

Rockport Forward Comprehensive Plan 2025

Town of Rockport Maine



Logo design by Richard Remsen






Approved by the voters
[enter date]

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Certification

I (we) certify that this comprehensive plan was prepared with the intent of complying with the Growth Management Act (30 M.R.S.A. §§ 4312 - 4350.), that it includes all of the applicable required elements of the Maine Comprehensive Plan Review Criteria Rule (07-105 CMR 208), and that it is true and accurate.

Select Board Member Name	Signature
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Date 3-10-25	

Acknowledgments

The creation of Rockport's Comprehensive Plan was a true town-wide effort.

The Rockport Comprehensive Planning Committee would like to thank all of the individuals and organizations who provided their input. Thank you to all who participated in completing a multitude of surveys, online engagement tools, a S.W.O.T. Analysis Meeting, Public Engagement Meetings held throughout the Town, and following this process.

The planning process has been a sustained effort by the Comprehensive Planning Committee to capture the closely held values of the neighbors who live and work in Rockport and to identify goals, objectives, and strategies for helping Rockport reach its vision for the future. The planning process has greatly benefited from collaboration with the Town of Rockport's Departments, meetings with other Town Boards and Committees, and support of the Select Board.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the planning process of Rockport's future by sharing your comments and ideas throughout this process.

Rockport's Comprehensive Planning Committee deserve special acknowledgment, including: David Cockey (chair), Dominic Cordisco (vice chair), William Bow, Meggan Dwyer, Debra Hall, Richard Remsen, and Joe Sternowski. Contributions as early committee members were made by: Nancy Albertson, Rich Anderson, Louisa Van Baalen, Sally Cook, Robert Duke, Jeffrey Hamilton, Geoffrey Parker, Marsha Steinglass, and Robert Young.

Special thanks to the following committees for providing feedback pertaining to their areas of focus as a committee, to ensure a strong Comprehensive Plan the Community can rely on:

- Conservation Commission
- Economic Development Committee
- Harbor Committee
- Library Committee
- Parks and Beautification Committee,
- Pathways Committee, and
- Planning Board

And, thank you to Orion Thomas, the Director of Planning & Development for the Town of Rockport, for working with this Comprehensive Planning Committee on creating this plan for Rockport's Future.

Executive Summary

Purpose

This 2025 Comprehensive Plan is the fundamental plan for Rockport, providing specific guidance to town officials, administrators, and volunteer committees as they govern, advise and regulate activities that affect the town's citizens. The Comprehensive Plan Committee's mission is: "To review, revise, and update the 2004 Comprehensive Plan so as to guide the actions and public policies of the citizens of Rockport and their representatives into the future."

Planning Process

To accomplish its mission, the Rockport Comprehensive Plan Committee, organized in 2019, began a thorough review of the 2004 Comprehensive Plan with the intent of continuing the 2004 Plan Committee's commitment to be bold and specific in guiding and addressing community issues with clear goals, public policies, and a concise road map for implementation. The Committee utilized the best of a well received 2004 plan, editing the outdated information, while highlighting the important values of our diverse community and giving direction and improvements for every area of the Town in accordance with the State of Maine's Growth Management Act.

Importantly, citizen participation was solicited, encouraged and considered throughout the process of creating this document. The public thoughts, concerns and suggestions were vital to the success of the Committee in producing this final version of the Town of Rockport 2025 Comprehensive Plan.

The 2025 Plan incorporates long-term goals, land-use strategies and addresses other identified needs within Rockport.

Vision for the Plan

Effective community and land use planning relies on a well-reasoned vision for the community's future and a healthy regard for its past. The following vision statement for Rockport reflects the values and aspirations of the community, which have been integrated into each section of this comprehensive plan.

This Comprehensive Plan aims to provide a guide for maintaining and enhancing a balanced, economically viable and inclusive community, while preserving the natural beauty and cultural richness of Rockport.

Plan Philosophy and Guiding Principles

The philosophy and guiding principles that underpin this document emerged from citizen input, the committee's deliberations, and the best thinking that the committee could incorporate from the completed and obtained research. It is this spirit of collaboration and deliberation that provided the overall concepts to guide Rockport. They are:

1. While understanding that attempts to add value to the tax base generally imply more land development, development for the sole purpose of broadening the tax base itself cannot be the only consideration. A balance must be struck between adding value to the tax rolls and protecting the natural resources and inherent beauty of Rockport.
2. Through new tools, programs and grant opportunities, there is an emphasis on non-property tax revenue generation coupled with cost containment efforts, so that the expense of town government will be less of a burden on the Rockport tax paying community.
3. Land use zones have been simplified to provide broader options and clearer differentiation in use criteria between the types of zones, and regulations updated to support and encourage affordable housing development and expanded, safer pedestrian and bicycle pathways.
4. The town is experiencing climate-related impacts such as rising sea levels and coastal flooding, increased storm intensity, invasive pathogens and pests, and shifting weather patterns that are and will continue to affect our economic future. One needs to look no further than the damage to town-owned harbor assets and adjacent private property during the January 2024 storms. It is essential that we proactively develop solutions to these challenges through a comprehensive understanding of the threats and then incorporate mitigation and adaptation measures into community planning.
5. The 2025 Plan strives for fairness and equality when considering the wide variety of needs and requests of Rockport's diverse citizenry throughout our five neighborhoods.
6. An extensive process of collaboration was used while drafting the plan to encourage interested citizens to reach a consensus before the plan was formally presented at public hearings.
7. In reviewing the increasing demands placed on the town's resources and services, particularly over the past several years, the committee is recommending bolder solutions to mitigate the impact of future growth.

The vision and principles developed in this document incorporate the most recent census data, MDOT statistics, marine resource data and inventories of our natural resources, financial assets, housing, town-owned land and commercial and service-related entities.

The 2025 Plan is a strong vision to guide the Town of Rockport based on strategic thinking, and the balance of consideration from Rockport's community. This plan integrates the viewpoint of stakeholders, and establishes goals, key findings, and strategies for achieving an environmentally and economically sustainable future. The 2025 Plan will serve as an informative guide for land use decision-making over the next decade.

Plan Structure

The 2025 Plan is structured into an Implementation section, Future Land Use section, a Policy Guides section (with associated goals, objectives, and strategies), a Regional Coordination section, and Appendices.

Implementation

The Implementation section offers guidance on priority actions and strategies from each of the Policy Guides areas addressed in the Plan. This section illustrates current thinking on prioritization and implementation.

Future Land Use

The Future Land Use chapter upholds Rockport's small town character, while allowing for balanced sustainable development in desired areas.

- Focus' growth in desired areas
- Enhance and protect the small town character of Rockport
- Provide location and growth opportunities for local businesses

Policy Guides

The Policy Guides section identifies practical goals, objectives, and strategies for advancing the community's vision for the future. This chapter is divided into eight areas:

- Housing
- Natural and Water Resources
- Marine Resources
- Climate Change Resilience and Solutions
- Economic and Community Vitality
- Public Facilities, Service and Fiscal Capacity
- Transportation
- Recreation
- History

These sections conditions and trends have been included in the appendices. The strategies in each of these topic areas are geared to inform future actions and identify who should be primarily responsible over the next ten years.

Regional Coordination

Rockport is an integral part of the larger Midcoast area, tucked in between the two primary service centers, Rockland and Camden, and within the Rockland-Camden Labor Market Area. Rockport is a tourist, business, medical, and educational destination, and part of the scenic corridor for those exploring the Midcoast via Routes 1, 17, and 90. .

Appendices

The appendices contain data, analysis, and State policy guidance that formed the identification of goals, objectives and implementation strategies included in the plan. These sections are where the reader will find the majority of the charts, graphs, tables, and maps.

The following sections can be found in the appendices:

- Population and Demographics
- Housing
- Economy
- Natural and Water Resources
- Forest and Agricultural Resources
- Marine Resources
- Historic Resources
- Existing Land Use
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Public Facilities and Services
- Fiscal Capacity



Community Engagement

Community input through public outreach and engagement is an essential component to creating a comprehensive plan. The Town of Rockport established a committee with the purpose of updating the 2004 Comprehensive Plan and to engage the public throughout this process to ensure a desired outcome is delivered for Rockport's future. The Comprehensive Planning Committee devised numerous strategies to inform and educate residents and business owners about the process a comprehensive plan plays in land use decision-making. Further, this committee was to engage with community members to gather ideas and feedback in hopes of making a plan that represents the vision and values of the Rockport community. The following outline major milestones in the public outreach process.

S.W.O.T. Analysis

The first public engagement meeting held by the committee was a S.W.O.T. Analysis meeting, covering the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of the community. The attendees were split up into the four different categories upon arrival at the meeting, and were given around ten minutes at each station where a committee member led the discussion of the respected topic and collected as much information provided from the attendees. This meeting was well attended and great input was captured that was integrated into this document.

Notifications

The committee utilized Facebook and a local notification system called CivicReady, managed by the town, to inform and engage the community about public meetings and other engagement opportunities.

Online Survey through Social PinPoint

The Committee opted to utilize an online survey platform hosted through Social PinPoint that allowed for multiple survey types; including the traditional style survey, but also a digital Idea Wall where participants can build on each other's comments, and an interactive map where pins can be placed with comments about ideas at certain locations.

Community Meetings and Public Presentations

Throughout the planning process the Committee held a series of presentations and meetings throughout the town in various locations to inform residents and community members about the progress of the plan and to gather feedback. These meetings started with an introductory to what a comprehensive plan is and why it is important, meetings around the survey results and what these mean to the committee followed with feedback from attendance, and final presentation to the community and then the Select Board.

Implementation

This Comprehensive Plan outlines a vision for Rockport’s future, as well as establishes goals for the topic areas ranging from housing to the economy to natural resource protection. To achieve these, this plan identifies a list of recommended strategies, ranging from broad scoping to specific. Successfully implementing these strategies will require continued review of responsibilities, timelines, budgets, allocation of staff time, collaboration with other projects and opportunities, and regular review of progress.

The Topic Area chapters of this plan offers a table which has a complete list of implementation strategies that can be drawn from as time and opportunity allows. Each table also identifies the potential responsible department or committee for the strategy as well as anticipated timeline.

IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

Sustainability

- Consider all policies with a balanced sustainability mindset (environmental, economic, and social)
- Identify at risk infrastructure and strategies methods to improve Rockport’s resiliency.

Housing

- Increase opportunities to address housing shortage, and community needs.

Economic Vitality

- Encouraging entrepreneurial start-ups, new businesses, and expansion where appropriate through land use policies.
- Ensure physical and visual connectivity with the harbor;
- Promoting and expanding its creative and skilled workforce;
- Promoting and expanding the marine economy;
- Recognizing and strengthening its character as a service economy;
- Supporting renewable energy and agricultural industries;
- Supporting open space access and associated industries; and
- Continuing to support the growth and vitality of the existing businesses and organizations in our Town.

Zoning

- Maintaining and enhancing the small-town character of Rockport;
- Promoting and encouraging reasonable growth to increase the town's tax base;
- Encouraging the development of additional housing stock, particularly for work force housing;
- Promoting the expansion of open space access and associated industries, including agricultural;
- Encouraging development of the downtown village and its vibrancy as a coastal destination; and
- Continuing to support the growth and vitality of the existing businesses, organizations, and other residential neighborhoods in our town.

Transportation

- Rockport should expand its network of sidewalks and pathways, focusing on linking this infrastructure to schools and other significant town services.
- Public Transportation in Rockport is extremely limited with no routes connecting to its Downtown. Rockport should coordinate with surrounding towns (e.g. Rockland's shuttle service, DASH), to provide expanded public transportation to PenBay Medical Center and other important services.
- Rockport should take efforts to improve the availability of parking in the community, especially in the Downtown area.
- Climate change has had, and will continue to have, an impact on the town's road system. An assessment should be completed identifying those sections of roadway that are vulnerable to damage from flooding, and mitigation efforts to minimize the impact.

The comprehensive plan is intended to serve as a road map for Select Board policy making and a resource for the Town Manager, Department Heads, and Committees as they plan and prioritize their respective work. Ultimately, the success of the plan will be measured by its implementation over time.

Monitoring the plan's implementation should be an open and ongoing process. As this comprehensive plan is implemented, annual review should identify areas in need of clarification or modification.

At least every five years this comprehensive plan should be evaluated to determine the following:

- The degree to which the Future Land Use Plan strategies have been implemented;
- Percent of municipal growth-related capital investments that have been directed to growth areas;
- The location and amount of new development in relation to designated growth areas and rural areas;
- The status of future planning efforts for the focus areas identified in the Future Land Use Plan; and,
- The amount of critical natural resource, critical rural, and critical waterfront areas protected through acquisition, easements, or other measures.

A goal for this Comprehensive Plan is to be a living document, and where possible to be updated regularly to stay current with the most current laws and allow Rockport to confidently pursue grants.

Regional Coordination

Rockport is an integral part of the larger Midcoast area, tucked in between the two primary service centers, Rockland and Camden, and within the Rockland-Camden Labor Market Area. Rockport is a tourist, business, medical, and educational destination, as well as pass-through for people driving on Routes 1, 17, and 90 to other destinations.

Key Issues for Regional Coordination

Several significant topics in the region could benefit from regional coordination. The issues briefly described and potential regional partners listed is not exhaustive, and these can and will likely evolve over time.

Housing

Lack of housing is one of the most pressing issues in the Midcoast Region, as well as the State of Maine. According to State and Census Data, the significant majority of households in Rockport are unable to afford a median home price. In 2022, 83.8% of households were unable to afford a median home according to Maine State Housing.

Most of the housing stock in Rockport, and the surrounding towns, is older with much of it built before World War II.

Rockport has a significant need for new housing units, particularly for the local workforce, which are units affordable to those residents making approximately 50% to 90% of the area median income (AMI). Construction of additional housing, particularly affordable housing, would help address the lack of a workforce and provide more options for the variety of household compositions in the region.

Housing Regional Partners

- Maine Habitat for Humanity and Knox County Homeless Coalition.
- The Genesis Fund
- Local Institutions
- Neighboring Communities

Economy

Rockport's major employers are Penobscot Bay Medical, the Samoset Resort, the local School District, Rockport Marine, and Seacoast Security, employing each at least fifty and up to one thousand employees. While Rockport is not the largest contributor economically in this Labor Market Area (LMA), there is a substantial number of workers commuting to Rockport daily. While these are the largest employers in Rockport, they do not detract from the smaller businesses within town, primarily operating as a home occupation until they need to move to a more suitable location to accommodate their growing needs.

Many communities in the region share many of the same economic challenges as Rockport – attracting workforce to allow local businesses to grow, encouraging affordable housing for the workforce, helping new businesses emerge, and monitoring trends and opportunities.

- Midcoast Council of Governments (MCOG)
- Penobscot Bay Chamber of Commerce
- Economic Development Committee
- State and regional economic development organizations.

Transportation

Rockport is considered Rural by many agencies, and lacks suitable public transportation for the community. However, Rockport does have many land trusts and preserves providing miles of trails for hiking and some include the ability for mountain biking.

- Land Trusts and non-profits
- Pathways Committee

Municipal Services and Infrastructure

Regional opportunities for sharing services for infrastructure exist for Rockport and the region.

- Wastewater / Sewer – Rockport currently utilizes the Rockland and Camden treatment plants for sewer.
- Water – A regional water utility, Maine Water Company, serves several communities in the region.
- Fire and Rescue – Rockport works closely with Rockland and Camden for emergency services.
- Police – Rockport currently works with Camden through an interlocal agreement.
- Solid Waste – Rockport works with Camden, Hope, and Lincolnville for solid waste management.
- Libraries – The Rockport Public Library serves many people who do not reside in the town, and collaborates with other libraries to provide access to a wider range of books and materials.
- Broadband – Rockport is a member of the Midcoast Internet Development Corporation – an organization working to advance fast and reliable broadband to the region. Other participating communities include Camden, Rockland, Thomaston, Hope, Lincolnville, Northport, and Union.

Education

Schools. Rockport is a part of the Camden – Rockport School District, MSAD 28 which governs grades K-8, and Rockport is a part of the Five-Town Community School District (CSD) which governs high school and adult education. The Five-Town CSD consists of Appleton, Camden, Hope, Lincolnville, and Rockport. All information can be found on a combined website at <https://csd.fivetowns.net/> .

Natural Resources

Rockport shares important natural areas with neighboring communities

Chickawaukie. Chickawaukie Pond and its watershed are shared between Rockport and the City of Rockland. There may be benefits in coordinating on lake protection. The Town of Rockport has enacted regulations to limit the phosphorus entering the lake system; Rockland does not yet have similar regulations.



Future Land Use

Recommendations

Background

Future Land Use Goals

Critical Challenges

Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Future Land Use Plan

Recommendations:

The Town of Rockport should seek to achieve an appropriate balance between encouraging reasonable growth to meet the housing and business/service needs of an increased population and maintaining the beauty and characteristics of Rockport that make it a unique and desirable place to live and work.

Rockport should focus on land use development aimed at

- Maintaining and enhancing the small-town character of Rockport;
- Promoting and encouraging reasonable growth to increase the town's tax base, while considering the impacts of climate change;
- Encouraging the development of additional housing stock, particularly for work force housing;
- Promoting the expansion of open space access and supporting industries, including agricultural;
- Encouraging development of the downtown village and its vibrancy as a coastal destination; and
- Continuing to support the growth and vitality of the existing businesses, organizations, and other residential neighborhoods in our town.

Background

Residents consider Rockport to be a wonderfully livable community, with an exceptional school, proximity to the ocean, a multitude of nature preserves and land trusts, and a wealth of natural resources. Due to these attributes, Rockport will continue to face pressures of growth. While growth has positives aspects, appropriate growth management raises several important land use questions, including:

- How to preserve and enhance residential neighborhoods;
- Identification and designation of residential, commercial and industrial uses within the growth areas; and
- Identification of areas for work force housing and appropriate areas for infill development.

Thoughtful and effective land use planning can help the town address these questions, enhance quality of life, and protect community character. This section outlines Rockport's Future Land Use goals, strategies, and challenges.

Future Land Use Goals

Rockport's overall goals remain largely consistent with the 1993 and 2004 Comprehensive Plans. These goals include:

- Enhance the rural landscape and small-town character of Rockport by designating land use areas that allow residents to enjoy the natural beauty and other assets of the town, while making Rockport an ever-more desirable place to live and work.
- Promote and encourage sensible growth in appropriate zones for both residential and business purposes, while conserving open land for agriculture, forestry, recreation, scenic purposes, watershed protection, and wildlife habitat. All the while considering the impacts of climate change.
- Encourage the availability of housing inventory to keep pace with the town/region's population growth. This includes expanding the availability of work force housing for the workers needed to support the town's economy, including teachers, medical technicians, trades, restaurant, and other service workers.
- Encourage development and vibrancy of "village" life in appropriate areas of the town with the following: 1) a variety of lot sizes; 2) retail/business uses mixed with residential uses; 3) public and commercial services located in convenient walking distances; 4) interconnecting streets with sidewalks, street trees, and other traffic calming methods to promote safe pedestrian travel; and 5) areas of common green space for recreation and enjoyment.
- Minimize the increase in tax burden on residents and business owners by encouraging a reasonable level of growth and expansion of the town's tax base.
- Simplify and clarify, to the extent possible, the number of zones and the intent of each. In this way, future boards, committees, and town employees who must create, interpret, or enforce ordinances will have a clear and common understanding as to the intent and scope of the ordinances and policies with respect to the zones.

Critical Challenges

Housing Inventory

The region has not seen suitable housing stock growth over the past decade, and according to Midcoast Council of Governments the Rockland-Camden Local Market Area is short more than 800 units without taking into consideration future growth. Once factored in, the deficiency increases to well over 1,300 units. To achieve sufficient workforce housing, Rockport will need to increase density by permitting multi-family housing. This increase in density will require expansion of Rockport's sewer system and universal access to reliable high-speed broadband.

It is anticipated that increased housing will bring about additional commercial development to service residents in those housing developments. Rockport's current zoning allows for increased density, and promotes infill developments to the downtown area. Rockport now has a Planned Unit Development overlay, a Cluster Development, and a Traditional Village Overlay. For more information about these overlays, please reach out to the Planning and Development Office.

Expansion of Sewer System

As we have noted in other sections of this Comprehensive Plan, Rockport currently lacks adequate sewage capacity to support projected future development. Until this issue is resolved, Rockport's approval for developments depending on town sewer will be contingent on the sewer capacity at that time. Rockport is currently underway at finding a viable solution to this problem.

High-Speed Broadband

We have also pointed out in this Comprehensive Plan that high-speed broadband is an essential part of Rockport's future growth.

Access to high-speed broadband is no longer a "nice to have" but a requirement for not only remote work but every day social, commercial, and civic interaction. Without it, Rockport cannot attract or retain young people to move or stay here, thereby affecting Rockport's ability to expand its workforce to sustain and grow its economy.

Competing Interests

Although residents have expressed concern about increasing taxes, there is also a competing desire to maintain as much rural character and open space within Rockport as possible. Most residents realize that the town needs to strike a balance between these competing interests. While Rockport is fortunate to be part of a strong multi-town school system, that system comes with a cost. That cost is controlled by the school boards, not by the towns. In fact, in recent years, the Rockport Select Board controls less than 30% of the town's annual budget with the rest of the budget being the responsibility of the school system and county government. There are two primary ways to minimize taxes – increase revenue or decrease expenditures. With town government controlling a relatively small percentage of the total tax burden, the only effective way to minimize tax is to increase revenue by increase the tax base.

Because Rockport is unlikely to become a major industrial center (see Economy section) and such change would be deemed undesirable in any event, the expansion of the tax base is far more likely to be because of increased population and density. With Rockport's large geographical area and open space compared to its neighboring times, it makes sense for Rockport to become the housing center for those who work in surrounding towns.

Rockport has already begun the process of implementing this task by reducing the lot size requirements, increasing lot coverage requirements, and other measures to promote multi-family and higher density construction in the designated areas of the town.

Future Land Use Key Findings

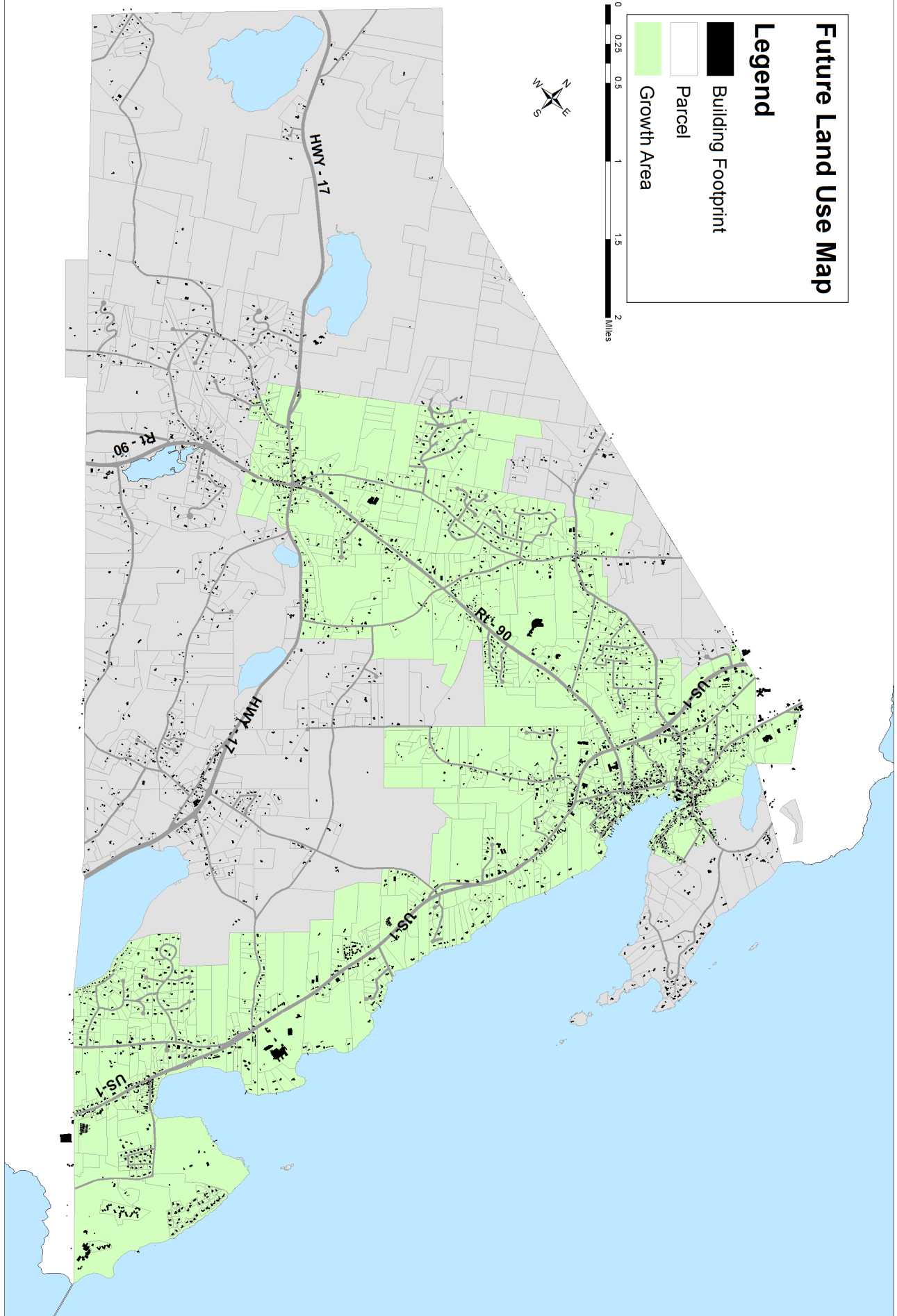
- Rockport's historic development pattern contributes to Rockport's small town feel, with a walkable downtown area, and working waterfront.
 - The majority of development is concentrated around the harbor and downtown area, which is ringed by residential neighborhoods. Further west, away from the water, the town becomes less dense, with a mixture of residential areas and scattered commercial development with substantial areas of natural habitat and open spaces.
- Rockport has several gateway transportation corridors including Route 1, Route 17, and Route 90. These corridor areas have less constant patterns of development and defined character than other parts of the town.
- Rockport's zoning includes 10 "standard" zones that address residential uses and commercial/industrial uses. There are 4 "overlay" zones further addressing residential and commercial uses, as well as resource protection.
- The effects of climate change and sea level rise may impact land use and the cost of doing business on or near the waterfront. According to projects from NOAA and the State of Maine, the entire Maine coast is vulnerable to sea level rise in the next 50 years.

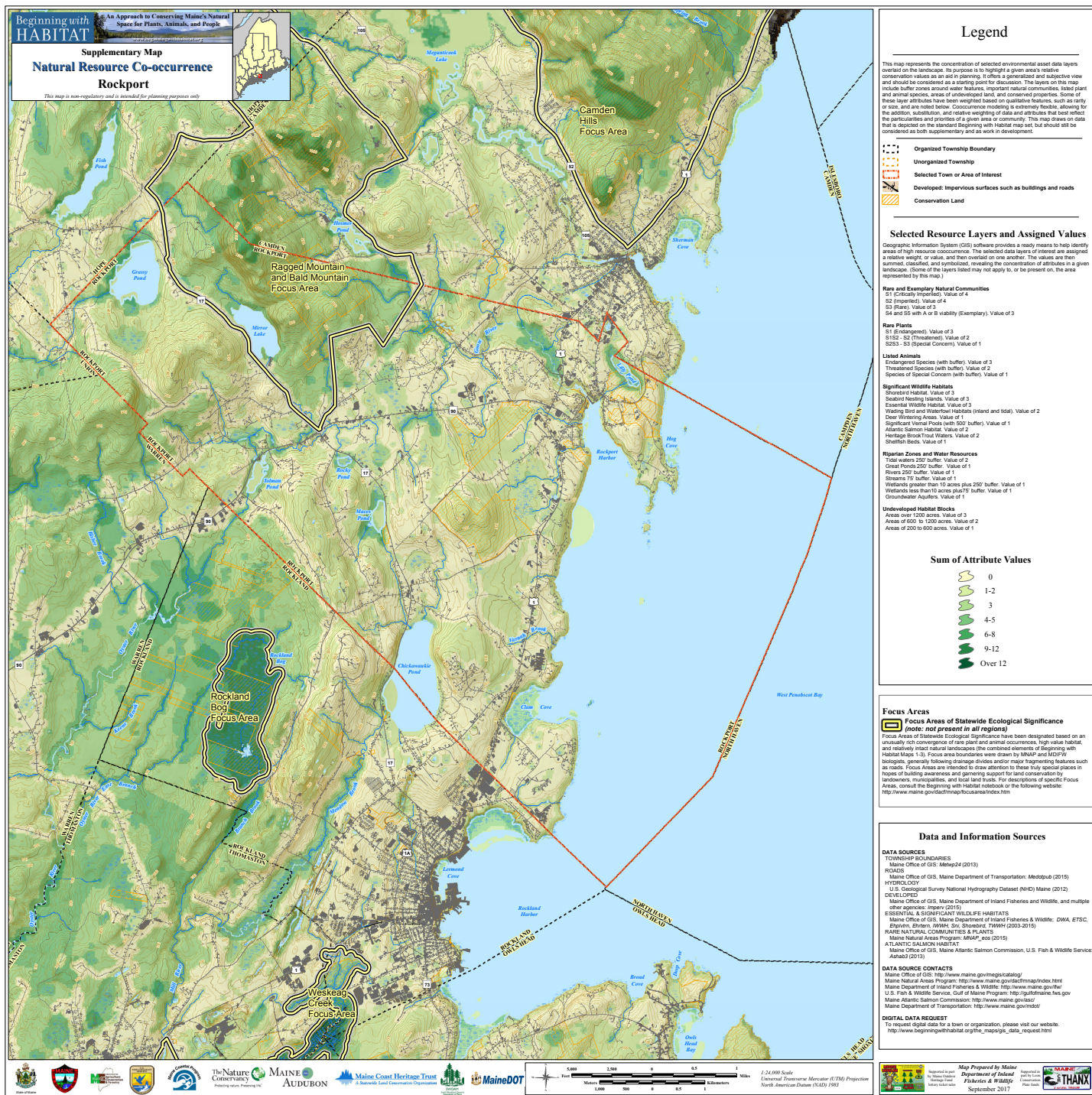
Future Land Use Map

Rockport's Future Land Use planning anticipates that residential, commercial, and mixed-use developments will be developed along Route 90 as well as other open land spaces. That aside, the future development will remain largely consistent with existing patterns. The plan also anticipates that the regulations governing development will not be static and stale but will adjust and adapt to changing needs and policy direction. Zoning boundaries and specific use, dimensional, and performance standards will be modified over time as ordinances are revised and updated. Future land use modifications will be informed by a combination of the vision, goals, objectives, and strategies of this plan.

The Future Land Use Map provides a high-level framework for making future zoning, policy, and investment decisions and provides a reference point for regulatory standards, which will help balance Rockport's quality of life, community character, and natural resources. The map shows "Growth Areas", "Rural Areas", and "Critical Natural Resources Areas".

- **Growth Areas.** It is anticipated that most residential and non-residential development over the next ten years will take place in these growth areas. Public sewer and water are either available, or expected to be available over the coming years.
- **Rural Areas.** These are areas that are predominately undeveloped, have large contiguous areas of open land and are not serviced, or likely to be serviced, by public water and/or sewer in the foreseeable future. New development may be appropriate in the rural area, provided it is small-scale, lower density development that is compatible with the rural landscape.
- **Critical Natural Resources Areas.** Future Land Use within the Growth Areas and Rural Areas will need to consider appropriate protective measures for the town's critical natural resources.





Goals and Implementation Strategies	
State Goal: To encourage orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of each community, while protecting the state's rural character, making efficient use of public services, and preventing development sprawl.	
Policies	
1	To coordinate the community's land use strategies with other local and regional land use planning efforts.
2	To support the locations, types, scales, and intensities of land uses the community desires as stated in its vision.
3	To support the level of financial commitment necessary to provide needed infrastructure in growth areas.
4	To establish efficient permitting procedures, especially in growth areas.
5	To protect critical rural and critical waterfront areas from the impacts of development.
Rockport's Goal: Focusing growth and development in appropriate areas, while ensuring the characteristics of the town and neighborhoods feel like a cohesive community.	
Objectives	
1	Make Zoning and new development balanced with the towns land use goal and consistent with community health and living standards.
2	Carefully consider zoning changes to protect the residential character of neighborhoods.
3	Ensure a timely and transparent permitting process.
4	Create neighborhoods that include varied housing options and accommodate a mixture of incomes.
5	Identify and protect important natural resources
6	Protect and enhance both physical and visual access to the water.
7	Create land use policy that supports the other goals and objectives in the Comprehensive Plan.

Implementation Strategies

Timeline: Immediate (up to 5 years); Med-Long Term (5-10 years); Ongoing 10+ years

FL-1	<p>Review and simplify Rockport's zoning districts, considering the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Clarity of ordinance language and review process. · Compatibility of allowable uses within existing residential neighborhoods · Consistency of the surrounding zoning · Areas where zoning standards are hindering the ability of the Town to accomplish its land use goals. <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Staff (Planning & Code Enforcement), Planning Board.
FL-2	<p>Review and clarify the purposes for each zone to ensure that allowed uses and standards accomplish the purpose and are aligned with current community needs.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Staff (Planning & Code Enforcement), Planning Board.
FL-3	<p>Include in the Capital Investment Plan anticipated municipal capital investments needed to support proposed land uses.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Town Manager; Department Heads.
FL-4	<p>Track new development in the community by type and location.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Staff (Planning & Code Enforcement)
FL-5	<p>Provide the code enforcement officer with the tools, training, and support necessary to enforce land use regulations, and ensure that the Code Enforcement Officer is certified in accordance with 30-A M.R.S.A. §4451.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate / Ongoing</p>	Town Manager, Department Head.
FL-6	<p>Meet with neighboring communities to coordinate land use designations and regulatory and non-regulatory strategies.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate / Ongoing</p>	Select Board (designated committee(s)); Staff (Planning Department)
FL-7	<p>Direct a minimum of 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments into designated growth areas identified in the Future Land Use Plan.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate / Ongoing</p>	Select Board, Town Manager

FL-8	Evaluate implementation of this plan every year from adoption. Timeline: Immediate / Ongoing	Select Board (designated Committee), Town Manager, Staff.
FL-9	Identify lots that are not entirely within one zone, and for each lot, evaluate whether it makes sense to change the boundaries of the relevant zones to make requirements more transparent and easier to understand, without unduly impacting neighborhood character. Timeline: Immediate	Staff (Planning & Code Enforcement)
FL-10	Considerations to be made for another Industrial Park, if possible. Timeline: Ongoing	Staff (Planning, Community & Economic Development), Economic Development Committee, Planning Board.
FL-11	Pursue opportunities to improve walkability, connectivity, and accessibility in both public and private development and re-development areas. Timeline: Ongoing	Select Board (Pathways Committee); Staff(Planning, Community & Economic Development, Public Works)
FL-12	Consider opportunities to enhance streetscape elements and landscaping to improve placemaking in underutilized spaces. Timeline: Ongoing	Select Board; Staff (Planning, Community & Economic Development); Parks and Beautification Committee
FL-13	Improve the town Gateway areas (Commercial St, Route 90, Route 17) considering such things as bikeability, walkability, green space, and signage. Timeline: Med-Long Term.	Select Board; Staff(Public Works, Planning, Community & Economic Development)

FL-14	<p>Review land use ordinances to ensure that development standards in rural parts of the town protect the desired character of the area while allowing for development of diverse housing opportunities, where appropriate.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Staff(Planning and Code Enforcement)
FL-15	<p>Encourage water-dependent, marine-related uses and compatible non-marine uses along the waterfront through appropriate regulatory standards.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Select Board; Staff(Planning & Code Enforcement)
FL-16	<p>Consider whether there should be additional stormwater standards, incentives, or fees related to new development. Consider whether any fees should be used for mitigation.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Select Board; Planning Board; Staff(Planning, Community & Economic Development, and Code Enforcement)
FL-17	<p>Research Form Based Codes and consider whether some of the regulations should be integrated into Rockport's Land Use Ordinance.</p> <p>Timeline: Med-Long Term</p>	Staff (Planning, Community & Economic Development, Code Enforcement); Planning Board
FL-18	<p>Evaluate zoning to assure that regulations for those who want to grow food are not unnecessarily onerous.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Staff (Planning, Community & Economic Development, and Code Enforcement)



Policy Guides

Housing

Natural and Water Resources

Agriculture and Forest Resources

Marine Resources

Climate Change Resilience and Solutions

Economic and Community Vitality

Public Facilities, Services and Fiscal Capacity

Transportation

Recreation, Parks and Open Space

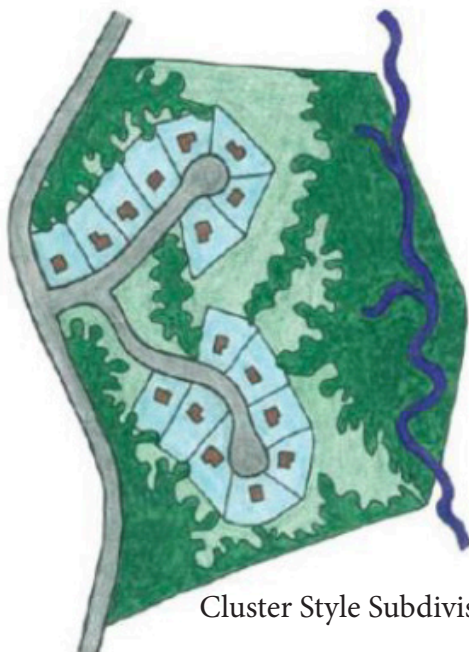
History

Housing

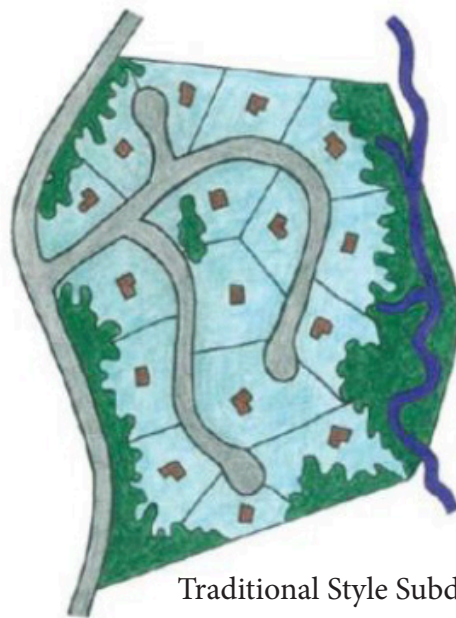
Recommendations:

The Town of Rockport should increase its housing stock to address the local housing supply crisis, as well as contribute to the regions lack of housing supply. Rockport should focus on increasing its housing supply through:

- Addressing the high sewer user rates which are burdensome for a developer to create a financially viable housing development for the workforce.
- Promote the type of workforce housing the Town is seeking.
- Promote cluster style housing developments to decrease suburban sprawl.
- Consider alternative relationships with developers to achieve the necessary housing goal the Town is interested in.



Cluster Style Subdivision



Traditional Style Subdivision

Traditional style subdivision design compared to a conservation style subdivision (cluster style)

Introduction

Housing represents the major investment made by many residents in the community. However, it cannot be thought of as just a financial investment, but also a basic need for residents to work and grow in the community. Residents of all income levels must be able to find housing units for purchase or rent that are affordable within their financial means.

Property taxes derived from new residential and commercial construction provide the basis for funding Rockport municipal services and schools. A stagnant commercial and housing growth limits the community’s ability to invest in critical infrastructure. The availability of housing allows a community to be vibrant and attract a wide demographic of families.

Rising property values and assessments, make affordable workforce housing very difficult to find in Rockport and is an ongoing concern for many residents. Rockport effectively has two housing markets: higher-priced seasonal, historic and waterfront homes; and moderately priced housing mostly located inland, sometimes further inland than the town of Rockport. The moderately priced housing tends to be occupied by those who depend on the local and regional economy for their livelihood, year round.

Three trends that may be contributing to challenges in the housing market and will be more closely examined are shift in age demographics, average household size, and increased seasonal rental market that is accumulating housing stock.

Housing Supply

The vast majority of housing units in Rockport are detached single family units as depicted in Table 1. There are few multifamily or apartment buildings in the town.

Construction Type	
1 Unit, detached	85%
Mobile home or other type	6%
2 apartments	4%
5 to 9 apartments	2%
1 Unit, attached	2%
10 or more apartments	1%
3 or 4 apartments	1%

Table 1: Housing Types in Rockport (Source: Census ACS, 2022)

Housing by Type compared to County, State, and neighboring Towns																		
	Rockport		Knox County		Maine		Rockland		Camden		Thomaston		Hope		Union		Warren	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Occupied housing units	1,421		17,780		605,338		3,371		2,368		1,276		674		1,004		1,662	
UNITS IN STRUCTURE																		
1, detached	1,210	85%	13,484	76%	409,280	68%	1,873	56%	1,663	70%	841	66%	594	88%	756	75%	1,338	81%
1, attached	22	2%	358	2%	17,797	3%	161	5%	85	4%	12	1%	13	2%	0	0%	19	1%
2 apartments	53	4%	959	5%	30,663	5%	366	11%	100	4%	243	19%	5	1%	65	6%	36	2%
3 or 4 apartments	9	1%	562	3%	33,986	6%	246	7%	184	8%	73	6%	0	0%	0	0%	14	1%
5 to 9 apartments	27	2%	314	2%	25,989	4%	169	5%	0	0%	62	5%	0	0%	40	4%	0	0%
10 or more apartments	11	1%	587	3%	36,596	6%	307	9%	203	9%	34	3%	0	0%	0	0%	22	1%
Mobile home or other type of housing	89	6%	1,516	9%	51,027	8%	249	7%	133	6%	11	1%	62	9%	143	14%	233	14%

Source: US Census, ACS, 2022

Source: US Census, ACS, 2022

Table 2: Breakdown of Housing Types

Table 2 illustrates the breakdown of housing types for Knox County and individual surrounding communities. Rockport ranks among the towns with the highest percentage of single unit detached facilities. By comparison, Rockland, Camden and Thomaston offer more multifamily units and apartment options, when compared to Rockport.

Housing continues to be in short supply in Rockport. From 2010-2020, the total number of housing units in Rockport increased by 14 units, while the town's year-round population increased by 228 during the same time period. Data collected from Census.

The data in Figure 1B below illustrates that the population has increased by approximately 9% over the ten year period.

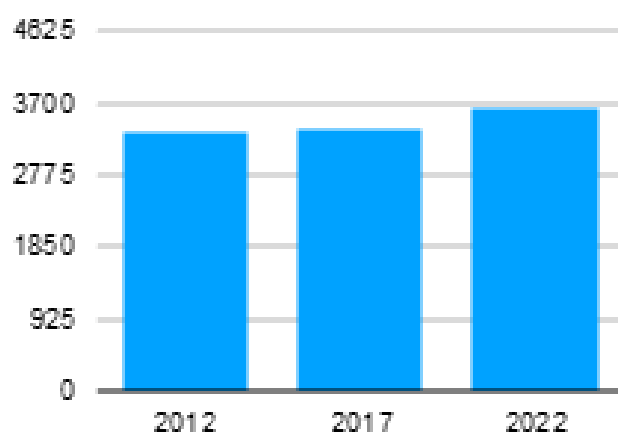


Figure 1A: Population

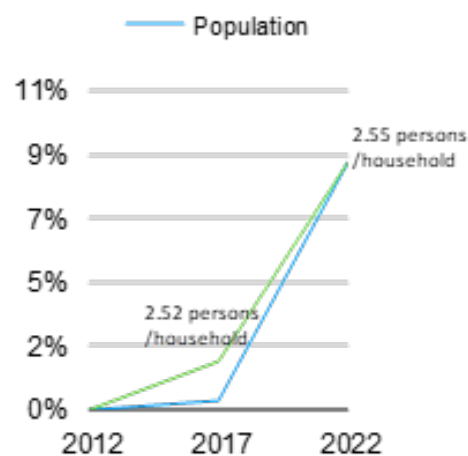


Figure 1B: Increase in Population vs. Increase in Household Size

The population of Rockport has not changed significantly over the period of 2012-2022 (Figure 1A). During this period of time the number of persons per household has remained fixed at approximately 2.5 persons/household. The age distribution has fluctuated slightly over the past ten years, but the shape of the age distribution curve remains largely unchanged, with one exception. One of the most disturbing trends is the constant decrease in the population under 17 years of age. The data is recognized in school enrollment numbers also. Families with children under 17 are not choosing to live in Rockport, possibly due to the cost of housing. In fact, from this data, one could conclude that Rockport is most attractive to two-person households, without children. During the period 2012-2022 the population increased slightly, and the age distribution of children under 17 years of age decreased.

Housing Challenges for Local Businesses

Local employers on the midcoast are having difficulty sustaining a workforce due to the lack of affordable housing units. Notably, PenBay Medical center has a significant shortfall of staff, limited to some degree by the ability for new staff to find adequate housing.

The region has not seen suitable housing stock growth over the past decade, and according to Midcoast Council of Governments the Rockland-Camden Local Market Area is short over 800 units today without taking into consideration future growth. Factoring in future growth, this number grows to a deficiency of well over 1,300 units.

Supply of homes is acknowledged as one of the major factors impacting cost of housing. Interest rates, economic conditions, cost of construction, and local demographics are the other major factors. While Rockport citizens and leaders have no direct impact on interest rates and economic conditions, it can through its own zoning ordinances encourage the development of housing supply, and as a result influence the demographics of its village.

Changes to Land Use

To increase supply, zoning ordinances will need to continue to allow multi-family housing, additional homes on existing parcels, and new individual homes on much smaller parcels.

Recent changes to the Land Use Ordinance were approved by voters of Rockport in June, 2024, resulting in smaller lot sizes as well as additional development tools such as a Planned Unit Development.

Changes to allow greater housing density will necessitate access to adequate sewage treatment. Regional efforts as well as local efforts are at play to help solve this issue. Locally, Rockport is working with the neighboring municipalities where sewage is currently sent to evaluate if additional sewage capacity is a viable option. At the same time, Rockport is considering constructing its own treatment plant to accommodate the future growth of the area. At this time the trends of the past ten years do not indicate a significant spike in housing construction in Rockport.

Regionally, Midcoast Council of Governments is working with municipalities in trying to find adequate land, and review local ordinances to propose amendments that may assist with both commercial and residential development.

Seasonal Homes.

There are a significant number of seasonal homes in Rockport. There is an increasing trend in the number of non-owner occupied homes which are being converted into short-term rentals offered during the spring/summer months, resulting in a decrease of the available inventory of housing for the year-round workforce.

Workforce housing

Housing of all types are currently needed in the Rockland-Camden Local Market Area. Rockport is particularly well-suited to accommodate additional housing, as it has the largest amount land available for development. However, much of the land available for workforce housing development does not offer easy access to public transportation, grocery stores and pharmacies, and general health care. While Rockport has significant land available, workforce housing needs to be developed within specific areas of the town that offer access to infrastructure.

Goals and Implementation Strategies		
State Goal: To encourage and promote affordable, decent housing opportunities for all Maine citizens.		
Rockport’s Goal: To encourage and promote a balance of affordable housing opportunities for Rockport citizens.		
Policies		
1	To encourage and promote adequate workforce housing to support the community’s and region’s economic development.	
2	To ensure that land use controls encourage the development of quality affordable housing, including rental housing.	
3	To encourage and support the efforts of the regional housing coalitions in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.	
Implementation Strategies Timeline: Immediate (up to 5 years); Med-Long Term (5-10 years); Ongoing 10+ years		
H-1	Maintain, enact or amend growth area land use regulations to increase density, decrease lot size, setbacks and road widths, or provide incentives such as density bonuses, to encourage the development of affordable/workforce housing. Timeline: Immediate, Ongoing	Select Board, Staff (Town Manager, Planning and Development)
H-2	Maintain, enact or amend ordinances to allow the addition of at least one accessory apartment per dwelling unit in growth areas, subject to site suitability. Timeline: Implemented	Select Board, Staff (Planning and Development)
H-3	Create or continue to support a community affordable/workforce housing committee and/or regional affordable housing coalition. Timeline: Ongoing	Select Board
H-4	Designate a location(s) in growth areas where mobile home parks are allowed pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A §4358(3)(M) and where manufactured housing is allowed pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A. §4358(2). Timeline: Implemented	Select Board

H-5	Support the efforts of local and regional housing coalitions in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs. Timeline: Ongoing	Select Board
H-6	Seek to achieve a level of at least 10% of new residential development built or placed during the next decade be affordable. Timeline: Ongoing	Select Board

Natural and Water Resources

Recommendations:

The Town of Rockport should continue its promotion of sustainability and conservation through its Natural and Water resources, while understanding this process of sustainability and conservation is never a completed process. Rockport should focus on sustaining its natural resources through:

- Staying up to date with the current scientific studies that would impact Rockport's natural resources.
- Coordinate with neighboring communities and regional and state resource agencies to protect shared critical natural resources.
- Conserve critical natural resources in the community that might not already be conserved.
- Being mindful of climate change and incorporating necessary policies to protect Natural and Water resources.

Natural Resources

The Town of Rockport is fortunate to have an abundance of natural resources that are enjoyed by residents and visitors. This chapter serves as a guide for the stewardship of those resources and will help us protect, preserve, and enhance them for current and future generations.

Goals and Implementation Strategies		
Goal: To protect Rockport’s ecosystems and natural resources, including without limitation, wetlands, wildlife, fisheries, shorelands, scenic vistas, preserved lands, and unique natural areas.		
Policies		
1	To conserve critical natural resources in the community.	
2	To coordinate with neighboring communities and regional and state resource agencies to protect shared critical natural resources.	
Implementation Strategies		
Timeline: Immediate (up to 5 years); Med-Long Term (5-10 years); Ongoing 10+ years		
N-1	Ensure the land use ordinances are consistent with applicable state law regarding critical natural resources. Timeline: Ongoing	Planning and Development Office, & attorneys
N-2	Designate critical natural resources as Critical Resource Areas in the Future Land Use Plan. Timeline: Immediate	Conservation Commission & Planning and Development Office
N-3	Through local land use ordinances, require subdivision or non-residential property developers to look for, identify, and protect any critical natural resources found on site. Timeline: Ongoing	Planning and Development Office, and Planning Board

N-4	<p>Through local land use ordinances, require Site Plan review and Subdivision Review to include consideration of pertinent BwH (Beginning with Habitat) maps and information regarding critical natural resources.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Planning and Development Office, and Planning Board
N-5	<p>Participate in interlocal and/or regional planning, management, and/or regulatory efforts around shared critical and important natural resources.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Town Manager, Planning and Development Office, Select Board
N-6	<p>Pursue public/private partnerships to protect critical and important natural resources such as through purchase of land or easements from willing sellers.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Town Manager, and Select Board
N-7	<p>Make information available to those living in or near critical or important natural resources about current use tax programs and applicable local, state, or federal regulations.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Assessing Department
N-8	<p>Establish a “Land for Rockport’s Future Fund,” for habitat protection.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Town Manager
N-9	<p>Completion of the Ecosystem Vulnerability Assessment and use the results to develop protection/preservation strategies.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Town Manager, Conservation Commission, & Planning and Development Office.
N-10	<p>Create Scenic resources inventory, and once completed, create a program to preserve those resources.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Town Manager
N-11	<p>Ensuring future development is balanced with the existing natural resources through Land Use Ordinances and local regulations.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate and Ongoing</p>	Conservation Commission, Planning and Development Office.

Water Resources

Goals and Implementation Strategies		
State Goal: To protect and maintain the quality and availability of freshwater resources for the Town of Rockport and the region, taking into account climate change predictions.		
Policies		
1	To protect current and potential drinking water sources	
2	To protect significant surface water resources from point and non-point source pollution and improve water quality where needed	
3	To minimize pollution discharges through the upgrade of existing public sewer systems and wastewater treatment facilities	
4	To cooperate with neighboring communities and regional/local advocacy groups to protect water resources.	
Implementation Strategies		
Timeline: Immediate (up to 5 years); Med-Long Term (5-10 years); Ongoing 10+ years		
W-1	Continue participation in local and statewide water quality monitoring efforts designed to identify potential impact source(s) and develop mitigation strategies. Timeline: Ongoing	Planning and Development Office; Conservation Commission
W-2	Continue to adopt and amend local land use ordinances as applicable to incorporate stormwater runoff performance standards consistent with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">o Maine Stormwater Management Law and Maine Stormwater regulations (Title 38 M.R.S.A. §420-D and 06-096 CMR 500 and 502).o Maine Department of Environmental Protection's allocations for allowable levels of phosphorus in lake/pond watersheds.o Maine Pollution Discharge Elimination System Stormwater Program Timeline: Ongoing	Planning and Development Office;

W-3	Amend local land use ordinances, as applicable, to incorporate low impact development standards as defined by Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Timeline: Ongoing	Planning and Development Office;
W-4	Where applicable, develop an stream watershed management or mitigation plan that will promote continued development or redevelopment without further stream degradation. Timeline: Implemented and ongoing	Planning and Development Office;
W-5	Develop a town-wide inventory of potable groundwater wells, and as appropriate, develop public wellhead and aquifer recharge area protection mechanisms. Timeline: Med-Long Term	Planning and Development Office; Public Works Office; Conservation Commission
W-6	In cooperation with surrounding communities, inventory efforts currently underway, and to the extent necessary, develop a water conservation plan to address the resilience of Mirror Lake and Grassy Pond to supply potable water. Timeline: Ongoing	Conservation Commission
W-7	Encourage landowners to protect water quality. Provide local contact information at the municipal office for water quality best management practices from resources such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Soil and Water Conservation District, Maine Forest Service, and/or Small Woodlot Association of Maine. Timeline: Immediate	Planning and Development Office;
W-8	Amend local land use ordinances, as applicable, to; <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Incorporate non-point and point source pollution control standards,○ Encourage natural buffers along roadsides,○ Strengthen site erosion control measures for all construction, and○ Prevent the use of herbicides, fertilizers, and other harmful chemicals. Timeline: Immediate	Planning and Development Office;



Agriculture and Forest Resources

Recommendations:

Agriculture is an important industry to the State of Maine. Rockport has a long heritage of supporting the agriculture industry which remains an active and integral part of the community today. It not only makes food available to consumers who prefer to eat locally sourced products, the industry also plays an important role in providing food for those in the community who need food assistance. Rockport should encourage agriculture through

- Supporting food sovereignty and other laws and ordinances designed to help farmers sell and residents to buy locally sourced food products;
- Encouraging land-use ordinances aimed at supporting the agricultural industry;
- Considering adoption of the State's Right to Farm Law, which establishes a presumption of agricultural activities not being a nuisance if conducted according to best management practices;
- Encouraging the purchase of local food for local schools and institutions; and
- Supporting and encouraging the establishment and expansion of farmers' markets and farmstands.

