, the High Peaks Alliance, CRNEMBA, Titcomb/CeNEMBA, Larry Warren, local ATV and snowmobile clubs have, maybe it's time for New Portland to consider jumping on the bandwagon to help it become a destination.

Municipal Operations:

The Town of New Portland's governmental structure is similar to most other towns in rural Maine, combining both elected and appointed officers. These officials are charged with the responsibility of accomplishing administrative and other necessary town business to ensure a well-balanced and effective representation of the townspeople.

The Town Meeting, usually held the first Saturday in March, provides the qualified voter with the opportunity and responsibility to exercise his/her individual power by voicing his opinions and voting on various town matters. Elected officials include the Town Clerk, the Selectmen (who are also the Tax Assessors), and a school board member. Also elected, though not as officials of the Town, are members of the Board of Directors of

School Administrative District #74 and members of the Municipal Advisory Committee. Acted upon at the Town Meeting are articles pertaining to appropriation of money through taxation or other means, as well as other items presented at the meeting as specified in the Call of the Meeting.

The Selectmen appoint the following individuals: Town Manager -- who is also Tax Collector, Treasurer, and Overseer of the Poor -- members of the Planning Board and Board of Appeals, Road Commissioner, Health Officer, Plumbing Inspector and Assistant, Code Enforcement Officer and Fire Chief and Municipal Advisory committee. The Town does not directly employ any others.

Fiscal Operations

Table 7-2 below outlines the fiscal history of the town over the past three years. The information presented regarding expenditures, local valuation and mil rate is taken from the annual audit reports and the State valuation and Full Value Mill are taken from State Valuation Returns.

Each expenditure category is tracked for percentage of the total budget and percentage of change in that category from the prior year.

The table also shows the total assessment of property taxes and the local mil rate. The mil rate is the dollar amount of taxes per \$1000 in property value. Over the three year period covered in the table our mil rate has been stable at about 17 mils.

**Table 7-2:
Summary of Fiscal Conditions 2013-2015**

	2013			2014			2015		
	Expenditure	% of Total	% Change	Expenditure	% of Total	% Change	Expenditure	% of Total	% Change
General Government	166,178	11.96%	9.25%	174,093	11.28%	4.76%	174,085	9.50%	0.00%
Protection	72,704	5.23%	2.21%	70,228	4.55%	-3.41%	79,739	4.35%	13.54%
Health/Welfare	48,920	3.52%	5.44%	55,105	3.57%	12.64%	44,783	2.44%	-18.73%
Education	600,033	43.20%	7.52%	627,622	40.65%	4.60%	639,565	34.90%	1.90%
Public Works	321,096	23.12%	4.44%	436,607	28.28%	35.97%	321,943	17.57%	-26.26%
Unclassified	161,609	11.64%	-22.55%	160,656	10.41%	-0.59%	182,555	9.96%	13.63%
Debt Service	18,352	1.32%	-82.22%	19,556	1.27%	6.56%	33,179	1.81%	69.66%
Capital Outlay	-	0.00%	-100.00%	-	0.00%	0.00%	356,730	19.47%	
Total	1,388,892	100.00%		1,543,867	100.00%		1,832,579	100.00%	
Local Valuation	67,067,690			70,644,435			70,918,200		
Mil Rate	17.2			17			17		
Assessment	1,158,854			1,200,955			1,220,585		
State Valuation	64,800,000			65,900,000			69,650,000		
Full Value Mil	16			16.28					
Source for Expenditures, local value, mil rate and assessment taken from annual audit reports.									
Source for State Valuation and full value mil rate from https://www1.maine.gov/revenue/propertytax									

In 1996 a complete revaluation of the town was done in an effort to correct inconsistencies in the assessments. Prior to the revaluation we were assessing properties at around 70% of their market value and our mil rate was 27 mils. As a result of the revaluation we began assessing at 100% of market value and the mil rate dropped to 17 mils. At that time we also began using TRIO assessment software.

During the period covered the education budget has fluctuated some, but has averaged more than 1/3 of the total budget. The next largest annual expense of course is the public works (roads) line. The combination of these two expenditures constitutes 70 percent of the total budget.

The public works category fluctuates wildly between 18 and 28 percent of the overall budget due to unforeseen road maintenance issues. General government, has basically remained stable for three years. Health/Sanitation (solid waste), unlike many towns in Maine, has been decreasing for a number of years.

Part of the trick to keeping a stable budget and tax rate from year to year is keeping the individual components of the budget stable. The school budget should be brought under control, but that is not an issue for the comprehensive plan. If the highway budget were stabilized from year to year, it would go a long way towards adding predictability to the tax rate.

The most common reason for the fluctuation of the highway appropriation is the need to perform improvements on one particular stretch of road. When it becomes necessary, the improvements are all appropriated in one year. This is a practice common to many small towns. However, the more progressive ones are establishing a long-range road improvement plan, which allows the town to predict which roads will need attention several years from now. Money would be appropriated and saved one year, to reduce the appropriation for a major project the next year. New Portland has begun to budget for road improvements as part of a CIP and road maintenance plan.

Chapter 8: New Portland's Transportation Facilities

The New Portland community is highly dependent on its transportation network. Local businesses need it to move products and draw customers. Residents need a way to get to their jobs out of town, and employers need a way to access workers. Families need transportation to schools, services, shopping, and recreation.

Transportation to this point has grown from farm lanes and wagon trails to the paved roads and highways we use now, without too much planning or thought in between. As the cost of maintaining the system grows, though, we suddenly have to begin planning for how to manage it more efficiently. This requires transportation choices that are cost-effective in the context of land use and economic development decisions elsewhere in the plan.

System Elements and Issues:

State Highways are the backbone of New Portland's transportation system. They are designed to accommodate the majority of traffic. "State highways" also include the category of state aid roads, maintenance of which is only partially borne by the state. New Portland's state highways are:

State Route 27: Route 27 is an arterial highway running north-south through western New Portland, joining the Farmington area with Carrabassett Valley and the Canadian border. The length within New Portland is approximately 7.2 miles. The road is designed and built to national highway standards, with easy grades and broad shoulders. There are no travel deficiencies on the New Portland segment. It is the busiest road in New Portland, with an average daily traffic count of 2,450 (2013) at the Kingfield town line.

Route 27 carries plenty of commercial traffic – 7.5 percent of its total in 2002 – some of which is international freight. Though it also serves commuters and recreational access, the highway is not highly significant to New Portland community life, as it bypasses West New Portland and only accommodates a few homes and businesses. Route 27 is a scenic byway from Kingfield north, but that designation does not extend into New Portland.

State Route 16: Route 16, known locally for most of its length as the Bog Road, runs for approximately 5.9 miles diagonally through the northeast of New Portland. It connects Kingfield to the west with North Anson to the east, through North New Portland village. Route 16 used to be known as the "Cross-Maine Trail" because it skirted the mountains from Rangeley to Orono, but it is no longer considered an important route. It is classified as an arterial road under the state classification system, but does not get anywhere close to the traffic or maintenance attention as Route 27. In 2011, the daily traffic count just east of North New Portland was 1,630.

State Route 146: Route 146 – School Street/River Road – is the most important local road, because it links the villages of North New Portland, West New Portland, and

East New Portland. In the overall network, it is less important, ranking only as a major collector road under the state classification. Route 146 runs about 6.4 miles in length, and carries an average daily traffic load of 500 vehicles. The road is not designed to the same standard as Routes 27 and 16, with a narrower profile and no paved shoulders.

Long Falls Dam Road and Katie Crotch Road are state roads classified as minor collector roads (state aid). Because of this classification, the roads will get no state money for improvements unless the Town provides a significant matching amount. Long Falls Dam Road leads from North New Portland towards Lexington and Flagstaff Lake. It is in rough condition, though recently having had some bridges replaced and paving done north of New Portland. Katie Crotch Road is a cutoff between East New Portland and Route 16 in Embden. It is in fair condition.

As noted above, the State is primarily responsible for maintenance and improvement projects on state highways. The primary form of maintenance for highways in the New Portland area, is a light repaving, formerly known as “maintenance mulch” and now known as “light capital paving.” It does not improve the structure or design of the road, but maintains its smoothness and rideability. This treatment was done to many of the roads in the New Portland area in 2016.

Additional state projects planned for New Portland roads include work on Proctor Brook Bridge (Route 16) and safety improvements on Route 146, both in 2017. Like any capital investment, new projects that may seem a local priority must compete on a statewide level for funding. New Portland, unfortunately, is not a very high priority for projects unless they were on Route 27.

Local Roads include both town ways and private roads. Private ways tend to be very short in length and serve very few homes. Many of these are seasonal. The Town is prohibited by law from using taxpayer dollars on private roads, for snowplowing or summer maintenance. The Town’s road ordinance provides for permitting of new private roads and basic standards for site distance at the entrance and passability for emergency vehicles if the road is to be used year-round. If an owner wants the Town to accept a private road, he must petition the planning board and road commissioner, meet construction standards, and be accepted at town meeting.

Town ways are maintained by the Town with some financial support from the State (about \$37,000 in 2015). The Town contracts out winter maintenance, but conducts summer maintenance with its own crew. Maintenance priorities are determined through a road maintenance plan and incorporated into the CIP, however, weather conditions and unexpected maintenance issues require immediate attention.

Table 8-1 on the following page shows the complete listing of local roads in New Portland, with maintenance responsibility noted. Town ways account for approximately 35.4 miles.

Table 8-1: New Portland Roads

maintain	Road Name	mileage	maintain	Road Name	Mileage
Town	AIRPORT	1.2 miles	State aid	KATIE CROTCH	2.0 miles
Town	ATWOOD HILL	1.2 miles	Town	LEMON STREAM	1.3 miles
private	BAKERS	.1 miles	private	LOBO	.3 miles
private	BASS	.1 miles	State aid	LONG FALLS DAM	2.7 miles
Town	BENNETT HILL	.7 miles	Town	MEADOW BROOK	.7 miles
private	BLACK HILL	.2 miles	private	MERRILL	.1 miles
State aid	BOG	2.1 m	Town	MIDDLE	7.1 miles
private	BOUNTY HUNTER	.1 miles	private	MIDDLEGATE	.2 miles
private	BOURBON	.1 miles	Town	MILLAY HILL	1.1 miles
private	CAMERON	.2 miles	private	MOOSEBROOK	.1 miles
town	CARRABASSETT	2.1 m	private	MULLEN	.3 miles
private	CEDAR	.1 miles	Town	NEW PORTLAND HILL	5 miles
Town	CHICK	1.7 miles	Town	OLD COUNTY	.1 miles
Town	CHURCH	.1 miles	Town	OLD KINGFIELD	.5 miles
private	COBBS	.1 miles	private	PINE	.1 miles
Town	COLEGROVE	1.9 miles	private	POODUCK	.1 miles
private	COLLINS	.1 miles	private	POULIN	.1 miles
Town	DEER FARM	.9 miles	private	REED	.1 miles
private	EARLES	.1 miles	State	RIVER	6.3 miles
private	EARNHARDT	.1 miles	Town	SAFFORD	.6 miles
private	FAIRGROUNDS	.3 miles	private	SAMANTHAS	.1 miles
private	FENWICKS	.3 miles	State	SCHOOL	.9 miles
private	FIELD	.2 miles	town	SHORE	.3 miles
Town	FREEMAN RIDGE	.5 miles	Town	SOUTH	.3 miles
Town	GAMMON POND	.2 miles	private	SPRUCE	.1 miles
Town	GEORGE E COLE	1.6 miles	private	STONE WALL	.1 miles
Town	GILMAN POND	2.0 miles	private	SUMMER	.1 miles
private	GILS	.1 miles	Town	TANNERY BRIDGE	.2 miles
private	GREATWORKS	.1 miles	private	TAYLORS PIT	.1 miles
Town	HANCOCK POND	1.2 miles	private	THE PINES	.1 miles
Town	HEATHER	.1 miles	private	TINY	.1 miles
private	HERBERT LOVEJOY	.2 miles	private	TOWER	.2 miles
private	HONORS	.1 miles	private	TRINITY FARM	.2 miles
town	HUTCHINS	.1 miles	private	TRUDELL	.1 miles
			private	TUTTLES	.3 miles
			Town	TWIN PINES	.9 miles
			Town	WIRE BRIDGE	1.8 miles

Source: town office

Support Infrastructure for the Road System:

In order to function efficiently, the highway system needs certain additional elements of infrastructure. These include bridges, traffic controls (signals, directional signs), and parking.

Bridges: New Portland's road system of necessity includes a number of stream crossings. Many of these are small culverts, which are the responsibility of the town to maintain. Culverts must be cleaned and inspected regularly, and replaced as necessary. Most bridges are the responsibility of the State, depending on the length of their spans. The Maine DOT inventories all bridges on a regular basis.

There are 15 bridges in New Portland, according to the State inventory. By far the most significant one is the Wire Bridge. It is located on Wire Bridge Road and spans the Carrabassett. This is single-lane, 200 foot long bridge. The wire bridge is an historic structure, said to be the only one of its design surviving in the US. In 1990, it was designated as a national civil engineering historical site. It was originally built in 1866, and extensively repaired in 1961. It receives regular maintenance.

Other notable bridges in New Portland:

- The New Great Works Bridge, crossing Lemon Stream on Route 27. This bridge is a 43-foot long, concrete-and-girder bridge built in 1954. All elements of this bridge are in satisfactory condition.
- The Great Works Bridge, on Old Route 27 (Great Works Road) crossing Lemon Stream. This is a concrete girder bridge built in 1926. It is listed in the state inventory as "closed due to imminent failure of the approach," although the bridge itself is in fairly good condition.
- The Grist Mill Bridge, where Route 146 crosses Lemon Stream. This bridge is 36 feet long, made of concrete slabs in 1923. All elements of this bridge are in fair condition.
- The Carrabassett Bridge, carrying Route 146 over the Carrabassett River. This is the longest bridge in New Portland, measuring 302 feet long. This bridge was originally built in 1923, and is a concrete arch design. Elements of the bridge are in either "fair" or "good" condition, although the overall sufficiency rating is a relatively-low 63.5 and it has exceeded its anticipated 70-year life span.
- The Bartlett Bridge, where Route 16 crosses Gilman Stream. This bridge is notable as having been completely rebuilt in 2009. It is a 108-foot long, steel girder bridge.
- Parsons Bridge, where Katie Crotch Road crosses Gilman Stream. This bridge is 108 feet long, constructed of concrete girders in 1936. All elements of this bridge are in good condition.
- The Gould Hill Bridge, located at another crossing of Lemon Stream by Route 146 (the crossing closer to Route 27). Like the Grist Mill Bridge, this is a concrete slab bridge constructed in 1923. It is 37 feet long. It is in slightly worse condition than the Grist Mill Bridge, with its culvert section rated "poor."

No bridges stand out in the bridge inventory as needing immediate replacement or closure (other than Great Works, which is already closed.) The Wire Bridge is the only bridge posted as requiring a weight limit. The location and maintenance responsibility of bridges is shown on the Transportation Map.

Traffic Controls: Traffic controls are infrastructure to help manage the flow of traffic. They range from STOP and YIELD signs to signals and raised islands.

Despite having a number of state highways crisscrossing the town, the traffic counts in New Portland do not yet warrant many traffic controls. Most intersections are controlled only by “stop” or “yield” signs.

Parking: Parking in New Portland is traditionally provided by the entity responsible for generating the demand. Most business sites provide their own, on-site parking lots, and there is no concentration of commercial development sufficient to warrant public parking. New Portland’s Land Use Ordinance contains a comprehensive set of standards for off-street parking design for new development.

No public parking is provided other than that associated with public facilities – primarily the town office. No parking issues are evident in town.

Environmental Issues:

Road systems by their nature have an impact on natural and environmental assets. In New Portland, perhaps the most sensitive impact is the potential for erosion and runoff generated that may affect water quality. New Portland’s Subdivision and Commercial Development Review Ordinance has provisions to protect waterbodies from road construction and other development activities as well as post-construction runoff (erosion control and stormwater management standards). Town road crews are trained annually in erosion control practices.

Transportation facilities can also impact wildlife habitat, including travel corridors. This can be particularly evident at stream crossings or near wildlife management areas. There are no recognized locations where existing roads conflict with wildlife movements.

Noise and light pollution can occur with some roads, however the roads in New Portland do not carry enough traffic to rise to a nuisance level. Light from development can also spill onto the roadways, creating a safety issue for motorists. New Portland’s Land Use Ordinance contains standards limiting glare from lighting in new development.

Transportation Choices:

Even though in today’s society, a huge majority of trips and miles travelled are by motor vehicle, there is still demand for alternatives. Some segments of the population (notably youth and some elderly) cannot use motor vehicles to get around, and the

increasing costs and impacts of energy consumption argues for reduced automobile use into the future. Alternative transportation systems take an enormous amount of time and money to put in place, and require planning well in advance.

Common alternatives to the car or truck in densely developed areas are the rail or public transit service; however, New Portland does not have enough development density to support either. No rail lines exist in New Portland. The nearest freight access is from Auburn.

Public transit, either commercial or public bus lines, is not generally available in New Portland. For special needs services, Kennebec Valley Community Action Program (KVCAP) provides low-income and MaineCare transportation, either with accessible vehicles or volunteer driver services. A variation on public transit is the use of carpooling. The census reported in 2010 that approximately one in 20 workers from New Portland regularly carpooled to work. These are undoubtedly casual arrangements. There are no park-and-ride lots in New Portland; the nearest one is in Farmington. The “GoMaine” commuter connections program does offer ride-matching services anywhere in the state.

For those with not so far to go, or an inclination for physical activity, the options are bicycling or walking. In New Portland, sidewalks are non-existent, but this is to be expected with a low density of development. Unless the development pattern changes dramatically, sidewalks will not become economically feasible.

There is a potential for pedestrian trails in such locations as the fairgrounds or town office. Many towns have developed loop trails for scenic access, exercise or nature walks. These would be more in the category of recreation facilities than transportation, however, and should be discussed elsewhere.

Bicycle travel in New Portland is limited to on-street routes or cross-country trails. Routes 27 and 16 are the only local roads with paved shoulders suitable for bikes, although other roads have low enough traffic counts that most cyclists could travel safely. Bicycle touring is a large and growing component of tourism, especially in scenic areas such as New Portland. The Maine DOT has published a listing of 32 bicycle tours, plus dedicated bike or multi-use trails, but none of them are located within New Portland.

There are no public airports in New Portland. The nearest one is Central Maine Airport in Norridgewock; the nearest with scheduled passenger service is probably Augusta. Hogan’s Field is a private airstrip located west of North New Portland, with no facilities.