Background

While farming has been an integral part of life in Rockport since the late 1800's, few farms are left today. There is, however, still room in Rockport for more farms, working forests, and agricultural enterprises. Farms can range in size and scope from the smallest backyard raising of herbs, vegetables, and fruit to larger cash crop operations supplying local farmers markets and other retail outlets.

According to the Comprehensive Plan survey results, 37% of the respondents want to encourage agriculture and farming growth, and 12.5% of respondents want to discourage this type of growth. Most respondents understand a balance must be struck in order to maintain a strong and diverse economy.

According to the Maine Department of Agriculture, agriculture in the state has developed into a diverse industry. Maine grows 10% of all blueberries, and nearly 100% of all wild blueberries (low-bush) in the United States, farmed on over 39,000 acres across Maine. Maine ranks in the Top 10 for potato production in the United States, contributing \$540 million in sales, 6,100 jobs, over \$230 million in personal income and over \$32 million in state and local taxes. Dairy production in Maine amounts to 550 million pounds of livestock production each year from 26,000 cows through 150 dairy processors. Apples in Maine are grown on 449 farms totaling 2,668 acres with more than 100 varieties of apples. (Maine Agricultural Overview, Maine Department of Agriculture Conservation & Forestry, Nancy McBrady, September 5, 2023).

Opportunities and Challenges

Maine's Forest Products, Life Sciences, Marine/Aquaculture, Food/Agriculture, and Outdoor Recreation have been identified as having the highest potential for growth. As part of Maine's Ten-Year Economic Development Strategy, the State is investing in innovation and seeking to expand our strengths in these industries.

Opportunities for Maine agriculture include: ability to attract younger farmers; the strong support for local food and growing direct-to-consumer sales; investment in infrastructure to promote farms; an established Maine goal of consuming 30% of locally sourced foods by 2030; as well as an increasing awareness of Maine foods through branding and reputation.

The ongoing challenges for Maine include: an aging workforce; labor constraints & costs; high costs of production & inputs; lack of control over pricing for some commodities; climate change; environmental concerns such as PFAS; and the cost of land and development challenges.

Overall, with the continued emphasis by the Maine Department of Agriculture to promote locally-grown food, and the desire of the public to increase agricultural production, there are growing opportunities for farmers in Maine.

Key Findings

Farms in Rockport

- **Blueberries**

Wild blueberries are grown commercially on approximately 290 acres in West Rockport by private landowners. Fields of varying size are cultivated on Mount Pleasant, West Street Extension, along Mill Street on Dodges Ridge, and on Route 17 by Maces Pond up to Vinal Street.

Most of the blueberry growers and all of the field managers work with a blueberry Extension expert to improve cultivation practices and to enhance integrated crop management and best management practices.

Spruce Mountain Blueberries on Mount Pleasant Street is a value-added integrated wild blue-berry farm that sells fresh-pack berries and to processor.

On Beech Hill, blueberry fields are owned and managed by the Coastal Mountains Land Trust with advice from the Maine Department of Agriculture.

- **Livestock Production**

Aldermere Farm, on Russell Avenue near Lily Pond, is a working cattle farm owned and managed by the Maine Coast Heritage Trust. In 1999, the late Albert H. Chatfield, Jr., put the 136-acre farm in trust, permanently protecting it through conservation easements. . Today, the Aldermere herd is the oldest continually operated herd of Belted Galloway cattle in the United States. Numbers generally range from 75 (winter) to 100 (summer) head. Guini Ridge Farm has been selling their meat to the local community for over 20 years.

- **Vegetables & other produce**

There are several other farms throughout Rockport that sell fresh vegetables and other produce. Most participate in the local farmers markets in Town, as well as offering their produce for sale on site.

Community Gardens - The Town of Rockport made available in 2021 a designated plot of land for community gardening. A portion of the Marge Jones Community Recreation Fields on Rt. 90 was set aside for individuals or families to garden in 10 x 15 plots for a minimal annual fee.

Erickson Fields – A former dairy farm, and now part of the Maine Coastal Heritage Trust, this conserved land features a 1.8 mile trail and gardens where young people grow food for the community. Erickson Fields Preserve is home to the Teen Ag Program, where local high school students work planting, harvesting, and distributing food to local hunger relief organizations, schools, and businesses. The preserve also hosts workshops that foster an appreciation for the environment and sustainable food production, including a community garden and Kids Can Grow, a program that teaches families about backyard gardening.

Tenderwild Farm - This no-till vegetable farm is located on Gurney Street in Rockport. Their mission is to nurture a vibrant ecosystem while growing superb vegetables.

Other farms that sell fresh produce from farmstands include Millers Farm and Goose River Greenery. The Town of Rockport adopted an ordinance in 2019, known as the Local Food Sovereignty Ordinance, aimed at encouraging self-sufficiency for town residents. This ordinance, based on the Maine Food Sovereignty Act, exempts direct producer-to-consumer transactions from the State food laws (except for laws pertaining to meat or poultry products). The intent of the ordinance was to support and encourage the production and sale of local food and produce without costly and labor-intensive government oversight. This ordinance has helped local producers to survive and made local food more available and affordable to the community.

Fresh Off The Farm – As a natural organic small Maine grocery store that sells fresh produce, plants, herbs, and other products, Fresh Off The Farm describes itself as a “local organic farmers market under one roof since 1987.”

- **Nurseries & Plants**

Rockport has three nurseries and plant sellers: Plants Unlimited on Rt. 1; Guini Ridge Farm and Garden Center on Route 1; and Seasons Downeast, a nursery and composting enterprise on Meadow street. Other businesses such as the Canopy Garden Shop support gardening.

Avena Botanicals Apothecary, on Mill Street, maintains organic herb gardens, and runs its Avena Institute's teaching center. The Avena Institute includes classroom and hands-on opportunities for students to better understand issues of biodiversity, seed saving, and ecological and cultural restoration along with various programs on growing and using medicinal herbs.

Agriculture and Food Assistance

"Maine already had an elevated level of hunger compared with the rest of the nation when the pandemic hit, with one in five children food insecure. As lives were upended, the problem worsened, and across the state, food pantries saw a surge in the number of people seeking food assistance." (See MCHT at <https://www.mcht.org/story/conserved-land-helps-feed-a-community/>)

Maine is fortunate to have non-profits focused on preserving farmland and educating young and future farmers for the benefit of the local community. These non-profits, through their volunteers and donors, provide needed food assistance to those in Rockport and surrounding areas that are in need.

Maine Coastal Heritage Trust (MCHT), through MCHT's Aldermere Farm relaunched the Hamburger Helper program, resulting in 1,000 pounds of Aldermere beef to local food pantries. The Teen Ag Crew at Erickson Farms donated nearly 25,000 pounds of vegetables to food pantries in a single year.

The Maine Farmland Trust (MFT) is a growing group of over 500 farms that have participated in MFT's programming, including nearly 300 protected farms across the State of Maine. The farms span all 16 counties and all scales and types of farming, from dairy to vegetables, orchards to potatoes, flowers to blueberries, grain, livestock, hay, maple and more. Their mission is protecting Maine's finite farmland from development and creating more affordable access to land to ensure that Maine has farmland and farmers to grow food for our region now and in the future.

Soils

Topographically, Rockport has miles of fertile agricultural and forestry land. According to mapped resources, Rockport's prime farmland lies within the Goose River Watershed, along Park Meadow streets, Annis Lane, and down along the Goose River where it empties into Rockport Harbor.

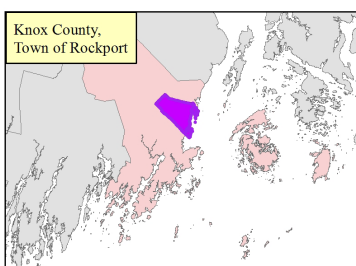
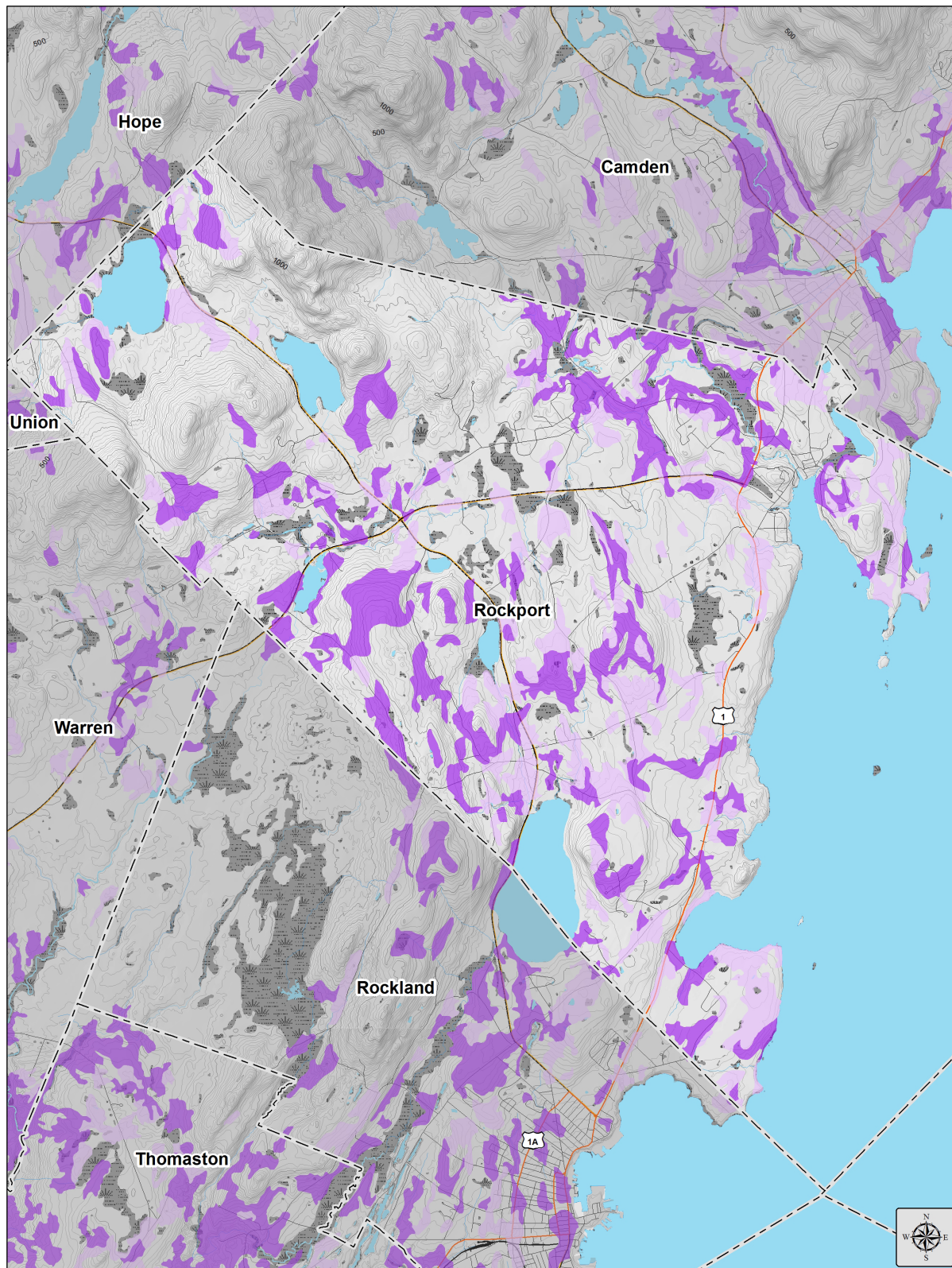
Other prime farmland areas include the fields along Cross Street, Route 90, and up toward Beech Hill Road.

In West Rockport, prime farmland exists along Mt. Pleasant Street, in the West Rockport Village area, toward West Street Extension, and near Robinson Drive.

There are other areas of prime farm soil along South Street, in Rockville, and all along Porter Street. Rockport Meadows, Spring Lane, and the area between Vinal Street and Route 17 contain prime farmland.

Route 1 from the Rockport Park Center to the intersection of Pascal Avenue contains fertile soil, as does areas of Glen Cove and the Samoset Resort.

Types of soils particular to each region of Rockport are further examined beginning on page 55 in the Topography and soils section of this comprehensive plan.



Rockport Agricultural Resources

Source Data: USDA, MEGIS, Maine DACF
 Projection: UTM, NAD83, Zone 19, Meters
 Produced by: Municipal Planning
 Assistance Program, DACF
 April 2020



0 1 2 Miles

Legend

- Municipal border
- Farmland of statewide importance
- Prime farmland
- Waterbody
- Rivers/Streams
- Wetlands

Forestry

There are no large tracts of commercially-harvested forests in Rockport. There were, however, 584 acres in designated tree growth in 2003.

The total timber harvest in Rockport fluctuated over the past three decades, with the largest harvest in 2014 when 403 acres were cut over a total of 9 harvest and the smallest harvest in 2005 when 20 acres were cut over 3 harvests.

Summary of Timber Harvest in Rockport

YEAR	Selection harvest, acres	Shelterwood harvest, acres	Clearcut harvest, acres	Total Harvest, acres	Change of land use, acres	Number of active Notifications
1991- 1992	101	0	0	101	0	4
1993	140	1	2	143	2	6
1994	65	0	0	65	0	4
1995	89	0	0	89	0	7
1996	25	0	0	25	0	4
1997	140	0	0	140	0	4
1998	179	0	31	210	31	6
1999	70	0	0	70	0	4
2000	125	0	0	75	0	8
2001	80	0	0	80	0	5
2002	32	0	0	32	4	5
2003	40	40	0	80	0	3
2004	29	25	0	54	0	3
2005	12	8	0	20	0	3
2006	0	0	0	0	0	3
2007	140	0	0	140	0	4
2008	51	40	0	91	0	4
2009	70	0	0	70	0	6
2010	80	20	0	100	3	9
2011	72	0	76	148	0	6
2012	60	20	0	80	0	3
2013	3	42	0	45	0	3
2014	123	280	0	403	5	9
2015	84	0	0	84	0	7
2016	54	72	0	126	0	5
2017	14	30	0	44	10	4
2018	62	0	0	62	0	8
Total	1940	578	109	2577	55	137
Average	72	21	4	95	2	5

Goals and Implementation Strategies		
State Goal: To safeguard the State’s agricultural and forest resources from development which threatens those resources.		
Rockport’s Goal: To support and safeguard Rockport’s agricultural and forest resources from development.		
Policies		
1	To safeguard lands identified as prime farmland or capable of supporting commercial forestry.	
2	To support farming and forestry and encourage their economic viability.	
Implementation Strategies Timeline: Immediate (up to 5 years); Med-Long Term (5-10 years); Ongoing 10+ years		
AF-1	Consult with the Maine Forest Service district forester when development any land use regulations pertaining to forest management practices as required by 12 M.R.S.A. § 8869 Timeline: Ongoing	Planning and Development Office
AF-2	Consult with Soil and Water Conservation District staff when developing any land use regulations pertaining to agricultural management practices: Timeline: Ongoing	Planning and Development Office
AF-3	Amend land use ordinances to require commercial or subdivision developments in critical rural areas, if applicable, maintain areas with prime farmland soils as open space to the greatest extent practicable. Timeline: Ongoing	Planning and Development Office

AF-4	<p>Limit non-residential development in critical rural areas (if the town designates critical rural areas) to natural resource-based businesses and services, nature tourism/outdoor recreation businesses, farmers' markets, and home occupations.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Planning and Development Office
AF-5	<p>Encourage owners of productive farm and forest land to enroll in the current use taxation programs.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Assessing Office
AF-6	<p>Permit land use activities that support productive agriculture and forestry operations, such as roadside stands, greenhouses, firewood operations, sawmills, log buying yards, and pick-your-own operations.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Planning and Development Office
AF-7	<p>Include agriculture, commercial forestry operations, and land conservation that supports them in local or regional economic development plans.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Planning and Development Office
AF-8	<p>Create a Critical Rural zone district to promote strategy AF-4.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Planning and Development Office, Assessing Office, Town Manager, Select Board

Marine Resources

Recommendations:

The Town of Rockport should continue its efforts in maintaining, developing and revitalizing the harbor for commercial uses, fishing, and recreation. To help strengthen these efforts, Rockport should focus on its Marine Resources through:

- Managing the marine environment and its related resources to preserve and improve the ecological integrity and diversity of marine communities and habitats, to expand our understanding of the productivity of the Gulf of Maine and coastal waters and to enhance the economic value of the State's renewable marine resources.
- Encourage and support cooperative state and municipal management of coastal resources; and
- Foster water-dependent land uses and balance them with other complementary land uses.



Overview

Rockport lies on the western edge of Penobscot Bay between Camden and Rockland, stretching approximately 14 miles from Aldermere Farm, around the rocky Beauchamp Point, and then westward to the shores of the Samoset Resort, which borders the Rockland Breakwater and the entrance to Rockland Harbor.

Along the coast, the landscape ranges from rocky covered shoreline to the clam flats of Glen Cove. In between, imposing bluffs and seaweed-covered boulders meet the Gulf of Maine. Steep slopes, some of them with grades of more than 25 percent, run along the coastline from the head of Rockport Harbor to the head of Oakland Park Cove, along the southern part of Clam Cove, around the point, and down to Babcock's Point. Clam Cove has a few narrow, steep strips, as does Babcock Hill, near the junction of Porter and South streets.

The Maine Department of Environmental Protection classifies the tidal waters of Rockport as SB. An SB classification means the water is suitable for recreational purposes, as well as aquaculture, shellfish harvesting, and navigation. The marine, fish, and estuarine habitats are characterized as unimpaired and discharges to SB classified waters should not adversely impact those habitats. The southwestern half of Ram Island, just off of Clam Cove, is a designated Class A Coastal Wildlife Concentration Area.

Due to bacterial pollution, all of Rockport's marine shoreline, flats, and waters have been closed to all digging of clams, quahogs, mussels, oysters, and other marine mollusks since 1962.

The coastal floodplain elevations range from lows of 17 feet to 20 feet in Clam Cove and Rockport Harbor to a high of 37 feet near Varmah Creek. Because the Rockport shoreline is exposed to the east and southeast, it is vulnerable to moderately heavy wind and wave splash.

Goals and Implementation Strategies	
State Goal: To protect the State's marine resources industry, ports and harbors from incompatible development and to promote access to the shore for commercial fishermen and the public.	
1	Promote the maintenance, development, and revitalization of the State's ports and harbors for fishing, transportation and recreation.
2	Manage the marine environment and its related resources to preserve and improve the ecological integrity and diversity of marine communities and habitats, to expand our understanding of the productivity of the Gulf of Maine and coastal waters and to enhance the economic value of the State's renewable marine resources;
3	Support shoreline management that gives preference to water-dependent uses over other uses, that promotes public access to the shoreline and that considers the cumulative effects of development on coastal resources;
4	Discourage new development in coastal areas where, because of coastal storms, flooding, landslides or sea-level rise, it is hazardous to human health and safety;
5	Encourage and support cooperative state and municipal management of coastal resources;
6	Protect and manage critical habitat and natural areas of state and national significance and maintain the scenic beauty and character of the coast even in areas where development occurs;
7	Expand opportunities for outdoor recreation and to encourage appropriate coastal tourist activities and development;
8	To restore and maintain the quality of our fresh, marine and estuarine waters to allow for the broadest possible diversity of public and private uses; and,
9	To restore and maintain coastal air quality to protect the health of citizens and visitors and to protect enjoyment of the natural beauty and maritime characteristics of the Maine coast.

Rockport’s Goal: To protect Rockport’s marine resources, industry, ports and harbor from incompatible development, to promote access to the shore for commercial fishermen and the public, and address sea level rise.		
Policies		
1	To protect, maintain and, where warranted, improve marine habitat and water quality	
2	To foster water-dependent land uses and balance them with other complementary land uses.	
3	To maintain and, where warranted, improve harbor management and facilities	
4	To protect, maintain and, where warranted, improve physical and visual public access to the community’s marine resources for all appropriate uses including fishing, recreation, and tourism.	
5	To maintain and, where warranted, improve the scenic qualities of Rockport’s coastline.	
6	To restore marine resources, such as clam flats and wildlife habitat.	
Implementation Strategies		
Timeline: Immediate (up to 5 years); Med-Long Term (5-10 years); Ongoing 10+ years		
MR-1	Identify needs for additional recreational and commercial access (which includes parking, boat launches, docking space, fish piers, and swimming access). Timeline: Immediate	Harbor Master, Planning and Development, Harbor Committee, Conservation Commission
MR-2	Encourage owners of marine businesses and industries to participate in clean marina/boatyard programs. Timeline: Immediate	Harbor Master
MR-3	Provide information about the Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program and current use taxation program to owners of waterfront land used to provide access to or support the conduct of commercial fishing activities. Timeline: Immediate	Assessor, Town Manager, Planning and Development

MR-4	Support implementation of local and regional harbor and bay management plans. Timeline: Immediate	Harbor Master, Planning and Development
MR-5	Provide sufficient funding for and staffing of the harbor master and/or harbor committee. Timeline: Immediate	Town Manager, Harbor Master
MR-6	Work with local property owners, land trusts, and others to protect major points of physical and visual access to coastal waters, especially along public ways and in public parks. Timeline: Ongoing	Town Manager, Planning and Development, Harbor Master, Parks Committee
MR-7	Explain and develop Rockport Boat Club program benefits for Rockport citizens Timeline: Immediate	Harbor Master, Rockport Boat Club
MR-8	Create a map of coastal trail systems and educate public on access. Timeline: Med-Long Term	Planning and Development, Parks Committee
MR-9	Celebrate Rockport's working waterfront and the history of the harbor Timeline: Immediate	Planning and Development, Town Manager, Legacy Rockport
MR-10	Create master plan of Harbor that addresses sea level rise in a manner that is consistent with the Maine Won't Wait Program and overall Town goals for the waterfront. Timeline: Immediate	Select Board, Town Manager, Harbor Master, Planning and Development.
MR-11	Maximize the use of existing dock facilities related to mooring allocation. Upgrade Marine Park floats and better disseminate public information about harbor ordinances. Timeline: Immediate	Harbor Master

Climate Change Resilience and Solutions

Recommendations

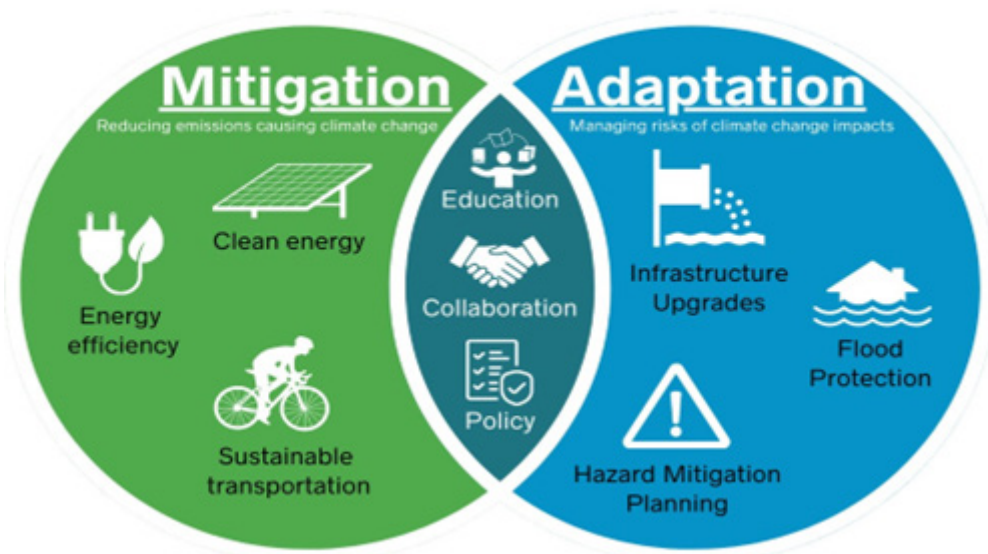
The Town of Rockport should continue its efforts at integrating state-level strategies, including those outlined in the “Maine Won’t Wait” action plan, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, modernize infrastructure, and build resilience against climate impacts through:

- Supporting local businesses, residents, and municipal operations in adopting greenhouse gas reduction measures;
- Focus on building climate resilient infrastructure and sustainable transportation.
- Promoting sustainability Land Use Policies
- Engage local businesses and the community in climate action
- Enhance community and ecosystem resilience by adopting nature-based solutions

Introduction

Rockport is already experiencing effects of climate change, including rising sea levels, increased storm intensity, invasive pathogens and pests, and shifting weather patterns. To safeguard the town’s future, it is essential to proactively address these challenges through mitigation, adaptation and increasing resilience by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, enhancing infrastructure, and integrating climate considerations into community planning. This chapter details the goals, objectives, and strategies Rockport will prioritize over the next decade, using the state’s climate action plan (Maine Won’t Wait) as a key resource, as well as emphasizing the critical role of residents and local businesses in the process.

Building Climate Resilience



Key Findings of Vulnerability Assessments

In 2021, Rockport joined the Community Resilience Partnership (CRP) and secured a grant from the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future (GOPIF) to assess local vulnerabilities. The membership was updated in 2024 and will continue to be updated every 3 years as per state guidelines. This partnership allows Rockport access to funding through the partnership as well as technical support and data resources. The Rockport Conservation Commission (RCC) was appointed as the primary liaison for the CRP, including facilitating funding opportunities and engagement with community stakeholders. Various tools, including surveys and a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis, a greenhouse gas assessment and a three-pronged vulnerability assessment (social, ecosystem and infrastructure) helped identify key areas for action.

1. Coastal Vulnerability:

At the state level, coastal towns are advised through the Maine Climate Council's Science and Technology Working Group to prepare for 1.5 feet of sea level rise by 2050 and 4 feet by 2100, relative to 2000 mean sea level. Generally, Rockport is well protected from rising sea levels due to a steep, naturally armored coastline. However, multiple low-lying locations within the Town are vulnerable to sea-level rise, storm surges/wave action, and coastal erosion. Proactive planning, including flood mitigation, updated zoning, and investment in shoreline and harbor protection is essential to protect public access, infrastructure and natural ecosystems.

2. Transportation and Emissions:

As is the case across Maine and the country, the use of gasoline and diesel-powered vehicles is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions; in Rockport, they accounted for 32% of overall emissions in 2019. Though the number of EVs registered in Rockport increased 6-fold from 2021 to 2023, further transitioning to hybrid or EVs, as well as considering the implementation of public transportation, walkability, and cycling strategies would be key components to further reducing the town's carbon footprint.

3. GHG Emissions in Residential and Municipal Buildings:

Though not the largest source of GHG emissions, municipal buildings and town-owned infrastructure in Rockport offer opportunities for emissions reductions through energy efficiency improvements, upgrades to heating and cooling systems, and the use of renewable energy sources. This also demonstrates the Town's commitment to addressing climate change, as well as serving as a demonstration for our residents and businesses who may wish to undertake similar actions.

4. Social Vulnerability and Impacts:

Documented increases in atmospheric and oceanic temperatures, as well as the increasing prevalence of extreme weather events are already having an impact on how Rockport's residents interact with the climate. Whether it is heat stress challenges due to the general lack of air-conditioning, changes to the fishery due to increasing temperatures in the Gulf of Maine, increasing tick populations or other disease-related vectors, or the cost of responding to extreme weather events (e.g., flooding or other storm damage), town residents, and particularly the elderly or those with limited financial means, are already being impacted at an increasing pace. As Rockport considers how to adapt to these current and future climate-related challenges, consideration should be given to how all residents, irrespective of demographic or economic status, may be impacted when developing and implementing solutions.

5. Ecosystem Vulnerability:

Rockport's natural ecosystems are vulnerable to changes in climate, including shifts in flora and fauna species distribution, invasive species proliferation, emerging pathogens and pests and habitat loss and fragmentation. Protecting biodiversity and implementing adaptive management strategies will be necessary to sustain the town's natural resources and natural carbon sinks and buffers.

6. Infrastructure Vulnerability

Critical infrastructure such as roads, water systems, and emergency services face increasing strain due to climate impacts, especially from flooding, storm surge and high winds. Enhancing resilience through updated design standards, green infrastructure, and regular maintenance will help sustain essential services.

7. Economic Impacts:

Engaging local businesses in climate planning is essential for the success of Rockport's climate action plan. Businesses are key economic drivers and can significantly influence emissions reduction and climate adaptation efforts. Offering support and resources to help them transition to sustainable practices will be crucial.

¹ MCC. 2024. Maine Won't Wait: A Four Year Plan for Climate Action 2024 Update. A Report by the Maine Climate Council (MCC). Augusta, Maine.

² MCC STS. 2024. Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine - 2024 Update. A Report by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (STS) of the Maine Climate Council (MCC). Augusta, Maine.

³ Rockport Conservation Commission & Louchheim, L. 2024. Rockport GHG Emissions Assessment

⁴ Dwelley, A. 2024. Rockport Social Vulnerability Assessment

Climate Solutions Goals

1. Local Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction:

Through the “Maine Won’t Wait” plan, the state is targeting key sectors such as transportation, building heating and cooling, and general energy use to achieve greenhouse gas emission reduction goals of 45% by 2030 and 80% by 2050. This includes accelerating the transition to renewable energy sources, improving energy efficiency in both the public and private sectors, and expanding the use of EVs. Similarly, and when appropriate, the town should consider policy changes to support residents and local businesses in this energy transition.

2. Resilient Infrastructure and Sustainable Transportation:

All new infrastructure projects and upgrades to existing facilities, including roads, buildings, stormwater systems and utilities must consider longer term climate-related risks as part of the planning process. For example, undersized stormwater culverts represent a financial risk for the community, as do infrastructure improvements within the harbor zone that are subject to sea level rise over the next several decades and far into the future. This also includes consideration of policies and programs that increase the use of EVs by facilitating the expansion of EV infrastructure, improving public transit, and creating walkable, bike-friendly routes. By prioritizing sustainable and climate-ready infrastructure, Rockport will contribute to its own resiliency, as well as to the statewide goals of reducing emissions and enhancing resilience to climate impacts.

3. Sustainable Land Use:

When appropriate, Rockport should promote sustainable land use policies in alignment with the “Maine Won’t Wait” action plan by encouraging development that reduces the need for car travel and supports walkability, bike use, etc. These policies should consider prioritizing the preservation of open spaces, wetlands, forests, and other critical natural areas that, in addition to supporting the goal of protecting valuable natural resources, it also provides valuable climate benefits such as reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, carbon sequestration, and flood mitigation.

4. Business and Community Involvement:

Rockport should actively engage with local businesses and the community in climate action, in line with the “Maine Won’t Wait” action plan, including providing technical support to help businesses reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase energy efficiency, and adopt renewable energy solutions. By fostering partnerships and promoting participation in programs such as energy efficiency upgrades, building EV infrastructure, and renewable energy adoption, Rockport can help residents and businesses improve resilience and contribute to achieving statewide climate goals.

5. Community and Ecosystem Resilience:

When appropriate, Rockport should consider supporting programs that enhance community and ecosystem resilience (including carbon sequestration) through preserving and restoring wetlands, forests, and floodplains to mitigate flooding, coastal erosion, and other climate-related impacts. Increasing community awareness and participation in climate adaptation efforts will contribute to both human and environmental resilience, as well as advance achieving Maine's climate adaptation goals.

Monitoring and Reporting

Monitoring and reporting progress is vital for the success of climate action efforts, as it enables ongoing evaluation and adaptation of strategies in response to new data and evolving conditions. Establishing a transparent system, such as a public-facing dashboard, ensures accountability and keeps the community informed about key climate indicators like emissions reductions and resilience projects. Additionally, consider creating a dedicated task force within the RCC to oversee progress, recommend policy adjustments and apply for Community Resilience Partnership funds strengthens the ability to stay on track toward meeting climate goals and ensures that the strategies remain effective in addressing the changing climate landscape.

Conclusion

Rockport's climate action policy guidance integrates state-level strategies, including those outlined in the Maine Won't Wait action plan, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, modernize infrastructure, and build resilience against climate impacts, with a strong emphasis on community and business engagement. By considering Maine's climate goals, Rockport can maintain a focus on clean energy, sustainable transportation, natural resource conservation, and collaborative efforts with the community. These efforts will help create a thriving, resilient town prepared for the challenges of a changing climate. Through partnerships with residents, businesses, non-profits, surrounding towns and regional stakeholders, Rockport can participate in the transition to a sustainable, low-carbon future, contributing to the broader statewide targets for emissions reduction and climate resilience.

References and Appendices:

- [Maine Won't Wait Climate Action Plan Update](#)
- [Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine](#)
- [Rockport Greenhouse Gas Emissions Assessment](#)
- [Rockport Social Vulnerability Assessment](#)
- [Rockport Ecological Vulnerability Assessment](#)
- [Rockport SWOT analysis](#)
- [Maine Geological Survey Sea Level Rise/Storm Surge Scenario Map tool](#)

Goals and Implementation Strategies		
Rockport’s Goals: Local Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Resilient Infrastructure and Sustainable Transportation Sustainable Land Use Business and Community Involvement Community and Ecosystem Resilience		
Objectives		
1	Supporting the Transition to Electric Vehicles (EVs)	
2	Modernizing Buildings and Energy Use	
3	Supporting Clean Energy Innovation and Adoption	
4	Improving Mobility and Reducing Vehicle Miles (VMT) Traveled	
5	Utilize climate-ready standards, designs, and practices to improve infrastructure	
6	Conserve Critical Natural Areas and Management Practices	
7	Incorporate Climate Resilience into Land Use Planning	
8	Engage Businesses in Climate Planning	
9	Promote climate literacy and understanding of local climate impacts.	
10	Protecting Natural and Working Lands	
11	Incorporate social equity considerations into all climate-related planning and projects.	
Implementation Strategies Timeline: Immediate (up to 5 years); Med-Long Term (5-10 years); Ongoing 10+ years		
CC-1	Explore the feasibility of purchasing or leasing Hybrid or EVs for municipal fleets and public works tools (e.g., mowers, weed whackers, etc.), supported by Efficiency Maine rebates. Timeline: Immediate	Town Manager, Department Heads

CC-2	<p>Consider public/private partnerships for installing EV chargers in public parking areas and encourage businesses to do the same.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Town Manager, Department Heads
CC-3	<p>Explore ordinances to consider EV infrastructure in new development.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Select Board, Town Manager, Department Heads.
CC-4	<p>Where not already implemented, adopt a phased plan for energy efficiency (such as installing heat pumps) and building weatherization improvements in municipal buildings and support businesses in implementing similar energy-saving measures through partnerships with Efficiency Maine. The existing solar panels and heat pumps at the Town Office and the heat pump at the Rockport Library are excellent examples already implemented.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Select Board, Town Manager, Conservation Commission
CC-5	<p>Encourage businesses and residents to install energy-efficient LEDs</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Town Manager, Department Heads, Conservation Commission
CC-6	<p>Consider the use of climate-friendly Maine forest products in municipal and commercial construction projects where appropriate.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Select Board, Town Manager, Department Heads
CC-7	<p>When appropriate, encourage the use of micro-grids and battery storage to improve energy security.</p> <p>Timeline: Med-Long Term</p>	Select Board, Town Manager, Department Heads, Conservation Commission
CC-8	<p>Conduct a baseline assessment of energy usage by municipal operations and engage local businesses in energy audits to identify emissions reduction opportunities.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Select Board, Town Manager, Department Heads, Conservation Commission

CC-9	<p>Explore the adoption of renewable energy ordinances that support solar and wind installations for both the public and private sectors.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Select Board, Town Manager, Department Heads
CC-10	<p>Consider the benefits of installing renewable energy projects on municipal properties and partner with local businesses to explore renewable energy installations on commercial properties.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Select Board, Town Manager
CC-11	<p>Implement bike and pedestrian infrastructure to increase active transportation.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Select Board, Town Manager, Department Heads
CC-12	<p>Develop policies that encourage municipal employees and local businesses to promote alternative commuting options, such as carpooling, biking, or telecommuting.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Town Manager
CC-13	<p>Promote compact development through zoning to reduce automobile use and increases in walkability and the use of bicycles.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Select Board, Town Manager, Planning and Development
CC-14	<p>Adopt a Complete Streets policy to ensure streets are safe and accessible for all users.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Select Board, Town Manager, Department Heads
CC-15	<p>Improve and protect drinking water and sewage systems to reduce physical damage and sustain function during extreme weather events.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Town Manager, Department Heads
CC-16	<p>Adopt a policy that prioritizes green infrastructure to manage stormwater.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Select Board, Town Manager

CC-17	<p>Adopt DEP's Stream Smart Crossing Guidelines as standard practice for culvert and bridge improvements. To the extent not already completed, identify vulnerable crossings.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Select Board, Town Manager
CC-18	<p>Develop and maintain a natural resource and habitat inventory that includes climate stressors and impacts.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Town Manager, Department Heads
CC-19	<p>Support sustainable farming and forest management techniques that improve soil health.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Department Heads
CC-20	<p>Encourage the use of native plants and agroforestry practices to increase carbon sequestration.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Town Manager, Department Heads
CC-21	<p>Integrate nature-based solutions to enhance the town's resilience to climate stressors.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Town Manager, Department Heads
CC-22	<p>Focus on increasing density in already developed areas, thereby helping preserve natural spaces.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Select Board, Town Manager, Planning and Development
CC-23	<p>Encourage mixed-use development to reduce transportation needs and promote walkability.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Select Board, Town Manager, Planning and Development
CC-24	<p>Initiate a town-wide energy reduction challenge for local businesses, encouraging them to lower emissions through competition and public recognition.</p> <p>Timeline: Med-Long Term</p>	Select Board, Town Manager, Conservation Commission

CC-25	<p>Encourage businesses and residents to participate in Rockport’s climate action planning, ensuring their perspectives and needs are reflected in the town’s strategies for reducing emissions and improving energy use.</p> <p>Timeline: Med-Long Term</p>	Town Manager, Conservation Commission
CC-26	<p>Partner with local business organizations to disseminate information about climate-friendly incentives, resources, and available support for upgrades.</p> <p>Timeline: Med-Long Term</p>	Town Manager, Conservation Commission
CC-27	<p>Develop educational programs and workshops on climate resilience and energy efficiency.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Select Board, Town Manager, Conservation Commission
CC-28	<p>Partner with local schools and organizations to create youth-focused climate action programs.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Select Board, Town Manager, Conservation Commission
CC-29	<p>Use town events, social media, and newsletters to keep the community informed about climate initiatives and progress.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Select Board, Town Manager
CC-30	<p>Engage community groups representing low-income, elderly, and other vulnerable populations to understand their needs and tailor climate resilience communication accordingly.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Select Board, Town Manager, Department Heads, Conservation Commission
CC-31	<p>Prioritize high biodiversity areas, wildlife corridors and floodplains for conservation and restoration.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Select Board, Town Manager, Department Heads, Conservation Commission

CC-21	<p>When appropriate, prioritize nature-based solutions for shoreline protection to manage coastal erosion.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Select Board, Town Manager, Department Heads
CC-32	<p>Consider enrolling in FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS) to reduce flood insurance premiums for residents and businesses. .</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Select Board, Town Manager, Department Heads
CC-33	<p>Create a watershed plan to identify flooding and water quality priorities and adaptation options.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Select Board, Town Manager, Department Heads, Conservation Commission
CC-34	<p>Encourage participation from identified socially vulnerable communities in the planning process.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Select Board, Town Manager, Department Heads Conservation Commission
CC-35	<p>As appropriate, consider assistance and incentives for low-income households to adopt energy efficiency upgrades and renewable energy technologies.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Select Board, Town Manager, Department Heads, Conservation Commission
CC-36	<p>Work with community-based organizations that work with socially vulnerable populations to develop solutions that integrate local knowledge and priorities into climate strategies.</p> <p>Timeline: Med-Long Term</p>	Select Board, Town Manager, Department Heads, Conservation Commission
CC-37	<p>Identify public health threats exacerbated by climate change, such as heat waves, and where appropriate, develop and/or improve the emergency response plan</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Select Board, Town Manager, Department Heads

Economy and Community Vitality

Recommendations:

The Town of Rockport should increase its tax base, though it is unlikely to do so through an influx of manufacturing or industrial businesses. Located far from major highways, airports, or rail systems, Rockport's strengths, including its geographical beauty and rural character, make it unsuitable for business enterprises that are more appropriate for urban centers. Rockport should focus on developing its economy through

- Encouraging entrepreneurial start-ups, new businesses, and expansion where appropriate through land use policies;
- Promoting and expanding its creative and skilled workforce;
- Promoting and expanding the marine economy;
- Recognizing and strengthening its character as a service economy;
- Supporting renewable energy and agricultural industries;
- Supporting open space access and supporting industries; and
- Continuing to support the growth and vitality of the existing businesses and organizations in our Town.

Essential to achieving this growth is expansion of Rockport's inventory of attainable workforce housing, universal broadband access to all residences and businesses, and strategic expansion of its sewer infrastructure and commitment to climate resiliency.

BACKGROUND

Like numerous coastal communities in Maine, Rockport's early economic landscape was predominantly shaped by enterprises centered around our harbor, such as commercial fishing and lime smelting. Today the harbor comprises primarily of the following:

- Rockport Marine, founded in 1962, the company employs a team of craftsmen who design, build, and restore some of the world's most renowned wooden yachts;
- 21 active lobster fishing boats;
- More than 100 recreational boats;
- Marine Park; and
- Rockport Boat Club, founded in 1948.

Although the harbor and village remain a pivotal source of revenue for the town, contributing through tourism (approximately 10,000 guests each year) and commercial activities, we have witnessed the emergence of other significant businesses and institutions, including

- Penobscot Bay Medical Center, Rockport's largest employer with over 1,000 employees;
- School District with over 200 employees;
- Samoset Resort with approximately 350 employees in the summer and 100 employees year-round.

To provide some context, 99 percent of employers in Knox County have fewer than 100 employees, 92 percent have fewer than ten employees, and 60 percent have fewer than five employees.

VISION

Rockport's overall goals have been largely consistent since the 1971 Town Plan. (See Town of Rockport, Maine Comprehensive Plan 2004 at page 8.) These goals include:

- Preservation of the aesthetics of Rockport, which includes its rural character, beauty of the hills, beauty of the harbor, and intimacy of its neighborhoods;
- Mitigation of the rate of increase in costs associated with town government;
- Better access to coastal waterfront and rural areas of Rockport;
- Protection for Rockport's natural resources, including wildlife habitat and water quality;
- Encouragement for Rockport's enviable mix of businesses and non-profit activities, including such diverse enterprises as healthcare, media communications, art studios and galleries, education, boat building, fishing, innkeeping, furniture making, and landscaping;
- Better transportation planning to mitigate the impact of increased traffic and the threat to public safety caused by congested highways;
- A welcoming town government that truly serves and encourages the participation of its citizens; and
- Promotion of community vitality and health, which includes providing business opportunities, recreational opportunities, and affordable housing, so that Rockport can remain an attractive place for people of all income levels and generations.

The Town of Rockport's Economic Development Committee is currently undertaking the creation of an Economic Development Strategic Plan to help guide Rockport's future growth. Once finished, this plan can be found on the Economic Development Committee's page on the Town's website.

The regional economic development plan, created by the Midcoast Council of Governments, is known as the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Rockport has multiple projects identified in that document that will benefit the economy in the region. To view this document, please visit Midcoast Council of Government's website.

CRITICAL CHALLENGES

The enduring economic well-being of Rockport presents a spectrum of challenges and opportunities. Preserving the existing businesses, which serve as the cornerstone of our economy, is paramount. Simultaneously, creating an environment conducive to the growth of new enterprises is vital, all while considering the evolving dynamics of climate and environmental conditions. This comprehensive strategy not only strengthens our tax base but also cultivates a vibrant and thriving community.

Our challenges lie in four major areas: managing growth and affordability by increasing the tax base; providing adequate housing options to support and expand the workforce; while at the same time recognizing that neither will occur without reliable high-speed broadband and a robust multi-family housing infrastructure which is dependent on sewer.

Property Taxes

In September 2019, some residents informed the Town's Select Board that they can no longer afford to live in homes that have been in their families for generations, unless they rent out portions of those homes. Property taxes, the majority of which are for the school district, have increased while property values have gone up and housing inventory has decreased.

Rockport's median income has grown two-fold between 2010 and 2020. The Town's population has grown by 14 percentage, significantly increasing the number of children enrolled in the local school district, particularly during the COVID pandemic. Property taxes are 26.5 percent higher in 2023 than they were in 2012, with approximately 65% of annual tax attributable to the school district.

Only two options exist to lower or hold the line on taxes: decrease expenses or increase revenue. Because most taxes are set by school boards and a small portion by county commissioners, the Rockport Select Board typically has control over approximately 20% of Rockport's property tax bill. Increasing revenue is the only viable option to positively impact the tax burden.

Workforce Housing

Most businesses in our town rely heavily on human labor. This reliance underscores the crucial need for a strong and reliable workforce. Our challenge lies in providing adequate housing options to support and expand this workforce, all the while maintaining robust support for our thriving tourist economy.

While Rockport's population has increased, new housing stock has not kept up with demand and existing housing stock has become unaffordable for the average worker.

It has been observed that even before Covid-19, there was a demographic trend toward people leaving urban environments in favor of rural ones for a variety of reasons, including: lifestyle choices, education, security (e.g. lower crime and fewer natural disasters), and advances in technology making these changes attainable (add footnote about Collin Woodward). The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated the drive toward in-migration to Maine due to the low numbers of Covid-19 cases and accelerated adoption of remote work. This increased rate of new residents drove housing prices up and reduced housing inventory.

Employers have expressed difficulty in securing sufficient workforce housing to attract and retain workers (cite to the workshop before the Select Board last fall). Multi-unit development of enough size to impact the housing shortage will require expansion of Rockport's sewer infrastructure and universal access to reliable high-speed broadband.

Sewer

Rockport currently lacks adequate sewage capacity to support projected future development. Until this issue is resolved, Rockport cannot approve commercial/industrial developments dependent on town sewer.

For decades, Rockport has had in place user agreements with the abutting municipalities of Camden and Rockland. Each agreement with the respective municipalities has a fee total based upon the Gallons Per Day of sewage sent to their plants; meaning the larger the quantity sent the higher the cost to Rockport users. Currently, Rockport users are paying about two to three times what users in Rockland and Camden pay. This is a large burden on existing businesses and households currently served by sewer, and a hurdle for potential new businesses and developers. Rockport is considering alternatives to ameliorate this cost, including authorization and funding for its own sewer treatment plant.

Broadband

Like sewer, high-speed broadband is an essential part of Rockport's future growth. Access to high-speed broadband is no longer a "nice to have" but a requirement for not only remote work but everyday social, commercial, and civic interaction. Without it, Rockport cannot attract or retain young people to move or stay here, thereby affecting Rockport's ability to expand its workforce to sustain and grow its economy.

Like other rural areas, Rockport has been captive to for-profit telecommunications corporations that have chosen to invest in infrastructure only when forced to and then only in the dense and therefore most profitable areas. As a result, approximately one-third of Rockport residences have access to fiber optic broadband while two-thirds of Rockport do not.

Rural access to broadband in the U.S. lags other developed nations and Maine is among the worst states in the nation in terms of this metric. The major hurdle in securing high-speed broadband is funding at the Federal, State, County, and local level. Rockport must continue to be active and determined in its goal of providing all residents and businesses with access to high-speed broadband. This will require financial commitment, creative solutions, and continued resolve.

Workforce challenge, local and throughout the state

The existing workforce in Maine is aging, population growth has been slow, and unemployment is at historic lows. The availability of professional workers, skilled technical workers, and entry-level workers are an issue that must be addressed. Maine's demography and labor force shortage is stalling potential developments, potential jobs, and economic growth. (Source: Making Maine Work: Critical Investments for the Maine Economy)

"80 percent of job vacancies occurred in five sectors: healthcare and social assistance, retail trade, administrative and waste services, accommodation and food services, and construction. Sectors with above-average demand for workers (measured as vacancies relative to employment in the sector) were administrative and waste services, construction, healthcare and social assistance and transportation, warehousing and utilities." These industry sectors are very important to Rockport's economy. (Source: State of Maine 201602020 Unified Plan)

Co-working space / Remote Workforce

While Rockport currently does not have a co-working space, there has been an influx of new citizens who are here working remotely. More people are working from home than in the past, creating a need for reliable internet and a place to work that isn't primarily a residence. Co-working spaces have been proven to "...build community and connection for early-stage entrepreneurs, free-lancers, and remote workers. These spaces foster dreaming, sharing, iteration, and risk-taking through their energy, density of people, and community-building activities." Maine Office of Business Development.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Rockport's Harbor Village is the historical and current center of the community. Home to the new Rockport Public Library, the Marine Park (and small "pocket" parks), the new Rockport Harbor Hotel, Rockport Opera House, Rockport Marine, an art gallery, several restaurants, and eateries (including six new ones), the Village has been the focus of investment in recent years. Care has been taken to not only preserve the historical nature of the downtown but to enhance local enjoyment and sense of community.
2. Tourism, consistent with most of Maine, is an important part of the local economy. Rockport has seen a growth in hotels and short-term rentals in recent years. While residents want the freedom to rent their properties and earn supplemental income, particularly those who need to in order to make ends meet, the growth of the short-term rental market has led to decreased availability for full-time or seasonal rentals to support the workforce housing shortage.
3. Home occupation and remote work play an ever-increasing role in Rockport's economy. Although home occupations and businesses have long been a feature of the Rockport lifestyle and economy, this trend has accelerated and expanded with the demographic move toward rural areas and the result of the Covid-19 pandemic. People are seeking to "work where they live" over the previous mindset of "live where you work."
4. With respect to opportunities for industrial or commercial development, Rockport currently has suitable zoning, and ample land to accommodate industrial and commercial development. However, distance to major highways, airports and rail systems make it impractical to expect that Rockport will ever develop into a manufacturing or industrial center. Additionally, Rockport and surrounding communities lack the workforce size to support such enterprises. Importantly, such development is unlikely to attract local support or be consistent with Rockport's character.

Rockport does, however, have the land mass and surface infrastructure to expand appropriate types of commercial development without negatively impacting its character if growth is focused in designated areas, for example, Rt. 90. This area is ideal for commercial development and much needed workforce housing, but development is dependent on access to both sewer and reliable high-speed broadband. Rockport has the necessary access to very expensive three-phase power to support development.

5. Local or regional economic development incentives exist in Rockport in the form of TIF districts. These districts will afford a sewer expansion to existing growth areas to accommodate proposed developments. The TIF districts also support pedestrian walkways/multi-use pathways to be expanded to these developments.

Rockport currently is pursuing increased density in certain zones associated with Growth Areas. This will be tied to the Land Use Ordinance through Planned Unit Developments and increasing opportunities through Cluster Development.

6. The Town capitalizes on its unique community assets through use of the Marine Park for a variety of civic and music events to draw people into town to buy from local businesses. These events include the Rockport Donut Festival, the Bay Chamber Music Summer Series, New Year's Eve fireworks, dances and concerts at the Opera House, sailing lessons for adults and children at the Rockport Boat Club, and lectures at the Public Library, to name a few. These events bring thousands of people downtown each year.

The Town is currently in partnership with a local family foundation to re-develop the former Rockport Elementary School site to become a Public Park. This 7-acre site, owned by the Town and centrally located near the downtown and Routes 1 and 90, has been used on an ad hoc basis for recreational, commercial and health related activities.

7. Rockport is fortunate to be comprised of neighborhoods in addition to Rockport Village, each of which has a unique historical significance. These include: West Rockport, Simonton Corner, Rockville, and Glen Cove. Consideration should be given to the development of these areas and ways in which the Town can highlight both their history and unique role in the future.

Goals and Implementation Strategies	
Maine State Goal: Promote an economic climate that increases job opportunities and overall economic well-being.	
Rockport's Goal: To promote a balanced economic climate that provides secure job opportunities.	
Policies	
1	To support economic development through growing Rockport's entrepreneurial, creative and skilled workforce.
2	To support economic development by promoting Rockport as a service economy to surrounding towns, supporting residential and associated commercial activities for workers employed in the denser communities of Camden and Rockland.
3	To make a financial commitment, if necessary, to support the desired economic development, including needed public improvements in broadband, sewer and transportation.
4	To coordinate with regional development corporations and entities in surrounding towns as necessary to support the desired economic development.