Traffic and Development:

The transportation system is not just a set of physical facilities. How well these facilities function is a matter of the economic activity and land uses that they serve. A rural highway may function fine for years, but as the community develops, traffic increases to the point where it no longer meets the needs of its users, leading to congestion, increased accidents, and eventually big expenses to improve the road. While there is no reason to

think that in New Portland any roads will be overwhelmed in the next 20 years, it makes sense to establish a baseline for the future.

Traffic levels are a function of the location of trip points (“traffic generators”); traffic conflicts (“crashes”) are often the unintended consequence of those locations.

Traffic levels have generally been growing over the past few decades as part of a national trend. Freight (truck) traffic is up noticeably, a result of our increased standard of living (more consumer goods and food travelling longer distances) and an increasing reliance on roads by freight carriers.

In terms of road use, however, automobile traffic has the greater impact. Most trips originate in the residence and move to employment centers, schools, or shopping. New Portland is an example of the “residential” end of traffic generators. There are no significant employers, schools or other traffic generators. While some residents work for themselves or in very small businesses, most commute to job centers like Kingfield, Farmington, or Skowhegan. Except perhaps the residents of Lexington and Highland, very few people come into New Portland to work or shop.

The town itself has been losing population over the past few years. While that seemed to have slowed traffic growth for a while, it seems to be showing signs of picking up. The table below illustrates the trend of traffic volumes at significant points on the road system.

Table 8-2: Historical Traffic Volumes*

Location	1996	2003	2006	2011	2014
Rt. 16 east of Long Falls Dam Rd.	1720	1920	1900	1630	1900
Rt. 27 @ Kingfield town line			2270	2240	2450
Rt. 146 in West New Portland	810	700	690	550	660
Rt. 146 west of Safford Rd.	550	570	520	460	

*Traffic volume numbers are average daily trips past a given point during the year.

Source: MDOT Traffic Counts

As can be seen, the only traffic increases during the period seem to have been the past interval between 2011 and 2014. The drop between 2006 and 2011 also reflects the recession and jump in gas prices in 2008. There are indications elsewhere in Maine that as of 2014 traffic volumes are nearly back to 2006 levels.

The DOT counts commercial traffic much less frequently. In New Portland, only Route 27 has been counted, and that only in 2002. At that time, there was an average of 168 trucks a day, or 7.5 percent of all traffic.

When combined with the capacity of the road to handle traffic volumes, the actual traffic on a road yields a measure called “level of service.” LOS is used to identify congested areas, and is of little use in New Portland, where virtually none of the traffic

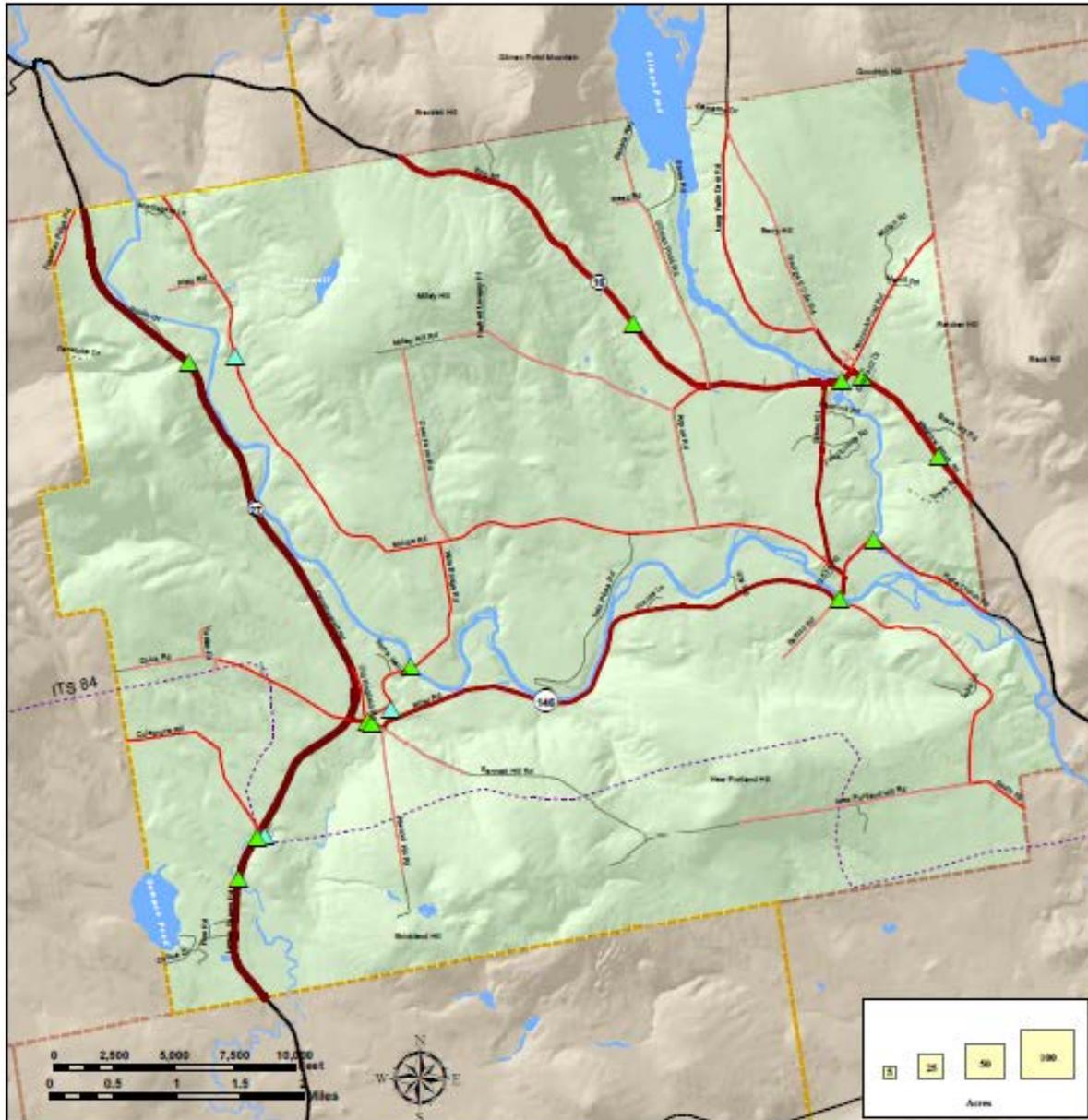
counts exceed 11 percent of road capacity. The town's land use ordinance requires developers to alleviate congestion when a development would result in LOS "D" or below, equivalent to roads at 70 percent of capacity. (On Route 27, that would be traffic of over 14,700 vehicles per day – roughly the same as Farmington Main Street in front of McDonalds.)

The visible result of traffic conflict is the traffic accident. While traffic accidents can happen anywhere and for any reason, traffic engineers can use a statistical analysis to determine if there are certain crash locations that are particularly prone. This is not a matter of simply adding up the number of crashes. The only locations that DOT identifies as "high crash locations" are those that have crash rates above what would be expected based on road conditions and traffic volumes.

There are three road segments in New Portland identified as high crash locations in 2015 (most recent data). They are all on Route 27. One segment, between River Road and Old Kingfield Road, was ranked as the worst segment for crashes in Somerset County in 2015.

This information does not mean that the entire road segment is crash-prone. The precise location and causes of these crashes would need to be studied. Because none of these road segments are heavily-developed, it is possible that crashes may be attributable to deer or road conditions rather than traffic conflicts. Local public safety people may be able to identify problem areas. Safety improvements are a high priority for the DOT, where specific corrections can be identified.

New Portland's Subdivision and Commercial Development Review Ordinance is the tool that the town can use to manage the relationship between development and the transportation network. The ordinance promotes development in and around the village areas. Since this is where the existing road network is, new development will not be a burden on the system. The ordinance has design rules for access points (curb cuts), parking lots, and subdivision roads. These provisions are adequate but dated. The ordinance was developed prior to the State DOT assuming jurisdiction over driveways and entrances onto state roads; New Portland's ordinance should be amended to coordinate with that. Also, the parking and road construction standards need to be brought up to contemporary engineering and terminology.



Town of New Portland
 Somerset County, Maine
 Transportation Planning Map
 2017 Comprehensive Plan



Map Legend	
Annual Daily Traffic Counts Bridges	
	10 - 50
	51 - 500
	501 - 1000
	1001 - 2000
	2001 - 3000
Maintainer	
	State DOT
	Municipal
	ITS Snowmobile Trail
	Lakes, Ponds & Rivers

Neither KVOOG nor the Town of New Portland assume any liability for the data delineated herein. All information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only and non-regulatory. Boundary data is based on digital sources and may differ from ground-based observations.
 Data Sources: Maine Office of GIS, Maine DOT Created 01-2017 by JD

Chapter 9:

New Portland's Plan Of Action Goals, Policies, And Implementation Strategies

The goals, policies and implementation strategies consist of recommendations for future action by the community. The goals are based upon Maine's Growth Management program. The issues listed in each section are local concerns that have been identified by the comprehensive plan committee and the public. The policies and implementation strategies are specific recommendations that have taken into consideration the findings and analysis of the plan data and community issues.

This is the heart of the comprehensive plan because it sets out a path for the community to follow. It also does much more than just recommend a future direction because it assigns a group, committee or board responsibility for making something happen.