Implementation Strategies		
Timeline: Immediate (up to 5 years); Med-Long Term (5-10 years); Ongoing 10+ years		
E-1	Assign responsibility and provide financial support for economic development activities to the Planning, Community and Economic Development Office. Timeline: Immediate	Town Manager, Planning and Development, Select Board
E-2	Enact or amend local ordinances to reflect the desired scale, design, intensity, and location of future economic development. Timeline: Immediate	Planning and Development, Town Manager, Planning Board, Economic Development Committee, Select Board

E-3	<p>If public investments are foreseen to support economic development, identify the mechanisms to be considered to finance them (local tax dollars, creating a tax increment financing district, a Community Development Block Grant, or other grants, bonding, impact fees, etc.)</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Planning and Development, Town Manager, Select Board
E-4	<p>Create an Economic Development Strategic Plan to guide Rockport's decision making on diversifying its local economy.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Economic Development Committee, Planning and Development
E-5	<p>Enhance Rockport's outdoor economy by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding areas for recreational use and activity • Connect recreational areas and natural areas • Enhancing / connecting trail systems within the region, especial within the Labor Market Area. <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Staff, Pathway Committee, Parks Committee
E-6	<p>Leverage state, regional, and local marketing efforts to showcase Rockport's strengths</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Planning and Development, Town Manager
E-7	<p>Foster opportunities to grow local businesses and attract new ones through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location assistance • Connecting businesses with compatible interests • Introductions to state and federal assistance program • Micro-loan programs <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Department Heads

E-8	<p>Seek grants to assist with economic development opportunities</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing.</p>	Planning and Development
E-9	<p>Leverage Tax Increment Financing to stimulate desirable development and assist with related municipal infrastructure needs.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Select Board, Town Manager, Department Heads
E-10	<p>Advance opportunities to address housing needs and increase the availability of workforce housing.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Select Board, Planning Board, Economic Development Committee, Planning and Development.
E-11	<p>Seek grants and financial assistance to deliver services and improve infrastructure.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Department Heads
E-12	<p>Leverage tools such as the Tax Increment Finance program, micro loans, or low interest loans to capture more of the benefits of increase assessed value, and support business growth and entrepreneurship.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Town Manager, Finance, Planning and Development
E-13	<p>Identify infrastructure and service needs that will facilitate development to increase the tax base, and strategically invest in those infrastructure and services.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Town Manager, Finance, Planning and Development, Public Works, Economic Development Committee

	COMMUNITY VITALITY SECTION	
C-1	<p>Welcome new workers, residents, and investors and provide opportunities for existing community members to grow and thrive.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Select Board, Town manager, (Department Heads)
C-2	<p>Maximize the experience of our elders for projects and policy making, mentoring, and service.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Select Board
C-3	<p>Protect and enhance Rockport's quality of place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance connectivity • Explore opportunities to use public spaces, sidewalks, streets for commerce, outdoor dining, community events, and other activities. <p>Timeline: Immediate, Ongoing</p>	Select Board, Staff (Town Manager, Planning, Community & Economic Development, Public Works, Harbor Master)
C-4	<p>Improve walkability, connectivity, and accessibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Complete Streets wherever feasible • Maximize sidewalk width where appropriate • Add and connect sidewalks wherever feasible • Implement traffic calming measures where needed • Develop and enhance local and regional trail system <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Select Board; Pathways Committee, Parks Committee; Staff (Planning, Community & Economic Development, Public Works)

C-5	<p>Discover and implement ways to support the production and sale of goods and products from local farmers and makers through the year.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Staff (Planning, Community & Economic Development)
C-6	<p>Encourage entrepreneurship and allow shared space/co-working space infrastructure in all appropriate zones.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Select Board, Planning Board, Staff(Planning & Development), Economic Development Committee.
C-7	<p>Encourage technology and infrastructure to support a modern workforce and education system that includes remote workforce, entrepreneurs, and remote learning to improve connectivity for the entire community.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Staff (Department Heads), Economic Development Committee, Midcoast Internet Development Corporation.
C-8	<p>Consider opportunities to improve placemaking in underutilized spaces.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Select Board; Staff (Planning and Development, Public Works); Economic Development Committee, Parks Committee
C-9	<p>Improve the Towns Gateway areas.</p> <p>US-1 & Rockland line US-1 & Camden line Rt 90 & Rockland line Hwy 17 & Hope line</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate, Ongoing</p>	Select Board; Staff (Town Manager, Planning, Community & Economic Development, Public Works), Planning Board, Economic Development Committee

C-10	<p>Implement wayfinding throughout Rockport.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of sign standards • Use of gateway signage • Consideration of business and community needs <p>Timeline: Immediate, Ongoing</p>	Staff (Planning, Community & Economic Development)
C-11	<p>When developing new master plans, ensure a clear and executable plan is created.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Staff (Department Heads)

Public Facilities, Services and Fiscal Capacity

Public Facilities

Municipal Governance
Fire Department
Police Department
Public Works Department
Midcoast Solid Waste Corporation
Library
Wastewater Department
Harbor Department
Regional or contracted services

One of the town's central functions is to provide the infrastructure and services that people depend on to live, work, recreate and thrive in Rockport. Public facilities and services improve our quality of life, enhance our neighborhoods, and enable a thriving business environment. Public investments in our infrastructure stimulate investment in private properties and businesses, contributing to the economic vitality of our town. Support for public safety, public works, and emergency preparedness help prepare for changes to the environment, protect public health, and plan for resiliency.

The Town of Rockport is committed to providing high-quality infrastructure and services to the community. It will continue to make investments that enhance the physical, fiscal, social and environmental quality of our community.

Recommendations:

The Town of Rockport should efficiently meet public facility and service needs in a manner that promotes and supports growth and development in identified growth areas. Rockport should focus these efforts through:

- Efficient Capital Improvement Planning
- Strategic Planning to organize utility expansion projects
- Enhance TIF district use throughout the town to improve and expand infrastructure.

Key Findings

- **Municipal personnel and offices take place in multiple buildings**, and consolidation may provide long term savings. At present, the town currently operates out of seven buildings. These include the Municipal Governance, Opera House for public meetings, Public Safety Buildings (two), Library, Public Works, Harbor Master Building. While not all can be combined into one building for logistical reasons, the others can create inefficiencies and additional costs associated with building maintenance and repair. This creates an opportunity to add value or efficiency by co-locating some of these departments and services.
- **Rockport's lack of sewage capacity would benefit from a master plan** to help address the future needs the community will have. Rockport has a lot of undeveloped land, and feels the pressure from the neighboring municipalities to the north and south for growth opportunities.
- **Rockport's stormwater is managed and adequately maintained by the Public Works Department.** Future developments receive sign off from Public Works before approval to ensure adequate upgrades are achieved to ensure proper mitigation is handled.
- **Septic systems are owned by the majority of residents**, with a few businesses maintaining their own. Disposal of septic tank waste is handled through a third-party company. Issues with septic systems is catching them when they fail and ensuring an adequate method for either tying into the public sewer or replacement of their system.
- **Public water is owned and operated by Maine Water Company.** There is an attempt to match up sewer line extensions with water line extensions planned in the future. The majority of land around Mirror Lake and Grassy Pond, where the drinking water comes from, is owned by Maine Water Company or classified as a preserve. Further, this area is protected by overlay districts heavily limiting development that could pollute the water sources.
- **Public Schools are not anticipated to expand much**, outside of maintenance related upgrades. Currently, the school districts elementary school is under enrolled, leaving room for incoming growth.
- **Rockport Public Library is an important community resource.** The library provides a wide range of programming and educational events. It also acts as a community center providing afterschool resources, meeting space, internet access, and a co-working environment for those that need it.
- **The Rockport Fire Department's incoming growth.** Rockport is currently expanding its Fire Fighters services to also include Emergency Management Services (EMS). The emergency response system is currently adequate and improved when appropriate.
- **Public Works is up against many miles of roads to pave over the next few years.** Balancing the high costs to pave without substantially increasing the taxes has been a challenge.
- **Midcoast Solid Waste**, the solid waste management system is currently meeting the needs of the community with recycling opportunities.
- **Telecommunications and energy.** Roughly 1/3 of Rockport, including all municipal buildings, is served by Fiber Optics. Rockport also has three phase power intermittently throughout town. Currently, fiber is being considered for further expansion and growth.

- **Health care facilities.** Penobscot Bay Medical Center is located within Rockport, and is able to expand its services when needed due to the zoning over this surrounding area. Currently, their services are understaffed due to lack of housing in the area.
- **Harbor and Climate Change.** The Harbor Master building and Marine Park are up against the time clock with sea level rise for a substantial portion of the Harbor and Marine Park are constantly damaged during high tides and rainstorm events, of which have been more frequent over the past couple of years. Consideration needs to be placed into the future of this area.
- **Rockport currently shares services** through it's police department and assessing department with the neighboring town of Camden, and will also share EMS responsibilities with Camden and Rockland.
- **Street Tree Program.** Rockport does not have a robust Street Tree Program at present, and is in need of revitalizing the program.

Fiscal Capacities & Capital Investment Plan

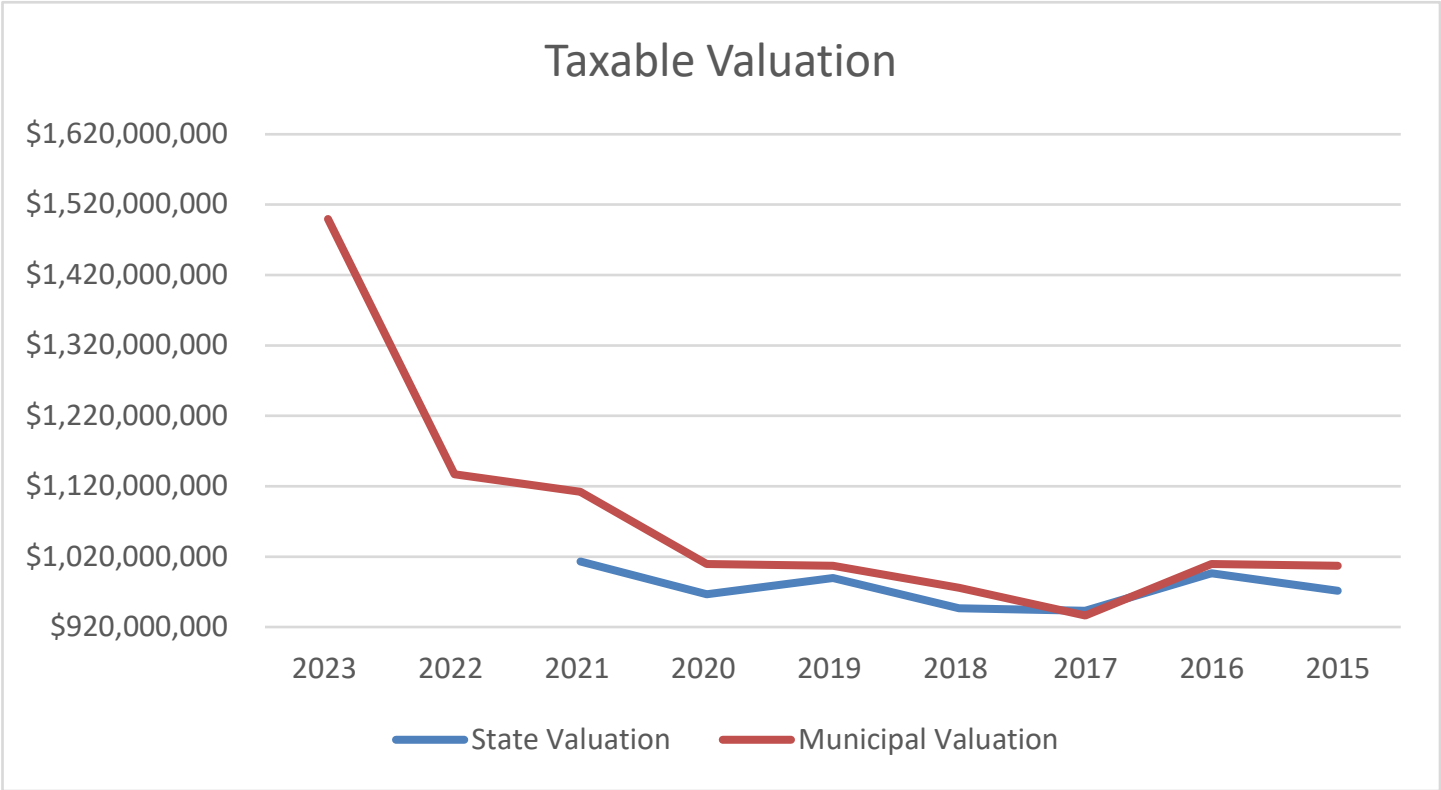
Rockport funds its municipal infrastructure and services primarily by property taxes, which apply to land and buildings, and personal property taxes on machinery and equipment. Rockport’s Assessor’s office maintains the property records for more than 6,000 individual properties in town.

Annually, the town sets its mill rate. The word “mil” is Latin for 1,000 and the mill rate is the amount of tax per 1,000 dollars of valuation. A mill rate of one would mean that a property owner would pay one dollar for every thousand dollars of valuation. If the mil rate is 15 dollars and the property is valued at \$50,000, the owner would pay \$750 (15×50) in taxes for that year.

Mil rates are computed by first adding the municipal, school and county budgets, then subtracting all the non-property tax revenues, such as excise taxes, school subsidy, and state road assistance. The remainder is the amount to be raised through property taxes. The mil rate is then calculated by dividing the amount to be raised through the property tax by the town’s total valuation.

2023 Municipal Valuation

In Fiscal year 2023-2024, Rockport had a total taxable valuation of \$1,499,560,574, the office state valuation lags by two (2) calendar years, which is represented by the chart below, however, generally the town valuation is very similar to the office state valuation.



Source for State Valuation; Finance Department, Town of Rockport
Source for Municipal Valuation: Town of Rockport Tax Assessor’s Office.

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

For the last several years Town Officials have incorporated into the annual Town Budget a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that identified capital infrastructure improvements or replacements, major infrastructure repairs and asset procurements.

The CIP shall include both capital infrastructure and capital asset management.

Capital Asset versus Capital Infrastructure:

Capital Asset: has a value of more than \$5,000 individually, or collectively, with an estimated useful life of more than one year. Capital assets may include, but are not limited to: computer equipment, office furniture, fleet vehicles, public works vehicles and machinery, and emergency response vehicles, to name a few.

Capital Infrastructure: is any expenditure for physical improvements, including costs for: acquisition of existing buildings, land or interests in land; construction of new buildings or other structures, including additions and major alterations or repairs; construction of roads, highways, sidewalks, parking lots, or utilities; acquisition of fixed equipment; landscaping; and similar expenditures that cost more than \$50,000 with a useful life of five (5) years or more. Any change, alteration, rearrangement or addition to existing facilities, new construction, acquisition or improvements to sites, parking lots, buildings or service systems.

Purpose of the Capital Improvement Plan:

The purpose of a written CIP is to formalize the process that develops the plan and to make sure the CIP becomes an integral part of the Town's annual budget process. The CIP will provide officials with key information related to the Town's infrastructure, its assets, and its financial resources to assure the citizens that the Town maintains its assets in the best interest of the public

Benefits of an Established Capital Improvement Plan:

The CIP focuses attention on community goals, needs and capabilities. The Town benefits from updating infrastructure and assets so it does not become faced with insurmountable financial needs at any one particular time. The CIP can help achieve optimum use of tax dollars, and can assist in guiding future growth and development. The CIP promotes efficient governmental administration, and maintains a viable, sustainable, and stable financial program.

To view the complete Capital Improvement Plan, visit the Town's budget listed on the Town's website.

Public Facility and Services

Goals and Implementation Strategies	
State Goal: To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.	
Rockport's Goal: To provide efficient quality services, while maintaining resilient and sustainable infrastructure, for a safe and prosperous environment for the community.	
Policies	
1	To efficiently meet identified public facility and service needs
2	To provide public facilities and services in a manner that promotes and supports growth and development in identified growth areas.
Objectives	
1	Town Facilities and services operated and maintained efficiently and effectively.
2	Provision of timely and appropriate response to emergencies
3	Infrastructure regularly maintained and upgraded to ensure continued operation and service.
4	Sewage capacity available at necessary levels with ability to increase as needed to benefit the community.
5	Infrastructure built to expected sea level rise, storm surges, and other climate change implications to come over the infrastructures lifespan.
6	Local and regional plans adequately address emergency preparedness.
Implementation Strategies Timeline: Immediate (up to 5 years); Med-Long Term (5-10 years); Ongoing 10+ years	

PF – 1	<p>Identify any capital improvements needed to maintain or upgrade public services to accommodate the community’s anticipated growth and changing demographics.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Town Manager, Department Heads, Select Board.
PF – 2	<p>Locate new public facilities comprising at least of 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments in designated growth areas.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Town Manager, Department Heads, Select Board
PF – 3	<p>Encourage local sewer and water district to coordinate planned service extensions with the Future Land Use Plan</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Town Manager, Department Heads, Select Board
PF – 4	<p>If public water supply expansion is anticipated, identify and protect suitable sources?</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Town Manager, Department Heads, Select Board
PF – 5	<p>Explore options for regional delivery of local services.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Town Manager, Department Heads, Select Board.
PF – 6	<p>Consider sea level rise, storm surges, and related flooding when planning for infrastructure investments to improve resiliency over the expected life of the improvements.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Staff (Planning & Development, Public Works, Harbor, Town Manager)
PF – 7	<p>Work with the Water District to review and ensure rules are sufficient for protecting drinking water resources.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Staff (Planning & Development, Public Works, Public Services, Wastewater)

PF – 8	<p>Explore ways to capitalize on existing and underused properties and assets as a means of supporting community vitality and economic growth.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Staff (Planning & Development, Town Manager), Parks Committee
PF – 9	<p>Encourage Water District to coordinate any future service extensions with the Future Land Use Plan.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Staff (Public Works, Planning & Development, Town Manager)

Fiscal Capacity

Goals and Implementation Strategies		
State and Rockport’s Goal: To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.		
Policies		
1	To finance existing and future facilities and services in a cost effective manner,	
2	To explore grants available to assist in the funding of capital investments within the community,	
Implementation Strategies Timeline: Immediate (up to 5 years); Med-Long Term (5-10 years); Ongoing 10+ years		
F – 1	Explore opportunities to work with neighboring communities to plan for and finance shared or adjacent capital investments to increase cost savings and efficiencies. Timeline: Ongoing	Select Board, Town Manager
F-2	Enhance TIF use throughout the Town to improve and expand infrastructure. Timeline: Immediate	Select Board, Town Manager, Planning and Development Director, Finance Director, Assessor
F-3	Strengthen Capital Improvement Plan by reviewing and updating as necessary. Timeline: Ongoing	Select Board, Town Manager
F-4	Increase Grant pursuit for Town projects that benefit Rockport. Timeline: Ongoing	Select Board, Town Manager,
F-5	Consider a program to charge impact fees for all new developments to cover costs of necessary improvements needed to accommodate such new development. Timeline: Immediate	Select Board, Town Manager

Transportation

Summary

A safe and dependable multi-dimensional transportation system is a critical infrastructure component for every community. Rockport's primary goal is to plan for the effective maintenance and improvement of its transportation system to serve existing and anticipated development.

Recommendations:

- Rockport must expand its network of sidewalks and pathways, focusing on linking the infrastructure to schools and other significant town services.
- Public Transportation in Rockport is extremely limited with no routes connecting to its Downtown. Rockport should coordinate with surrounding towns (e.g. Rockland's shuttle service, DASH), to provide expanded public transportation to PenBay Medical Center and other important services.
- Rockport should take efforts to improve the availability of parking in the community, especially in the Harbor District area.
- Climate change has had, and will continue to have, an impact on the town's road system. An assessment should be completed identifying those sections of roadway that are vulnerable to damage from flooding, and mitigation efforts to minimize the impact.

Background

Rockport has over 72 miles of public roads, including three major state highways that pass through the town: U.S. Route 1, Highway 17, and Route 90. These highways are a mix of heavily traveled routes and rural ones.

Rockport's small "downtown" is located between the public library at the northeastern end of Central St and the Goose River bridge at the beginning of Pascal Ave. In between are multiple restaurants, parks, a hotel, gallery, hair salon, and business offices. This revitalization of the downtown district has occurred over the past 10 years, but the infrastructure to support parking, vehicular, bicyclists, and pedestrian flow have not kept pace with this growth.

The village is centered on the bridge that crosses the river and which has seen multiple revisions over its long history resulting in some unusual and awkward situations for vehicular, pedestrian, and bicyclist traffic. Compounding the current awkward arrangement is the pending repair/replacement of the bridge by the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) for the 4th time in its history, which presents both complexities as well as opportunities for the improvement of our downtown district. This project is currently underway with MaineDOT, and can be followed on the Town's website for the Goose River Bridge project.

With respect to pathways, the town participates on a Camden – Rockport Pathways Committee which has observed that the schools, located on Route 90, have no pedestrian or bike links to the two Town's, and surrounding suburban developments in which many of its students live.

The citizens of Rockport have expressed a desire in pedestrian and bicycle pathways through surveys, public hearings, written comments, and by direct vote. Recently, during the public outreach process for developing this Comprehensive Plan, the main area of concern during the public meetings was safe access to the schools and the need to slow traffic in certain areas of town. "Let's plan to add sidewalks and bike lanes to the greatest extent possible." – public survey response. More recently, support for complete streets and connectivity from the Schools to the Downtown were documented in the Traffic Infrastructure Study, prepared by the engineering firm Sewall.

Critical Challenges

Transportation and Land Use

In July 2009, a Gateway 1 Corridor Action Plan ("Action Plan") was finalized by a group of representatives from MaineDOT and twenty "gateway" towns along the Rt. 1 corridor from Brunswick to Stockton Springs. This Action Plan was at the time supported by MaineDOT, the Maine State Planning Office and the U.S. Dept. of Transportation. However, the Gateway project was not funded by the State during the Governor LePage administration and was not revisited. From this document, however, Rockport would support a regional transportation action plan to focus on the areas outlined below from that Action Plan.

The Gateway 1 effort focused on "the 100-mile spine of the Mid-Coast, centered on Route 1 and its bypass in Knox County, Route 90. The Action Plan noted that this region comprises all or parts of five counties, seven labor market areas with 92,000 jobs, 161,000 year-round residents, more than 6,000 wage-paying employers, 2,700 seasonal homes and nearly \$13 billion in property value. "And all of it – the jobs, the residents, the businesses, the visitors, and everyone who serves them – depends on a single, remarkable roadway: Route1."

Importantly, the Action Plan noted that within 25 years, Gateway 1 analyses show that much of the corridor will reach serious stress points in congestion along Route 1, negatively impacting the quality of life for residents and visitors alike. After studying different scenarios, the Steering Committee settled on a Community Centered Corridor approach, what they called the "21st century version of the corridor's New England village heritage – described as groupings of core growth areas that serve as growing job centers and that create and preserve the minimum mix of jobs and housing needed to open up a variety of transportation opportunities to move people and goods.

Each core growth area would be under 100 acres, with residential, commercial and mixed use functioning together to meet many of the needs of the corridor residents, businesses and visitors. The core growth areas would be separated by stretches of uninterrupted rural land. Seen from the air, the core growth areas would look like a “necklace of pearls.” Along with other advantages, this approach would reduce the number of miles traveled by each household, reducing congestion on Routes 1 and 90 and minimizing the need for secondary roads to avoid such congestion.

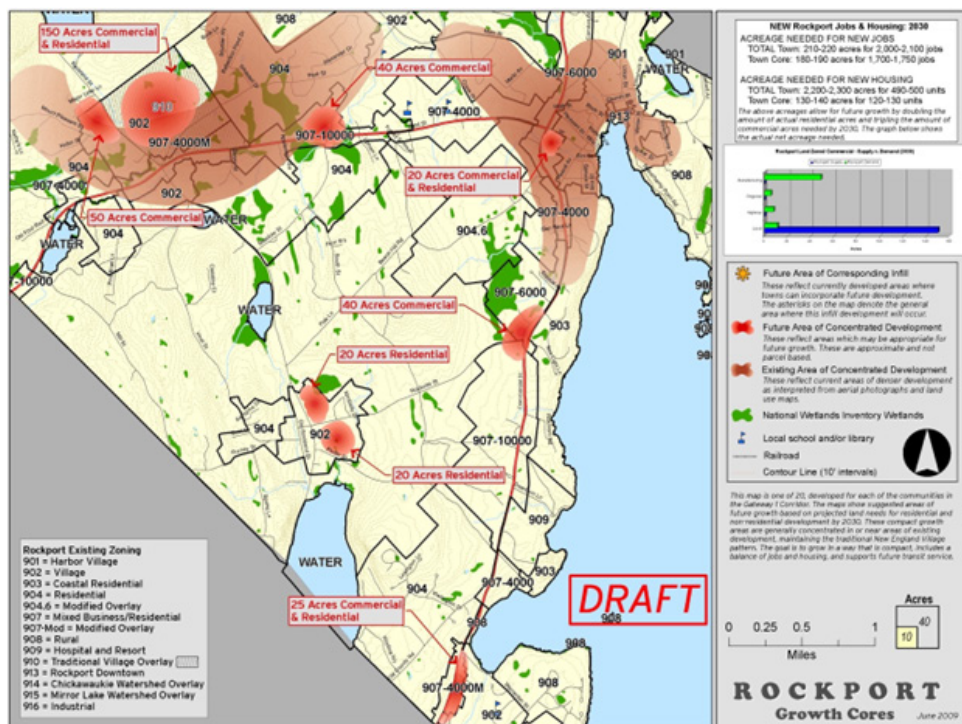
Referring to the previous Gateway 1 recommendations of necessary steps of the corridor communities to commit to, including the following:

- Revising zoning maps and ordinances consistent with the Community Centered Corridor approach;
- Limiting the numbers of driveways onto Routes 1 and 90;
- Allowing for increased residential and commercial densities in designated core growth areas;
- Designating visually distinctive and noteworthy segments of the corridor as rural areas;
- Adopting a rural conservation plan; and
- Protecting and planning for infrastructure for alternative modes of freight transportation.

The Action Plan noted that land use actions are important because they help to prevent transportation problems before they occur, and because the right pattern of growth will help to create choice in the transportation system.

The Action Plan included maps of proposed growth areas by community. These areas identify where new commercial and residential development should be targeted. These areas are located in or near areas of existing development. These growth areas for Rockport to consider and review are outlined below. The recommended growth areas for Rockport that resulted from this plan are shown in Figure 3. These growth areas are congruent with the Growth Area Map outlined in the Future Land Use section.

Figure 3: Growth Cores Identified in Gateway 1 Plan



Local Transportation Plans

Rockport retained the firm Sewall to conduct an Infrastructure Study with a grant awarded through Maine Department of Transportation. This project was conducted through MaineDOT's Planning Partnership Initiative which is intended to address time-sensitive locally-initiated planning and feasibility studies that occur outside MaineDOT's normal annual Work Plan cycle. The first public hearing was held on May 18, 2023, and the second public hearing on February 6, 2024. A presentation at the May 18, 2023 public hearing listed the following as known infrastructure issues:

- Traffic moving through the village area
- Speeding on Pascal Avenue
- Narrow Sidewalks & Walkability
- No sidewalks to the schools on Route 90
- Biking on Pascal Ave, Goose River Bridge & through village
- Parking downtown (Harbor Village)
- Hills present grading challenges and constraints
- Biking to/from schools on Route 90

The town has limited financial and human resources to devote to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. There may be a gap between the infrastructure desired by the public and their willingness to fund large and costly projects.

Some recommended projects may result in significant conflicts between preserving current landscape features, utility rights of way, and realistic sidewalk or paved shoulder alignments. Despite these challenges, the town should explore how to support increasing bicycle and pedestrian access on many more roads than is current today.

To view the full Traffic Infrastructure Study, please visit the Town's [Planning and Development Department's website page](#).

Macro Trends

Complete Streets

Complete Streets is a transportation policy and design approach that require streets to be planned, designed, operated, and maintained to enable safe, convenient and comfortable travel and access for users of all ages and abilities, regardless of their mode of transportation. A complete street may include: sidewalks, bike lanes, special bus lanes, comfortable and accessible public transportation stops, frequent and safe crossing opportunities, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, narrower travel lanes, roundabouts, and more. Complete Streets helps to create livable communities for various types of users, including children, people with disabilities, and older adults. Complete Streets improve equity, safety, and public health, while reducing transportation costs and traffic concerns.

It is recommended that Rockport implement a Complete Streets Policy for its Town owned roads.

Key Findings

- Road maintenance is a particularly expensive budget item for Rockport, given the large number of road miles within its geographic boundaries and the relatively low number of taxpayers to fund sufficient maintenance of those roads. The town has identified road maintenance as a priority and has invested over \$2 million dollars since 2020, with anticipations of investing an additional \$970 thousand in year 2025.
- Rockport's downtown Harbor village lacks sufficient parking, particularly with the revitalization that has occurred in recent years.
- Unlike other Maine coastal towns, Rockport does not have a ferry service or freight / passenger rail system.
- High Traffic Volumes and high crash volumes. Highway 17, 90, and US-1, all State Highways pass through Rockport. Each contributing high traffic volumes, even though the volumes have decreased over time, with high crash rates at the intersection of Highway 17 and Rt 90, and at US-1 and Pascal Ave.
- Rockport has potential to be a bikeable community. Pascal Avenue has enough space to allow for a dedicated bike lane, with a share ROW on the bridge and throughout the downtown, but otherwise fully dedicated bike lanes can be easily provided.

Goals and Implementation Strategies		
State Goal: to Plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.		
Rockport’s Goal: Efficient multi-modal system of transportation that meets residential, commercial, and visitor needs.		
Policies		
1	To prioritize community and regional needs associated with safe, efficient, and optimal use of transportation systems.	
2	To safely and efficiently preserve or improve the transportation system.	
3	To promote public health, protect natural and cultural resources, and enhance livability by managing land use in ways that maximize the efficiency of the transpiration system and minimize increases in vehicle miles traveled.	
4	To meet the diverse transportation needs of residents and through travelers by providing a safe, efficient transportation network for all types of users, such as motor vehicles, pedestrian and bicyclists.	
5	To promote fiscal prudence by maximizing the efficiency of the state or state-aid highway network.	
Implementation Strategies Timeline: Immediate (up to 5 years); Med-Long Term (5-10 years); Ongoing 10+ years		
T-1	Develop or continue to update a prioritized improvement, maintenance, and repair plan for the community’s transportation network. Timeline: Immediate, Ongoing	Select Board, Town Manager, Public Works Director, Pathways Committee.

T-2	<p>Initiate or actively participate in regional and state transportation efforts.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate, Ongoing</p>	Select Board, Town Manager, Public Works Director, Planning & Development
T-3	<p>Maintain, enact or amend local ordinances as appropriate to address or avoid conflict with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objectives of the Sensible Transportation Policy Act (23 M.R.S.A. §73) State access management regulations pursuant to 23 M.R.S.A. §704; and State traffic permitting regulations for large developments pursuant to 23 M.R.S.A. §704-A. <p>Timeline: Immediate, Ongoing</p>	Select Board, Town Manager, Planning & Development
T-4	<p>Maintain, enact or amend ordinance standards for subdivisions and for public and private roads as appropriate to foster transportation-efficient growth patterns and provide for future street and transit connections.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate, Ongoing</p>	Select Board, Town Manager, Planning & Development
T-5	<p>Traffic Calming Measures to enact, such as but not limited to regularly assessing speed limits on local roads.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Police Department, Public Works Department.
T-6	<p>Complete Streets policy to enact.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate, Ongoing</p>	Select Board, Town Manager.
T-7	<p>Master Plan for Town wide trail and pathway system to connect institutions, downtown, neighborhoods, and with the local land trusts.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Select Board, Town Manager, Planning & Development, and Pathways Committee.

T-8	<p>Develop a time-phased and prioritized plan for the expansion of walkways and bikeways that connect critical town facilities.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	<p>Community Planning Director and Pathways Committee</p>
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Recreation, Parks and Open Space

Recommendations:

Recreational activities, parks and open space are important to the quality of life in Rockport. Parks and open spaces beautify the community, protect environmentally sensitive areas, provide wildlife habitat, offer passive and active enjoyment of the outdoors, and provide public access to waterbodies. Recreational activities help improve physical and mental health, encourage social interaction, increase personal confidence, and improve quality of life. Rockport should consider supporting and enhancing these activities and opportunities through the following:

- Expanding recreational services by way of adding more fields for recreational use through the Recreation Committee and/or by creating a recreational department overseeing these programs to ensure the facilities are being maximized to their full potential;
- Developing a long-range plan, preferably on a regional basis, that outlines future recreation needs in terms of land and its use (including public access to saltwater and freshwater) and the mechanisms for funding its realization;
- Encouraging development of bike/pedestrian pathways connecting parks and recreation areas to village and residential neighborhoods by supporting the work of the Pathways Committee; and
- Encouraging preservation of open space for use as community gardens, parks and play grounds using impact fees (if appropriate), tax incentives and land acquisition funds.

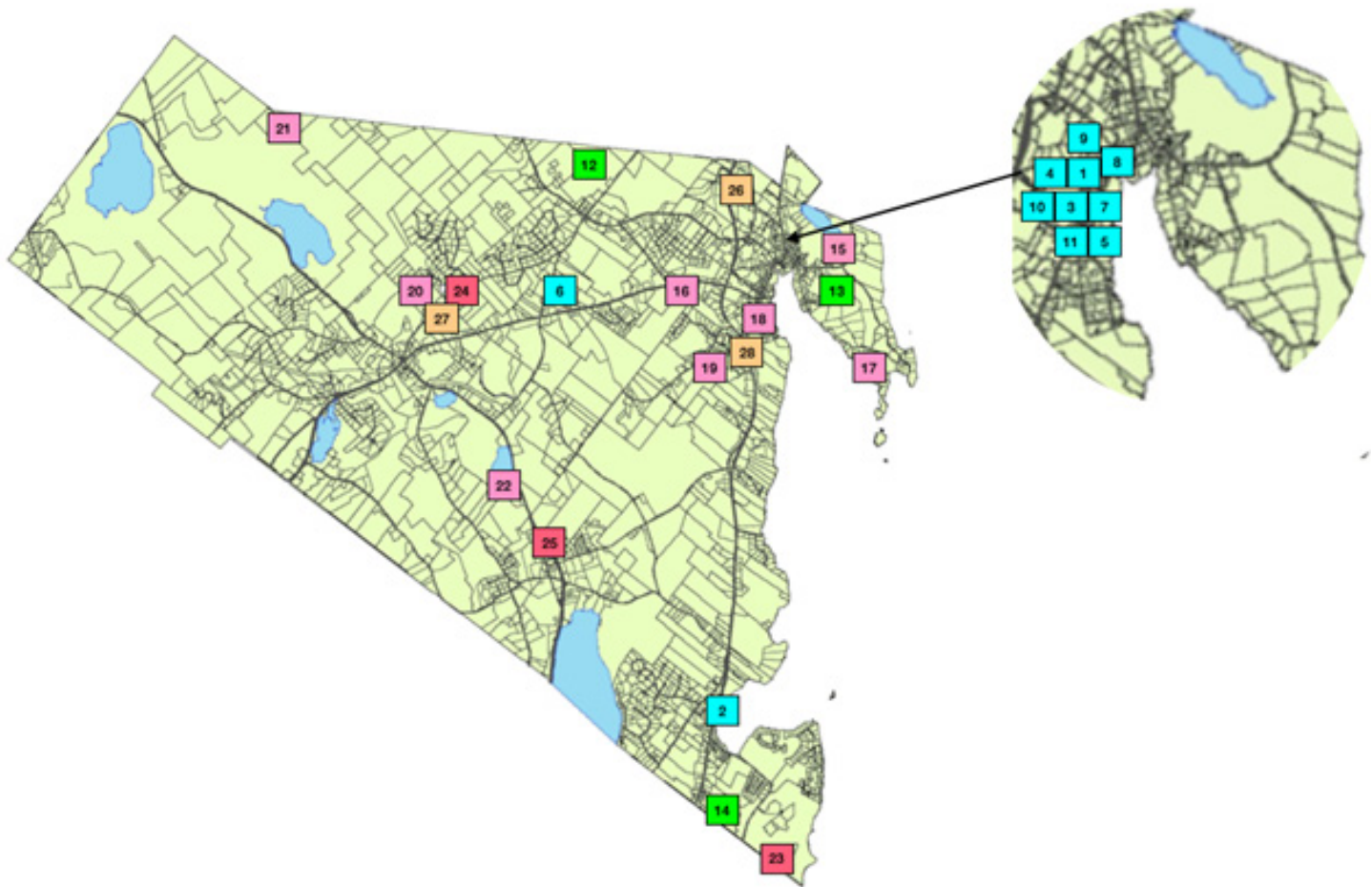
Background

Rockport is fortunate to have many recreational resources, including recreational facilities, golf courses, town parks, non-profit parks, farms, open space, and trails.

Rockport is a beautiful town often featured in articles and magazines as the “Jewel of the Midcoast”. Much of its beauty is attributable to our parks. The Parks Committee believes that with a relatively small investment in our town budget, along with gifts from donors, the Town of Rockport will realize significant return in beautifying and maintaining Town parks for the enjoyment of residents and visitors alike.

The Recreation Committee oversees the Town’s recreation fields, grounds, buildings, signs and use of facilities. In conjunction with Town staff, the committee is responsible for ensuring that the fields are in good safe playing conditions for the youth and adults of our communities to play. The committee works closely with the Staff Representative, in developing an annual budget, a workplan to establish long-term goals, land-use strategies and identifies/addresses current needs.

The figure on the next page illustrates the location of each of these facilities in the town.



Parks		
	1	Cramer Park
	2	Glen Cove Park
	3	Goody's Beach
	4	Goodridge Park
	5	Kononen Park
	6	Marge Jones Fields:
	7	Marine Park
	8	Mary Lea Park
	9	Memorial Park
	10	Rockport Elementary School (RES) Site:
	11	Walker Park:
Other		
	12	Merryspring Nature Center
	13	Vesper Hill Children's Chapel:
	14	Pen Bay Community Wellness Trail

MCHT		
	15	Aldermere Farm
	16	Erickson Fields Preserve
CMLT		
	17	Beauchamp Point Preserve
	18	Harkness Preserve
	19	Beech Hill Preserve
	20	Simonton Quarry Preserve
	21	Ragged Mountain Preserve
	22	Sides Preserve
Golf Courses		
	23	Samoset Resort Golf Club
	24	Goose River Golf Club
	25	Megunticook Golf Club
Indoor Recreation		
	26	Penobscot Bay YMCA
	27	Midcoast Recreation Center
	28	Midcoast Gymnastic

Parks Committee's Mission Statement - 2024

The Parks Committee mission fosters in residents, businesses, and employees a spirit of ownership for the Town's landscaping, parks and infrastructure by coordinating the efforts of multiple Town departments, committees, and resident volunteers to provide stewardship for the Town's eight (8) parks: Mary Lea, Goodridge, Cramer, Memorial, Walker, Harbor, Kononen and Glen Cove, as well as other public areas with gardens and landscaping. To facilitate their work, The Parks Committee works closely with the Department of Public Works.

Of primary importance to the Committee is maintaining the appearance of the parks while incorporating input from citizens and the Town while being cognizant of the impact of climate change.

Key Findings

- Existing recreational facilities and programs in Rockport and the region accommodate the current population; however, projected growth for Rockport and the region has the potential to necessitate facilities and programs in the future;
- Rockport currently has approximately 544 acres of open space. Most owned and operated by the Coastal Mountain Land Trust and the Maine Coast Heritage Trust, and are permanently conserved, with the balance of the land owned by the Town. Conservation efforts have been primarily done through land trusts, for the Town does not have a mechanism currently in place to acquire open spaces and access to sites outside of the Select Board putting a question to the voters to purchase the open space in question;
- Access to the community's significant water bodies is available to the public and must be maintained, including Rockport Harbor.
- Recreational trails throughout the community are primarily under the care and routine maintenance of the local land trusts. Residents are interested in enhanced trail connectivity.
- Private Lands are, by state law, open for hunting by the public unless posted with a no-trespassing sign. Currently there are no private open lands being restricted in the town.

Goals and Implementation Strategies		
State Goal: To promote and protect the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities for all Maine citizens, including access to surface waters.		
Rockport’s Goal: To ensure public spaces are available and welcoming to all residents and visitors		
Policies		
1	To maintain / upgrade existing recreational facilities as necessary to meet current and future needs.	
2	To preserve open space for recreational use as appropriate.	
3	To continue to maintain at least one point of public access to major water bodies for boating, fishing, and swimming.	
Implementation Strategies Timeline: Immediate (up to 5 years); Med-Long Term (5-10 years); Ongoing 10+ years		
R – 1	Create a list of recreation needs or develop a recreational plan to meet current and future needs. Explore ways of addressing the identified needs and/or implementing the policies and strategies outlined in the plan. Timeline: Immediate	Staff (Department Heads), Recreation Committee
R – 2	Pathways Committee continue work with public and private partners to extend and maintain a network of trails for public uses, including bikes / pedestrians. Connect individual trails as part of a regional trail systems, where possible. Timeline: Immediate	Staff, Parks Committee, Pathways Committee

R – 3	<p>Provide educational materials regarding the benefits and protections for landowners allowing public recreational access on their property. At a minimum this will include information on Maine’s landowner liability law regarding recreational or harvesting use, Title 14, M.R.S.A. §159-A.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediate</p>	Staff (Department Heads), Recreation Committee
R – 4	<p>Support boating activities for children and adults through the Rockport Boat Club.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Select Board, Staff (Town Manager, Department Heads).

Historic and Archaeological Resources

Through the efforts of many caring citizens, Rockport's historical heritage is well researched and preserved. The emphasis has been on Rockport Village, the more densely populated area of town since the mid-1700s and where industry has thrived most prominently. However, Rockport's historical integrity also lies in its farms and smaller villages, as well as any pre-historic sites that have yet to be identified. The town would do well to draw those areas into its historical panorama.

While many of Rockport's historic resources have been inventoried, there lacks a central repository. The complete inventory may consist of information available from the Maine Historic Preservation Commission and local inventory work. The Maine Historic Preservation Commission has a predictive model for archaeological resources and surficial geology maps to identify potential prehistoric resources. Criteria in the model focus on the availability of canoe navigable and flowing waters.

Once the inventory is accomplished, the information must be analyzed. The importance of historic resources on a federal, state, and local level should be determined. Rockport can then consider establishing an archaeological resource overlay district and require proposed developments to minimize the impacts on archaeological resources.

Rockport has implemented measures aimed at protecting the architectural harmonious character of the Downtown village area by instituting language in the Land Use Ordinance that new structures have to be architecturally harmonious to the surrounding buildings. However, the current Land Use Ordinance does not require a historical and/or archaeological survey to be performed. Rather, the Land Use Ordinance indicates the importance of preserving the historical attributes of the community, and the Planning Board has the authority to request such a study if deemed appropriate.

Recommendations:

The Town of Rockport should increase efforts of preserving its historic and archaeological resources through:

- To create public mechanisms to assist in historic preservation
- To create an awareness of Rockport's historic resources and their value for the present and future.
- Protect, to the greatest extent practicable, the significant historic and archaeological resources in the community.

Goals and Implementation Strategies		
State Goal: To preserve the State’s historic and archaeological resources.		
Rockport’s Goal: To preserve Rockport’s historic buildings while respecting the rights to Rockport’s landowners.		
Policies		
1	To create an awareness of Rockport’s historic resources and their value for the present and future.	
2	To create public mechanisms to assist in historic preservation.	
3	Protect to the greatest extent practicable the significant historic and archaeological resources in the community.	
Implementation Strategies Timeline: Immediate (up to 5 years); Med-Long Term (5-10 years); Ongoing 10+ years		
Hist-1	For known historic archaeological sites and areas sensitive to prehistoric archeology, through local land use ordinances require subdivision or non-residential developers to take appropriate measures to protect those resources, including but not limited to, modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, and/or extent of excavation. Timeline: Immediate	Planning and Development Office;
Hist-2	Adopt or amend land use ordinances to require the Planning Board (or other designated review authority) to incorporate maps and information provided by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission into their review process. Timeline: Immediate	Planning and Development Office;

Hist-3	<p>Work with the local or county historical society and/or the Maine Historic Preservation Commission to assess the need for, and if necessary plan for, a comprehensive community survey of the community's historic and archaeological resources.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Planning and Development Office;
Hist-4	<p>Inventory and create a central repository of Rockport's History</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing</p>	Planning and Development Office; Legacy Rockport
Hist-5	<p>Consider and implement a Historic District ordinance, modeled off of the National Parks Historic District.</p> <p>Timeline: Med-Long Term</p>	Planning and Development Office

Appendix

Population and Demographics

Housing

Economy

Natural Resources

Marine Resources

Historic and Cultural Resources

Existing Land Use

Recreation, Parks and Open Space

Transportation

Public Facilities and Services

Fiscal Capacity

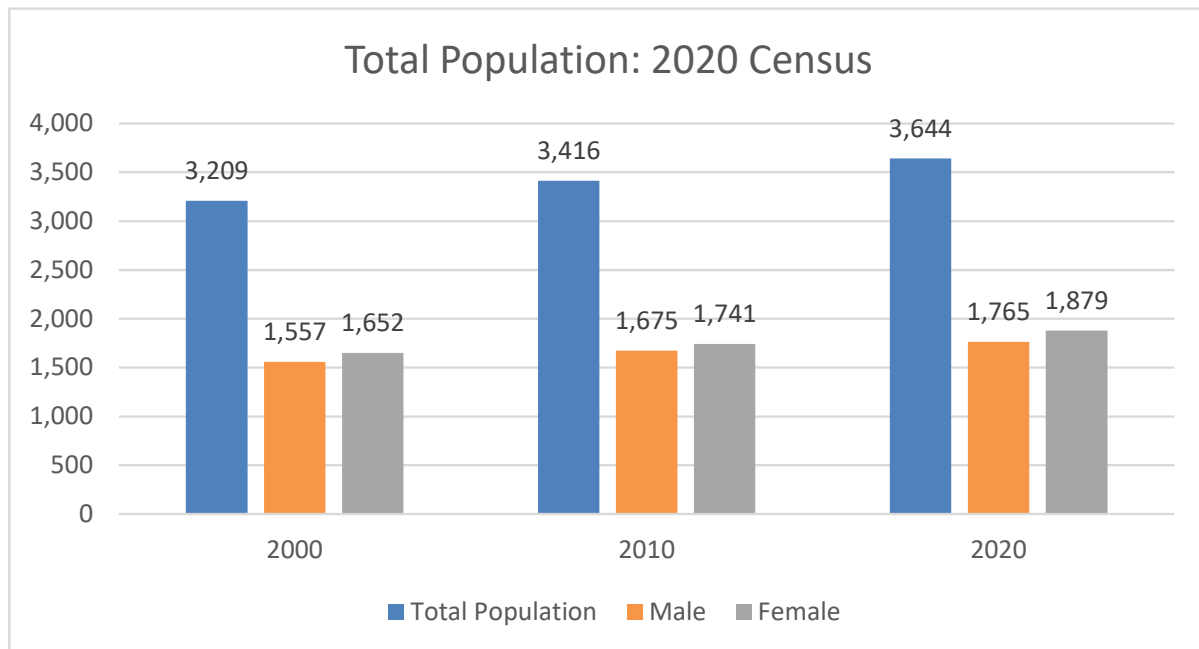
Population and Demographics

The Community of Rockport

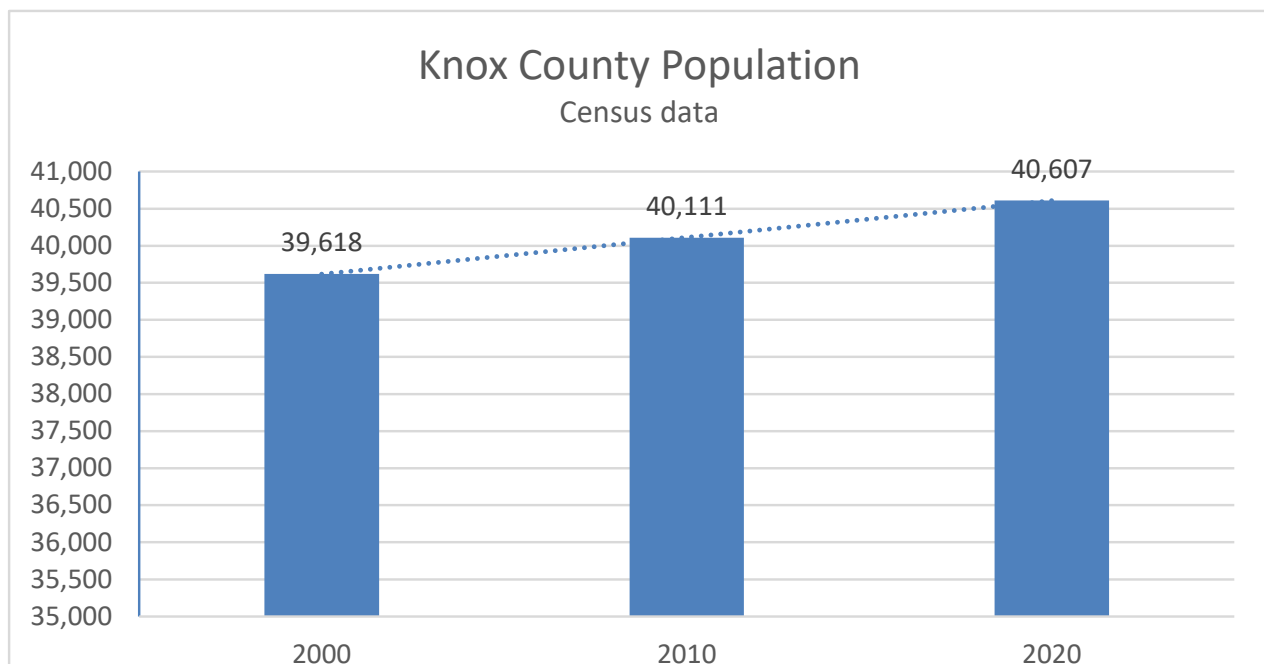
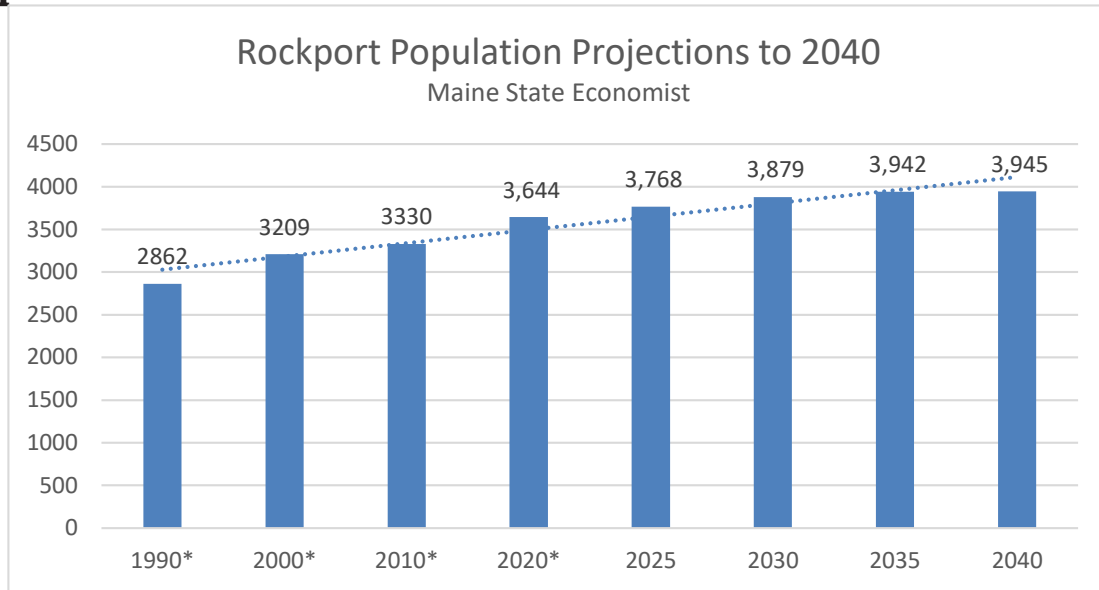
The oldest town records indicate that descendants of original settlers are still residents of Rockport today; the Barrows, Fiskes, and Tolmans appear on the records, as do the Simonton and Annis families, the Oxtons, Ingrahams, Gregorys and Cloughs, the Richards, Graffams, and Carletons are all part of the town's social fabric. Through good times and bad, those are some of the families that have provided a link with Rockport's past, serving the community in countless ways.

In turn, Rockport has also been invigorated by newer residents who live here because they appreciate the community, quality of life, and beautiful landscape. Rockport has welcomed its newer residents with grace and the town has moved beyond the "native versus from-away" clash that has battered many of Maine's communities.

While Rockport's population declined by almost 800 from 1900 to 1940, most dramatically during the Great Depression, the trend reversed following World War II, as people began moving back to the town. By 1970, the population was almost back to the size it was in 1900, and by 1980 the town had seen a jump of more than 700 additional citizens. By 2000, the population surpassed 3,000 residents settling at 3,209, and increased by 435 residents by 2020 totaling 3,644. The population projections to the year 2040 suggest an increase up to 3,945 residents.

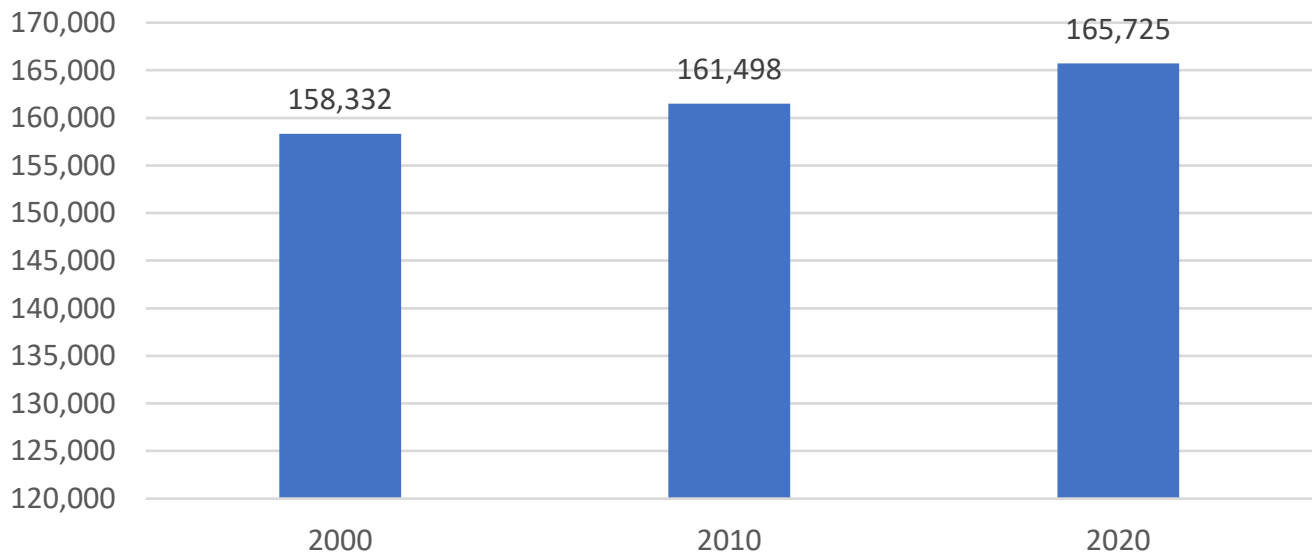


Rockport Continues to Grow



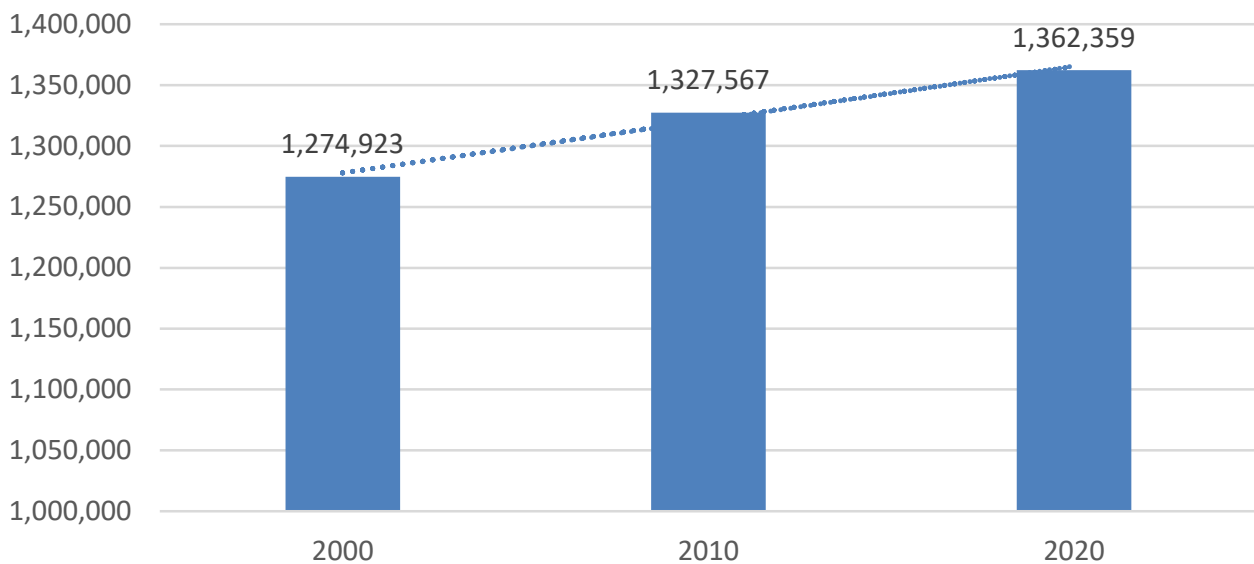
Midcoast Region Population

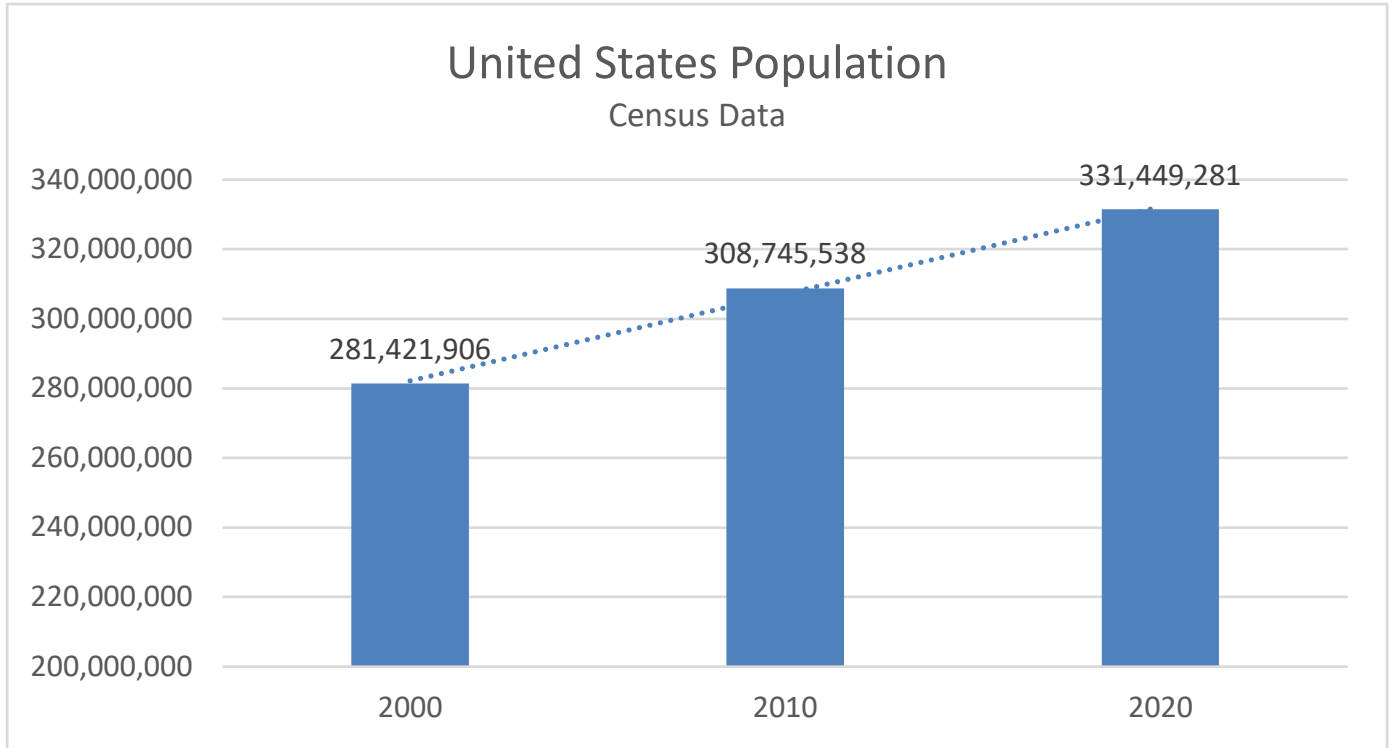
Census Data



Maine Population

Census Data





The State of Maine’s Department of Vital Statistics projects that Rockport’s population could be 3,768 by the year 2025.

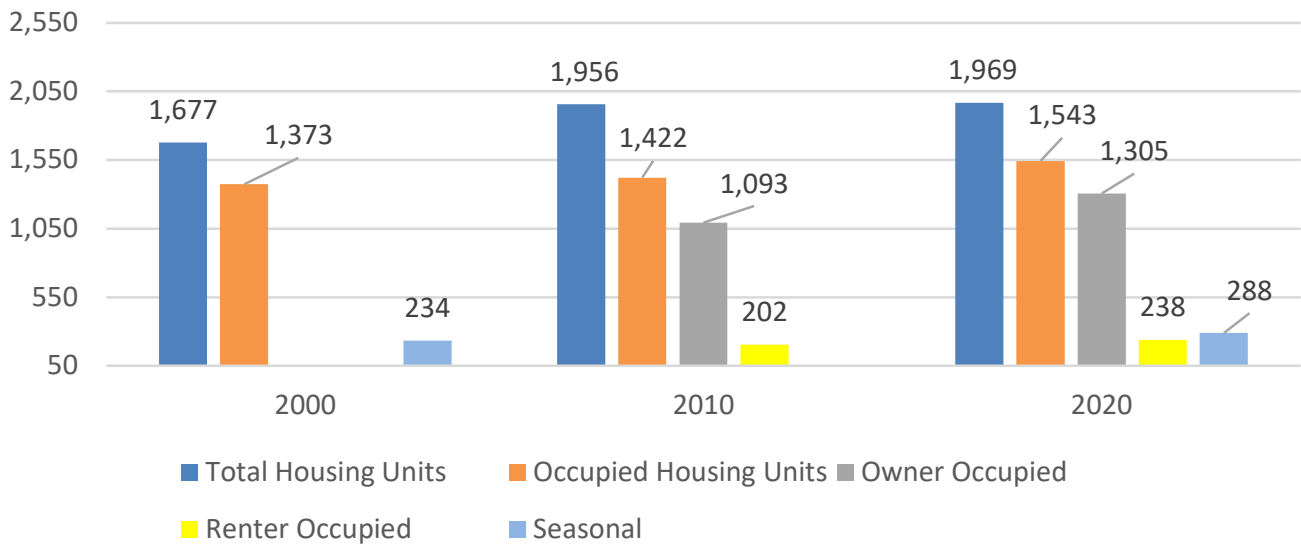
Over the 2010 to 2020 decade, Rockport gained 308 residents, an increase of 9.2 percent. By contrast, Knox County as a whole only grew 1.2 percent.

By 2023, Rockport had decreased slightly to 3,615, according to the 5-year estimates from the US Census Bureau.

The racial / ethnic breakdown of the town remained similar throughout the decade, going from roughly 98% to 91% white in 2020.

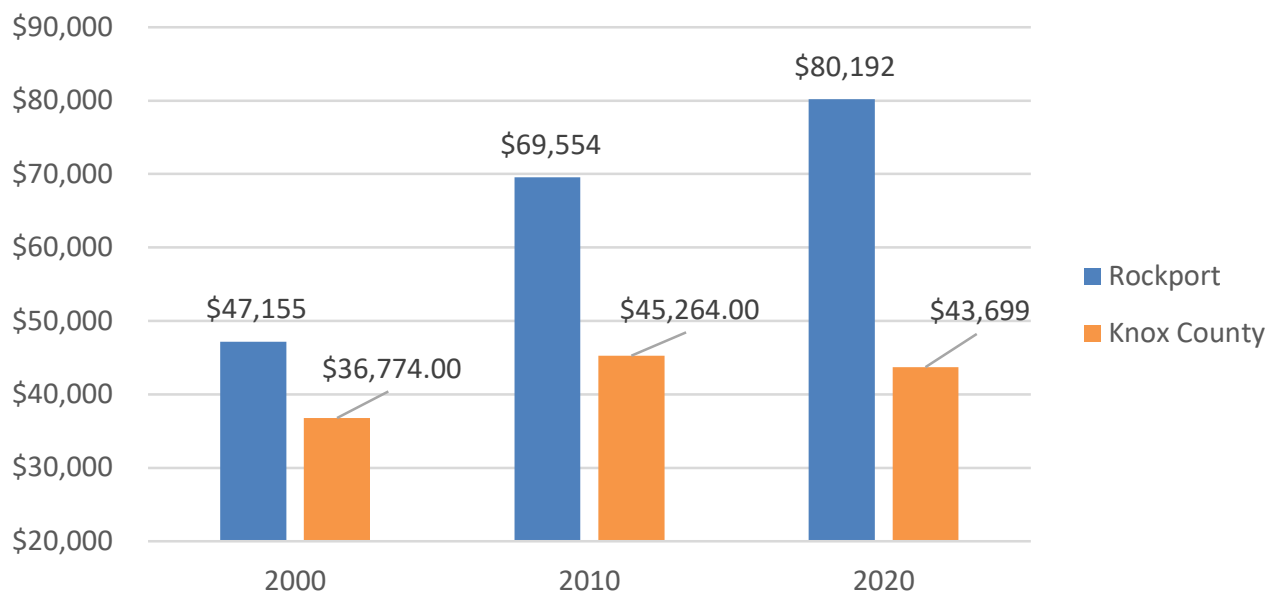
Rockport - Housing

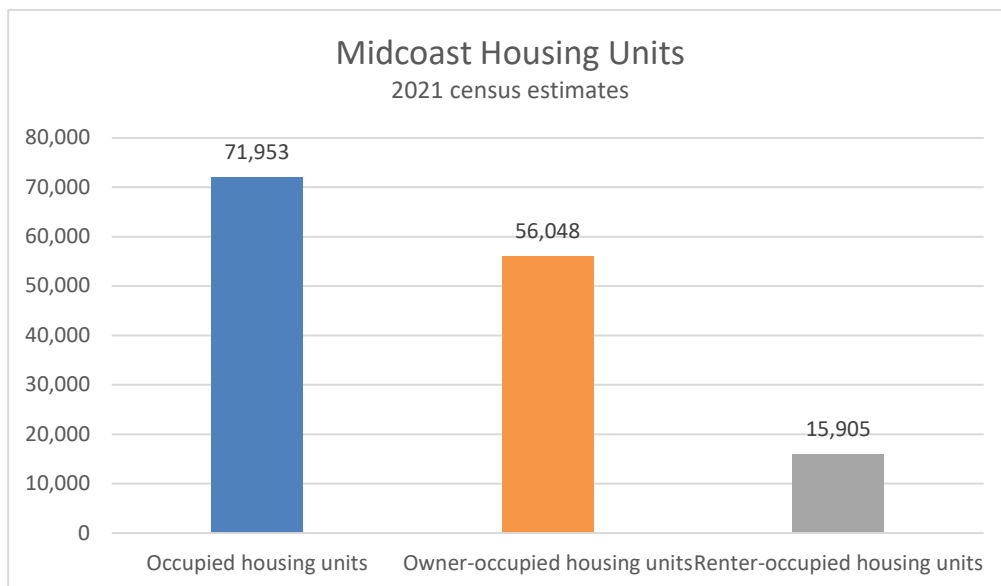
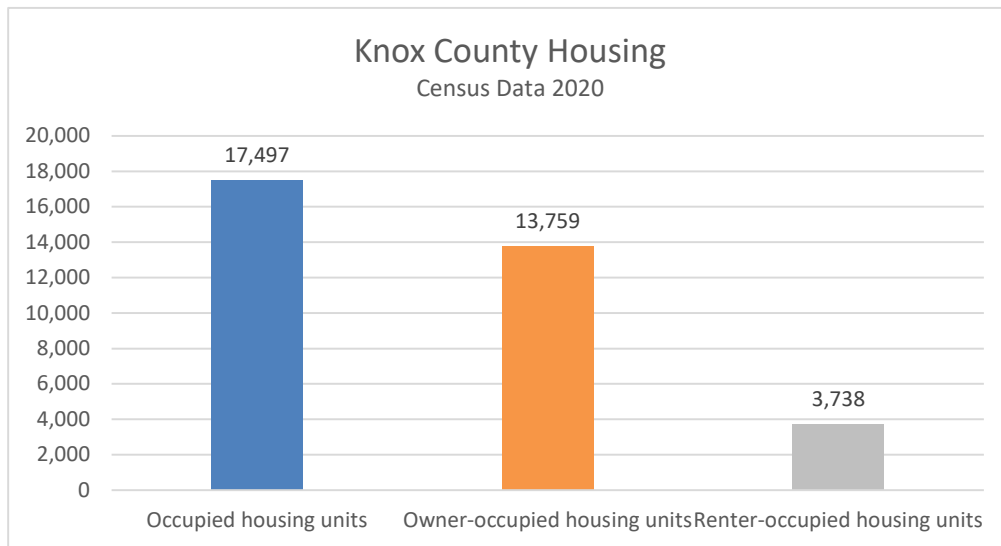
Census Data



Median Household Income

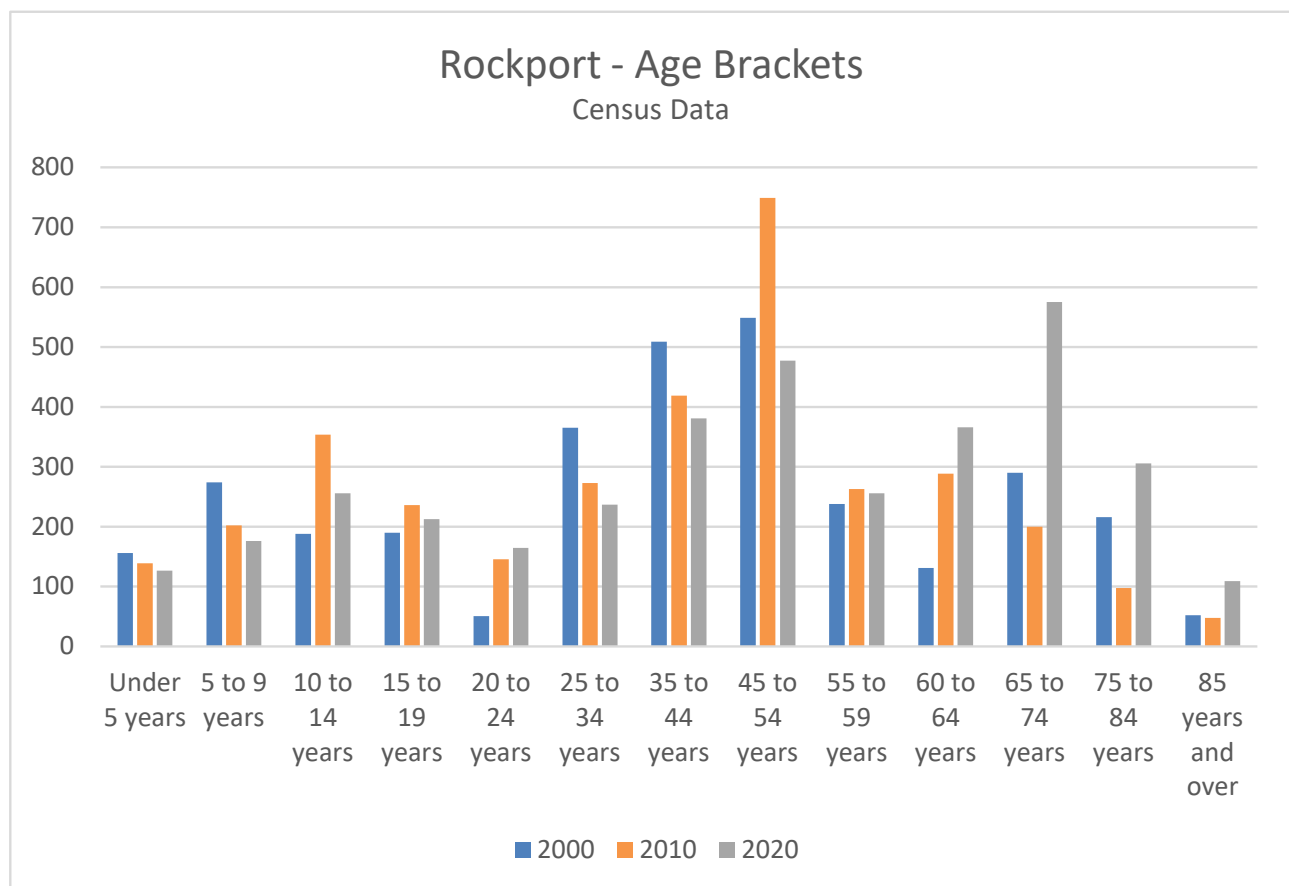
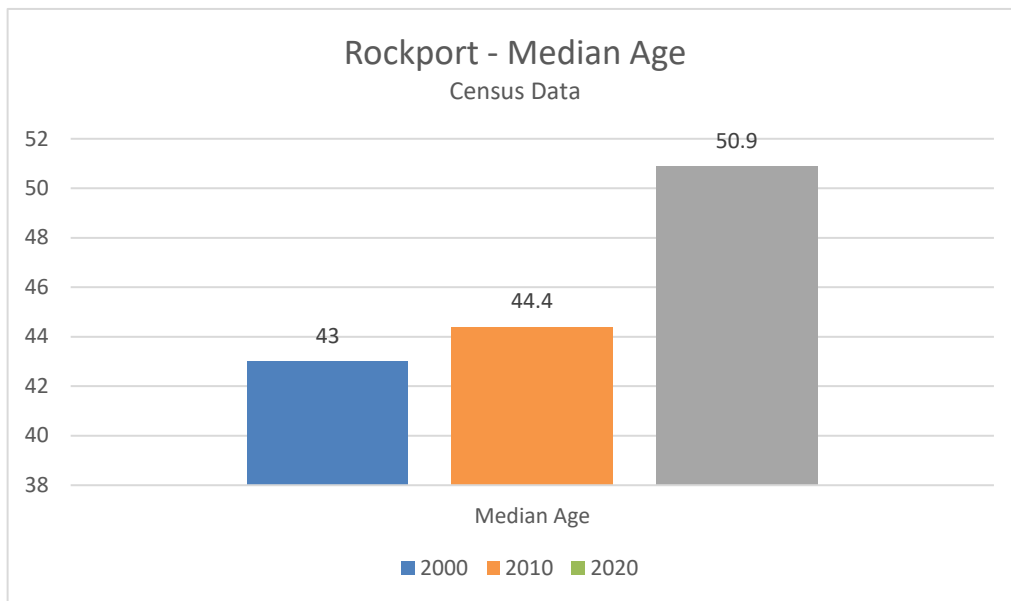
Census Data





Household Type Census Data 2020	Rockport town, Knox County, Maine
Total:	1,543
Family households:	1,038
Married couple family	828
Other family:	210
Male householder, no spouse present	65
Female householder, no spouse present	145
Nonfamily households:	505
Householder living alone	402
Householder not living alone	103

Age Distribution



Rockport is an aging community, despite the desire of families wanting to relocate to Rockport in order to enroll students in the RSU 28 / MSAD 28 and Five Town CSD for the K through 8 and 9 through 12 program. The percentage of those over age 45 increased from 48% in 2010 to 57% in 2020. Correspondingly, the percentage of residents between 20 and 44 years of age has declined over the past decade from 25% to 21%.

There was a large increase in population for ages 65 to 74 years, with a general decrease in population for ages under 45 to 54 years of age when compared to the past decade. This corresponds with the increasing Median Age increasing to 50.9 years.

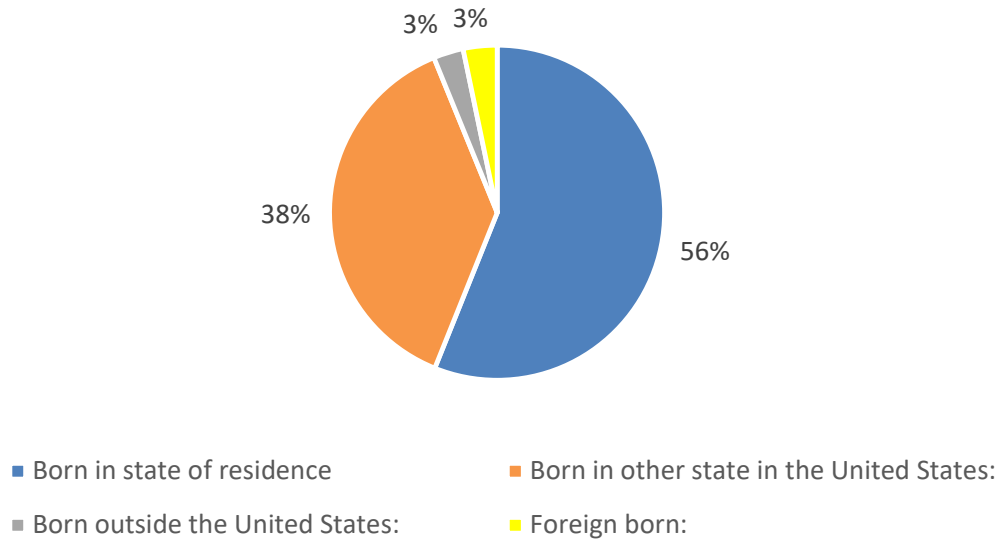
Further highlighting the aging of the population is the fact that the State of Maine has the fifth lowest birthrate in the nation. During the past decade, Maine experienced a drastic increase in population growth in the population age bracket of 20-34 years. This is due in part to the State’s push to increase Maine’s population, but also due to the Covid-19 pandemic and Climate Change. During the pandemic, Maine was perceived as a safe place to live due to the low contagion rate. Further, over the past decade, the weather across the nation has been plagued with extreme weather events, including: wildfires and drought in California; multiple hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico and along the Eastern Coast line; and ice storms in the South. These events have caused many people to relocate. Both the pandemic and climate change, coupled with the ability to work remotely made an easy sell for people looking to relocate.

Town of Rockport - Births and Deaths data			
Year	Births	Deaths	Net difference
2020	22	26	-4
2021	16	51	-35
2022	19	27	-8

Source: Town of Rockport’s Clerk’s office

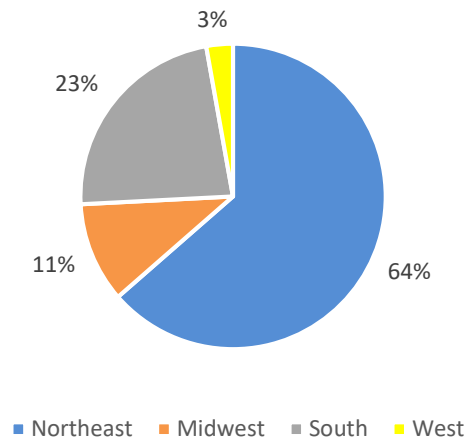
Place of birth - residents of Rockport 2020

Census Data

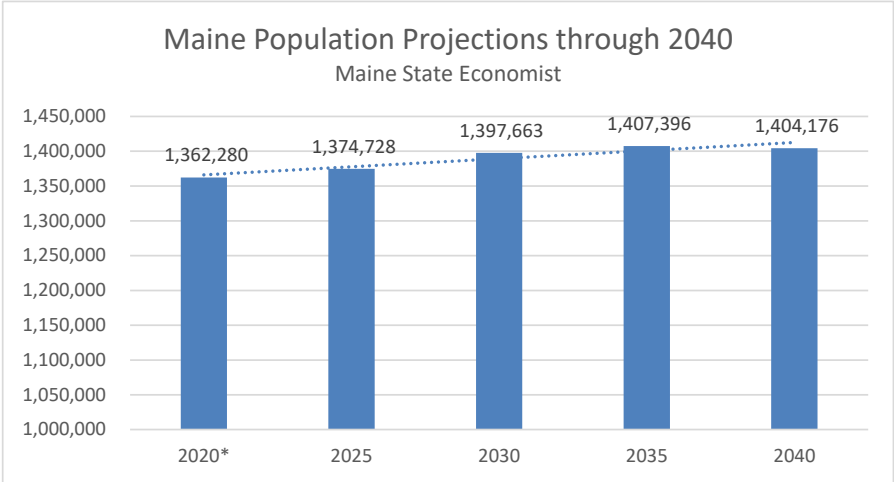
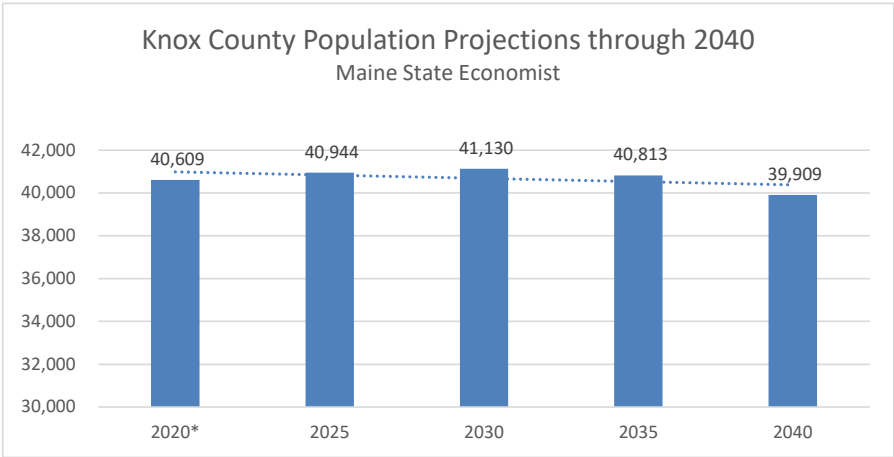
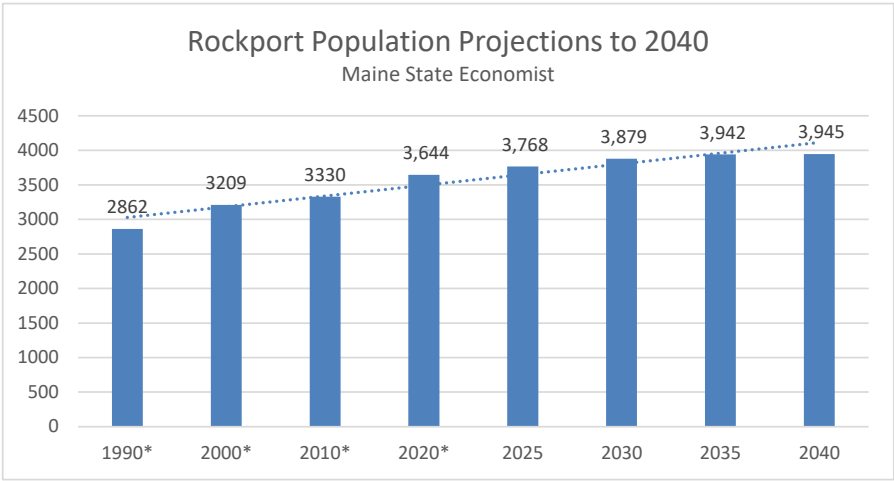


Born in other state in the United States - residents of Rockport 2020

Census Data



Population Projections



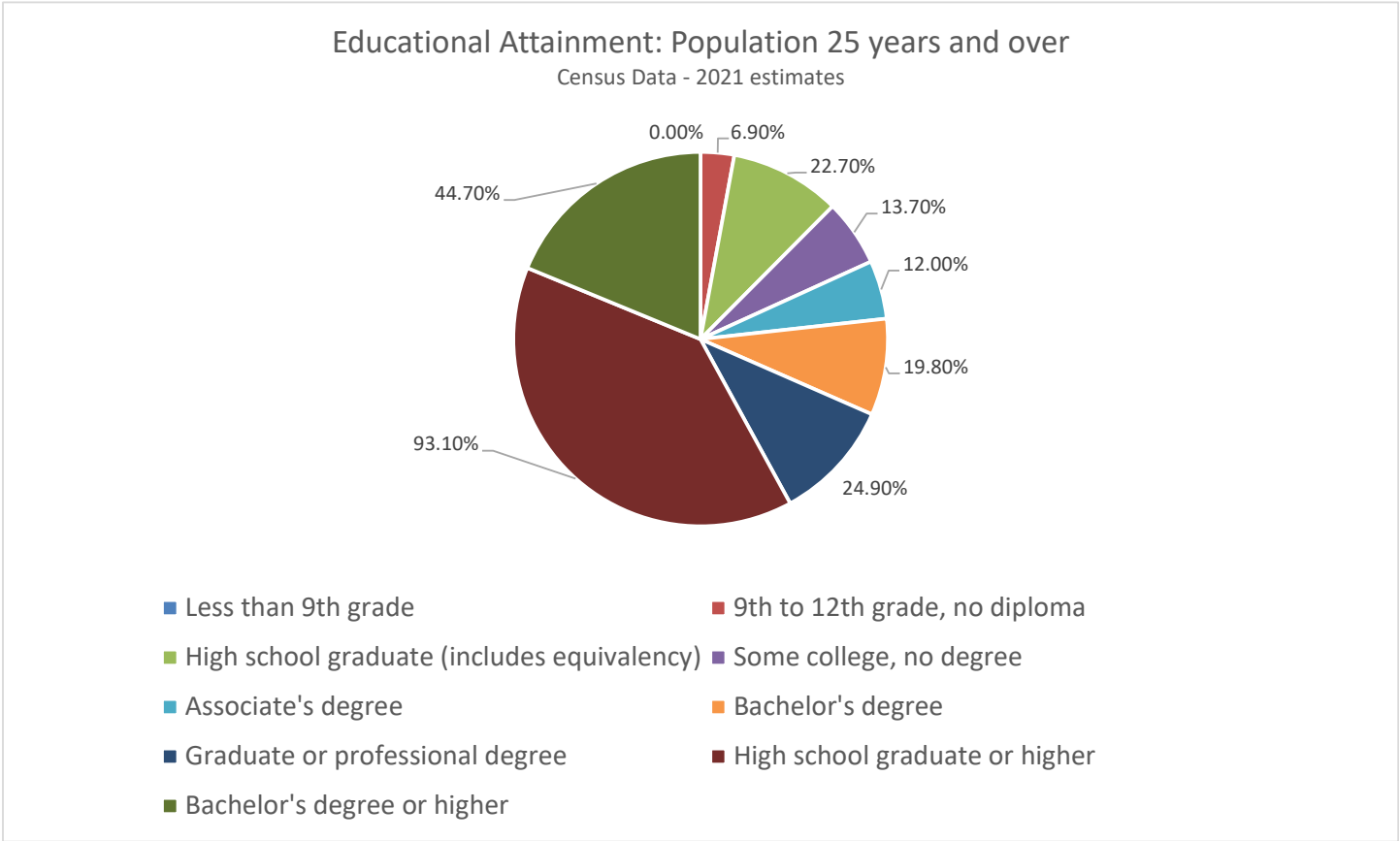
The State of Maine grew by 3 percent from 2010 to 2020 while the United States as a whole grew 7 percent. Knox County recorded a population increase of approximately 2 percent. Despite the departure of MBNA in Camden in 2005 (lasting a little over a decade and was a major employer during this period) lead to a decline in Camden’s population, however the Town of Rockport didn’t decline and instead continued to grow steadily year over year.

The Population projections from the Department of Administrative and Financial Services State Economist of Maine project the population of Rockport and the State of Maine to continue to grow, while Knox County as a whole is projected to decrease; see figures above.

New Households

With the surge of Covid, and demand for housing in 2023, it is difficult to project how many houses will be built by 2030. However, the current needs assessment of houses, prepared by Midcoast Council of Governments, suggests the Economic Service Area of Rockport needs 800 units today, and taking into account future needs over the next 5 years, this number is to increase to about 1,500 units.

Education



Summary

Rockport continues to grow, as evidenced by the number of new residents each year, the number of new homes being built, and the demand for housing in this area. In 2000, the census recorded 3,209 year-round residents in Rockport. In 2010, this number grew to 3,336. And, in 2020 this number grew again to 3,644. This 13.5 percent increase from year 2000 is mostly attributed to in-migration.

The population projection for Rockport is anticipated to reach 3,945 by 2040. This projection does not, however, account for the effects Covid-19 and climate change have had on Rockport. These two factors have highlighted Maine as desirable and safe place to live. Maine has seen a population increase between 2020-2023 which was not anticipated, meaning that the population projections for 2040 are most likely underestimated.

Maine has one of the oldest median age populations in the United States, with Knox County being among the oldest counties. Rockport's median age is reaching 50.4 years, one of the oldest in the State and County.

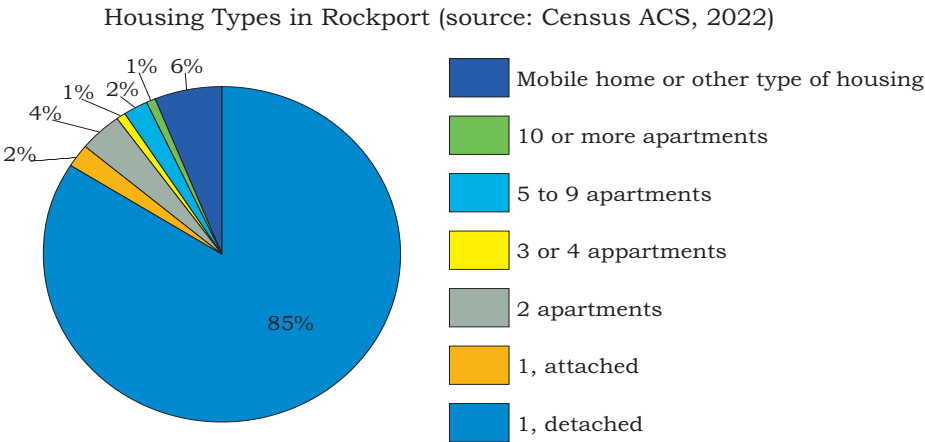
Housing

Housing Stock
Demographics
Affordability
Housing Trends

Housing is an integral component of community health and prosperity. On the social side, housing helps determine whether our population is diverse or homogeneous. On the economic side, housing investment is a major driver of growth and is critical to support the local workforce.

This section provides an overview of the data necessary for understanding Rockport’s housing picture and developing goals and strategies to meet Rockport’s future housing needs. It includes a summary of the housing stock, a snapshot of housing tenure and occupancy, an analysis of affordability, and an overview of other housing trends.

Housing Stock

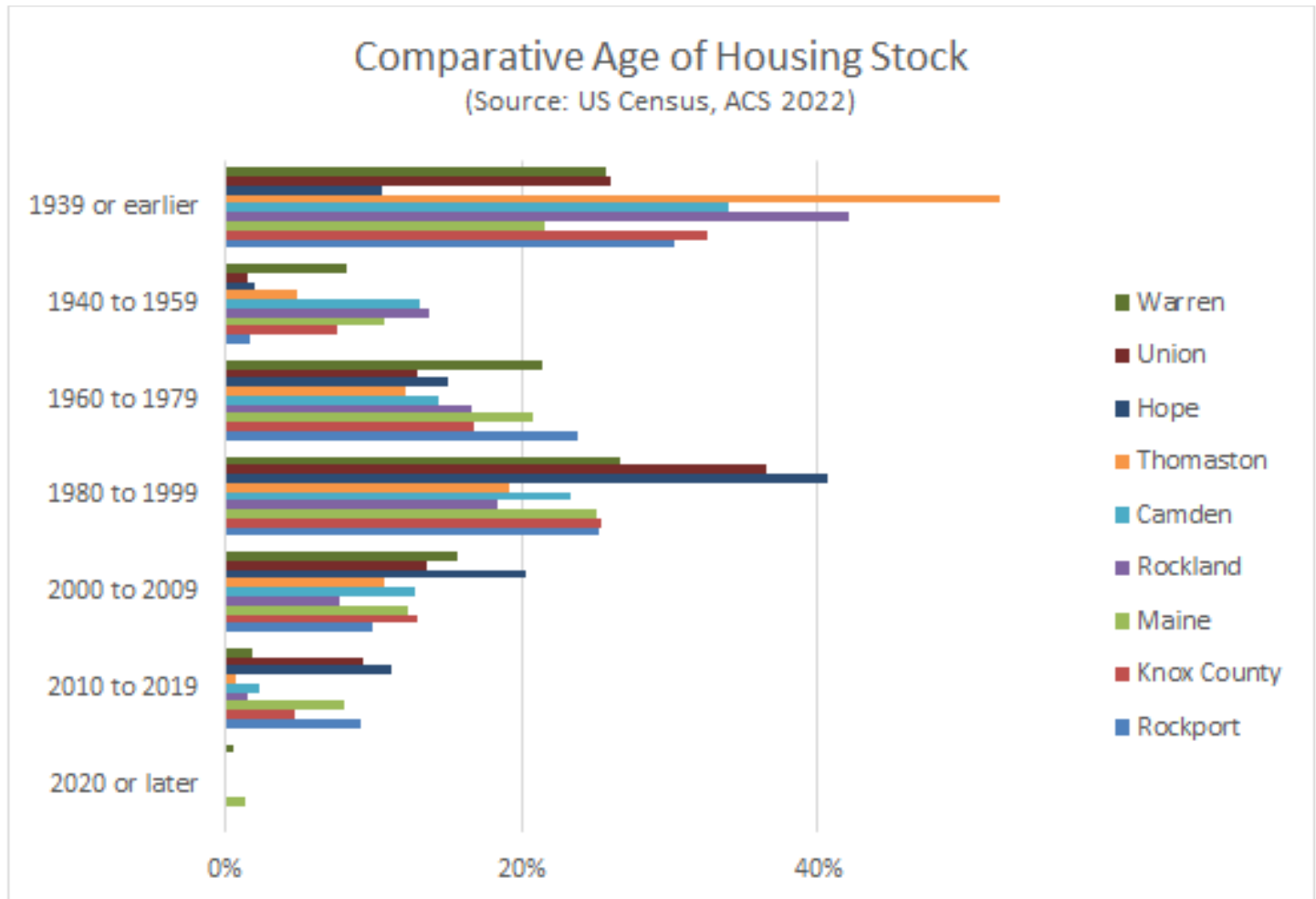


Housing by Type compared to County, State, and neighboring Towns																		
	Rockport		Knox County		Maine		Rockland		Camden		Thomaston		Hope		Union		Warren	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Occupied housing units	1,421		17,780		605,338		3,371		2,368		1,276		674		1,004		1,662	
UNITS IN STRUCTURE																		
1, detached	1,210	85%	13,484	76%	409,280	68%	1,873	56%	1,663	70%	841	66%	594	88%	756	75%	1,338	81%
1, attached	22	2%	358	2%	17,797	3%	161	5%	85	4%	12	1%	13	2%	0	0%	19	1%
2 apartments	53	4%	959	5%	30,663	5%	366	11%	100	4%	243	19%	5	1%	65	6%	36	2%
3 or 4 apartments	9	1%	562	3%	33,986	6%	246	7%	184	8%	73	6%	0	0%	0	0%	14	1%
5 to 9 apartments	27	2%	314	2%	25,989	4%	169	5%	0	0%	62	5%	0	0%	40	4%	0	0%
10 or more apartments	11	1%	587	3%	36,596	6%	307	9%	203	9%	34	3%	0	0%	0	0%	22	1%
Mobile home or other type of housing	89	6%	1,516	9%	51,027	8%	249	7%	133	6%	11	1%	62	9%	143	14%	233	14%
Source: US Census, ACS, 2022																		

Age of Housing Stock

The majority of housing units in Rockport were built in or before 1939 making them 84 or more years old.

The bulk of housing in the area was built in the same era, 1939 or earlier, and the next significant housing construction boom was between 1980 and 1999. From there, the construction of newer housing trails off.



Housing units by year structure built																		
YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT	Rockport		Knox County		Maine		Rockland		Camden		Thomaston		Hope		Union		Warren	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
2020 or later	0	0%	22	0%	8,117	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	9	1%
2010 to 2019	131	9%	832	5%	48,994	8%	50	1%	56	2%	10	1%	76	11%	93	9%	30	2%
2000 to 2009	141	10%	2,307	13%	75,042	12%	259	8%	305	13%	137	11%	137	20%	137	14%	260	16%
1980 to 1999	358	25%	4,511	25%	151,573	25%	619	18%	553	23%	245	19%	274	41%	366	36%	442	27%
1960 to 1979	337	24%	2,978	17%	126,156	21%	560	17%	340	14%	156	12%	101	15%	131	13%	355	21%
1940 to 1959	24	2%	1,342	8%	65,334	11%	467	14%	311	13%	62	5%	14	2%	16	2%	138	8%
1939 or earlier	430	30%	5,788	33%	130,122	21%	1,416	42%	803	34%	666	52%	72	11%	261	26%	428	26%

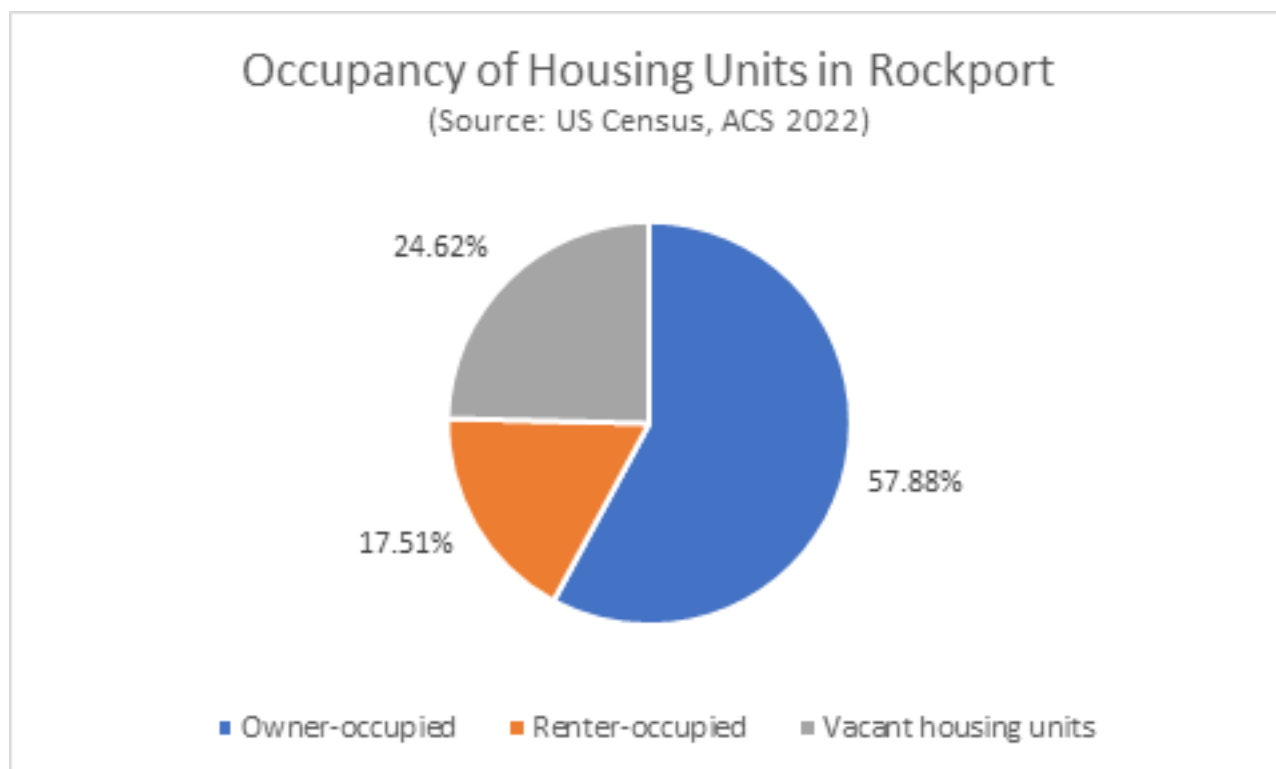
Source: US Census, ACS, 2022

Housing occupancy and tenure

Of the 1,885 housing units in Rockport, about 75% were considered occupied and about 25% were considered vacant. A housing unit is considered vacant if no one is living in it at the time of the survey, unless its occupants are only temporarily absent.

When compared to Knox County and the State as a whole, the percentage differences are about the same.

Occupancy Comparison						
HOUSING TENURE	Rockport town,		Knox County,		Maine	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total Units	1,885	1,885	24,331	24,331	751,697	751,697
Owner-occupied	1,091	57.88%	14,084	57.89%	448,772	59.70%
Renter-occupied	330	17.51%	3,696	15.19%	156,566	20.83%
Vacant housing units	464	24.62%	6,551	26.92%	146,359	19.47%
Source: US Census, ACS,						



Demographic snapshot

Population and household size, and income

Trends in population, age, household size, and income ca influence housing demand and affordability. More detailed information on demographics can be found in the Population and Economy sections, however it is important to note the following trends:

Population and Household Size

Between 2000 and 2020, the population increased by 435 people. Further, the median age of Rockport residents increased from 43 years old in 2000 to 50.9 years old in 2020. Between 2000 and 2020, the age trend show decreasing numbers in the under 5 to 44 age brackets and increasing numbers in 55 years and older.

Income

Rockport’s median household income increased by almost two folds from 2000 to 2020.

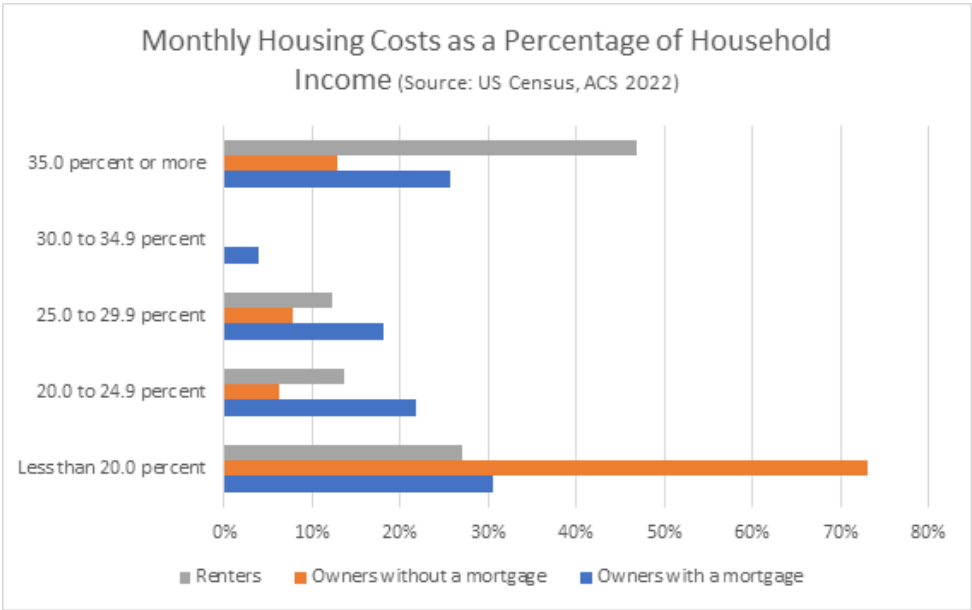
Affordability

Housing is generally considered affordable when the occupant pays no more than thirty percent (30%) of their gross income for their housing costs (rent/mortgage, utilities, and other related costs).

In Rockport, about 378 housing units, or about 20% of the total number of housing units, are spending more than 30% of their income on housing related expenses.

- Approximately 13% of homeowners (about 241 housing units) are spending 30% or more on housing.
- Approximately 75 of renters (about 137 housing units) are spending 30% or more on housing.

The figure below shows a breakdown of the monthly housing cost as a percentage of household income for homeowners with mortgages, homeowners without mortgages and renters.



Rockport is unaffordable to the median income household, according to MaineHousing. MaineHousing shows the affordability index in Rockport as being .46 for 2022 estimates. (source: MaineHousing 2022 Affordability Index)

- According to MaineHousing, the estimated income needed in 2022 to afford a median home price in Rockport is \$171,438. When compared to the median income provided by the US Census ACS 2022 data of \$86,188, there is a gap of \$85,250.
- About 1,308 households in Rockport are not able to afford the median priced home and approximately 96.8% of the homes sold in 2022 would not have been affordable to the median income household.

As can be seen on the table above, Rockport home values are significantly higher

Mainehousing Homeownership Affordability Index for Rockport											
Year	Affordable Homes Sold	Home Price Affordable to Median Income	Households Unable To Afford Median Home	Households Unable to Afford Median Home (%)	Income Needed to Afford Median Home Price - Annual	Income Needed to Afford Median Home Price - Hourly	Affordability Index	Median Home Price	Median Income	Percentage of Unattainable Homes Sold	Unattainable Homes Sold
2022	2	\$244,343	1,308	83.8%	\$171,438	\$82.42	0.46	\$532,750	\$78,629	96.8%	60
2020	12	\$271,304	1,137	76.0%	\$122,975	\$59.12	0.59	\$458,000	\$72,846	82.1%	55
2010	17	\$204,566	966	61.9%	\$80,460	\$38.68	0.81	\$251,250	\$85,510	58.5%	24

than the average home price in Knox County and the State of Maine.

Owner Occupied Home Value				
	Rockport	Knox Co.	Maine	USA
Median Home Value	\$366,600	\$260,800	\$290,600	\$320,900
Source: US Census, ACS 2022)				

MaineHousing data for renters within Rockport stop at 2010, so it is inconclusive to determine the affordability through this agency in todays market.

In 2020, the rental market for Knox County would be considered unaffordable to the median income renter. MaineHousing data shows the affordability index in Rockport at 0.96 in 2020 estimates, up from 0.89 in 2017, but still below the affordability threshold.

- The median two-bedroom rent (including utilities) in Knox County is estimated at \$1,000 per month in 2020, which would require a renter household median income of \$40,000. However, the median income renter is estimated to make approximately \$38,293 per year. This is close to being considered affordable, and worth noting.
- MaineHousing did not have data specific to renters within Rockport, so the Knox County data was used.

Employment

Another measure of affordability is to compare the average wage for typical jobs of employed residents. More detailed information on wage and employment can be found in the Economy section, but the information below provides an overview of income related to employment and implications for housing need and affordability.