All of the policy recommendations will require the attention and voice of citizens serving in various committees and participation at public meetings and the Town Meeting. It might appear that the policies recommendations are in their final form and ready to be put into practice. However, these policies are designed and intended to serve not as a designation but as a point of departure. The members of the Comprehensive plan Committee listened to the community and serve as a sort of "Jack of All trades" as they crafted these policies. The next step in the planning process is to have members of the public with the interest and expertise in a particular area to take a leadership role and further refine each of these recommendations. The work of the Comprehensive Plan Committee is completed and over the coming years many more citizens will further advance the ideas, and recommendations contained in the plan.

This section is divided into goal areas based on state guidelines. Policies and implementation strategies relate to specific areas such as housing or natural resources and are listed in one place. However, it is important to remember that a particular policy might also have implications for other areas in the community.

This section is divided into the following areas:

- Population
- Housing
- Archeological and Historic Resources
- Economy
- Outdoor Recreation
- Transportation
- Public Services and Fiscal Capacity
- Natural Resources
- Land Use
- Regional Cooperation

Implementation:

A plan is a waste of time and effort if it is not carried through. The recommendations in this plan are complex and varied, and must be monitored to determine if the responsible parties are still working. In addition, because of New Portland's limited capacity, the Town cannot do everything at once. The proposed timeline and responsibility of each recommendation are an attempt to spread the work around over various town officials and over time, so that it does not become a burden on any one person or committee. The Town Manager will be the shepherd of the plan, but cannot be expected to carry the entire burden. (S)he will report on a regular basis to the Board of Selectmen and the Town Meeting on progress in implementing the recommendations and next steps.

Fortunately, New Portland has a history of taking its planning seriously. Many of the planning recommendations in the 1992 plan have made it to reality and have made a big difference to the town. These include establishment of the municipal advisory committee, development of the Subdivision and Commercial Development Ordinance, and construction of the town office complex without overly burdening the tax rate. The Town can take pride in its dedication to carrying through on its plans

Population

Goal:

To plan for orderly growth and development throughout the community and to respond to changes in our population.

Issues:

1. The 2003 population estimate is 782 persons. The 2000 population was 785 persons. The decrease is a result of slow housing starts as reported to the State by the assessors.
2. Seasonal housing is becoming popular due to rising land prices near the mountains.
3. The town currently does not have a system in place to keep tabs on existing or new seasonal developments.
4. Population growth has been slow for the past 20years. Will this trend continue? Will the seasonal population grow?

Policies:

1. To examine available demographic data from the Census Bureau, State of Maine and KVCOG when it becomes available and distribute this data to the Selectmen and the Planning Board.

Plan	Responsibility	Timeline
The town shall monitor demographic trends especially population, housing and seasonal development and incorporate any significant changes into the comprehensive plan. Applicable policies and growth estimates shall be revised depending upon the data.	Town Manager	Ongoing

Housing

Goals:

To encourage and promote affordable, decent housing opportunities for all residents of New Portland.

To provide a variety of types of housing and densities of housing available to households of different sizes, ages and incomes.

Issues:

1. Between 200 and 2010 a total of 41 new homes were constructed or installed, about half of what were built in the previous decade. About $\frac{3}{4}$ of them were mobile homes.
2. Between 2010 and 2016 housing starts have been very slow. Only 13 units have been reported.
3. Seasonal housing rose from 126 units in 1990 to 224 units in 2010.
4. Median housing value according to the 2010 Census was \$101,700. This is an increase of 82 percent (54 percent after inflation)
5. The average home in New Portland is still priced affordably, but because of the appreciation in home values outpacing the increase in incomes, affordability is becoming an issue. This is aggravated by the increasing number of seniors in town with reduced income and few options.
6. With increasing numbers of retirees in town, housing availability as well as affordability, will be a major issue in the future. The town is interested in supporting senior housing developments.
7. The town is supportive of obtaining grants to assist homeowners to repair homes.
8. Should the town develop standards for housing in order to maintain the rural nature of the community especially along the roadways?

Policies:

1. To explore interest in developing elderly housing. If interest is expressed by the community a committee may be formed to develop a plan for town consideration.
2. To develop a system to account for all seasonal housing construction.
3. To appoint a housing grant committee to develop a housing rehab plan and pursue a housing grant application for town consideration.
4. To develop an affordable housing plan for the town and identify ongoing funding strategies to maintain the program.
5. Draft a good neighbor booklet for public distribution.

Plan	Responsibility	Timeline
The town should explore local and regional solutions to meet the needs of elderly citizens including senior housing and other forms of housing assistance and programs.	The Town Manager, Board of Selectmen	2021
The Town should develop a system to monitor seasonal housing construction.	The Town Manager, Assessors	2017
The Town shall apply for a housing rehab grant from the Community Development Block Grant Program. A housing rehab plan should be developed in concert with other regional and state housing organizations such as KVCAP and the Maine State Housing Authority.	Board of Selectmen	2020
The Town shall in cooperation with regional and state housing groups develop a plan to promote affordable housing in the community. The plan should address the ongoing affordable needs of the community for the foreseeable future.	Board of Selectmen, Town Manager	2020
The Town shall develop a voluntary good neighbor building standard to distribute to persons interested in building in the community. The good neighbor standard should illustrate ways for homeowners to site and build a home in a manner that respects the town’s rural character, and provides for the privacy and future enjoyment for the homeowner.	Town Manager, Board of Selectmen, CEO, Planning Board	2018

Archeological and Historic Resources

Goal:

To preserve the Town's historic and archeological resources.

Issues:

1. Many scenic areas have been identified and are valued by residents. How should the town address these areas?
2. The town has many historic buildings and structures including the Wire Bridge. How should the town promote these historic resources?
3. Currently potential archeological sites are afforded some protection due to the requirements contained in Shoreland Zoning. Subdivisions are also required to identify any known archeological or historic resources. Should the town do more to protect potential archeological and historic sites?
4. The town has a Historic Society. What can the town do to support their efforts?
5. People are supportive of preserving historic resources. How should the town address this interest?
6. Address the following concerns as outlined by the Historic Society:
 - Create an active Historic Society.
 - Access to the site of the Hutchins cabin.
 - Re-publish new Portland's History.
 - Map Historic sites.
 - Establish a New Portland History Day.
 - Conduct an oral History.
7. How can the town obtain funds to further historic preservation projects?

Policies:

1. To support the use of town funds for historic preservation projects.
2. To seek funds to undertake a survey.
3. To amend town ordinances as necessary to make sure that all archeological and historic are identified and protected from development as appropriate.
4. To participate in the activities of the Western Mountain Alliance.

Plan	Responsibility	Timeline
The Town shall support the ongoing efforts of the Historic Society and whenever appropriate raise funds to support their projects; The Historic Society should develop a project list and budget to present to the town for consideration.	Board of Selectmen, Historical Society	Ongoing
The Town shall undertake a comprehensive survey of all the archeological and historic resources of the community.	Town Manager, Historical Society	2020
All development within the community shall be required to identify any archeological or historic structures on the proposed site. A plan to mitigate any negative impacts on any identified resources shall be developed.	Planning Board	Ongoing
The town will cooperate with the Western Mountain Alliance to promote cultural, historic, and other unique features of New Portland and the region.	Board of Selectmen	Ongoing

Economy

Goal:

To promote an economic climate that increases job opportunities and overall economic well-being.

Issues:

1. Many manufacturing jobs have been lost during the past decade.
2. The town's existing ordinance regulates commercial projects over a certain size. How is this ordinance working? Are existing regulations/performance standards adequate for commercial developments?
3. Are commercial uses locating in appropriate parts of town?
4. Will commercial activities associated with seasonal housing and winter sports increase?
5. What can be done to promote agricultural and other natural resource based activities?
6. Home occupations are popular throughout the town and they can provide both a full and part time income for residents. Should the town promote these activities?
7. High speed internet access is an essential component for many new business ventures? What can the town do to increase access?
8. Are there any areas not adequately served by cell phone towers?

9. What business activities does the town wish to attract?
10. Most town residents work in other communities. New Portland, like many small rural towns serves as a bedroom community. The regional economy plays an important part in the overall economic health of the community. How should the town continue to participate in regional economic development efforts?
11. Very few jobs are being created in the region that are attractive to young and educated workers. How should the town address this issue? How will this impact the future of the community?
12. What new economic opportunities can the town pursue?

Policies:

1. To participate in regional economic activities as appropriate.
2. Develop policies and ordinances that serve to promote the continuation of rural land use activities and shall participate in efforts that seek the same goal.
3. The Selectmen shall seek community members to serve on the committee.
4. To appoint an Economic Development Steering Committee to solicit public opinion and develop a plan for the community.