Poverty

According to the 2022 American Community Survey, about 3.4% of Rockport's population was living below the poverty level for 2022, a decrease from 2012 of about 12.1%.

Homelessness

Homelessness in Rockport is difficult to track, mainly due to the data typically being collected at the county or state level. According to MaineHousing, there is one shelter available in Knox County, Knox County Homeless Coalition, which has a total of 22 beds. "In 2020, we provided 8104 nights of emergency lifesaving shelter through a combination of Hospitality House, motels, campgrounds, and other off-site locations." – statement from Knox County Homeless Coalition website.

Housing Trends

Average Hourly wage snapshot (2022)	
Occupation Title	Average Wage
Food Preparation and Service-Related Occupations	\$ 17.04
Community and Social Services Occupations	\$ 25.34
Sales and Related Occupations	\$ 19.73
Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	\$ 23.95
Personal Care and Service Occupations	\$ 17.64
Construction and Extraction Occupations	\$ 23.81

Short-Term Rentals

Short-term rentals, through platforms such as VRBO, AirBnB, Vacasa, are a growing trend in many communities. According to a RentalScape, a online service that tracks rental properties of every kind, indicates that Rockport has 150 properties serving as short-term rentals at some point throughout the year.

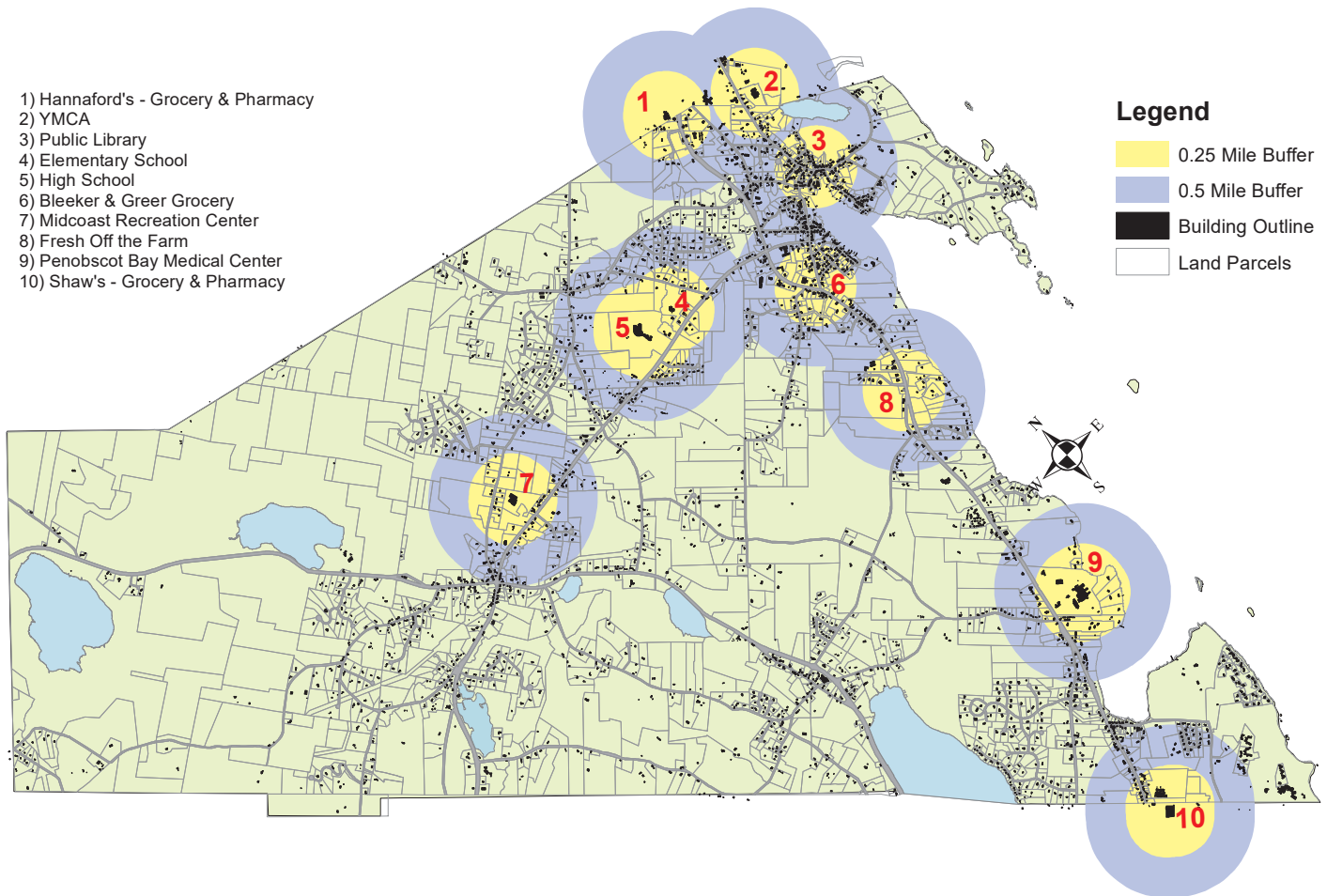
The challenges to the workforce housing market are twofold. First, investors that buy a property for the purposes of a short-term rental are willing to pay a purchase price based on the income value of a property. This typically exceeds what a home owner intending to live in the property would pay.

Second, the rental rate for a short-term rental typically far exceed the value a resident would be willing to pay for a year round rental occupancy. This in affect makes rental property out of reach for workforce housing.

Walkable neighborhoods

There is a growing trend toward walkability which is impacting the kinds of features people are looking for in housing and the way developers include amenities in new developments. In a 2015 survey by the National Association of Realtors, roughly eight in 10 respondents nationwide said that being within walking distance to amenities like shops and parks was very or somewhat important to them. Sidewalks and nearby public transportation were cited as desirable means to that end. These trends are becoming common across various age groups (see www.nar.realtor/research-and-statistics for more information).

Walkability Map indicating a 0.25 mile and a 0.5 mile radius buffer around essential services and amenities.



Economy

The table below provides an overview of Knox County's economic activity by industry sector according to the 2012 & 2017 Economic Census.

Economic Activity by Industry for Knox County (Source: Economic Census 2012,2017)				
Meaning of NAICS code	Number of establishments	Sales, value of shipments, or revenue (\$1,000)	Annual payroll (\$1,000)	Number of employees
Utilities	8	Q	4,458	64
Manufacturing	92	559,945	86,932	1,615
Wholesale trade	51	247,970	11,586	280
Retail trade	252	720,199	79,006	2,873
Transportation and warehousing (106)	51	32,247	10,938	332
Information	36	N	13,033	339
Finance and insurance	61	N	45,060	737
Real estate and rental and leasing	70	38,161	7,658	187
Professional, scientific, and technical services	133	69,495	25,580	511
Professional, scientific, and technical services	D	D	D	500 to 999
Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services	72	41,755	15,526	486
Educational services	D	D	D	100 to 249
Educational services	14	1,854	668	27
Educational services	D	D	D	100 to 249
Health care and social assistance	167	260,882	113,819	2,977
Health care and social assistance	106	89,900	47,730	1,084
Health care and social assistance	61	170,982	66,089	1,893
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	55	30,158	10,765	404
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	30	10,571	2,984	81
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	25	19,587	7,781	323
Accommodation and food services	175	128,530	39,312	1,612
Other services (except public administration)	145	82,630	23,990	671
Other services (except public administration)	108	57,342	17,267	493
Other services (except public administration)	37	25,288	6,723	178
Wholesale trade	11	67,733	3,015	56
Retail trade	86	249,642	25,334	1,011
Transportation and warehousing (106)	15	13,105	5,327	133
Information	13	N	6,946	188
Finance and insurance	21	N	15,142	337
Real estate and rental and leasing	18	7,974	D	20 to 99
Professional, scientific, and technical services	34	31,493	10,316	211
Professional, scientific, and technical services	34	31,493	10,316	211
Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services	13	10,414	4,797	170
Educational services	6	934	D	0 to 19
Educational services	D	D	D	0 to 19
Health care and social assistance	46	29,054	13,379	476
Health care and social assistance	17	7,956	3,591	124
Health care and social assistance	29	21,098	9,788	352
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	D	D	D	100 to 249
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	D	D	D	20 to 99
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	D	D	D	20 to 99
Accommodation and food services	51	38,535	13,084	606
Other services (except public administration)	46	29,021	7,885	234
Other services (except public administration)	35	14,648	4,835	148
Other services (except public administration)	11	14,373	3,050	86
D - Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual companies; data are included in higher level totals				
N - Not available or not comparable				
Q - Revenue not collected at this level of detail for multiestablishment firms				

Knox County Marine Economy

Many parts of the marine cluster are hard to track, specifically due to reporting rules and confidentiality requirements. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NOAA, utilizes seven high level sectors which can be used at the county state and county level to qualify marine economy, which includes Marine Construction, Living Resources, Offshore Mineral Extraction, Ship and Boat Building, Tourism and Recreation, Marine Transportation, and All Ocean Sectors. The table below shows the available data for each of these sectors.

Tourism and Recreation, for both Maine and Knox County, is the highest sector in terms of employment and GDP.

Data specific to Rockport is, unfortunately, not available.

Marine Economy, Maine and Knox County, 2019					
Ocean Sector		Establishments	Employment	Wages	GDP
Maine	Marine Construction	39	270	\$ 17,029,000.00	\$ 22,581,000.00
Maine	Living Resources	811	3,330	\$ 153,429,000.00	\$ 433,083,000.00
Maine	Offshore Mineral Extraction	13	53	\$ 2,632,000.00	\$ 11,516,000.00
Maine	Ship and Boat Building	87	13,271	\$ 958,856,000.00	\$ 633,153,000.00
Maine	Tourism and Recreation	2,525	24,550	\$ 685,213,000.00	\$ 1,426,635,000.00
Maine	Marine Transportation	59	2,325	\$ 109,983,000.00	\$ 136,416,000.00
Maine	All Ocean Sectors	3,534	43,802	\$ 1,927,141,000.00	\$ 2,663,385,000.00
Knox, ME	Marine Construction	Suppressed	Suppressed	Suppressed	Suppressed
Knox, ME	Living Resources	174	217	\$ 10,871,000.00	\$ 30,511,000.00
Knox, ME	Offshore Mineral Extraction	0	0	\$ -	\$ -
Knox, ME	Ship and Boat Building	Suppressed	Suppressed	Suppressed	Suppressed
Knox, ME	Tourism and Recreation	194	1,558	\$ 47,588,000.00	\$ 96,482,000.00
Knox, ME	Marine Transportation	Suppressed	Suppressed	Suppressed	Suppressed
Knox, ME	All Ocean Sectors	389	2,196	\$ 79,289,000.00	\$ 145,225,000.00
Suppressed: Data suppressed for Marine Construction and Marine Transportation, meaning there was not enough county wide data to protect privacy for existing companies.					

Tourism

Rockport's Tourism includes accommodations, retail sales, food service, and arts/entertainment/recreation.

In 2022, tourists spent more than \$8.6 billion in Maine. As one of the state's largest industries, tourism supported 151,000 jobs and contributed nearly \$5.6 billion in earnings to Maine's households. Visitors to the state also saved every Maine household \$2,172 in state and local taxes in 2022. – Maine Office of Tourism, 2022.

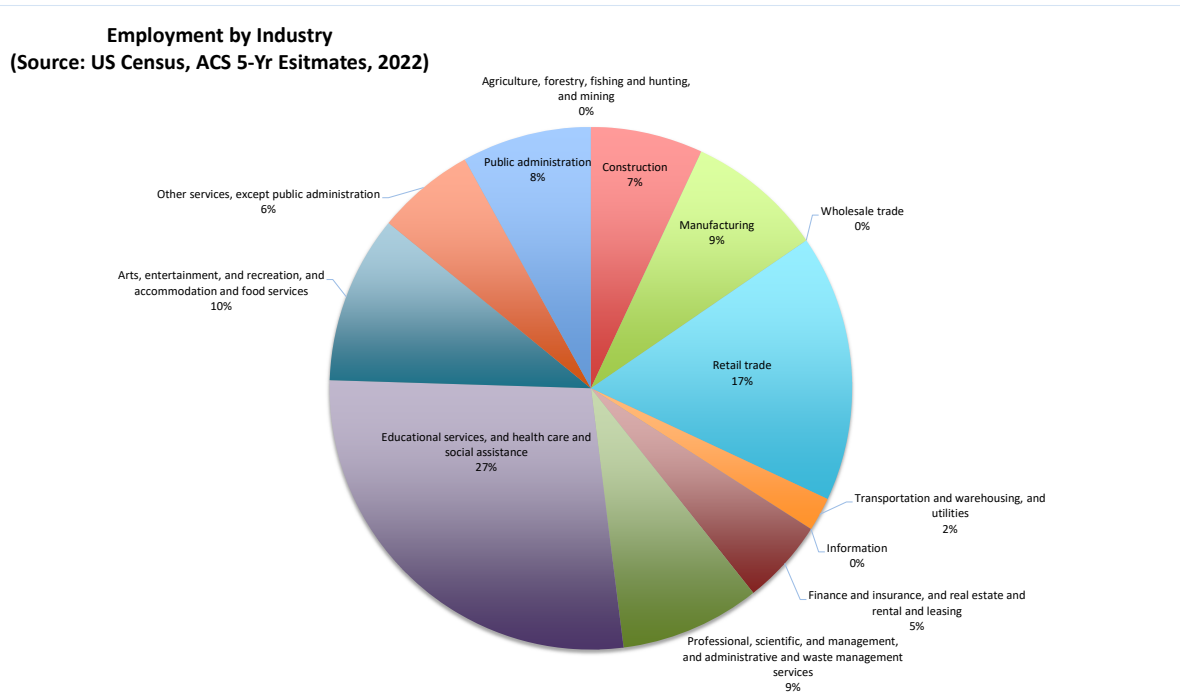
Employment

The largest employer in Knox County is located in Rockport, along with four employers with more than 50 employees, and several businesses that have more than 20 employees.

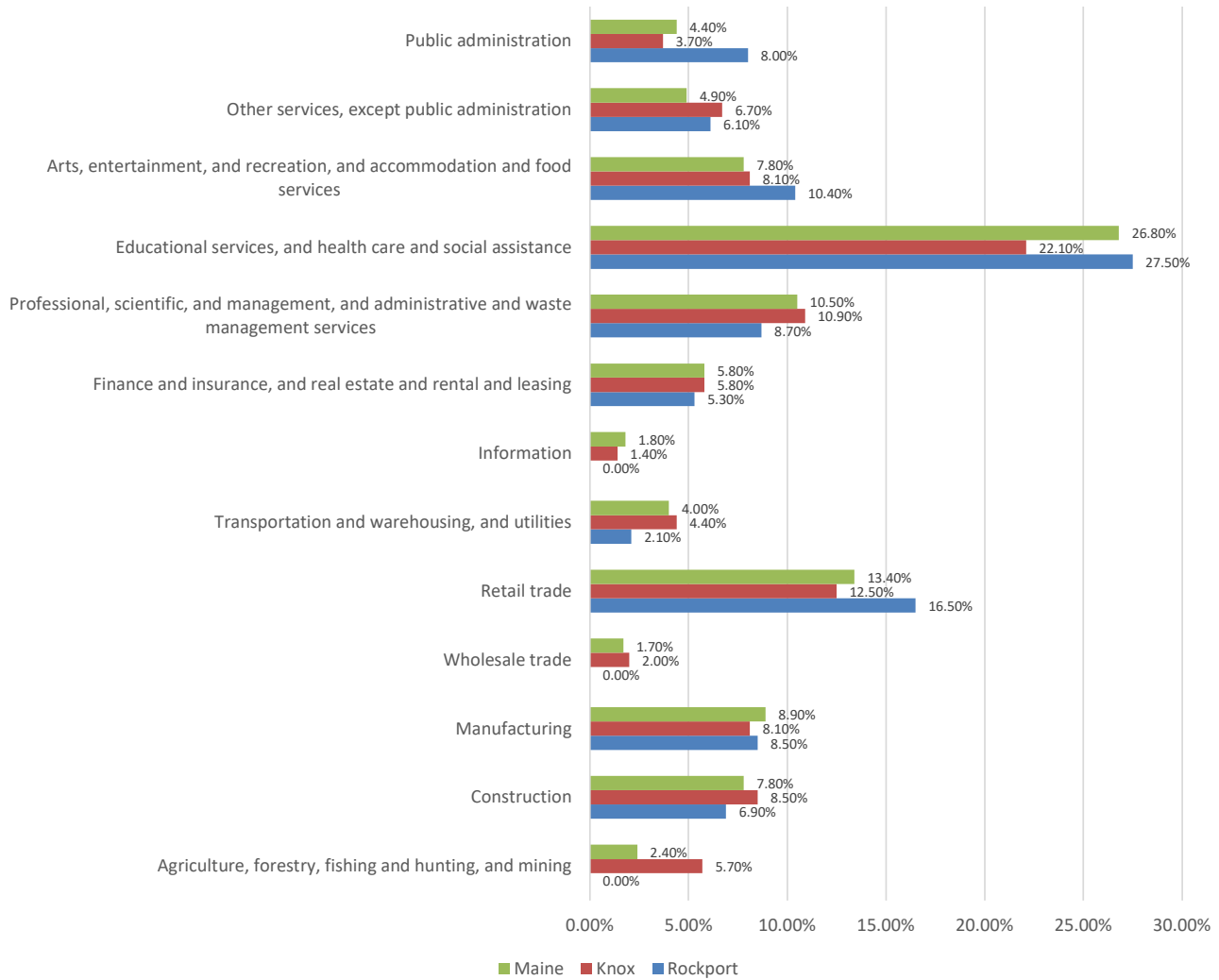
Employers in Rockport (with 20 or more employees)		
Employer Name	Employer Size	Industry Group
Medical Ctr	500-999	Health Care and Social Assistance
Vita	100-249	Accommodation and Food Services
chool Admin Dist 28	100-249	Education Services
t Resort	50-99	Accommodation and Food Services
it Security	50-99	Manufacturing
erprises	20-49	Other Services (except Public Administration)
	20-49	Accommodation and Food Services
ounty Homeless Coalition	20-49	Health Care and Social Assistance
port Outfitters	20-49	Retail Trade
alth Care At Home	20-49	Health Care and Social Assistance
st Recreation Ctr	20-49	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
i Kingdom Music	20-49	Retail Trade
e Designs	20-49	Construction
nlimited	20-49	Retail Trade
t Marine	20-49	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
On the Falls	20-49	Accommodation and Food Services
Rockport	20-49	Public Administration
boatworks	10-19	Manufacturing
d Waldorf School	10-19	Educational Services
Hospital For Animals	10-19	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
Inn At Camden Rockport	10-19	Accommodation and Food Services
if the Farm	10-19	Retail Trade
Bros Seafood	10-19	Accommodation and Food Services
Appliance Village	10-19	Other Services (except Public Administration)
ac Pharmacy & Home Care	10-19	Retail Trade
Construction	10-19	Construction
Indian Food	10-19	Accommodation and Food Services
liver Tennis Club	10-19	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
Veterinary Assoc	10-19	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
Italy	10-19	Accommodation and Food Services
hool	10-19	Educational Services
Dry Stone Work	10-19	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction
t Diner	10-19	Accommodation and Food Services
t Transfer Station	10-19	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services

Top 25 Employers in Knox County, 2022			
Rank	Name	Business Description	Employment Range
1	Mainehealth	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	1,001 to 1,500
2	Fisher Engineering	Construction Machinery Manufacturing	1 to 500
3	Wal-Mart Associates Inc	Warehouse Clubs and Supercenters	1 to 500
4	Mainehealth	Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities)	1 to 500
5	Samorock LLC	Hotels (except Casino Hotels) and Motels	1 to 500
6	Hannaford Bros Co LLC	Supermarkets and Other Grocery Retailers (except Convenience Retailers)	1 to 500
7	Mainehealth	Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities)	1 to 500
8	North End Composites LLC	Boat Building	1 to 500
9	Lowe S Home Centers LLC	Home Centers	1 to 500
10	Dupont Nutrition Usa Inc	All Other Miscellaneous Food Manufacturing	1 to 500
11	Mainehealth	Home Health Care Services	1 to 500
12	Penobscot Bay Ymca	Civic and Social Organizations	1 to 500
13	Hannaford Bros Co LLC	Supermarkets and Other Grocery Retailers (except Convenience Retailers)	1 to 500
14	Mainehealth	Offices of Physicians (except Mental Health Specialists)	1 to 500
15	The Home Depot	Home Centers	1 to 500
16	United Parcel Service	Couriers and Express Delivery Services	1 to 500
17	Camden National Bank	Commercial Banking	1 to 500
18	Lie-Nielsen Toolworks	Saw Blade and Hand tool Manufacturing	1 to 500
19	Dragon Products Company LLC	Cement Manufacturing	1 to 500
20	Shaw's Rockland	Supermarkets and Other Grocery Retailers (except Convenience Retailers)	1 to 500
21	Lyman Morse Boatbuilding Co Inc	Boat Building	1 to 500
22	Dst Asset Manager Solutions Inc	Telemarketing Bureaus and Other Contact Centers	1 to 500
23	Maritime Energy	Fuel Dealers	1 to 500
24	Seacoast Security Inc	Security Systems Services (except Locksmiths)	1 to 500
25	Tj Maxx Store Rockland	Department Stores	1 to 500

(Source: Maine Department of Labor, center for Workforce Research and Information)



Employment by Industry - County & State Comparison (Source: US Census, ACS 5-yr estimates, 2022)



The largest percentage of workers, about 27%, were employed in the educational services, and health care and social assistance sector.

Seasonal fluctuations in key industries

A few industry sectors experience seasonal fluctuations in employment. For this analysis, key industries with seasonal fluctuations include Retail Trade, Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation, and Accommodation and Food Services.

Average employment was highest in these industries for the third quarter (July -September) and the lowest for the first quarter (January-March)

SEASONAL VARIATIONS IN KEY INDUSTRIES FOR 2022					
(Source: Maine Department of Labor, center for Workforce Research and Information)					
Industrial Sector	Qtr.	Establishments	Average Employment	Total Wages	Average Weekly Wage
Total, All Industries	1	281	3,077	\$41,984,747	\$1,049
	2	279	3,308	\$44,631,843	\$1,038
	3	274	3,481	\$51,249,737	\$1,132
	4	276	3,262	\$53,662,391	\$1,265
Retail Trade	1	25	220	\$1,661,960	\$580
	2	25	276	\$2,272,086	\$632
	3	25	282	\$2,541,236	\$694
	4	27	254	\$2,287,437	\$694
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1	12	68	\$388,871	\$438
	2	12	75	\$500,432	\$516
	3	11	89	\$629,975	\$542
	4	11	68	\$587,563	\$661
Accommodation and Food Services	1	24	255	\$1,530,125	\$462
	2	25	322	\$2,259,932	\$540
	3	24	455	\$4,541,298	\$768
	4	25	319	\$2,796,015	\$674

Labor Force

Population 16 years and over (source: US Census, ACS 5-Yr, 2022)				
	Rockport #	Rockport %	Knox %	Maine %
Population 16 years and over	3,045	3,045	34,809	1,170,061
In labor force	2,103	69.10%	58.10%	61.70%
Civilian labor force	2,103	69.10%	58.00%	61.50%
Employed	1,958	64.30%	55.80%	59.50%
Unemployed	145	4.80%	2.20%	2.00%
Armed Forces	0	0.00%	0.10%	0.20%
Not in labor force	942	30.90%	41.90%	38.30%

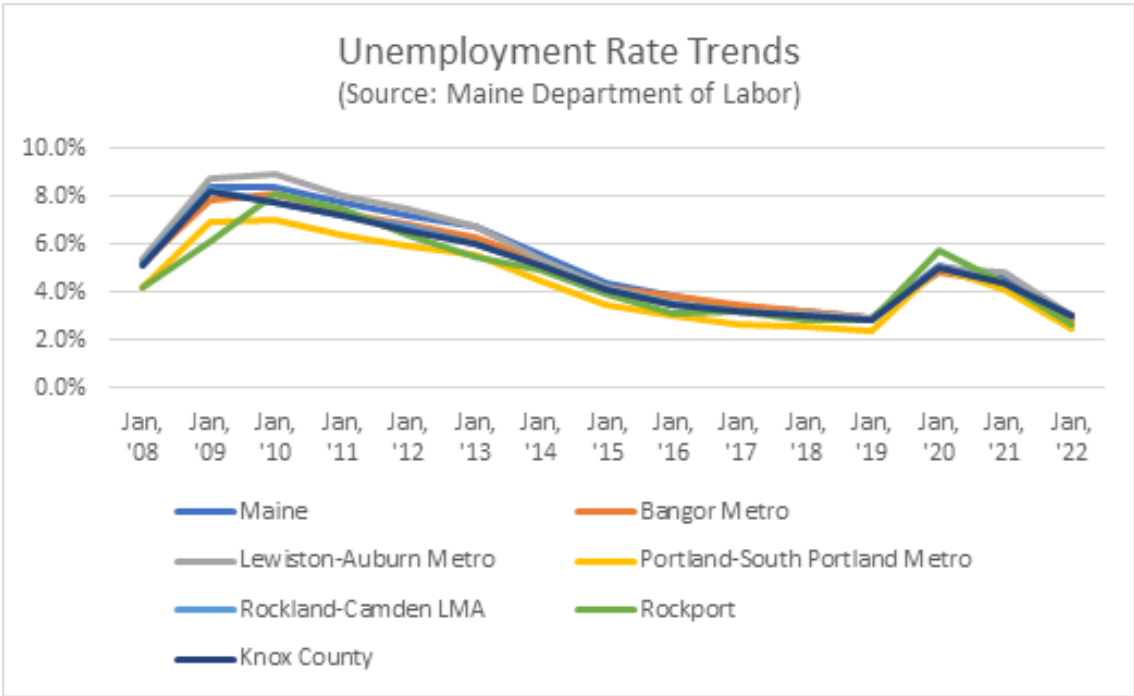
Changes in the Labor Force

Labor force participation for Rockport increased from 2010 to 2022, by 213 individuals.

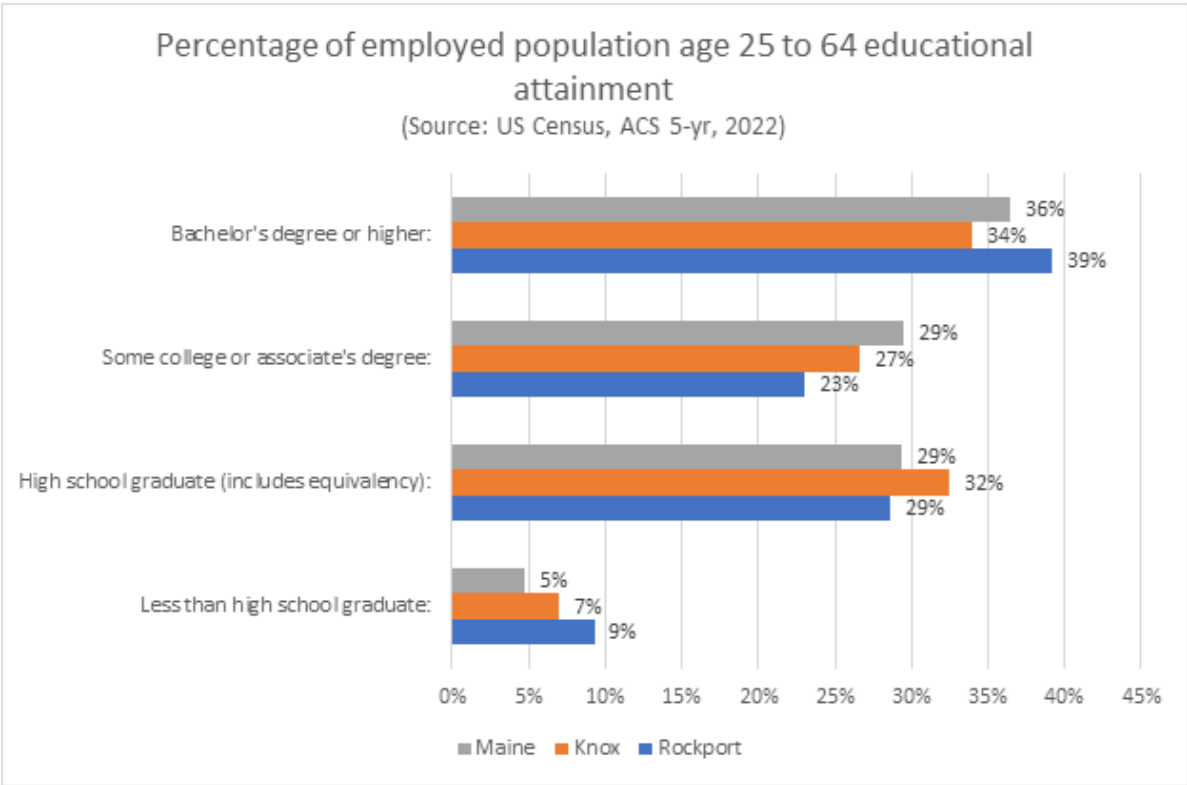
Population 16 years and over (source: US Census, ACS 5-Yr, 2022)		
	2010	2022
Population 16 years and over	2,698	3,045
In labor force	1,890	2,103
Civilian labor force	1,890	2,103
Employed	1,795	1,958
Unemployed	95	145
Armed Forces	0	0
Not in labor force	808	942

Unemployment Trends

Rockport’s unemployment rate decreased from 8.1% in 2010 to 2.7% in 2022. Unemployment regionally and at the state level shows this same downward trend.

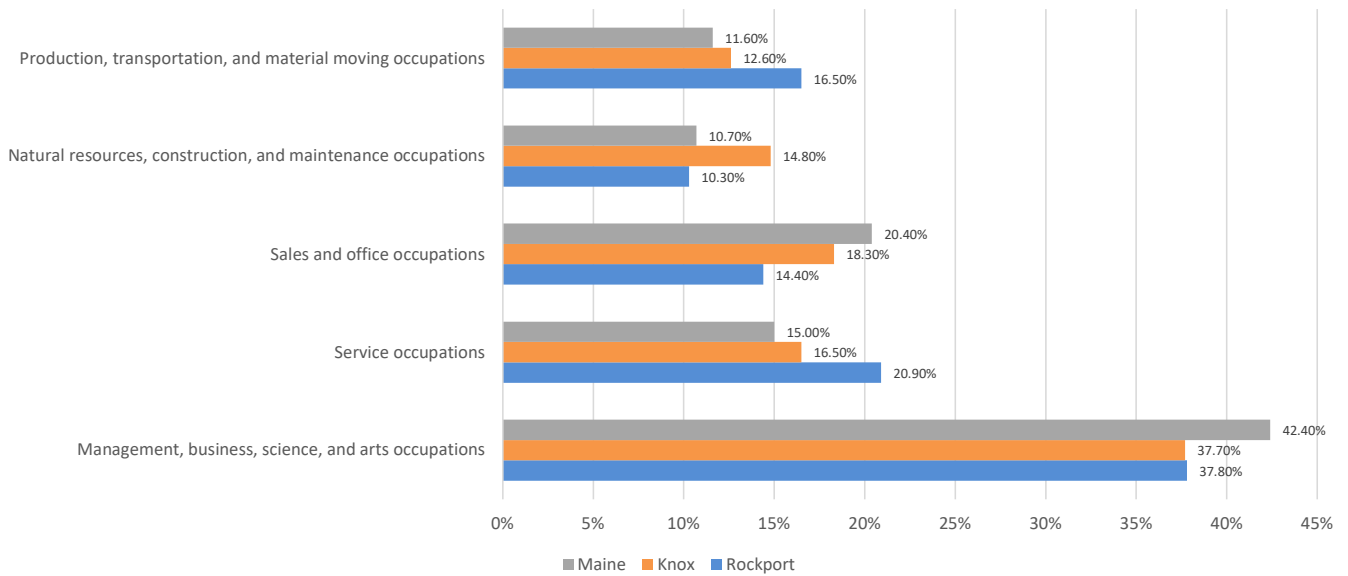


Labor Force Demographics



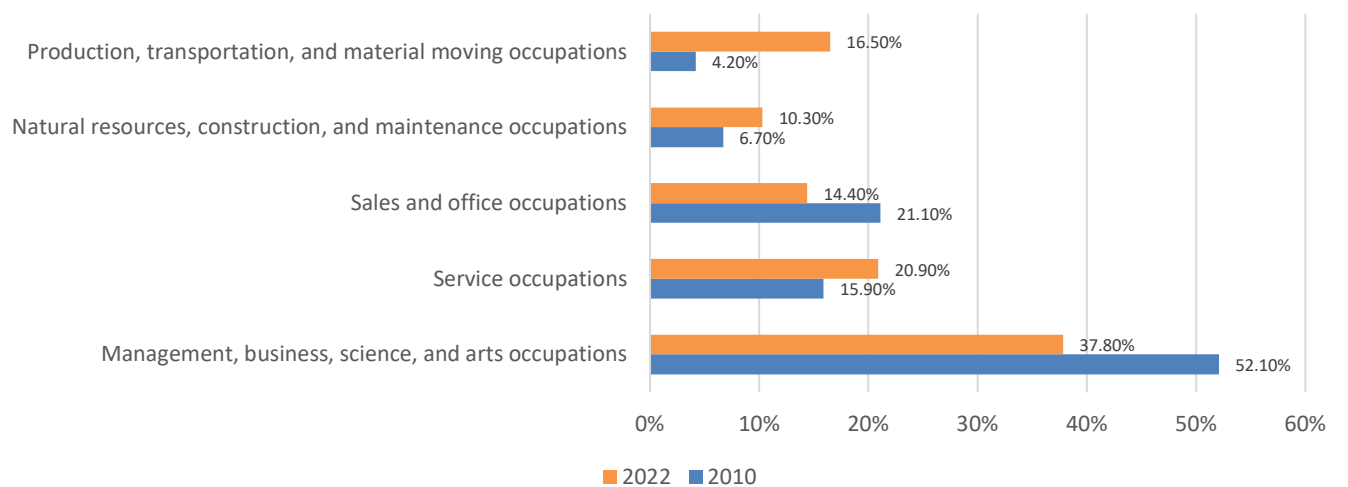
Percentage of Employed Civilian Population 16 years and over by occupation, 2022

(Source: US Census, ACS 5-yr, 2022)

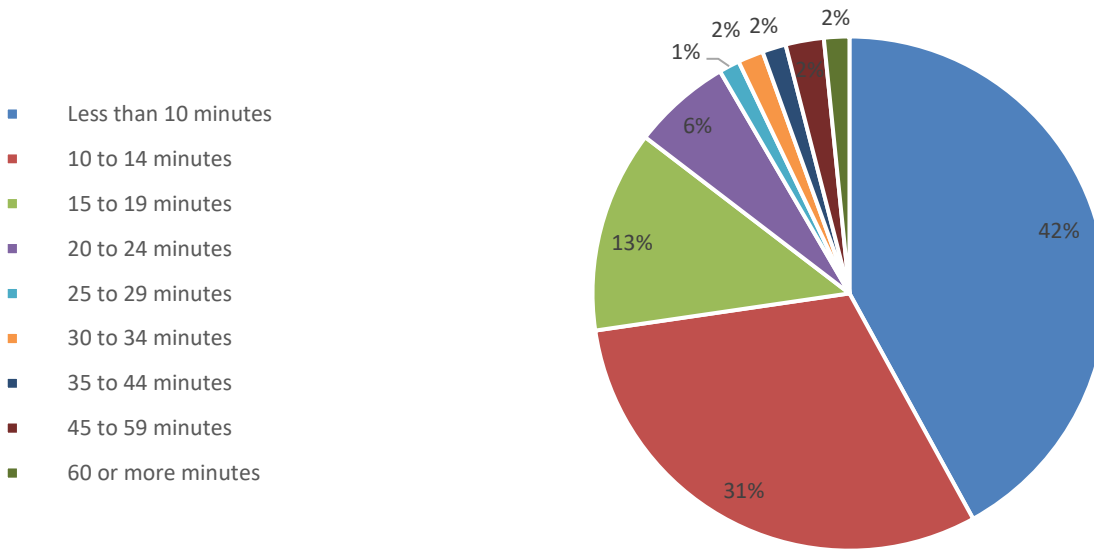


Percentage of Employed Civilian Population 16 Years and Over by Occupation, 2010 and 2022

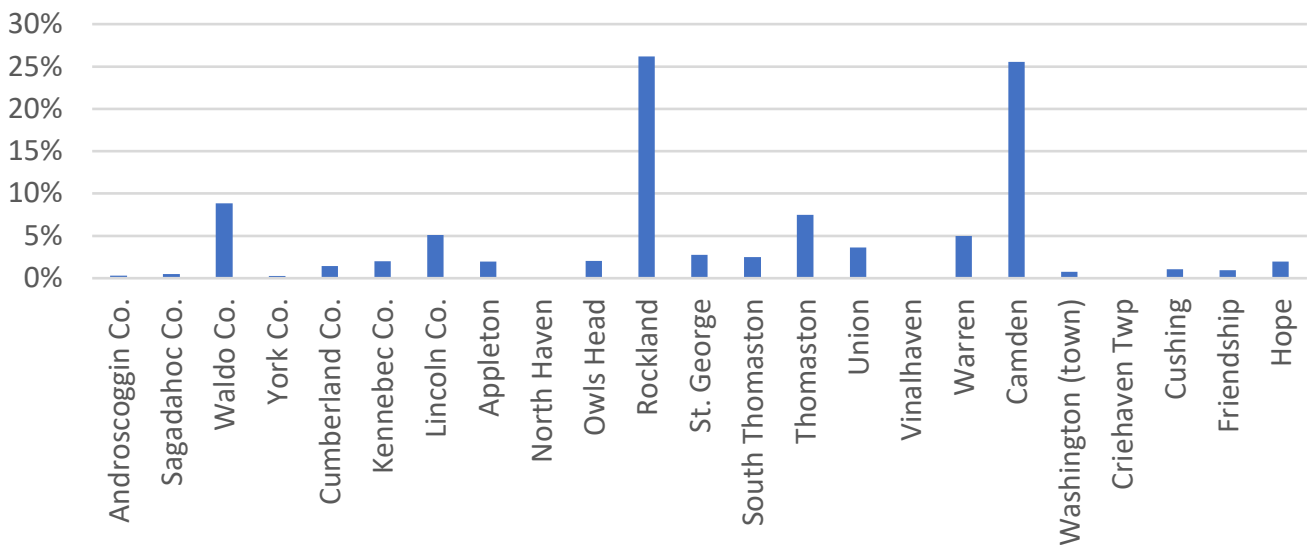
(Source: US Census, ACS 5 Yr, 2022)



Travel Time To Work
(Source: US Census, ACS 5 yr, 2022)

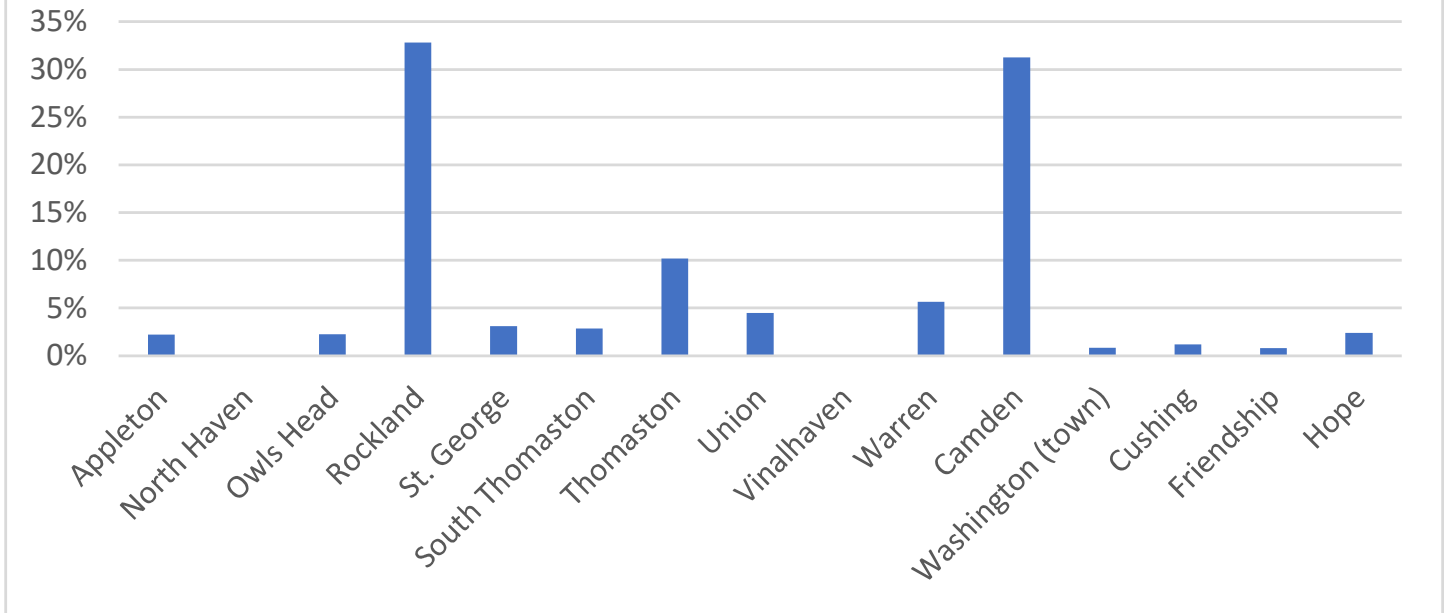


Commute to work in Rockport
(Source:MDOT traffic counts, 2021)



Commute to work from Rockport

(Source: MDOT Traffic Count, 2021)



Where does Rockport's workforce live?

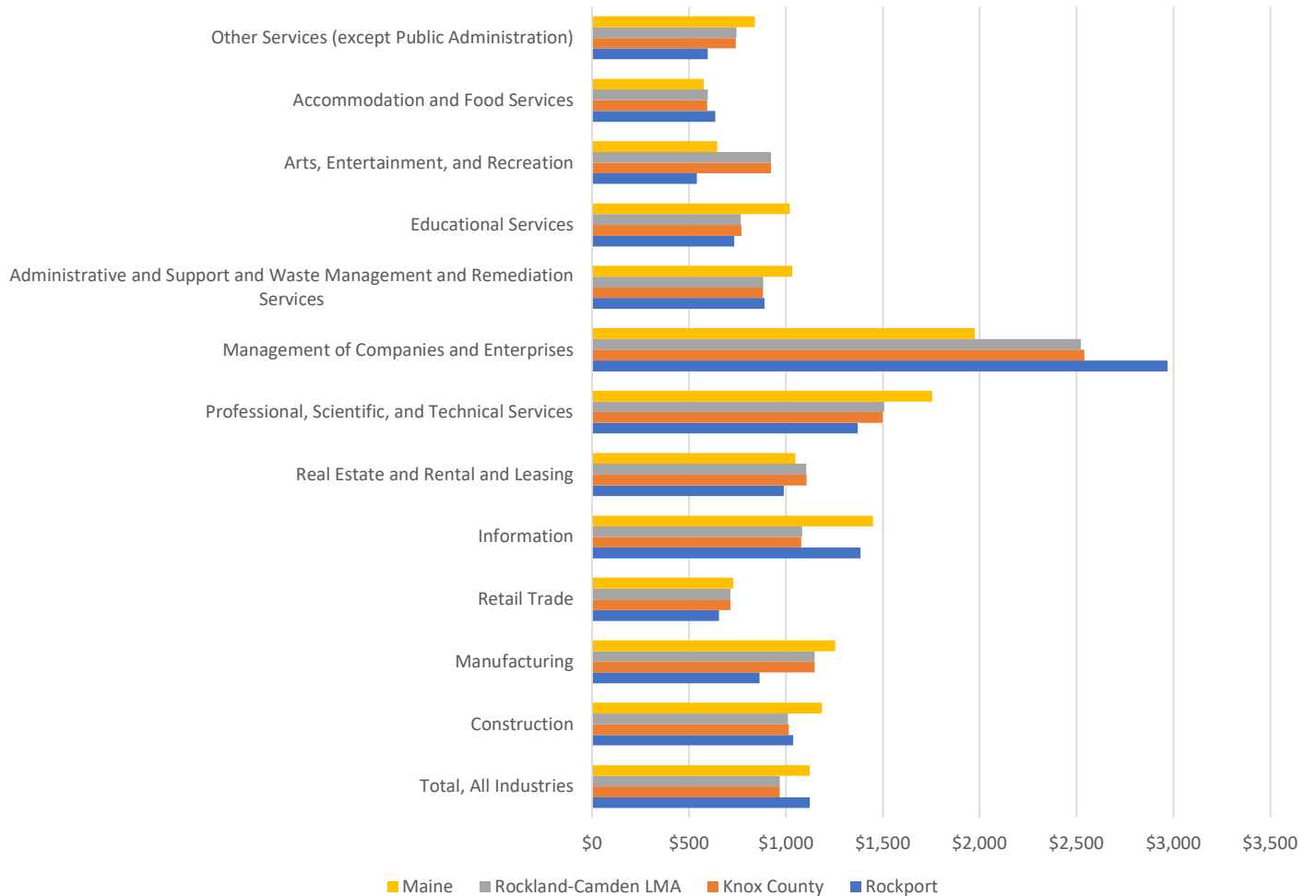
From Maine Department of Transportation's traffic count data from 2021, most of the workforce of Rockport is coming in from Rockland and Camden, followed by commutes from other towns in Knox County. There is about 10%-15% collective traveling in from other counties.

Comparison: Employment Sector (Source: US Census ACS 5-Yr, 2022)

	Rockport 2022		Knox 2022	Maine 2022
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	1,958		19,427	696,402
Private wage and salary workers	1,433	73.20%	75.70%	77.90%
Government workers	319	16.30%	11.10%	13.90%
Self-employed in own not incorporated business workers	192	9.80%	13.10%	8.00%
Unpaid family workers	14	0.70%	0.10%	0.20%

Average Weekly Wages by Industry, 2022

(Source: Maine Dept of Labor, Center for Workforce Research and Information)



Natural and Water Resources

Geology & Soils

Wildlife Habitat & Unique Natural Areas

Scenic Resources

Water

Geology and Soils

Geography

Approximately 25.5 square miles in size, Rockport lies along the Penobscot Bay coastline between Camden to the north and Rockland to the south. Bordering to the west are the towns of Hope and Warren; to the east is Penobscot Bay, and Rockport's two islands, Indian and Ram.

Within the town boundaries are seven Great Ponds totaling 611 acres; portions of five watersheds, 2,000 acres of wetlands, a stretch of rocky coastline, a deep harbor, a shallow cove with clam flats, farmland, blueberry fields, and elevated topography that is part of the Camden Hills.

At latitude 44 degrees north, Rockport's climate is influenced by its proximity to the ocean, with cool summer temperatures and moderate winter temperatures. Mean annual precipitation is approximately 50 inches, an average high temperature of 70.7 degrees Fahrenheit in August, an average of 69 inches of snow per year, with an average of 200 sunny days annually, and a comfort index of 9.2/10 in the summer and a 4/10 in the winter.

Topography and Soils

Rockport's bedrock consists of rocks crystallized at great depths from molten rock, including granite, volcanic rock, and rocks changed by heat and pressure. Much of Rockport's higher elevations are covered by only a thin layer of surface soil.

According to the Maine Geologic Survey, glaciers covered Maine up to four times during the past two million years. The most recent glacial episode in Maine began about 25,000 years ago, when the Laurentide ice sheet overspread New England. During its peak development, this ice sheet was up to one-mile in thickness, was centered in the Hudson Bay area, and flowed east to southeast across Maine.

Glacial till and the marine sediments of the Presumpscot Formation are the most prevalent surficial soil deposits in Rockport. Soils are generally suitable for pasture, blueberries, and tree-growing.

Habitat and Natural Areas

In 2002 and updated in 2012, the Maine Department of Conservation, Maine Natural Areas Program, Maine State Planning Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Maine Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, the Nature Conservancy, Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission, Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve, and Maine Audubon pooled resources and produced for Maine communities a collected series of documents and maps known as "Beginning with Habitat, An Approach to Conserving Maine's Natural Landscape for Plants, Animals, and People." The "Beginning with Habitat" report, resources, and maps were developed principally to help guide municipalities in land-use planning efforts. The maps, available online, delineate state and federally designated habitat that is considered rare and valuable, collecting various strands of data, regulations, and guidelines. The intent of the "Beginning

with Habitat” program is to conserve high-value habitats throughout towns by integrating natural resource information into planning. Conserving species through habitat conservation keeps species of concern from becoming endangered or threatened, and minimizes further additions to rare species lists.

The following is a list of Rockport’s natural resource assets that have been identified through maps provided by Beginning with Habitat, Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife.

- Chickawaukie Lake, western and northern ends, has been identified as habitat and location of the NEW ENGLAND BLUET, a dragonfly rated of special concern by the State of Maine. The habitat area and buffer area spreads in a wide circle into the lake, as well as on the adjacent shorelines and upland from the lake. THE NEW ENGLAND BLUET is restricted to emergent vegetation along shallow lakeshores, often with coarse substrates of sand and gravel. Individual bluets can move several hundred meters, depending on wind direction and speed. In limited sampling, there appeared to be a relationship between shoreline development and bluet presence, with bluets tending to occur more often along less developed lakeshores. A key land management consideration is the type of lakeshore vegetation; bluets seem attracted to old field vegetation adjacent to lakeshores, while avoiding closely mowed grass. Thus, where development abuts waterways, retention of an un-mowed strip at least several meters wide would be favorable for this species.
- Northern, eastern, and southern shores of Chickawaukie Lake are also determined to be HIGH-VALUE HABITAT of more than five acres for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Priority Trust Species. That habitat includes grass, shrub, and bare ground, as well as forest and forested wetlands.
- Rockport Village, in particular the HARKNESS PRESERVE, is home to the AMERICAN CHESTNUT tree, a rare species and natural community location of special concern to Maine’s Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.
- INLAND WATERFOWL/WADING BIRD HABITAT: Freshwater waterfowl habitats are characterized both seasonally and behaviorally as breeding habitat, migration and staging habitat, and wintering habitat. Wading bird habitat consists of breeding, feeding, roosting, loafing, and migration areas, and in Rockport, includes:
- TIDAL WATERFOWL/WADING BIRD HABITAT: Tidal waterfowl habitat is characterized both seasonally and behaviorally as breeding habitat, migration and staging habitat. Wading bird habitat consists of breeding, feeding, roosting, and migration areas. Habitats can include seaweed communities, reefs, aquatic beds, emergent wetlands, mudflats, and eelgrass beds.
 - This habitat runs along much of the Rockport coastline, and is especially prevalent in Glen Cove.
 - Rockport has shared tidal waterfowl and wading bird habitats with the City of Rockland along Penobscot Bay.
 - Ram Island, which sits less than one mile off of Glen Cove, is identified as a Sea Bird Nesting Island Number 63-323 by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

State of Maine Laws – pertinent to Natural Resources

NATURAL RESOURCES PROTECTION ACT (Title 38 M.R.S.A. Section 480).

Administered by the Department of Environmental Protection. This law is designed to protect the state's critical natural resources, including rivers and streams, great ponds, fragile mountain areas, freshwater wetlands, significant wildlife habitat, coastal wetlands and coastal sand dunes systems. There are several activities that require a permit from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) if performed over or adjacent to a protected natural resource. These activities include dredging, bulldozing, removing or displacing soil, sand, vegetation or other materials; draining or de-watering; filling; construction, repair or alteration of permanent structures. The DEP will only grant permits for activities that will not unreasonably interfere with existing scenic, aesthetic, recreational or navigational uses; will not cause unreasonable erosion of soil or sediment; and will not unreasonably harm the state's critical natural resources.

COASTAL MANAGEMENT POLICY (Title 38 M.R.S.A. Sections 1801 to 1805).

Administered by the State Planning Office, Department of Environmental Protection and Department of Conservation. This statement of policy is directed toward balancing the competing uses of Maine's coast. The policies encourage developing ports and harbors, managing marine resources and shorelines, increasing recreation and tourism and protecting natural and scenic areas, and water and air quality.

SHORELAND ZONING ACT (Title 38 M.R.S.A. Article 2-B). Administered by the Department of Environmental Protection. This law is designed to prevent and control water pollution; to protect fish spawning grounds, aquatic life, bird and other wildlife habitat...to protect commercial fishing...to protect freshwater and coastal wetlands...to conserve natural beauty and open space; and to anticipate and respond to the impacts of development in shoreland areas. It requires local governments to restrict certain land uses within 250 feet of the normal high-water line of any great pond, river or saltwater body, and within 250 feet of the upland edge of coastal or freshwater wetlands, and within 75 feet of the high water mark of a stream.

MAINE'S RIVERS LAW (Title 12 M.R.S.A. Sections 401 to 409). This law provides special protection for outstanding Maine rivers. The law protects these rivers from the construction of dams and hydro-electric facilities without consent of the state legislature. This establishes the policy of balancing the diverse needs of the public, particularly the need to restore fisheries, improve recreation, restore the water to fishable/swimmable standards, revitalize waterfronts, and maintain the scenic beauty of these rivers. The law requires several state agencies to cooperate to create a comprehensive river resource management plan for each watershed with a hydroelectric facility.

SUBDIVISION LAW (Title 30-A M.R.S.A. Sections 4401 to 4407). This law requires local governments to review applications for subdivisions. A subdivision will not be approved if it has an undue effect on the natural beauty of the area, or on rare and irreplaceable natural areas. The developer must map and identify all freshwater wetlands within the proposed area regardless of their size and indicate any rivers, streams, lakes and ponds so the town may consider the potential impact of the subdivision on these natural resources.