Plan	Responsibility	Timeline
The town shall be an active participant in regional economic development efforts whenever such activity pose a benefit for the community.	Town Manager, Board of Selectmen	Ongoing
The town shall promote agricultural, forestry and other natural resource based activities by providing and receptive environment for these uses and by participating in regional and State efforts for their promotion	Board of Selectmen, Planning Board	Ongoing
The town shall create a committee to work with farmers and others involved in natural resources activities to develop new ways to remain competitive. Ideas such as Agra-tourism, marketing local products and other innovative strategies used in other regions should be explored. Funding to promote new initiatives should also be identified.	Board of Selectmen	2020
The Town shall develop a local economic development plan for the community with a great deal of public involvement. The plan shall incorporate some of the following areas:	Board of Selectmen	2018

Promotion of agriculture and other traditional natural resource activities. Promotion of home occupations. Expansion of high speed internet access throughout the community. Promotion of tourism related activities. Identification of job opportunities for all members of the community especially the young. Promotion of local businesses. Identification of services and other opportunities to serve a growing seasonal population.		
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Outdoor Recreation

Goal:

To promote and protect the availability of recreational opportunities for all citizens including access to surface waters

Issues:

1. Access to the Carrabassett River for recreation.
2. How can the town work regional to increase recreational opportunities?
3. Outdoor access is a major part of recreation in a rural community. How can the town maintain access to private land and ensure that citizens respect this opportunity?
4. How can the town finance future recreational programs and facilities?
5. What should be the Town's recreational priorities?
6. The following needs were listed by the Recreation Committee:
 - Finish ball field
 - Bathroom facilities at the ball field
 - Swim program
 - Ski/skate program
 - Skateboard patch

Policies:

1. To support the efforts of local and regional recreational groups.
2. Develop a plan for the community. Grants and other funding resources shall also be identified to implement the plan

3. To incorporate public access to water bodies as a priority
4. To make sure that the needs of the entire population are being fairly addressed.
5. To maintain a dialogue with neighboring communities and actively pursue joint recreation programs whenever it will benefit t the community.
6. Cooperate with other recreation groups and clubs, landowners and neighboring communities develop a master trail plan for the community. Funding sources shall also be identified as necessary.
7. Develop an annual public land use forum to discuss access issues and seek solutions for any problems.

Plan	Responsibility	Timeframe
The town shall support the recreational programs and services offered by existing recreation clubs, and groups including sports activities, snowmobiling, and ATV trails.	Board of Selectmen, Recreation Committee	Ongoing
The town shall develop a recreation plan for the community based upon priorities identified in the comprehensive plan. This shall also include a regional component if neighboring communities wish to be included.	Board of Selectmen, Recreation Committee	2021
The town shall seek to improve access to water bodies for a variety of activities including, swimming, boating, fishing, and hiking.	Recreation Committee	2020
Recreational opportunities shall be identified and provided for all ages within the community especially for both children and senior citizens.	Recreation Committee	Ongoing
The Town shall explore regional recreational programs and activities with neighboring towns whenever opportunities arise. Areas of particular interest should be water access, recreational trails, senior citizen activities, day camps, and summer recreation programs.	Recreation Committee	Ongoing
The town shall develop a trail plan for the community that will provide access to multiple users whenever possible.	Recreation Committee	2021
The town shall in cooperation with local landowners, state agencies, clubs and recreational programs develop a forum to discuss public access to private lands and how to both continue and improve access in a manner that is respectful to all interested parties especially property owners.	Recreation Committee	2018

Transportation.

Goal:

To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.

Issues:

1. Should the town develop a public works department?
2. Identify road drainage work including culverts and other storm water improvements and incorporate into road improvements plan.
4. Evaluate existing road maintenance practices.
5. What about bike and walking trails? How can bike access be improved?
6. How should the town participate with MDOT concerning future road improvements in town and the region?
7. What regional opportunities with our neighbors dealing with road maintenance and other related issues?

Policies:

1. To implement the town's road improvement plan and shall look for the most cost effective methods to maintain the road system.
2. To make sure that training opportunities are available for the Road Commissioner and municipal employees.
3. Evaluate current gravel road maintenance practices.
4. Draft an annual road budget that keeps the road system in good repair and avoids sharp increases in road cost from year to year.
5. Discuss regional road maintenance opportunities with neighboring communities.
6. To maintain a close relationship with the Department of Transportation in order to promote local road and other transportation issues.
7. To develop a trail plan in cooperation with neighboring communities and identify funding sources to implement the project.

8. Advocate for improved shoulders along Routes 16, 146, and 27.
9. Seek funds to improve the roads leading to the Wire Bridge.
10. Participate in discussions and advocate for improvements in transportation services for senior citizens.

Plan	Responsibility	Timeframe
The town shall continue to plan and schedule road improvements and maintenance based upon its road improvements plan.	Road Commissioner	Ongoing
The town shall provide the necessary resources and training for municipal employees and the Road Commissioner in order to keep them updated on road issues and new ideas. The programs offered by the Local Roads Center shall be utilized.	Town Manager, Board of Selectmen	Ongoing
The town shall evaluate its road maintenance practices for gravel roads and make improvements as necessary to make sure that gravel roadways are maintained in the most cost effective manner.	Board of Selectmen, Road Commissioner	Ongoing
The town shall appropriate sufficient funds to maintain the road system in the most cost efficient manner.	Board of Selectmen, Road Commissioner	Ongoing
The town shall explore regional and inter local opportunities to address road maintenance tasks. Ideas such as joint equipment leases or purchases, a shared public works operation and other strategies should be discussed to determine if they would be both beneficial and cost effective.	Town Manager, Board of Selectmen	Ongoing
The town shall work with the Department of Transportation to improve unsafe roadways and shall advocate for necessary local road improvements as necessary.	Road Commissioner, Town Manager	Ongoing
The town shall develop a comprehensive trail system plan for the community that includes walking trails, ATV trails, Snowmobile trails, bike paths, horse riding trails and ski trails.	Recreation Committee, Road Commissioner	2021
The town shall in cooperation with the Department of Transportation develop a plan to pave the shoulders along Routes 16, 146, and 27 for use by walkers and bikers.	Road Commissioner, Town Manager	Ongoing
The Town shall seek funds to make improvements in the vicinity of the Wire Bridge.	Town Manager, Historical Society, Board of Selectmen	2020
The town shall cooperate with neighboring communities and regional and state organizations seek	Town Manger	Ongoing

to improve and expand transportation services for elderly residents		
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Public Services and Fiscal Capacity

Goals:

To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and development.

To develop and maintain public services that are designed to be responsive to the citizens of New Portland.

Issues:

1. Residents appear satisfied with the current level of town services.
2. What changes if any will be required to adjust town services to the needs of an aging population?
3. What regional opportunities exist for both existing and new town services?
4. Should the town create a public works department?
5. What regional opportunities exist for shared services and programs?
6. Our educational system constitutes the largest single expenditure in town government. How do we manage funding and maintain future enrollment?
7. Develop a new capital improvements plan, including: Fire vehicles, public works, community center, recreation facilities
8. How do we maintain a sound fiscal base for the community.
9. Develop a process for identifying grants and other funding sources.

Policies:

1. To anticipate major cost by using a capital improvements plan.
2. To explore with neighboring communities regional partnerships as opportunities become available.
3. To make sure that service availability is discussed by each community service provider and appropriate program adjustments are made to address new demands.

4. To provide necessary municipal services.
5. To keep informed of grant opportunities.

Plan	Responsibility	Timeframe
The Town shall make sure that adequate funds for municipal services are available in a manner that does not overwhelm spending in any one year.	Town Manager, Board of Selectmen	Ongoing
The town shall explore the feasibility of regional and interlocal partnerships for municipal services whenever a cost effective and beneficial program can be identified.	Town Manager, Board of Selectmen	Ongoing
The town shall make sure that community services will be made available to all residents especially as our population increases in age. Regional partnerships to provide recreation, health services, transportation, and housing shall be actively explored to address the needs of an aging population.	Town Manager	Ongoing
The town shall continue to provide a level of town services that adequately meets community needs in a cost effective manner.	Town Manager, Board of Selectmen	Ongoing
The town shall continue to maintain sound fiscal planning and ensure adequate oversight of fiscal affairs.	Town Manager, Board of Selectmen	Ongoing
The town shall explore grant opportunities to finance needed capital improvements.	Town Manager	Ongoing

Natural Resources

Goals:

To protect the quality and manage the quantity of the Town's water resources including rivers, streams, ponds and aquifers.

To protect the Town's critical natural resources including wetlands, wildlife and fishery habitats, shoreland, scenic vistas, and unique natural areas.

To safeguard the Town's agricultural and forest resources from development which threatens those resources.

Issues:

1. Current local environmental regulations include Shoreland Zoning, Floodplain Management Ordinance and the Subdivision and Commercial Review Ordinance. Are these ordinance adequately protecting the Town’s natural resources?
2. Does the town need to consider developing local aquifer regulations to address high water usage from water bottling companies?
3. What regional groups or organizations should the town participate with to address natural resource issues?
4. What is the new role for agricultural and forestry in our future?
5. What impact will seasonal properties have upon our use and appreciation of the environment?

Policies:

1. To maintain ordinances according to state and federal requirements.
2. The Planning Board shall develop performance standards that address aquifer water usage.
3. Appoint a conservation commission.
4. Promote interest in land conservation throughout the community.
5. The Conservation Commission shall maintain open communication with land owners in order to promote responsible stewardship of land and resources.

Plan	Responsibility	Timeframe
The town shall continue to enforce its existing ordinances that protect natural resources such as Shoreland Zoning and Floodplain Management and shall as appropriate make revisions to these ordinances to comply with state and federal requirements.	Planning Board	Ongoing
The town shall include in the Commercial Review Ordinance, performance standards that protect aquifers from large water users in order to maintain adequate quantity and quality of the water supply.	Planning Board	2018
The town will utilize information from Beginning with Habitat and other state/federal source in decision-making, including development review	Board of Selectmen, planning board	Ongoing
The town shall create a conservation commission to promote the environmental health of the community and	Board of Selectmen	2019

to play a role in implementation natural resource strategies proposed in the plan.		
The town shall cooperate with other local and regional groups promote the use of conservation easements and other similar tools to maintain agriculture, forested, and open space lands or future generations.	Conservation Commission	Ongoing
The Town shall continue to value and enhance the protection of its natural resources including rivers, streams, wetlands, scenic areas and other resources by using as appropriate local and state regulations and voluntary measures.	Board of Selectmen, planning board	Ongoing

General Land Use

Goal:

To encourage orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of the Town, while protecting the town's rural character, making efficient use of public services and preventing development sprawl.