WATER POLLUTION CONTROL LAW. (Title 38 M.R.S.A. Sections 411 to 424)

Administered by Department of Environmental Protection. This law is designed to implement water pollution control measures by granting funds for municipal pollution abatement projects, and requiring licenses for discharges of waste into bodies of water. Narrow exceptions to this rule include 1) discharges of pollutants resulting from erosion related to agricultural activities, 2) discharge of snow dumps, if the Board determines the activity would have no significant adverse effect on the quality of water in the state, and 3) dredge related discharges if the party has a Federal permit under the Clean Water Act, and is discharging at an approved Army Corps of Engineers discharge site.

INTERSTATE WATER POLLUTION CONTROL (Title 38 M.R.S.A. Sections 491 to 501)

Administered by the Signatory States of the New England Water Pollution Control Compact. This law affirms Maine's support of the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Compact. The Compact states (Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Vermont and Maine) work together to manage interstate waters to meet the industry and agriculture's growing need for water and the growing population's increasing need for clean water for consumption and recreation.

SITE LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT LAW (Title 38 M.R.S.A. Sections 481 to 490).

Administered by the Department of Environmental Protection. This law is designed to control the locations of certain developments and subdivisions that may substantially affect the natural environment. The natural resources protected under this act are existing uses, scenic character, air quality, water quality or other natural resources in the municipality or in neighboring municipalities.

MAINE FOREST PRACTICES ACT (Title 12 M.R.S.A. Sections 8867 to 8869).

Administered by the Department of Conservation, Maine Forest Service. This law creates size limits for clearcuts, establishes requirements for buffer zones between clear cuts, requires reforestation within clearcuts, requires a forest management plan for clearcuts over 20 acres, and expands the authority of the Maine Forest Service to create and enforce water quality protection rules.

WATER CLASSIFICATION PROGRAM (Title 28 M.R.S.A. Sections 464 to 470).

Administered by the Department of Environmental Protection. Established to monitor and protect water quality. Maine's waters are divided into categories and within each category waters are designated a class rating AA, A, B, or C. Limits on licensed discharges of pollutants are determined based on these ratings. The State's anti-degradation policy is meant to prevent degradation of Maine's waters by forbidding any license that would allow additional discharges into a waterbody that doesn't currently meet the minimum standards of its classification.

Conserved Natural Areas

Of Rockport's overall size of approximately 12,750 acres, roughly 8% are under conservation (slightly more than 1,000 acres), either through easements or outright preservation parcels purchased by land trusts. This does not include the land placed by owners under the tax classification of open space, farmland, or tree growth. Conserved areas include:

- Aldermere Farm (136 acres): Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT) owns and manages the working 136-acre Aldermere Farm, which supports a world-renowned herd of Belted Galloway cattle and is permanently protected by conservation easements. MCHT is currently developing long-term stewardship plans.
- Erickson Fields Preserve (163 acres): MCHT owns and manages this preserve that is home to the Teen Ag Program, where local high school students work planting, harvesting, and distributing food to local hunger relief organizations, schools, and businesses.
- Harkness Preserve (23 acres): Owned and operated by Coastal Mountains Land Trust (CMLT), Harkness Preserve contains approximately one mile of hiking trails and views of Rockport Harbor.
- Beech Hill (295 acres): Beech Hill, consisting of open blueberry fields, hilltop, and wooded slopes, is owned and managed by CMLT. The Beech Hill Preserve allows public access on trails to enjoy views from the summit across Penobscot Bay and the Camden Hills while protecting current organic blueberry farming operation and habitat for rare grassland bird species.
- Sides Preserve (8.3 acres): Donated by Ginny and Andrew Sides, this preserve protects 1,400 feet of shoreline on Maces Pond. The northern portion is a popular spot to launch a canoe or wet a fishing line. A quiet trail moves south through the interior woods of the preserve and towards the southern end of the pond. The wetland near the pond's outlet is a great spot to look for many species of waterfowl. It is managed by CMLT.
- Beauchamp Point Preserve (2 acres): This picturesque headland beach, managed by CMLT, is an ideal picnic spot or a stopover on a paddle between Rockport and Camden.
- Rockport Shore (10 acres): Located within Beauchamp Point along Rockport Harbor, this unimproved preserve is managed by CMLT.
- Ragged Mountain Preserve (222 acres in Rockport): Overall, the Ragged Mountain Preserve is a 2,400 acre conservation and recreation area open to the public for both summer and winter trail use.
- Town of Rockport (145 acres): The Town of Rockport owns two conservation easements protecting the five acres of land between Lily Pond and the Penobscot Area YMCA complex, and approximately 140 acres of woods and fields at the top of Bear Hill. Both are monitored by the Rockport Conservation Commission.

Scenic Resource

As a town, Rockport has never officially designated scenic areas, although there are spots or landscapes that citizens informally and collectively refer to as important and treasured. They range from the Belted Galloways at Aldermere Farm to Rockport Harbor to the ridgelines of the hills of West Rockport. Mirror Lake, on the west side of Ragged Mountain, and the Glen Cove area with its views out to Penobscot Bay.

Vulnerability Assessment

Under a Community Resilience Partnership Grant issued by the State of Maine to Rockport in 2023, the Town, through the Conservation Commission, is completing an Ecosystem Vulnerability Assessment. That work is expected to be completed by the end of 2024 and will be used to identify specific actions necessary to protect Rockport's ecosystems and nature resources. This work will be uploaded to the Town's website and made available to the public.

Water Resources

Introduction

Rockport's freshwater resources include seven (7) Great Ponds (as defined by the State of Maine), portions of five watershed basins (and associated streams), various wetlands, and groundwater. Great Ponds, as defined in Title 38 MRSA 480-B, "means any inland bodies of water which in a natural state have a surface area in excess of 10 acres and any inland bodies of water artificially formed or increased which have a surface area in excess of 30 acres." This designation provides for other regulatory requirements related to public access and water quality standards, among others.

This section provides additional information on these resources and a discussion of potential water quality threats.

Great Ponds

Rockport's Great Ponds consist of Chickawaukie Lake, Tolman Pond, Grassy Pond, Lily Pond, Maces Pond, Mirror Lake, and Rocky Pond. In addition, Hosmer Pond, located in Camden at the base of the Snow Bowl ski facility and the source water for the Goose River watershed (which is largely in Rockport), is also designated as a Great Pond. As of 2024, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP) recognizes a total of 5,782 lakes in the state, of which 2,313 are listed as "significant," which was originally established by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U. S. EPA) under the Clean Water Act in the early 1990s. There are eight (8) categories for lake classification as of 2024, ranging from "attaining all standards" to "total maximum daily load (TMDL) alternative has been submitted" (for lakes with contaminants requiring an alternative standard). These standards apply to Rockport's Great Ponds.

The fundamental objective of the classification is to identify waters to help direct point¹ and non-point² source water pollution control efforts (primarily excessive phosphorus, leading to algal blooms). In Rockport, Chickawaukie Lake was treated for high levels of phosphorus in the early 1990s (was leading to large algal blooms) and as of 2024, that treatment appears to be waning (expected treatment lifespan was roughly 30 to 35 years), thus additional treatment may be necessary in the next several years. In 2024, Lily Pond was delisted by the MDEP, taking it from an impaired water body to one that has recovered from degradation due to runoff from the nearby landfill; this is a great success story. Mirror Lake and Grassy Pond are both monitored closely due to their status as a potable water source for the region.

Monitoring of these Great Ponds should continue. On an ongoing basis (including 2024), the Town of Rockport (through the Rockport Conservation Commission) provides funding for monitoring of these Great Ponds via the Lake Stewards of Maine program, which is administered by the MDEP. Parameters include Secchi depth (clarity), total phosphorus, temperature, and dissolved oxygen content. The data are maintained by the Rockport Conservation Commission and are available to the public.

Focus Area(s): As of 2024, significant effort will be required in the next several years to assess whether additional treatment for excess phosphorus will be necessary for Chickawaukie Lake. Responsible parties include Town of Rockport, City of Rockland, and the MDEP.

Watersheds

Portions of five watersheds basins are located in Rockport, three of which drain south to the St. George River and Muscongus Bay. Quiggle Brook drains west from Grassy Pond through Crawford Pond and is confluent with the St. George River. The Oyster River arises north of Mirror Lake, the discharge from which flows south through Tolman Pond to its confluence with the St. George River Estuary near Thomaston. Meadow Brook flows south from Mace's Pond to Chickawaukie Pond, a large shallow impoundment that straddles the boundary between Rockport and Rockland, and then south to its confluence with the St. George River. The Goose River, as well as several smaller streams that are part of the narrow coastal watershed (Ott Brook, Harkness Brook, Lily Pond Stream, and several stormwater drainages), drain to Penobscot Bay. The Goose River arises as the discharge from Hosmer Pond in Camden and is confluent with Penobscot Bay at the head of Rockport Harbor.

On an ongoing basis (including 2024), the Town of Rockport (through the Rockport Conservation Commission) funds water monitoring of various Rockport streams (Ott Brook, Harkness Brook, Goose River, Lily Pond Stream, and Winter Street Ditch) from roughly May through September through the Voluntary River Monitoring Program (VRMP), which is administered by the MDEP. Parameters include dissolved oxygen content, temperature, specific conductivity, and fecal indicator bacteria (e coli). The data are maintained by the Rockport Conservation Commission and are available to the public.

Focus Area(s): As of 2024, it has been observed that levels of fecal indicator bacteria are present at concentrations exceeding various regulatory criteria in the various monitored streams and stormwater conveyance piping that drain to Rockport Harbor, particularly following rain events. These need further evaluation to determine the potential source(s), including septic system failure within the various watersheds. Responsible parties including the Town of Rockport and the MDEP.

Rockport's Public Water Supply

The sources for Rockport's public water supply are Mirror Lake (112 acres, watershed 1.8 sq.mi.) and to a much lesser extent when it is used to supplement water levels in Mirror Lake, Grassy Pond. Both are located within Rockport on the west side of Town. Roughly one-third of Rockport's residents obtain their drinking water from this source, which also serves Rockland, Camden, Thomaston, and parts of Owls Head and South Warren. The Maine Water Company, a subsidiary of SJW Group, operates this public water system.

Protection for the water source and its associated watershed includes:

- Maine Water Company's ownership of the entire shoreline of Mirror Lake and Grassy Pond, and over 50 percent of the land area in the combined watersheds. The Town of Rockport's zoning code includes a water supply protection overlay district that regulates land use activity within the watershed of the public water supply.
- In 2019, Coastal Mountains Land Trust completed the purchase of a conservation easement protecting 500 acres of land surrounding Grassy Pond, owned by the Maine Water Company, in Rockport and Hope. The easement permanently protects

the entire shorefront of Grassy Pond. According to Maine Water company officials, water from Grassy Pond is typically pumped to Mirror Lake in late summer when water levels in Mirror have been depressed several feet due to water withdrawals and there has been insufficient precipitation.

Focus Area(s): Ongoing resource protection efforts by Maine Water appear to adequately address near term risks to water quality. However, over the longer term (multiple decades), water conservation efforts should be considered as part of a water resource resilience and preservation strategy, as population growth will begin to stress this relatively limited resource.

Maine Public Water Systems By County

12/2/2024

KNOX		OPER- ATING CTGRY	WATER SYSTEM TYPE	SOURCE	SOURCE TYPE
PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM NAME		PWSID			
ROCKPORT					
OAKLAND PARK BOWLING CENTER	ME0009242		NC		
				DRILLED WELL	WL
VILLAGE AT ROCKPORT #1	ME0092711		C		
				WELL 1- HILL TOP 8-19	WL
ASHWOOD WALDORF SCHOOL	ME0094551	VSWs	NTNC		
				500' BEDROCK WELL, 1995	WL
CENTER FOR FURNITURE CRAFTSMANSHIP	ME0095015		NC		
				200' BR WELL 12-29-1995 @5GPM	WL
VILLAGE AT ROCKPORT #2	ME0192711		C		
				WELL 3-CABANA DRIVE 23-34	WL
VILLAGE AT ROCKPORT #3	ME0292711		C		
				CABANA WELL 20-22	WL
VILLAGE AT ROCKPORT #4	ME0392711		C		
				WELL 4-MICHELLE LANE 6-22	WL

Groundwater

There are no significant aquifers in Rockport adequate to supply the Town as a whole or any other larger commercial or industrial use (Source: Maine Geological Survey). However, roughly two-thirds of Rockport's residents obtain their drinking water from groundwater wells and there is very limited data on individual wells, including location, depth, capacity, and water quality.

There are many emerging factors working against safe drinking water in Maine (and nationwide) including groundwater contamination from per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), impacts of extreme weather events (flooding, drought, etc.), supply chain disruptions, etc. The town should continue to work with Public Water Systems toward mitigating these factors in support of safe drinking water.

The town should continue to maintain, enact, and/or amend protections for all public wellheads, groundwater, and surface water in the Town of Rockport. Taking proactive measures to protect Rockport's wellheads, groundwater, and surface water will continue to support safe drinking water now and in the future.

Focus Area(s): With the next five years, an effort should be made to inventory the wells, as well as compile available data on flow capacity, depth, and to the extent available, water quality. This will allow for a longer term assessment of groundwater protection requirements that may be necessary to protect this valuable resource.

Floodplains

Floodplain areas are situated along Rockport's Harbor as well in the low-lying areas around the Goose River, and in close proximity to the ponds and lakes within Rockport. These floodplains are protected through Rockport's Floodplain Management Ordinance.

Focus Area(s): None currently identified.

Wetlands

Freshwater wetlands denoted by FEMA are found in many areas of Rockport. Wetlands are protected through State and Municipal shoreland zoning, floodplain management regulations, and are protected through Rockport's Land Use Ordinance, Chapter 1400 – Shoreland Zoning (approved by Maine Department of Environmental Protection). Freshwater and coastal wetlands are also protected by the Maine Natural Resources Protection Act and the U.S. Clean Water Act.

Stream Barriers

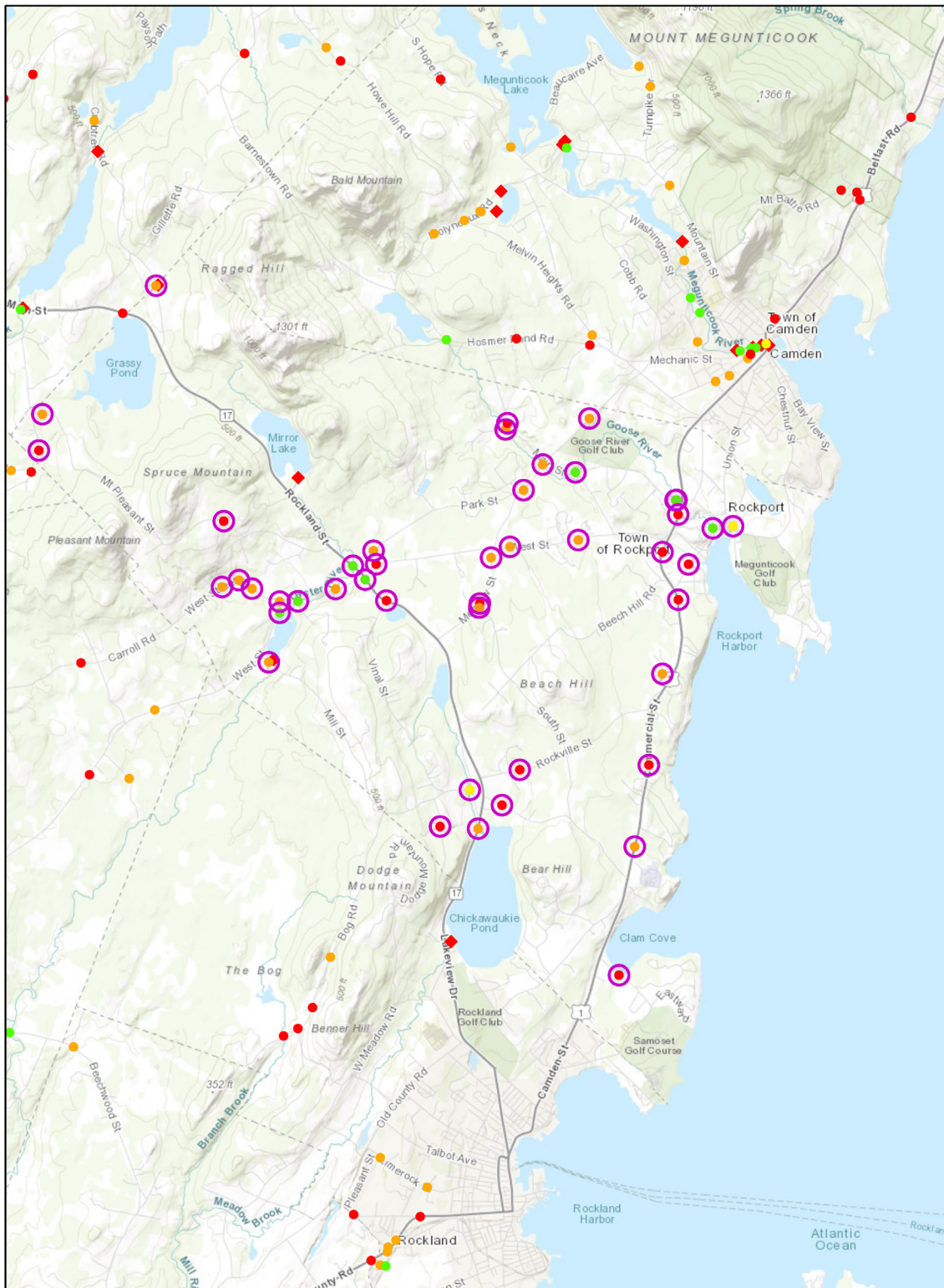
Barriers to fish and other aquatic animals occur where roadways cross over streams. The State of Maine has identified 15 Road/Stream crossing barriers in Rockport, and 20 potential barriers. More information on this topic can be found at the Maine Stream Habitat Viewer online at <https://webapps2.cgis-solutions.com/MaineStreamViewer/>

Maps

The following maps are formatted to fit this document, and therefor might come across as grainy. For this, we do apologize, and offer a digital version through Beginning with Habitat's website's Interactive Map Viewer: <https://webapps2.cgis-solutions.com/beginningwithhabitat/mapviewer/>

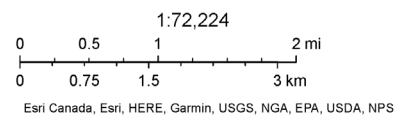
At Beginning for Habitat, the most up to date maps can be found for reference.

Rockport Fish Passage Barriers



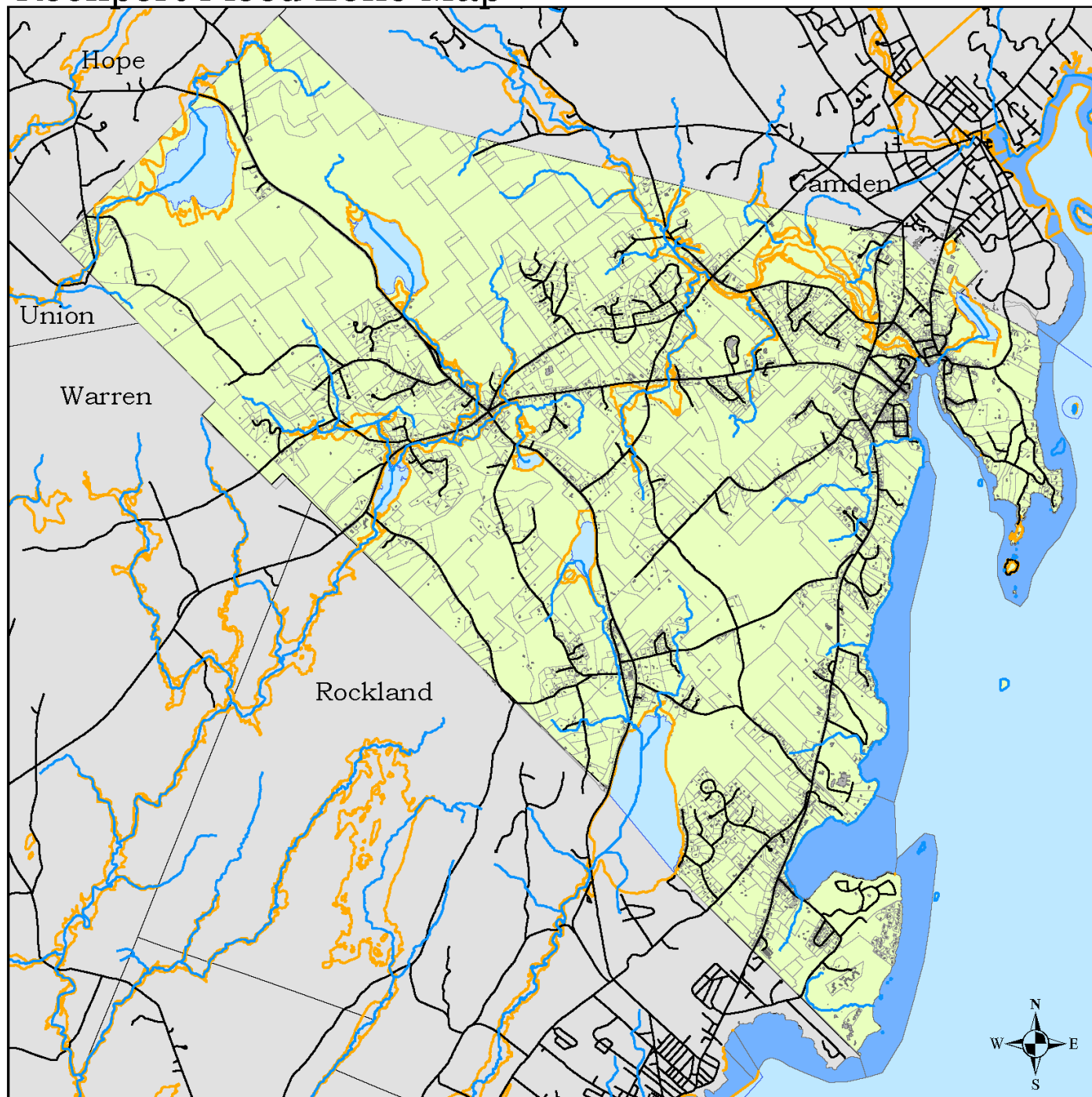
January 4, 2023

- Override 1 crossingsbarrierscr
- No Barrier
- Unknown crossingsbarriersdm
- Barrier
- Potential Barrier
- Barrier



Stream Habitat Viewer
 State of Maine Copyright 2017

Rockport Flood Zone Map



Legend

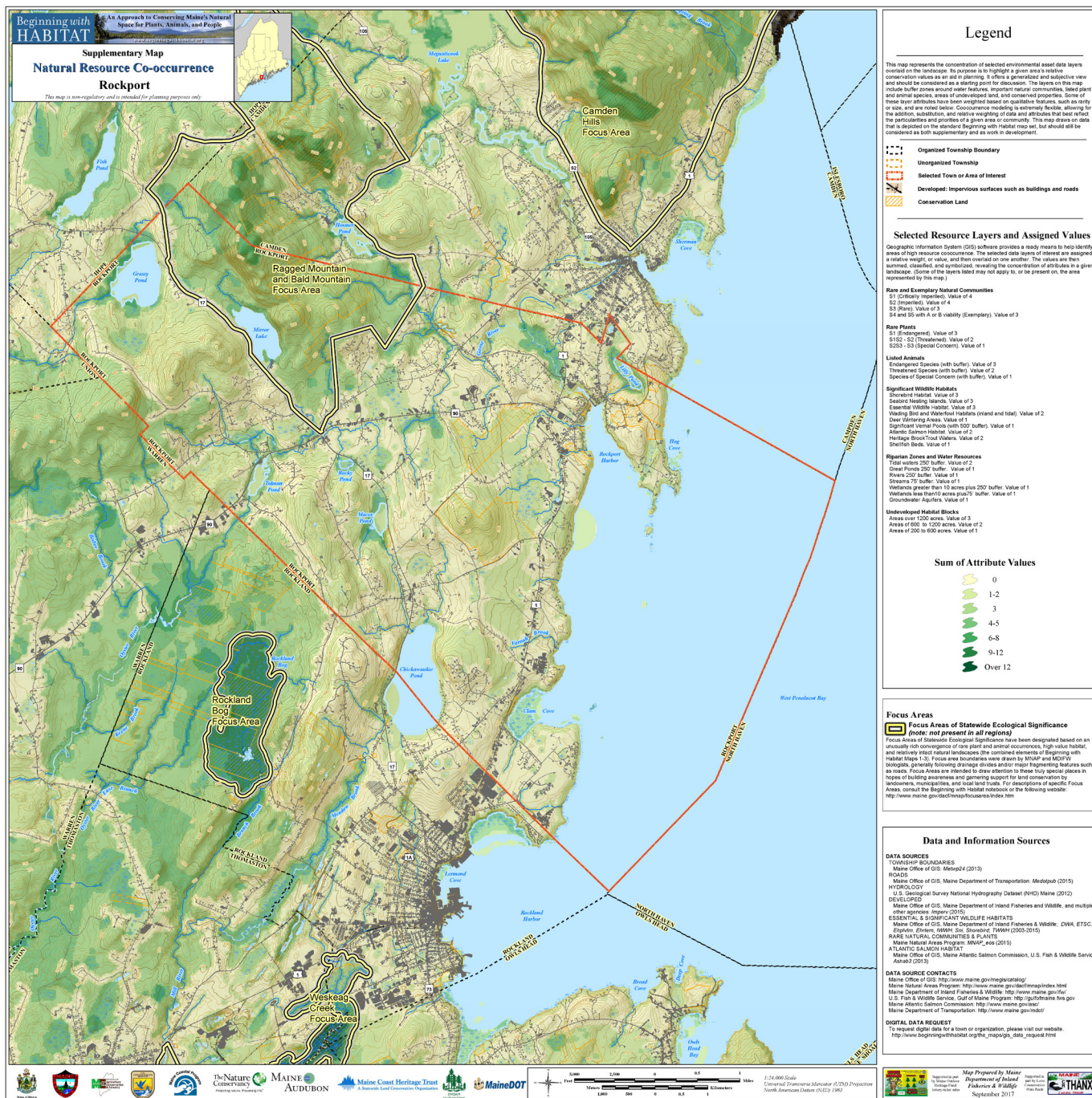
- Rivers / Streams
- Roads
- Zone A
- Zone VE
- Lakes and Ponds
- Building Footprint

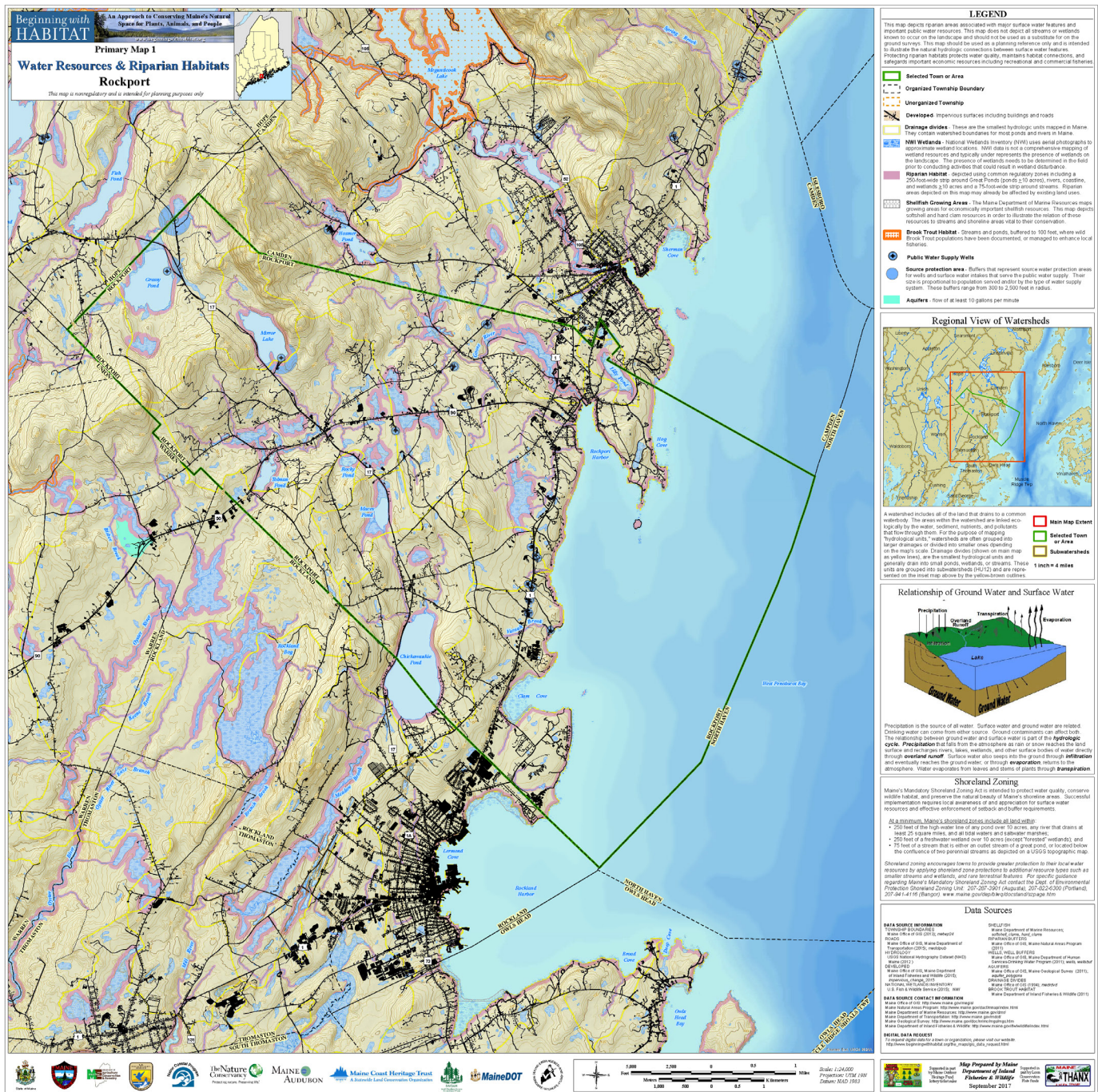
0 0.3 0.6 1.2 1.8 2.4 Miles

Data: FEMA data NFHL_23013C_LOMR Date 01/29/2021.
 Town of Rockport, ME.
 Map prepared by:
 Orion Thomas, MCRP.
 Planning and Development Director for the Town of Rockport
 Map created on: 01/05/2023









Marine Resources

Rockport Harbor
Glen Cove/Clam Cove
Brewster Point

Rockport Harbor

Rockport Harbor, facing due south, offers safe haven from coastal weather, thanks to its long stretch inland. Shaped like an upside-down letter V, the harbor extends from its northerly head, where the Goose River empties, due southward and gradually widens as it opens into Penobscot Bay. Sailors and fishermen can set a course for 0-degrees north as they enter the harbor and wind up at the bridge that spans the Goose River.

The head of the harbor is physically narrow and confined with relatively limited room for docking facilities. The harbor topography is rugged, which restricts the amount of commercial and recreational activity that can be accommodated. Therefore, due to limited space, Rockport's challenge is how to manage greater future demand for its harbor facilities.

Rockport Harbor is split into three sections: the inner, middle, and outer harbors. Most of the harbor offers protection from prevailing westerly winds, as well as north, northwest, and northeast winds. Boats, however, are not as well protected from the rare southeast storms, and the winds that pick up directly out of the south.

At its northerly edge, steep bluffs and small hills help protect the year-round boats from winter's northwest winds and northeast storms.

Nautical charts show the harbor edged with primarily a rocky shoreline, which drops off almost immediately to depths of 58 feet below mean low tide. The entire outer harbor has an almost consistent depth of 54 to 58 feet, from Indian Head Island to the Ledges on the east and from Rockport Ledges subdivision to Sea Street on the west.

The inner harbor, from the Ledges across to Sea Street, is also fairly deep at 20 to 30 feet, until the bottom shoals up at the low energy beach, a beach of mixed sediment and marsh grass, where a brook from Lily Pond discharges. Charts indicate that the harbor bottom is mud, and at the head of the harbor are mud flats and ledges.

In 1987, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers hired Prock Marine, of Rockland, to dredge the inner harbor to a low-water depth of 10 feet. Approximately 10,000 yards of silt were removed. At the same time, the town dredged the mouth of the Goose River to a five-foot depth. The 1987 dredging of the harbor removed sediment impacted with undocumented concentrations of polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons and lead from the bottom sediment, likely sourced from operation of the lime kilns in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Local dredging, if needed, will be handled in accordance with guidance from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

There are a few sand beaches on the harbor. A small sand beach with an intertidal boat ramp is located where Ott Brook joins the ocean at Sea Street. Similarly, there is a small gravel beach near Ship Street, where the Harkness Brook enters the harbor.

Goodie's Beach, acquired by the town in 2000 as a result of public money and private donations, offers the public a sandy beach on the waterfront just adjacent to the town-owned Marine Park.

The west side of the harbor is mainly glacial marine deposits (Presumpscot formation, mostly silt and clay). The harbor floor from the harbor beacon, which is near Ship Street, to the head of the harbor, near the town wharf and Rockport Marine, is relatively flat. The Marine Park was once home to lime kilns, the old railroad, and the former Homeport Fish Plant, before it was purchased by the Friends of Rockport Harbor in 1970 and repurposed for public use.

The east side of the harbor is characterized by steep boulders and ledges. Mechanic Street is fully developed with ramps and floats providing homeowners private access to the ocean. Most of the floats can accommodate deep draft boats. The Ledges, on Beauchamp Point Road just beyond the winter closure point, offers public access to the water.

It should be noted that Rockport Harbor provides the town with additional income in the form of increased taxes due to increased property value. Additional benefit accrues to the town as a result of employment opportunities at the boatyard on the harbor, other boatyards away from the water yet still in town, commercial lobster fishing, and commercial recreational boat operations that engage in charter sailing and transportation on Penobscot Bay and beyond. Rockport residents support and encourage the continuation and strengthening of the harbor's commercial base. Rockport residents appear comfortable with the existing mix of commercial and recreational uses.

The traditional water-dependent uses are closer to thriving than declining, however this is contingent upon sea level rise and what the Town ultimately decides to do with the Town-owned infrastructure that allows the commercial fishermen's pier to operate and a ramp where boat builders and boat owners can launch their vessels. If nothing is done in the next 10 years, the viability of the Harbor as it is known today is at risk due to sea level rise.

Today, there is reasonable balance between water-dependent and other uses in the harbor, mainly due to Marine Park and the commercial portion on the other side of the Goose River. Marine Park provides access to all pleasure crafts, as well as public access to the water with a beach. The commercial side provides access to all commercial aspects, from fishermen to boat storage/repair, to the Rockport Boat Club, and additional parking needs for the downtown district.

Zoning for the working harbor is fortunately tolerable within the shoreland zoning overlay, for this is not in a "Resource Protection Shoreland Overlay." The local zoning is acceptable for any municipal need to take place on the parcel.

Access to the harbor is adequate, however, parking is not. The Town has a Parking and Traffic Ordinance in place and is in the process of addressing the parking demands of those using the downtown and harbor.

All important points of visual access have been identified in the town and are protected outside of clearing trees for visual preservation of the harbor.

- Working Waterfront
- Rockport Harbor
- Glen Cove / Clam Cove
- Ram Island
- Brewster Point

Working Waterfront

The Town of Rockport has a long history of protecting access for commercial fishermen at the Town Landing, on the commercial (east) side of the harbor. Fishermen have two floats exclusively reserved for their use with adequate space for 20 dinghies. The number fluctuates but, as of 2024, Rockport has roughly 20 fishermen operating out of the harbor. They appear to have enough space for loading and unloading. Fishermen have priority in the allocation of inner harbor moorings, which is another testament to the town's placing high value on the concept of a working waterfront.

Mooring and Dinghy Space

There are approximately 280 moorings in Rockport Harbor, the majority allocated to private boat owners. The remaining are split between commercial rental moorings and commercial craft. Dinghy space, to provide private boat owners with access to their moored boats, continues to be inadequate to meet demand. Solutions to this problem remain elusive with only 14 floats at Marine Park for the use of yachtsmen. The Marine Park floats can only service 62 recreational dinghies and there is a long waiting list for dinghy space at the town office.

It is estimated that more than \$100,000 is needed to replace aging floats at Marine Park. These floats will need to be replaced and the possibility exists that a replacement set of floats could be designed to create more in-the-water dinghy space.

Rockport Boat Club

The Rockport Boat Club was founded in 1948 by 40 year-round and summer residents. Since that time, the club's membership has increased to the limit of the club's facilities. The Boat Club is an important feature of Rockport Harbor, located at the head of the harbor, on town owned land and operates through a lease with the town.

Club activities are both social and boating related. Of perhaps the greatest importance is the junior sailing program that has been sponsored by the Rockport Boat Club since 1973. That program is open to children of members and non-members. Scholarships are available for children whose parents cannot afford the instruction cost. The sailing program is run as a public service on a break-even basis by the Boat Club.

Public Access and Recreation

In addition to docking facilities and the boat launch ramp at the head of the harbor, public access is provided at several other locations, including Walker Park, Goodie's Beach, and the east side Ledges, which is owned by the Dodge family and protected through a conservation easement held by the Coastal Mountain Land Trust. Additional public access points include Aldermere Farm and Clam Cove, for public swimming, fishing, picnicking, small boat launching, and relaxation.

Public access to a scenic overlook of the outer harbor is also available at the Harkness Preserve, off of Spruce Street. It is maintained by the Coastal Mountain Land Trust. Residents may not be well informed about the availability of water access points and how they can be used. The ability of Maine residents to gain access to their coastal waters has been a persistent issue over the past few decades.

Areas of the coastal trail system have been lost due to denied permission from landowners and, in some cases, new opportunities have been created such as the Aldermere Farm trail system which extends to water destinations on the east side of Beauchamp Point.

Harbor Water Quality

The waters of Rockport Harbor have an SB classification, according to the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. As such, the water should be suitable for recreational purposes, as well as aquaculture, shellfish harvesting, and navigation. The marine, fish, and estuarine habitats are characterized as unimpaired, and discharges to SB classified waters shall not adversely impact those habitats.

The Rockport Conservation Commission monitors water quality at four established locations within the harbor on a monthly (minimum) basis, generally from May through September. Parameters include Secchi depth (water clarity), temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen, chlorophyll, phosphorus, nitrogen, enterococcus bacteria, and pH. Many of the parameters are measured as depth profiles from the surface to the bottom. The results are available to the public and are also shared with the VRMP program managed by the Maine DEP.

In addition, the Town of Rockport collects water samples from Goodie's beach pursuant to the Maine Healthy Beaches program. The Rockport Conservation Commission has worked with the Town to establish guidelines on beach access during and immediately following heavy rain events when bacteria levels may be elevated.

Economics of Rockport Harbor

Rockport Harbor's history is rich with industry, ranging from fishing, shipbuilding, export of natural resources, fish packing, and lime extraction. Today, there is moderate activity, with fishing, boatbuilding, and tourism as the primary businesses at work.

Boats and Marine Facilities

Marine facilities at Rockport Harbor include floats, finger floats, a launching ramp at the Marine Park, the Rockport Boat Club float, commercial floats at the bottom of Main Street and the town wharf, and the privately-owned Rockport Marine docks and floats.

At the Marine Park, a new harbor master's building was constructed in 2001, providing toilets, showers, and laundry facilities to the public.

Department of Marine Resources State fishing vessel/license data

License Year	2023												
Count of License	Column Labels												
Row Labels	Commercial Fishing Crew (CFC)	Commercial Fishing Single (CFS)	Commercial Pelagic and Anadromous Crew (CPC)	Elver 1 Fyke Net (E1)	Elver 1 Fyke Net Crew (E1C)	Elver 2 Fyke Nets Crew (E2C)	Elver Dip Net 1 Fyke Net (E6)	Green Crab (GC)	Lobster/ Crab +70 (LC0)	Lobster/ Crab Apprentice (LA)	Lobster/ Crab Class 1 (LC1)	Lobster/ Crab Class 2 (LC2)	
ROCKPORT		2	1			1			3	1			4
WEST ROCKPORT	1			1	1		1	1			1		
Grand Total	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1		4
		Lobster/ Crab Class 3 (LC3)	Lobster/ Crab Class 3 +70 (LC30)	Lobster/ Crab Non Commercial (LNC)	Lobster/ Crab student (LCS)	Menhaden Commercial (MENL)	Recreational Saltwater Fishing Operator (SWRO)	Recreational Saltwater Registry (SWR)	Scallop Non Commercial (NCS)	Sea Urchin with Tender (SUWT)	(blank)	Grand Total	
		6	1	7	5	1	1	16	1	1			51
				1									7
		6	1	8	5	1	1	16	1	1			58

License Year	2023																			
Count of Vessel Length	Column Labels																			
Row Labels		1	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	32	34	35	36	41	47 (blank)	Grand Total
ROCKPORT		1	1	1	2	2	2		2	3	1	1	1	5	1	1	4	1	1	30
WEST ROCKPORT								1						1		1				3
Grand Total		1	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	3	1	1	1	6	1	2	4	1	1	33

Federal Dealer Permit

DEALER NUMBER	DEALER NAME	ADDRESS LINE 1	ADDRESS LINE 2	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	TELEPHONE	FAX	DATE OF ISSUE
4272	GRAFFAM BROS SEAFOOD MARKET	PENOBSCOT BAY ICE CO INC	PO BOX 340	ROCKPORT	ME	04856	207-236-8391	207-236-6715	20 Jan 2024
BLUEFISH	BLACK SEA BASS	BLUEFIN TUNA	OTHER TUNA	SPINY DOGFISH	SUMMER FLOUNDER	HERRING DEALER	HERRING PROCESSOR	LOBSTER	MONKFISH
X		X	X		X			X	X
MULTISPECIES	RED CRAB	SEA SCALLOP	SCUP	SF/OQ DEALER	SF/OQ PROCESSOR	SKATE	SMB	MACKEREL AT SEA PROCESSOR	TILEFISH
X		X					X		

License Year	2023	
Count of License Name	Column Labels	
Row Labels	ROCKPORT	Grand Total
Lobster Meat Permit (LMP)	1	1
Reshipper (RS)	1	1
Retail Seafood (R)	5	5
Shellstock Shipper (SS)	1	1
Wholesale no lobster (W)	1	1
Wholesale with lobster (WL)	1	1
Wholesale with lobster supplemental (WLS)	1	1
Grand Total	11	11

Federal Fishing Permit

PERMIT	PERMIT YEAR	VESSEL NAME	HULL ID	OWNER NAME	TELEPHONE	ADDRESS LINE1	ADDRESS LINE2	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	HOME PORT CITY	
251907	2024	YES DEAR	1314795	ROBERT RICK	207-691-7075	MISTIC		ROCKPORT	ME	04856	VINALHAVEN	
HOME PORT STATE	PRINCIPAL PORT CITY	PRINCIPAL PORT STATE	LENGTH	GROSS TONS	HORSEPOWER	MAX TRAP LIMIT	BLUEFISH	BLACK SEA BASS	SPINY DOGFISH	SUMMER FLOUNDER	INCIDENTAL HMS SQUID TRAWL	
ME	VINALHAVEN	ME	41.0	34.0	1000	800						
HERRING	GENERAL CATEGORY SCALLOP	AMERICAN LOBSTER	MONKFISH	NORTHEAST MULTI-SPECIES	OCEAN QUAHOG	ATLANTIC DEEP SEA RED CRAB	SCALLOP - LIMITED ACCESS	SCUP	SURF CLAM	SKATE	SQUID/MACKEREL/BUTTERFISH	TILEFISH
		A1										

Sea Level Rise

Much has been documented across the state in terms of impacts due to increased storm frequency and sea level rise, and Rockport is no different. The storms in early 2024 resulted in significant erosion to the bulkhead walls and the upland soils normally not submerged. In addition, significant damage was experienced by the Rockport Boat Club, in addition to many private piers and boathouses. The Town of Rockport is currently undertaking an effort to identify vulnerable areas, as well as determine a future for the harbor area consistent with the goals of the Maine Won't Wait program.

Aquaculture

There is uncertainty about the potential for clam production in Clam Cove in the future. The continued pollution from the stream under Warrenton Road, and other sources, as well as the presence of predator populations, hold back the commitment of human and economic resources to restoration. Streams entering Clam Cove from the surrounding watershed remain polluted, causing the area to not be opened for shell fishing even if a robust clam population existed.

Overboard Discharge

As of 2024, there is one remaining overboard discharge system along Rockport's coastal shore, licensed by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection.

Glen Cove (aka Clam Cove)

The neighborhood of Glen Cove lies at the south end of Rockport at the town line with Rockland. Its waterfront is otherwise referred to as Clam Cove, named for its former abundance of the almighty clam.

Clam Cove is a broad, shallow cove that faces east toward North Haven. It is well protected from the prevailing winds and swells, and is an ideal habitat for quahogs, surf, and soft-shelled clams. With a narrow, sandy beach, the cove is surrounded by houses along Warrenton Street, and protected from Route 1 by steep bluffs. On its south side, the cove is currently abutted by private and wooded land. A small town-owned picnic area accessed from Route 1 allows the public to enjoy the view and walk to the beach.

The shoreline is protected from high waves with ledges at the head of the cove. Proceeding to about 10 feet below mean low-water depth, there is a boulder ramp, mudflats, and areas of accumulated sediment where waves wash onto the flats, creating swash bars.

The area's fragile yet rich habitat for marine life, mammals, reptiles, and birds is well outlined in a complete natural resource inventory compiled by Rockport in 1989. Sixty-one species of waterfowl and migratory birds, including geese, loons, ducks, and osprey have been recorded there, and the shrubbery around the cove offers protection to migratory and land birds, as well as deer, fox, and other wildlife.

Pollution, primarily residential discharge, had officially shut the mudflats for shellfish harvesting on May 18, 1962, as well as along the shore that runs to the Rockland breakwater. The pollution of fecal coliform has kept Clam Cove closed to clamming since that time. More study is needed to determine with restoration efforts may be successfully completed in a cost-effective way.

Ram Island

Ram Island, which sits less than one mile off Glen Cove, is identified as Sea Bird Nesting Island Number 63-323 by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. Ram Island has also been identified as an important seal haul-out and is a Class A Coastal Wildlife Concentration Area. It is also identified as a wetland.

The Town has identified Ram Island as especially significant in conjunction to the habitat of Clam Cove because of its nesting status. Efforts to secure the island as a protected natural resource zone are crucial to the preservation of a large portion of the bird life in Clam Cove.

Brewster Point

Another seal haul-out area is identified near Brewster Point. The Brewster Point Watershed is less than 100 feet in elevation. Except for some narrow bands of 25-percent slope at the head of Brewster Point, and along the coast on either side of the point, the entire watershed and coastline are flat. There is an escarpment at Jameson Point. Brewster Point has a gravel beach.

Land Use Regulation

The town of Rockport adopted a Shoreland Zoning ordinance which includes a shoreland setback. In certain areas of this setback, it is deemed “resource protection” and not available for development. In the other areas of this setback, development can take place but within certain parameters outlined in the Shoreland Zone section of the Land Use Ordinance. These setbacks are indicated on the official Zoning Map of the Town, which has also been approved by Maine DEP.

History

Rockport History Since 1769

In 1769 the first British settler, Robert Thorndike, came with his family of seven children to inhabit what is now Rockport Village, by the Goose River. He settled on approximately 50 acres, purchased from the Twenty Associates. The Twenty Associates included Brigadier General Samuel Waldo, who along with a company of his partners, the Ten Proprietors, claimed the Waldo Patent — approximately one million acres located between the Medomak and Penobscot rivers.

Gradually, other families arrived, settling around the harbor, in Clam Cove (Glen Cove) and Simonton Corner. With the American Revolution, immigration ceased. The settlements were vulnerable to attack during the Revolutionary Period, and it wasn't until the close of the war that more people arrived.

By February 16, 1791 the Plantation of Cambden (sic) was incorporated and included what was to become Camden and Rockport. In Boston, Massachusetts Governor John Hancock lent his signature to the document, and by April 4, 1791, the community was holding its first town meeting at Peter Ott's Inn at Goose River.

Goose River adopted the name Rockport in 1852 when the growing village decided it needed a more pleasing and appropriate name for its new post office.

Rockport Splits from Camden

Dissension between Camden and Rockport, due to economic and cultural differences, commenced almost immediately after the incorporation. Even at the first meeting, the Harbor (Camden) people accused the River (Rockport) people of filling all the town offices with Goose River men.

While much of Rockport was essentially rural, Camden already was a center of trade. Town reports continuously reflected arguments about the cost of rebuilding or repairing a bridge over the Goose River. Other historians attribute the growing rift over the next century between Rockport and Camden to differing goals: Rockport wanted to promote industry, while many Camden residents were focused on building tourism. The official separation finally came on February 25, 1891 when Camden filed a petition for separation from Rockport.

The newly independent Rockport needed an adequate space to hold large gatherings, which led to the construction of the Rockport Opera House in 1892. Today, it is used for community events, concerts, performances, special events, Town public meetings, Select Board meeting, Planning Board meeting, Zoning Board of Appeals meetings, and committee meetings.

Rockport grew to become one of the prominent commercial centers of the state during the last half of the 19th Century and the first decade of the 20th Century. Shipbuilding, fishing, lime production, ice and fish-canning industries provided the principal means of support for inhabitants. Other ventures included cooperage (the making and repairing of barrels and casks), a shirt factory, gristmill, paper manufacturer, and maritime shippers. Because of the large number of ships entering Rockport Harbor, the Custom's House was moved from Camden to Rockport in 1888. By 1920, the economic boom was over.

As wooden ships were replaced by less vulnerable metal vessels, shipbuilding came to an end, except for brief periods during the world wars. Competition and other economic factors snuffed out the fires of the lime kilns, and the railroad tracks of the Rockland & Rockport Lime Company between the harbor and Simonton's Corner were disassembled. The economic stagnation resulted in a population decline that began in the 1900s and reduced Rockport's population from 2,314 residents in 1900 to a low of 1,526 by 1940.

Rockport Village Revitalized

Through the efforts of longtime summer resident and philanthropist Mary Louise Bok, the vacant and dilapidated buildings that had housed workers and businesses along both sides of the harbor were torn down and the land cleared in the 1930s. The Curtis Music Institute chose Rockport for their summer home for their pupils and faculty.

Rockport Marine Park was completed in 1975, and by the end of the 1990s, the Friends of Rockport Harbor successfully raised \$200,000, matched by \$200,000 appropriated by Rockport voters in 1999 to buy more land adjacent to the park. That land included "Goody's Beach," a small sandy beach that had been owned by longtime resident Goody Kononen.

In 2001, a new harbor master's building was built, replacing the old fish cannery that had been housing offices and boat storage space.

The Marine Park, thanks to a donation from Mary Meeker Cramer, contains a Vulcan Narrow Gauge locomotive, the type used when the lime kilns were in use more than 100 years ago. The train was used to transport lime from quarries around town to the kilns located near the harbor. Legacy Rockport, an independent non-profit, has raised funds to rebuild and restore The Vulcan.

After World War II, tourism began to attract more Maine vacationers to the harbor and surrounding countryside. Rockport's small businesses also thrived as tourism increased along Rockport's coast.

By 1980, the population of Rockport was 2,749. A second surge of tourism and growth during the later 1980s further expanded the year-round population to 2,854 as of December, 1990. In spite of a recession in the early 1990s, the Town of Rockport continued to grow as part of the larger and rapidly growing midcoast region. By 2020 the town's population reached 3,644

At the beginning of the 1990s, Rockport was well into completing its first-ever Capital Improvement Program, which included building a new town garage and salt/sand shed. With the help of Federal assistance, sewer facilities were constructed in both Glen Cove and Rockport Village preventing waste from being dumped directly into the ocean.

In the mid-1990s, work began on the town's second Capital Improvement Plan, which included projects such as the construction of the Rockport Recreation Park, with its ballfields and tennis courts on Route 90, the restoration of the Rockport Opera House, construction of a new town office, improving the water quality of Chickawaukie Lake, building a new recycling building at the Midcoast Solid Waste Transfer Station, and expanding the Rockport Public Library.

Another major project reaching fruition in the 1990s was the construction of the \$27 million Camden Hills Regional High School on Route 90 in Rockport. Governed by the Five-Town Community School District (Appleton, Camden, Hope, Lincolnville, and Rockport), the new high school, along with the gradual recognition that the local school systems in Rockport were above average, drew new residents to town. At the same time, sewer and public water lines were extended from Rockport Village to the new high school. With the help of a \$400,000 Maine Community Development Block Grant, the town also expanded its sewer and water infrastructure down Route 1, in keeping with Rockport's Comprehensive Plan recommendations.

By 2002, the Union Street pedestrian/bike path was completed, with the help of a state grant, and the Camden-Rockport Pathways Committee was actively pursuing construction of pathways elsewhere in the two towns to encourage alternate modes of transportation.

Several movie and film companies choose Rockport for its photogenic qualities, enticing the silver screen to film segments in town. Movies such as *Man Without A Face*, *Casper the Friendly Ghost*, *Thinner*, *In the Bedroom* and other independent films have enhanced Rockport as a creative destination. The creative and cutting edge film school, Maine Media Workshop, has grown and benefited from all the cultural activity in Rockport. In addition, the Camden International Film Festival, CIFF, an annual documentary film festival based in Camden, Rockport, and Rockland has grown over the years drawing many participants from around the US and overseas.

And in 1992, Charles Kuralt, from CBS Good Morning America, named Rockport one of the "most scenic harbors in the United States."