Issues:

1. Has the Subdivision and Commercial Review Ordinance adequately addressed growth concerns?
2. What are the future roles for the Village areas?
3. Is the community pleased with the placement and construction of commercial projects?
4. Does the town need to establish regulations for housing and small commercial projects not covered in the existing ordinances?
5. What is the impact of seasonal housing development?
6. Are there any areas in the town that need additional protection?
7. Should the town pursue land preservation through a local, regional or state land trust or similar program?
8. What can be done to promote agricultural and forestry?

Policies

1. To monitor development trends and at least once a year discuss the effectiveness of ordinances and policies to address growth impacts. Revisions shall be developed and presented to the town for consideration as necessary.
2. The Planning Board shall implement the recommendations of the land use plan (chapter 10).

Plan	Responsibility	Timeframe
The town shall monitor growth and change within the community and determine if the proposed policies advocated in this plan are adequately addressing the needs of the town. Changes shall be proposed to the plan as appropriate in order to address the needs of the town. Changes shall be proposed to the plan as appropriate in order to address contemporary issues	Planning Board	Ongoing
The town shall revise its ordinances and policies as recommended in the land use plan.	Planning Board	Ongoing

Regional Coordination:

New Portland is a town of just over 700. We can not, and should not, be expected to provide the range of services most people (and state government) have come to expect of a municipality. It is beyond our capacity. However, we can expand our capacity greatly by cooperating on issues of mutual interest with our neighbors in the region.

We already do this. Here are a few examples:

- The regional school district
- The county sheriff and state police
- North Star ambulance
- Mutual aid pacts with neighboring fire departments
- The Kingfield transfer station
- The New Portland Community library, which serves Highland and Lexington
- Economic development/business assistance, with Somerset Economic Development Corp. and Kennebec Valley Council of Governments

This chapter recommends many additional ways we can leverage our regional relationships. Among the recommendations are:

- explore local and regional solutions to meet the needs of elderly citizens including senior housing and other forms of housing assistance
- in cooperation with regional and state housing groups develop a plan to promote affordable housing

- cooperate with the Western Mountain Alliance to promote cultural, historic, and other unique features of New Portland and the region
- be an active participant in regional economic development efforts
- explore regional recreational programs and activities with neighboring communities whenever opportunities arise
- explore regional and inter local opportunities to address road maintenance tasks. Ideas such as joint equipment leases or purchases, a shared public works operation and other strategies should be discussed
- cooperate with neighboring communities and regional and state organizations seek to improve and expand transportation services for elderly residents
- explore the feasibility of regional and interlocal partnerships for municipal services whenever a cost effective and beneficial program can be identified
- cooperate with other local and regional groups promote the use of conservation easements and other similar tools to maintain agriculture, forested, and open space lands or future generations.

Chapter 10: A Strategy for Managing New Development

Many of the actions suggested in Chapter 9 will have an effect—direct or indirect, intended or otherwise—on development trends here in New Portland. Some of the recommendations will make it easier to develop, some will make it harder, others will promote development more in the villages, encouraging enterprises like forestry, and agriculture, to flourish in the rural areas. But in order to have it all make sense, we have to bring it together into a consistent package that will help us to predict and plan for the size and location of new development.

It is important to keep in mind that this document is not an ordinance or regulation. It is an outline, whereas the actual regulations will be worked out in cooperation with landowners and other citizens over the next few years.

Goals and Objectives:

Every town's development strategy will be a little different. In New Portland, we choose to emphasize two principles in building our strategy: freedom of the landowner to develop his property, and consideration for neighbors and other townspeople who might be affected by the development. Because these two principles often collide, the town must act as referee. That usually means that we have to limit the freedom of the developer in order to protect the welfare of others.

Out of these two principles comes a series of objectives that we have tried to keep in mind while building the strategy. They are:

- 1) Stay away from the traditional zoning approach.
- 2) We want to regulate new development, not the activities that are now going on.
- 3) Prevent environmental degradation and negative impacts on neighbors.
- 4) Do not allow development to create too much demand for town services.
- 5) Encourage development in and around the villages.

It must also be kept in mind that New Portland is currently in a very slow growth situation. We have seen only 54 new homes in 16 years – primarily mobile homes – and a net shrinkage in commercial properties. While we must promote the objectives listed above, we must do it in a way that will not be heavy-handed or discouraging to new developers.

We want to be as flexible as possible, to accommodate unique situations and allow developers to be creative. But the tradeoff to this is that we have to make the rules more complicated. If the rules were simple and rigid, they would be easy and cheap to enforce. With a more flexible set of rules, it will take longer and cost more for the planning board and developer to approve a project, but the final result may be cheaper for the developer and better for the town. Combining our land use regulations for subdivisions and commercial

development into a single ordinance has helped to make the process more efficient and user-friendly.

Outlining the Development Strategy:

It is clear that, although New Portland doesn't have all that much commercial development, residents here look at that as the biggest threat. If we were assured of getting only clean, quiet, high-value business, maybe we wouldn't need to be concerned. But New Portland is more in a situation of take-what-we-can-get. We just need to be sure that what we can get is not shoved down our throats.

Perhaps second on the list of threats to our rural way of life are large residential subdivisions. Again, we don't have any yet. But we do have major recreational attraction nearby. We also have low land prices, great views, and decent commuting times to job centers. It could be the next development boom, or the one following, when some developer wises up, finds a vacant farm in town, and proposes fifty or a hundred houses, condominiums, or mobile homes. We want to be ready to bargain on equal terms, to avoid the potential neighborhood and municipal services impacts.

On the other hand, most of the subdivisions done now are by local landowners who need to sell off a few lots to get by. We don't want to make them go through the same hoops and hurdles that a large development would. Therefore, we have a different set of procedures for reviewing large and small subdivisions. The existing Subdivision and Commercial Development Review Ordinance that was enacted in 1994 does this by establishing a separate track for subdivisions of fewer than ten lots in village districts and five lots in the rural district.

At the bottom of the list of threats are single homes. Most of us live in houses that were built one at a time, on a single new lot. Some of us may be planning on building another one. While continued single-house-building could add up to a problem sometime in the future, at this time the town will not regulate it, except to make sure that basic health and sanitation is provided, and to require that builders notify the town, so that the town's assessors can pick up the new tax base as quickly as possible.

New Portland has two basic settlement patterns: the villages and the rural area. But a settlement pattern more resembling the rest of the country is beginning to emerge. It is the early suburban pattern: houses gradually filling in all the frontage along formerly-quiet country roads. We want to use our regulatory powers, not to cancel what has already happened, but to encourage future developers to respect the rural areas, and perhaps build their large subdivisions nearer the villages.

We can do this by establishing stricter rules for development in the rural areas. By having more lenient rules near the villages, we make it easier for a developer to locate there than in rural areas. The land use plan map at the end of this chapter illustrates our approach.

Since the villages are already built up, it doesn't really make sense to encourage new subdivisions in them (although the rules are also more lenient towards new commercial development). Therefore, we have established growth areas near the villages, designated as "extended village", suitable for development. These growth areas are not actually new; they are the areas where we have already been seeing new houses and businesses -- certain roads adjacent to the villages, and the area between North and East Villages.

The Subdivision and Commercial Development Ordinance uses a point system to encourage village-area growth in preference to rural growth. The point system establishes criteria: soil types, front setbacks, road frontage, buffer areas, and dedicated open space. While points are awarded for levels under each of these criteria, the key is that, in village and extended village areas, an application must score *under* a point threshold, while in the rural area, he must score *over* the threshold. In practice, this sets a maximum lot size in the villages, and a minimum in the rural area.

Ensuring that Developments are "Good Neighbors":

If all new neighbors were good neighbors, that is, considerate of our own enjoyment of our property, then we wouldn't have need of land use regulation. As it is, we need a set of rules to protect neighborhoods and communities from potential hazards that could be produced by new development. A lot of this was mentioned already in chapter 9. They include groundwater pollution, noise, erosion, dust, and traffic. They also include things that make them good neighbors to the community, such as demand for town services.

Under state subdivision law, and by our own authority under home rule for commercial developments, we are maintaining a set of performance standards to insure that each developer is a good neighbor to the town. These performance standards already appear in Shore land Zoning and in our Subdivision and Commercial Development Review Ordinance. They need only be updated to contemporary engineering practice, and adjusted to avoid overlap with state and federal regulation.

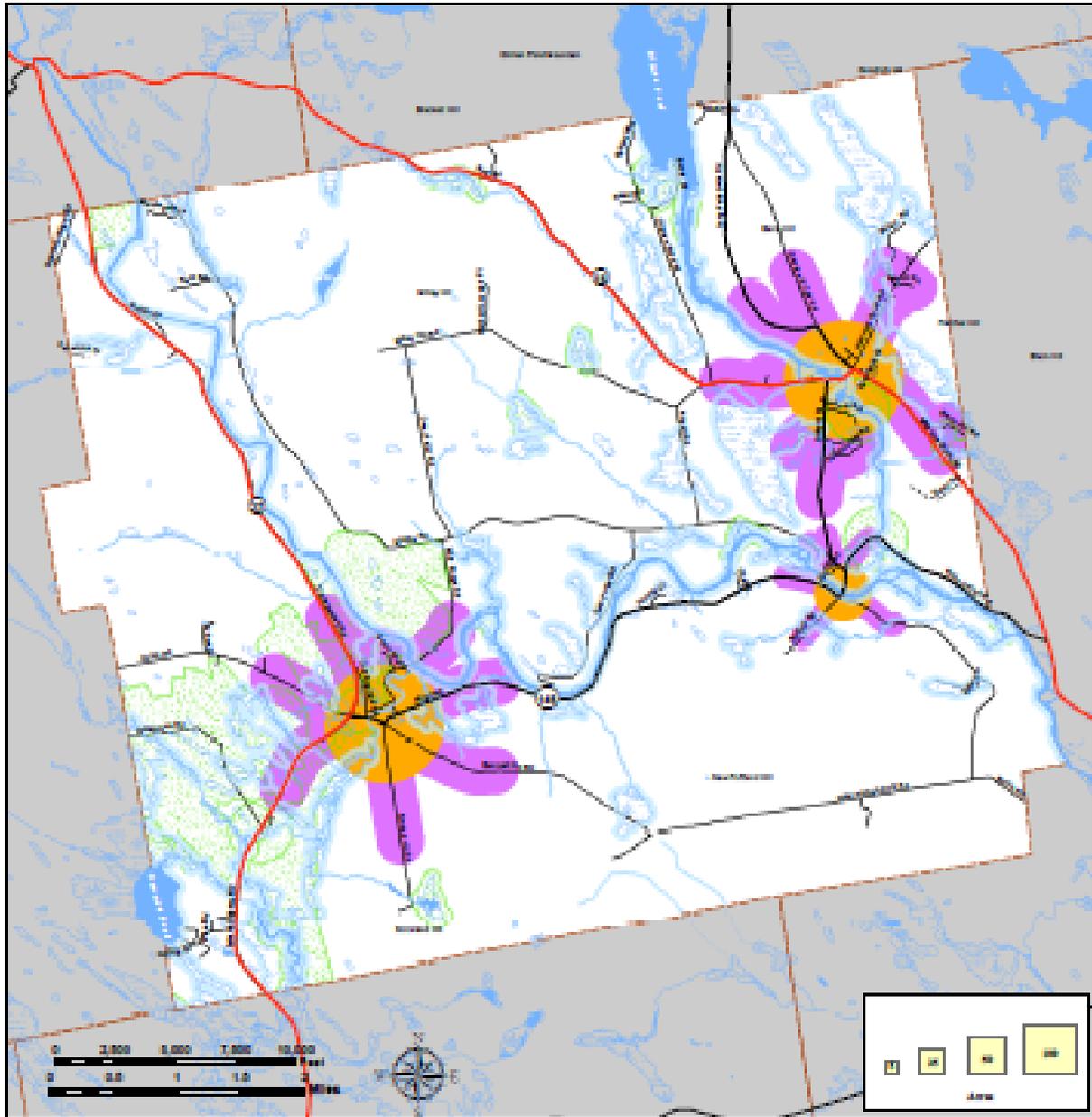
The Legacy of the 1992 Comprehensive Plan

The land use plan proposed in the 1992 Comprehensive Plan was an approach that was tailored to fit the character and needs of the Town. The recommendations of the land use plan were implemented in 1994, and the result was the Subdivision and Commercial Development Review Ordinance. This ordinance has served the town well over the previous 23 years and it is recommended that it continue to serve as the Town's land use policy statement.

Land Use Recommendations

The following are a list of specific land use recommendations. These supplement some recommendations addressing specific aspects of development mentioned in chapter 9:

Plan	Responsibility	Timeline
Maintain the existing Subdivision and Commercial Development Ordinance as the town's primary growth management strategy.	CEO, Planning Board, Board of Selectmen	Ongoing
Review the Ordinance on a regular basis to make sure that it is adequately serving the needs of the community especially as it relates to the number, type, location and density of development.	CEO, Planning Board, Board of Selectmen	Ongoing
Monitor future seasonal housing development and modify the land use plan and ordinances as necessary to address impacts.	CEO, Planning Board, Board of Selectmen	Ongoing
Add performance standards to address development with a high volume of water withdrawal from aquifers	CEO, Planning Board, Board of Selectmen	2018
Improve the user friendly application forms for both commercial and subdivision applications.	CEO, Planning Board	2017
Provide additional hours for the Code Enforcement Officer, to review applications and answer questions from applicants and the public.	Town Manager, Planning Board, Board of Selectmen	2018
Modify the application fees to finance the increased time necessary for the Code Enforcement Officer.	Board of Selectmen	2018
Review the ordinance procedures and requirements dealing with minor subdivisions to determine if the existing point system should be modified.	CEO, Planning Board	Ongoing



Town of New Portland

Somerset County, Maine
 Future Land Use Map
 2017 Comprehensive Plan



Map Legend	
	State Highway
	Major Town Roads
	Town Roads
	Private Roads
	Lakes, Ponds & Rivers
	Wetlands
	Village Areas
	Potential Growth Areas
	Rural Area
	Critical Natural Resources
	Shoreland Zones

Neither CVCOG nor the Town of New Portland accept any liability for the data referenced herein. All information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only and non-regulatory. Boundary data obtained from aerial photography may differ from ground-based observations.
 Data Sources: Maine Office of GIS, Maine DOT. Created 01/20/17 by JG

Chapter 11: Planning For Capital Investment Needs

Background:

One of the functions of town government consists of managing the town's assets. The assets of the town are what create benefit to its citizens. Examples are the town office, roads, and fire equipment. The purpose of managing the asset is to provide it at the lowest possible cost.

In 2015, according to the Audit Report, the town spent \$321,943, or approximately 22% percent of its budget, on "infrastructure," which is another term for fixed assets. Most of this was spent on roads. As of December 31, 2015, the Town of New Portland's investment in capital assets for its governmental activities amounted to \$1,444,821 for 2015 and \$1,090,084 2014 years. This investment includes land, buildings, equipment, and vehicles. The most significant addition for 2015 was the new fire truck. The town has eight different capital projects funds targeted for the purchase of different assets.

The Capital Investment Plan outlined in the 1992 Comprehensive Plan created a new approach towards planning and funding municipal infrastructure improvements. The following identified in the 1992 Capital Investment Plan have been accomplished:

- The Landfill has been closed.
- Kingfield/New Portland Transfer Station was created in 1992
- A new town office has been constructed.
- A new fire station has been constructed.
- A new library has been constructed.
- A new fire vehicle was purchased in 2004 (Fire Service Grant Program)
- A new fire vehicle was purchased in 2015 (Reserve Accounts & Loan)
- A road improvements plan will guide all future road maintenance.

A Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) will help us to organize our asset management. What a CIP does is identify what capital items the town needs *and when we need them*. It then sets up a savings/funding strategy that will allow us to afford things when we need them. This helps to avoid the need for heavy borrowing or giant jumps in assessments. The CIP, because it identifies and prioritizes all our needs, helps everybody identify where the money is going.

The CIP will provide a long-term cost savings. The planning process can provide the flexibility to take advantage of "good deals," like low interest rates or bargain prices. Some of our neighboring towns that had the foresight are profiting from the recession, borrowing for projects at 3 percent and bidding them out way below engineer's estimates. The process also allows us to look for alternatives to tax money. There are several state, federal, and private grant programs that may be available to help supplement local funds.

This plan cannot go into the depth of detail necessary to set up these funding priorities, identify needs, and locate funding sources. We simply do not have the town's consensus on what should go into such a plan. But we can make recommendations on ways for the process to work.

The Process:

The Capital Improvements Plan will be developed in initial form over the next two years, with contributions from the Selectmen, Advisory Committee, Fire Departments, Road Commissioner, Town Manager, and others. Thereafter, the CIP will be updated once a year, for review by the Town Meeting.

The CIP will include the following elements:

- Listing of Projects, including expected cost and year to be acquired.
- Cap on municipal spending from taxes.
- Procedure and possibilities for deriving financing to supplement taxes.
- Contingency plan to deal with emergencies, opportunities.
- Separate Road Improvements Element.
- Vision towards improving the aesthetics of the New Portland villages.

Each project should have a price and a means of financing suitable to the urgency of need. In other words, we need to know that we can pay for them when we need them. Most projects will want to be paid for out of a reserve account. If we can't save fast enough, though, the CIP should suggest bonding or seeking grants. (Since most grants will only pay for certain types of projects, this will help decide where we should be saving and where granting.)

Responsibility:

The following municipal entities will contribute to the development of the CIP:

Selectmen will assign priorities among suggested projects, will present CIP for review to town meeting and will propose (via warrant article) annual spending on the program. They will also make official application for grants, loans, etc., as needed.

Municipal Advisory Committee will be responsible for coordinating and collecting project proposals from all officials and departments. Where proposals have many options (e.g. where to put a replacement town hall), the MAC will evaluate the options with regard to cost and financing.

It will be responsible for investigating financing alternatives (grant programs, low cost loans, etc.), including savings apparent from cooperation with neighboring towns. The MAC will present its recommended priorities and financing strategies to the selectmen at least 90 days before town meeting.