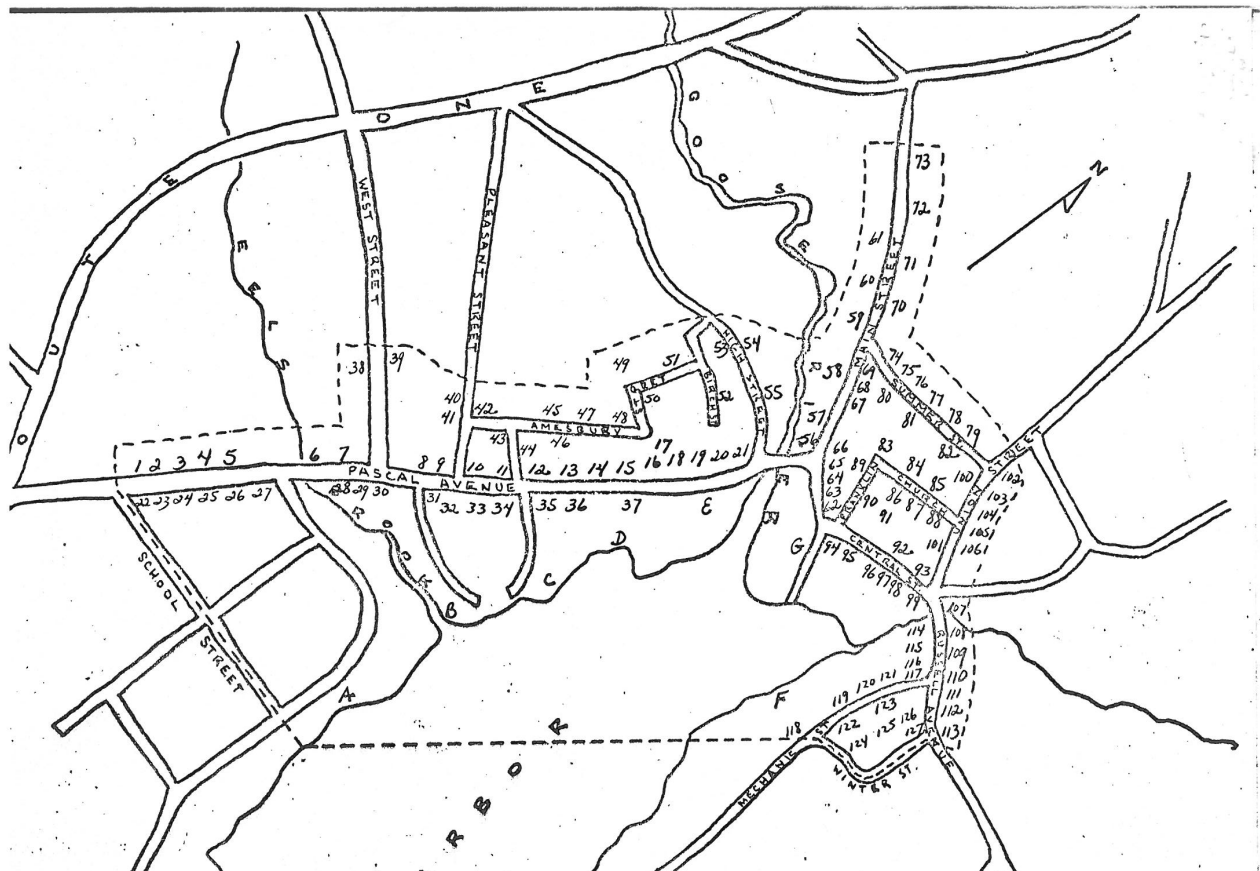
Historic Preservation

Rockport Historic District with the National Park Service

Rockport's stately homes and buildings contribute to the character of the town. In 1976, 127 homes and buildings standing in close proximity to one another on 12 streets in Rockport Village became part of the National Register of Historic Places Inventory. This Rockport Historic District, which is well recorded in the 1993 Rockport Comprehensive Plan, runs in an irregular pattern along Pascal Avenue from Russell, Union, and Winter Streets on north to School Street. The area is noted for architectural styles of Greek Revival, Italianate, and others. The periods of significance include the years of 1850–1874 and 1875–1899. Just to note, this historic district is not a zoning district within the Land Use Ordinance.

The Historic District reflects Rockport's greatest periods of development. The 19th Century scale, proportions, materials, color, and design quality of the structures are in harmony throughout the district.

Historic District Designation have been marked with the oval, black-cast aluminum marker with raised goldleafed numbers, cast locally, and have met the following criteria: The house is at least 75 years-old; the structure retains its original appearance, and has been kept in good repair with no significant alteration.



Map #	Building	Date built	Map #	Building	Date built
1.	H.L. Shepherd House	Post 1875	64.	J.G. Carver House	By 1859
2.	Harkness House	By 1859	65.	Piper Building (later a hotel)	1859
3.	Ells House	By 1859	66.	Philbrook Building	By 1859
4.	Capt. J.D. Piper House	By 1859	67.	Spear House	By 1859
5.	John Achorn House	By 1859	68.	Pitts House	By 1859
6.	Dillingham House	By 1859	69.	Philander J. Carleton House	By 1859
7.	Albert S. Ells House	By 1859	70.	S.D. Carleton House	By 1859
8.	Piper House	By 1859	71.	J.G. Norwood House	By 1859
9.	Congregational Chapel (Tin Shop)	1854	72.	John Pascal House, shipbuilder	By 1859
10.	J.N. Farnham House	By 1859	73.	House (Italianate)	Post-1875
11.	Baptist Church (Benjamin Paul, master builder)	1854	74.	J.B. Howard House	By 1859
12.	Caleb Andrews House	1840	75.	Quinn House	By 1859
13.	J.S. Veazie House	1840	76.	W.G. Morse House	By 1859
14.	Captain Wall House	1850	77.	A.J. Thomas House	By 1859
15.	Joseph Bowers House	1840	78.	House	Post-1875
16.	Capt. Winthrop Amsbury House	1856	79.	House (Queen Anne)	Post 1875
17.	Mrs. Cheney Packard House	1885	80.	J.N. Magune House, 1871 additions	By 1859
18.	Captain Cheney S. Packard House	1859	81.	Rockport High School, Joshua Southard, builder	1892
19.	Dailey House	1859	82.	Kuger House	By 1875
20.	Edward Shepherd House	By 1875	83.	S. Dexter Carleton House	By 1875
21.	C.M. Knight House	By 1859	84.	Shepherd House	By 1859
22.	Shibles House	By 1859	85.	Universalist Church, altered	1844
23.	Shibles House	By 1859	86.	Sumner House (gone)	By 1859
24.	House (Italianate)	Post 1875	87.	Sumner House (added to)	By 1859
25.	House (Italianate)	Post 1875	88.	Fire Engine House (gone)	By 1875
26.	House (Mansard)	Post 1875	89.	House	Post-1875
27.	Ells House	By 1875	90.	Paul House	By 1875
28.	Tolman House	1875	91.	E.P. Paul House	By 1875
29.	Shop	1875	92.	Jacob Graffam House	1830
30.	Enos E. Ingraham Co. Store	Post 1875	93.	Martin House	By 1859
31.	Moody House	By 1875	94.	Union Hall	c. 1858

32.	House (Modern)		95.	Martin Block	c. 1848
33.	House (Modern)		96.	Carleton-Shepherd Block, Carleton Norwood builder	1891
34.	George Seidlinger House	1859	97.	Newspaper office	Post-1875
35.	House (Colonial Revival)	post 1875	98.	Commercial building, now a home	c. 1905
36.	House (Greek Revival)		99.	Rockport Opera House	1891
37.	Mallett House	1849	100.	House (Modern)	
38.	Abel Merriam House	By 1859	101.	McLane House	By 1859
39.	Robert Harkness House	1859	102.	Merriam House	By 1859
40.	Shepherd Co., double house	By 1875	103.	Packard House	By 1859
41.	Shepherd Co., double house	By 1859	104.	S.W. Stinson House	By 1859
42.	A.P. Corthell House	By 1859			
43.	House (Modern)		105.	Champney House	By 1859
44.	Gallery (Modern)		106.	Andrews House	By 1859
45.	House (Italianate)	Post-1875	107.	Rockport Public Library	
46.	Capt. Jabez Amsbury House	c. 1860	108.	Talbot House	By 1859
47.	Capt. Wilson House	c. 1878	109.	Talbot House	By 1859
48.	House (Modern)		110.	Talbot House	By 1859
49.	House (Modern)		111.	Alexander Pascal house	By 1859
50.	Capt. Oliver Amsbury House	1858	112.	J.H. Gould House	By 1875
51.	Capt. Horatio Amsbury House, altered	1857	113.	House (Greek Revival)	Post-1875
52.	House (Italianate)	1886	114.	Carey House	By 1859
53.	M.E. Lamb, altered	By 1859	115.	Barrows House	By 1859
			116.	Livery Stables, was town office	By 1875
54.	Fitzgerald House, altered	1859	117.	J.G. Myers House, rebuilt 1986	By 1859
55.	Andrews House, rebuilt	1859	118.	Charles Barrett House	c. 1837
56.	Blacksmith Shop, altered	By 1859?	119.	House (gone)	1875
57.	Barn, altered, now a house	By 1875	120.	Huse House	By 1875
58.	McLaughlin House, altered	By 1859	121.	H.B. Eaton House	By 1875
59.	McLaughlin House, wing and barn added 1986	By 1859	122.	House (Modern)	
60.	A.H. Miller House	By 1859	123.	House, moved to Camden	By 1875

61.	Sherman House	1859	124.	House (Italianate)	Post-1875
62.	Granite Block (Masonic Hall, third story added 1910)	1835, 1910	125.	Methodist Parsonage	By 1875
63.	Dillingham House (shoe store and repair)	By 1859	126.	Methodist Church	1874
			127.	Page House, extensive remodeling	By 1859

Sites

A.	Eells Kilns	E.	Carlton-Norwood Kilns
B.	Eells Shipyard	F.	Ice Houses
C.	Talbot Shipyard	G.	Kilns
D.	Carleton-Norwood Shipyard		

Historic Archaeological Sites

Historic Archaeological Sites recorded by the Maine State Historic Preservation Commission include six maritime wrecks: the Woodbury M. Snow, schooner; Hastings, schooner; Zone, brig; Cepola, Canadian wreck; Daring, Canadian schooner; and the Mary A., Canadian schooner.

The six are in need of further survey, inventory, and analysis. Additionally, the commission said: “No professional survey for historic archaeological sites has been conducted to date in Rockport. Future such fieldwork could focus on sites relating to the earliest European settlement of the town, beginning as early as 1770.”

Historical Society & Museums

The Conway Homestead-Cramer Museum, on Route 1 in Rockport, is now home to the Camden- Rockport Historical Society and offers the public a door to the rich history of the two towns.

Prehistoric Archaeological Sites

The Maine Historic Preservation Commission also points out the existence of a series of inland and coastal prehistoric archaeological sites in Rockport. The coastal sites are along Brewster Point, north of the Rockland Breakwater, along Clam Cove below Pine Hill (where Penobscot Bay Medical Center is), in an area that stretches from Oakland Park to the outlet of Varmah Brook, and along Beauchamp Point. Inland areas include the area along the Goose River stretching from Simonton Corners to Route 1, the entire shorefront of Grassy Pond, the northwest shorefront of Mirror Lake, and a good portion of the Chickawaukie Lake perimeter.

Reports of these prehistoric sites date back from the 1980s to the 1920s, and include artifact collections, the discovery of a possible cave along the side of Bald Mountain, and the siting of stone tools used by Native Americans. However, the state has little more information about these areas and the Maine Historic Preservation Commission recommends the need for further professional archaeological surveys, inventory, and analyses in the aforementioned areas, along the Penobscot Bay shoreline, and along the Goose River.

Additional Historic Designations

The Maine Historic Preservation Commission and the National Register of Historic Places also have on their lists:

ROCKPORT HISTORIC KILN AREA. Known as Rockland-Rockport Lime Company and Merriam & Shepherd Lime Company at the Rockport Marine Park. This site includes seven structures and sits on 7 acres. Period of significance include the years from 1800-1824, 1825-1849, and 1850-1874.

HISTORIC OLD CONWAY HOMESTEAD AND MUSEUM. Conway Farm House (ca 1770). Restored 1962, the Conway house is the location of the Camden-Rockport Historical Society.

INDIAN ISLAND LIGHT STATION, Indian Island, Rockport Harbor. This site includes three buildings and one structure. It is so named because legend has it that local Native Americans took refuge there during the French and Indian War. The island was sold to the U.S. government for a light station by Silas Piper for \$25 in 1849. The site is also on the National Park Service Inventory of Historic Light Stations. The station was established in 1850, was lit first in 1874, and deactivated in 1934. The periods of significance were 1850-1874, 1875-1899, 1900-1924, and 1925-1949.

MEGUNTICOOK GOLF CLUB, Calderwood Lane. The golf club comprises 661 acres, and one Club House. Periods of significance were 1900-1924 and 1925-1949.

SPITE HOUSE, Deadman Point.

TILLSON FARM BARN, Warrenton Road, Glen Cove.

BEECH HILL HUT, built during the winters of 1913 through 1915. Inspired by traditional mountain cottages of Norway, Beech Hill Hut has low ceilings and a heavily timbered and sod roof. The stones used in the walls were hauled to the site individually wrapped in burlap bags and set in place by hand. Beech Hill Hut was designed by landscape architect Hans Heistad, of Norway, who resettled in Rockport and whose daughter, Goody Kononen, was a long-time Rockport historian.

Existing Land Use

Rockport covers approximately 25.5 square miles and consists of mountains, rocky shorefront, ponds and lakes, farmland, and wetlands. Rockport is primarily residential with some commercial and limited industrial land users. Rockport also possesses a wealth of natural resources, such as the Marine Park which showcases Rockport's past and present economy, moving from a heavy industrial harbor to one comprised of commercial fishing and pleasure boating.

Wabanaki Native Americans lived along and around the Rockport area for centuries before Euro-American settlement. In the late 1700s, like the Wabanaki, settlers established themselves near the water for prime access to natural resources, transportation routes, and growing commercial activity. Rockport's development pattern reflects the town's major historic economic activities.

- Lime production intensified development activity along the waterfront to produce and ship lime.
- Neighborhoods developed with business owners living close to Downtown.
- Fishing and boat building became a significant sector of economic activity.

Land Use Patterns

While Rockport derives its built form from the harbor, the first area to drive economic activity, Rockport also has four other historically developed areas; West Rockport, Rockville, Glen Cove, and Simonton Corner. These areas, known as villages, were settled by water, be it a harbor, cove stream, and/or river. Rockport's original settlements were primarily a fishing and farming community, with the 1970's style of suburban development trends reshaping the community to what we see now. These five villages have led to different development patterns, not distinguished by a central location and radiating outward. Rather, spurts of residential development in each village seemed to happen over the course of a few decades from the 1970's to early 2000's.

Recent Development

Since 2010, Rockport has had a limited amount of new construction and infill development, according to the Census for new housing. Between 2018 and 2023, permits and planning board applications remained somewhat steady. However, data shows that after 2020, both building permits and planning board applications plateaued. This is a result of overall economic activity including increased interest rates.

Most recent developments have been occurring lot by lot, with little by way of planned developments or subdivisions. That being said, a few preliminary planned developments have been presented, but no action has been taken for final review.

Number of Permits issued						
Month	FY 17-18	FY 18-19	FY 19-20	FY 20-21	FY 21-22	FY 22-23
July	38	23	43	35	25	33
August	33	29	27	26	29	41
September	29	21	35	35	24	28
October	19	26	46	23	19	23
November	11	12	28	15	24	32
December	16	23	23	23	23	18
January	27	25	26	16	20	19
February	22	22	19	18	14	16
March	25	20	26	34	37	23
April	39	34	11	39	34	23
May	26	52	23	33	55	30
June	33	24	30	38	21	22
Total	318	311	337	335	325	308
Source: Rockport Planning and Development Office						

Planning Board Applications						
Month	FY17-18	FY 18-19	FY 19-20	FY 20-21	FY 21-22	FY 22-23
July		1	2	1	1	3
August		0	2	3	1	0
September		2	1	0	2	0
October		2	3	0	2	0
November		0	0	1	2	0
December	1	0	5	1	3	0
January		4	4	1	3	2
February	2	4	3	2	0	1
March	2	3	0	3	4	1
April	2	5	0	4	2	2
May	2	3	3	4	1	1
June	3	0	4	5		
Total	12	24	27	25	21	10
Source: Rockport Planning and Development Office						

Regulation

Rockport's land use ordinances have evolved over the years, with regular amendments each year to reach the desired outcome of the comprehensive plan and or needed maintenance related edits.

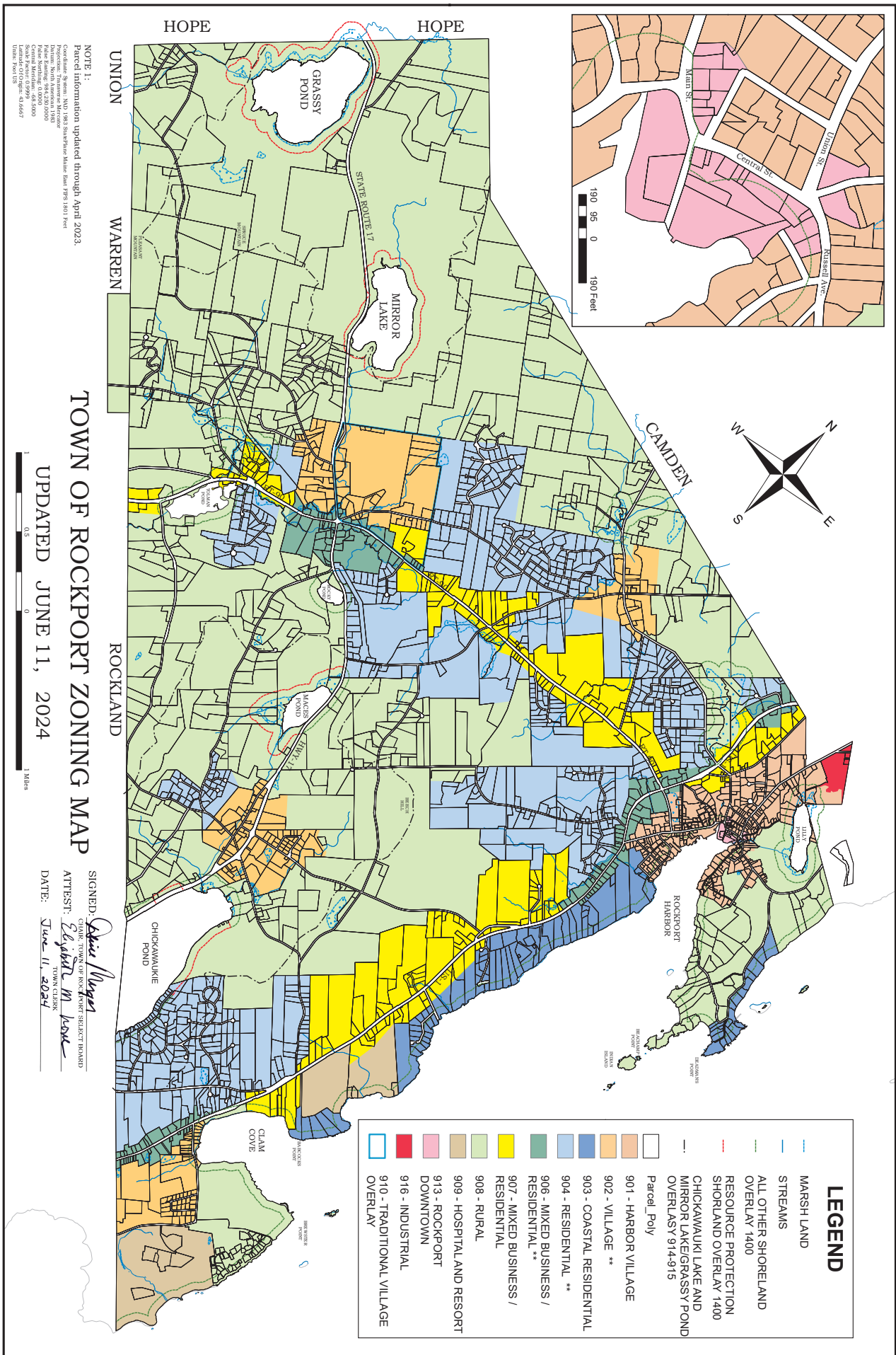
- Buildings, Inspections, and Enforcement are covered in Chapter 600 – Administration, establishes standards governing the condition and maintenance of all structures in Rockport.
- Site Plan Review is covered in Chapter 1300, establishes standards and administration of the site plan review process.
- Subdivision Review is covered in its own ordinance, the Subdivision Ordinance, which establishes standards and administration of the subdivision review process.
- Floodplain Management Ordinance is its standalone ordinance.
- Shoreland Zoning is covered in Chapter 1400, which regulates development within the shoreland zone.

Applicable Land Use Ordinances can be found on the Town of Rockport's website under its own Ordinance page: <https://rockportmaine.gov/ordinances>.

Zoning Overview

Rockport's zoning includes 15 separate zones. There are 10 "standard" zones that address residential uses and commercial/industrial uses. There are 5 "overlay zones" further addressing residential and commercial uses, but also addressing resource protection.

- Residential Zones. All of Rockport, except the industrial zone, is within a residential zone.
- Commercial Zones. Approximately 25 acres is zoned industrial, which is the only zone that does not allow for residential.
- Mixed Use. All zones except for the industrial zone are mixed use.



Zone Districts and Purpose	
Zone	Purpose
901 Harbor Village	To maintain the physical, historic, aesthetic, and social quality of Rockport's Harbor Village.
902 Village	To promote the development of Simonton's Corner, West Rockport, Rockville, and Glen Cove Villages while at the same time preserving their physical, historic, aesthetic and social qualities.
903 Coastal Residential	To provide a low-density residential setting while respecting the natural saltwater shorelines of the Town and other natural features of the coastal area.
904 Residential	To preserve the physical, historic, and aesthetic quality of that area of Rockport between the Villages and the Rural areas of the Town. To provide an opportunity for less dense growth than in the Villages, but denser growth than in the Rural areas, while minimizing sprawl.
906 Mixed Business / Residential	The objective of the Modified Mixed Business/Residential District is to encourage commercial growth and residential uses in a setting that creates a village atmosphere. The village setting should encourage pedestrian traffic while slowing vehicular traffic. These objectives are in addition to those of the Section 907 Rockport Mixed Business/Residential District.
907 Mixed Business / Residential	The objective of the Rockport Mixed Business/Residential District is to encourage commercial growth and residential uses along Routes 1, 17 and 90 and to preserve the scale, size, and character of existing architecture, without the design and traffic problems of strip development.
908 Rural	To preserve natural resources while allowing for development that is sensitive to lake water quality, wildlife habitat, scenic vistas, steep slopes, and ridge lines. To encourage the continuation of resource-based opportunities including blueberry production, farming, and woodland management. To, as much as is practical, encourage structures build at high elevations to blend in with the surrounding landscape.
909 Hospital and Resort	To provide areas in the Town of Rockport in which quality recreational and tourist development and in which medical care facilities can occur in harmony with other uses while maintaining the character of the Town.

910 Traditional Village Overlay	To encourage growth to occur in areas which are best suited for increased density in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan; to encourage communities to be built in such areas on the pattern of traditional Maine villages; to promote pedestrian travel and street life by placing houses, shops, workplaces and public places in close proximity; to reduce traffic congestion and dependence on the automobile by creating a hierarchy of streets and ways which equitably and efficiently serve pedestrians, cyclists and drivers; to provide opportunities for the development of employment-generating uses; to provide focuses for community life by providing for commercial services, village greens and sites for civic buildings; to create a built environment that fosters a sense of community and greater independence for senior citizens and children; to promote the physical and social integration of citizens diverse in age, lifestyle and economic status; to provide housing affordable to residents with a wide range of incomes; to create more affordable housing by reducing the amount of land and infrastructure which is built for each dwelling unit; and to promote a pattern of development which permits the efficient delivery of municipal services.
913 Downtown	To preserve and enhance the mixture of small business, civic, educational, residential, and water-dependent development in the Downtown District and to provide additional uses and alternative standards for increased development potential on specific lots with street frontage on Central Street and Main Street consistent with historical patterns of development.
914 Chickawauki Lake Watershed Overlay	The purpose of this regulation is to prevent the degradation of the present water quality of the Chickawauki Lake Watershed area to ensure its use for recreational purposes and its suitability as a potential drinking water supply source by controlling the amount of phosphorous and nutrient discharge to the ground or to the groundwater from land uses and development by the application of Best Management Practices (BMPs).
915 Mirror Lake and Grassy Pond Watershed Overlay	The purpose of this regulation is to prevent the degradation of the water quality of the Mirror Lake and Grassy Pond watershed area in order to ensure its present and future suitability as a drinking water supply source by controlling the amount of phosphorous and nutrient discharge to the ground or to the groundwater from land use activities through the application of Best Management Practices (BMPs).
916 Industrial	To provide area within the Town of Rockport for manufacturing, processing, treatment, research, warehousing, and distribution.

917. LAND USE TABLE

A. RURAL / AGRICULTURAL / RECREATION

	901	902*	903	904*	906*	907	908	909	913	916
Agricultural	CU	CU	CU				P			
Camp Sites Individual								P Note 1		
Campgrounds						P		P Note 1		
Golf Courses							P	P		
Golf Range							P	P		
Horticultural	CU	P	P	P		P	P	P		
Private Club		CU							P	
Recreational Boat Facility									P	
Recreation Indoor					P	CU	CU	P		
Recreation Outdoor					P	P	P	P		
Resort								P Note 3		
Timber Harvesting				CU			P			

* Growth Zones

B. RESIDENTIAL

	901	902*	903	904*	906*	907	908	909	913	916
Accessory Dwelling Unit	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Community Living Facility	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Cluster Development	SB	SB	SB	SB	SB	SB	SB	SB	SB	
Congregate Housing	CU	CU		CU				P		
Home Occupations	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Mobile Home Park		CU								
Residential Single Family	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Residential multi-family	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Residential multi-family 20	P	P		P	P	P	P	P		
Residential Dormitories	CU	CU								
Rooming Houses	CU	CU		CU					P	

* Growth Zones

KEY: P = Permitted
CU= Conditional Use
SB = Subdivision

C. COMMERCIAL

	901	902*	903	904*	906*	907	908	909	913	916
Agricultural Product Processing							CU			
Animal hospital/veterinary					P	P				
Animal kennel & facilities					CU	CU				
Art Galleries	P	P	CU		P	P	P		P	
Auto service/sales					P	P				
Barber Shop/Salon					P	P			P	
Bed & breakfast	CU	CU		CU	P	P	P			
Commercial greenhouse						P				
Grocery Store	P	P			P	P			P	
Heavy Landscaping Business					P Note 11	P Note 11				
Hotels/Motels/Inns		CU			P	P		P	P N- 9	
Landscaping Business		P N-10			P	P				
Medical clinics	CU	CU			P	P		P	CU	
Office/Professional	P	P			P	P	CU	P	P	P
Commercial Parking Facilities	CU	CU							CU	
Restaurant▲	P	P			P	P		P	P	
Retail	P	P			P	P		P	P	P
Tradesman shop	CU	CU		CU	P	P	CU		CU	

* Growth Zones

▲ follow the Polystyrene take-out food containers ordinance

D. GOVERNMENT / INSTITUTIONAL

	901	902*	903	904*	906*	907	908	909	913	916
Cemetery	CU	CU		CU			CU			
Places of Worship	CU	CU		CU	P	P	CU	CU	P	
Community building	CU	CU		CU				P	P	
Boarding Care	CU	CU		CU						
Day Care Facility	CU	CU		CU	P	P		P	P	
Hospital						P		P Note 6		
Nursing Home	CU	CU		CU				P		
Municipal Uses	CU	CU	CU	P	P	P			P	P
Schools	CU	CU		CU	CU	CU				
Solid waste facilities										P

* Growth Zones

KEY: P = Permitted
CU = Conditional Use
SB = Subdivision

E. INDUSTRIAL / MANUFACTURING / TRANSPORTATION / WHOLESALE

	901	902*	903	904*	906*	907	908	909	913	916
Agricultural product processing							CU			
Boat Storage Commercial	CU	CU		CU					P	
Boat storage/shipyard/sales					P	P			P	
Commercial Fish Pier									CU	
Industrial						P				P
Marina/boat yard									P	
Mini-storage										
Outdoor Storage facility										P
Research Facility									P	P
Storage Building						P Note 7				
Wholesale facility					P	P				

* Growth Zones

F. OTHER

	901	902*	903	904*	906*	907	908	909	913	916
Accessory Structures	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Accessory Uses	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Essential Services	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Municipal Pumping station	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Public Utility Facility	CU	CU	CU	CU	P	P	CU	P		

* Growth Zones

KEY: P = Permitted
CU = Conditional Use
SB = Subdivision

Lot Size

The following tables indicate the amount of land needed, along with setbacks, to develop a site. These tables are found in the Land Use Ordinance, under Chapter 900.

A. General Dimensional Requirements

	901	902*	903	904*	906*	907	908	909	913	916
Minimum lot size without public sewer	20,000 sq. ft.	20,000 sq. ft.	20,000 sq. ft.	20,000 sq. ft.	20,000 sq. ft.	20,000 sq. ft.	130,000 sq. ft.	20,000 sq. ft.	20,000 sq. ft.	20,000 sq. ft.
Minimum lot size with public sewer	3,000	3,000	20,000	4,000	4,000	10,000	130,000	10,000	0	0
Max. lot coverage	60%	60%	33%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	100%	60%
Max building height	34 ft.	34 ft.	34 ft.	34 ft.	34 ft.	34 ft.	34 ft.	§ 909.3.F	Note 5	34 ft.
Minimum street frontage	60 ft.	60 ft.	60 ft.	60 ft.	60 ft.	60 ft.	150 ft.	60 ft.	40 ft.	60 ft.
Minimum frontage Rts 1, 17, 90 and Old County Rd.			75 ft.	100 ft.	75 ft.	100 ft.				
Minimum side/rear setbacks	8 ft.	8 ft.	15 ft.	15 ft.	15 ft.	15 ft.	15 ft.	15 ft.	6 ft.	25 ft.
Min. side and rear setback parking / driveways (Note 3)	4 ft	4 ft.	8 ft.	8 ft.	10 ft.	8 ft.	8 ft.	8 ft.	4 ft.	8 ft.
Min. front yard setback condo / internal roads	10 ft	10 ft.	10 ft.	10 ft.	10 ft.	10 ft.	10 ft.	10 ft.		
Min. front yard setback (Note 4)	10 ft	10 ft.	40 ft	40 ft.	15 ft.	35 ft.	20 ft.	35 ft.	10 ft.	35 ft.
Minimum front yard setback on Rts. 1, 17 & 90		20 ft.	50 ft	40 ft.	20 ft. residential use		20 ft.	35 ft.		
					20 ft. comm.	20 ft. comm.				

* Growth Zones

B. General Dimensional Requirements

(1) Lot Density for Dwelling Units

	901	902*	903	904*	906*	907	908	909
Single family dwelling w/o public sewer	20,000 sq. ft per unit	20,000 sq. ft per unit	40,000 sq. ft. per unit	20,000 sq. ft. per unit	20,000 sq. ft. per unit	40,000 sq. ft. per unit	130,000 sq. ft. per unit	40,000 sq. ft. per unit
Single family dwelling with public sewer	3,000 sq. ft. per unit	3,000 sq. ft. per unit	20,000 sq. ft. per unit	4,000 sq. ft per unit	4,000 sq. ft. per unit	10,000 sq. ft. per unit	130,000 sq. ft. per unit	10,000 sq. ft. per unit
Multi-family w/o public sewer	20,000 sq. ft. per unit	20,000 sq. ft per unit	20,000 sq. ft per unit	20,000 sq. ft per unit	20,000 sq. ft per unit	20,000 sq. ft per unit	65,000 sq. ft. per unit	20,000 sq. ft per unit
Multi-family with public sewer	2,700 sq. ft. per unit	3,000 sq. ft. per unit	20,000 sq. ft. per unit	20,000 sq. ft. per unit	3,000 sq. ft. per unit	2,000 sq. ft. per unit	32,500 sq. ft. per unit.	10,000 sq. ft. per unit
Multi-family in shoreland overlay with public sewer	15,000 sq. ft. per unit							

* Growth Zones

(2) Minimum Lot Density for Other Uses

	901	902*	904*	906*	907	909
Boarding Care, Nursing Home Community Living and Dormitories without sewer	20,000 sq. ft. + 3,000 sq. ft. per bedroom	20,000 sq. ft. + 5,000 sq; ft. per bedroom	40,000 sq. ft. +20,000 sq. ft. per bedroom			20,000 sq. ft. per bedroom
Boarding Care, Nursing Home Community Living and Dormitories with sewer	12,000 sq. ft. + 3,000 sq. ft. per bedroom	15,000 sq. ft. + 5,000 sq. ft. per bedroom	40,000 sq. ft. +20,000 sq. ft. per bedroom			10,000 sq. ft. per bedroom
Congregate Housing with or without sewer (see Note 6)	12,000 sq. ft. + 3,000 sq. ft. per bedroom	15,000 sq. ft. + 5,000 sq. ft. per bedroom	40,000 sq. ft. + 10,000 sq. ft. per bedroom			
Motels, Hotels, Inns, Bed & Breakfast, Community Living, Boarding Care, & Dormitories with and without sewer				40,000 sq. ft. + 5,000 sq. ft per bedroom	40,000 sq. ft. + 5,000 sq. ft. per bedroom	
Motels, Hotels Inns or Resorts w/o sewer						40,000 sq. ft. +10,000 sq. ft per bedroom
Motels, Hotels, Inns or Resorts with sewer						20,000 sq. ft. + 5,000 sq. ft. per bedroom

* Growth Zones

Recreation, Parks and Open Space

Recreational Facilities

Rockport has three indoor fitness/recreational facilities, including:

Penobscot Bay YMCA celebrated its 100th birthday in 2015. Papers were submitted to create the original YMCA in October 1915. It first opened in Camden, where it remained until 2002, when it moved to Union Street in Rockport. The YMCA is a cornerstone of our healthy community, fostering partnerships, providing programs and services and promoting youth development, healthy living and social responsibility to improve the quality of life for everyone. See www.penbayymca.org for more information on current programming at this location.

The MRC (Midcoast Recreation Center) is a nonprofit organization committed to the promotion of healthy living in our community through sports and fitness programs. MRC promotes healthy living through sports, fitness and recreational programs that support physical, emotional, and mental health. See www.midcoastrec.org for more information on current programming.

The North Atlantic Gymnastics Academy has its own facility now and is an organization geared where gymnastics can be enjoyed by children of all ages. Gymnastics is a wonderful tool for teaching both physical and cognitive life skills. North Atlantic Gymnastics Academy is offering classes for Preschool, girls, boys, and trampoline & tumbling classes, as well as offering camps throughout the summer. See www.nagagym.com/ for more information on current programming.

Golf Courses

Rockport is fortunate to have three golf courses within its geographical boundaries, including:

Samoset Resort Golf Club – Designed by Robert Elder in 1902, Samoset Resort celebrated its centennial year in 2002. The course features some of the most spectacular views of Penobscot Bay, with a granite seawall separating the golfer from the Atlantic Ocean.

Goose River Golf Club – Located one mile West of Route 1 on the Rockport-Camden town line. The quaint clubhouse with food, bar and outside deck serves as a perfect spot to relax after your round. Goose River Golf Club's property originally started as a dairy farm and was eventually transitioned into the golf course by in 1965.

Megunticook Golf Club –Megunticook Golf Club was founded in 1899 along the shores of Penobscot Bay in Rockport, Maine. The Club's historic building and grounds are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The club has always been a family club with activities for young children as well as competitive golf, tennis, and pickleball players.

Town Parks

Rockport currently boasts eleven town-owned parks, including:

- Cramer Park: 3.85 acres. Walking trails and picnic tables along the Goose River, where it passes through the old limestone waste before emptying into the harbor.
- Glen Cove Park: 5.23 acres. Located on Route 1, close to Rockland overlooking Glen Cove with expansive scenic views, picnic tables and charcoal grills, with access to the beach.
- Goody's Beach: A sandy beach next to Marine Park and the Harbor Master's office, this small beach provides access to swimming.
- Goodridge Park: 0.19 acres. A small green space across from the Rockport Harbor Hotel and near the harbor, the park has a granite bench and several tables with chairs.
- Kononen Park: A small park above the Marine Park, with access to benches, beautiful views across the beach and harbor with a giant chess set.
- Marge Jones Fields: 14.76 acres. A recreational park consisting of three baseball diamonds, soccer field, basketball courts, tennis and pickleball courts, playground, and picnic tables. This recreation park is heavily used throughout the Spring to Fall season, from minor league teams to adult rec teams.
- Marine Park: 4.46 acres. Located on the scenic harbor, this park has great water views, preserved historic limestone kilns, antique steam engine, statue of Andre the Seal, lawn with picnic tables, Harbormaster's office, boat launch, schooner trips, concerts, and public events.
- Mary Lea Park: 0.2 acres. A small park located in the downtown next to the Rockport Opera House, with scenic views of the harbor, flower beds, and benches; it was originally designed as an amphitheater for events.
- Memorial Park: 0.42 acres. a small park located in the downtown next to the Rockport Library, showcasing memorials to Rockport's residents who have served in past wars, as well as a walkway, benches and perennial garden
- Rockport Elementary School (RES) Site: 7.67 acres. Located on the former Rockport Elementary School site, which currently has a multi-use field for baseball, tee-ball, soccer, or any sport needing a field. Ample parking space where the foundation of the old building stood. This site is currently in the planning process for construction of a larger public park; construction to begin in 2025.
- Walker Park: 1.5 acres. On Sea Street, on the west side of Rockport Harbor, with picnic tables, benches, small beach, and playground equipment.

Non-profit parks, farms, open space, and trails

In addition to the town parks, Rockport is fortunate to have privately owned and conservation preserved spaces for the public to enjoy:

Merryspring Nature Center: A privately-owned 66-acre nature park and education center in Camden and Rockport, spanning a diverse ecosystem of meadows, wetlands, and forests. Visitors can hike four miles of rustic trails through meadows and forests; enjoy beautifully cultivated perennial, herb, and native species gardens; visit the Vernal Pool, Fairy Village, and Kitty Todd Arboretum or attend an educational program. Outdoor activities also include bird watching, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing. Educational offerings include talks, classes, workshops and outreach to schools throughout the year. Contact education@merryspring.org for more information.

Vesper Hill Children's Chapel: A non-denominational outdoor pine chapel sits high on a ledge looking eastward over Penobscot Bay. The chapel can seat 50 people and is a popular location for special occasions such as weddings, baptisms, and memorials. But even in the absence of a big event, the Chapel is a place to relax, think, meditate pray, or paint/draw. The grounds are landscaped with flowers, herbs, grassy knolls. Built on property owned by Helene Bok in 1960, it is open to the public and supported by the Vester Hill Foundation.

Pen Bay Community Wellness Trail: The trail runs along the perimeter of the Pen Bay Medical Center (PBMC) hospital grounds and is accessed by three trail heads. This 1.5-mile looped trail, with ocean views, around Pen Bay Medical Center. The track is wide, and groomed in the winter to make for easier walking. There are a couple of rather steepish hills. The trail includes nine fitness stations. Benches and picnic tables dot the most scenic parts of the path. You can park in the small lot across from CedarWorks on Route 1. Two additional trail heads are located at 3 Glen Cove Drive and near the PBMC café.

In addition to the venues mentioned on the prior page, there are two land trusts that maintain trails in Rockport.

Maine Coast Heritage Trust operates two preserves in Rockport.

Aldermere Farm: A 136-acre farm, is owned and operated by Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT). Through conservation easements, it will remain a working Belted Galloway cattle farm in perpetuity. The farm, an area landmark for generations, offers youth and adult programs and events encouraging sustainable agriculture, natural history and provides access to cross-country skiing. Visit their website for more information at www.aldermere.org

Erickson Fields Preserve: A former Rockport dairy farm featuring a 1.8-mile trail and gardens, Erickson Fields sponsors programs for local youth plant, harvest, and distribute food to local hunger relief organizations, schools, and businesses. The preserve also hosts other programs, nature walks, and workshops that foster an appreciation for the environment and sustainable food production. Erickson Fields is owned and operated by Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT). More information can be found at www.mcht.org

Coastal Mountain Land Trust (CMLT), founded in 1986 has conserved over 13,000 acres through public nature preserves serving 15 communities between Rockport and Prospect, Maine. Visit www.coastalmountains.org for more information.

Rockport CMLT preserves include:

Beauchamp Point Preserve – 2 acres on Rockport Harbor. This picturesque headland beach is an ideal picnic spot or a stopover on a paddle between Rockport and Camden. The gravel and rock shore is accessible at all tides. Water access is via town landing. Harbor treasures are found on the shorefront. Over 20 wildflowers near the shore, including sea lavender and seaside goldenrod. A view of Indian Island Lighthouse, and the keepers' house, built in 1875 and now privately owned. One can often see osprey feeding in the water and nesting on shore, and seals swimming in the harbor with the tides.

Harkness Preserve – 23 acres on Spruce Street. This loop trail is a gentle walk suitable for young families. Two hand-built footbridges cross Ott Brook, a perennial stream that is rust-colored from tannic and humic acids from an upstream wetland. This preserve's last full-sized American chestnut trees died in 2010, but stump sprouts live on. A Lime kiln chimney cap, a relic of Rockport Harbor's lime kilns can still be found

Beech Hill Preserve – 295 acres on Beech Hill Road. The Summit Trail offers views of Penobscot Bay, islands, and mountains. Beech Nut, built in 1914, is a stone hut located on top of the hill. The preserve is managed for bird habitat and organic blueberries. The venue is also used for music events throughout the summer.

Simonton Quarry Preserve – 26 acres on Main Street. While no trail currently exists on the property, Simonton Quarry, it is a lovely place to observe Rockport's historic lime quarries. The three quarries were operated in the 1800's, and a narrow-gauge railroad transported lime to the Rockport Harbor kilns. The quarries provide a good picnic spot.

Ragged Mountain Preserve – 914 acres in Rockport, Camden, and Hope. This 1300' tall mountain (and nearby Spruce Mountain and Grassy Pond) contains a 2400 acre conservation and recreation area open to the public for both summer and winter trail use. There is a major network of over 20+ miles of trail primarily for hiking and/or mountain biking that are serviced by three major trailheads. Ragged Mountain contains the 5.5-mile long Round the Mountain Trail, a 6ft wide, gravel trail that is now open for hiking, running, and biking. The other popular Figure trails on the mountain are the Georges Highland Path, trails at the Camden Snowbowl ski area, and the Goose River network of mountain bike trails.

Sides Preserve – 9 acres on Route 17. Maces Pond is a popular fishing spot for warm-water species. It is bordered by Route 17 to the east, the preserve to the southeast, and private undeveloped ownership to the west. Fishing can be done on shore, by boat, and on ice. This preserve conserves shoreline on Maces Pond's outlet and Meadow Brook, which drains into Chickawaukie Lake. A hand-carry launch is accessible at the pull-off on Route 17 at the preserve. A short loop-trail follows the waterfront, and provides glimpses of the neighboring Rockville Cemetery.

Transportation

Current Road / Street Network

Rockport has approximately 72 miles of roads and streets. All public roads and streets are paved but in varying physical conditions.

- Arterial roads
- Collector roads
- Local roads

Road Responsibility / Road Maintenance

The state highway classification system is used to determine what level of government is responsible for road maintenance. MDOT reconstructs, paves, and maintains State highways. The Town Public Works Department is responsible for all work on town roads, including snow removal, street resurfacing, and general repair. Both, Maine DOT and the Town share responsibilities for State-aid roads.

The Road Responsibility graphic in Figure 1 depicts which government entity has responsibility for road maintenance in Rockport.

To stay up to date on state maintenance projects, visit the MDOT website to view the workplan and Public Map Viewer tool: <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/>

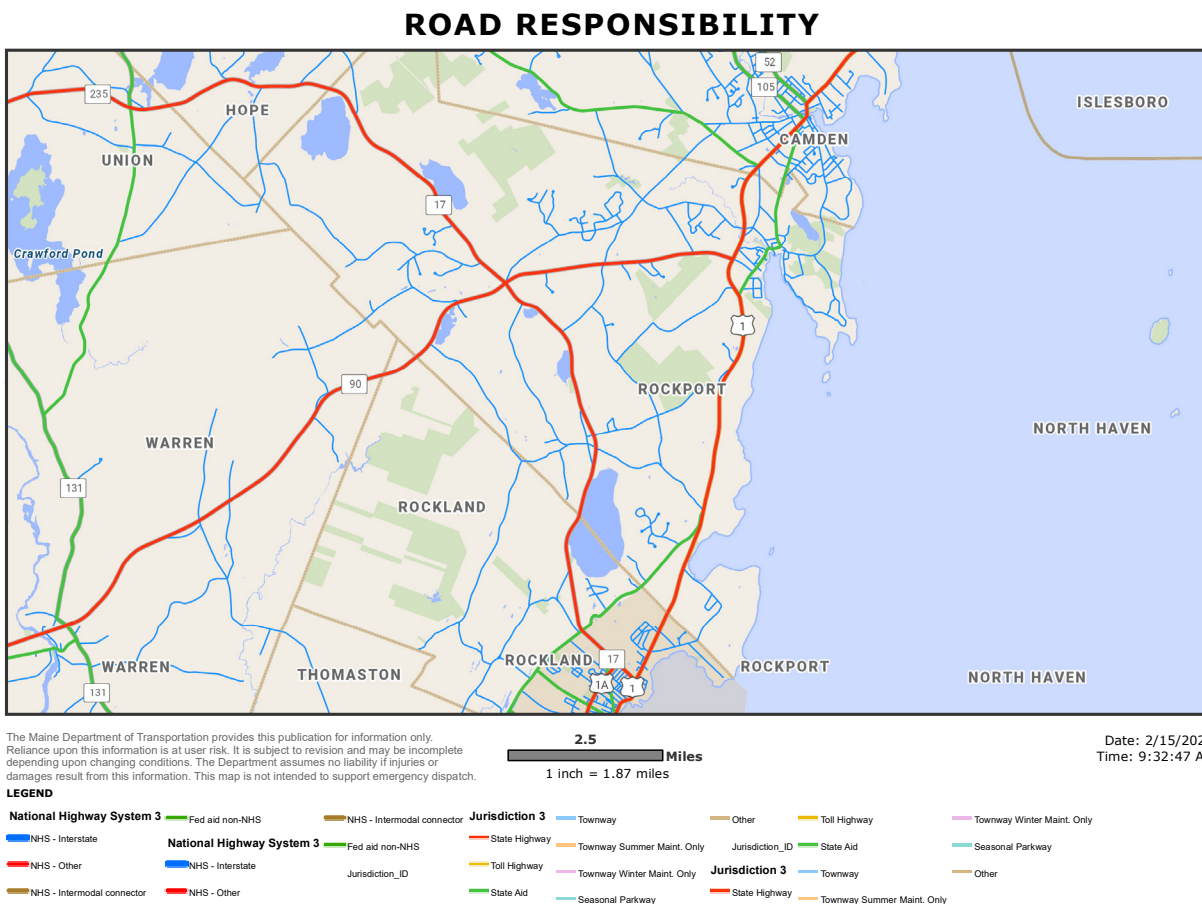


Figure 1: Road Maintenance Responsibility

Bridges

MDOT identifies seven major bridge structures in Rockport within their classification system (see table below). From the list of bridges in Table 1, the only bridge currently identified for replacement in the next several years is Bridge 2724, at Pascal Ave in the Harbor Village. Replacement of this bridge will be funded by the Maine DOT. A committee is active and looking at aspects of the bridge reconstruction.

BRIDGES (source: Maine Department of Transportation)				
BRIDGE	NAME	OWNER	FACILITY	YEAR BUILT
5142	SIMONTON CORNER	Town of Rockport	PARK ST	1948
5240	GOOSE RIVER	Maine DOT	COMMERCIAL ST	2000
2724	ROCKPORT	Maine DOT	PASCAL AV	1951
6007	PATTIE	Town of Rockport	MAIN ST	1964
583	MELVIN	Town of Rockport	MAIN ST	1975
597	ANNIS	Town of Rockport	ANNIS LN	1976
5864	MILL ST. BRIDGE	Town of Rockport	MILL ST	2016

Table 1: Table of Rockport Bridges

Travel Volume and Type / Commuting

Traffic Counts, Town of Rockport (Source: Maine Department of Transportation)				
Roadway	2016	2022	Change 2016-2022	% Change 2016-2022
US - 1				
at Rockland Town Line	11,900	10,818	(1,082)	-9%
At Pascal Ave.	16,268	14,196	(2,072)	-13%
At Main St	16,645	14,400	(2,245)	-13%
Rt 90				
At US-1	7,696	6,610		
At Hwy 17 (south)	7,959	7402	(557)	-7%
At Hwy 17 (north)	10,076	8302	(1,774)	-18%
At Rockland Town Line	8,642	6599	(2,043)	-24%
Hwy 17				
Rockland Town Line	10,392	9854	(538)	-5%
At Rt 90	10,547	8873	(1,674)	-16%
At Hope Town Line	8,341	7770	(571)	-7%

Table 2 shows a breakdown of traffic counts for State Roadways, according to MDOT traffic counts. Overall, since 2013, traffic volumes appear to be declining.

Table 2: Traffic Counts

Traffic in the Rockport area and the Maine Midcoast is highly seasonal, with the largest volumes seen in May through October. Traffic along Routes 1, 17 and 90 supports points along the Midcoast as well as providing significant volume between Portland and Acadia National Park. This large volume provides transportation challenges for the town, since Route 1 divides the town, north to south. The speed of this traffic through Rockport also poses safety issues.

Census Data

According to MDOT Transportation Data from 2021, 82% of commuters worked in Knox County, with 17% working outside the County.

- According to US Census Data of 2021, the mean travel time to work was 14.4 minutes, a little more than half of the average travel to work time for Maine which was 24.2 minutes.
- In 2021, there were 1,877 estimated residents 16 years and older in the labor force. Of those, 1,277 drove alone (68%), 149 carpooled (7.9%), 129 walked (6.9%), 35 took public transportation (1.9%), 17 got to work by other means (0.9%), and 270 worked from home (14.4%).
- Compared to 2010 Census, there is a slight increase in residents who ride alone and carpool, but also an increase from 0 to 35 in taking public transportation, a 30 % increase in those that walked, and a 100% increase from those that work from home.
- Of the 1,364 housing units in 2021, 64 housing units did not own a vehicle (4.7%), while for Maine about 6.7% of housing units lacked a vehicle.
- The portion of workers that walk to work in Rockport is nearly twice the average percentage for Maine at 3.8%.

Safety / Crash Data

- According to Maine DOT crash data, the city averaged 107 vehicle crashes per year between 2010-2024, with only four resulting in a fatality. Vehicle crash data is summarized in Figure 2.
- The intersection of Rockland St and West St (Hwy 17 & Rt 90) was identified as the only High Crash Location (HCL) in Rockport for the 2017 – 2023 period.
- Knox County recorded 88 vehicle-pedestrian crashes between 2010–2023 (Maine DOT Public Crash Query Tool). Eight resulted in fatalities with 96% resulting in personal injuries of varying degrees.
- Knox County recorded 44 vehicle-bicycle crashes between 2010-2023 (Maine DOT Public Crash Query Tool). No fatalities occurred, however 100% of the crashes resulted in personal injuries of varying degrees.

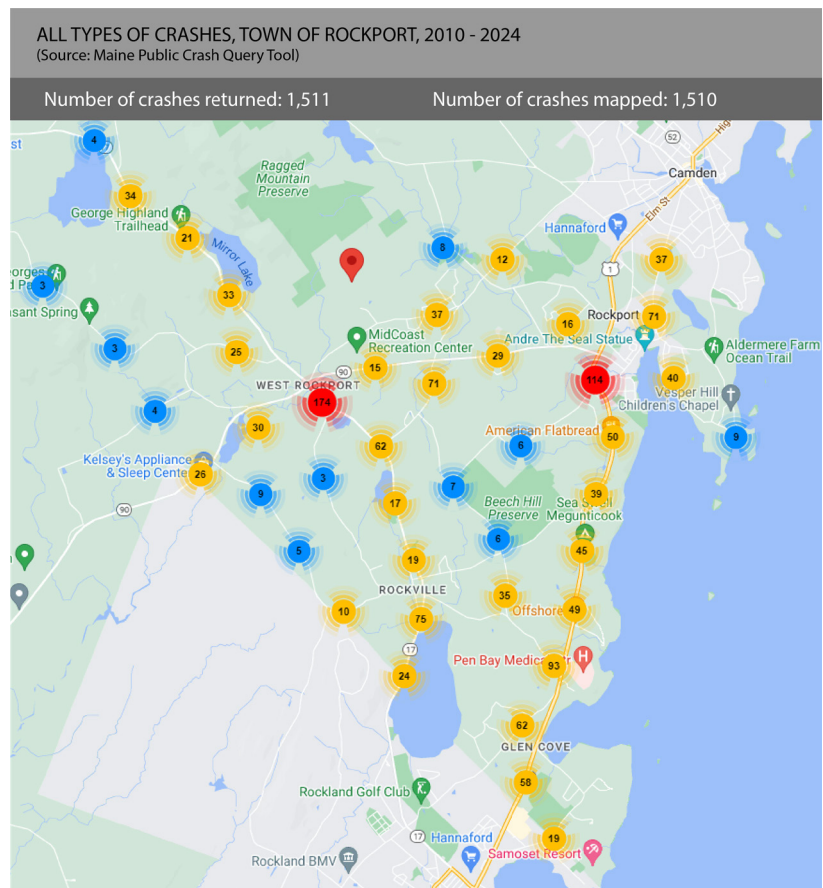


Figure 2: Vehicle Crash Data

Parking

Public parking is available in the downtown area of Rockport, totaling 198 spaces. Off-street parking is located at the Marine Park, Cramer Park, and at the library. Within half a mile distance of the downtown, there are about 30 parking spaces located at the Town Office. During the public outreach process, lack of parking in the downtown was identified as a weakness of the town.