Planning Board will be responsible for informing the MAC about growth and capital need considerations resulting. On an annual basis, the board will report on new construction and permit approvals over the preceding 12 months, anticipated future activity, and any capital improvements that will be necessary to accommodate the growth.

Table 11-1: Capital Improvements Plan (Preliminary)				
Item:	Priority (1=High)	Estimated Cost	Probable Funding	
Road Improvements	1 (annual)	\$40,000	taxes, DOT grant	
Library Improvements	1	On-going	grants	
Public works equipment	2	unknown	Reserve, borrowing	
Fire Service	Equipment	2	\$100,000	Grant
	Vehicles	2	xxxxxxx	Reserve, borrowing
Recreation Facilities	3	\$ unknown	state grant	
Community Center	3	\$90,000	Reserve, grants	

Results of the 2014 Comprehensive Plan Questionnaire

1. Are you a year- Round resident? Seasonal Resident? Week-end or vacation resident in a second home? A landowner?

Answers: Year-round resident- **34** Seasonal Resident- **8** Week-end/vacation home /land – **32**

<u>Year-round resident</u>	<u>Seasonal Resident</u>	<u>Week-end/vacation home</u>	
34	8	32	

2. How much effort do you think the town should expend in the following basic areas?

	<u>Less money and effort</u>	<u>Same as now</u>	<u>More money and effort</u>	
Summer Roads	6	58	8	
Winter roads	3	58	11	2
Fire Department	11	52	6	
Internet Service	13	32	21	1 better service
Recreation	11	39	15	1 less effort 2

3. Should town attempt to attract commercial development?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Depends</u>	<u>No answer</u>
Commercial	41	9	1	8
Full time residents	42	9		14
Seasonal Homes	37	9		16

4. Is the balance of a healthy environment, strong local economy, quality of life and sense of pride important to you?

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No answer</u>
72	4	9

5. Do you feel New Portland should work to better preserve its natural resources for conservation and recreation ? If so how?

Yes	No	No answer
41	9	4

6. Would you be interested in learning more about resources for conservation of your land?

yes	no
24	36

7. Do you feel New Portland is doing an adequate job of protecting its rivers, streams, ponds, lakes and water supply?

Yes	No
42	7

Would you like to know more about what New Portland residents can do to protect and improve water resources for conservation of your land?

Yes	no
26	19

8. Should New Portland actively protect its water resources by considering human activities that affect water, land/water interactions, aquatic life and resources and potential impacts to communities upstream or downstream?

yes	no
9	54

Written comments:

Go all Green, Don't know if town is already doing this. No more then what is currently being done. New Portland already is doing this. Absolutely. We need to know exactly what is being harmed, what needs to be done to fix it. Healthy balance so residents can still use it. Keep it the same.

9. What recreational activities do you enjoy in new Portland?

Snowshoeing	Trail riding horses	Hunting	Running	Bird watching	Swimming	Wirebridge beach	Hiking	Boating	Fishing
6	2	15	3	3	8	3	18	3	16
Snowmobiling	fourwheel	Xcountry skiing	Biking	Dining-out	Walking	Kayaking Canoe	Play ground	Ice skating	Garden-ing
25	6	12	11	3	9	12	6	3	4

Sliding	Picnic	Frog hunting	Wild flowers	relaxing					
1	5	3	4	6					

10. Would you like to see the Wire Bridge area turned into an improved recreational area?

No	Not sure	Positively no	yes
22	2	3	22

Comments:

Can be crowded at times, Picnic tables needed(keep getting destroyed), trash cans needed, benches. Take out mess on lot by bridge. Buy the land, preserving and address land near bridge - mess and signs. Hard to envision how to care for everything, go small, see how it goes, see how it is cared for. Worth exploring, but concern for maintenance and “policing”, that would be hard. Important to maintain the “uniqueness” of the bridge and feel of the site. Get rid of signs and trash.

11. Would you like the Wire Bridge area to have a public boat launch?

No	Yes	Positively not	Not at wirebridge
40	9	5	4

Too much money to maintain, town would be responsible, Ridiculous, Too shallow, canoes and kayaks can easily go in, nothing bigger, not enough water.

12. Would you volunteer to be part of a committee that takes responsibility for trail building and maintenance along the maintenance of a recreational area?

No	Yes	Not able	maybe
38	11	14	10

Comments: Depends on what is allowed on trails

13. Are there any other areas in new Portland that you think would make a good recreation’s area?

We had 12 responses, all no.

Comments: Black Mtn., area next to town office, Beach on Gilman Pond, Hiking trails, Gilman pond, fairgrounds. Small picnic area next to old Central School.

14. How can the appearance of the Villages be improved?

(9 Forms were blank on this question). **Comments:** General upkeep, tear down vacant houses, Remove debris from west village, prosecute junk violators, tear down, run

down, uninhabitable buildings, clean up WNP village. Individuals need care for their own property, Remove defunct houses, zoning ordinances, Restriction on junk. Require setbacks for all new construction. More business, jobs, people could afford to fix up places, clean up trash. Resources to owners, where to get help, tax incentives to clean up. Tough question with economy the way it is, free clean up days in Fall/Spring. Personal choice of homeowner, clean up junk in WNP. Enforce laws in place now. Clean up and remove burnt building, enforce on property owners. Refresh stores. Get people to care about homes, remove cars, address problems with times to finish or fix. Clean up abandoned buildings and unsightly building. (this is most of the responses, the rest of the same as above.)

15. What is your vision for the future of New Portland?

Comments: Residential community, quality housing, selective commercial development. Turn town back to the state. Become unorganized, stay private but improve buildings. Keeping it small, open our own school, people moving out to a better area to live. Restaurants, bars and shops in town. Becoming a bedroom town with few people. Capitalized on the bridge, afraid cost of living will drive young people away, few businesses, have coffee shop so people can meet and talk? Have businesses, store, gas available and a gathering place. Restoration of village life, to have a school, maintain rural character, pretty much the same with the elderly housing which town needs. (all comments that were written)

16. When asked, how do you describe New Portland to others?

Comments: I always start with why I live here, the way it was. I think of positives to give people: open area, not a lot of rules and government control, friendly, caring people who want a good place to raise a family, disorganizing, Rural, poor, rude, very quiet probable underdeveloped for its age. Depressing, poverty-stricken villages, good snowmobiling, motorcycling good. Dumpy town. High taxes, beautiful, peaceful and serene, lovely area, 5 miles outside of Kingfield, no business. Laid back scenic views it is in a transition period and has the potential to become a clean, safe, quiet community. This is my home; it's quiet but beautiful and full of good people. North New Portland has the best water, my favorite place on earth, love hearing the frogs and peacefulness, my home town. I don't tell anyone, we tell people to go to Kingfield. I tell people the town before Kingfield.

17. Why do you live in New Portland?

Comments: I live here because of what it was, the schools for kids, local so you could be involved. The people who are rooted here, who want to keep the character of calmness, caring and safety for our elders and children. New Portland is a good place because of the generations still here, who care about their roots. Pride and the need to work at keeping values in place. Stable, scenic, rural feel. Found a place to live and start a

business. Vacation home, quiet place, natural beauty. I don't know about now; used to be quiet, small town, now new houses everywhere. Been in my home for 84 years, family heritage, family land, peaceful, great library, good fire department, family has lived here for over 200 years, view from my house and quietness. Have Family, friends, good location, space, history, recreation opportunities, and right place at the right time. Week-end place, will retire here. Lots of trees, I live here for what is was, schools, kids, local so you could be involved, outdoor activities, great place to retire. Beautiful and peaceful.

18. What do you think would make new Portland more appealing?

Having a School again, businesses, gas station, activities that will get people out of their homes to be involved. These are words, because it is hard to put this all in place without involvement from more citizens. More scenic overlooks, cleaning up villages, and revoke abandon buildings. Build restaurants, bars, shops, lower taxes, pave the middle road, clean up buildings and make people clean up junk. Small business that could be supported by seasonal traffic, remain a small town, a school, a gas station, activities to people out. Better internet service, Village improvement, Town office hours more convenient for working people, a school, more people trying to help fix problems, rather than just complaining .Make it more attractive, less taxes. Great the way it is, maybe something to get people to stop on their way to Sugarloaf.

19. What about living in new Portland makes it difficult for you?

Traveling to stores, work and entertainment areas. Slow or no internet, Television by a company who has more commercials, advertisements then programs. Not having a place you meet up with friends for coffee and conversation. Not having activities, game nights, music concerts to go to. Taxes, middle road difficult to drive on most of the time. Village areas having to drive out of town to shop. Taxes. We put our energy into Kingfield community, since things are hard to change here. We would love to see new Portland develop into the sweet little town/ community it once was. I grew up here. Can't put time and energy into a place that doesn't want to change.

20. What would motivate you to become more involved in your community of New Portland?

I am motivated, just am not aware of all the happenings in time to help or go. The New Portlander newsletter is a blessing to this town. It was one thing that stood out from the last Comprehensive plan and is still in play. Applause to Dallas for helping the town maintain it. Not much, I'm 80 years old. Young people being interested, in theory it's nice ideas, but reality is between meeting basic needs, family needs, and church, no time remains. Time and availability (it should happen someday) Effort to improve the internet. More surveys like this (please do this again). I would love to join the recreation. Being involved in town government drives us insane. No changes ever happen, the new selectperson may make the start.