Lack of parking in the downtown area has been an issue for years, including in the 2004 Comprehensive Plan. That Plan noted the lack of parking for the library and opera house. Since then, a new library has been built and available parking has been expanded by 16 spaces. At the same time, the library hosts more and larger events. Parking has been controversial particularly during town debates about the future site of the new library and concerns by some about the planned (and now existing) Rockport Harbor Hotel. Lack of parking effects elderly residents and visitors and parents with babies and toddlers most acutely.

Numerous unofficial surveys have been taken. A recent professional study by the Sewall firm observed that on an afternoon in August, with approximately 198 spaces in the downtown area – 171 spaces were utilized during peak usage. Spaces in closest proximity to the downtown were most utilized with less usage on the outskirts. All spaces in Marine Park, the lot on High at Cramer Park, the lot at Main & Central, and all on Central Street were fully utilized. (cite Sewall study presentation Feb 6, 2024)

According to an in-person meeting and online survey conducted by the Sewall firm, parking in the downtown ranked fourth on the list of infrastructure needs / concerns among residents, following #1 poor pedestrian and bike infrastructure, #2 speeding in the village / Pascal Avenue, and #3 the lack of safe access to schools along Rt. 90.

Walking & Biking

Rockport has approximately five miles of sidewalks that connect much of the downtown, however there are certain stretches that do not connect residents to service areas.

The most recent stretch of pathway was added in 2019 – 0.3 miles of sidewalk along US-1 near the Camden Town Line to connect the Concord Bus Stop to downtown Camden, as well as the first phase of connecting to downtown Rockport.

Rockport has a walkability score of 33 out of 100 from www.walkscore.com, categorizing Rockport as car reliant. The methodology considers walking routes and related amenities, as well as population density, block length and intersection density.

Similarly, in the absence of dedicated bike lanes, Rockport has a bike score of 33 out of 100 from www.walkscore.com.

During the public outreach process, participants encouraged the increase of walkability and bike ability throughout town. Additionally, in a recent survey conducted by the Sewall firm, residents rated poor pedestrian and bike infrastructure as their number one infrastructure concern. In the same survey they rated the lack of safe access to the elementary and high schools along Rt. 90 as their third infrastructure concern.

Congestion

Maine Department of Transportation’s Customer Service Level (CSL), tracks highway safety, condition, and serviceability. These CSL uses customer-focused engineering measures to track highway Safety, Condition and Serviceability, and grades them similar to a report card (A-F). ‘A’ is the least congested, and ‘F’ is the greatest congestion. These results are summarized in Figure 4 below.

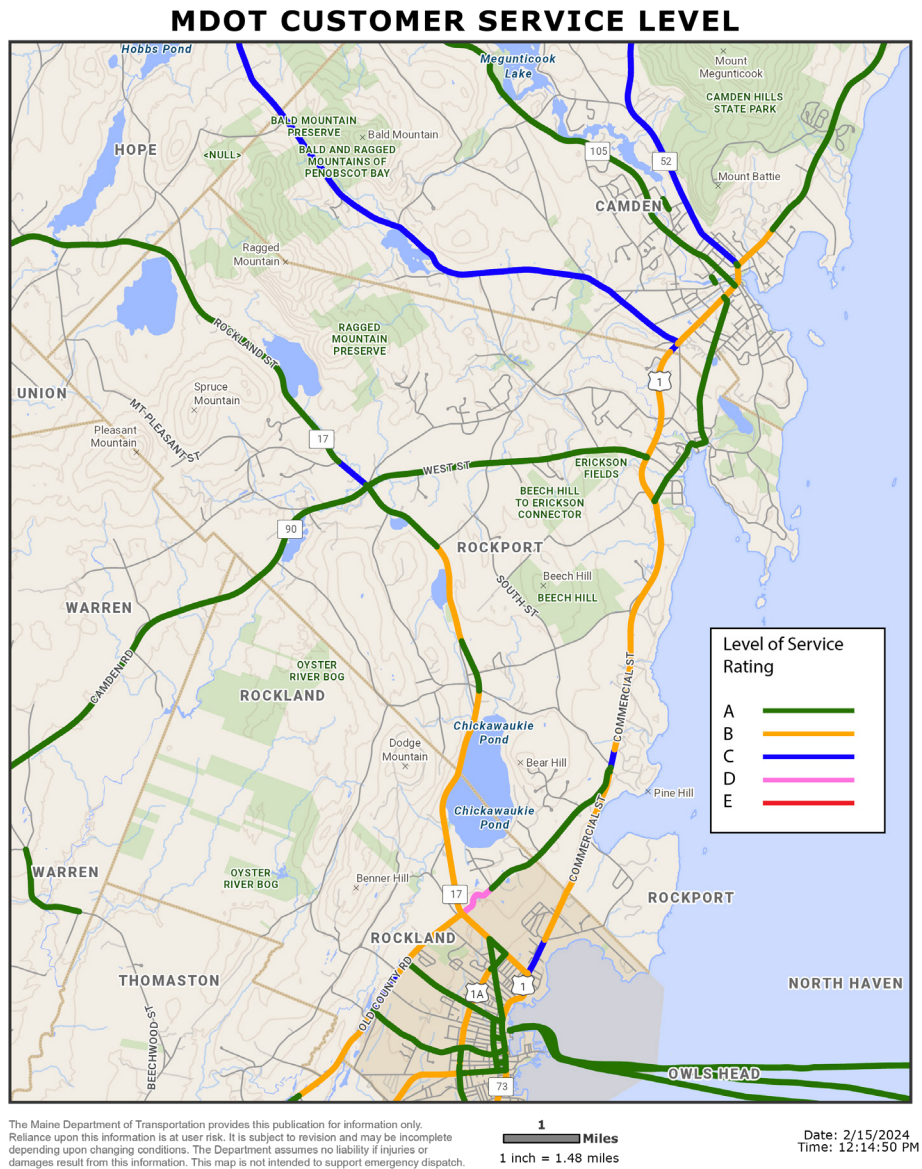
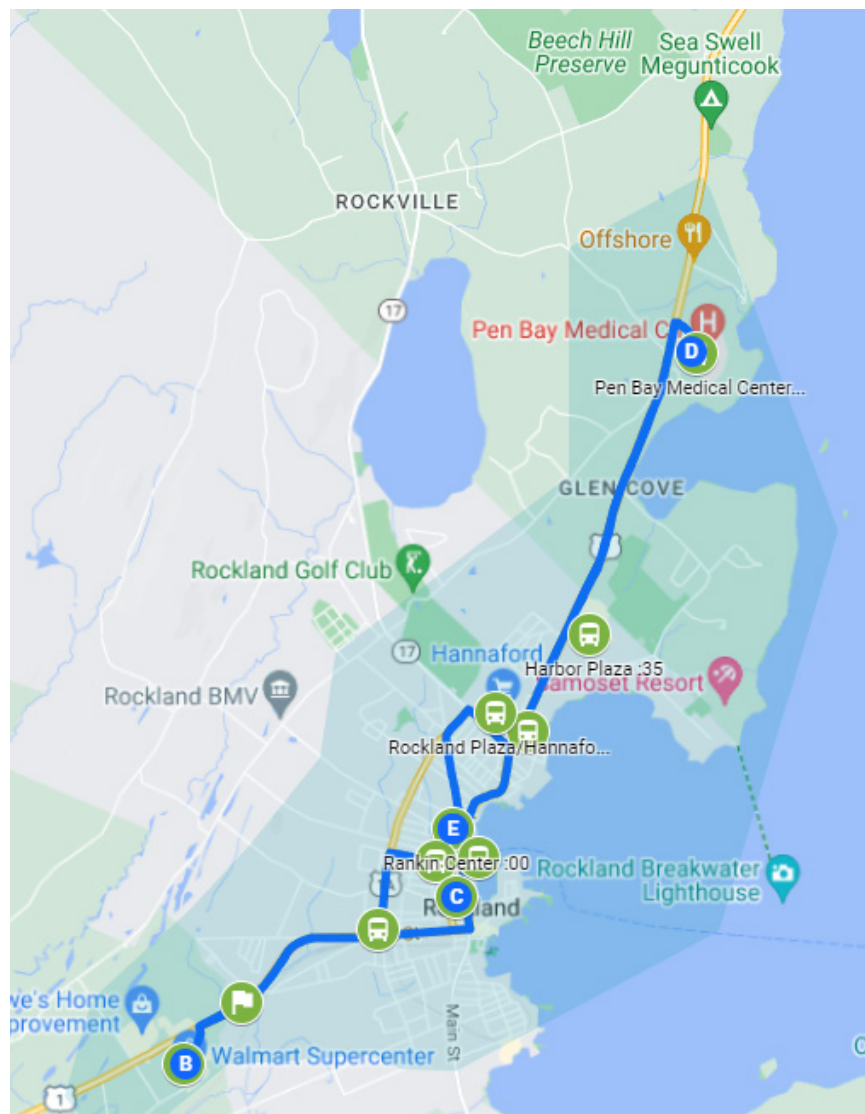


Figure 4: MDOT Customer Service Level

Public Transportation Services

Public Transit

- Public Transportation in Rockport is extremely limited with no routes connecting to its Downtown. However, DASH (Rockland's Downtown Area Shuttle) connects PenBay Medical to Rockland's Downtown.
- Rockport is connected to a regional bus network. Concord Coach Bus Lines provides intercity service between Rockport, southbound to Portland, Boston, and northbound to Bangor.
- PenBay Medical Center has a bus stop for anyone needing access to PenBay Medical Center from Rockland Downtown area, or those visiting PenBay Medical Center needing access to Rockland Downtown can do so from this bus stop through the MidCoast Public Transportation network provided by WCAP (Waldo Community Action Partners). The Dash route is shown in Figure 5.
- Private transportation services such as taxi, Uber, and Lyft are available on a limited basis.



Passenger Rail & Freight Rail

Rockport does not have rail lines in the town. The closest rail connection is the Amtrak Downeaster service that connects Boston to Brunswick. The train station in Brunswick is connected via bus service through Concord Coach to Rockport.

Ridesharing and Taxis

Limited ridesharing services (Uber and Lyft) are available in Rockport, and there are several locally-based private taxi services in the Midcoast area that serve Rockport by calling for a pickup or through a reservation.

Air Transportation

Air transportation for Rockport is available in the region. In Owls Head, 10 miles from Downtown Rockport is the Knox County Regional Airport which supports residents, tourism and business activity in the region. Originally constructed in 1939 and turned over to Knox County in 1968, the 538-acre facility provides passenger connections and freight to Boston and the larger region through both commercial and charter aviation services. The airport is categorized as a “primary commercial service airport” with more than 10,000 flights per year.

Bangor International Airport is less than 60 miles from Downtown Rockport with flights on several major airlines, some direct and others connecting. Portland International Jetport is less than 85 miles from Downtown Rockport and is one of the nation’s fastest-growing airports, serving most of the major domestic airlines and over 1.6 million passengers a year. Both the Bangor and Portland airports can be accessed via Concord Coach bus service.

Electric and Other Fueled Vehicles

The growth in the number of hybrid and electric vehicles will likely continue into the foreseeable future. The extent of their adoption and specifically, adoption in Maine is yet to be seen. Rockport is a vehicle-reliant community in a region that is also vehicle-reliant. Early indications are that electric vehicles may not hold a charge well in cold climates like Maine and there are concerns about the distance that can be traveled on a charge. It will take time for this new technology to evolve.

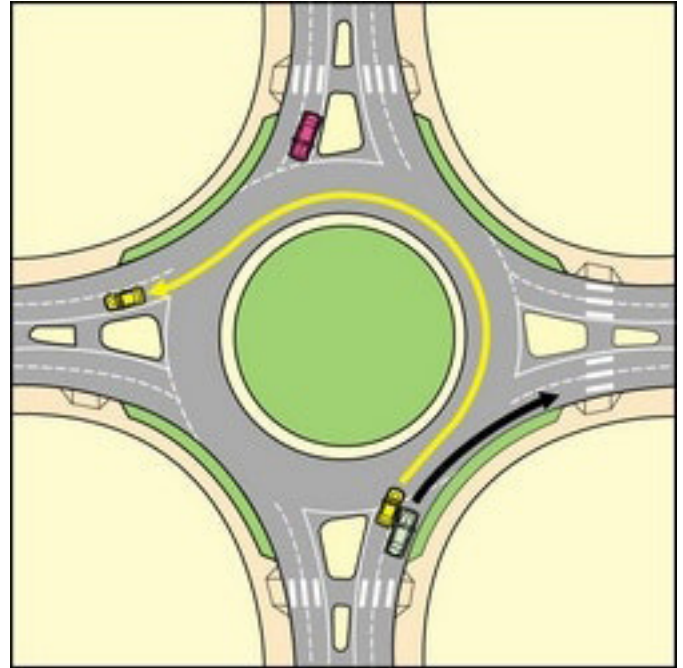
Transportation Fuel and Energy Services

Rockport does not have any petroleum fuel stations within the town. In fact, the Land Use Ordinance does not allow the construction of a new petroleum fuel station. However there are several petroleum stations within a few miles of Rockport.

Several local businesses have installed electric charging stations for the use of their patrons. Currently, the Town of Rockport is considering placing a few public EV charging stations for visitors in the Downtown Harbor Village area. The use of these charging stations is expected to be a growing trend.

Roundabouts

Roundabouts are an increasingly popular intersection design because they offer continuous traffic flow, while reducing the amount and intensity of traffic accidents. According to the Federal Highway Administration, roundabouts reduce the types of crashes in which people are injured by 78-82%. A roundabout is a circular intersection in which traffic is permitted to flow in one direction around a central island and priority is given to traffic already in the roundabout. Modern roundabouts are safer and more efficient than other types of circular intersections, such as older rotaries and traffic circles found in New England. There are cost savings in terms of construction and maintenance when compared to traditional intersection with traffic signals. https://highways.dot.gov/sites/fhwa.dot.gov/files/Roundabouts_508.pdf



One application of roundabout that has been discussed and will be considered in the future is at the intersection of State Routes 17 & 90, the site of the most traffic accidents in Rockport.

During the public outreach process, the participants in public meetings encouraged the use of roundabouts for the increased safety and lower yearly maintenance.

Public Facilities and Services

MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE

The Town of Rockport operates under a Select Board Town Management form of government with a five-member Select Board that serves as the legislative body for town government. The Town Charter and local ordinances govern the town and provide for the organization of the town's administration. The Town Charter and other municipal ordinances can be found on the Town's website.

Administrative Offices in Town Office

- Town Manager
- Assessing
- Finance
- General Assistance
- Planning, Community, and Economic Development
- Town Clerk/Tax Collector

Town Office. Rockport Town Office is located at 101 Main St. The building was constructed in 1990's for the purposes of a Town Hall.

The building remains in good condition, but it has become too small for the employees and needs expansion. The conference room out back has been converted into more office space, which has increased the demand on the conference room which is much smaller.

New heat pumps were installed throughout the office, upgrading from the radiant heating and forced air. The heat pumps provide adequate air conditioning in the summer months.

Staffing. The Town Office houses 11 full time employees and 2 part time employees in 6 different departments in 2023.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Rockport Fire Department currently operates from two fire stations with 25 on-call Firefighters, two full time Firefighters and 1 full time Fire Chief. The Fire Chief is the custodian of the Public Safety building and it's budget. He is assisted on the scene of a fire by a deputy chief, assistant chief, and four lieutenants.

Twice monthly, training sessions are held that emphasize hands-on use of equipment. That, along with an up-to-date fire command center combine to deliver professional fire protection to the citizens of Rockport. Firefighters are alerted by the tone activated pagers they carry with them, as well as by monitors in their home.

Firefighters respond to approximately 298 incidents each year, up from an average of 153 in 2013. That large increase, however, is due in part to the expectation that the fire department respond to more vehicular accidents, as well as mutual aid to 7 different surrounding communities. They range from structure fires to fuel spills, chimney fires, false alarms, and now EMS for assistance with CPR and overdoses. The firefighters also work closely with the Knox County Mutual Aid Association to respond to a variety of emergency situations. The mutual aid system has been in operation since 1958, linking several communities with well-organized services, including quarterly meetings of the 18 fire chiefs. Rockport relies on the mutual aid system for aerial ladders, for example, thus saving the town a considerable expense.

Apparatus consists of two 1,000 gpm pumpers, one 1,250 pumper, 700 gpm Squad, two pickups, one four-wheel drive Jeep. The life expectancy of the pumpers is approximately 25 years.

Currently, \$65,000 is put aside each year in an equipment reserve fund to meet expected apparatus replacement and maintain pace with new technology. Additionally, approximately \$15,000 is spent annually on hoses, tools, nozzles, and safety equipment.

Legislation related to firefighter safety has made it essential to properly train and equip firefighters with modern protective clothing and with self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA).

Twenty years ago, the town purchased a SCBA air compressor and cascade system to allow rapid refill of breathing air tanks for Rockport firefighters and those of surrounding area fire departments.

Fire Department Equipment					
# of Mobile Radios:	20				
# of Portable Radios:	32				
# of Pagers:	36				
Personnel:	Full-time: 1 Fire Chief; 2 FF/EMT, On-call: 25+/- Firefighters				
Portable Pumps:	2 – 300 GPM pumps				
Vehicles & Equipment:	Unit Number	Year/Make/Model	Type	GPM	Tank Size
	21	1996 Freightliner	Engine	1,000	1,000
	22	2004 Freightliner	Engine	1,250	1,000
	23	2014 E-One	Engine	1,250	1,000
	25	2016 E-One Squad	Engine	1,500	768
	Willy’s Jeep	1951 Willy’s Jeep	4x4	n/a	n/a
Hose:	Diameter (in)		Thread Type		Length (feet)
	1-1/2”		NPSH		0
	1-3/4”		NPSH		2,600
	2-1/2”		NH		5,500
	3”		NH		0
	4”		Stortz		6,875
	5”		Stortz		0
Support Equipment:	Number			Type	
	1			2000W Honda Generator	
	6			Thermal Imaging Camera’s	
	3 set			Jaws of Life	
	5			CO Detectors	
	1			UTV Rescue Side by side	
	0			Night Vision Googles	
Respiratory Equipment:	16 Scott 4.5 Air Packs with 45, 45-minute bottles				
AED Units:	4				

POLICE

Rockport's Police Department is a six-member professional police agency, serving the citizens of Rockport since the 1960's. The department is devoted to all areas of modern-day policing practices with a focus on community policing. The department has always maintained its respectable reputation in the community which we serve.

Since 2016 the Towns of Camden & Rockport have shared the services of one Chief of Police. Although the two towns' departments are separate police agencies, we work together to provide the best service possible for the communities we serve.

Over the years the department's call volume has increased dramatically. Call volumes of the late 1990's – early 2000's was in the 1800-3000 calls your service yearly. In 2023 the Rockport Police Department managed 5620 calls for service. Even though our call volume has increased over the years the department has been able to continue to offer three tiers of service to the community. Examples are listed below:

Tier 1 – Emergency response to incidents, immediate action responses, crimes in progress, arrest.

Tier 2 – Non-emergency lower-level response, after incident reports, late report accidents, less time sensitive response, follow up on case.

Tier 3 – Quality of life issues, radar details, school visits, special enforcement details, drug take backs, working with support agencies, morning calls to seniors.

With the increase in call volume our department has had to adjust with the times. Policing in the past was a more proactive approach. We have had to modify our current approach to more reactive policing. In 2024 we will hopefully add an additional position to the department. This will help manage the workload among staff, so we can attempt to find a middle ground in our policing approach. It should be noted that our resolute staff always manage to get the job done effectively, efficiently, and professionally.

The staff of the Rockport Police Department can accomplish our mission with high confidence. This is in part due to the professional level of continued education and training our officers receive each year. Members of our staff are trained at supervisory level long before ever being promoted. Officers trained at this level respond, act, think, and problems solve like supervisors. All staff members are certified instructors in at least one area of policing. Many members have multiple instructor certifications or specialized training areas.

The Rockport Police Department is available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, three hundred sixty-five days a year to offer professional, community-based policing services to the citizens of Rockport.

In 2023, the police department staff included: Randy Gagne, Police Chief, James Moore, Sargent, Travis Ford, Patrol Officer, Antonio Del Vecchio, Patrol Officer, Celjeta Bixhaku, Patrol Officer, Jacob Powers, Part-Time Patrol Officer.

The departments fleet consists of the following: 1 - 2019 Dodge Charger Sedan cruiser

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

The Public Works Department is responsible for managing and maintaining the vast majority of infrastructure and public facilities in Rockport. This includes approximately 72 miles of streets, five miles of sidewalks, sewer main and drainage maintenance and repair, mowing, plowing / snow removal, street sign maintenance, leaf collection, town trash barrels, fleet management, and assisting with needs of other town departments.

- Facilities. Rockport's Public Service garage is located on Elwood Ave, off of US-1, on a 15.44 acre parcel of land. The facility is approximately 40 years old and is in need of significant repair or replacement to address safety, code, and space issues.
- Staffing. Staffing consists of 10 full time employees and two seasonal employees for plowing.

ROCKPORT PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT VEHICLES					
YEAR	Color	MAKE	MODEL & DESCRIPTION		PURCHASED
1998	GR	Oshkosh	P2523	Plow Truck	Sep/1998
2004	GR	Ford	F-350		Dec/2003
2004	GR	Freightliner	FL80	Dump Truck	Mar/2004
2007	GR	Freightliner	M2-106V	Dump Truck	Jun/2007
2010	GR	Freightliner	M-2	Dump Truck	Apr/2010
2012	GR	Ford	F550	1 ton dump truck	2012
2013	GR	Ford	F550	1 ton dump truck	Jan/2013
2015	GR	Ford	F350	Crew cab PU	Jan/2015
2015	GR	Wstn Star	4700SB	Dump Truck	May/2015
2016	GR	Ford	F550	Dump Truck	Oct/2015
2017	BK	Ford	F550	Dump Truck	Dec/2016
2017	BK	Ford	F350	Crew Cab PU	Aug/2017
2019	BK	Ford	F550	1 ton dump truck	Jul/2019
2022	WHT	Ford	F550	1 ton dump truck	Aug/2021
2022	GR	Ford	F550	1 ton dump truck	Dec/2022
2022	GR	Wstn Star	3700SF	Wheeler Truck	Jan/2022
2023	GR	Wstn Star	4700sf	Dump Truck	Jan/2022
2024	GR	Freightliner	108SD	Dump Truck	Jan/2023
2023	BK	Ford	F350	Mike's truck	Mar/2023
1969		John Deere	JD570	M63AA116284	Nov/1969
1994		Vac-All	CF8000	Duel Engine Vacuum Sweeper	10/16/06 CPW
2019		CASE	621E	Wheel Loader	2020
2011		CASE	590 SN	Backhoe/Loader	1/31/2011
2014		Doosan	DX63-3	Excavator	2016
2004		Eager Beaver	20TXL	Tilt Trailer	2004
1978		Eager Beaver	Trailer	9D76639	Unknown
1990		Custome		Oil Tank Trailer	1990
1992	1990 reg			Morback Eager Beever Wood Chip	>2004
1996			2500A5R	Trailer 109FS1211T2022440	1996
1994		Caterpillar			1994
2005				Trackless MT5T	Oct/2004
2017	trailer	KARA	KDH200	5KTUS129HF534883	2023

SOLID WASTE & RECYCLING

The Mid-Coast Solid Waste Corporation (MCSW) comprises the towns of Camden, Hope, Lincolnville, and Rockport. The towns operate a solid waste facility at the site of the old limerock quarry – Jacob’s Quarry – in Rockport for the benefit of the member communities.

- Facility. The MCSW has been in operation in one form or another since 1930, when in 1979 the four towns established their inter-local agreement and built a transfer station on 1 acres of land. Today this has grown to about 30 acres.
- Recycling. MCSW collects paper, cardboard, metal cans, glass bottles and jars, hard plastic containers (#1-7) in various containers for recycling.
- Swap Shop, apart of recycling, has been in place to encourage the re-use of materials in order to diminish unnecessary waste processing.

WASTEWATER TREATMENT & STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

The Town of Rockport owns and operates over 17 miles of pipes for separated stormwater and sanitary sewers, along with pump stations and force mains.

The Current sewered equivalent users is 1,311. The total Gallons Per Day (GPD) share between commercial to residential use is almost a 50/50 split, even though the majority tied in are residential with the significant users being PenBay Medical, the Elementary and Middle School, and the hotels/motels/and inns.

Rockport’s sewage currently is being sent in two different directions for treatment. The Downtown area is being pumped up to the Camden treatment plant and the Glen Cove area is being sent to the Rockland treatment plant.

Sewer rates (usage and debt service) is currently paid by the users and abutting parcels to the sewer line. The oldest lines are from the 1980’s and have been maintained very well over the course of this time.

Management of the collection system is combined with the Public Works department and a contracted service with Woodward & Curran Engineering. Woodward & Curran is responsible for the wastewater collection and drainage systems, the lift stations and force mains. The Public Works Department is responsible for the maintenance of all street and catch basins.

Rockport Sewer Lines 2024



Legend

- Manholes
- Forcemain Pipe
- GravitySewerPipe

0 0.5 1 Miles

Map Prepared by Orion Thomas
Sewer files of 2024
March 2024



HARBOR DEPARTMENT

The Harbor Department is responsible for the overall care and regulation of the Rockport Harbor, placement and maintenance of channel markers and additional navigational aids, coordinating with US Coast Guard, local police and fire officials in event of emergencies, oversee commercial floats and interacts with commercial fishing fleets.

- Staffing. The Harbor Department currently has one full-time employee, the Harbor Master. And seasonal employees including a Deputy Harbor Master and Park Attendants.
- Harbor Master Building. The Harbor Master's building is located at 111 Pascal Avenue and is part of the town owned Harbor Park.

Rockport Public Library

The Rockport Public Library was established in 1914, when the YMCA, then located in the theatre part of the Rockport Opera House, made available its "box office" area and collection of 1,000 books as the nucleus of a town library. This collaboration with the YMCA continued until 1925 when the YMCA closed. The Opera House became the town hall; the library was relocated to the lower level of the building.

Today, the Rockport Public Library is located in a completely new building on the same site. This was done after many meetings, much discussion, a town-wide survey and previous votes. From there, a dedicated team of local architects and engineers arrived at a handsome, two-story 7,000 sq. ft. building with a brick façade, patios and a small garden overlooking Rockport Harbor. The new library in the heart of downtown Rockport continues the library's tradition of serving as the community's gathering place and providing a vital space for community engagement.

For more information about the Rockport Public Library, visit the website where more details can be conveniently found.

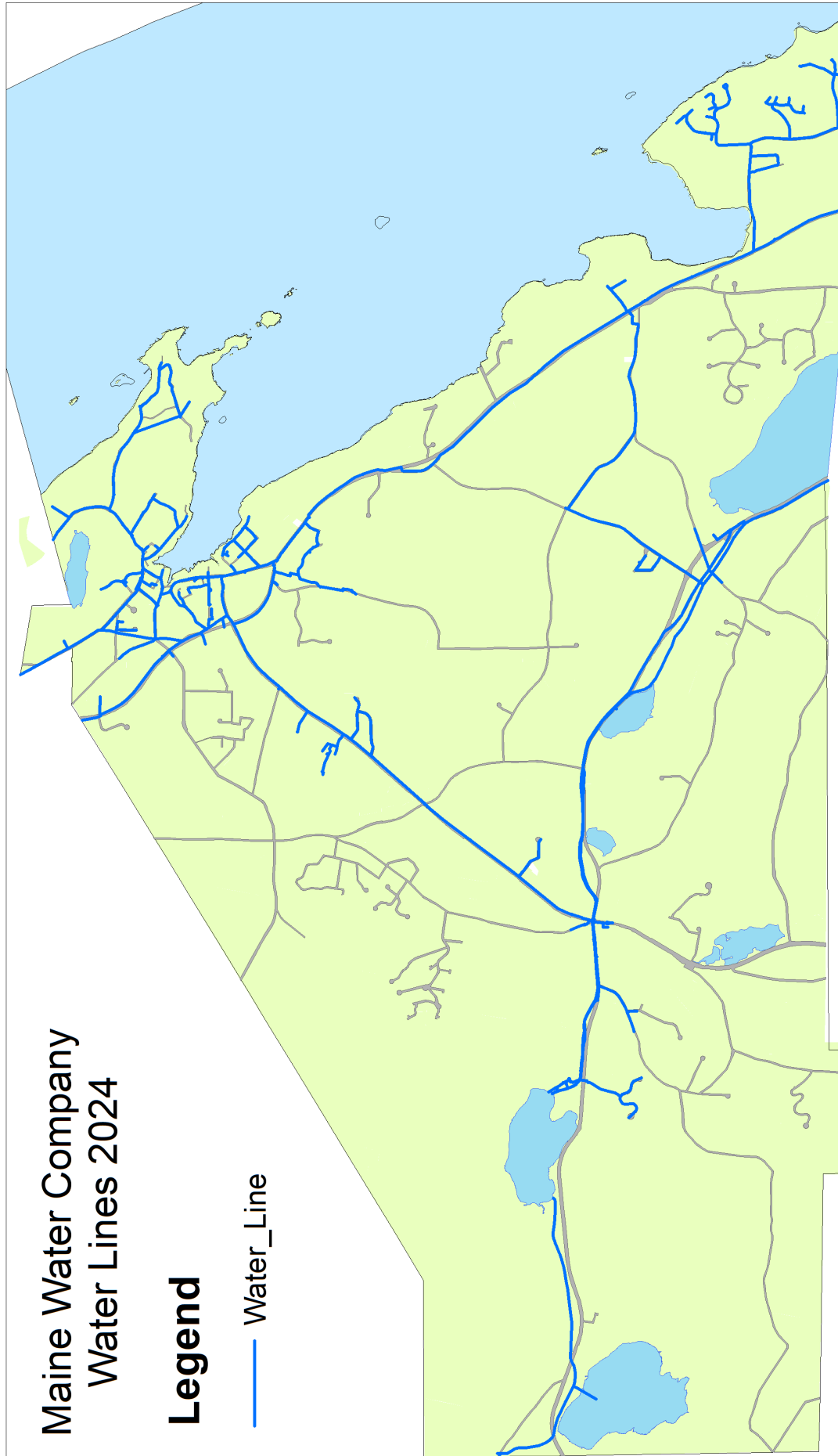
REGIONAL OR CONTRACTED SERVICES

Schools. Rockport is apart of the Camden – Rockport School District, MSAD 28 which governs grades K-8, and Rockport is apart of the Five-Town Community School District (CSD) which governs highs school and adult education. The Five-Town CSD consists of Appleton, Camden, Hope, Lincolnville, and Rockport. All information can be found on a combined website at <https://csd.fivetowns.net/>

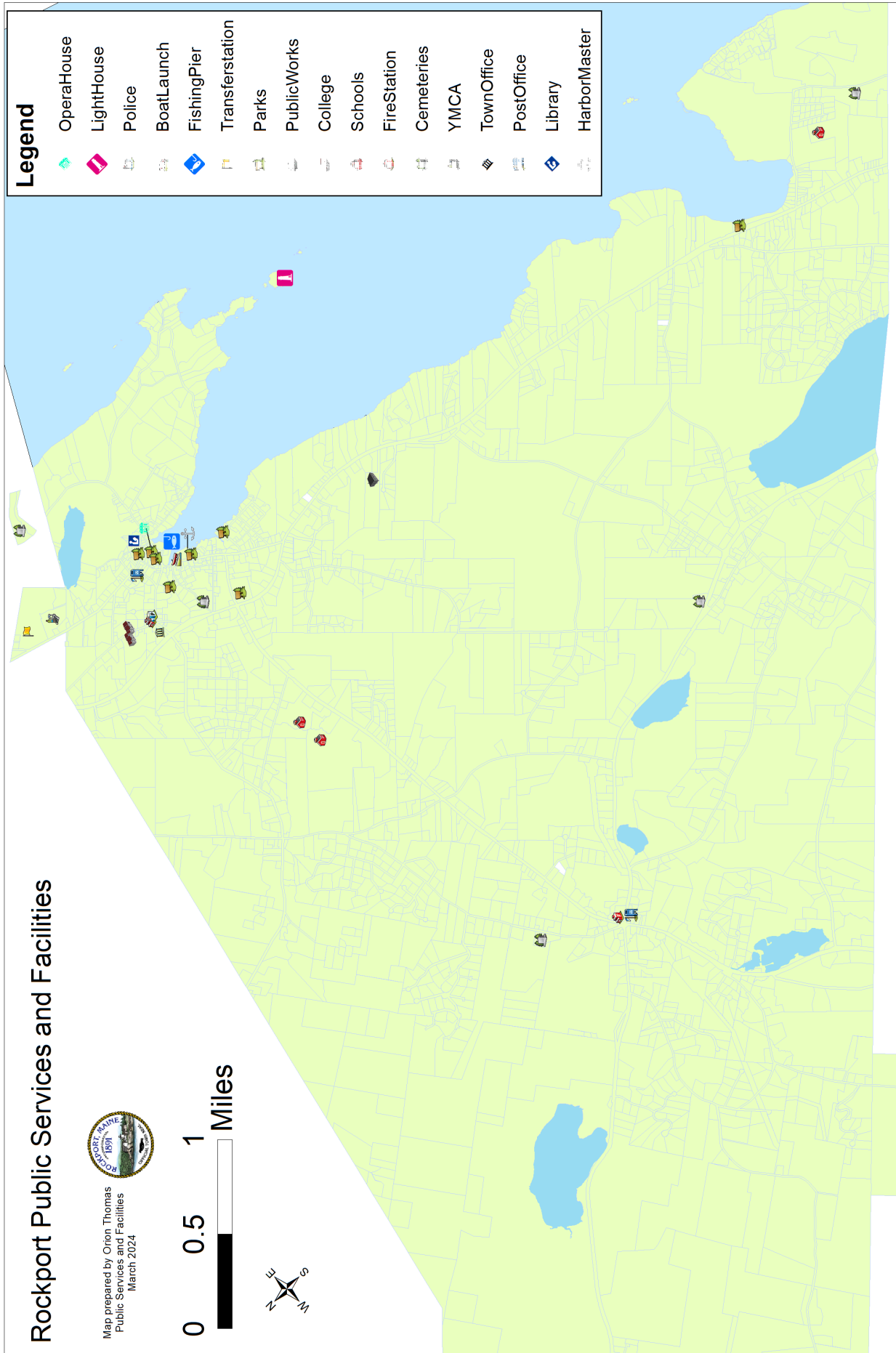
Maine Water Company Water Lines 2024

Legend

— Water_Line



Map Prepared by Orion Thomas
Water files of 2024
March 2024



Fiscal Capacities & Capital Investment Plan

Ten-Year Mil Rate History

The mil rate and taxpayers ability to pay is one of the first things we consider when presenting a budget to the Select Board and the Budget Committee. The Select Board and Budget Committee also consider this heavily when approving a budget to be presented to the voters of Rockport, for ultimate approval at Town Meeting.

In the chart below you will notice that we have been all over the map in the last ten years as it relates to the mil rate. In 2015 we went through a Town wide revaluation, which led to us losing nearly 62 million dollars, and then the following year, a property that had been subdivided was reverted back to one single property which resulted in a loss of taxable value of about 40 million dollars. You will notice that in 2016 the mil rate saw an 8.2% increase over the previous year, this increase was a direct result of the two losses that were just noted.

In the fiscal year ending 2021, there was a reduction of the mil rate of 1.4% going from \$17.05 to \$16.81 per \$1,000, the following fiscal year we saw an increase of 1.4% going back up to a rate of \$17.05 per \$1,000. For the fiscal year ending 2022 there was a statistical update, or revaluation, that resulted in a decrease in the mil rate of 9.4%, going from \$17.05 to \$15.45 per \$1,000. While the mil rate consistently went down during this period, there were many things that had to be dealt with after the COVID-19 pandemic, and our net budgets increased during this time. These included dealing with capital infrastructure projects, such as paving, dealing with a changing economy and labor force, and trying to head on very large inflation changes ranging from personnel costs, to supplies to contractor costs. We did not add significant debt to the Town in this time frame, however, in 2023 there was a bond passed by voters for the construction of new West Rockport Fire Station.

As noted above we completed a statistical update that was effective for the fiscal year ending 2023, which was the result of changes to the housing market. Houses were being sold and bought for significantly more than we had them assessed for during the pandemic. This was something that nearly every municipality had to deal with. We saw a dramatic increase of taxable value of just over 362 million dollars.

Fiscal Year Ending	Mil Rate	% Change	Interest Rate	Assessment Ratio
2012	12.21	4.9%	7%	100%
2013	12.21	0.0%	7%	100%
2014	12.69	3.9%	7%	100%
2015	12.99	2.4%	7%	100%
2016	14.05	8.2%	7%	100%
2017	14.61	4.0%	7%	100%
2018	14.75	1.0%	7%	100%
2019	16.08	9.0%	7%	100%
2020	17.05	6.0%	9%	100%
2021	16.81	-1.4%	8%	100%
2022	17.05	1.4%	4%	99%
2023	15.45	-9.4%	4%	100%

Source: Town of Rockport, Maine, Municipal Budget Fiscal Year 2022-2023.

Tax Relief Programs

There are several property tax programs to lessen the burden of taxes. These programs follow state statute and may change from year to year, it is important to note, that none of these programs are guaranteed assistance and can change. Information on these programs can be found on the Department of Administrative and Financial Services Maine Revenue Services State of Maine website as well on the Town of Rockport's website, these programs are briefly outlined below, for any questions or additional information you can also reach out to the Assessor's Office;

State Property Tax Deferral Program

The State Property Tax Deferral Program is a lifeline loan program that can cover the annual property tax bills of Maine people who are ages 65 and older or are permanently disabled and who cannot afford to pay them on their own. The loan program allows Maine's most vulnerable community members to age in place and ensures that property taxes are still delivered to municipalities, requiring repayment of the loan once the property is sold or becomes part of an estate.

Business Equipment Tax Exemption ("BETE") Program

The BETE program is a 100% property tax exemption program for eligible property that would have been first subject to tax in Maine on or after 4/1/08. BETE does not replace the Business Equipment Tax Reimbursement program (see below). The BETR program remains in place for qualified property placed in service after April 1, 1995 and on or before April 1, 2007 and for retail property placed in service after April 1, 1995.

Business Equipment Tax Reimbursement ("BETR") Program

The BETR program is designed to encourage capital investment in Maine. The program reimburses taxpayers for local property taxes paid on most qualified business property. To qualify, qualified business property must have been first placed in service in Maine after April 1, 1995.

Current Land Use Programs (Tree Growth, Farmland, Open Space, Working Waterfront)

- The State of Maine has four "current use" programs that offer the property owner a reduction in assessed value: Farmland, Open Space, Tree Growth, and Working Waterfront. The programs establish valuation of property at its current use, rather than at market value.
- All four programs are available to property owners through an application process with the local municipality. Applications must be filed on or before April 1 of the year the reduced valuation is first requested.
- Property must meet certain criteria to qualify for each program and any future change in the use of the land will cause disqualification resulting in a penalty.

Property Tax Exemptions

- Fully exempt – property tax may include real estate or personal property owned by governmental entities, school systems, and other institutions.
- Partially exempt – property tax relates to the following categories:
 - Homestead exemption – This program provides a measure of property tax relief for certain individuals that have owned homestead property in Maine for at least 12 months and make the property they occupy on April 1 their permanent residence. Property owners would receive an exemption of \$25,000, the exemption amount can change year to year, for up-to-date information please reach out to the Assessor's office.
 - Renewable Energy Investment Exemption – This program exempts renewable energy equipment, such as solar panels, from property tax beginning April 1, 2020. Taxpayers must apply for the credit by April 1 of the first year the exemption is requested.
 - Veteran Exemption – A veteran who served during a recognized war period and is 62 years or older; or, is receiving 100% disability as a Veteran; or became 100% disabled while serving, is eligible for \$6,000.
 - Paraplegic Veteran – A veteran who received a federal grant for a specially adapted housing unit may receive \$50,000.
 - Blind Exemption – An individual who is determined to be legally blind receives \$4,000.
 - Business Equipment Tax Exemption – 36 M.R.S. §§ 691 - 700-B.

Partial exemptions must be adjusted by the municipality's certified assessment ratio.

All of the above exemptions require completion of an application to the town office where the property is located. Exemption claims may require additional information to support the claim for exemption and must be delivered to the Assessor's office no later than April 1.

For more information see 36 M.R.S. §§ 651 - 684.

- Property Tax Fairness Credit
 - Eligible Maine taxpayers may receive a portion of the property tax or rent paid during the tax year on the Maine individual income tax return whether they owe Maine income tax or not. If the credit exceeds the amount of your individual income tax due for the tax year, the excess amount of credit will be refunded to you.

Tax Exempt Property

Source: Town of Rockport Assessing Office, 2023

ORGANIZATION NAME	EXEMPT AMOUNT
COASTAL MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST	\$ 13,220,600
SWEETSER	\$ 1,544,300
MID-COAST HABITAT FOR HUMANITY, INC	\$ 287,500
ZOE, INC	\$ 360,500
LADY KNOX CHAPTER, NATIONAL	\$ 41,700
MAINE COAST HERITAGE TRUST	\$ 10,770,200
MIDCOAST MUSIC ACADEMY	\$ 258,300
MERRYSRING FOUNDATION	\$ 379,200
KNOX COUNTY HOMELESS COALITION	\$ 1,698,400
MID-COAST RECREATION CENTER INC	\$ 3,155,100
MAINEHEALTH	\$ 40,673,600
PENOBSCOT BAY YMCA	\$ 6,507,300
P.A.W.S. ANIMAL ADOPTION CENTER	\$ 158,000
SIMONTON COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION	\$ 254,700
CENTER FOR FURNITURE	\$ 1,489,000
CAMDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY	\$ 216,700
MID-COAST RECREATION CENTER INC	\$ 113,700
VESPER HILL FOUNDATION	\$ 1,141,100
COASTAL WORKSHOP INC	\$ 332,300
Total Exempt Amount	\$ 82,602,200

Tree Growth, Farm and Open Space

Under the state's Farm and Open Space Tax Law, and the Tree Growth Tax Law, land that is designated as crop land, orchard land, pastureland, and woodland is eligible for a tax reduction.

The Farm and Open Space Tax Law provides for the valuation of land which has been classified as farmland or open space land based on its current use as farmland or open space, rather than its potential fair market value for more intensive uses other than agriculture or open space.

The resulting property taxes are usually lower than regular property taxes that base their land valuation on the likely price of the land if offered on the real estate market. Instead of market valuation, Farm and Open Space based land values on current use. The State of Maine offers the Farm and Open space tax program to encourage the preservation of farmland and open space. Parcels must be greater than five contiguous acres (tree growth 10 acres) and farmland and open space must show that there is a public benefit.

The Maine Tree Growth Tax Law provides for the valuation of land that has been classified as forested on the basis of productivity value, rather than on fair market value.

In Fiscal Year 2019-2020, the acreage of Rockport classified under tree growth, farm, and open space broke down as follows:

Source: 2019 Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary

Tree Growth	
Total Tree Growth	574.65
Softwood	24.60
Mixed Wood	188.90
Hardwood	361.15
Total Assessed Valuation of all forest land in Tree Growth	\$175,541
Farmland	
Total Farmland	364.99
Total Assessed Valuation of all Farmland	\$130,600
Open Space	
Total Open Space	799.03
Total Assessed Valuation of all Open Space	\$3,566,300
Working Waterfront	
Total Working Waterfront	\$0.00
Total Valuation of Working Waterfront	\$0.00

Rockport's Fiscal Capacity

The below table and graph are pulled from the 22/23 Fiscal Year Budget for Rockport, which indicate the Municipal Budget alone increasing by 50% from the year 2013 to 2022.

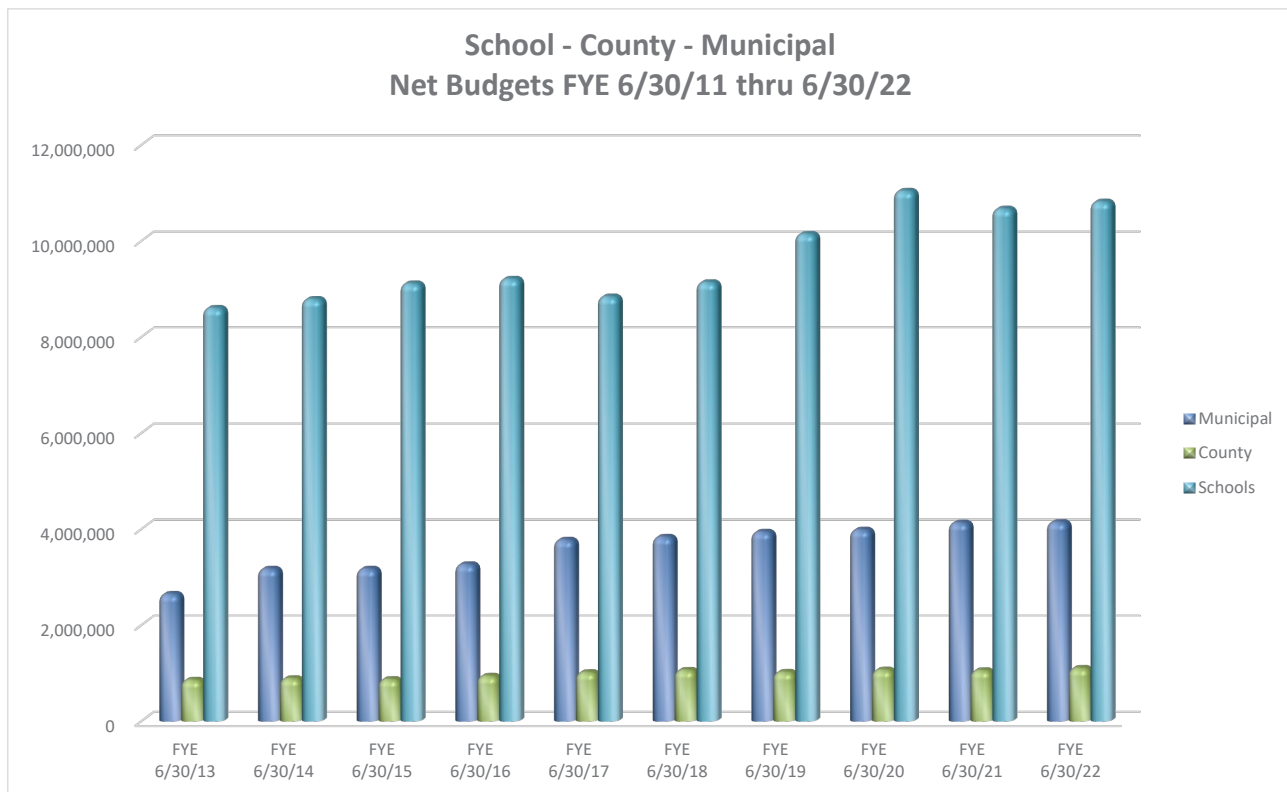
School budget increased by 27% and the county increased by 28% over the same time period.

Overall increase by 32% (municipal, county, and schools).

Comparatively, the United States inflation rate for this same time period is estimated at 25.6%.

It is therefore probably reasonable to conclude that some proportion of Rockport's citizens will find the increasing property tax burden to be beyond their means.

NET BUDGETS											
	FYE 6/30/13	FYE 6/30/14	FYE 6/30/15	FYE 6/30/16	FYE 6/30/17	FYE 6/30/18	FYE 6/30/19	FYE 6/30/20	FYE 6/30/21	FYE 6/30/22	% of Tax
Municipal	2,642,734	3,166,356	3,166,358	3,260,364	3,770,498	3,831,114	3,937,166	3,979,816	4,128,074	4,138,801	25.79%
Annual Change		19.81%	0.00%	2.97%	15.65%	1.61%	2.77%	1.08%	3.73%	0.26%	
County	854,034	886,566	869,039	937,590	1,013,095	1,059,031	1,018,257	1,064,206	1,051,999	1,100,924	6.86%
Annual Change		3.81%	-1.98%	7.89%	8.05%	4.53%	-3.85%	4.51%	-1.15%	4.65%	
Schools	8,597,847	8,783,202	9,107,286	9,204,630	8,835,591	9,132,629	10,140,044	11,036,989	10,664,309	10,811,423	67.36%
Annual Change		2.16%	3.69%	1.07%	-4.01%	3.36%	11.03%	8.85%	-3.38%	1.38%	
	12,094,615	12,836,124	13,142,683	13,402,584	13,619,184	14,022,774	15,095,467	16,081,011	15,844,382	16,051,148	100.00%
	7.08%	6.13%	2.39%	1.98%	1.62%	2.96%	7.65%	6.53%	-1.47%	1.30%	

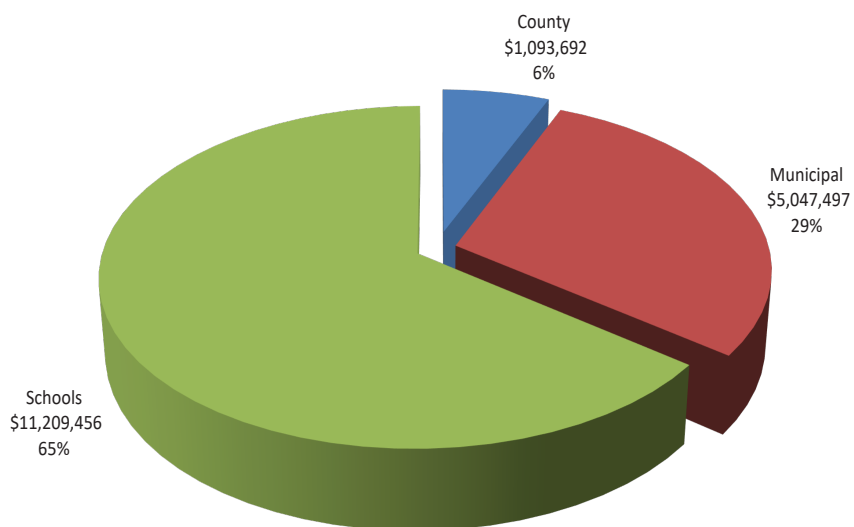


Debt

The town's total debt has increased over the decade between 2010 and 2020 from \$9,959,680 in fiscal year ending 2010 to \$24,097,617 in fiscal year ending 2020, the increase in debt includes municipal, school and county projects. The total debt of \$24,097,617 represents 2.4% of assessed valuation, the state allows a municipality to have up to 7.5% of the state valuation in municipal debt, in our case in 2020, that would have been a maximum allowable debt of \$75,728,268, of this allowable debt, Rockport had debt of about 6.8% of the total allowable, or a total of \$5,255,095. Rockport is well below state and bank guidelines, and we believe Rockport's rate of debt growth is not of concern.

The town's debt has two components; exclusive (work done only for the Town of Rockport) and shared or overlapping debt (work completed for the schools, county, and Midcoast Solid Waste Corporation).

ESTIMATED Mil Rate Apportionment



Exclusive Debt

For the work done exclusively for Rockport, the debt totals \$5,255,095 of which:

In the fiscal year ending 2020 the Town had outstanding bonds for capital infrastructure projects, and Opera House improvements bond, and Library bond, to construct a new Library facility. Of the allowable maximum debt set by the State, which totaled \$75,728,268 in 2020 or 7.5%, Rockport was 0.5% of this amount in this year.

The majority of the debt in 2020 is debt that is held by the school district, with \$18,071,016, of this amount nearly 17-million-dollars is Rockport's share of the new middle school constructed, the remaining portion of this bond is the responsibility of the Town of Camden, as the district serves both Rockport and Camden. The state allows for the school district to accumulate debt equal to 10% of the municipal valuation, which in 2020 would have been a total of \$100,971,024, and the district was at 17.9% of their allowable debt.

The remaining debt amount is attributed to Knox County, which was \$252,060, which is the remaining balance owed on a 1.9 million dollar infrastructure bond. As the state sets maximum amounts for the municipality and school district, they do the same for allowable county debt, which 7.5% of the municipal valuation, this is the same amount as the municipality. At this time the county was at less than half a percentage of their allowable debt.

The total of both debts represents 2.3% percent of the 2020 assessed value and a per capita debt of \$6,612.96 (population 3,644), this breaks down to be about 75% school debt or \$4,959.72, 21.8% municipal debt or about \$1,441.63, and the remaining balance of \$211.61 or 3.2% as County debt.

Property Valuation and the Mil Rate

The assessed property valuation from year 2010 to year 2020 decreased, going from \$1,012,250,000 to \$1,009,710,224, with a respective mil rate increase of \$11.68 to \$17.05. The assessed property valuation in 2023, however, increased to \$1,499,560,574 with a respective mil rate of \$15.45.

Unassigned Fund Balance

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, the unassigned fund had a balance of \$4,708,832 equaled approximately 25 percent of total annual expenditures for the fiscal year ending 2022, which is in line with the reserve standard set by the Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB).