

WEST GARDINER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



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WEST GARDINER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Introduction

The following document contains the 2024 Comprehensive Plan (hereinafter, the “Plan”) for the Town of West Gardiner (hereinafter, the “Town”). Although extensive in content and broad in scope, and while it follows the outline provided by the State of Maine, it should not be assumed to contain every facet of life, history, actual conditions or manner of operations for our wonderful town.

At their most basic level, communities complete Comprehensive Plans to help them prepare for the future. A comprehensive review of a community and its current statistical data, issues, and policies promotes discussion.

A Comprehensive Plan is a guide to a town’s future. It is not an ordinance or a set of rules and regulations, but a guide for town government to use as it moves in a path that will be determined by the public and municipal officials. It provides a “snapshot in time” of the town, a roadmap with a direction the town may want to take over the next 12 years.

A good Comprehensive Plan should enable a community such as West Gardiner to:

- Encourage thoughtful and orderly growth and development
- Protect the town’s rural character
- Preserve a healthy landscape
- Promote and encourage appropriate economic development.
- Identify future housing needs and how to best address these needs.
- Balance economic prosperity with quality of life.
- Develop a discussion among neighbors.
- Develop a basis for sound decisions in town management.

To begin this entire effort, the Comprehensive Planning Committee developed, printed, and distributed a 51-question survey that town residents were requested to complete email and return.

The survey queried all portions of the Comprehensive Plan Checklist. The survey was distributed in March of 2023, and the requested date of completed survey return was May 2023. Three hundred and twenty-five surveys we completed and returned. This covered less than 8% of the total population and 9% of registered voters. The results of the survey were tallied and incorporated into their respective sections of the plan. In addition to this input, the Maine State provided major statistical data Department of Administrative and Financial Services and the Maine Department of

Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. These two departments provided invaluable data on all facets required by the Plan. All this information was combined with the collective knowledge and backgrounds of the committee members to produce a picture of the present condition and atmosphere of West Gardiner.

Coordination with adjacent and area towns is quite extensive for a town the size of West Gardiner. The entire list of agreements and contracts is listed in the section titled “Regional Coordination Programs”.

Implementation of this plan will follow this path. Following the Plan’s creation, the Selectboard will review and approve its contents. The Plan will be submitted to the State of Maine for review. The Maine State Planning Office will check the Plan for consistency with the goals and guidelines of the Growth Management Act (30-A M.R.S.A...4312-4350).

After approval by the State of Maine and the Selectboard, the Plan will be presented to the residents in two ways. A complete Plan will be available on the town’s website and a paper copy will be available for review at the Town Office.

The purpose of the Plan is to highlight issues raised by the Town and its residents, determine desired outcomes, and outline possible strategies to accomplish these outcomes in the appropriate section of the Plan. The Plan is not intended to implement or direct any specific regulatory or policy changes, as that would be too narrow a focus, and outside the intended scope of the Plan. Implementation of any recommendations of the Plan would be accomplished within the context of the Town’s established administrative procedures and policies (e.g., formal adoption of ordinance revisions, Select Board consideration, public participation).

These areas include:

- A. Future land use recommendations; and
- B. Capital investments.

This Comprehensive Plan will be updated and submitted to the State of Maine 12 years after the approved date of this Plan, according to State of Maine guidelines. It will be reviewed every 5 years after the State’s approval.

In summary, this Plan encourages growth and development in areas of the community, while protecting the Town’s rural character and natural resources.

Vision

As we stand in the middle of West Gardiner's future journey, our vision propelled by the memories of the past will perpetuate those values, traits, ideals, customs, principles, character, standards, attitudes, and beliefs contained in the 1990 Comprehensive Plan and posture us to fulfill a successful outcome. The Town of West Gardiner is a community of extraordinary history and beauty. Our residents cherish West Gardiner's small-town quality of life and wish to preserve what we currently value while planning for a productive and viable future.

Each succeeding chapter in this plan will enumerate this vision in congruence with its respective subject area.

Acknowledgements

The development of the Towns' Comprehensive Plan was the result of the active participation and hard work of many people who value our community's future. We would like to thank them for their time and efforts.

Thanks to:

- The hundreds of people who took part in the community survey
- The Town staff who contributed their deep knowledge of Town services and the community's service needs
- Members of community organizations who contributed their ideas on the community's needs and who are partners in implementing this Plan
- Members of the community who participated in the public hearing process for this Plan
- Subcommittee members:
 - Dee Berglund
 - Andrea Lenhart
 - Alfred Luongo

And last, but not least, the members of the Comprehensive Plan Committee, who worked for 2 years to pull this Plan together.

- Comprehensive Plan Committee members:

John Morris, Chair: Comprehensive Plan Committee
Earle McCormick, Assistant Chair: Comprehensive Plan Committee
Debra Couture, Secretary: Comprehensive Plan Committee
Joan Anastasio
Gregory Couture, Chair: Selectboard
William Daniels
Vicki Dill
Susan Emmett
Michael Gross
Gary Hickey II, Selectboard
Randall Macomber, Selectboard
Fred Merrill
Angela Phillis, Town Clerk
Lisa Roberts
Erin Small
Rawn Torrington
Teresa Weichmann
Michael Wing

Comprehensive Plan Town Survey

This section of the Plan discusses the 51-question survey that the Town distributed in March and April of 2023. The survey was based, in part, on a survey that the Town of Readfield, Maine had designed several years earlier. It was distributed via paper and electronically via the Town's website. Question #7 did not make it into the online survey data, so was not considered in the review.

The survey questions and results of are located on pages of this Plan.

The population of the Town, determined by utilizing the 2020 census plus calculations for additional recorded births, deaths, and new residents was estimated to be 3647 on January 1, 2024.

The total number of the Town's registered voters on June 11, 2024, was 3023.

Based on the number of residents who answered the survey, the response rate was approximately 8% of the total residents and 9% of the total registered voters. Therefore, we caution the reader to understand that answers, suggestions, and recommendations in this plan that are based on survey responses may not reflect an accurate accounting of how the residents will view a particular future suggestion, recommendation, or ordinance for the Town.

Each survey question, with the corresponding percentages and comments, is included. Spelling has not been corrected. The responses are those of the person completing the survey. Inappropriate language has been removed from the text. Thank you.

Historical and Archeological Resources

State Goal: Preserve the state's historic and archeological resources. The purpose of this chapter is to identify and promote the distinctive archaeological and historic characteristics of the Town of West Gardiner (hereinafter, the Town). The task of preserving the places, buildings, and memories of the past is important to present and future inhabitants of the town. The remaining evidence of our ancestors, whether it consists of cemeteries, old homes, or prehistoric sites, all contribute to the individuality and identity of the community.

Although West Gardiner has a long history of settlement and has many fine examples of architecture from the late 1700's on, no buildings are on the National Register of Historic Places. The Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) is the state repository for all historic and archaeological information. MHPC has yet to be consulted on any identified private homes as possibly being "eligible" for inclusion. One major goal of this plan is to consult with the MHPC about the many homes that have been identified as over two hundred years old. In 2019, the Gardiner Public Library received a grant to identify homes in Gardiner and the adjacent towns that were built in 1820 or earlier. This grant was part of the many State grants that were given in preparation for the State of Maine Bi-Centennial in 2020. However, due to the COVID-19 epidemic, that committee was disbanded and never completed its work. However, the West Gardiner Historical Society president had already recorded a great deal of information from Elaine Goodwin, an expert on West Gardiner town history. Many of the homes that Elaine had noted that were over two hundred years old were photographed and catalogued. Many of these pictures are included at the end of this section of the Plan.

West Gardiner's history is largely an account of its land and what its residents have put into and gained from the land. A history of West Gardiner through the year 1950 was prepared by the town's Centennial Committee and written by Walter "Bud" Martin. West Gardiner's Centennial Celebration was celebrated on August 19, 1950. The book was originally published in 1950 during West Gardiner's Centennial and was reprinted in March 1990 and dedicated to Bud Martin. Most of the information included in the next five pages is taken directly from that book. The book is not available electronically. Because of that fact, a paper copy is included as part of this 2024 Plan submission.

An additional history of the Town's was written by a longtime resident, Mary Emery. It is titled "West Gardiner, Then and Now". A copy of that book is also included with this Plan submission. The information included through page 6 of this document comes from these two books.

West Gardiner's Hundred Years is misnamed because it begins its tale in the prehistoric age. "Once upon a time no rain or snow fell upon the fields of West Gardiner, nor any sunshine, nor was there any land whatsoever upon which to pay

interest and taxes." This was the Tertiary Age when West Gardiner lay beneath the sea. Clay deposits left by the ocean and the later ice age still determine the town's pattern of development today.

Claimed by at least five nations within the past 450 years, West Gardiner has also been part of the towns of Gardinerston, Pittston, Litchfield, and Gardiner. One of its most outstanding features, Cobbosseecontee Lake, was also known over the years as Cabbassa, Cabbassa-contee, Cabbassaguntiag, Cobbosseecontiquoke, and Cabbasaguntiquoke. We have shortened it in recent times to Cobbossee, working our way back to the easiest terminology, Cabbassa.

"This and nearby territory changed hands nine times in 127 years, until possession was decided in favor of the English and the fall of Quebec erased the name of New France from the map of North America in 1759. Settling of the new lands was under the control of the great English companies, like corporations, which derived their authority from grants or patents bestowed by English Kings. The first of these was a sizable chunk of pasture and woodlot granted by James I in 1606 to the London Company and to the Plymouth Company. It contained all the land in America between South Carolina and New Brunswick. The deeds to West Gardiner farms are based upon this and subsequent grants made by English Kings.

"The territory where West Gardiner now thrives eventually came under the ownership of "The Proprietors of the Kennebec Purchase from the last Colony of New Plymouth" in 1753.... Things didn't really begin to take shape in the West Gardiner neighborhood until Dr. Sylvester Gardiner came into town....He was one of the stockholders in the Kennebec Company and in his early fifties when he came here."

Dr. Sylvester was very successful in getting settlers onto his land, which encompassed as much as 12,000 acres at one time. He built sawmills at the mouth of Cobbossee Stream and the first gristmill. This old plantation of Gardinerston comprised the present areas of Pittston, Randolph, Gardiner, and West Gardiner, and was named for Dr. Gardiner.

An important part of West Gardiner's modern history concerns waterpower and rights on Cobbossee Stream. Dr. Gardiner acquired those rights and made the most of them, using that waterpower to build today's City of Gardiner.

Although the land and water provided bountiful harvests in those days, including sturgeon, salmon, and "white oaks and pine eighteen and one-half feet in circumference", there were also times of great scarcity, when "dried moose meat substituted for bread."

When war came with England, many Tories (English loyalists) fled to England or Canada, among them Dr. Gardiner. He never returned. When the War for Independence ended in 1781, most of Dr. Gardiner's land was restored to his

grandson and heir, Robert Hallowell, who, as required by his inheritance, took the Gardiner name, becoming Robert Hallowell Gardiner in 1802 by an act of the legislature.

In 1779 a tornado swept through the area, taking with it the Gardiner name. Probably because of resentment at Dr. Gardiner's British sympathies during the Revolution, the Plantation of Gardinerston was incorporated into the Town of Pittston. In 1779 the first reference to West Gardiner is found in available histories, when "about this time West Gardiner was settled by Tibbetts, James Dunlap and others.

James Dunlap "lived latterly about a mile below Purgatory Bridge in a logging camp, and "he also lived upon the Neck, at one time." Dunlap suffered calamity (tragedy) in 1796 when four of his children drowned in Cobbossee Stream in a sledding accident. Only two of his seven children lived to grow up.

Other early settlers were luckier, at least with children. Solomon Tibbetts had twelve children and his son Edward had a dozen too. Children were a great asset in these early times, serving as free farm laborers-and they all worked.

"The Neck comprises 1,760 acres, of which 590 are upon islands or beneath the waters of Lake Cobbossee; and a famous bog which has successfully contested the right of way with many generations of road builders....This interesting region is unquestionably one of the first in town to become the home of white men. But it was part of Litchfield until 1856, when it saw the light and petitioned to be included in the Town of West Gardiner."

Quarrying was one of the early industries of West Gardiner and it is thought that the Neck provided the granite for Christ's Church in Gardiner, which was built in 1819. The remains of numerous quarries dot West Gardiner's fields and forests today. "Most of the great slabs which are the foundations for some of the chimneys and so many of the houses and bridge abutments of the town were produced locally. Some of these were cut from granite boulders in the fields-not quarried from the ledges.

In 1799 Kennebec became the sixth Maine county, breaking off from Lincoln County. "Old Pittston forsook old Lincoln and became a part of the new country.' When Robert Hallowell Gardiner became twenty-one in 1803, he "engaged Solomon Adams to survey what is now the town, excepting the Neck, marking out roads and numbering farm lots, and starting the greatest real estate boom West Gardiner has ever seen."

The location and builder of West Gardiner's first home is unknown, but it was surely located along Cobbossee Stream, which served as the local highway when roads were merely blazed trails through the woods. "Early travel was by boat in summer, by skates or sled in winter."

Note: In 2019, in preparation of the State of Maine Bi-Centennial, the City of Gardiner's Public Library received a grant from the State of Maine to research and document homes, buildings, and other property that dated back to 1820. The Town participated in that endeavor and research was done to document all structures still standing that were built on or before 1820. Debra Couture and Susan Emmett were part of this committee. Pictures of those buildings are included as part of this Plan. All historical information on the buildings was received from Elaine Goodwin. Elaine is considered a historian in the Town. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020, that committee was disbanded and never finished a complete historical accounting for the grant. There is one home still standing on the Pond Road in West Gardiner that is believed to date to pre-1820. This follows the thoughts that the first homes were probably located along Cobbossee Stream, which follows the Pond Road into Litchfield and becomes the Plains Road.

"The number of houses and even larger buildings in West Gardiner which have been moved from their original sites is astonishing. Churches, stores school buildings, dwellings-even the Grange Hall aren't where they used to be."

"The roads have also been relocated there, so that when you see a house in the middle of a field and wonder why they built it there, the chances are that it was on the old road before it was moved.... There are roads in West Gardiner now that were not here before, and there are others that used to be here and are now on their way to being forgotten. The old Buffee Landing Bridge is gone. Monkey Lane is no longer a public way. Ware Lane is no more.

Brick to build chimneys, ovens, fireplaces, and even whole houses were made from West Gardiner clay. There were many brick kilns, including one at Merrill's Corner. The brick in the old Pope house was made from a kiln in the corner of the Pope's back field.

In 1803, by legislative act, old Pittston split asunder, with the eastern side of the Kennebec River retaining the name which it acquired in 1779 and the western shore becoming the Town of Gardiner. Dr. Gardiner's British loyalties must have been forgiven. One of the first acts of the Gardiner town meeting was to oppose construction of a bridge across the Kennebec River.

The first West Gardiner post office was established in the home of Aaron Haskell at French's Corner in 1828, requiring patrons to pick up their thrice per week mail. Rural Free Delivery was not authorized until 1896.

Gardiner became a city in 1849, but West Gardiner citizens spent very little time living in the city. Governor John Hubbard signed the legislative act on August 8, 1850, which separated and set up the Town of West Gardiner. The new town was thought to comprise about 10,400 acres.

We have since found that the town totaled 13,440 acres at that time. Later, the Neck's 1,760 acres, added from Litchfield, brought today's total acreage to about 15,200. The

boundaries in 1850 were the same as they are today except Farmingdale, from time to time.

The first town meeting was held in the "Freewill Baptist White Meeting House" which was then on High Street, on the site of today's West Gardiner garage. The date was August 21, 1850. "A venerable, leather-bound tome contains the record of what the townsfolk did there that day." Town meeting records from that day forward are preserved in today's town office.

In March 1856, the Neck became part of West Gardiner. "It has been suggested that perhaps taxation might have had something to do with it, West Gardiner's rate being traditionally lower than its neighbor's."

In the early 1800's ships were "built all up and down the Kennebec, many in Gardiner, and the local yards furnished work for West Gardiner settlers, some of whom were ship carpenters. Steamboats brought "good times and an era of prosperity to West Gardiner farmers."

"At the outset it became apparent that the new development would become a rural, rather than an industrial community. In all the miles of West Gardiner's Cobbossee Stream there were not such opportunities for waterpower development as Gardiner Village possessed in just the brief gorge below the dam at New Mills."

"West Gardiner's terrain was gently rolling. The land, though heavily clayed, was rich with the decaying of centuries-old forests. It was good land for growing things....Sheep were important possessions of families that grew own wool to make their own yard to knit their own socks....Clothes for the whole family were made on these farms."

But waterpower did continue to determine the future of much of West Gardiner's land. "Raising the height of the dam at New Mills in Gardiner flooded meadows so that farmers could no longer cut bog hay or harvest cranberries."

"In Ezekial Ware's farming days there was no Horseshoe Pond-just a meadow or bogland where two brooks met and flowed into Cobbossee Stream. Cranberries grew on the bog and Ezekial harvested and sold them. He also cut bog hay and shipped it to Boston, baled where it was used in packing dishes for shipment."

"Many West Gardiner products found their way to the Boston market via the old steamboats....which left Gardiner every evening." The car line began operating from Lewiston to Gardiner, via Spear's Corner, about 1908....called the "A &K" which stood for Androscoggin and Kennebec. You could go clear to Boston on the electric cars, once....The electric railroad made some significant changes in West Gardiner. West Gardinerites living on or near the line could work in Gardiner or Augusta and still get home every night, for one thing."

"The old A & K made it possible for an ambitious young fellow like Fred Trafton to do quite a business for himself in West Gardiner and Litchfield. He went into lumbering in

a pretty big way, for these parts, cutting about 250,000 feet a year, in Litchfield mostly. One year he cut a million feet....The blizzards of 1920 shut the A & K down for three weeks during February and March, when some folks could walk right up and look down their chimneys-if they had snowshoes." Crews of volunteers from all over the area pitched in to shovel the A & K track and get it running again.

World War I changed West Gardiner greatly. "Many of the men who did not go to war worked at high wages in Gardiner and in the Bath shipyards. They found the security of a weekly paycheck more to their liking than the hard work and uncertainty of farming, and this was the time when West Gardiner started to become a suburb-the home of people worked for wages out of town." World War II also affected the Town greatly. They saw their first casualty with Kenneth Goodwin Nason. A resident all his life, he was the oldest son of Freda and Louis Nason. He was married and the father of a young son, Robert, and a daughter who had not been born yet when he died. Freda became the first "Gold Star Mother" in West Gardiner. She was well known for decades as she rode in a convertible in the Gardiner Memorial Day parades wearing her Gold Star white hat, cape, and gloves. Her attire will be displayed in the West Gardiner Historical Society after its completion. Dozens of West Gardiner residents fought in this "War to end all wars".

The first automobile also started the town literally down a new road, in 1911. "Automobiles changed not only the economic aspect of life in West Gardiner but the social life as well....And the automobile era ended the A & K."

"The broad stream of freight which once had flowed from West Gardiner's fields and woods was dried to a trickle now. The cordwood and the lumber were gone and, anyway, city people were all burning coal. The hayfields lay, neglected and unplowed, growing up to hawkweed, with alders spread from the brooks.... Near the last of July, in 1932, the last of the trolleys made its final, lonesome run over the old right of way, and then the rails were taken up and sold and people dug out the ties and piled them in their yards to dry and burn for summer wood."

Even as West Gardiner's history is one of its lands, its people also had an impact on their world. Children were plentiful in West Gardiner's history. Mrs. Adrian Philbrick Small raised nineteen children, and a baker's dozen were not uncommon. Children were an asset to a couple trying to clear a farm.

John Frank Stevens was one of the world's famous civil engineers, one of the chief engineers of the Panama Canal, and a builder of railroads all over the world. He attended the old red schoolhouse on the Hallowell Road which preceded the white schoolhouse that bore his name. There is a bronze figure of Mr. Stevens in the Maine State Library in Augusta which is a copy of a ten-foot bronze statue that gazes out across the Rocky Mountains at Marias Pass, Summit, Montana. A long way a West Gardiner boy to go, indeed.

Collins' Mills once talked of major industry, a railroad and great textile manufactories, with, perhaps, someday, a new city to rise in the hollow and populate the hill.... Outsiders did buy the dam, at last. But they took its flowage for another city's mills, and that is when the sun went down and the twilight came wherein the oldsters sit today, remembering, as they listen to the stream that turns their wheels no more.

Prior to that day, Collins Mills boasted many tanneries. "It was a good location, because there was plenty of water handy to go into the tanning solution, and there was power to run the bark mill. But most of all, there was an unfailing supply of good hemlock bark, almost as important as the green hides, in the early tanning process.... Hemlock bark was a by-product of the extensive lumbering of early days."

In 1881, 7,500 dozen sheepskins per year were being tanned by the Horne Brothers in two buildings, each forty feet square, with steam power, in Collins Mills.

"Somewhere in the neighborhood of 1887.... Bates Manufacturing wanted to erect a textile mill here, so it is said, and the Maine Central Railroad is reputed to have run a preliminary survey branch line from Lewiston to Hallowell, with a station and siding to be at Collins' Mills.... But none of it came to pass....times changed, an era passed, and for \$3000 a deed (for the dam and water power) was passed to James and Rose Carver, of Gloucester, Massachusetts. This deed was dated December 18, 1903....About two years later, September 25, 1905, the Carvers of Massachusetts transferred their deed to the Gardiner Water Power Company, another out-of- tower."

No history would be complete without a discussion of the day's educational system. In 1850 there were 615 children of legal school age in West Gardiner. Less than half went to school and those that did attended only two terms each year, one in the summer and one in the winter each term of ten to twelve weeks in length. The public school system consisted of nine elementary school districts, with no high school. The schools were located so that no student had a long walk. "High school, in the early days, was only for rich men's sons. And there weren't many rich men in West Gardiner."

A perusal of old school records reveals that most of today's gripes and complaints from scholars, parents, taxpayers, and teachers were being uttered more than a century ago....The report of the School Committee in 1873 has a modern sound: We would recommend more interest by parents and better schoolhouses." Today, with over three hundred students at Helen Thompson School on Spear's Corner Road, we still hear the same statements.

This can be but a tiny portion of West Gardiner's illustrious history, so full of struggle. success, change, discouragement, and life itself. Readers are encouraged to purchase a copy of West Gardiner's Hundred Years. And to put it all in perspective, starting with the Tertiary Age. A complete copy of this book is added as part of this Plan.

There is quite a gap in the interest in historical information for the Town from 1990 to the early 2000's. In 2014, the West Gardiner Historical Society (WGHS) was founded. It was a group of about twenty members who had an interest in the history of West Gardiner and a concern for preserving that history for future generations. The WGHS still meets an

average of about eight times per year. The number of members who attend the meetings now totals twelve. About 3 years ago, the WGHS decided that the best way to help the Town and to preserve the Town's documents for future generations was to build a building to house historical items. An aging trailer was located adjacent to the Town property. It was offered to the Town by its owner. A special Town meeting approved funding to purchase the property. Steve McGee, a local contractor, removed the building at no cost to the Town. Additionally, some groundwork was completed in preparation for the concrete flooring. Mr. McGee also funded the design plans for the new building. In 2023, the Town approved funds to begin construction of the new building. The first phase of the building was to frame it up and make it watertight. That was completed in December 2023. At the April 2024 Town Meeting, an additional \$80,000 was approved to complete the insulation, electrical, and siding for the building. There is still more to be done, and it is listed as one of the capital investments in that section of this Comprehensive Plan.

Based on meetings and discussions with the Kennebec Historical Society, the WGHS also determined that having a climate-controlled room was of the utmost importance to the Town. Currently, the Town's historical documents are housed in the basement of the Town Office. There have been water problems there and there is concern about the documents and how they will survive over time.

After completion of the first phase, the WGHS started a review of the interior location to design the climate-controlled room. The Thompson family of West Gardiner had donated \$25,000 to the WGHS for the sole purpose of designing and building a climate-controlled room within the new historical society building. This donation is what was needed to start this very important part of the total project.

The main concern for completion of the building is future articles in the warrant at the Town Meeting. In relation to this Comprehensive Plan, it is hoped that the Town will provide adequate funding to complete the building. As stated earlier, it has been included as part of the Fiscal Capacity and Capital Investment Plan in this Comprehensive Plan and is listed as one of the Town's capital investments. As soon as the insulation is complete, the WGHS will begin to accept donations to the building.

The WGHS is working with the Maine Historical Preservation Commission (MHPC) to determine if there are prehistoric campsites located on the shores of any bodies of water in West Gardiner. They have identified three in Litchfield. They are located on Sand, Woodbury, and Cobbosseecontee Stream/Pleasant Pond. Precise locations are suppressed by MHPC to discourage treasure hunters. These three pre-historic sites that were identified by the MHPC are all located adjacent to waterways. Rivers and streams provided the only reasonable avenue of transport for early Native Americans. Once any of this type of archeological site is determined, it is recommended that the Town determine what measures need to be taken to preserve these sites. It is a goal of the historical society to publish a list of these sites for the Town Office, once the work is complete.

The new WGHS building will house historic artifacts that are related to the Town only. The WGHS currently has a Facebook page and utilizes the Town's website. The WGHS

will be writing grants in the future in the hopes of securing funds for records transfer, building upkeep, building upgrades, and the like.

As a final note, the Town has built a Veteran's Memorial next to the Town Office. That memorial contains the names of all residents of West Gardiner who were residents when they entered active or reserve military service or when they deployed in support of a military event. It contains all the names of West Gardiner residents from the Civil War through and including Vietnam. All those who served in the Post-Vietnam Era to the present have yet to have their names listed on this monument.

The historical and archeological goals for the WGHS and the Town include:

1. Completion of the WGHS building.
2. Completing the climate-controlled room in the WGHS building and transferring all historical documents from the Town Office basement to the climate-controlled room.
3. Inquire if there are any locations in West Gardiner that could be identified as prehistoric campsites or other archeological findings.
4. Investigate locations of archeological significance.
5. Include pictures of old houses, cemetery information, and the two books that have been written about the Town on the Town's website within the WGHS section.
6. Link the Town's annual reports to the University of Maine at Orono's Folger Library.
7. Begin the data entry of all donations to the WGHS museum utilizing the PastPerfect software.
8. Update the Veteran's Memorial with all the names of those residents who served in the post-Vietnam Era.

The following pages contains pictures of 200+ year old homes that currently stand in West Gardiner. The pictures are not in any specific order. The names depicted with each home are either the name of the current owner or the surname of an owner who resided there for an extended period in the 20th century.

Picture #1: The Abbott Homestead; Circa 1797, 500 Lewiston Road

Picture #2: The Abbott Homestead as pictured in the late 1800's

Picture #3: The Canty Homestead; Circa 1804, 6 Spears Corner Road

Picture #4: The Cotta Homestead; Circa 1807, 1128 Hallowell-Litchfield Road

Picture #5: The Couture Homestead; Circa 1810, 98 Pond Road

Picture #6: The Neva and Harold Goodwin Homestead; Circa 1807, 3326 Neck Road

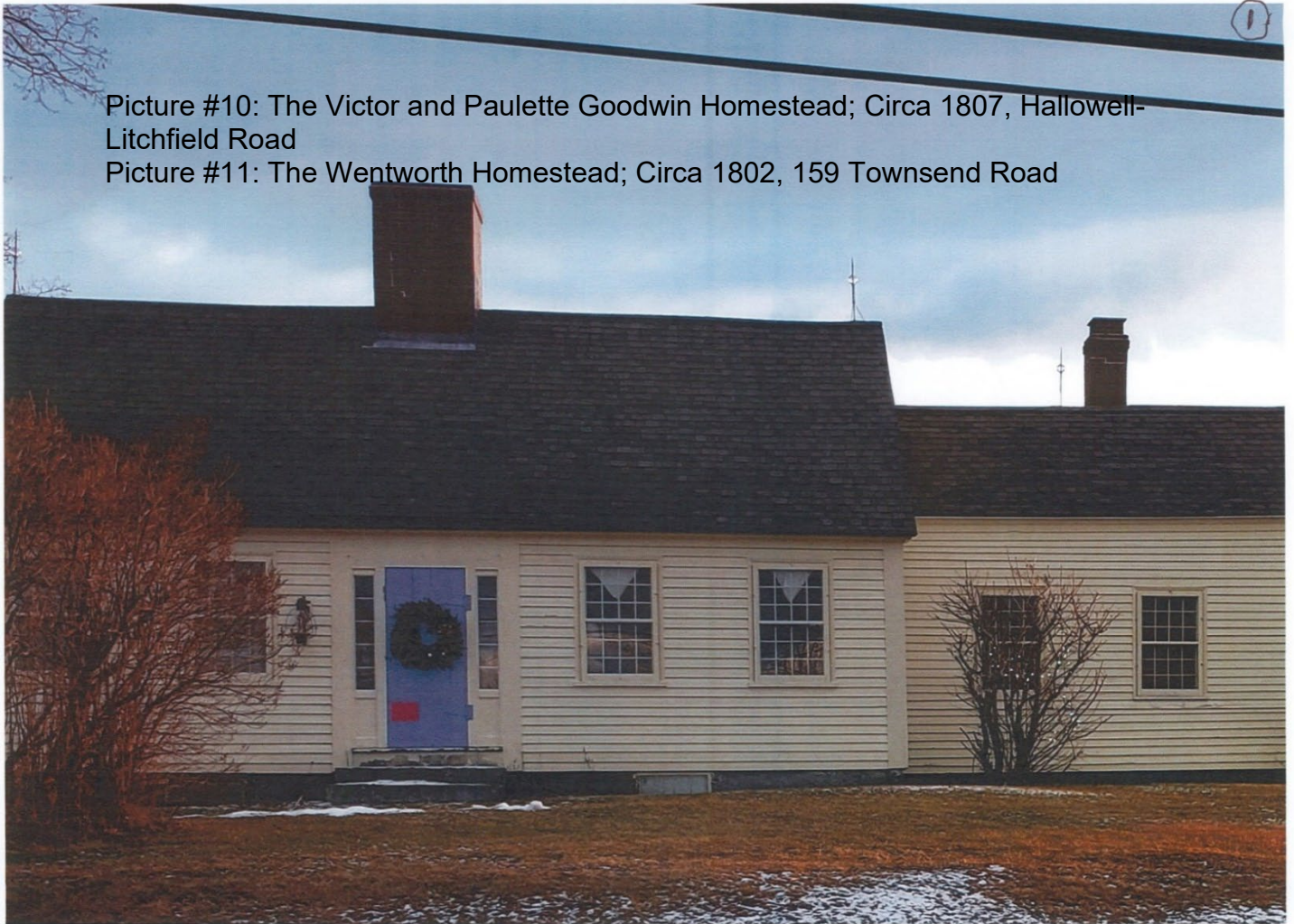
Picture #7: The Greenleaf Homestead; Circa 1800, 1194 Hallowell-Litchfield Road

Picture #8: The McLaughlin Homestead, Circa 1798, 986 Hallowell-Litchfield Road

Picture #9: The Marks Homestead; Circa 1804, Hallowell-Litchfield Road

Picture #10: The Victor and Paulette Goodwin Homestead; Circa 1807, Hallowell-Litchfield Road

Picture #11: The Wentworth Homestead; Circa 1802, 159 Townsend Road



Picture #1: The Abbott Homestead; Circa 1797, 500 Lewiston Road



Picture #2: The Abbott Homestead as pictured in the late 1800's



Picture #3: The Canty Homestead; Circa 1804, 6 Spears Corner Road



Picture #4: The Cotta Homestead; Circa 1807, 1128 Hallowell-Litchfield Road



Picture #5: The Couture Homestead; Circa 1810, 98 Pond Road



Picture #6: The Neva and Harold Goodwin Homestead; Circa 1807, 3326 Neck Road



Picture #7: The Greenleaf Homestead; Circa 1800, 1194 Hallowell-Litchfield Road



Picture #8: The McLaughlin Homestead, Circa 1798, 986 Hallowell-Litchfield Road



Picture #9: The Marks Homestead; Circa 1804, Hallowell-Litchfield Road



Picture #10: The Victor and Paulette Goodwin Homestead; Circa 1807, Hallowell-Litchfield Road



Picture #11: The Wentworth Homestead; Circa 1802, 159 Townsend Road

WATER AND NATURAL RESOURCES

State Goal

To protect the quality and manage the quantity of the state's water resources, including lakes, aquifers, great ponds, estuaries, rivers, and coastal areas.

Lakes, streams and ponds are an essential part of West Gardiner's landscape and enhance the town's rural character by their natural beauty. They provide recreational opportunities for all town residents and contribute to the economy through tax revenues. The surface waters are home to many species of fish, other aquatic animals and plants. West Gardiner is part of the 240-acre Cobbosseecontee Stream watershed, stretching from Mount Vernon in the north to Bowdoinham in the south traversing through 15 towns where it flows into the City of Gardiner and meets the Kennebec River.

Analyses

The Town has one storm drain on the Spear's Corner Rd which empties into a culvert and that culvert drains into an adjacent wetland. The State has storm drains in the area where Routes 95 and 295 converge. Drains can be found in the roundabout, the West Gardiner Service Plaza and near exit and entrance ramps and they drain into retention basins adjacent to the highways.

There are no known failed septic systems, and the one previously known cesspool has been removed and replaced with an approved septic system.

Non-point pollution is present as it is in most communities from melting snow and rainfall which transports natural and human-made pollutants to waterbodies. Examples are road salt, fertilizers, pesticides, animal waste and petroleum products. In the last few years, PFA's have been a concern in most towns and West Gardiner is no different. PFAS have been found in Maine in agricultural sites, drinking water supplies, surface waters, landfills, wastewater, sludge and septage spreading sites, and remediation and cleanup sites. In general, PFAS can enter the environment through direct releases from specific PFAS-containing products (e.g., certain firefighting foams), from various waste streams (sludge and septage when land applied, leachate from unlined landfills), and other pathways still being researched. In Maine, sludge and septage that may contain PFAS was applied to various "sites" for nutrient value. This activity was licensed because at the time little was known about PFAS as an emerging contaminant. West Gardiner has one 20.5-acre lime treated septage site. Septage application site permits for 5 years were granted in 1993 and 2000. In addition, there are 3 wells on the Lewiston Rd (Route 126) and 4 wells on the Indiana Rd and 2 wells on Long Meadow Dr are identified as having levels of PFA's which are below safe drinking water levels (Maine DEP PFAS Investigation (Formerly the "Septage and Sludge Map") (arcgis.com)). The wells were tested on 10/05/2022. Acreage abutting these wells is identified as a sludge utilization site with confirmed spreading. Both the High St property and the Indiana Rd property are designated as Tier II sites. State definition below.

Tier II	<p>Sites where between 5,000 and 10,000 cubic yards of sludge were land applied, where homes are within 1/2 mile, and where PFAS is likely to be present in the sludge based on an evaluation of known sources or contributors of wastewater at a given treatment facility. In cases where homes are over 1/2 mile away, a site may be downgraded to Tier III depending on distance and other hydrogeological factors. Likewise, a site may be elevated to Tier I if results from a Tier II site with similar source contributions show a greater than anticipated impact to the soil and water being tested.</p>
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Phosphorus is the pollutant that has caused the most degradation of surface waters. Excessive phosphorus causes microscopic algae to bloom in the lake and ponds. Different forms of algae bloom in the streams. Phosphorus is found in fertilizers, human and animal waste, pesticides and herbicides.

The groundwater and surface water supplies are protected through state regulations that the town follows. The Plumbing Code Officer interacts with the Selectboard when a property abuts water. He also approves soil test designs for septic systems and maintains office copies of the plans which are mailed to the state.

Public works crews and contractors assist in the protection of local waters by adhering to best practices. West Gardiner was one of the first smaller towns to build a salt shed to control subsurface water penetration. A large new town garage was constructed in 2017 to hold equipment.

There are local and regional advocacy groups that promote water resource protection. Cobbossee Watershed District was authorized by the Maine Legislature in 1971. The District's mission is to protect, improve, conserve and manage the 28 lakes, ponds and streams of the Cobbossee watershed. CWD carries out this responsibility by monitoring water quality regularly on more than twenty lakes in the watershed and working with public and private landowners to voluntarily implement pollution reduction on roads, shorefront properties, farms, and other lands in the watershed. CWD provides technical assistance to local planning boards, code enforcement officers, and developers. CWD also procures grant funding to assist municipalities and property owners with lake protection and restoration projects, including in lake treatments, and coordinates water level management throughout the watershed to minimize flooding, provide recreational water levels, and protect aquatic life. Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed (FOCW) is an organization based in Winthrop that provides outreach and education, courtesy boat

inspections, restoration projects with the Youth Conservation Corps and science programs to local schools.

Conditions and Trends

Within its boundaries, the Town has portions of Cobbossee Lake, Pleasant Pond, Lily Pond, Horseshoe Pond, Cobbossee Stream, and Cold Stream.

Cold Stream

Cold Stream originates off Northern Avenue in Farmingdale and empties into Cobbossee Stream shortly before the Interstate 95 bridge. It meanders approximately 4.5 miles through the town. It is clay lined and dark in color. From the bridge over Route 126 to Cobbossee Stream it averages 7' in depth and is navigable by boat. Above the bridge it is shallower and access by canoe or kayak is limited. The bridge is a popular spot for fishing and various aquatic animals and birds abound.

Lily Pond

Lily Pond is a small, elongated pond of 24 acres with access by canoe or kayak off the east side of Cobbossee Lake. It is monitored for invasive species but has none recorded to date. Various species of fish, aquatic animals and birds can be found.

Horseshoe Pond

Horseshoe Pond is a warm water pond of 74 acres located in Cobbossee Stream and has a mean depth of 9' although there is a 40' deep hole off the east end of the island. Various fish species, birds and aquatic animals can be found. Variable leaf milfoil was confirmed in 2002.

Pleasant Pond

Pleasant Pond is a long narrow shallow waterbody formed by the damming of Cobbossee Stream in Gardiner in the 1800's. The pond is 970 acres in 2 distinct basins. The upper basin has a depth of 12' and the lower basin 30'. West Gardiner has only a small portion of the pond within its boundaries. The pond is also subject to algae blooms due to overly enriched nutrients, the water quality is below average and variable leaf milfoil was confirmed in 2001. It is a popular pond for fishing and boating.

Cobbossee Stream

Cobbossee Stream begins at the outlet dam in Manchester and discharges into the Kennebec River in Gardiner. Approximately 9 miles of the stream is within West Gardiner, and it is one of the boundaries between West Gardiner and Litchfield. With the new Tappan Bridge, the stream is now navigable from the town boat launch in Collins Mills to the New Mills section of Gardiner. There are areas of wetlands that provide habitat for birds and aquatic species. Variable leaf milfoil below the Bog Hill boat landing was confirmed in 2002. The stream is home to many species of warm water fish and the predatory northern pike. Sediment, erosion and phosphorus runoffs are issues and during the summer low water levels, algae blooms are common. West Gardiner has no control of the dams that control the water flow that are a causative

factor in erosion. Maine has had a water classification system since the 1950's rating freshwater rivers in Class AA, A, B or C relating to dissolved oxygen, bacteria, habitat and aquatic life. Cobbossee Stream is classified as Class B by the DEP.

Cobbossee Lake

Cobbossee Lake has a surface area of 5541 acres and is the largest lake in the watershed. It is a highly scenic lake used for recreation, especially for boating and fishing and is developed with seasonal and year-round homes with fairly high density. The lake provides a fishery for both cold water and warm water species, but it is best known for smallmouth and largemouth bass. Cobbossee Lake was previously on the list of impaired waterbodies but was removed in 2006 and continues to improve in water quality. Frog bit was confirmed at the northern end of the lake in 2018 and in 2023 Eurasian water milfoil was discovered above the dam and in the outlet. No access to the areas involved was permitted. Herbicides were applied for remediation and the area will continue to be monitored.

Water quality testing is done each year in August and the most recent published data from Lake Stewards of Maine from testing stations is below:

	Chlorophyll	Phosphorus	Color	Alkalinity	PH	Conductivity
Cobbossee Lake	8.8	16	16	18.1	7.04	62
Pleasant Pond	7.8	23	26	16.6	6.84	76
Horseshoe Pond	8.7	21	23	20.5	6.92	82

Low is 0

High	11	32	65	32	9	110
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Secchi Disk Transparency is a quick, simple and fairly accurate method for determining lake water quality. Transparency is a measurement of how deep into a lake the sunlight can penetrate. Factors that interfere with light penetration are algae, zooplankton, water color, and silt. Average transparency for Cobbossee Lake is 18.7 feet, Pleasant Pond 11.7 feet and Horseshoe Pond 14.8 feet. Data goes back to 1975 and both Cobbossee and Pleasant Pond have steadily improved while Horseshoe Pond has remained consistent. Encouragement of local lake associations to eliminate the use of fertilizer has led to improvement along with the buffer zones designated in the Inland Shorelands Protection Act.

Policies

To protect current and potential water sources.

To protect significant surface water resources from pollution and improve water quality where needed.

To protect water resources.

To minimize pollution discharges.

To cooperate with neighboring communities and regional/local advocacy groups to protect water resources.

Strategies

Adopt or amend local land use ordinances as applicable to incorporate stormwater runoff performance standards consistent with:

Maine Stormwater Management Law and Maine Stormwater regulations.

Maine Department of Environmental Protection's allocations for allowable levels of phosphorus in lake/pond watersheds.

Maine Pollution Discharge Elimination System Stormwater Program

Consider amending local land use ordinances, as applicable, to incorporate low impact development standards.

Maintain, enact or amend aquifer recharge area protection.

Encourage landowners to protect water quality. Provide local contact information at the municipal office for water quality best management practices such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Soil and Water Conservation District, Maine Forest Service and Small Woodlot Association of Maine.

Consider water quality protection practices and standards for construction and maintenance of public roads.

Participate in local and regional efforts to monitor, protect and improve water quality.

Provide educational materials at appropriate locations regarding aquatic invasive species.

Cooperate with neighboring communities to encourage a fish passage at the New Mills Dam and removal by purchase of both privately owned dams.

Support the work of the Cobbossee Watershed District.

Natural Resources

Goal

To protect local wetlands, wildlife and fisheries.

Analyses

There are neither rare nor exemplary natural communities or ecosystems nor are there any habitat focus areas of statewide significance identified within the Town. The town has no zoning and a minimal lot size ordinance which does not discourage development. However, with no public water or sewer services, development is limited and is currently not a threat to natural resources.

The Code Enforcement Officer follows the state inland shoreland guidelines when approving septic systems. There are no regulatory measures or ones proposed regarding natural resource protection. The local groups to protect resources are volunteer based.

Conditions and Trends

Scenic areas of interest include Cobbossee Lake and the 113-acre Wakefield Wildlife Sanctuary on Cobbossee Stream.

Policies

To conserve resources within the town and to partner with neighboring towns, regional and state agencies to protect shared natural habitats and resources.

Strategies

Ensure any local land use ordinances are consistent with applicable state law. Consider participating in regional planning and make available information to those whose lands encompass or abut natural resources information regarding current use tax programs.

Agricultural and Forest Resources

Goal

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

Analyses

Although agriculture was important in its earlier days, it is no longer a central part of the town's economy. Historically, family farming and logging were prevalent. Today, there are numerous small farming operations that sell plants and produce in farm stands and 3 larger working farms. Both farming and logging are stable at this point.

Landcover classifications in acres from the 2019 National Land Cover data set provided from the Maine Forest Service are:

Barren land - 39	Deciduous Forest – 1279
Cultivated Crops - 1	Developed, High Intensity – 70
Developed, Low Intensity - 743	Developed, Medium Intensity – 396
Developed, Open Space - 819	Emergent Herbaceous Wetland – 427
Evergreen Forest - 2621	Hay/Pasture - 2081
Herbaceous - 227	Mixed Forest – 5944
Open Water - 6821	Shrub/Scrub - 232
Woody Wetlands – 1745	

These numbers will have changed between 2019 and 2024 due to increased development, an increase in cultivated crops and logging.

The town has recently passed ordinances prohibiting solar farms and unmanned storage shed developments to protect open land. There are no local or regional land trusts working to protect farms, but the Kennebec Land Trust (Wakefield Wildlife Sanctuary) has 43 acres designated as forever wild and 61 acres designated as managed forest.

Some farm and forest landowners are taking advantage of the state's current use tax laws.

There is minimal impact of housing and other land use development on local farming and logging operations.

There are no large tracts of agricultural or forest land currently for sale.

The town is a supporter of forestry and agriculture. There are no ordinances that restrict the selling of what an individual or small farm is able to grow, cook or produce on their own property. There are no community gardens or farmer's markets in the town.

The town has no public woodlands under management. The town does own 223 acres of open land, mixed forest and wetlands.

Condition and Trends

West Gardiner is home to several woodlots and acreage owners. Historically family farming formed one base of the economy with open fields in much of the town. Today small farms and farmstands are still present, including Farmer Kev's a certified organic farm which distributes produce mostly through its farm shares.

Most of the threats to woodlots are from invasive pests such as spruce budworm and emerald ash borer. A threat to both forest land and farmland is the recent explosion of the Asian jumping worm because it quickly depletes nutrients from the soil.

In addition to landowner's enrollment into both the tree growth and farmland current use tax programs, one property has been placed into the open space tax program.

Neither farming nor forestry play a significant role in the community. There are numerous small farm stands in town selling seedlings, annual and perennial plants, baked and canned goods, produce, fruit, eggs and small shrubs. There are several loggers who specialize in cordwood and landowners who manage small woodlots for their own purposes.

Deer wintering areas are dispersed throughout the town. Most are near riparian areas associated with lakes, ponds and streams. Maintaining sufficient winter shelter is an exercise in forest management.

Forestry professionals manage forested land. Some private landowners have taken advantage of the 1972 Tree Growth Tax Law which requires a forestry management plan for that property.

West Gardiner Land Enrolled in State Farmland and Tree Growth Taxation Programs

	Farm			Tree Growth			Open Space		
Year	Parcels	Acres	Total Valuation	Parcels	Acres	Total Valuation	Parcels	Acres	Total Valuation
2014	4	242	\$49,315	7	286	\$99,916			
2015	4	242	\$47,171	7	286	\$98,292			
2016	4	242	\$45,027	7	269	\$100,881			
2017	5	269	\$47,672	6	262	\$90,083			
2018	5	269	\$48,144	6	258	\$86,998			
2019	5	269	\$46,728	6	258	\$84,355			
2020	4	270	\$44,861	6	258	\$84,665			
2021	4	270	\$45,107	6	258	\$84,665			
2022	4	270	\$46,728	7	256	\$74,716			
2023	4	270	\$43,731	8	317	\$87,530	1	43	\$18,060

Summary of Timber Harvest Information for the Town of West Gardiner

Year	Selection Harvest Acres	Shelterwood Harvest Acres	Change of Land Use Acres	Clearcut Harvest Acres	Total Harvest Acres	# of Reports
1990-1994	381	60	21	31	493	23
1995-1999	712	110	2		824	30
2000-2004	668	40	20		728	28
2005-2009	472	95	87		654	17
2010-2014	397	100	190		687	23
2015-2020	779	15	85		879	38
Total	3409	420	405	31	4265	159
Average	568	70	68	16	711	27

Data compiled from Confidential Year End Landowner Reports to Maine Forest Service

Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry – Maine Forest Service

***To protect confidential landowner information, data is reported only when there are three or more landowner reports reporting harvesting in the town.**

Policies

To protect lands identified as prime farmland or capable of supporting commercial forestry which helps to keep development manageable. To encourage landowners to retain and improve land.

Support farming and forestry and encourage their economic viability.

Strategies

Consult with Maine Forest Service district forester when developing any land use regulations pertaining to forest management practices as required by 12 MRSA 8869.

Consult with Soil and Water Conservation District Staff when developing any land use regulations pertaining to agricultural management practices.

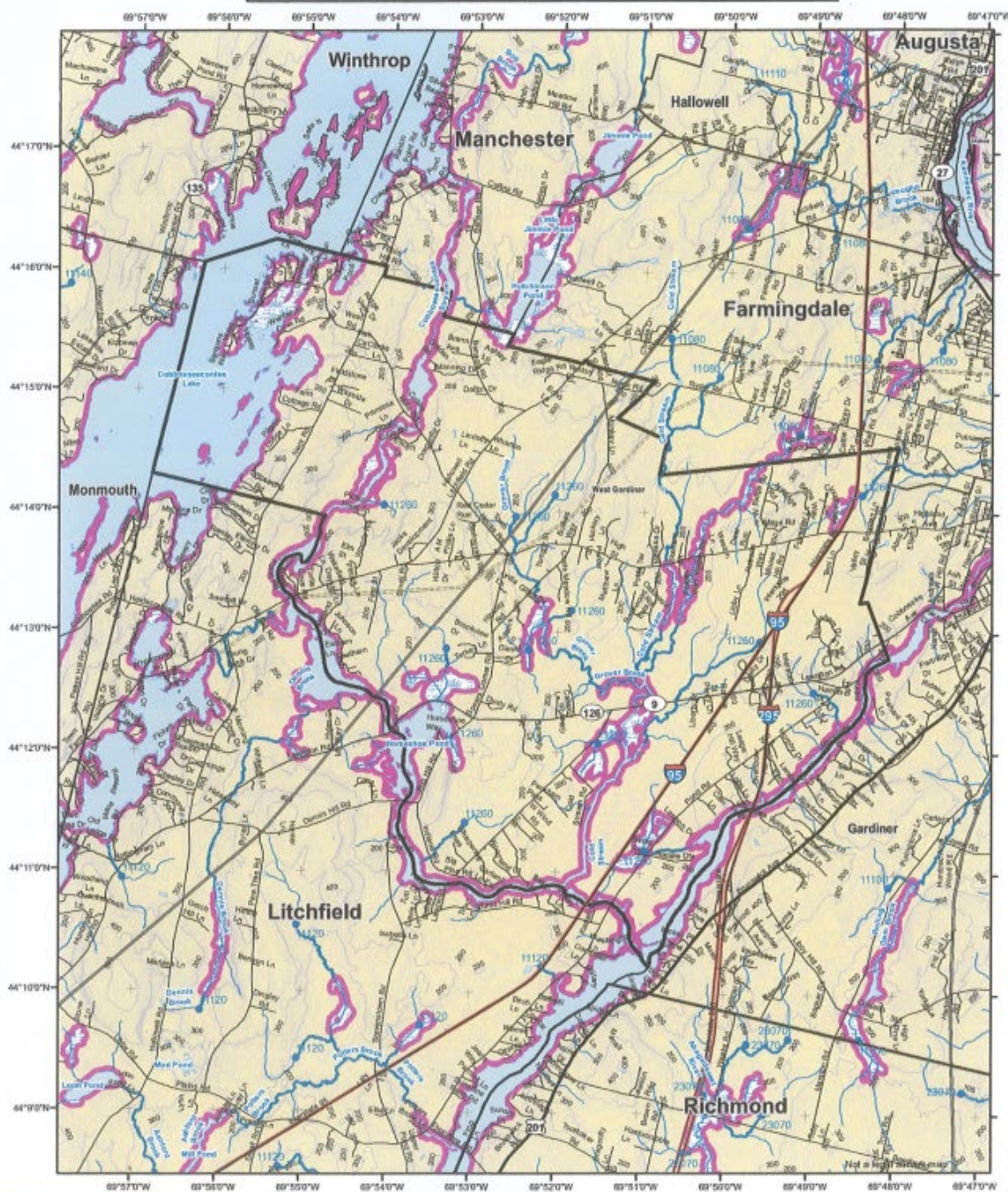
There are no land use ordinances requiring developers to maintain farmland as open space and although the residents of West Gardiner appreciate the value of open space and farmland, they are not in favor of restricting property rights.

The town has no designated rural critical areas.

Encourage owners of productive farm and forest land to enroll in the current use taxation programs within 5 years of the approval of this Plan.

West Gardiner permits 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 and townspeople want to continue this policy.

Statewide Standards for Timber Harvesting in the Shoreland Area* Map



This map is **ADVISORY**, for planning purposes only. Actual ground conditions and water body locations determine where and how MFS timber harvesting rules apply. Contact the MFS for additional information/assistance from a MFS Forester.

Forest Operation Notification & Shoreland Area* Map West Gardiner

Adoption Date
9/30/2010

LO Last Name _____
LO First Name _____
Prepared By _____
FORS # _____
Date _____

Wetlands

Non-forested Wetlands Greater Than 10 acres
(Aquatic, Palustrine)

Emergent or Marine Wetland

Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Maine Forest Service

Maine Forest Service

For additional information, please contact the MFS at
1-207-287-2701 or 1-800-367-0223 (in-State)

Email us at: forestinfo@maine.gov
or on the web at: www.maine-forestservice.gov

Drainage Points

1234
300 Acre Drainage Point
(start of the 75 ft buffer)
1234 - ID Number (location info)

56
25 Square Mile Drainage Point
(start of the 250 ft buffer)
56 ID Number (location info)

Habitat

Coastal Wildlife Habitat
(Least Tern, Roseate Tern, Piping Plover)

FOR Town
Statewide Standard Rules do not apply
(Town/DEP Standards apply)

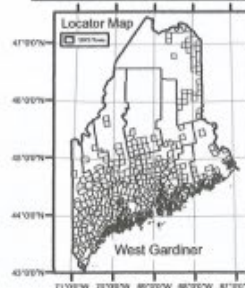
Buffers

250 Foot Buffer Zones
Great Points
Non-forested Wetlands greater than 10 acres
Rivers below the 25 square mile drainage point
Coastal Wetlands
Total Wetlands
Essential Wildlife Habitat
(Least Tern, Roseate Tern, Piping Plover)

75 Foot Buffer Zones -
Stream between the 300 acre drainage point and
the 25 square mile drainage point

Shoreline Integrity - Streams draining less than
300 acres, ponds and non-forested wetlands greater
than 0.1 acre and less than 10 acres

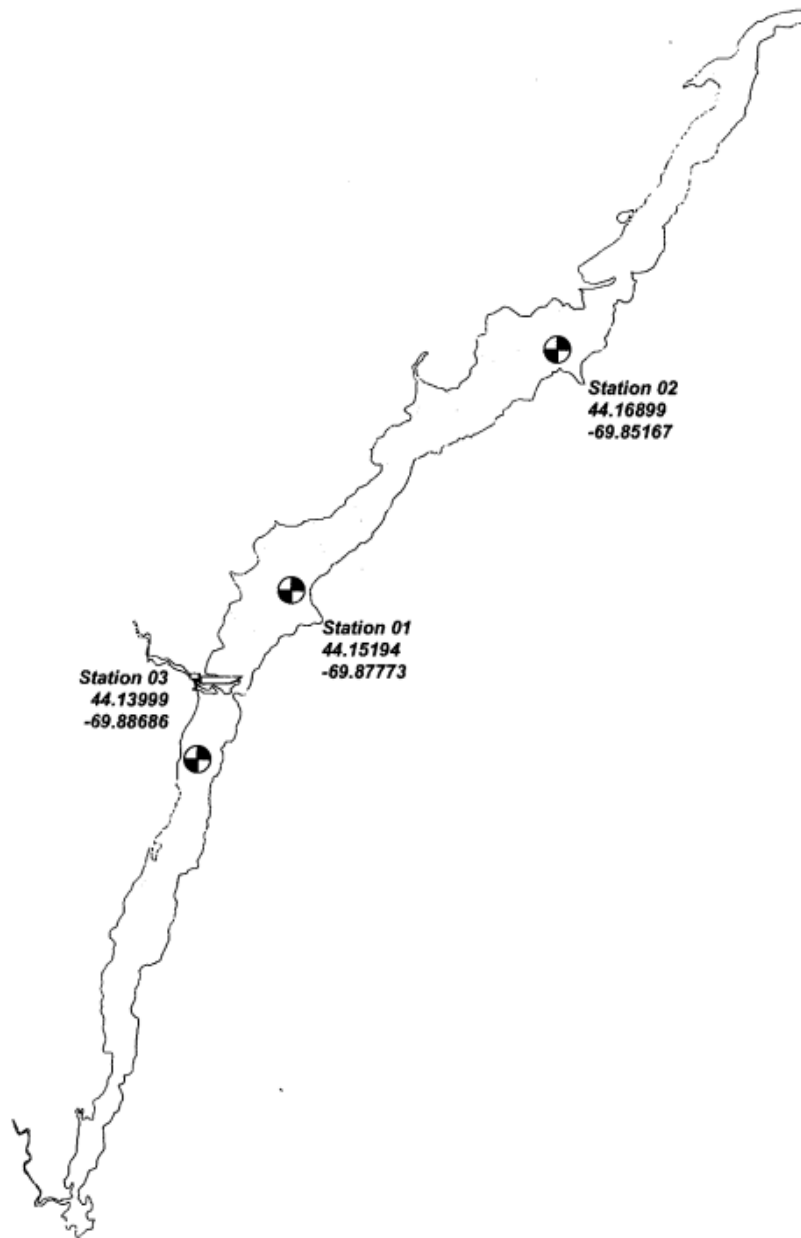
Shoreline Integrity also applies to UNMAFED streams & wetlands



*See MFS Rule - Chapter 21 for additional information.

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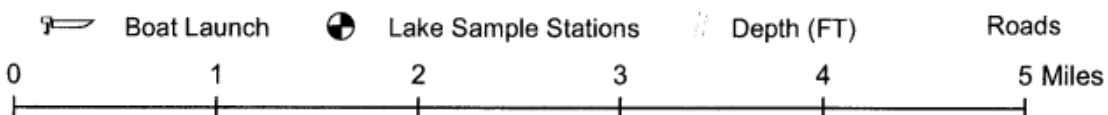


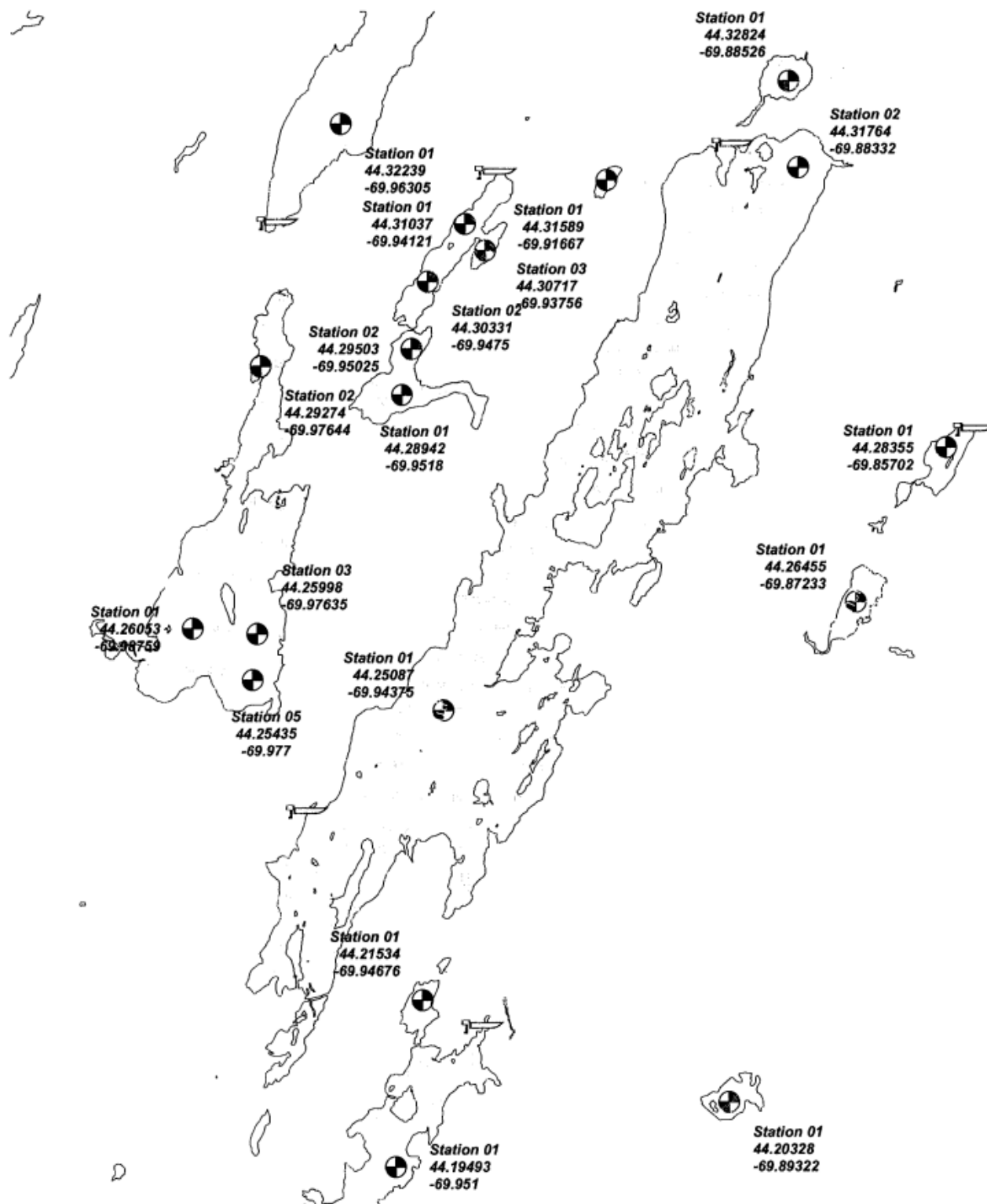


Upper Pleasant Pond2

MIDAS # 5254

Gardiner, Kennebec Co. - Delorme Page 21 - 970 acres

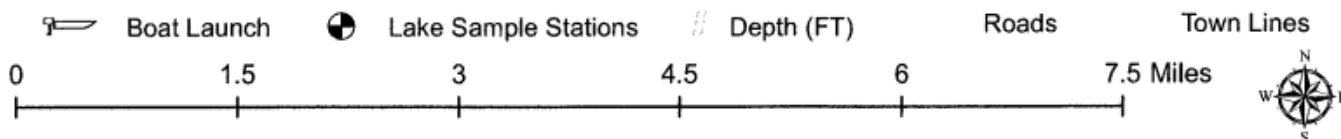


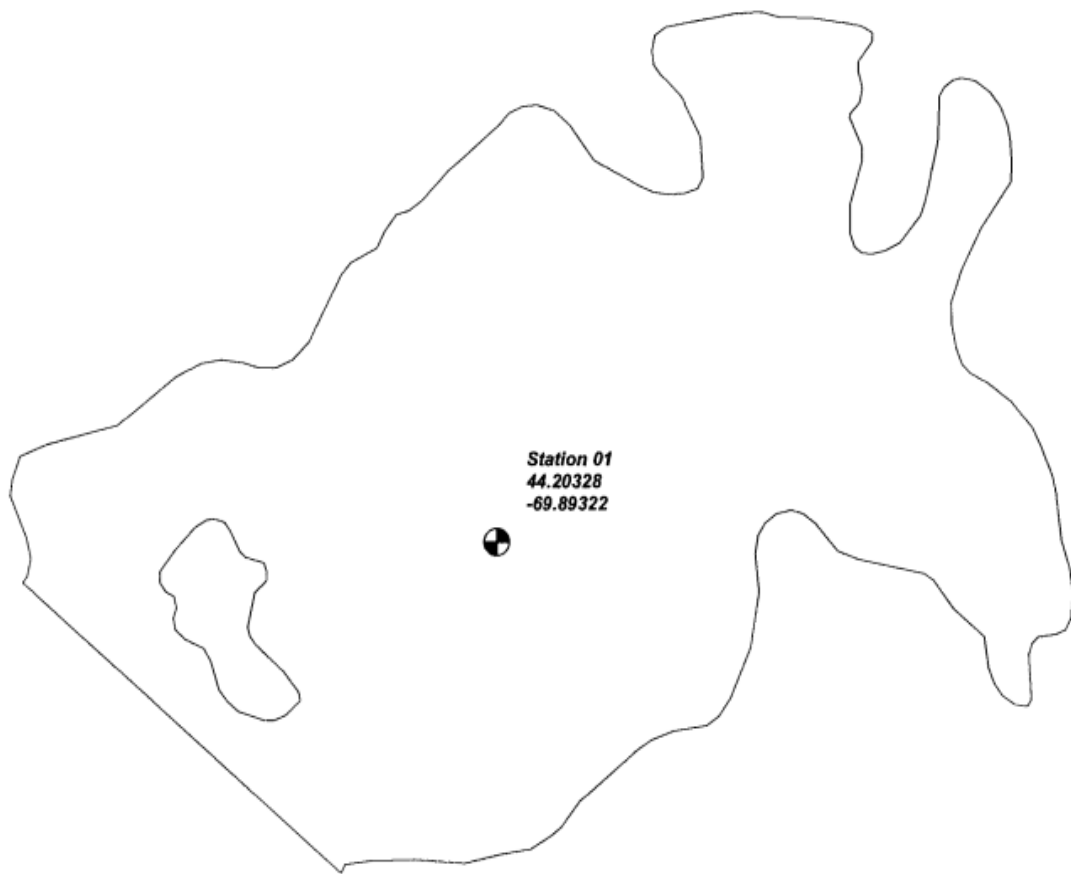


Cobbosseecontee Lake

MIDAS # 5236

Manchester, Kennebec Co. - Delorme Page 12 - 5541 acres

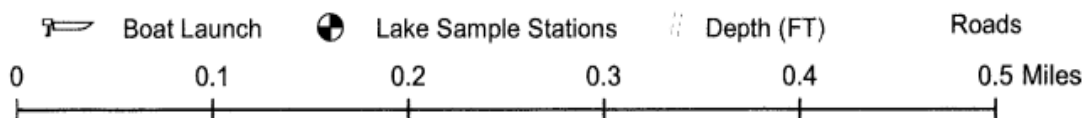




Horseshoe Pond

MIDAS # 5252

West Gardiner, Kennebec Co. - Delorme Page 12 - 76 acres



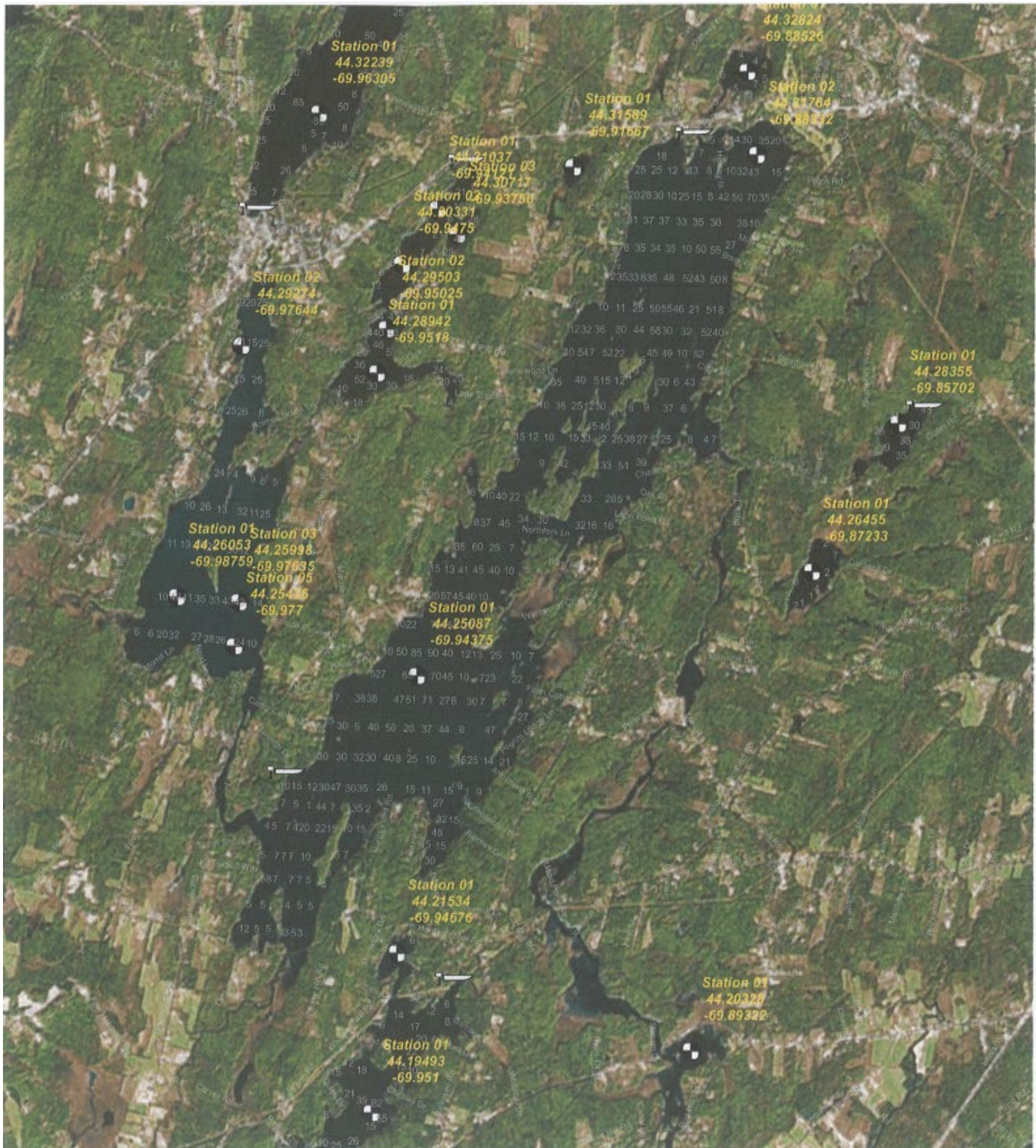


Horseshoe Pond

MIDAS # 5252

West Gardiner, Kennebec Co. - Delorme Page 12 - 76 acres

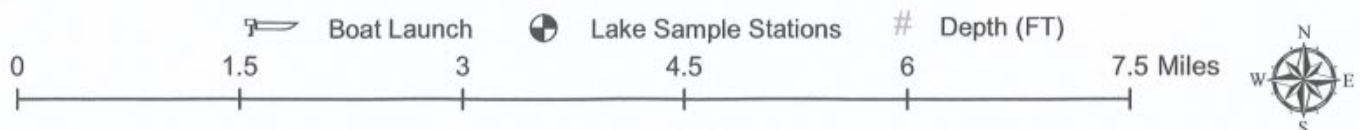




Cobbosseecontee Lake

MIDAS # 5236

Manchester, Kennebec Co. - Delorme Page 12 - 5541 acres



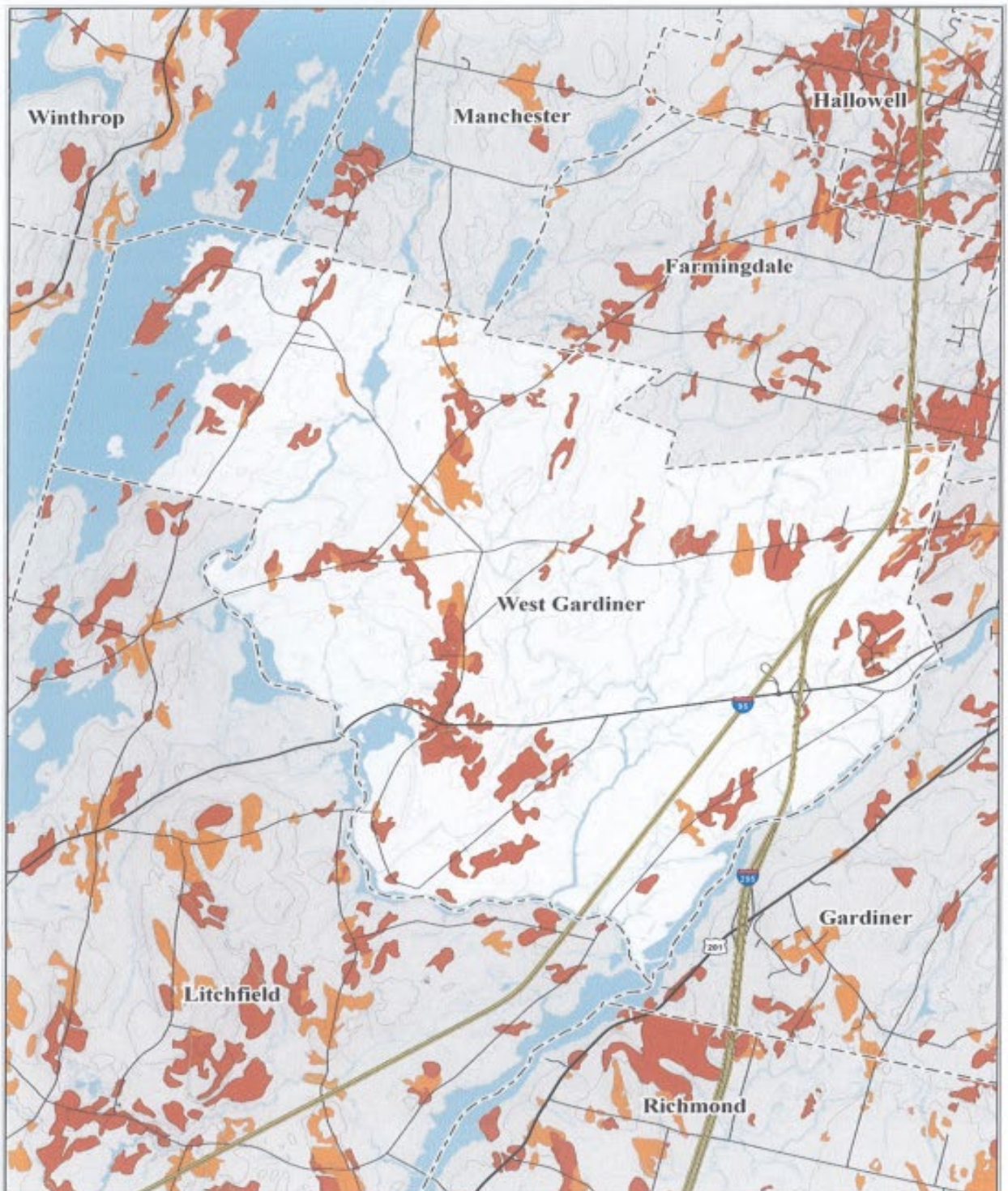


Upper Pleasant Pond2

MIDAS # 5254

Gardiner, Kennebec Co. - Delorme Page 21 - 970 acres





Kennebec County,
Town of
West Gardiner

West Gardiner Agriculture

Source Data: USDA, MEGIS, Maine DACF
Projection: UTM, NAD83, Zone 19, Meters
Produced by: Municipal Planning
Assistance Program, DACF
October 2023

0 1 2 Miles

Legend	
	Contours
	Waterbody
	River
	River/Stream
	Wetlands
	Farmland of statewide importance
	All other prime farmland



Maine DEP PFAS Investigation (Formerly the "Septage and Sludge Map")

Zoom
to
Site

This map depicts both groundwater (residential well drinking water) and soil data collected by the Department in accordance with Public Law 2021, Chapter 478 (land application of both septage and lime-stabilized wastewater treatment plant sludge). A recent addition to this map includes drinking water samples collected near other potential PFAS sources including remediation sites, redevelopment sites (Brownfields and VRAP), municipal closed landfills, and other relevant sites. The map is continuously updated as more information and data become available and as our data and GIS specialists are able to upload information. All data is carefully reviewed and validated. The information presented on this map comes from several sources, including the Maine Environmental and Geographic Analysis Database (EGAD).

Please note that the water and soil concentration data illustrated on this map represents the most recent data available and does not represent a comprehensive dataset of all available information. Please be patient while our staff investigate and assemble this data, which is updated bi-weekly. Any errors or omissions should be reported via email to PFAS.DEP@maine.gov



Legend

PFAS Results Near Land Application Sites

- Above Drinking Water Standard
- Below Drinking Water Standard

PFAS Groundwater Results Near Other Site Types



PFAS Fish Sample Location



PFAS Surface Water Samples



Installed Water Treatment System



Septage Land Application Site



Sludge Utilization Site



LD1911 PFAS Investigation - Wastewater Sample Location



Soil Sample Area



0.2mi
-69.860 44.201 Degrees



Maine DEP PFAS Investigation (Formerly the "Septage and Sludge Map")

This map depicts both groundwater (residential well drinking water) and soil data collected by the Department in accordance with Public Law 2021, Chapter 478 (land application of both septage and lime-stabilized wastewater treatment plant sludge). A recent addition to this map includes drinking water samples collected near other potential PFAS sources including remediation sites, redevelopment sites (Brownfields and VRAP), municipal closed landfills, and other relevant sites. The map is continuously updated as more information and data become available and as our data and GIS specialists are able to upload information. All data is carefully reviewed and validated. The information presented on this map comes from several sources, including the Maine Environmental and Geographic Analysis Database (EGAD).

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Legend

PFAS Results Near Land Application Sites

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- Below Drinking Water Standard

PFAS Groundwater Results Near Other Site Types



PFAS Fish Sample Location



PFAS Surface Water Samples



Installed Water Treatment System



Septage Land Application Site



Septage Land Application Site

Sludge Utilization Site

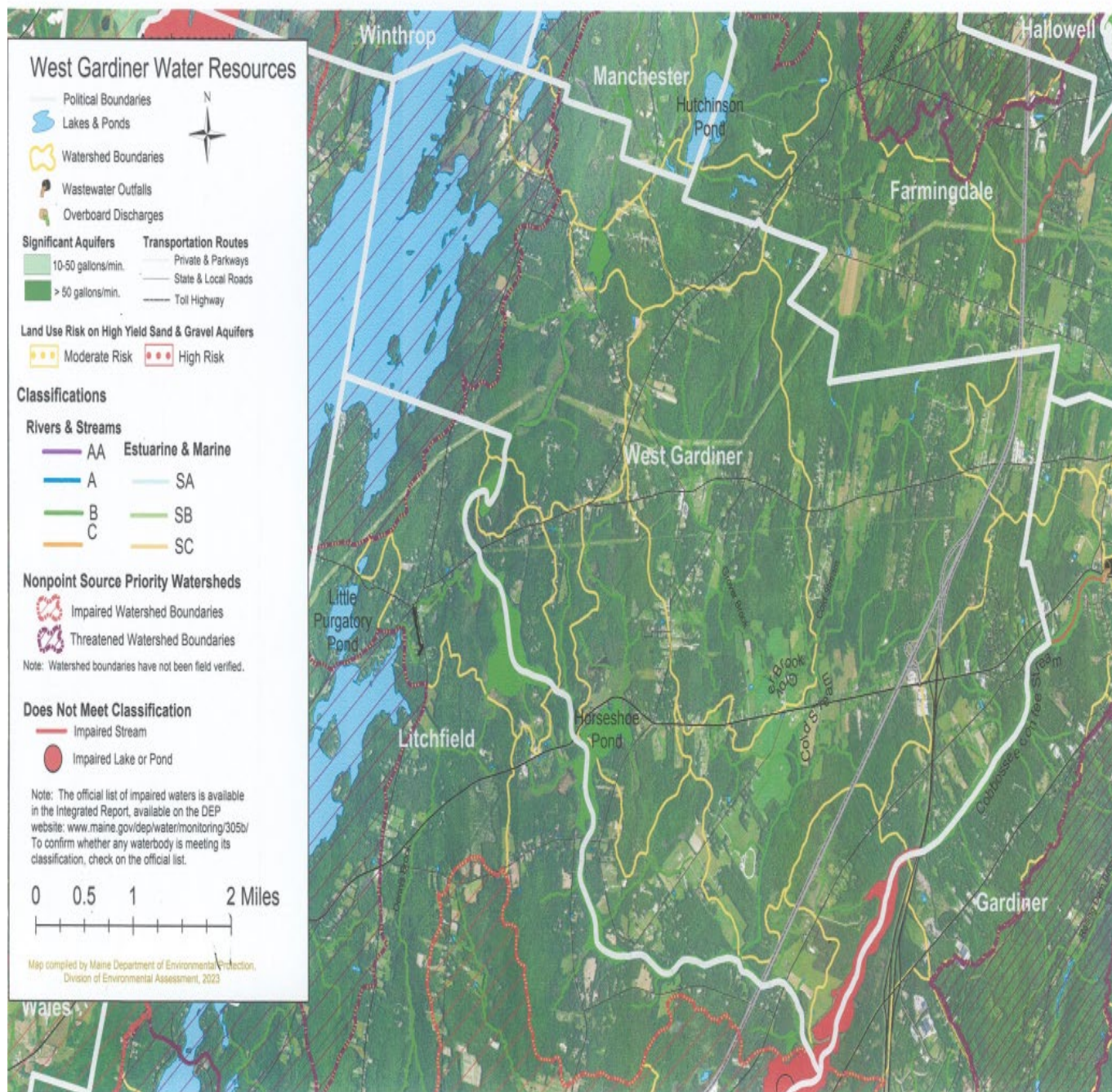


Sludge Utilization Site

LD1911 PFAS Investigation - Wastewater Sample Location



Soil Sample Area



Marine Resources

This section is not necessary as West Gardiner does not border on any bodies of salt water.

Population and Demographics

The town's present and projected vision in the areas of population and demographics dovetail into the past Comprehensive Plan and propels that vision into the future. The population of West Gardiner is rural and reflects the character and traits of hard working, self-reliant, independent people content in their belief they will manage and logically progress through all future endeavors by employing hard work and common-sense tactics. They embody the family unit as the core of all values. This family unit cohesiveness is intertwined with others and builds into a network with strong bonds. Principles of fair play, honesty and friendliness are quickly shared. Although the population is comparatively small and centered in single family homes, the power of the whole results in a potent force to embrace and contend with all challenges.

The rate of population change is predicted by the state to increase in Kennebec County by 6,505 or 5.3% by 2030. The county's population was 123,754 in 2020 and is projected to be 130,259 by 2030. This growth is slightly higher than the overall state projection of 2.6%. West Gardiner's expected change is 5.2%. This is a change from 3,671 in 2020 to 4025 in 2030.

On its face, the West Gardiner numbers reflect the outcome of the state's algorithm applied to the entire population. They do not compute or reflect variables of age, economy shifts, birth or death rates. To illustrate this, Maine's prime working-age population (age 20-64) is projected to decrease by 5.3% from 2020 to 2030, as the Baby Boom generation continues to age out of the cohort. In 2020 this generation was between 56-74 years old. In 2030, the youngest baby boomers be 66 years old, while the oldest among them will be 84 years old. If just the young working-age population (20-39) is considered, this age group will decline by only 2.0% from 2020 to 2030, Meanwhile, the age 65 and older cohort is expected to see growth of 36.2% from 2020 to 2030 as the youngest baby boomers age in this cohort. This is a major factor. Maine's 65+ year olds in 2020 was 288,854. It is predicted to be 393,399 in 2030 or a 36.2% increase. Additionally, the working age group (20-39) will experience a 2% decrease, and the age group (40-64) will see a 7.6% decrease. The only age group to see and increase is the 65+ which will grow by 104,545.

These dynamics impact future demographic trends within the state in two major ways: first, by increasing Maine's median age; and second, by leading to natural population decline. Due to the sheer size of the Baby Boom generation, the aging of the cohort will

naturally raise Maine's median age, barring the migration into the state of younger populations. This trend had been happening nationwide.

Along with this aging comes a second major impact, which is natural population decline. As Baby Boomers have aged out of the childbearing years, the number of deaths each year exceeds the number of births each year. This is reversal of what happened when Baby Boomers were in childbearing years, when births far outnumbered deaths. In this case, Maine's population can only grow through in-migration. Since 2016, Maine has seen net domestic migration accelerate, with over 15 thousand people moving in from other states in 2021.

Population growth through in-migration will only occur in areas, towns, cities and counties where a robust economy exists. That economic factor is not present in West Gardiner. As a result, in-migration will have little or no impact on West Gardiner's population. What will be major factors on population numbers are the loss of childbearing adults (20-39), and the growth of 40-65+ adults. These two points will result in a loss of population in West Gardiner.

The population in Kennebec County in 2020 was 123,754. West Gardiner was 3,671 or 3% of the county's total. Sixty-two percent of the County's population, or 77,778, is in ten of its towns. The remaining 20 towns house the remaining 38% or 45,976. West Gardiner at 3% is one of the 20 towns. City/Town projections by necessity use a different, less robust methodology due to the lack of detailed source data. Most of the city/town projections were calculated by estimating a constant rate of growth for each town's share of their county population between 2015 and 2019 and then extrapolating this growth into the future. There were few communities for which projections required off-model adjustments. The off-model adjustments included either: (1) using a linear regression to estimate a constant rate of growth for the town as a share of its county population between 2010 and 2019; (2) using a linear regression to estimate constant rate of growth for the town as a share of its county population between 2017 and 2019, or (3) applying the town's share of the county population in 2020 to each year of the forecast. In all methodologies, the emphasis is on a town's growth as a share of its county's total growth. This is necessary to ensure the town totals within the county equal the total county projections, but this can create some counterintuitive results.

Towns with historical population growth in counties that are projected to grow may have projected population declines if that town's share of the county population has been declining (that is if the other towns in the county have been growing faster than the town in question). City/town projections should be used with caution, particularly in situations where the results seem unlikely.

Considering the above discussion, West Gardiner can expect a decline or at least a stagnation in population growth.

Discussions of population and demographic projection must follow with the impacts on demands for housing and municipal and school services. The decrease in age group

20-39 will result in fewer children of school age. The effect will be a decrease in demand for school services. Also of note, there are several other contributing factors. Home schooling trends are increasing as parents seek alternate methods of educating their children. This home-schooling trend is driven by multiple factors such as a displeasure with current curriculums, school administration dictums or the change in the social behaviors of children.

Housing in West Gardiner is predominantly single-family units. Construction of new dwellings are waning as the availability of reasonably priced land is becoming scarcer due to previous building. Also, demand will decrease as fewer people move into the town.

A non-contributing factor to the demand for housing and municipal and school services is the seasonal population consists of camp or cottage owners which is very small in number and firmly positioned in their structures.

West Gardiner does not have service centers, nor does it have a major employer. The largest employer is a construction company that employs 152 people. Of note is that Maine's working age population will continue to decline by 5.3% from 2020 to 2030, including the aging-out Baby Boomers, who will be 66-84 years old in 2030. Both the younger working-age (20-39) and the older working-age 40-64 cohorts are also expected to decline during this period, by 2% and 7.6% respectively.

This discussion, although not bleak, does not predict significant growth in West Gardiner's population.

Economy

The economic values shared by West Gardiner's population center around prudent, conservative and frugal expenditures of town resources. The town's leaders promote and support these values by spending monies in a fair, equitable and common-sense manner that serves the needs but gets the "best bang for the buck". The leaders are flexible to ever changing needs, emergencies, governmental mandates and residents' desires.

This approach allows West Gardiner to have one of the lowest mil rates in the state and the best tax structure in the county. The economy has experienced significant changes since the last Comprehensive Plan. The COVID-19 virus outbreak in January 2020 and its subsequent government control measures significantly increased the cost of living for all residents, restricted their out-of-home movement, closed offices and businesses, thus restricting or eliminating work and forced all residents to severely adjust their routines. When the virus dissipated in the first quarter of 2022, the economy had been severely altered.

Housing and property sales in West Gardiner have dramatically increased due to the low tax rate. This trend raised property values exponentially resulting in adjustments in the tax structure. The mil rate was then lowered by the Selectboard leaving the tax burden on the residents at or slightly below the previous level but at the same time raising the value of real property, as well as raising the borrowing potential. This was an unforeseen boon to the COVID-19 pandemic. It must also be noted that in the same timeframe, the West Gardiner Selectboard has been able to operate with a total expenditure increase of only 3%, a fantastic accomplishment. This prudent and responsible spending practice has allowed the residents to better handle the massive cost of living increases which totaled 40.80% since 2010. It should be noted that little or no control over national fiscal conditions is available to the West Gardiner Selectboard, much less the town residents.

Consequently, an economic development plan cannot be formulated.

The Town does not contain a traditional downtown or village center. Downtown Centers usually contain all or most of the following: shopping venues, a post office, varying businesses, gas stations, eating establishments, etc. West Gardiner does, however, have several ad hoc locations which serve as town focal points.

The Town Hall complex consisting of the Town Office, fire station, town maintenance garage, auxiliary hall, Historical Society Building, Four Corners General Store and Helen Thompson Elementary school is one and the Fuller's Market complex on the Hallowell-Litchfield Road is the second such area.

Because no noteworthy tourist attractions, like the Maine Coast, Western Mountains or iconic shopping venues (i.e., Freeport) are in West Gardiner, little or no tourist traffic happens in the town. It should be noted, however, that the Travel Plaza located at the junctions of Rt 126, I-95 and I-295 realizes a huge amount of travel traffic. This plaza is not a tourist destination, but serves as a fuel, food and service center for travelers. This travel plaza was set up with a one-time agreement with the City of Gardiner for water and sewer access. The water and sewer lines were run from the City of Gardiner property line to this Travel Plaza to allow it to operate at maximum capacity. Well and septic design could not have accommodated the size of this operation.

West Gardiner experiences an almost 100% home occupancy rate. Few dwellings or homes are unoccupied. There are fewer than 5 abandoned structures in town.

Industrial or commercial development opportunities exist on the Lewiston Road (Rt-126) and I-95/I-295 corridors. These business opportunities are severely limited in scope and have no services available, such as sewer and water. As a result, the need for a zoning ordinance has not been needed or anticipated.

The vast expense of a major sewer plant, an adequate water well complex, broadband and three phase power sources to service economic development on the above-mentioned corridors are out of fiscal reach. A sewage treatment plan would have to be constructed along with the drilling of a major well complex (like the Bond Brook wells in Augusta). The cost of these two actions would prove to be exorbitant expenditures and significantly alter the financial structure of the town.

Because of the above discussion, no TIF (Tax Increment Financing - a public funding mechanism that reallocates newly generated tax revenues for up to 25 years to support development and infrastructure improvements in designated areas) districting is necessary.

The discussions above make it obvious that West Gardiner is not able to provide unique aspects for economic growth and does not plan to build any sewer treatment facilities, connect into city water sources, or extend city water lines to accommodate more large construction projects.

The Economic Data Set for West Gardiner contains information on Median Household Income, Income below the Poverty Level, and Employment categories. The Median Income is \$94,730 with a margin of error of \$43,103. Given that the medium income for the county is \$58,907, it is safe to say the medium income for West Gardiner is \$51,627. There are 1,026 families below the poverty level or only 2.6 % of West Gardiner's population. Two thousand three hundred and seventy-three (2,373) residents 16 years or older are employed. This constitutes 1.5% of our total population. The occupations range from management, service occupations, sales, natural resources, transportation and material handling occupations. With the obvious error in total income and the low percentage of employed residents, this overall data is called into question. Most West Gardiner residents work outside the Town. The largest contingent work for the State of Maine. The largest local business, a construction firm, employs about 152 workers, most of them are residents.

The Town has no interest in promoting economic development within the boundaries of West Gardiner. Residents are happy to find employment elsewhere while maintaining the rural atmosphere of their hometown. There have been no economic development plans created over the past five years. The residents spurn commercial enterprises in favor of their rural lifestyle.

Most West Gardiner residents today work outside the Town. Major centers for employment are in Augusta (especially state government), Gardiner and the Lewiston-Auburn area. Some residents also commute to Bath Iron Works.

There are no TIF districts in West Gardiner.

The results of survey pertaining to residents' economic desires conducted and concluded on May 1, 2023, revealed that people overwhelming were extremely satisfied with the status quo.

When asked should West Gardiner encourage additional economic development, 56% cautiously encouraged it while 40% cautiously discouraged it. And when queried should West Gardiner encourage industrial or light industrial development, again, the results were split. Forty-five percent cautiously encouraged development while 53% strongly discouraged it.

However, when asked should they support large scale commercial or industrial development, 76% expressed no. But when asked to comment of what type of commercial development they would like to see, the predominate sentiment expressed was small businesses in the vein of local gas stations (36%), restaurants (31%), café/bakery (26%), and grocery store (25%). The opinions expressed were nearly unanimous in their disdain for storage buildings, large scale solar complexes and cannabis operations. It is obvious from the tone and content of all the responses that the residents desire to keep West Gardiner a rural town.

A financial commitment to support economic development has been rejected by Town residents. Previous discussion has shown that economic development is not desired.

There is significant coordination with other towns for many services. Those are listed in the Regional Coordination Program section of this Plan.

As the survey results reflect, there is no desire by residents to encourage economic development in the Town.

West Gardiner is blessed to have a population that prides itself in participating in ordinance development and enactment. Witness the latest creation and passage of three Cannabis, Storage Unit and Large-Scale Solar ordinances that were recently added to the Town's code. In addition, over 400 residents attended and vigorously participated in this year's Town meeting in which they voiced strong objection to these three proposed articles and thus initiated the process of ordinance creation and final passage. Residents are quite versed in the ordinance process and may exercise their right to form, debate, finalize and subsequently pass changes and additions to the Town's codes. However, the Selectboard scrutinizes and retains legal guidance for any ordinance creation. Since the Town's beginnings in 1850, only 29 ordinances have been written and approved by the Selectboard and the residents.

Public investment in economic development is not foreseen to happen in West Gardiner.

Housing

West Gardiner residents overwhelmingly value private home ownership. This is a continuation of the time-tested pioneer spirit that burns hotly among its people. Family

traditions are deep rooted in the homes and ownership is passed from generation to generation. Many of the homes and dwellings in Town are fifty years old or older. Most are meticulously maintained with manicured lawns and flowering vegetation. Multiple family dwellings are rare and there are no apartment complexes in Town.

This condition presents a rural character steeped in the traditions of the past.

The Population and Demographics portion of this plan pointed out that population growth in West Gardiner is not projected to increase. As a result, growth, in any shape or form, will not be needed.

Housing in West Gardiner is affordable. The median income is greater than \$51,600.00 with an average household size of 2.8 persons. Housing of residents below the poverty level is 2.6% or 781 households. Most homes, because of their age, do not have a mortgage, and those that do, have a mortgage that enjoys a reasonable finance rate.

The condition of most dwellings is fixed in their nature. Little or no conversion of buildings to either year-round or seasonal status occurs.

The housing status quo does not guarantee projections to provide family, senior, or assisted housing needs.

State housing data reflects there are no substandard issues in the housing in West Gardiner.

There are no local regulations which encourage or discourage housing development.

The State's Housing Data Set contains substandard housing issues. West Gardiner enjoys a condition where none of the Town's housing is in any of the categories mentioned in the State Data Set. These categories were lacking kitchen or plumbing facilities or lacking phone service.

The State's Income Data Set was also used to figure housing affordability.

There are no affordable/workforce housing coalitions in Town.

There are no regulations that effect housing efforts in Town.

West Gardiner enjoys a condition where no housing policies are necessary to promote, encourage, foster or support adequate workforce, rental or housing coalitions. Because West Gardiner enjoys an established, rooted, and positive housing environment, strategies to promote or foster growth are not necessary.

To facilitate the State's guidelines on the above mentioned strategies and to address LD 2003, the Town recently changed the following Ordinance to accommodate multiunit

housing. The Town and its Code Enforcement Officer are monitoring LD 2003 closely for any future requirements and/or recommendations.

“WEST GARDINER MINIMUM LOT SIZE ORDINANCE

Purpose. The purpose of this ordinance is to preserve the rural and residential character of the Town, to promote the maintenance of safe and healthful living conditions, to preserve and protect the natural environment and scenic beauty of the area, and to protect existing residential development.

Applicability, Conflict with Other Ordinances. This ordinance applies to all land within the Town of West Gardiner. All buildings and accessory structures hereafter erected, reconstructed, altered, enlarged, or moved shall be in conformance with the provisions of this ordinance. Where other ordinances impose a greater restriction on the use of land, buildings or structures, the greater restriction shall control. This ordinance shall not repeal, annul, or in any way impair or remove the necessity of compliance with any other ordinance, regulation, permit or provision of law.

Definitions:

Accessory dwelling unit.(ADU)

Dwelling. "Dwelling" means a structure, all or part of which is designed or used for human habitation, including a dwelling unit. (Title 22 Section 1315)

Dwelling unit. "Dwelling unit" means any room, group of rooms or other areas of a structure designed or used for human habitation. (Title 22 Section 1315)

Single family residential unit. "Single family residential unit" means any structure of any kind, including mobile homes, used or designed to house a single family, and shall include those structures used permanently and seasonally.

[PL 1973, c. 411, §1 (NEW).]

Restrictions:

An accessory dwelling unit may be constructed only:

A. Within an existing dwelling unit on the lot; [PL 2021, c. 672, §6 (NEW).]

B. Attached to or sharing a wall with a single-family dwelling unit; or [PL 2021, c. 672, §6 (NEW).]

C. As a new structure on the lot for the primary purpose of creating an accessory dwelling unit. [PL 2021, c. 672, §6 (NEW).]

D. A Small Lot, less than or equal to 30,000 square feet is restricted from having an ADU as there is not sufficient space to enlarge a leach field.

E. A Medium Lot, More than 30,000 square feet but less than 50,001 square feet is allowed an ADU of a minimum of 190 square feet and a maximum of 480 square feet.

F. A Large Lot, More than 50,000 square feet is allowed an ADU of a minimum of 190 square feet and a maximum of 600 square feet.

Residential Lots - Minimum Lot Size and Road Frontage — A single family dwelling unit may

not be constructed on a lot of less than 60,000 square feet, of which 52,000 square footage shall exclude the area of any public and private roads and rights of way. If multi-family dwelling units or accessory dwelling units are constructed on a single parcel, the parcel shall contain at least 60,000 square feet for each dwelling unit constructed thereon. "Dwelling unit" for the purpose of this ordinance shall be defined as a room or group of rooms designed and equipped for use as living quarters for only one family.

A lot upon which a single-family dwelling unit is to be constructed must contain at least 200 lineal and contiguous feet of road frontage or a 200 x 200-foot square inserted inside of said lot boundaries. If a multi-family dwelling is constructed on a single parcel, the parcel shall contain at least 200 lineal and contiguous feet of road frontage for each single-family dwelling unit constructed thereon or a 200 x 200- foot square inserted inside of said lot boundary for each single family dwelling unit or a combination thereof. "Road frontage" for the purpose of this ordinance may be on a public road or a private road but must be lineal and contiguous.

Commercial Lots – Minimum Lot Size and Road Frontage — A "Commercial Lot" shall be used for business purposes only. A Commercial Lot must contain at least 10,000 square feet with at least 75 lineal and contiguous feet of road frontage. A Commercial Lot does not meet the minimum residential lot size and therefore cannot receive a permit for a residential septic system.

Pre-Existing Lots of Record -- A single lot of record which, at the effective date of adoption of this Ordinance, does not meet the area and/or frontage requirement of this Ordinance may be built upon provided that such lot be in separate ownership. If two or more contiguous lots are in single ownership of record at the time of adoption of this Ordinance, and if all or part of the lots do not meet the dimensional requirements of this Ordinance, the lands involved shall be considered to be a single parcel for the purpose of this Ordinance and no portion of said parcel shall be built upon or sold which does not meet the dimensional requirements of this Ordinance. A "Lot of Record" is defined as a parcel of land, a legal description of which, or the dimensions of which, are recorded in a deed on file with the Kennebec County Registry of Deeds as of the date of this Ordinance.

Back Lot Provision -- Notwithstanding the road frontage requirements of this ordinance, rear lots may be built upon providing that all state, federal and the following requirements are met. The access to the rear lot may serve not more than two rear lots, or not more than two single family dwellings or one two-family dwelling. Access to a rear lot shall provide for a permanent easement for a right of way or fee simple ownership of a right of way, which is at least 25' feet in width, described in metes and bounds, or by a plan, either of which shall include language requiring the development and use of these lots and there access to be in compliance with all provisions of this ordinance that may apply specifically to rear lots, and recorded in the Kennebec County Registry of Deeds, and held by deed or other legal instrument by the owner of the rear lot.

This ordinance shall not apply to existing lots of record which do not meet the requirements of this ordinance at the date of its passage, provided that any such lot meets the requirements of any State Law or regulation and provided the lot has been improved with a single-family dwelling unit or multi-family dwelling.

Severability — If any portion of this ordinance shall be declared invalid it shall not affect the validity of any other portion of this ordinance.

Administration -- Any dwelling constructed, located or placed or work performed in violation of the provisions of this Ordinance shall be considered a nuisance. Any person found guilty of violating any provision of this Ordinance shall be subject to a fine of not less than \$100 for each offense. Each day on which a violation is proved to exist shall constitute a separate offense under this Section. The West Gardiner Selectboard and the Code Enforcement Officer are authorized and directed to institute any action or proceeding that may be required to enforce the provisions of this Ordinance.

Effective Date — This ordinance shall become effective when enacted by the legislative body of the Town of West Gardiner.”

Recreation

Town folk treasure their leisure time and value, to the utmost, the opportunity to spend their time in the outdoors. They take every opportunity to choose activities for each season to snowmobile, snowshoe, cross-country ski, hike, fish, boat, swim or walk. This is a value that is almost universally enjoyed by all the residents.

The facilities and programs available to the community serve present needs and are sufficient to provide opportunities for ten years or more.

There is no demand and, therefore, no need to create new recreational facilities or expand present options.

All commonly used recreational tracts are privately owned by organizations and trusts or Town owned.

The Town has no mechanism to acquire additional open spaces as none have been Identified as needed.

All water bodies, Cobbossee Lake and Cobbossee stream are accessible to all Town residents.

The trails within Town limits are maintained by the Cobbossee Snowmobile Club and conflicts with their use has been experienced.

The only restriction to private lands has been the posting of no hunting signs. This is not widespread and ample hunting opportunities existing in Town.

The State’s Recreational Data Set provided by the Department of Conservation reveals no additional recreation opportunities for the Town.

West Gardiner has within its borders six different recreational opportunities. They are the Cobbossee Snowmobile Club, the West Gardiner Rod and Gun Club, the Wakefield Wildlife Sanctuary, Cobbossee Lake, Cobbossee Stream, three boat launches on Cobbossee stream and one boat launch on Cobbossee lake in Nearby Monmouth on Rt 135.

The Cobbossee Snowmobile Club, an organization of 50+ years, maintains 25 miles of trails for snowmobiling, hiking or walking. The club host several short and several long trail rides in season which includes breakfast at the club house building adjacent to the Town office.

The West Gardiner Rod and Gun Club on the Collins Mills Road has a single story club house with indoor archery range and full-size kitchen. It has an outdoor range on the property for firearms and archery practice. The club hosts multiple events each year including a major scholarship raffle, craft fair, hunters' breakfast, fishing derby, shooting competitions, and classes pertaining to firearm safety, hunting practices, concealed firearms carry certification and archery.

The Wakefield Wildlife Sanctuary in the perpetual care of acres which Kennebec Land Trust is located on the Hallowell-Litchfield Road and borders on Cobbossee stream. It offers 113 acres which contain historical rental cabins and 4,000 feet of frontage on Cobbossee stream. The property has coniferous and deciduous woods, vernal pools/marshlands, hiking, nature observation, cross-country skiing, snow shoeing, and a 1-mile trail with a picnic table at its termination. The site has a 3 car parking lot for visitors.



WAKEFIELD WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Photo: Cobbossee Stream in West Gardiner, Norm Rodrigue.

Location and Description:

Location: West Gardiner, Maine

Property Description:

The Wakefield Wildlife Sanctuary was generously bequeathed to the Kennebec Land Trust in November 2016 upon owner Kendra Wakefield Shaw's passing. Its 113 acres feature historic cabins and 4000 feet of frontage on Cobbossee Stream in West Gardiner. The property's coniferous and deciduous woods, vernal pools, and marshlands are important habitat for many species of birds, mammals, and plants.

Usage:

Allowable Uses: hiking, nature observation, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing. No motorized vehicles. No hunting.

Trails: There is an approximately 1 mile trail that traverses a mellow slope to the stream with a picnic table at the termination. The trail leaves from the parking lot.

Parking: There is a small parking lot for day use at the end of Wakefield Ln on the right, by the gate. Fits approximately 3 cars. Do not park in front of nearby private residence or gate.

Directions: The Wakefield Wildlife Sanctuary is located in West Gardiner, Maine off of the Hallowell-Litchfield Road. Turn north on Wakefield Lane, a small private drive, off of the Hallowell-Litchfield Road. Wakefield Lane is located about .9 of a mile west of the intersection with High Street or .9 of a mile east of Neck Road in Litchfield, shortly after the bridge over Cobbossee Stream. Pull into Wakefield Lane, continue past the private residence on the left, and look for a small parking area on the right. Do not block gate or garage.

Google maps does not recognize 'Wakefield Lane', but searching for 'Wakefield Wildlife Sanctuary' will locate Wakefield Ln via google maps. Please plan to look at a map before your departure and, if possible, bring a paper map with you for reference.

Cabins: There are two cabins available for rent on this property. Please visit our [Eco-Cabins](#) page for more information. The cabins are not open to the general

public without reservation. Please respect the privacy of renters, neighbors, and be aware of private property.

Cobbossee stream meanders through 18 miles of West Gardiner. At three points throughout its journey the Town hosts boat launches – one the Collins Mills Road, one on the Hallowell-Litchfield Road at the West Gardiner/Litchfield line and one on Rt 126 at Horseshoe Pond. All sites offer opportunities for fishing, boating, and swimming,

There are no freshwater bodies in the community that have inadequate public access.

The maps attached to this plan illustrate and denote the trail system within the limits of West Gardiner.

The maps attached to the plan contain illustrations of parking areas.

It is the policy of the Town to maintain existing recreational facilities and encourage the organizations within the Town to do the same.

Transportation

The people of West Gardiner value smooth paved roads that are well maintained during all seasons. They understand the road network and treasure those who care for it.

These values include prudent, efficient expenditure of Town funds to keep the roads at peak operating efficiency and realize that the rural character and condition of the Town bring with it a necessity for reliance on privately owned means of conveyance.

The overwhelming majority of Town residents surveyed indicated they were satisfied with the Town's network of roads. People were not interested in constructing additional roads as 44% said it was unimportant and 43% were neutral on the issue. Folks were in favor of paving Town roads 152 to 61 with 116 remaining neutral. People found very important snow removal on Town roads important by 90%. They slightly favored bicycle and pedestrian paths 31% to 28%, but they were not in favor of sidewalks 44% to 19%. Public transportation, like bus service, was rejected 49% to 16%, but desired transportation for people with limited mobility 47% to 13%. In the above questions, percentages were in favor or opposed and do not include neutral opinions. The neutral category was the majority in all questions except the snow removal question. Preferences of Town's people cannot be positively ascertained because of the neutral category. Future surveys may eliminate the neutral category for this type of question.

West Gardiner enjoys a condition where no conflict arises between the roads in Town and a major U.S. Route. The I-95 and I-295 road network passes through the East

portion of the Town but they are controlled access corridors with no disruption to the Town road network.

The lengthy distances between locations within the Town eliminates the necessity for sidewalks.

The same distance conditions exists for sidewalks and bicycling opportunities. The State maintained road (Rt. 126) does have some marked side of the road areas for joggers, walkers, and bicyclists. Rt. 126 is frequently used for joggers.

The local road design and layout does not support safe bicycle and pedestrian transportation. The private and subdivision roads do support walkers, joggers, and bicyclists and are safe to utilize.

The state maintains four major East/West corridors in Town. They are the Lewiston Road, High Street, Hallowell-Litchfield Road and the Neck Road. The state maintains road ditching, culvert maintenance and replacement, road surface maintenance and debris clean-up and the Town is tasked with snow removal. This is a major savings for the Town.

The Town transportation budget is \$ 395,332.00 annually. This covers snow removal and sanding, equipment maintenance, employee salaries, re-surfacing and ditch maintenance. A yearly plus-up of \$68,844.00 or 5.7 % is forecast to pay for increases in materials and labor.

Because there are no major retail or commercial centers in Town, little or no parking issues exist. The rural nature of the Town with private homes and two convenience stores render parking a non-issue. Town Office complex and Helen Thompson School do experience traffic congestion, but it is limited to specific times and events and dissipates quickly.

Referencing areas where there may be some congestion at times:

The Town Office hours are Monday through Wednesday and Friday: 8 AM to 1 PM; and Thursday 11 AM to 7 PM. The Selectboard meets on Thursdays from 5 PM to 8 PM by appointment.

Helen Thompson School is open Monday through Friday from 7 AM to 3 PM. There are other times that the school may be open for special or sporting events. Those are random and there is no specific set times that could be listed for those events.

Because of the limited commercial sites, the size of Town government and recreational opportunities in the community, the lack of parking does not discourage development.

The KVCAP Transportation Service provides door-to-door transportation to the elderly and disabled residents on an on call basis. Kennebec County provides this service at no cost to the Town.

West Gardiner does not have transportation terminals, airports, or passenger rail stations or ferry terminals.

There are no airports in West Gardiner.

There are no ferry terminals in West Gardiner.

Because of the rural nature of West Gardiner, no local access management of traffic permitting measures are necessary except for private driveways constructed to connect to state roads. These driveways require a State permit.

Because originally the road network served the farm-to-market needs and now serves as access venues for private residences, the desired land use pattern or scheme is firmly placed in the Town.

Subdivision roads, for the most part, are dead ended. The topography, available land parcels, and natural barriers (lakes, ravines and bogs) have prevented connection of private roads at both ends.

The State of Maine Transportation Data Set contains the means of travel to work and the travel time to work. The means to work is overwhelmingly private conveyance (car, truck or van). Only 9 residents carpooled to work while 79 worked at home. Most were on the road from 10 to 39 minutes to get to work. The majority of travelers spent 15 to 30 minutes on the road.

The overall condition of roads in West Gardiner is excellent. There are no major deficiencies and minor situations are corrected quickly to prevent them from growing into major concerns.

Distances between locations prevent on and off-road connections for bicycles or pedestrians.

There are only two major traffic congestion generators – The Town Office Complex and the Helen Thompson School. The Town Office Complex only occurs during Town Meetings that are mostly conducted after work hours or weekends. The Helen Thompson School congestion is primarily during student release around 2:00 to 3:00 pm, Monday through Friday. This disruption is minor and dissipates quickly.

The Town's policy and standards for road design, construction, and maintenance of public or private roads follows the Maine Department of Transportation road design and maintenance criteria,

There are two municipal parking areas: the Town office complex including the maintenance garage which can park more than 75 vehicles, and the Helen Thompson School complex can park more than 50 vehicles.

Kennebec County's KVCAP program is the only van or bus service in West Gardiner.

There are no marine or rail terminals in West Gardiner.

There are no public ferry or private boat terminals in West Gardiner.

West Gardiner's transportation policies are formulated, prioritized and adjusted through the process of Town meetings in which ordinances are debated, developed and enacted. These ordinances, administered by the Selectboard, maintain a safe, efficient road system. This process allows for improvement of the Town's transportation system. As a collaborative, collective process, it promotes the overall well-being in health, cultural, and material resource protection and maximizes the efficiency of the transportation system. It provides a safe network for all types of vehicle users and looks out for the needs of the elderly and disabled. This system is fiscally sound and postures the prudent expenditure of the Town's resources.

The strategy for transportation leadership and management begins with the Select Board who, along with the Town's Road Commissioner, prioritize improvement, maintenance and repair of the Town's road network. This effort is with the knowledge and coordination of the State's transportation efforts and plans. This team develops proposed ordinances for residents approval that foster efficient growth patterns and future street connections.

Public Facilities and Services

The residents highly value West Gardiner's Public Facilities and Services as they provide necessary commodities, waste disposal, public safety, local government, a repository for historical reminders/mementos/keepsakes, road care maintenance and educational opportunities. The people of West Gardiner treasure these services. They fund and support all facets of their respective agendas.

All the municipal services are adequate to provide for any and all unforeseen changes During the timeframe of this Plan.

Partnering with neighboring communities has proven beneficial in many areas, as noted in the Regional Coordination Program section of this Plan.

There are no public sewer systems in West Gardiner.

There are no public water systems in West Gardiner.

The projected growth in West Gardiner will be in single family housing eliminating the need for public sewer or water systems. This absence of these systems will not prevent future growth.

Stormwater Management Systems do not exist in West Gardiner.

Homeowner septic tank waste is disposed of through private contract with privately owned disposal service companies.

With the receipt of two federal grants, two new fire trucks have been added to the fire response fleet. This postures the Town in excellent stead for future fire protection. Police and ambulance services are provided through Kennebec County Sheriff/Maine State Police and Gardiner ambulance.

West Gardiner is fortunate to own and operate a state-of-the-art solid waste transfer station which is more than adequate for its present and future needs. This facility has recycling opportunities for plastic, metal, tin, glass, construction waste, cardboard, waste oil and appliances. Expansion for the future needs is not anticipated but adequate land is available should the need arise. Upgrades to some areas of the current facility are planned within the next 2 years.

The telecommunication and energy infrastructures are owned, maintained and managed by entities that provide these commodities to the State. West Gardiner will have no impact on any portion of their operations except as a consumer.

Health care facilities and public health and social service programs are provided at the county/state level. They are all within short driving distance from West Gardiner. West Gardiner's facilities are the Town Office, auxiliary hall, new historical building, fire stations, maintenance garage, transfer station complex and nine cemeteries. The Town office building will get a door/window and siding upgrade, and the transfer station will get two concrete wall replacements and two concrete back hoe outrigger pads within the next 2 years. The remaining are all in excellent condition and more than adequate to provide service for the next 12 years.

No additional Town investment in new residential or commercial development is anticipated.

West Gardiner does not have a street tree program.

The facilities as (noted on the enclosed maps) are all in excellent physical condition. Their respective capacity and anticipated future demand will not exceed present capabilities and all are presently owned by the Town. The cost of their operation and maintenance is \$ 5,479,227.00 a year.

The following information on each of the facilities and services is provided.

- a. Sewage and water supply – none.
- b. Septage – none.
- c. Solid waste – The Town's solid waste transfer station processed a total of 6,518 tons of trash and 2,465 tons of recycled materials in the past five years.
- d. Stormwater management - none.

- e. Power and communications – Three phase power is available in only two areas in Town: one on the Spears Corner Road at the Helen Thompson School and the Town Office complex and the other on Rt 126. Internet and cable services are provided by Spectrum and TDS, private companies. There is no broadband in Town.
- f. Emergency Response System – The average call response time for the fire department is 5 minutes and 10 seconds. Police and emergency rescue services are provided by the Kennebec Sheriff/ Maine State Police and Gardiner rescue.
- g. Education – School Administrative District (SAD) 11 serves Gardiner, West Gardiner, Pittston, and Randolph. Student enrollment as of March 2022 was PK-5 = 897, 6-8 = 445, 9-12 = 619 for a total of 1,961 students. The Helen Thomson School was 262 of the PK-5 total. Enrollment in the next ten years is expected to significantly decline. The childbearing years, ages 20 to 39, will be reduced by 7.2%. This factor will lead to a reduced enrollment. SAD 11 is in the exploratory stages of reviewing a plan to consolidate all PK-5 grades into a single facility and close all the remaining PK-5 schools in the district.
- h. Health Care – All Health Care for West Gardiner residents is provided in either Augusta or Gardiner. Municipal subsidy for public health and social services is provided by Kennebec County and West Gardiner's share is paid from the Town budget.
- i. Municipal Government Facilities and Services – The Town office provides all municipal administrative work and employs four individuals. The public works operation provides all road services and employs 4 workers. The transfer station handles all trash and recycle disposal and employs 3 individuals.
- j. Street Tree Program – none.

The Selectboard of West Gardiner efficiently and effectively projects expenditures to fund the needs of facilities and services. The Board's work has positioned the Town to a point where it will be able to provide all demands for the next ten years. Because there are no public works in West Gardiner, the need to compose a strategy to manage them is not necessary.

Capital improvements and costs are noted in the Fiscal Capacity and Capital Investment Plan section of this Plan.

Fiscal Capacity and Capital Investment Plan

In relation to fiscal capacity and a capital investment plan, the Town's goal is to plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.

Financing Future Growth

A significant component of planning for future growth is determining what capital investments are most essential for achieving the community's vision. The next step is to consider sources for how the capital investments will be funded, whether that be grants, donations, etc.

A survey, with questions designed by the West Gardiner Comprehensive Planning Committee, was conducted in the spring of 2023 in West Gardiner. It was tailored after a similar survey that was conducted in the Town of Readfield, Maine several years earlier. Although the survey was completed by only about 15% of the total registered voting population, it did furnish the members of the Comprehensive Planning Committee with some interesting answers and opinions.

The results of this survey were reviewed, and it was determined that there were two major areas that concerned West Gardiner residents in relation to future investment planning.

The first item was the need for a dedicated US Post Office in the Town (hereinafter, Town). After discussion with the US Postal Service, the answer was, as follows: The US Postal Service has determined and stated that no new post offices would be built/opened in Maine. In fact, they are looking at closing US Post Offices around the state.

The second concern was the need for a Public Beach. That would only be possible if there was land available for sale or lease on one of the bodies of water in West Gardiner. The residents would have to approve the purchase/lease of that land through public hearings and either a special Town meeting or at the annual Town meeting with an article in the Town Report. Currently, there are no properties listed for sale or lease. The Town may look at what is available in the future for a Public Beach. However, there were no articles for Fiscal Year 2024 recommending funding for a Public Beach. The value of waterfront property in West Gardiner has increased by over 300% in the past 10 years. The cost of waterfrontage is prohibitive. With rising county tax rates, increases in the cost of school services, and the State of Maine's mandated increase in the Town valuation, the Town will have to seriously consider how the purchase or lease of waterfront property would affect their property taxes. It has not been ruled out as an option and will be reviewed in the future if it comes before the Selectboard.

Currently, there is a small boat landing/fishing spot/swimming area at the bridge on Collins Mills Road. However, it only gives access to part of Cobbossee Stream.

One major capital investment in this year's Town Report was Article 32.

Article 32 stated "Shall the Town of West Gardiner (1) approve a capital acquisition project consisting of the purchase of a one-ton pickup truck for use by the Town's highway department, and including transportation costs and other expenses reasonably related hereto; (2) appropriate the sum of \$90,000 to fund the project; (3) authorize the

Town Treasurer and the Chair of the Selectboard to issue general obligation securities of the Town (including temporary notes in anticipation of the sale thereof) in an aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$90,000 to fund the appropriation; and (4) delegate to the Treasurer and the Chair of the Selectboard the authority and discretion to fix the dates, maturities, interest rates, denominations, calls for redemption (with or without premium), form, and other details of said securities, including authority to execute and deliver the securities on behalf of the Town.

A loan has been approved to fund this 1-ton truck. Total principal and interest over a 6-year period will total \$108,928.00.

The second major capital investment for 2024 is the additional work on the West Gardiner Historical Society building. The 2024 Town Report and corresponding "Article 44: To see if the Town will vote to raise an appropriate a sum of money for the Historical Society building or take any other action thereon." The Selectboard recommended \$80,000. Article 44 was approved. These funds are dedicated for insulation of the building, installing of all electrical, and the siding for the building. There will still be additional work that will need to be done to complete this project. It is anticipated that there will be an article in the 2025 Town Report to complete or partially complete the building. The following items will still be needed after the 2024 construction projects are completed:

1. Sheetrock
2. Plumbing and plumbing fixtures, to include vanity, toilets, deep sink, changing table, and fans
3. Inside Painting
4. Outside Barn Doors
5. Vestibules over outside doors
6. Three (3) interior doors, to include trim and finish work, and handrails for the stairs to the storage loft. The West Gardiner Historical Society is considering grants to help with some of the above-mentioned areas.

Other future major capital investments include replacement of equipment and building repair at the West Gardiner Transfer Station (\$400,000); replacement of the West Gardiner Fire Station on the Pond Road (\$900,000); Construction Costs for the Town Office (\$1,000,000); Fire Department - Breathing Air Containment Fill Station (\$60,000) and Handheld Radios (\$55,000).

How will the Town fund future capital investments?

Capital investments refer to the expenditure of municipal funds of \$20,000 or more to purchase assets of land, machinery, equipment, or buildings. There are a variety of capital investments that the Town has identified as being projects that the Town may

include in their Capital Investment Plan. They are listed in the previous paragraph. These projects may be funded in numerous ways, including bank loans, municipal low interest loans, donations, volunteer labor, surplus funds, and municipal, state, and federal grants, to name a few.

In reference to the West Gardiner Transfer Station equipment replacement and building repairs, the Town will be looking to use funds that the Town currently has budgeted plus additional funding that will be included in the FY25 budget in calendar year 2025.

Additionally, the Emergency Management Director has also submitted 2 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant requests in March 2024 for the Breathing Air Containment Fill Station and the Handheld Radios through the Assistance to Fighters Grant (AFG) Program. The Fill Station was applied for as a Regional Grant with the Towns of Farmingdale and Randolph. Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) have been signed with both of those towns for mutual aid for firefighting services and related training. An additional MOU will be signed between the three towns on the Fill Station regulations if the grant is approved.

Where it is feasible, the Town submits grants and raises money in the most economical way possible, hoping to curb any additional financial burden to the Town's residents.

The Town has identified (that it is aware of at this time) all the previously listed capital investments/expenditures that would cover the next ten (10) years and perhaps longer, depending on the length of the loan period to cover the capital investment/expenditure.

A Capital Investment Plan may identify capital investments of \$20,000 or more that are anticipated over the planning period (12 years minimum). If the community approves the projects listed in a Plan, the diverse funding sources (e.g., municipal grants, surplus funds, donations, bank loans, etc.) enhance borrowing capacity and increase the likelihood of project completion.

Currently, the Town is still paying for the Town Garage and the Town's Fire Station and a loan to cover the equipment on two new fire trucks (\$140,000). The additional loan for the one (1) ton \$90,000 pick-up truck for the Public Works Department will add to the current borrowing totals. Beginning FY2025, the Bond Bank total is **\$921,105.18**.

The Town currently has sufficient borrowing capacity to obtain the necessary funds for these capital investments. However, the Town residents must realize that their taxes may increase to pay for these expenditures. Note total municipal debt and its comparison to the Maine Bond Bank limitations within the Conditions and Trends section of this Fiscal Capacity and Capital Investment Plan.

There has been minimal capital investment sharing with neighboring communities. The largest area of sharing occurs within the fire departments with mutual aid agreements for firefighting services and training between six neighboring towns. Additionally, there is a FEMA - AFG regional grant request in process for fire department equipment that

would be shared with two other neighboring towns. That grant is noted in an earlier paragraph in this section of the plan.

In the early years of the West Gardiner Transfer Station, there were plans to work with The Town of Litchfield on an agreement to share specific responsibilities of the West Gardiner Transfer Station. However, that did not happen. Currently, there are no plans for shared responsibilities. The Town of Litchfield now has its own Transfer Station.

The Town also is part of multi-town contracts for Ambulance Services; the Treasurer, State of Maine - Public Service Answering Point; and the Lincoln County Dispatch Office.

There are zero cost mutual agreements with the neighboring towns of Litchfield, Gardiner, Farmingdale, Randolph, and Pittston that cover fire department services and training. An example of one of these agreements is included on the next page.

Please reference the section on “Regional Coordination Programs” for more information on these topics.



MUTUAL AID FIRE DEPARTMENT AGREEMENT

The undersigned Fire Chiefs for and on behalf of the Town of West Gardiner and the Town of Farmingdale, as approved by the Selectboards of West Gardiner and Farmingdale, hereby agree to render mutual aid in cases of emergency.

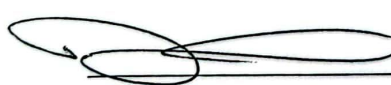
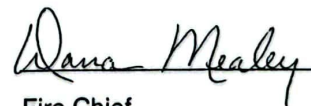
This agreement is subject to the following conditions:

1. Each municipality shall respond with its fire and lifesaving equipment, adequately staffed, as is requested solely by the Town Fire Chief or Acting Fire Chief of the other municipality, or by anyone theretofore authorized to call on behalf of the municipality, and render back-up, firefighting, or other assistance.
2. Each participating municipality will ensure that personnel rendering mutual aid have the required credentials, qualifications, licensure, and certifications to operate the equipment utilized in the mutual aid services.
3. Each participating municipality to this Agreement shall be responsible for compensation of damages to its own equipment that may occur while aid to another municipality is being rendered.
4. Each participating municipality to this Agreement shall be responsible for compensation for injury or death of its own fire department personal that occurs while aid to another municipality is being rendered.
5. This agreement shall remain in effect until terminated in writing by either party. Notice of termination is to be sent by registered mail to the municipal officers of the other community 30 days before the effective date of termination.

For the Town of West Gardiner, Maine

	3/7/24		03/07/24
Selectboard Chair	Date	Fire Chief	Date

For the Town of Farmingdale, Maine

	3-7-24		3-7-24
Selectboard Chair	Date	Fire Chief	Date

Community revenues and expenditures by category from 2019 to 2023 with trends.

The following five (5) pages include audited totals for all revenue and expenditures for the last five (5) years. This next section includes some comparisons of the various line items within the revenues and expenditures.

Property Taxes: Property taxes have increased by 17.14% from 2019 to 2023. It is anticipated that property taxes will continue to rise due to the increases in the Town appropriation and the county and school budgets.

Excise Taxes: Excise taxes have increased by 26.12% from 2019 to 2023.

Total Revenues: Total revenues, as noted in the next section, have increased by 26.3%.

Public Works/Health and Sanitation (also includes Fire Department/Ambulance Services: The costs for all services within these areas have remained constant.

County Tax: County taxes have increased by 36.56% from 2019 to 2023. The anticipated increase from 2023 to 2024 is approximately 27%. This is one of the main reasons that the Town will likely see increases over the next few years in their property taxes.

Education: Across the five-year period, on an annual basis, West Gardiner expended the most capital on education. The Town consistently spends between 83% and 86% on education.

Total Expenditures: Across the five-year period, Municipal Expenditures increased by 25.7%.

While the overall Public Works numbers have remained fairly constant, there have been large capital expenditures within this Department. Looking at the public works and fire departments within this category, most of the Town's capital expenditures and requests for additional equipment have come from these departments.

The Town is currently paying for both a new Fire Department building, a Town Garage, two new Public Works vehicles, and the \$140,000 loan for additional equipment for the new fire trucks.

These items make up 100% of the outstanding loans that the Town currently holds. Additionally, in reviewing the list of future major capital investments, this area comprises approximately 78% of the costs.

FY2019

TOWN OF WEST GARDINER, MAINE STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES			
Fiscal Year 2019			
Revenues			
	General Fund	Other Governmental Funds	Total Governmental Funds
Property Taxes	\$3,512,091		\$3,512,091
Excise Tax	\$845,589		\$845,589
Intergovernmental Revenue	\$392,521		\$392,521
Charges for Services	\$52,223		\$52,223
Interest and Lien Fees	\$27,086	\$753	\$27,839
Licenses and Permits	\$19,814		\$19,814
Other Revenue	\$24,151		\$24,151
Total Revenues	\$4,873,475		\$4,874,228
Expenditures			
General Government	\$353,126		\$353,126
Protection	\$366,877		\$366,877
Public Works	\$584,826		\$584,826
Health and Sanitation	\$187,725		\$187,725
Social Services	\$48,605		\$48,605
County Tax	\$308,806		\$308,806
Education	\$3,112,555		\$3,112,555
Debt Service	\$92,645		\$92,645
Unclassified	\$66,188		\$66,188
Total Expenditures	\$5,121,352	\$753	\$5,121,352
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over (under) expenditures	(\$247,878)	\$753	(\$247,125)
Other Financing Sources			
Proceeds from tax anticipation note (TAN)	\$200,000		\$200,000
Payoff of tax anticipation note (TAN)	(\$200,000)		(\$200,000)
Proceeds from issuance of long-term debt	\$75,740		\$75,740
Transfer in	\$750	\$1,100	\$1,850
Transfer (out)	(\$1,100)	(\$750)	(\$1,850)
Total other financing sources (uses)	\$75,390	\$350	\$75,740
Net Change in Fund Balances	(\$172,488)	\$1,103	(\$171,385)

FY2020

TOWN OF WEST GARDINER, MAINE			
STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES			
Fiscal Year 2020			
Revenues			
	General Fund	Other Governmental Funds	Total Governmental Funds
Property Taxes	\$3,598,847		\$3,598,847
Excise Tax	\$867,005		\$867,005
Intergovernmental Revenue	\$495,798		\$495,798
Charges for Services	\$53,694		\$53,694
Interest and Lien Fees	\$20,783	\$634	\$21,417
Licenses and Permits	\$17,676		\$17,676
Other Revenue	\$35,107		\$35,107
Total Revenues	\$5,088,910		\$5,089,544
Expenditures			
General Government	\$376,072		\$376,072
Protection	\$295,955		\$295,955
Public Works	\$277,309		\$277,309
Health and Sanitation	\$189,225		\$189,225
Social Services	\$37,774		\$37,774
County Tax	\$331,890		\$331,890
Education	\$3,184,015		\$3,184,015
Debt Service	\$116,683		\$116,683
Unclassified	\$65,534		\$65,534
Total Expenditures	\$4,874,458	\$634	\$4,874,458
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over (under) expenditures	\$214,452	\$634	\$215,086
Other Financing Sources			
Proceeds from tax anticipation note (TAN)	\$500,000		\$500,000
Payoff of tax anticipation note (TAN)	(\$500,000)		(\$500,000)
Proceeds from issuance of long-term debt	\$0		\$0
Transfer in	\$0	\$750	\$750
Transfer (out)	(\$750)	\$0	(\$750)
Total other financing sources (uses)	-\$750	\$750	\$0
Net Change in Fund Balances	\$213,702	\$1,384	\$215,086

FY2021

TOWN OF WEST GARDINER, MAINE			
STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES			
Fiscal Year 2021			
Revenues			
	General Fund	Other Governmental Funds	Total Governmental Funds
Property Taxes	\$3,634,829		\$3,634,829
Excise Tax	\$955,824		\$955,824
Intergovernmental Revenue	\$703,734		\$703,734
Charges for Services	\$67,106		\$67,106
Interest and Lien Fees	\$19,761	\$338	\$20,099
Licenses and Permits	\$31,941		\$31,941
Other Revenue	\$50,169		\$50,169
Total Revenues	\$5,463,363		\$5,463,701
Expenditures			
General Government	\$386,274		\$386,274
Protection	\$310,900		\$310,900
Public Works	\$335,995		\$335,995
Health and Sanitation	\$193,584		\$193,584
Social Services	\$47,409		\$47,409
County Tax	\$346,847		\$346,847
Education	\$3,221,635		\$3,221,635
Debt Service	\$115,780		\$115,780
Unclassified	\$66,517		\$66,517
Total Expenditures	\$5,024,940	\$338	\$5,024,940
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over (under) expenditures	\$438,423	\$338	\$438,761
Other Financing Sources			
Proceeds from tax anticipation note (TAN)	\$125,000		\$125,000
Payoff of tax anticipation note (TAN)	(\$125,000)		(\$125,000)
Proceeds from issuance of long-term debt	\$0		\$0
Transfer in	\$0	\$1,700	\$1,700
Transfer (out)	(\$1,700)	\$0	(\$1,700)
Total other financing sources (uses)	-\$1,700	\$1,700	\$0
Net Change in Fund Balances	\$436,723	\$2,038	\$438,761

FY2022

TOWN OF WEST GARDINER, MAINE			
STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES			
Fiscal Year 2022			
Revenues			
	General Fund	Other Governmental Funds	Total Governmental Funds
Property Taxes	\$3,684,080		\$3,684,080
Excise Tax	\$991,333		\$991,333
Intergovernmental Revenue	\$726,572		\$726,572
Charges for Services	\$45,570		\$45,570
Interest on Taxes and Lien Fees	\$14,351	\$0	\$14,351
Interest Income	\$5,874	\$468	\$6,342
Licenses and Permits	\$18,175		\$18,175
Other Revenue	\$41,678	\$1,022	\$42,700
Total Revenues	\$5,527,633		\$5,529,122
Expenditures			
General Government	\$337,302		\$337,302
Protection	\$304,410		\$304,410
Public Works	\$389,497		\$389,497
Health and Sanitation	\$208,027		\$208,027
Social Services	\$76,402		\$76,402
County Tax	\$384,629		\$384,629
Education	\$3,359,014		\$3,359,014
Debt Service	\$293,561		\$293,561
Unclassified	\$126,385		\$126,385
Total Expenditures	\$5,479,227	\$1,490	\$5,479,227
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over (under) expenditures	\$48,406	\$1,490	\$49,895
Other Financing Sources			
Proceeds from issuance of long-term debt	\$204,588		\$204,588
Reclassification of fund balance	\$0	\$35,263	\$35,263
			\$0
Transfer in	\$0	\$900	\$900
Transfer (out)	(\$900)	\$0	(\$900)
Total other financing sources (uses)	\$203,688	\$36,163	\$239,851
Net Change in Fund Balances	\$252,094	\$37,653	\$289,746

FY2023

TOWN OF WEST GARDINER, MAINE			
STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES			
Fiscal Year 2023			
Revenues			
	General Fund	Other Governmental Funds	Total Governmental Funds
Property Taxes	\$4,114,156		\$4,114,156
Excise Tax	\$1,066,474		\$1,066,474
Intergovernmental Revenue	\$846,061		\$846,061
Charges for Services	\$57,659		\$57,659
Interest on Taxes and Lien Fees	\$11,832	\$0	\$11,832
Interest Income	\$9,326	\$3,621	\$12,947
Licenses and Permits	\$5,512		\$5,512
Other Revenue	\$38,270	\$2,719	\$40,989
Total Revenues	\$6,149,290	\$6,340	\$6,155,630
Expenditures			
General Government	\$415,490		\$415,490
Protection	\$436,674		\$436,674
Public Works	\$499,159		\$499,159
Health and Sanitation	\$220,106		\$220,106
Social Services	\$55,642		\$55,642
County Tax	\$421,708		\$421,708
Education	\$3,696,218		\$3,696,218
Debt Service	\$99,350		\$99,350
Unclassified	\$592,028	\$35	\$592,063
Total Expenditures	\$6,436,375	\$35	\$6,436,410
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over (under) expenditures	(\$287,085)	\$6,305	(\$280,780)
Other Financing Sources			
Proceeds from tax anticipation note (TAN)			\$0
Payoff of tax anticipation note (TAN)			\$0
Proceeds from issuance of long-term debt			\$0
Transfer in		\$1,500	\$1,500
Transfer (out)	(\$1,500)		(\$1,500)
Total other financing sources (uses)	(\$1,500)	\$1,500	\$0
Net Change in Fund Balances	(\$288,585)	\$7,805	(\$280,780)

Funding is and will be accomplished by utilizing a variety of funding mechanisms, including bank loans, municipal grants, donations, volunteer labor, and municipal low interest loans. Currently, West Gardiner's major capital investments are financed through bank loans. They include:

West Gardiner Fire Station: 30 Year Loan. Initial Cost - \$700,000

At Payoff - FY2036: Principal and Interest: \$1,145,235.05.

West Gardiner Town Garage: 15 Year Loan. Initial Cost - \$400,000

At Payoff – FY2032: Principal and Interest: \$373,023.72.

West Gardiner Dump Truck/Plow Truck: Initial Cost - \$204,588.00

At Payoff – FY2029: Principal and Interest: \$243,490.15.

West Gardiner Fire Trucks: Two (2) new fire trucks were purchased by the Town between August 2022 and October 2022. The first truck was funded through ARPA COVID 19 funds and local funding. The second truck was funded through a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) – Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program that the Town's Emergency Management Director had applied for in 2022. It was funded at a 95/5 match. The 5% matching amount of \$15,000 was taken from the Town's grant match account.

The second truck was delivered in February 2024. There were additional pieces of equipment that the Fire Department wanted added to both trucks that were not covered by the grants. Therefore, the Fire Department requested, and the Town residents approved a \$140,000 loan in 2023 to cover the additional new equipment for the trucks.

As far as future capital expenditures, they have been listed previously in this document and include the Pond Road Fire Station, finishing the Historical Society Building, Transfer Station upgrades and building repairs, and additional equipment for the Fire Department.

The Town has done an excellent job at containing costs for its residents and continues to research grants and other financing options for any capital expenditure that the Town may consider.

The following chart identifies local and state valuations and local mill rates for the last five (5) years: 2019 through 2023.

<i>YEAR</i>	<i>REVENUE</i>	<i>EXPENDITURES</i>	<i>MIL RATES</i>	<i>STATE MUNICIPAL EVALUATION</i>
2019	\$4,874,228.00	\$5,121,352.00	\$11.50	\$297,500,000.00
2020	\$5,089,544.00	\$4,874,458.00	\$11.20	\$311,650,000.00
2021	\$5,463,701.00	\$5,024,940.00	\$9.50	\$326,950,000.00
2022	\$5,529,122.00	\$5,479,227.00	\$8.30	\$355,150,000.00
2023	\$6,155,630.00	\$6,436,410.00	\$8.10	\$427,900,000.00

Between FY 2019 and FY 2024, Municipal Revenues increased by 26.3%; Municipal Expenditures increased by 25.7%; Mil Rates decreased by 29.57%; and State Municipal Evaluations increased by 44%.

Municipal Debt and the Maine Bond Bank Statutory Limits:

In accordance with the State of Maine, the Town is subject to a statutory limitation of its general long-term debt equal to 15% of the State's valuation of the Town. Following the 2023 state valuation of West Gardiner, which totaled \$427,900,000.00, the Town's long-term debt, at .02%, is well below the statutory limit of \$64,185,000.00.

When adding in the County and School Costs (the Town does not have public water and sewer utilities) to the Maine Bond Bank's total, the Town's percentage of municipal debt is 1.18%. This is still well below the recommended limits.

Over the next decade, the Town anticipates there may be Capital investments of municipal funds for projects related to:

1. Refurbishing/rebuilding of the Pond Road Fire Station: 15-year plan
 2. Completion of the West Gardiner Historical Society building: 5-year plan
 3. Transfer Station: replacement of equipment and repairs to the building: 3-year plan
 4. Purchase of a Containment Fill Station for the Fire Department: 5-year plan
 5. Handheld Radios for the Fire Department: 3-year plan
- All the above listed items were also noted under "Financing Future Growth."

In the Capital Investment Plan, projects are organized by their estimated year of completion and funding priority. Only 1% of anticipated investments will require one to

two years to reach completion. Thirty-seven percent (37%) of the projects are expected to be completed within three to five years. The one larger project, the Pond Road Fire Station, which is 62% of the total proposed expenditures would, in all likelihood, have to be funded over a 30-year period. It may only take a year or two to build, if approved by the residents. However, the cost would require a long-term loan. The proposal for these capital expenditures has not been put before the voters at this point in time. This list is just a broad look at what the Town may anticipate seeing in requests over the next twelve years.

Funding for the projects will be primarily sourced from the municipality, loans, state, excise taxes, private funders, and donations. Grants and volunteer labor may also be sought.

The Town is very conservative in its spending, which has led to significant savings for West Gardiner residents since the Town's incorporation almost 174 years ago.

The Town's goal is to finance existing and future facilities, equipment, and services in a cost-effective manner. The Town will always explore all grant sources as a resource for funding and will attempt to stay within the parameters of LD1. The Town was not able to stay within LD1 for this fiscal year (2024), spending \$160,000 over their 3.5% limit (from and voters had to approve going over that cap). The Town was \$160,000 over their limit of increasing the Town's appropriation by 3.5%.

All requests and approvals of any expenditures will be reviewed and approved by not only the Selectboard, but also the residents at the annual Town meeting.

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.
- 3). To reduce Maine's tax burden by staying within LD 1 spending limitations. Based on calculations for the Town, the Town can increase its appropriation by approximately 3.5% each year. In FY2024, the Town had to have a written vote at the Town Meeting to approve the increase above the LD1 limitations. The Town was \$160,000 above those limitations in the budget for FY2024. Note LD1 language and Maine Municipal Association interpretations of LD1 after Strategies.

Strategies

The Town will continue to explore options for working with other surrounding towns, in addition to the current memorandums of understanding. The "Regional Coordination Program" section contains more information and is located on pages of this document.

LD1:

5721-A. Limitation on municipal property tax levy

1. Definitions. As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

A. Average personal income growth; has the same meaning as in Title 5, section 1531, subsection 2. [PL 2015, c. 267, Pt. L, §13 (AMD).]

B. [PL 2015, c. 267, Pt. L, §14 (RP).]

C. Property growth factor; means the percentage equivalent to a fraction established by a municipality, whose denominator is the total valuation of the municipality, and whose numerator is the amount of increase in the assessed valuation of any real or personal property in the municipality that became subject to taxation for the first time, or taxed as a separate parcel for the first time for the most recent property tax year for which information is available, or that has had an increase in its assessed valuation over the prior year's valuation as a result of improvements to or expansion of the property. A municipality identified as having a personal property factor that exceeds 5%, as determined pursuant to Title 36, section 694, subsection 2, paragraph B, may calculate its property growth factor by including in the numerator and the denominator the value of personal and otherwise qualifying property introduced into the municipality notwithstanding the exempt status of that property pursuant to Title 36, chapter 105, subchapter 4C. [PL 2009, c. 545, §1 (AMD).]

D. Property tax levy; means the total annual municipal appropriations, excluding assessments properly issued by a county of which the municipality is a member and amounts governed by and appropriated in accordance with Title 20A, chapter 606B, and amounts appropriated to pay assessments properly issued by a school administrative unit or tuition for students or amounts attributable to a tax increment financing district agreement or similar special tax district, reduced by all resources available to fund those appropriations other than the property tax. [PL 2005, c.12, Pt. WW, §11 (AMD).]

E. [PL 2015, c. 267, Pt. L, §15 (RP).] [PL 2015, c. 267, Pt. L, §§13-15 (AMD).]

2. Property tax levy limit. Except as otherwise provided in this section, a municipality may not in any year adopt a property tax levy that exceeds the property tax levy limit established in this subsection.

A. The property tax levy limit for the first fiscal year for which this section is effective is the property tax levy for the municipality for the immediately preceding fiscal year multiplied by one plus the growth limitation factor pursuant to subsection 3. [PL 2005, c. 2, Pt. C, §1 (NEW); PL 2005, c. 2, Pt. C, §§3, 5 (AFF); PL 2005, c. 12, Pt. WW, §16 (AFF).]

B. The property tax levy limit for subsequent fiscal years is the property tax levy limit for the preceding year multiplied by one plus the growth limitation factor pursuant to subsection 3. [PL2005, c. 621, §12 (AMD).]

C. If a previous year's property tax levy reflects the effect of extraordinary, nonrecurring events, the municipality may submit a written notice to the State Tax Assessor requesting an adjustment in its property tax levy limit. [PL 2005, c. 2, Pt. C, §1 (NEW);

PL 2005, c. 2, Pt. C, §§3, 5 (AFF); PL 2005, c. 12, Pt. WW, §16 (AFF).] [PL 2005, c. 621, §12 (AMD).]

3. Growth limitation factor. The growth limitation factor is the average personal income growth plus the property growth factor.

A. [PL 2015, c. 267, Pt. L, §16 (RP).]

B. [PL 2015, c. 267, Pt. L, §16 (RP).] [PL 2015, c. 267, Pt. L, §16 (AMD).]

4. Adjustment for new state funding. If the State provides net new funding to a municipality for existing services funded in whole or in part by the property tax levy, other than required state mandate funds pursuant to section 5685 that do not displace current property tax expenditures, the municipality shall lower its property tax levy limit in that year in an amount equal to the net new funds. For purposes of this subsection; net new funds; means the amount of funds received by the municipality from the State during the most recently completed calendar year, with respect to services funded in whole or in part by the property tax levy, less the product of the following: the amount of such funds received in the prior calendar year multiplied by one plus the growth limitation factor described in subsection 3; Net new funds; refers to state-municipal revenue sharing and does not include changes in state funding for general assistance under Title 22, section 4311 or in state funding under the Local Road Assistance Program under Title 23, section 1803B if those changes are the result of the operation of the formula for calculation of state funding under that section but does include changes in funding that are the result of a statutory change in the formula for calculation of state funding under that section. If the calculation required by this subsection reveals that the municipality received or will receive a net reduction in funding, the municipality is authorized to adjust its property tax levy limit in an amount equal to the net reduction of funds. For the purpose of determining if there was or will be a net reduction in funding, the municipality may consider only those funds that are not new funds. For purposes of this subsection, with respect to the development of any municipal budget that was finally adopted on or before July 1, 2013; net reduction in funding; means the amount of funds received by the municipality from the State during the calendar year immediately preceding the most recently completed calendar year less the amount of such funds received in the most recently completed calendar year. For the purposes of this subsection, with respect to the development of a municipal budget that is finally adopted after July 1, 2013, a municipality may calculate net reduction in funding as the amount of funds received by the municipality from the State during the municipal fiscal year immediately preceding the fiscal year for which the budget is being developed less the amount of such funds that will be received during the fiscal year for which the budget is being prepared, as reasonably calculated on the basis of all available information. If the calculation required by this subsection yields a positive value, that value may be added to the municipality's property tax levy limit. If a municipality receives net new funds in any fiscal year for which its property tax levy limit has not been adjusted as provided in this subsection, the municipality shall adjust its property tax levy limit in the following year in an amount equal to the net new funds.

[PL 2013, c. 368, Pt. G, §1 (AMD).]

5. Exceeding property tax levy limit; extraordinary circumstances. The property tax levy limit established in subsection 2 may be exceeded for extraordinary circumstances only under the following circumstances.

A. The extraordinary circumstances must be circumstances outside the control of the municipal legislative body, including:

- (1) Catastrophic events such as natural disaster, terrorism, fire, war or riot;
- (2) Unfunded or underfunded state or federal mandates;
- (3) Citizens; initiatives or other referenda;
- (4) Court orders or decrees; or
- (5) Loss of state or federal funding.

Extraordinary circumstances do not include changes in economic conditions, revenue shortfalls, increases in salaries or benefits, new programs or program expansions that go beyond existing program criteria and operation. [PL 2005, c. 2, Pt. C, §1 (NEW); PL 2005, c. 2, Pt. C, §§3, 5 (AFF); PL 2005, c. 12, Pt. WW, §16 (AFF).]

B. The property tax levy limit may be exceeded only as provided in subsection 7. [PL 2005, c. 2, Pt. C, §1 (NEW); PL 2005, c. 2, Pt. C, §§3, 5 (AFF); PL 2005, c. 12, Pt. WW, §16 (AFF).]

C. Exceeding the property tax levy limit established in subsection 2 permits the property tax levy to exceed the property tax levy limit only for the year in which the extraordinary circumstance occurs and does not increase the base for purposes of calculating the property tax levy limit for future years. [PL 2005, c. 2, Pt. C, §1 (NEW); PL 2005, c. 2, Pt. C, §§3, 5 (AFF); PL 2005, c. 12, Pt. WW, §16 (AFF).] [PL 2005, c. 2, Pt. C, §1 (NEW); PL 2005, c. 2, Pt. C, §§3, 5 (AFF); PL 2005, c. 12, Pt. WW, §16 (AFF).]

6. Increase in property tax levy limit. The property tax levy limit established in subsection 2 may be increased for other purposes only as provided in subsection 7. [PL 2005, c. 2, Pt. C, §1 (NEW); PL 2005, c. 2, Pt. C, §§3, 5 (AFF); PL 2005, c. 12, Pt. WW, §16 (AFF).]

7. Process for exceeding property tax levy limit. A municipality may exceed or increase the property tax levy limit only by the following means.

A. If the municipal budget is adopted by town meeting or by referendum, the property tax levy limit may be exceeded by the same process that applies to adoption of the municipal budget except that the vote must be by written ballot on a separate article that specifically identifies the intent to exceed the property tax levy limit. [PL 2005, c. 2, Pt. C, §1 (NEW); PL 2005, c. 2, Pt. C, §§3, 5 (AFF); PL 2005, c. 12, Pt. WW, §16 (AFF).]

B. If the municipal budget is adopted by a town council or city council, the property tax levy limit may be exceeded only by a majority vote of all the elected members of the town council or city council on a separate article that specifically identifies the intent to exceed the property tax levy limit. Unless a municipal charter otherwise provides or prohibits a petition and referendum process, if a written petition, signed by at least 10% of the number of voters voting in the last gubernatorial election in the municipality, requesting a vote on the question of exceeding the property tax levy limit is submitted to the municipal officers within 30 days of the council's vote pursuant to this paragraph, the article voted on by the council must be submitted to the legal voters in the next regular election or a special election called for that purpose. The election must be held within 45 days of the submission of the petition. The election must be called, advertised, and conducted according to the law relating to municipal elections, except that the registrar of voters is not required to prepare or the clerk to post a new list of voters and absentee ballots must be prepared and made available at least 14 days prior to the date of the referendum. For the purpose of registration of voters, the registrar of voters must be in

session on the secular day preceding the election. The voters shall indicate by a cross or check mark placed against the word; Yes or No; their opinion on the article. The results must be declared by the municipal officers and entered upon the municipal records. [PL 2005, c. 12, Pt. WW, §12 (AMD).] [PL 2005, c. 12, Pt. WW, §12 (AMD).]

8. Treatment of surplus; reserves. Any property tax revenues collected by a municipality in any fiscal year in excess of its property tax levy limit, as determined by a final audited accounting, must be transferred to a property tax relief fund, which each municipality must establish, and used to reduce property tax levies in subsequent fiscal years. Nothing in this subsection limits the ability of a municipality to maintain adequate reserves pursuant to section 5801. [PL 2005, c. 2, Pt. C, §1 (NEW); PL 2005, c. 2, Pt. C, §§3, 5 (AFF); PL 2005, c. 12, Pt. WW, §16 (AFF).]

9. Fractional divisions. A municipality may, consistent with Title 36, section 710, exceed its property tax levy limit in such reasonable amount as necessary to avoid fractional divisions. [PL 2005, c. 2, Pt. C, §1 (NEW); PL 2005, c. 2, Pt. C, §§3, 5 (AFF); PL 2005, c. 12, Pt. WW, §16 (AFF).]

10. Enforcement. If a municipality adopts a property tax levy in violation of this section, the State Tax Assessor may require the municipality to adjust its property tax levy downward in an amount equal to the illegal property tax levy and impose such other penalties as the Legislature may provide. [PL 2005, c. 2, Pt. C, §1 (NEW); PL 2005, c. 2, Pt. C, §§3, 5 (AFF).]

Maine Municipal Association: Summary of LD1

LD 1 Property Tax Limits

“LD 1” is the law enacted four years ago that, among other things, restricts municipal property tax increases based on an annually calculated “growth factor” (see 30-A M.R.S.A. § 5721-A). Using that growth factor, a municipality establishes a “property tax levy limit” that limits the amount of property taxes that may be committed for the municipal budget, unless the municipal legislative body uses a special voting procedure to override the limit.

Exceeding the limit. The property tax levy limit may be exceeded only for extraordinary circumstances outside the control of the municipal legislative body, including (1) catastrophic events such as natural disaster, terrorism, fire, war or riot, (2) unfunded or underfunded State or federal mandates, (3) citizens’ initiatives or other referenda, (4) court orders or decrees, or (5) loss of State or federal funding. Exceeding the limit permits the tax levy to exceed the limit for the year in question but does not increase the base for purposes of calculating the limit for future years. Following is a sample warrant article (or ballot question) to exceed the limit:

To see if the Town will vote to (or Shall the Town) exceed the property tax levy limit of \$_____ established for the Town by State law, due to extraordinary circumstances outside the control of the municipal legislative body, namely (here insert reason or reasons).

Increasing the limit. The property tax levy limit may be increased for any reason, with or

without extraordinary circumstances. Increasing the limit permits the tax levy to exceed the limit for the year in question and also increases the base for purposes of calculating the limit for future year. Following is a sample warrant article (or ballot question) to increase the limit:

To see if the town will vote to (or Shall the town) increase the property tax levy limit of \$_____ established for the Town by State law, in the event that the municipal budget approved under the preceding articles results in a tax commitment that is greater than this property tax levy limit.

As noted above, exceeding or increasing the property tax levy limit requires a separate vote by the same method as used for adoption of the municipal budget, except that if the budget is adopted by traditional “open” town meeting, the vote must be by written ballot (blank pieces of paper, except that “yes” and “no” boxes may be printed). A simple majority vote is sufficient, except that if the budget is adopted by town or city council, it must be a majority of all members.

If there is any chance the approved budget will exceed the property tax levy limit, the appropriate article or question should be included on the warrant or ballot. We also recommend that it follow the other budget articles or questions, although the LD 1 vote may precede voting on the budget if preferred.

For much more on LD 1, including how to calculate your property tax levy limit, see the feature-length article “Municipal Spending Limits” in the March 2005 Maine Townsman, available at www.memun.org. A 2009 LD 1 municipal worksheet, with instructions, is also available on the MMA website. (By R.P.F.)

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F); PL

Current Land Use: Development and Growth Management

Historical Pattern of Development

Pre-1960s

West Gardiner's land use and growth developed through the years based on the needs and situations of hundreds of families. The needs were and remain today: food, shelter, and employment. The situation in earlier times was slow transportation, scattered farms and hard- working people.

Mills and factories were built along Cobbossee Stream to take advantage of the good waterpower flowing from the stream, supplying a small number of people with steady work and many members of the community with important products.

Most everyone in Town had a farm, large or small, and a woodlot. The land and resources gave them money to buy essentials they couldn't produce themselves. Most

people periodically worked for their neighbors. Many hand-built Town roads using only shovels and horses. Taxes could be worked off by laboring on Town roads.

When factories came into Gardiner our population dropped rapidly. Many people moved closer to work provided by shoe shops and other manufacturing plants.

The automobile started the migration of people back to the countryside. West Gardiner's population drove back in a slow steady stream which continues today.

In 1950 there were eight large dairy farms just on High Street between the Town line and Babbs Corner. Most of those farms have gone out of business with the land reverting to woodland.

The landscape of West Gardiner is ever changing as residents use the land and resources.

1960s-1990s

Where heavy timber grew, and was harvested in 1985, residents in 1990 could pick blackberries and raspberries. On old fields where hay had been cut in the 1960s, pulp was cut heading into the 1990s. Fifty years prior, one could see all the ways to Gardiner from the center of West Gardiner. By 1990, one would have to get up in the air in a helicopter to see Gardiner, and that ride would show our Town as nearly completely wooded.

With no major industry and a great deal of undeveloped land, West Gardiner's growth had been limited to residential development and home-based businesses, primarily along existing roads. In 1990, few lots were available along existing roads.

Development was moving into the backland, and the Town felt that most of the future growth must continue to occur there. Low-cost land and lack of regulation provided plenty of affordable housing and residents appreciated the diversity of structures and land uses, as well as the freedom to manage their property with little interference from the Town office.

Seventy-six small and home-based businesses existed in Town and the prediction was that most commercial growth would continue to occur in home-based service and resource-based businesses scattered throughout Town. Because of the lack of public sewer and water, large scale commercial development was not expected nor desired by residents.

Natural resources consisted primarily of plentiful lakes, ponds, streams, and forests. At the time, most of West Gardiner's forests were actively managed for timber production. The enactment of Shoreland Zoning forced many waterfront owners to develop their property and consequently there was little shoreland left to develop on lakes and ponds. Soils throughout Town are quite poor, limiting development potential, both residential and commercial.

At the time the 1990 Comprehensive Plan was written, most residents wanted to wake up ten or twenty years in a community that has maintained its rural residential character. Such a community would include an active forestry industry, many small and home-based businesses, a lot of undeveloped land, no major industry, a diversity of types of homes spread-out all-over Town along both existing roads and new internal roads, and clean lakes, ponds and streams.

They predicted that the West Gardiner of the future would not be appreciably larger, in population and number of houses, than the West Gardiner of 1990, although most citizens would concede that there was plenty of room for growth.

The *vision* for the future emphasized a small residential community with a large land base that offers low-cost housing lots, minimal regulation, and plenty of room for growth and development.

1990 Prediction for Future Population and Development

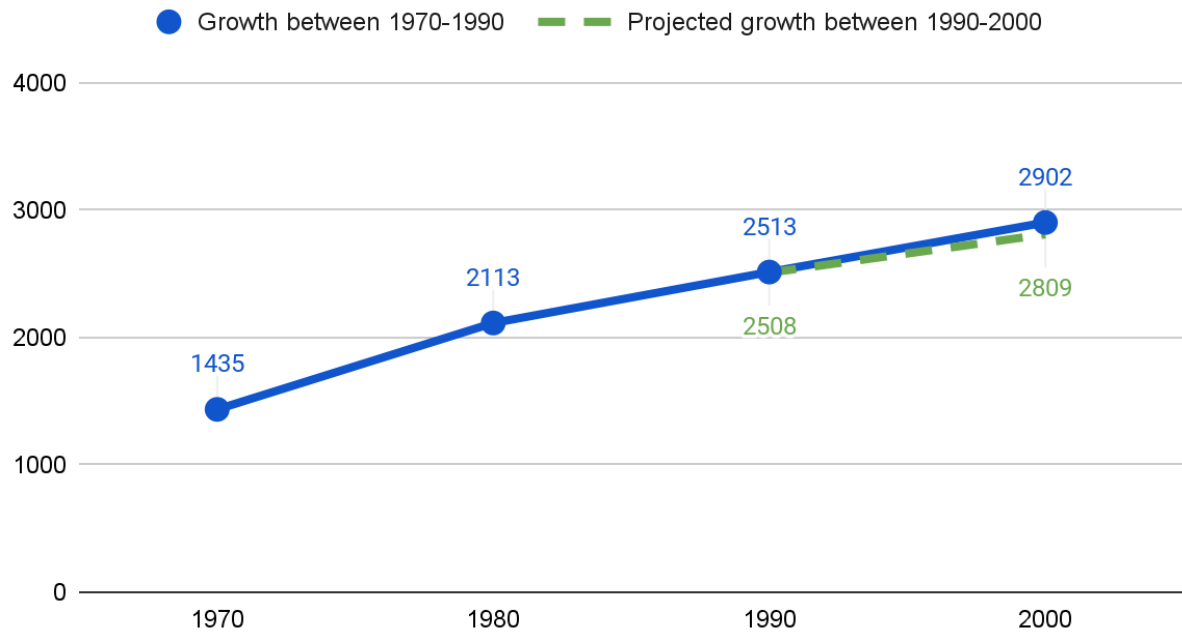
As is true today, it was difficult to project in 1990 the population growth that would occur between 1990-2000 and any new development required to support it. West Gardiner saw a population surge in the 1970s and a slowdown in the 1980s. (We can posit that the back-to-land movement of the 1960s and 1970s, which saw a high surge of people migrating from cities to rural areas, likely played some role in West Gardiner's surge in population in the 1970s.)

The 1990 Comprehensive Planning Committee relied on a few data points to make their projections for 1990-2000 growth:

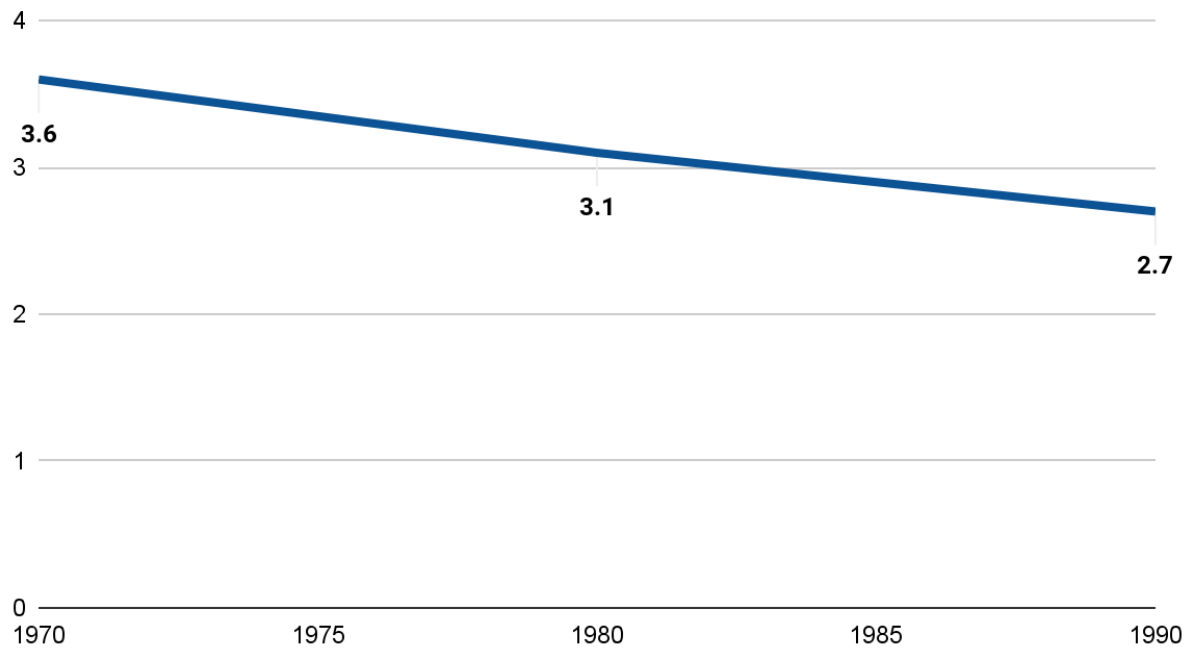
- Growth trends between 1970-1980
- Preliminary 1990 US Census count for West Gardiner to account for growth between 1980-1990.
- Average household size
- Additional factors such as the state of the economy that *could* have an impact on growth.

In 1990, the *preliminary* US Census count for West Gardiner in 1990 was 2,508 (actual: 2513). The 1990 committee expected the growth rate to continue to slow from the two previous decades and projected an 11.9% population increase (a net gain of 300 residents).

West Gardiner Population Growth Between 1970-2000



Average Household Size Between 1970 and 1990



The average household size both nationwide and in West Gardiner had been steadily declining since the 1960s. Factoring in the recent population trends outlined above as well as the steady decline of the average household size, both nationally and locally, the committee projected that if the average household size remained at 2.7 between 1990 and 2000, 111 new homes would be needed to support the projected increase of new residents.

New Home Development Projections for 1990-2000

	Average Household Size	New homes required
West Gardiner Trends	2.7	111
US Census Predictions	2.5	120

Recent Pattern of Development

1990-2020

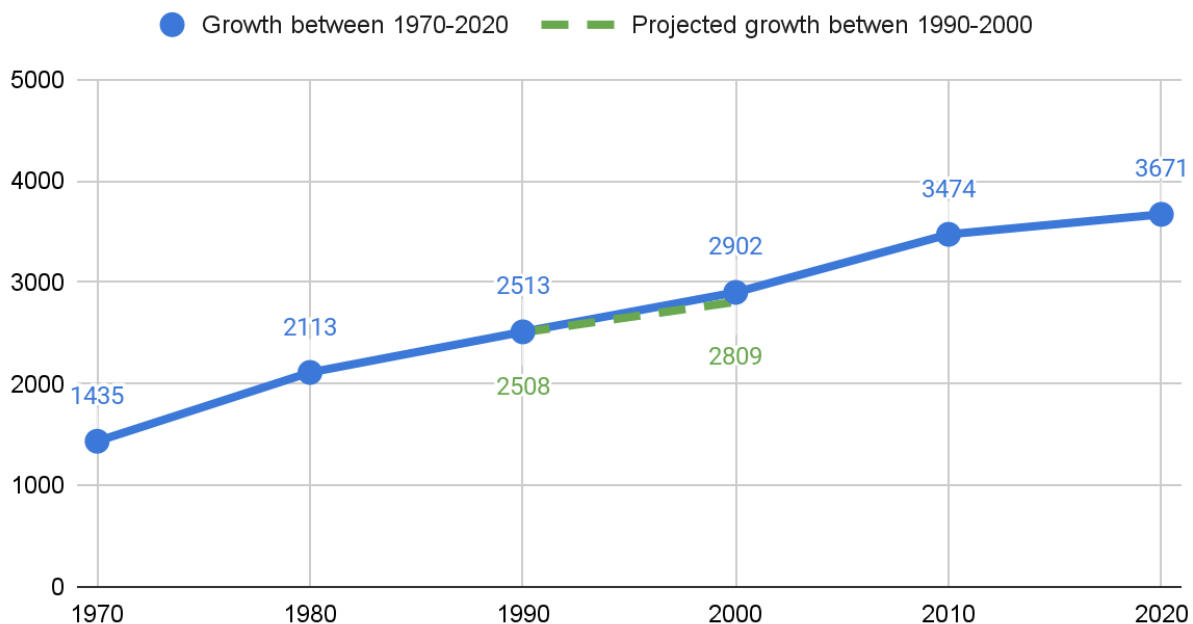
The actual net gain was higher than predicted and West Gardiner saw a net gain of 389 residents between 1990-2000. Growth accelerated between 2000-2010, exceeding the growth seen in the 1980s by 1.1%. The growth rate between 2010-2020 saw a sharp decline and, although there is speculation that the 2020 Census population count may be wildly inaccurate, research indicates that any counting errors in Maine are statistically insignificant. With this in mind, recommendations were based on the existing 2020 Census count.

West Gardiner Population Growth Between 1970-2020

Census	Population	Net Gain	% +/-
1970	1435	291	25.4%
1980	2113	678	47.2%
1990	2508 (preliminary Census data) 2513 (actual)	395 400	18.7% 18.9%

2000	2808 (1990 projection) 2902 (actual)	300 389	11.9% 15.5%
2010	3474	572	19.7%
2020	3671	197	5.7%

West Gardiner Population Growth Between 1970-2020



Current Pattern of Development and Land Use

2020 - Present

What could not have been predicted in 1990 are factors that have had enormous impacts on the economy, the way people work, where people live, increased mobility facilitated by the prevalence of distributed work environments, the gig economy, the unavailability and unaffordability of housing (especially in urban areas), and a mini revived back-to-land movement:

- 1990s - Present: Wage stagnation and increasing unaffordability of housing
- 1995: Advent of the internet in the mid-1990s
- 2007: Housing crisis and recession
- 2010 - Present: Proliferation of digital tools that make remote work and distributed work environments possible

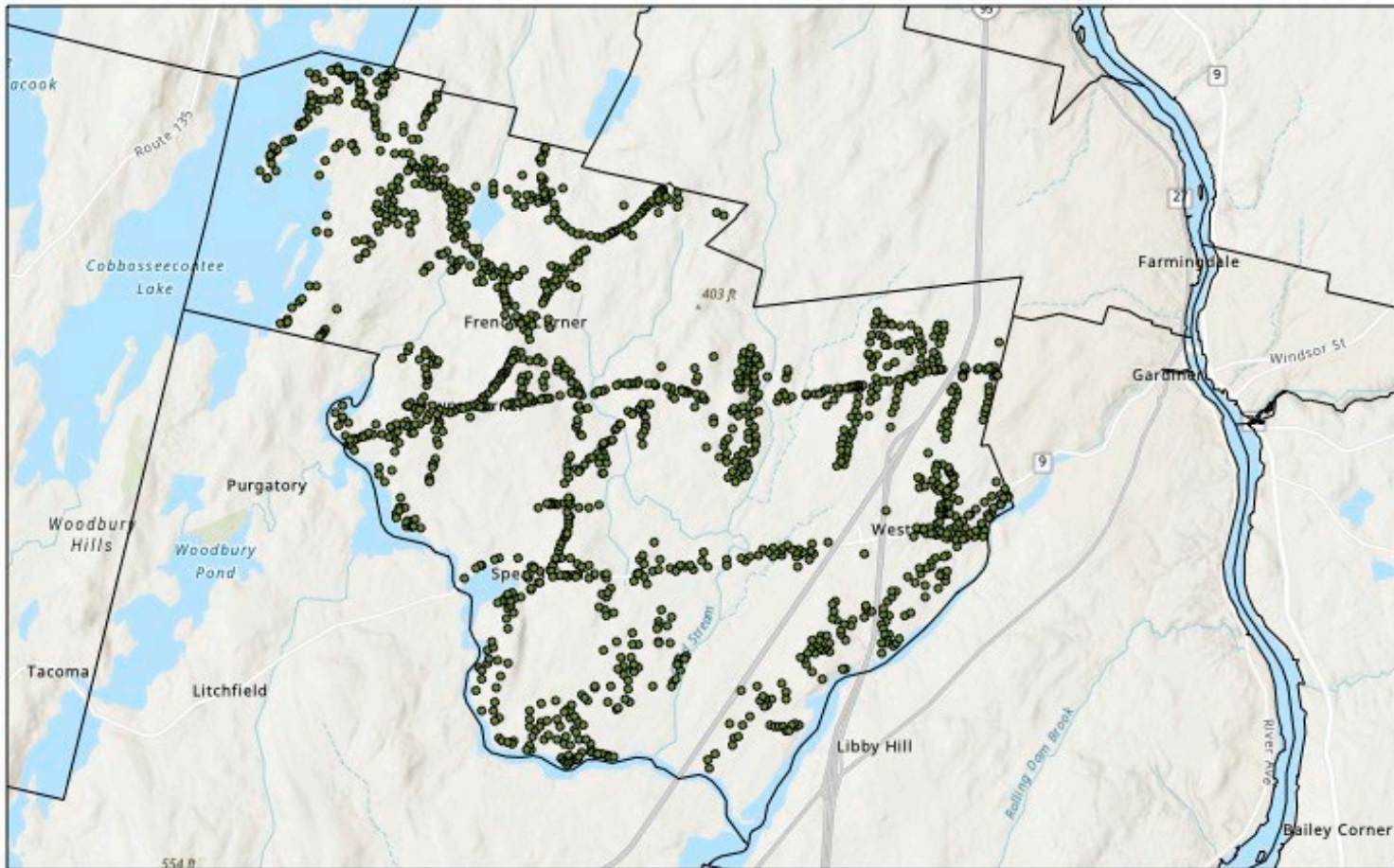
- 2008 – West Gardiner was named a “Green Town” because of its transfer station and recycling efforts
- 2010s - Present: Accelerated development of and positive sentiment towards renewable and green technologies
- 2020: Global pandemic (COVID-19)
- 2022: Interest rate hikes and inflation

These factors have and may continue to make West Gardiner a target for those seeking a quieter life and affordable homeownership and homesteading with low taxes and open spaces, as well as a target for corporations and/or large businesses seeking vast and inexpensive land for commercial development. As such, we may expect vacancy rates in West Gardiner to remain low.

Recent Development

West Gardiner contains a mix of lot-by-lot construction and subdivisions, of which there has been a significant increase over the last 15-20 years. The residential footprint in the Town continues to be clustered on or around existing public roads, with new private roads being developed to connect new residential development(s) to the existing transit network.

West Gardiner Residential Addresses



4/7/2024

- Residential Addresses (911 Address Feature)
- West Gardiner Town Boundary



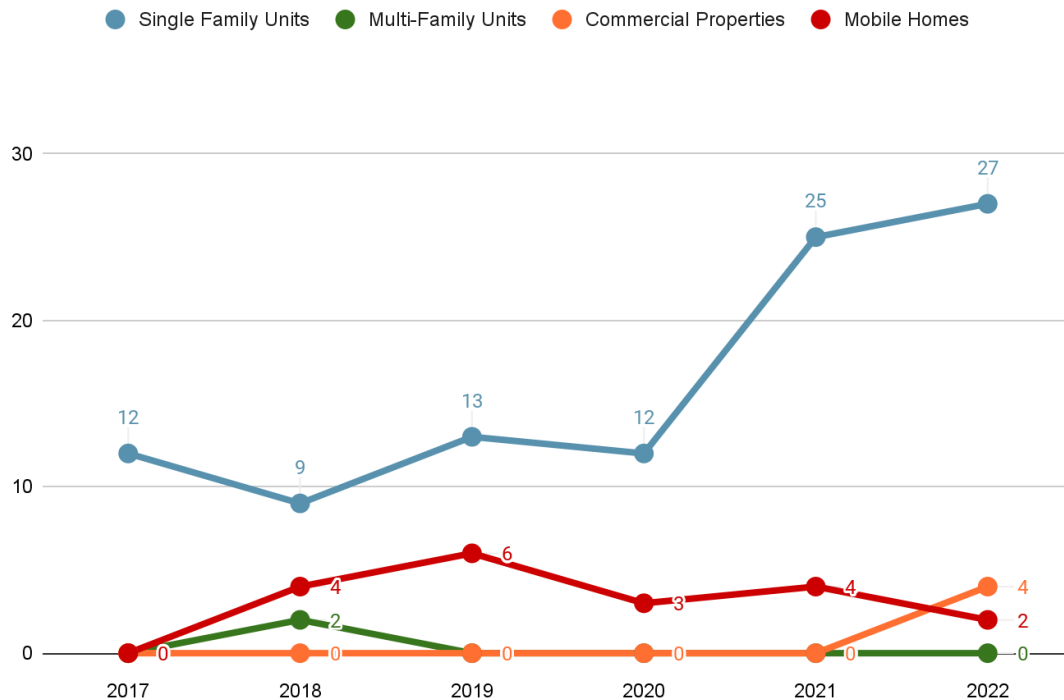
The above map of West Gardiner depicts all known E911 coordinator verified residential addresses in West Gardiner, irrespective of development date.

For clarity, land purchased for subdivision development is considered *commercial* during the initial transaction phase. Once a subdivision lot is sold for residential development, that parcel is considered *residential* and is regulated by the existing residential ordinances. As of April 2024, there are no existing ordinances that specify regulations for subdivision development. The only restriction is the residential lot size.

Known data from 2017-2022 demonstrates an increase in residential development (new homes and mobile homes). There has been a spike in subdivision development. However, as of April 2024, accurate data could not be obtained on the number of

subdivision developments (commercial), individual units built (residential) or the number of remaining lots available. Some of the subdivision residences are depicted below, but the subdivision commercial developments are not. There has been a recent spike in commercial development, to include one cannabis caregiver retail store and self-storage facilities. Accurate commercial subdivision development figures could not be obtained. Three solar farms have been approved for development, but construction had not begun as of April 2024 and are not depicted in the graph below.

Estimated Residential & Commercial Development (2017-2022)



We can reason that increases during this period may be, in part, the result of:

- Growing housing shortage in Maine
- Housing unaffordability nationwide and within the state of Maine
- Low home mortgage interest rates (preceding the sharp increase in 2022)
- Low and affordable property tax rates in West Gardiner
- A statewide increase of in-migration, home sales, and new home construction during the first two years of the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2022)

Despite the increase in residential and commercial development, West Gardiner continues to be a low-density municipality with no village center.

Alignment with Community's Vision

It's important to point out that the vision residents have for West Gardiner has remained unchanged throughout its history. Residents love its rural setting, low-density population and open spaces. They enjoy the natural resources, laid back atmosphere, friendly neighbors and landowner rights.

Most support the minimum lot size requirements, while others wish to *increase* it to minimize growth. Based on the minimal response from the April 2023 survey, there is almost no appetite for any new commercial development aside from an openness by some to small-scale senior housing, small businesses that offer localized services and community-based facilities.

Development since the 1990 Plan is consistent with the communities vision for the 1990 Plan. Results of the surveys may show that residents are beginning to be concerned about increased development. There are no current plans for regulating residential or commercial development, but they may be considered as part of future land use suggestions.

Currently, the code enforcement officer can satisfactorily cover the requests for additional building in the Town. His duties may be reviewed over the next 2 years to determine if additional hours (or a full-time position) are needed.

Existing Land Use Plan/Regulation

Overview

Land use is primarily regulated through the state department of environmental protection, laws including Shoreland zoning, and resource protection including subdivision regulations.

Each subdivision plan is submitted to the Town Selectboard for review. Each lot within the subdivision has to comply with the Town's minimum lot size ordinance which was enacted on October 15, 1987 (most recently amended in April 2024). This includes lots being at or greater than 60,000 ft.², 200 feet of road frontage or the ability to foot a 200' x 200' in any lots that do not meet the 200-foot road furniture requirement.

West Gardiner does not require any setbacks other than what is governed by the State of Maine. This includes but is not limited to right of ways, waterfront-edge or septic system setbacks.

Lot dimensional standards

The Town of West Gardiner Minimum Lot Size Ordinance, adopted in 1987 and last amended in 2024, focuses on two areas: residential and commercial.

Residential Lots: Minimum Lot Size and Road Frontage

A single-family dwelling unit may not be constructed on a lot of less than 60,000 square feet, of which 52,000 square footages shall exclude the area of any public and private roads and rights of way. If multi-family dwelling units or accessory dwelling units are constructed on a single parcel, the parcel shall contain at least 60,000 square feet for each dwelling unit constructed thereon. "Dwelling unit" for the purpose of this ordinance shall be defined as a room or group of rooms designed and equipped for use as living quarters for only one family.

A lot upon which a single-family dwelling unit is to be constructed must contain at least 200 lineal and contiguous feet of road frontage or a 200 x 200-foot square inserted inside of said lot boundaries. If a multi-family dwelling is constructed on a single parcel, the parcel shall contain at least 200 lineal and contiguous feet of road frontage for each single-family dwelling unit constructed thereon or a 200 x 200-foot square inserted inside of said lot boundary for each single-family dwelling unit or a combination thereof. "Road frontage" for the purpose of this ordinance may be on a public road or a private road but must be lineal and contiguous.

Commercial Lots - Minimum Lot Size and Road Frontage

A "Commercial Lot" shall be used for business purposes only. A Commercial Lot must contain at least 10,000 square feet with at least 75 lineal and contiguous feet of road frontage. A Commercial Lot does not meet the minimum residential lot size and therefore cannot receive a permit for a residential septic system.

The Town complies with the state-required Setbacks when it comes to waterfront zoning, wastewater, etc. – as required by the State of Maine.

Development

Historically, Ordinances have been the primary tool for establishing guidelines and regulating development projects in West Gardiner. Most established ordinances pertain to commercial development and entities, which is by design; ***residents want minimal restrictions governing what they do with their own land.***

Ordinances relating to land use (as of April 2024):

- Adult Business Ordinance
- Caregiver Retail Stores Licensing
- Driveway Entrance Specifications
- Marijuana Retail
- Medical Cannabis Cultivation Facilities Licensing
- Minimum Lot Size Ordinance
- Minimum Street Design Construction
- Self-Service Storage Ordinance
- Solar Energy Systems Ordinance
- Telecommunications Facilities Ordinance
- Wind Energy Systems Ordinance

- Plus, any state regulations that the Town of West Gardiner currently complies with.

The ordinances are adequate in terms of managing or providing guidelines for the existing commercial uses listed above and residential development.

The Self-Service Storage, Solar Energy Systems and Caregiver Retail Store and Medical Cannabis Cultivation Ordinances were drafted and adopted in response to commercial developments that had already been approved by the Selectboard. Preceding the finalization of the ordinances' language, there was a moratorium (approved by West Gardiner residents) on the future development of all three commercial categories, respectively.

Floodplains

The Town is not currently enrolled in the national flood insurance program; adherence to the state-required setbacks along West Gardiner 's major waterways, Cobbossee Lake, Cobbossee Stream, and Horseshoe Pond provide adequate protections.

As community trends and conditions change over time, the Town may continue to assess floodplain areas on an ongoing basis to determine whether additional measures such as a Floodplain Management Ordinance and/or participation in the National Flood Insurance Program will mitigate future risks.

Floodplain Maps can be found in the [Appendix](#) and are linked to the State's information, as the maps were not transferable to paper copies for submission in this document.

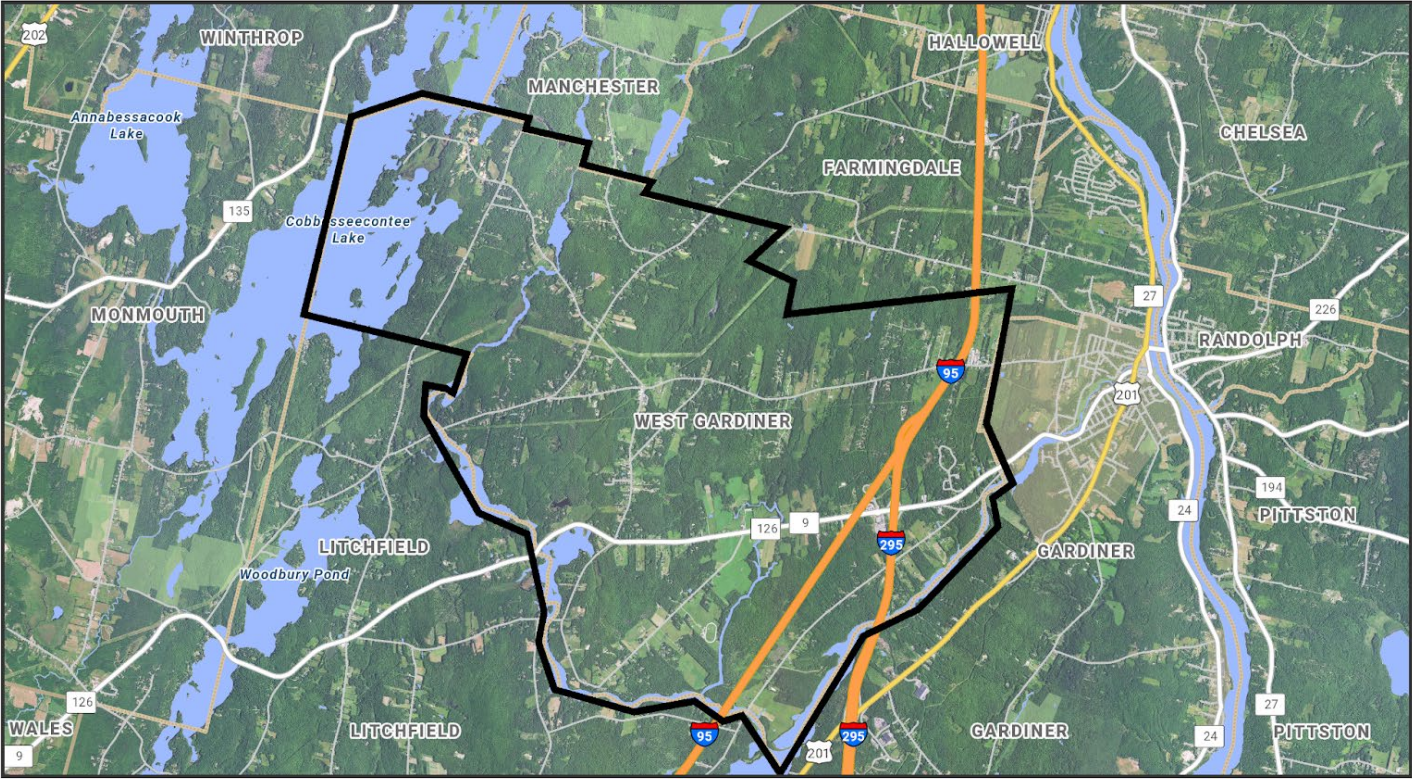
Current Conditions and Trends

As of April 2024, there is no formal data from the Town or State that is specific to West Gardiner that will provide for this map to be made. However, 1 map using polygons is included below that denotes locations of residential subdivisions, 5 storage facilities, 3 solar farms, and 1 medical marijuana caregiver retail store. The map is hand drawn and based on the Town's internal information, as there were no local or state maps available for use that contained this data.

Subdivision Development

As of April 2024, the Town does not have the official date that each subdivision was started.

WEST GARDINER EXISTING ARIAL VIEW



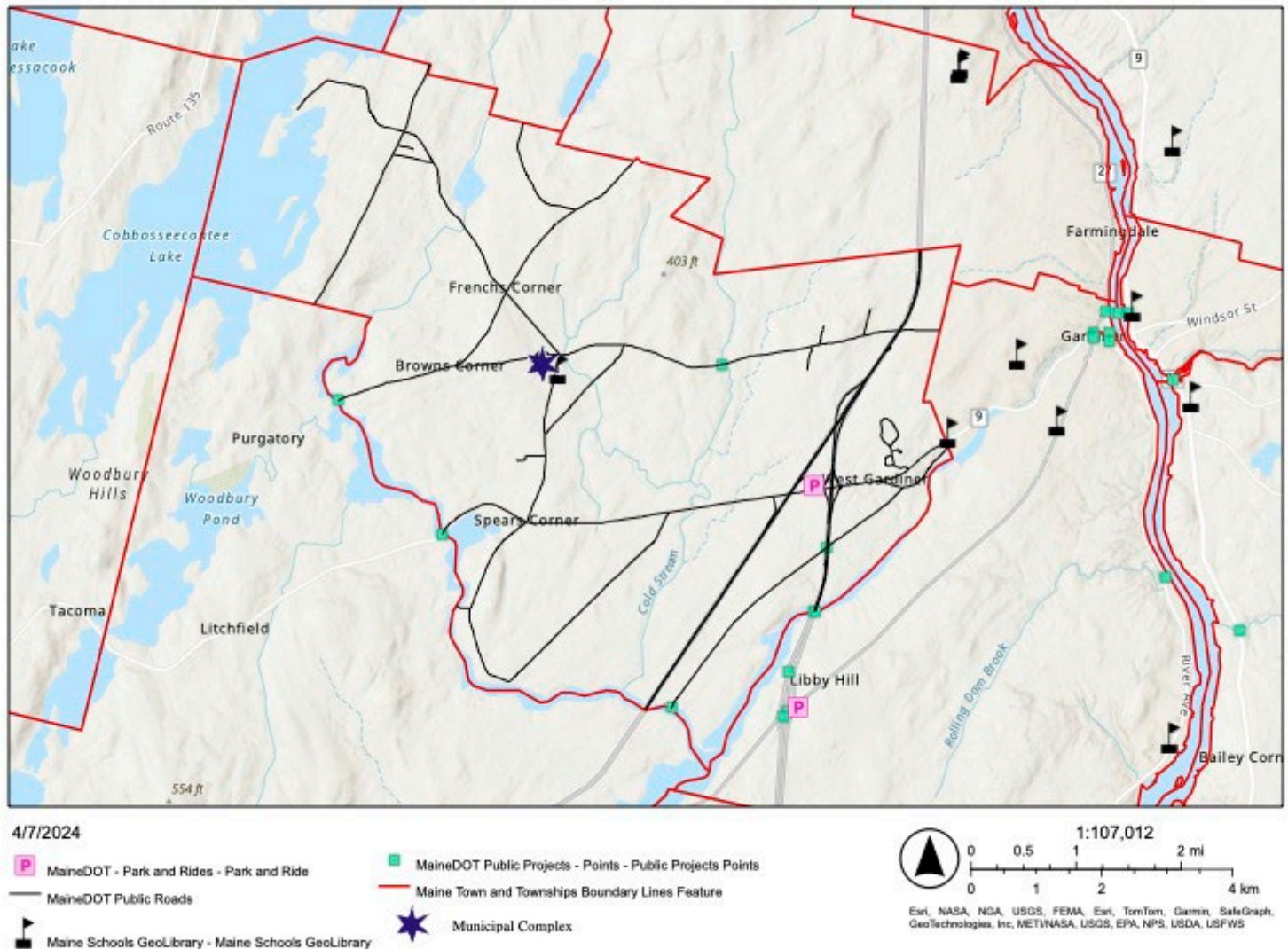
The Maine Department of Transportation provides this publication for information only. Reliance upon this information is at user risk. It is subject to revision and may be incomplete depending upon changing conditions. The Department assumes no liability if injuries or damages result from this information. This map is not intended to support emergency dispatch.

2.5 Miles
1 inch = 1.94 miles

Date: 4/7/2024
Time: 8:16:23 PM

LEGEND

West Gardiner: Public Roads, Public Facilities, Park & Ride, DOT Projects



Impacts on Transit Network and Town Budget

One impact of residential and commercial development—especially subdivision development—is an increased prevalence of private roads throughout West Gardiner.

An inventory of the Town's roads reveals that many of the roads are private.

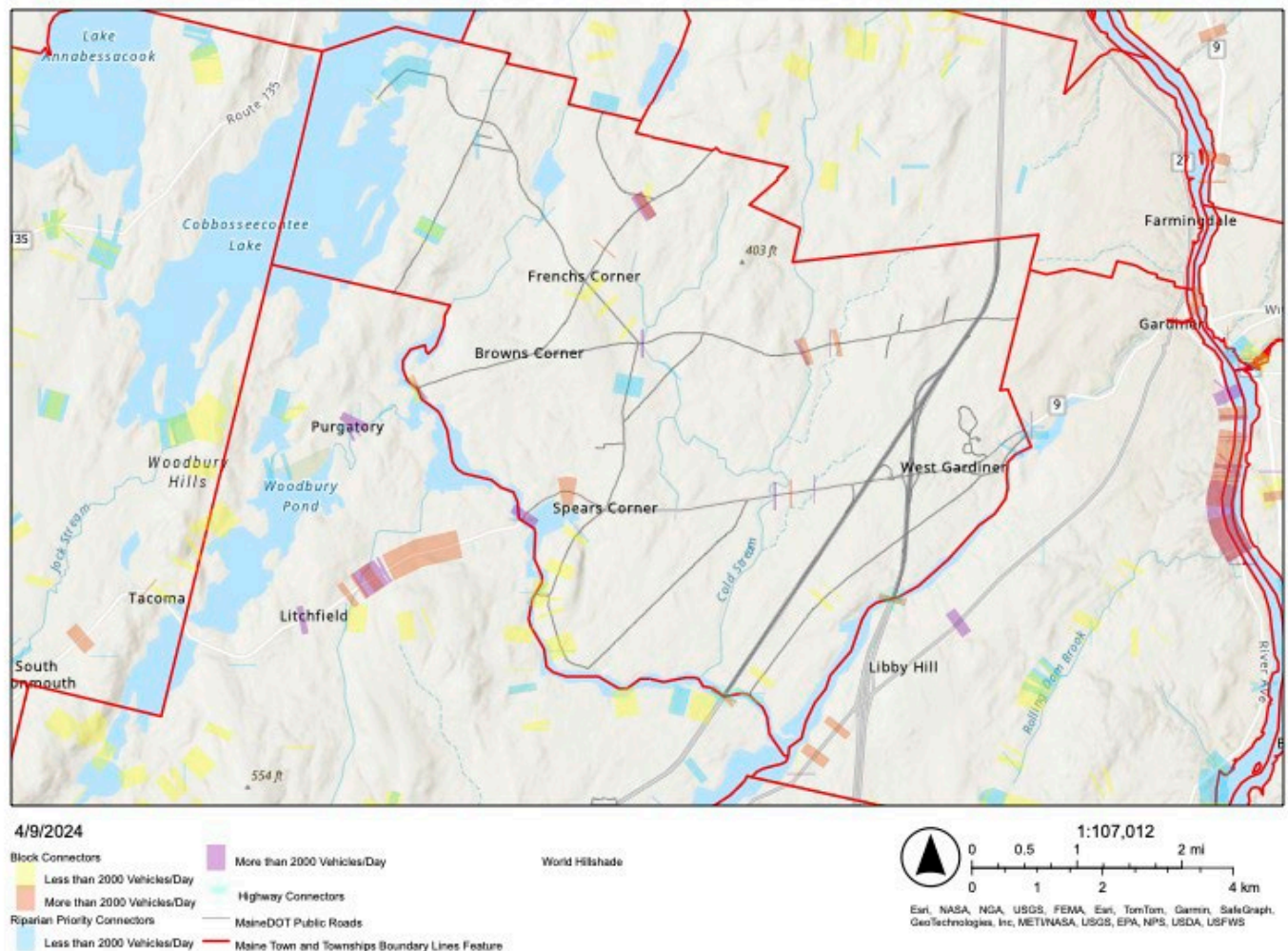
Risks

- Currently, there is no overarching ordinance that clearly outlines minimum requirements for their construction. This may present a potential risk to

emergency service vehicle accessibility and maneuverability, especially in inclement weather.

- The Town has no legal authority to spend public funds to maintain, repair or plow private roads. It is the sole responsibility of the road owner to perform these duties. However, should private roads be brought up to code and the Town petitioned to take ownership of them, there would be a fiscal impact on the Town's budget to maintain the road(s).

Existing Public Roads and Daily Vehicle Traffic



Future Growth Predictions

Through 2030 and beyond, the Town may expect continued interest in commercial, subdivision and residential development. The external factors detailed in the Current Pattern of Development and Land Use: [2020-Present](#) section are thoughts to be considered as currently West Gardiner may be an attractive alternative to neighboring

urban areas with low residential housing vacancy rates and high-density/high-regulation areas that prevent or limit commercial development.

Commercial Development

As of April 2024, the following near-term nonresidential development is taking place:

- New proposed commercial development within or around the service plaza towards Gardiner on Lewiston Road route 126, including two of the three approved solar farms.
- One of the solar farms will be developed on the Pond Road

Subdivision and Residential Development

As of April 2024, the following near-term subdivision and new residential development are taking place:

- Open and yet-to-be developed lots in existing subdivisions.
- Larger parcels of back lots continue to be accessed and subdivided into residential development (though the specifics and volume are unknown)
- New single-family homes continue to be developed throughout West Gardiner, though current estimates are unknown.
- The assumption is made that some of the future land sales will be used for new residential development.

West Gardiner Housing Market and Vacancy Rates

Single Family Residence Inventory and Sales

Since January 2021, single family home inventory rates have been on a steady decline, whereas sales have remained somewhat consistent.

Land Inventory and Sales

A similar trend can be seen in land inventory and sales in West Gardiner; vacancy rates are low, and demand remains at a steady constant.

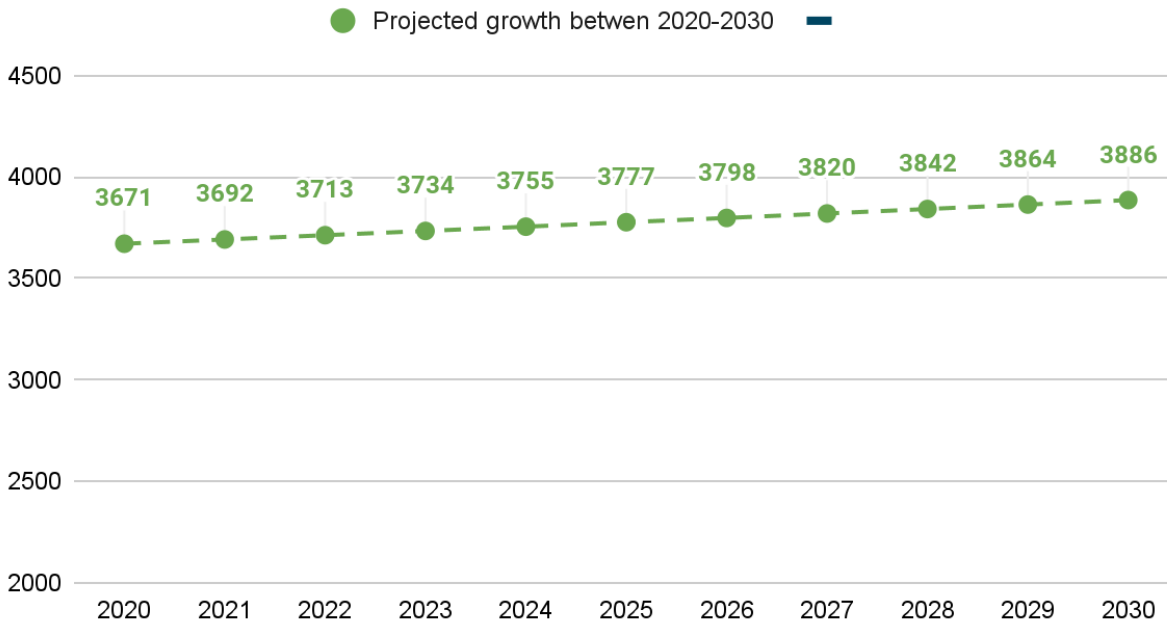
During this period, days on the market saw a dramatic decrease between January and March 2021 during which time Maine saw an overall increase in population growth and home and land sales. However, unlike single family home sales, most land sales were sold below the sale price.

Population Growth

Population growth projections are an imperfect science, and, for the purposes of this document, we will be using:

1. 2020 Census population count of 3671 as a baseline (for which the Census Bureau's data, as was pointed out in the 1990-2020 Pattern of Development, had no statistically significant margin of error)
2. Annualized growth rate of .57% between 2010-2020 (population: 3474 in 2010 to 3671 in 2020)

Projected Population Growth Between 2020-2030



Based on this annualized rate, West Gardiner should see a net population gain of 215. Keep in mind that there are current numbers available that show that using this automatic .57% increase per year has not worked through 2023. It is just a factor that was used for the graph. The current number of residents for 2023 is 3641, almost 100 less than the above chart.

Considerations for and caveats to applying a .57% annualized growth rate to the 2020-2030 projection:

1. Considerations for using the .57% annual growth rate.
 - a. The state of Maine's projects that Kennebec County will see an overall growth rate of 5.3% between 2020-2030.
 - b. Recent West Gardiner housing market trends indicate that demand may remain constant for the near future.
 - c. With low housing inventory rates coupled with existing and future open land inventory, West Gardiner may be able to accommodate new residential and subdivision development.
 - d. Housing unaffordability and availability in Maine—especially south of West Gardiner—may persist and may make West Gardiner an affordable and viable alternative to higher-density areas.
 - e. Climate refuge and the increasing prevalence of distributed work environments will continue to make more remote states like Maine a viable relocation option, regardless of local industrial growth conditions.
 - f. As indicated in the 2023 State of Maine's Population Outlook, "Despite a natural population decrease of 4,520, Maine's population managed to

increase by over 13,000 people in 2021. Maine's population growth has accelerated in recent years as the final component of population has improved: net migration." Keep in mind that this is a statewide statement.

2. Caveats

- a. The State of Maine's Population Outlook acknowledges that the full impact of COVID-19 on Maine's population growth is unknown and may not be a long-term factor in sustained growth.
- b. The population growth and housing need predictions for 1990-2000 made by the 1990 Comprehensive Planning Committee were underestimated. The committee estimated an 11.9% growth (+300 pop. increase) and the actual growth was 15.5% (+389 pop. increase). Conditions *will* change and should be continuously monitored so that adjustments can be made accordingly.
- c. As with COVID-19, unforeseeable conditions that drive up immigration and housing demand may occur again, and we should be prepared to meet all conditions.

4,000 Population Threshold

If the 2030 population projection is accurate, West Gardiner may not surpass the 4,000-resident threshold, which would have triggered state-level residential housing regulations not currently seen in West Gardiner. (If we apply the same .57% annualized growth between 2030-2040, we may reach the 4,000 thresholds in 2036.)

With only a 114-person variance between our projection and the 4,000 thresholds, we may be in a precarious situation; if actual growth exceeds our projection, we may meet the 4,000 thresholds sooner than expected. This plan suggests that the Selectboard review, over the next 12 years, the scenario for a 4000 plus population.

Housing Needs

The 2020 US Census indicates that the average household size in West Gardiner is 3.31 (+/- .73). With a projected population increase of 215, we can project the need for 66 additional homes.

Projected Pop. Gain	Average Household Size	New homes required
215	3.3	66

Resident Sentiment: Town Surveys

Comprehensive Planning Committee Town Survey Findings Overview

In April 2023, the newly formed 2023-2024 Comprehensive Planning Committee sent out a survey to West Gardiner residents to gather basic demographic information and insight into how they felt about residential and commercial development. They were asked what they felt deserved more attention from Town officials, what preservation measures should be taken, whether they felt that recent development was consistent with their vision of West Gardiner, and to define that vision.

325 residents completed the survey, which contained more than 50 questions. Broadly, the survey results underscored a vision for the community, discontent over the increased residential and commercial development, and revealed support for a planned growth strategy to preserve West Gardiner's character. Keeping in mind the survey information contained at the beginning of this plan submission, noting that the survey results reflect less than 8% of the Town's population and 9% of the voting population.

Survey Findings

In November 2023, an internal (not sponsored by the entire Comprehensive Plan Committee) 5-question survey was released on election day at the polls that focused on gauging sentiment about zoning ordinances, understanding the ideal setting for West Gardiner residents and what aspects of development deserve more attention. 132 residents completed the 5-question survey.

Highlights From the Surveys

Insights were leveraged from the surveys to better understand how residents imagine West Gardiner, how current development trends and future land uses align with that vision, and what they felt deserves the most attention moving forward.

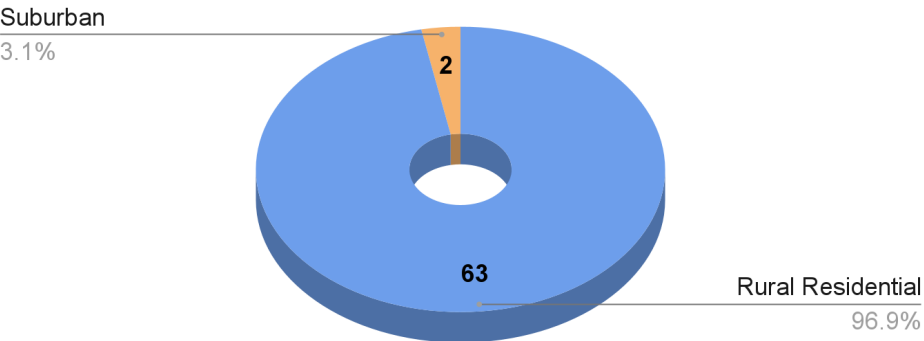
Sentiment: The Character of West Gardiner

When asked what residents love about West Gardiner, residents indicated dozens of responses, including the following:

Small, Rural, Quiet, People, Community, Rural Feel, Taxes, Openness, Services, School , Helpful, Property, Residents, People

When asked about the ideal setting for West Gardiner: the overwhelming response was that West Gardiner should maintain its residential, small-town community with protected lakes, ponds, wetlands and farmlands.

The ideal setting for West Gardiner is:



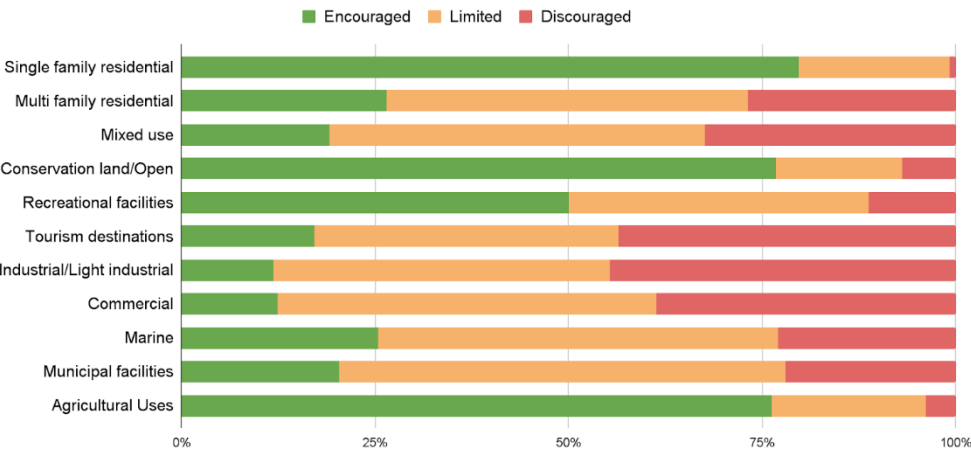
Again, note that these numbers are exceedingly small when compared to the total number of voters and residents in the Town.

Sentiment: Land Use

When asked about which land uses should be encouraged, limited or discouraged:

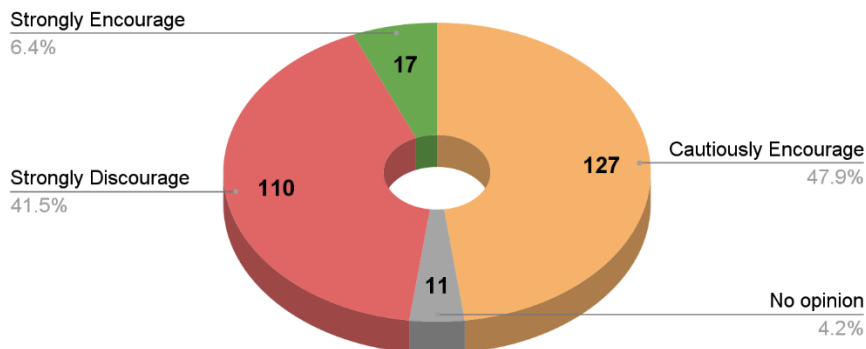
- Single-family residential, conservation land/open, agricultural and recreational facilities were ranked the highest for **encouraged** land use.
- Industrial/light industrial, tourism destinations, commercial and mixed-use were ranked the highest for **discouraged** land use.

Indicate whether the following land use types should be encouraged, limited, or discouraged



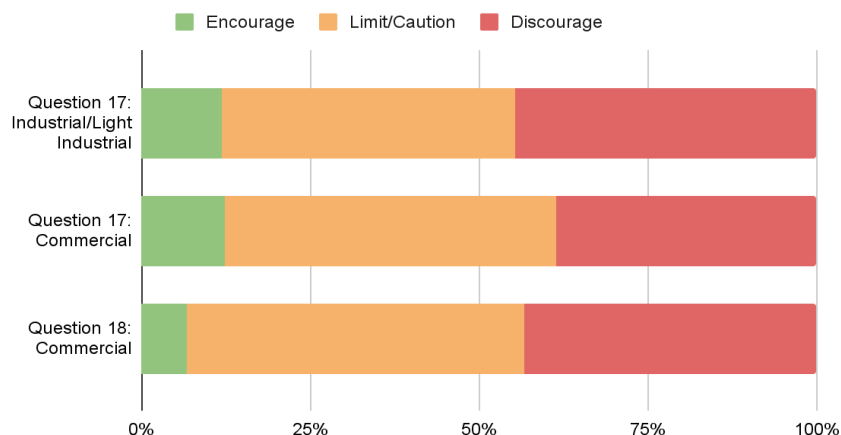
When asked about whether we should be encouraging additional commercial growth: Nearly 48% said that commercial growth should be encouraged with caution, while nearly 42% said that commercial growth should be strongly discouraged.

To what extent should West Gardiner encourage additional commercial development, even on a limited scale?



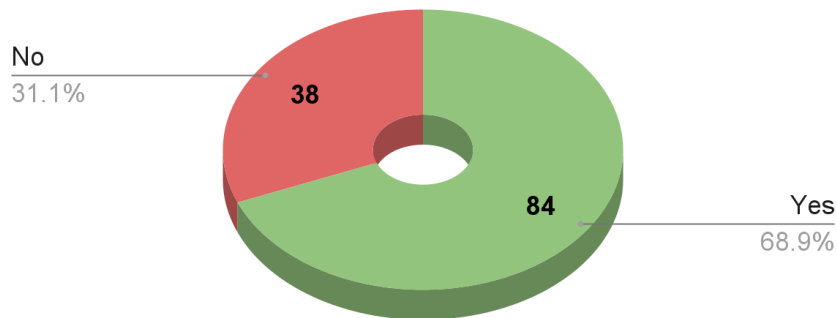
Side-by-side comparison of Commercial land use sentiment expressed in Questions 17 and 18: reveal a fairly consistent theme, which is that approximately 42% of the survey participants strongly discourage commercial development and approximately 48% cautiously encourage commercial development.

Questions 17 & 18: Commercial Land Use Sentiment Trend



The majority indicated an openness to using tax dollars to purchase and preserve open spaces.

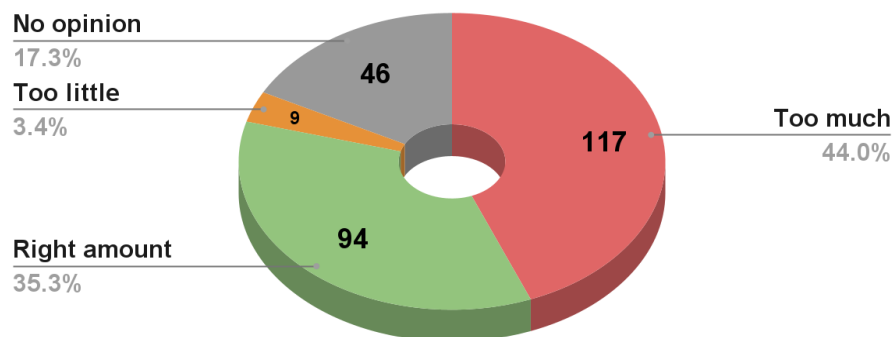
Should taxpayer money be available for the purpose of purchasing and maintaining open space?



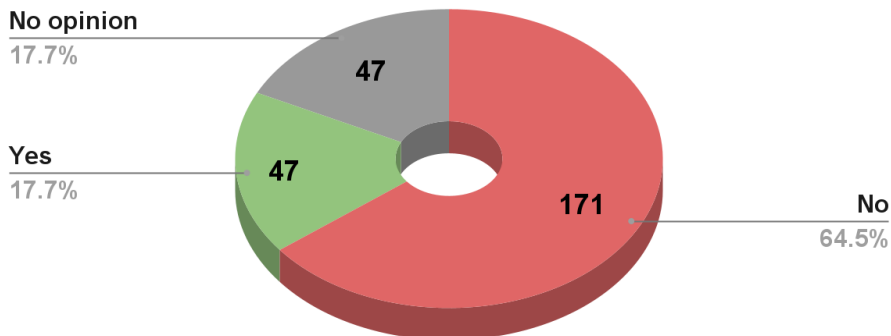
Sentiment: Recent development in West Gardiner

44% of the survey respondents indicated that too much development had occurred in West Gardiner between 2013-2023. Approximately 39% of respondents said there was the right amount or too little development.

Opinion about the amount of residential development between 2013-2023



Opinion of whether recent development is in keeping with the town's character.



Sentiment: What deserves more attention

When asked about what aspects of recent development should receive more attention **from Town officials:** Storage facilities, Solar, Cannabis, Commercial and Businesses ranked as the top 5 most-frequently used words across all responses.

Note: The Town was in the beginning stages of designing ordinances that would limit/control the building of solar farms, storage facilities, and cannabis farms/sales at the time of this survey. This may explain why these were at the top of the respondents lists.

1. Storage facilities
2. Solar Units
3. Cannabis Farms
4. Development
5. Businesses
6. Commercial

More information can be found in the limited survey results at the end of this document.

Proposed Solutions to Increasing Town Workloads

Question 44 acknowledges that the Town's employees are experiencing significant workload increases because of increasing changes at the State and County level. It asks residents about their openness to a Planning Board, Zoning Board and full-time code enforcement.

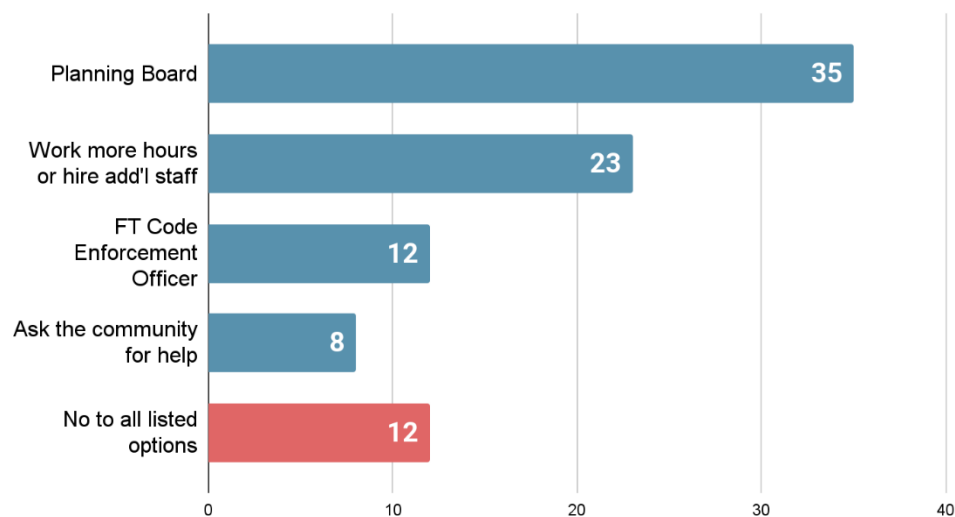
The response rate was lower than most other questions (n=93) and required a text input response (not multichoice). Increased workload was not articulated.

Although, to some, the question may not provide enough detail, respondents provided valuable insights, nonetheless. Some offered multiple solutions. Follow-ups to this question in a future forum may yield a higher engagement rate and additional ideas.

Respondents indicated an openness to a planning board and a full-time code enforcement position to assume the increase in workload. (The answers provided were not mutually exclusive; some respondents indicated that they would support more than one of the solutions outlined in the table below.)

Total responding to the question: 90

Recommendations for helping with increased workloads



When asked about ways to offset increasing workloads: Planning Board, Work More Hours or Hire Additional Staff, Full Time Code Enforcement and Community help ranked as the top 4 most-frequently used words across all responses. Again, please note all responses in the complete survey at the end of this Plan.

1. Planning
2. Additional Employees
3. Full time Code Enforcement
4. Community Assistance

Many respondents from both surveys support the idea of creating a zoning ordinance.

Should West Gardiner consider a zoning ordinance?

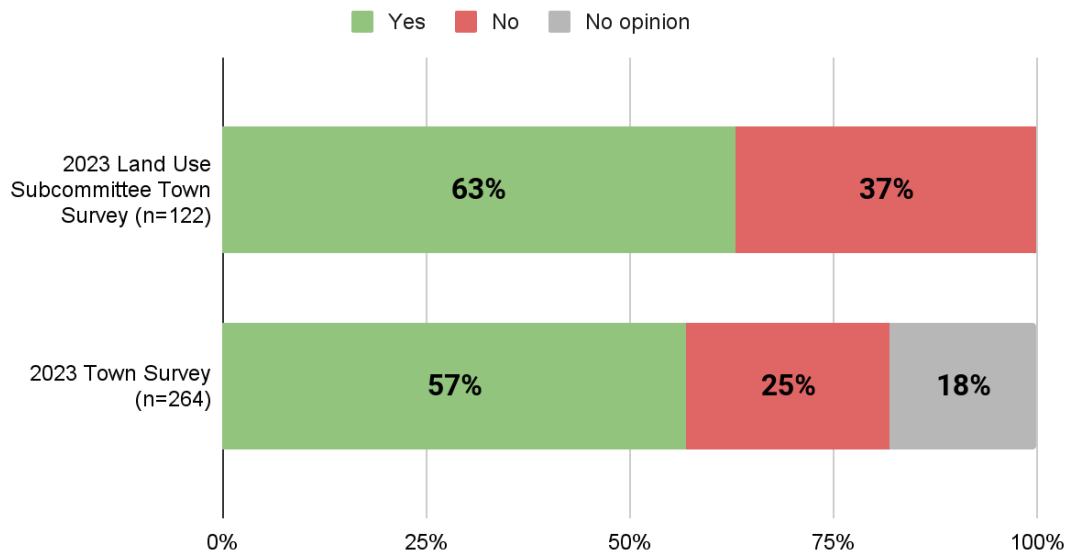


Figure 1

Summary of Survey Findings

Above is a side-by-side comparison of the two surveys completed on topics related to land use. There is some common sentiment among residents, which can be summarized as follows: (understanding that the total number of respondents to the survey was less than 8% of the Town's population and 9% of the registered voters)

1. Residents want to maintain West Gardiner's low-density, rural residential character.
2. There is concern over the increased rate of commercial, subdivision and housing development that some respondents feel is not in keeping with the Town's character.
3. Residents want assurances that their individual landowner rights will be preserved and protected and may want to see greater restrictions on and oversight of commercial growth and development.
4. Many survey respondents do not like the terms "zoning" and "regulations", particularly in the context of residential development and landowner rights.
5. Some respondents see zoning and nonresidential regulation as necessary means to preserve the Town's rural residential character through managed growth.
6. There are calls for improved communication about special Town meetings and hearings during which land use and zoning discussions, debate and decisions about land use and zoning may occur.
7. There are suggestions for greater clarity, more community involvement and multi-directional conversation with the Selectboard when it comes to land use and development considerations, and the drafting of ordinance language.

Future Land Use

Growth Area Exemption: The Town is requesting a “Growth Area Exemption”. The Town clearly meets this exemption because there is no public water or sewer systems in the Town.

To understand where we are in 2024, it’s helpful to look back at 1990.

As part of its Future Land Use strategy, the 1990 Comprehensive Planning Committee established Growth Management Principles and a series of Growth Management Goals and Policies to safeguard them, outlined on page 58.

The principles are consistent with what residents today shared in the 2023 Town surveys:

- Protect the rural characteristics and diversity of the Town.
- Conserve the Town's important natural resources, especially water bodies.
- Treat all property owners equitably.
- Protect private property rights and freedom of choice for individuals and landowners.

The goals and policies of 1990 remain relevant in 2024:

We strongly believe that the growth management plan included in this comprehensive plan will achieve both state and local growth management goals, which are as follows:

1. Encourage orderly growth and development in all areas while protecting West Gardiner's rural residential character and historical and archaeological resources, making efficient use of public services, and assuring that all landowners are treated equitably and fairly.
2. Protect the quality and manage the quantity of West Gardiner's water resources, including lakes, ponds, and streams.
3. Protect other critical natural resources, including without limitation, wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, shorelands, and unique natural areas.
4. Safeguard agricultural and forest resources from over-development which threatens those resources.

However, there was a hesitancy by the 1990 Committee to establish growth and rural zones, for fear that in doing so would mean “abandoning an important Town principle that all residents should be treated equitably”. The committee states on Page 60 that “Attempting to place some landowners in a restrictive rural zone while forcing others to live in clustered growth zones would guarantee defeat for this plan.” It was believed that the Town’s ordinances (and West Gardiner’s geological and geographical characteristics that naturally limit commercial growth) were sufficient in keeping with the Town’s principles and the interest of its residents.

As a show of compliance with the state's Growth Management Act, however, the 1990 Committee did designate a growth area, which states:

This plan designates the area east from the Maine Turnpike to the westerly intersection of Route 126 and Old Lewiston Road as a growth area and specifies that mobile home parks and commercial growth (with the exception of home-based businesses and occupations) will be limited to this growth area in the future.

The remainder of the Town is designated rural residential, in order to achieve the rural zone which is mandated by the Growth Management Act.

1990 Growth Management Policies

The 1990 Growth Management Plan concluded with 14 Policies to be implemented in support of the goals outlined on page 61.

These policies included:

- **Policy 5:** Prepare and enact a site plan review ordinance which establishes performance standards for commercial and industrial development. (Excluding home-based businesses, so long as the impact is minimal.)
- **Policy 6:** Prepare and enact a subdivision ordinance to regulate all residential development of three or more dwelling units, including multi-family housing.
- **Policy 7:** Enact strict limits on the overall size of major developments.
- **Policy 10:** Encourage all landowners, before they build on their property, to visit with selectmen and informally discuss the options available for their particular site.
- **Policy 12:** Limit commercial growth (except for home based businesses and occupations) and mobile home parks to a designated "Growth Area" which runs east from the Maine Turnpike to the westerly intersection of Route 126 and the Old Lewiston Road.

Each of the policies outlined above (except for Policy 10) was recommended to be established through and regulated by Ordinances drafted by the Selectboard and voted on by residents. It is unclear whether any ordinances pertaining to the policies outlined in the 1990 Comprehensive Plan were drafted and put to a vote. They are not current ordinances.

It is easy to see that the 1990 Committee's commitment to upholding the Town's principles was central to their decision to minimize a preemptive regulatory response to every existing and potential land use related challenge. In the simplest terms: prevention and preservation through use of regulation may have been viewed as a paradox.

Administrative Capacity to Adequately Manage Land Use Regulation

Currently, land use regulation is managed by a 3-person Selectboard and a part-time Code Enforcement Officer whose duties include inspections and permits for septic on new construction.

Commercial and subdivision development applications are made directly to the Selectboard and are not typically communicated to Town residents while under consideration. In recent years, there was backlash when multiple self-storage facilities were constructed in residential areas, a medical cannabis retail shop was opened, and plans for three commercial solar farms were approved. However, after a series of special Town hearings, residents did vote in favor of a moratorium on the future development of self-storage facilities, commercial solar farms and cannabis retail facilities, and weighed in on the ordinances created to regulate them.

Residential construction project questions and considerations are reviewed by the Selectboard on an as-needed basis, either informally or during its regular Thursday Selectboard meetings. In some instances, requests that conflict with or stretch the bounds of the Minimum Lot Size Ordinance may trigger a special Town hearing or meeting for further debate and discussion. If amendments to the Minimum Lot Size Ordinance are required to grant special requests, the amendment is then put to a vote.

Understanding that the 1990 Comprehensive Plan was not a mandate for the Town to act on, but only a guide/suggestion for review. Over the past 34 years, the 1990 Comprehensive Plan has not been utilized by the Town as a governing document or charter with regard to commercial development approvals within residential or commercial areas. Ordinances, drafted in response to already approved commercial development, is a response to development that residents may not have wanted in the first place.

Based upon survey responses and public comments made during the three commercial ordinance hearings and meetings in 2022-2023, residents may want more say about what is developed (and where) and to be given notice before commercial development is approved. Existing processes may not provide enough clarity around commercial development applications and approvals, future commercial development criteria are not documented, and existing policies do not require notice.

As a summary, these and other items are listed in the Plan's "Implementation Planning" section with

1990 Growth Management Plan as a Starting Point for the Future

The 1990 Comprehensive Plan provides a great starting point for establishing a blueprint that provides all the landowner protections it promises while preparing the Town for the future, including the 4,000-population threshold that triggers a series of residential development regulations.

The Future Land Use recommendations will not only safeguard individual and landowner rights but will ease the increasing workload burdens of the Town's employees, provide pathways for residents to engage with their community and be part of the decision-making processes that dictate their futures. Our recommendations may preserve what we love most about our community, beloved resources and beautiful wide-open spaces, and the choice to do what we want with our land.

Core Values and Principles

The core values and guiding principles outlined below are central to ensuring that all future land use is consistent with the vision of the Town.

Core Value	Guiding Principle
Protection	We protect the rural residential characteristics of our Town
Personal freedom	We protect private property rights and freedom of choice for individuals and landowners
Preservation	We preserve our Town's important natural resources
Clarity	We are clear about our intentions and make policies and information widely accessible and are delivered in a timely manner
Collaboration	We find ways to make all voices heard and leverage the collective wisdom and diverse thinking of community members by collaborating whenever possible

The Land Use Goals and Recommendations

Fundamental to preserving the Town's character, natural resources and private property rights is adopting an initiative-taking, non-reactive, approach to land use management. Through the controversies over recent commercial development, clarity about land use decisions and providing residents with an opportunity to discuss, debate, respond and even appeal decisions before actions are taken is the best way to ensure that we uphold our vision.

Goals and recommendations include: Note that much of this information is included in the Plan Implementation Section of this Plan.

Goals: (not requirements)

1. Short and Long-Term: (over the period of this Plan – 12 years)
 1. Review ordinances and determine whether to codify land use criteria for strategic and managed growth.
 2. Establish groups of Selectboard members, Town staff, and Comprehensive Plan Committee members to assist with future land use ordinances, when required.
 3. Provide greater clarity for residents regarding land use policies and decisions through website information and other advertising means. Work with the Town's webmaster to determine how this can be designed and set up.
 4. Review the requirements for the 4,000-population threshold, evaluating administrative and oversight needs and establishing a plan to ensure regulatory compliance.
 5. Review land use oversight, compliance, zoning, application, and approval processes by investigating the need for a planning board over the timeframe of this Plan.

Recommendations:

1. Establish a clear process for nonresidential development applications, providing notice to residents through the Town's website before approvals are granted, thus allowing residents the opportunity to voice their opinions to the Selectboard before a decision is made.
2. Establish criteria for future commercial development and road construction not currently articulated in existing ordinances to ensure measured and responsible land use/growth management.
3. Review the Private Road Ordinance for minimum specifications for the design and construction to ensure safe and sufficient access for emergency service vehicles.
4. Site plan review to ensure that all new nonresidential development complies with all existing relevant Town ordinances, does not have an adverse impact on the Town's natural resources.
5. Subdivision review that clarifies the approval criteria of the State Subdivision Law, meets the goals and conforms to the recommendations of the West Gardiner Comprehensive Plan, ensures the safety, health, and welfare of the residents, promotes the development of an economically sound and stable community, minimizes the potential impact from new subdivision on neighboring properties and on the municipality, ensures clarity throughout the subdivision application, review and approval process, giving residents the right to notice before approval, minimizes the potential impact from new subdivision on neighboring properties and on the municipality.
6. Establish a database of existing businesses to help determine future use when properties or businesses are transferred to other parties and for data preservation.

7. Establish a data preservation plan to gather, manage, archive, and make accessible all land use data covered in the 2024 Comprehensive Plan

Future Land Use Implementation Planning

See the Plan Implementation section of this Plan

Recommendations:

1. Ensure greater clarity for residents regarding land use policies and decisions through website and other communication methods.
2. Plan for the 4,000-population threshold, evaluating administrative and oversight needs and establishing a plan to ensure regulatory compliance. This is questionable now, because not all sections of the Comprehensive Plan agree that the 4,000-population count is in the near future for the Town. There are many State of Maine mandates that already dictate what the requirements will be for the Town if it does reach that threshold. The population totals over the next 4 years will generate what the Town will do in preparation for any anticipated plans.

Future Land Use Summary:

In recognition of the fact that the 1990 West Gardiner Comprehensive Plan did not contain any specific direction for future land use, this Plan will move forward with recommendations to chart a plan for future Town development. The Town will work with all interested citizens, following State guidelines, to inform residents of changes and recommendations to the Town's land uses. More detail is located in the Plan Implementation section.

Regional Coordination Program

This section summarizes the regional coordination agreements that the Town has with surrounding towns and the State of Maine. The Town shares many resources with surrounding towns. The Town helps to finance those resources via its annual Town Meeting and budget review. Articles are voted on and funds are dispersed to specific organizations that the Town helps to support in coordination with other towns.

The organizations noted in each Article are supported by multiple towns.

The following articles were presented to West Gardiner residents in April 2024. They cover all the areas that the Town supports outside of the Town's specific town-related expenses. Not all of these have written agreements. Those that do have written agreements are noted.

ARTICLE 20. Appropriation of a sum of money for the Kennebec Valley Humane Society of Augusta (KVHS):

2024: \$ 6,500.00

There is no written agreement. The KVHS sends the Town of West Gardiner a letter of request for a specific amount each year. The KVHS services are shared among many towns and cities in the area.

ARTICLE 23. Appropriation of a sum of money for communication: State of Maine and Lincoln County 911 services.

2024: \$58,000.00

This refers to the dispatch agreement for shared 911 services for ambulance and fire support. There is a contract between the Town of West Gardiner and the State of Maine and Lincoln County. The State of Maine and Lincoln County both operate dispatch sites for 911 services. The towns that are included in this specific contract are West Gardiner, Pittston, Randolph, Farmingdale, and Litchfield.

ARTICLE 25. Participation in the Gardiner Ambulance Service:

2024: \$ 90,000.00

There is a contract for these services with the City of Gardiner. There are 7 Towns that contract with the City of Gardiner for these services. Eight communities receive these services. Those towns include West Gardiner, Randolph, Farmingdale, Pittston, Litchfield, Richmond, ½ of Chelsea, and the City of Gardiner, which operates the service.

ARTICLE 28. The income received from the State of Maine Fire Marshal's Lease:

2024: \$1600.00 Received from State of Maine.

Funds utilized for 2024:

Community Events \$1,200.00

Forrest Wakefield Scholarship \$ 400.00

There is a contract with the State of Maine Fire Marshall's Office to house the State Fire Marshal's Office Mobile Command Unit. That contract is updated each year. The funds received from that contract are disbursed in the manner stated above.

ARTICLE 38. Appropriate a sum of money for the Gardiner Public Library:

2024: **\$ 37,628.00**

There is no written agreement. The Gardiner Public Library (GPL) sends the Town of West Gardiner a letter of request for a specific amount each year. The GPL services are shared among many local towns and the City of Gardiner. In addition to the City of Gardiner, the following towns are represented on the GPL Board of Directors: West Gardiner, Litchfield, Farmingdale, Pittston, and Randolph.

ARTICLE 39. Appropriation of a sum of money for the following requests

2024 Total: \$ 15,501.00

Hospice Volunteers of K.V.: \$ 1,451.00

Family Violence Project: \$ 1,350.00

Chrysalis Place: \$ 3,500.00

Faith Food Pantry: \$ 3,500.00

Spectrum Generations: \$ 2,500.00

United Valley American Red Cross: \$ 3,200.00

There is no written agreement. Each of these organizations sends the Town of West Gardiner a letter of request for a specific amount each year. The services of each of these organizations are shared among many towns and cities in the area.

ARTICLE 40. Appropriation of a sum of money for the Boys & Girls Club of Kennebec Valley (BGCKV):

2024: \$ 15,500.00

There is no written agreement. The BGCKV sends the Town of West Gardiner a letter of request for a specific amount each year, based on the number of children from West Gardiner who attend the BGCKV. The services are shared among many towns and the City of Gardiner.

ARTICLE 42. Appropriation of a sum of money for the following requests:

Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed Request: \$ 14,300.00

Courtesy Boat Inspections (CBI): 2024 \$ 8,300.00

DASH (Diver Assisted Suction Harvester): 2024 \$ 6,000.00

There is no written agreement. These organizations send the Town of West Gardiner a letter of request for a specific amount each year. Their services are provided to all towns in the Cobbossee Watershed region.

ARTICLE 46. Appropriation of a sum of money for the second (2nd) of four (4) payments for the Cobbossee Lake Dam & New Mills Dam Repairs:

2024: \$ 5,375.00

This is a written agreement between the Towns of Gardiner, West Gardiner, Litchfield, Winthrop, and Manchester. Currently, this agreement is in the review and update stage for these 5 towns.

Additionally, the Town of West Gardiner has a Mutual Aid Agreement with the following towns and city for Fire Department/Emergency support:

Litchfield, Farmingdale, Randolph, Pittston, and the City of Gardiner. This also covers emergency support for incidents that occur on the Interstate 295 and 95 corridors.

This agreement has no financial implications.

The last item to mention is the Maine School Administrative District #11 agreement. This is an agreement between the towns of West Gardiner, Randolph, Pittston, and the City of Gardiner that determines the appropriate allocation of costs to run this school district. The State of Maine Department of Education determines those costs.

The above information includes all the areas related to any lakes, rivers, streams, and transportation facilities that may exist in the Town of West Gardiner. The Town of West Gardiner has identified any shared resources and facilities (if they exist). The Town of West Gardiner does not have any current conflicts with neighboring communities' policies and strategies pertaining to shared resources and facilities.

Plan Implementation

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION	Categories of Implementation:	
	Ongoing; Short Term; Midterm; Longterm	
	Short Term: 1-5 years	
	Midterm: 6 - 8 years	
	Longterm: over 8 years	
Vision Statement	Page 6	
Public Participation Summary	Pages 7-8	
Regional Coordination Program	Pages 119-122	
Plan Implementation	Pages	
HISTORICAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES		
The West Gardiner Historical Society is active and is hoping to preserve the Town's heritage with the construction of a new Historical Society building that will house all the West Gardiner historical documents and artifacts. The Town currently has no requirements above the state requirements for site assessments for historic artifacts.		
Policies	Strategies	Implementation
Protect the significant historic and archeological resources in the community.	1. Known archeological sites have been determined and there will be no building/construction on those sites. All sites are submerged and are not accessible.	West Gardiner Historical Society, Selectboard, Town Residents at Town Meeting. Ongoing

2. Continue efforts to preserve West Gardiner's history.	2.1 Continue to inventory materials and documents in preparation for transfer to the climate controlled room at the new building. 2.2 Continue training on Past Perfect software to allow the items to be catalogued. 2.3 Complete the historical society building and climate controlled room. 2.4 Link the town's annual reports to the University of Maine's Folger Library.	West Gardiner Historical Society members and resident volunteers; Town residents at Town meeting. Ongoing
3. Continue to support the West Gardiner Historical Society's efforts to raise interest in the Town's history.	3.1 Continue fundraisers, presentations at the elementary school, and activities like the 175th Anniversary Celebration planned for August 2025 to celebrate the Town's 175th year. 3.2 Update the Town's Veteran Memorial with Post-Vietnam Era veterans names.	West Gardiner Historical Society members and resident volunteers. Ongoing
4. Work with the Maine State Historic Preservation to document all homes over 200 years old.	5. Include all information on the Town's website.	West Gardiner Historical Society and volunteers. Ongoing
5. The Town recognizes the importance of buildings and sites of historical significance and looks to encouraging the historical society in its endeavors.	6. The West Gardiner Historical Society will conduct a comprehensive inventory of historical buildings in West Gardiner and update the list for the State of Maine. They will also investigate the use of historical markers for buildings that have been identified as historical, according to State of Maine guidelines.	West Gardiner Historical Society. Mid Term
6. The Town will investigate and determine locations of archeological resources.	Sites were determined and have been documented at the State level. None of the sites are in areas that are buildable.	Completed

NATURAL RESOURCES		
<p>West Gardiner's land and water assets provide a necessary buffer against environmental degradation and support for resource-based economic activity such as forestry. Water-based assets provide a basis for recreation, as well as sustaining life. Protect local wetlands, wildlife, and fisheries.</p>		
Policies	Strategies	Implementation
<p>1. Conserve any critical natural resources.</p>	<p>1.1 Adopt or amend local land use ordinances as applicable to incorporate necessary State of Maine Stormwater Management Law and Maine Stormwater regulations; 1.2 Review Floodplain guidance regularly; Educate public about any of the Town's natural resources to raise awareness. 1.3 Maintain membership in the Cobbossee Watershed District and the Kennebec Land Trust and work with them to maintain natural resource protection.</p>	<p>Selectboard; Town Residents through Town Meeting; Kennebec Land Trust; Cobbossee Watershed District. Ongoing</p>
<p>2. Coordinate with neighboring communities and regional and State agencies to protect shared natural resources.</p>	<p>2.1 Cooperate with State and local communities to protect lake and other bodies of water from invasive species. 2.2 Continue to coordinate and partner with other municipalities, land trusts, and other organizations to protect natural resources.</p>	<p>Selectboard; Town Residents through Town Meeting; Cobbossee Watershed District. Ongoing</p>

3. Encourage landowners to protect water quality.	3. Provide local contact information at the municipal office for water quality best management practices such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Soil and Water Conservation District, Maine Forest Service and Small Woodlot Association of Maine.	Town Clerk; Selectboard. Ongoing
4. Cooperate with neighboring communities to investigate the option of a fish passage at the New Mills Dam and removal by purchase of both privately owned dams.	4. Discuss with applicable towns about this endeavor.	Selectboard; Town Residents through Town Meeting; Cobboossee Watershed District. Short-Term
5. Support the work of the Cobboossee Watershed District.	5. Work with other towns and cities involved in keeping our lake and waterways clean.	Selectboard; Town Residents through Town Meeting; Cobboossee Watershed District. Ongoing
6. Conserve resources within the Town and to partner with neighboring towns, regional and State agencies to protect hared natural habitats and resources.	6. Ensure any local land use ordinances are consistent with applicable State laws. Consider participating in regional planning and make available information to those whose lands encompass or abut natural resources information regarding current use tax programs.	Selectboard; Town Residents through Town Meeting; Cobboossee Watershed District. Ongoing

AGRICULTURAL AND FOREST RESOURCES		
Agriculture and forestry were two of West Gardiner's first forms of economic development and are still an important part of the Town today. State Goal: To safeguard the State's agricultural and forest resources.		
Policies	Strategies	Implementation
1. There are no land use ordinances requiring developers to maintain farmland as open space and although the residents of West Gardiner appreciate the value of open space and farmland, they are not in favor of restricting property rights.	1. West Gardiner supports 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. Townspeople want to maintain this atmosphere. 1.2 The Town has no designated critical rural areas. 1.3 Consult with the Maine Forest Service district forester when developing any land use regulations pertaining to forest management practices as required by 12 MRSA 8869. 1.4 Consult with Soil and Water Conservation District staff when developing land use regulations pertaining to agricultural management practices.	Selectboard; Town Residents through Town Meeting. Ongoing

2. Encourage and support farming and forestry to help maintain their viability.	2. Encourage owners of productive farm and forest land to enroll in the current use taxation programs within 5 years of approval of this Plan.	Selectboard; Town Residents through Town Meeting. Ongoing
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ECONOMY		
West Gardiner's economy is essential to the health and vitality of the Town. As stated in Pages 51 to 54 of this Plan, the Town is thriving and plans to keep on the same track that it currently maintains.		
Policies	Strategies	Implementation
1. To support the type of economic activity the community desires, reflecting the community's role in the area.	1. Note Pages 51-54 of this Plan in the desire to maintain its current structure.	Selectboard; Town Residents through Town Meeting. Ongoing
2. To support information on new community developments.	2. Track new development in the community by type and location and maintain updates on the Town's website.	Selectboard; Town Residents through Town Meeting; Webmaster. Ongoing

HOUSING		
West Gardiner's housing stock has grown fairly steadily over the past few decades. Affordability continues to be an issue for many. Multiple housing options are available in Town, including duplexes, mobile home parks, and accessory dwelling units.		
Policies	Strategies	Implementation
1. Ensure that West Gardiner's ordinances related to housing are reviewed and kept up to date.	1. Explore options where the development of multi-family housing would be appropriate and in keeping with the Town's character.	Selectboard; Town Residents through Town Meeting. Short Term
2. Proactively work to ensure new housing development meets the current and future needs of West Gardiner residents.	2. Review options for senior and affordable housing in Town	Selectboard; Town Residents through Town Meeting. Ongoing
3. Track housing types and numbers in West Gardiner	3. Design a spreadsheet to track types of housing and numbers in the Town.	Selectboard; Town Clerk. Short Term

RECREATION		
West Gardiner's residents currently have their recreational needs met...per the survey results.		
Policies	Strategies	Implementation
1. Work to establish a year round calendar of recreational activities that are available to the Town's residents.	1. West Gardiner has within its borders six different recreational opportunities. They are the Cobbossee Snowmobile Club, the West Gardiner Rod and Gun Club, the Wakefield Wildlife Sanctuary, Cobbossee Lake, Cobbossee Stream, three boat launches on Cobbossee stream and one boat launch on Cobbossee lake in Nearby Monmouth on Rt 135.	Town Clerk; Webmaster. Short Term
2. Ensure public buildings and recreational facilities meet current ADA standards to provide handicapped access to people of all ages.	2. Explore the possibility of reviewing Town-owned buildings and properties to determine accessibility.	Selectboard; Town Clerk. Short Term

TRANSPORTATION		
<p>Transportation is an essential element to the local economy and community. It provides access to jobs, services, and supplies. Without transportation and road access, a community could not exist. West Gardiner's road network provides both access in Town and to larger market areas.</p> <p>State Goal: To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public highway and road facilities as well as Town services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.</p>		
Policies	Strategies	Implementation
1. To prioritize community needs associated with safe, efficient, and optimal use of the available road systems.	1. Develop or continue to update a prioritized improvement, maintenance, and repair plan for the community's transportation network.	Selectboard; Road Commissioner; Town Residents through Town Meeting. Ongoing
2. To safely and efficiently preserve or improve the transportation system.	2.1 Actively participate in regional and State transportation efforts. 2.2 Work with MDOT to improve the existing transportation system.	Selectboard; Road Commissioner; Town Residents through Town Meeting. Short Term
3. Review the private road ordinance for minimum access for emergency service vehicles.	3. Review and make necessary changes to ensure safety of all concerned.	Selectboard; Road Commissioner; Town Residents through Town Meeting. Ongoing

4. Work towards making the Town Office, Historical Society, and Helen Thompson School areas safe for pedestrian traffic and disabled parking.	4. Clearly mark the disabled parking areas and the crosswalks.	Selectboard; Road Commissioner. Ongoing
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PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES		
West Gardiner does not have numerous public services for its residents. All water and septic is private. Ambulance services are contracted. Fire department services are provided by our volunteer fire department and through mutual aid agreements with five other area towns. Police support is through the Maine State Police and the Kennebec County Sheriff's Department. Note information contained in the Regional Coordination Program section of this Plan.		
Policies	Strategies	Implementation
1. Work with State and county law enforcement to increase enforcement of traffic laws, especially around the elementary school and high traffic areas.	1. Continue communications with law enforcement to have patrol vehicles on site at specific locations at certain times of the day.	Selectboard; Town Clerk. Ongoing
2. Seek opportunities for regional cooperation with neighboring towns.	2. Ensure that mutual aid agreements are in place and up to date for fire safety. 2.1 Engage neighboring towns in planning for disaster mitigation. 2.3 Continue discussions with neighboring towns on new ways to share and/or provide services.	Fire Chief; Emergency Management Director; Selectboard. Ongoing
3. Continue to improve the Town's recycling efforts.	3.1 Upgrade the Town's transfer station equipment to remain efficient; Continue to	Selectboard; Town Residents through Town Meeting;

	monitor grants that may assist with upgrades.	Grant Writer. Short Term
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FISCAL CAPACITY		
West Gardiner has achieved a solid financial standing with little debt in place. They are currently changing their fiscal year from a February 1 fiscal year start to a July 1 fiscal year start. This has caused some resident concern because of the change in tax amounts due. This will enable the Town to vote to be aware of the school budget costs before a Town meeting is held. Historically, the school budget is passed after the Town meeting and then the tax rate must be determined later.		
Policies	Strategies	Implementation
1. To fund and finance facilities and services in a cost-effective manner.	1.1 Review the Town's Capital Improvement Plan on an annual basis and expand the scope to encompass a 10-year period. 1.2 Establish a comprehensive road improvement and maintenance plan.	Selectboard; Town Residents through Town Meeting; Road Commissioner and interested residents. Ongoing
2. Continue to explore grants available to assist in the funding of capital investments within the	2.1 Request current grant writer to explore new grants. 2.2 Maintain a working knowledge and listing of grants and deadlines. 2.3 Review option of employing a grant write for the Town.	Selectboard; Emergency Management Director; Residents through Town Meeting. Short Term
3. To reduce Maine's tax burden by staying within LD 1 spending limitations	3. Continue to explore opportunities to collaborate with surrounding communities on ideas to share services.	Selectboard; Residents through Town Meeting. Ongoing

LAND USE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES		
West Gardiner's land and water assets provide a necessary buffer against environmental degradation and support for resource-based economic activity such as forestry. Water-based assets provide a basis for recreation, as well as sustaining life.		
Policies	Strategies	Implementation
1. Support residential land use needs and desires.	1.1 Establish a clear process for non-residential development applications that provide a 30 day notice to residents before approvals are granted. Notices to be posted on the Town's website; 1.2 Review on an annual basis the current ordinances associated with land use; 1.3 Include in the budget any associated costs for land use expansions (roads, etc.); 1.4 Review through the town meeting process what the residents want in relation to lot size and future development. 1.5 Protect the viability of active agricultural activities from negative impacts of new development; 1.6 Continue to encourage the preservation of open space creation of greenspace, and access to land and water	Selectboard; Town Residents through Town Meeting; Road Commissioner and interested residents. Ongoing

	resources; 1.7 Minimize the impact of development in and around high valued areas, such as wetlands, waterbodies and wildlife.	
2. Support other land use desires related to multiple units.	2.1 Allow diverse housing types within the Town's ordinances including assessor dwelling and multi-family units; 2.2 Encourage the development of housing opportunities for the elderly and disabled, including supported living.	Selectboard; Town Residents through Town Meeting; Road Commissioner and interested residents. Ongoing

3. Ensure that Code Enforcement Officer is up to date on all requirements.	3.1 Provide the code enforcement officer with the tools, training, and support necessary to enforce land use regulations. Ensure that s/he has the staff necessary to accomplish the job 3.2 Continue to maintain and protect our critical natural resources through our Town, State and Federal regulations, including (but not limited to) Shoreland Zoning, Floodplain Management, Natural Resources Protection Act, Subdivision, Site Plan Review, Stormwater Management.	Code Enforcement Officer; Selectboard; Town Residents through Town Meeting; Short Term
4. Protect critical waterfront areas from the impacts of development.	4. Clearly define protective measures for any proposed critical waterfront areas, if proposed, following all State guidelines related to this development.	Code Enforcement Officer; Selectboard; Town Residents through Town Meeting; Ongoing and Short Term
5. Track Development within the Town - both residential and commercial.	5. Establish a database of existing businesses to help track future use when properties or businesses are transferred to other parties and for data preservation and maintain information on the Town's website.	Selectboard; Town Clerk and staff; Ongoing
6. Keep the Comprehensive Plan updated.	6. Review the Plan every 5 years to see where changes may need to made.	Selectboard; Town Clerk and staff; Residents through the Town Meeting. Midterm

West Gardiner Comprehensive Plan Survey Return Date: May 1, 2023

This survey is ANONYMOUS. Please do not include your name on the form. Completed paper copies may be returned to the Town Office or deposited in the **Flag Drop Box** located outside and to the right of the Town Office.

1. What part of town do you live in (where is your property located closest to)?

☐ Cobbossee Lake, West Road, and all abutting side roads - 8%

☐ Neck Road, Collins Mills Road, and all abutting side roads – 14%

☐ Hallowell-Litchfield Road and all abutting side roads – 24%

☐ High Street, Spears Corner Road, and all abutting side roads – 32%

☐ Lewiston Road and all abutting side roads – 15%

☐ Pond Road, Old Lewiston Road, and all abutting side roads – 7%

☐ Other (Please specify) N/A

2. How long have you lived in West Gardiner?

☐ Less than 3 years – 7%

☐ 3 to 9 years – 17%

☐ 10 to 24 years – 31%

☐ 25 or more years – 41%

3. Where is the last place you lived before you came to West Gardiner?

☐ Within Maine – 86%

☐ Outside of Maine – 13%

☐ Outside of the USA – 1%

4. You are:

☐ A year-round West Gardiner resident and property owner – 96%

☐ A year-round West Gardiner resident renting property in West Gardiner – 2%

☐ An occasional use West Gardiner resident and property – 0%

☐ An occasional use West Gardiner resident renting property – 0%

☐ A non-resident and a West Gardiner property owner – 2%

☐ Other (Please specify) – N/A

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5. How old are you? Less than or equal to 50: 37%; Greater than 50: 63%.

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6. How many persons in each of these age groups live in your household?

0 – 4	<table border="1"><tr><td>31</td></tr></table>	31
31		

5 – 17	<table border="1"><tr><td>124</td></tr></table>	124
124		

18 – 22	<table border="1"><tr><td>37</td></tr></table>	37
37		

23 – 35	<table border="1"><tr><td>71</td></tr></table>	71
71		

36 – 45

106

46 – 64

166

65 years and older

226

7. How important were each of the following to your choice of West Gardiner for your home? Not completed. This question was left out of the online survey.

Very Important - Important – Neutral - Unimportant - Very Unimportant

Low Density

Population

Rural

Residential

Atmosphere

Natural

Resources

Potential for

Economic Development

Location

Relative to Employment

Level of
Public Service

Community
History and
Historic Buildings

Low Taxes

Reduced
Regulations

#7 was unintentionally not included in the online survey. Therefore, no responses were recorded.

8. Number of children currently attending school in MSAD #11:

Other Schools (College, Daycare, Private School, Home Schooled):

9. Your place of employment:

☐ Retired – 38%

☐ Work in West Gardiner – 5%

☐ Work at Home – 15%

☐ Work outside of West Gardiner – 40%

☐ Not employed – 2%

If you work outside of West Gardiner, in what town or city?

N/A

10. There has been an increase in residential development in West Gardiner over the past decade. Please check the box that best describes your opinion of this development.

☐ There has been too little residential development. – 4%

☐ There has been too much residential development. – 45%

☐ There has been the right amount of residential development. – 35%

☐ No opinion. – 16%

11. Do you feel there is a need for housing alternatives other than single-family residential in West Gardiner?

☐ Yes – 31%

☐ No – 57%

☐ No Opinion – 12%

12. Please comment on the following affordable housing initiatives with respect to your support.

	Favor	Oppose	No Opinion
Expansion of non- Conventional means Accessory apartment- Garage apartments	<input type="checkbox"/> 42%	<input type="checkbox"/> 30%	<input type="checkbox"/> 28%
Conventional multi- Dwelling units (condos, Apartments, elderly Housing, townhouses)	<input type="checkbox"/> 33%	<input type="checkbox"/> 53%	<input type="checkbox"/> 14%
Permanent elderly Housing only	<input type="checkbox"/> 53%	<input type="checkbox"/> 20%	<input type="checkbox"/> 27%
Greater density			

(cluster, open space ☐ 26% ☐ 53% ☐ 21%
Subdivisions)

Decrease in single
Family acreage

Requirements (smaller ☐ 11% ☐ 76% ☐ 13%
Lot sizes)

Current lot size is 1.38
Acres or 60,000 sq.ft.

No town action. ☐ 25% ☐ 26% ☐ 49%

13. Would you support the expenditure of town funds in support of
affordable housing initiatives?

☐ Yes – 22%

☐ No – 68%

☐ No Opinion – 10%

14. If you feel there is a need, please rate the following alternative
housing types in terms of level of importance within West Gardiner for
future planning consideration.

Very Important – Important – Neutral – Unimportant – Very Unimportant

Accessory

Apartments ☐ 10% ☐ 25% ☐ 43% ☐ 22% ☐ 0%

(apartments
connected to
a main house)

Apartment ☐ 7% ☐ 16% ☐ 24% ☐ 31% ☐ 22%

Buildings

Elderly ☐ 21% ☐ 41% ☐ 23% ☐ 10% ☐ 4%

Housing

Condos ☐ 1% ☐ 9% ☐ 30% ☐ 30% ☐ 29%

Residential

Life Care ☐ 11% ☐ 24% ☐ 41% ☐ 14% ☐ 10%

15. Would you support some limiting of the size of residential structures that can be built in West Gardiner?

☐ Yes – 38%

☐ No – 50%

☐ No Opinion – 12%

16. Do you think the minimum lot size in West Gardiner should be kept the same? The current lot size is 1.38 acres or 60,000 sq. ft.

☐ Kept the same. – 52%

☐ Made smaller to encourage more density. – 6%

☐ Made larger to encourage less density. – 39%

☐ No Opinion. – 3%

17. Please indicate whether the following land use types should be Encouraged, Limited, or Discouraged:

	Encouraged	Limit	Discourage
Single Family Residential	<input type="text"/> 80%	<input type="text"/> 19%	<input type="text"/> 1%
Multi-Family Residential	<input type="text"/> 28%	<input type="text"/> 46%	<input type="text"/> 26%
Mixed Use (Commercial/ Residential)	<input type="text"/> 19%	<input type="text"/> 50%	<input type="text"/> 32%
Conservation Land – Open Space	<input type="text"/> 79%	<input type="text"/> 15%	<input type="text"/> 6%

Recreational Facilities	<input type="checkbox"/> 53%	<input type="checkbox"/> 37%	<input type="checkbox"/> 11%
Tourism Destinations	<input type="checkbox"/> 18%	<input type="checkbox"/> 38%	<input type="checkbox"/> 44%
Industrial/Light Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> 12%	<input type="checkbox"/> 45%	<input type="checkbox"/> 43%
Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> 13%	<input type="checkbox"/> 49%	<input type="checkbox"/> 39%
Marine	<input type="checkbox"/> 19%	<input type="checkbox"/> 60%	<input type="checkbox"/> 20%
Municipal Facilities	<input type="checkbox"/> 76%	<input type="checkbox"/> 20%	<input type="checkbox"/> 21%
Agricultural Uses	<input type="checkbox"/> 76%	<input type="checkbox"/> 20%	<input type="checkbox"/> 3%

18. To what extent should West Gardiner encourage additional commercial development, even on a limited scale?

☐ Cautiously Encourage. – 56%

☐ Strongly Discourage. – 40%

☐ No Opinion. – 4%

19. What type of commercial development would you like to see and where should it be located?

Creating a "town" feeling
NO COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT.
No opinion
Laundry mat, ice cream shop, vegetable stands, located centrally
Family restaurants, ice cream shops, Nurseries or hardware store, family entertainment. Too new to the area to know good locations.
No cannabis retail or any more storage units. Location is dependent on type of business and how it would impact neighborhoods.
convenience type businesses, near highway
Type: options for stores, fuel, and healthcare. Located closer to interstate, interstate side toward Litchfield and Gardiner.
Low impact
Laundry mat, ice cream shop, vegetable stands, located centrally
None, keep commercial in the cities
Commercial developers promise the world until you sign and they break ground. Then the clauses & lawyers come out along with the tried & true formula they've used for decades to get what they want from towns with limited resources and experience. It's too risky. 80% of growth comes from small businesses, encourage that.
Rt. 126 Commercial Zoned section.
Type: options for stores, fuel, and healthcare. Located closer to interstate, interstate side toward Litchfield and Gardiner.
Don't know options of what could be developed yet. That's why cautious.
Agriculture
None

20. To what extent should West Gardiner encourage industrial or light industrial development, even on a limited scale?

☐ Cautiously Encourage. – 45%

☐ Strongly Discourage. – 52%

☐ No Opinion. – 3%

21. What type of industrial or light industrial development would you like to see and where should it be located?

Thoughtful, unlike the giant storage units on the corners of our main streets
Post office
NONE
no pot shops or growing facilities, don't need anymore storage places, small engine repair shops, centrally located; no large scale solar panels, saw mill
Unsure of examples
One that does not negatively impact neighbors views, property values, and way of life. For example, if the business needs bright exterior lights on all evening, it could negatively impact residential homes. The key is to be a good and thoughtful neighbor.
Some storage, construction
Don't know what type of development would be considered. That's why cautious.
No opinion

over by the highway should be the oblong commercial additions
Rt. 126 Commercial Zoned section.
Any 'light' industrial will need easements to dump "acceptable waste products" what does that mean. Kids already can't drink the water at Helen Thompson School.
low impact on main roads

22. Please indicate your opinion with regard to the need for the following uses in West Gardiner.

Very Important – Important – Neutral – Unimportant – Very Unimportant

Food ☐ 13% ☐ 25% ☐ 25% ☐ 26% ☐ 11%

Grocery Store

Café/Bakery ☐ 9% ☐ 26% ☐ 40% ☐ 24% ☐ 1%

Post Office ☐ 14% ☐ 23% ☐ 24% ☐ 25% ☐ 14%

Clothing ☐ 1% ☐ 5% ☐ 24% ☐ 38% ☐ 32%

Store

Furniture ☐ 1% ☐ 3% ☐ 19% ☐ 40% ☐ 37%

Store

Hardware ☐ 2% ☐ 26% ☐ 24% ☐ 28% ☐ 20%

Store

Pharmacy 3% 16% 23% 34% 24%

Automotive 2% 9% 28% 33% 28%

Supply Store

Banking/

Financial 3% 8% 24% 38% 27%

Personal

Services 3% 9% 46% 25% 17%

Wedding/

Event Center 0% 12% 33% 55% 0%

Restaurant 8% 31% 37% 24% 0%

Marina 6% 23% 44% 16% 11%

Water Dependent Uses

Self-Storage

Facilities 1% 3% 11% 26% 59%

Cannabis

Related 1% 6% 16% 20% 57%

Businesses

Gas Station ☐ 14% ☐ 36% ☐ 31% ☐ 11% ☐ 8%

23. Should West Gardiner consider a zoning ordinance?

☐ Yes – 58%

☐ No – 24%

☐ No Opinion – 18%

24. Do you feel that recent development in West Gardiner has been in keeping with the character of the town?

☐ Yes – 16%

☐ No – 66%

☐ No Opinion – 18%

25. Are there any aspects of new development which you feel should receive more attention from town officials?

☐ Yes – 53%

☐ No – 16%

☐ No Opinion – 31%

If yes, please indicate what areas or issues should receive more attention:

Items listed:

I feel town citizens should connect with our trusted selectmen so they can learn more about what is in process, rather than on a Facebook page.
No solar fields or storage facilities
The amount of money given to the library in Gardiner for the number of residents that actually use it. Do we know how many people in town actually frequent the library? Why can't individuals pay for themselves if they want to use it? Not certain it is the best use of town money.
1) Question the closeness of the cannabis shop on route 126 to the middle school? 2) Limit number of storage units 3) Like to see more focus on the needs of OUR youth; use funds for them in our town, not just Boys and Girls Club, very worthy, but what could we do for our youth?
A Healthcare center with dental & eye care services
Affordable housing is an absolute, seriously lacking in this area...There is no good reason to not have it...would be able to retain more younger talent, and make it easier for potential new landowners to stay local and make a nice chunk of coin for the town
Affordable housing solutions.
All commercial development
All commercial development needs to be addressed. Need to get ahead of new trends. The Town needs to develop a rigid system to evaluate new business wanting to locate here.

All non residential affairs
Any commercial/industrial development should receive more scrutiny, residential should be left alone
Any new business needs to be hidden by trees. The storage units are ugly and right at an intersection.
Anything commercial with LLC associated with National or out of state subsidiaries. Look at what Maine has at LURC.
Anything commercial, and all subdivisions should be voted on by townspeople as a whole.
<p>Anything that could potentially cause harm or contamination to someone else's property.</p> <p>Thinking specifically of solar farms. When someone is putting something toxic into place or something that could potentially decrease value of someone's property or cause long term damage, there needs to be a way to get restitution. With the solar farms I'm thinking there has to be something legal put in place that would require clean up and disposal after use and maybe even fees before hand just in case of bankruptcy or some other unknown where to take place so that these things dont just become a mess for someone else to have to pay and take care of.</p>
<p>Anything that could potentially cause harm or contamination to someone else's property.</p> <p>Thinking specifically of solar farms. When someone is putting something toxic into place or something that could potentially decrease value of someone's property or cause long term damage, there needs to be a way to get restitution. With the solar farms I'm thinking there has to be something legal put in place that would require clean up and disposal after use and maybe even fees before hand just in case of bankruptcy or some other unknown where to take place so that these things dont just become a mess for someone else to have to pay and take care of.</p>
As mentioned by everyone else, solar and storage would be the highest on my list of things. Although marijuana is up there. We certainly don't need 4 (or more) storage facilities in this tiny little town and it certainly doesn't help that they are all sitting right on the roadside.

Cannabis and solar farms
Cannabis businesses
Cannabis growers should not be in residential neighborhoods. Also there are so many cannabis retail places flooding Augusta, Gardiner, Hallowell, Manchester...seriously why allow in west gardiner?
Cannabis-related businesses. There are plenty nearby; therefore, no need to have or add any in West Gardiner.
Commercial solar farm development - ban it. No more storage units. No medical cannabis stores or growers. No recreational cannabis growers. Make a new updated comprehensive plan. We should not have a 20 year old plan.
commercial solar farms could drastically alter the character of the town
Consider the need of the people living in WG, not outside developers.
Consideration of neighboring land owners.
elderly housing
Figure out how to stop commercial solar farms while allowing residential, no more self storage facilities
Housing development needs to be closely watched you have increased land development on Pond road but no update to speed, traffic or road conditions monitoring. You are adding way too much traffic on this cross over road!
Housing, a big shortage in state.
How many storage units does one small town need, happy to see more solar panels are not taking up more fields or farms. How long will that last?
I believe in general zoning areas, such as business vs home, etc

I believe the town owes a discussion to the abutting land owners when they learn of a commercial development next door.
I don't feel large scale solar farms should be in West Gardiner. I wish businesses in West Gardiner were only for/run by Residents. I also don't feel like one person/group of people should be able to tell others what they can/can not do on their own land. (eg. smaller scale solar etc)
I don't have a lot of faith the most of the long-term town officials give a crap about what we think but it does seem to be a total mystery how developers are chosen and without zoning laws and a planning board—power is limited to three men. We can still enjoy a fairly libertarian-leaning community/value system and have more transparency and some guidelines around development.
I feel there are enough (maybe too many) marijuana shops and Self Storage units.
I think the town officials need to be very careful about where/what is built in order to maintain the feel of the town; while progress is good, progress for progress's sake is not.
I think there should be more attention paid to housing developments which abut wooded properties. I think more attention should be paid to the aesthetics of neighborhoods (such as surrounding houses with storage facilities or any kind of industrial buildings) as it impacts the value of all surrounding houses. But then again, since old development is not addressed (such as derelict houses/yards), perhaps community development could be assessed by creating more social groups for people to address their values and work toward a pleasant place to live. Perhaps having community define what the character of West Gardiner could be/is.
I very much wish West Gardiner would be more like other towns with more clarity and transparency and inclusion in decision-making. I'm not proud of wicked low taxes instead of providing more community services. Regulation is not a bad word, but a helpful way to provide standards of practice. I think we should invest in developing map/lots, for example.

If west gardiner doesn't do anything about speeding vehicles, lack of law enforcement, dogs roaming wherever they want go with no warning or enforcement , people will leave
I'm in favor of people doing what they see fit with their property. However, there have been some recent self storage units built in what may have been considered residential areas. Not definite either way, but I could see the potential for more egregious examples in the future.
Inappropriate placement of businesses in neighborhoods
Instead of storage units solar farms or weed shops we could build apartments or other multi family dwellings
Legality... town need a lawyer and a planning board. The town doesn't need to build a museum for historical society no way should it cost 300,000 for a historical Society building!!!!!!
Less commercial structures
Less storage facilities.
Let's not let our town be overrun by pot shops , storage facilities and solar farms. West Gardiner deserves better.
Limit solar panels!!! It ruins the look of our town!
Limit the building of solar panel fields and storage units.
Limit the number of new commercial structures whether storage facilities or solar farms or marijuana facilities. Taxes are low and we have what we need now. Don't bring in more at this time.
Limit the size and number of subdivisions...everywhere you turn there seems to be a new road going in
Limiting solar development
Lot size, construction quality, code enforcement
Medical marijuana and storage units are not needed here. They look awful and give a bad image of the town.

Need for affordable housing Traffic studies when commercial or high density housing go in
New houses, storage units, solar that leaves a property, Housing density needs to be looked at. No multiple house units (apartment or townhouses)
No cannibas stores or anything to do with it and no more storage facilities!
No large scale solar farms, limit new storage facilities.
No more commercial storage units, weed shops or solar farms.
No more self storage units! No cannabis dispensaries!
No more self-storage businesses.
No new subdivisions
No solar (unless on a home & it stays for that homes sole use only), no more storage sheds, Nothing that changes the individual rural feel of area we have had in past. NO apartments or multi family units. No new houses buildings over 2 regular stories high. Promote more natural areas.
No weed shops to poison our beautiful community and tarnish our country charm. Let them go elsewhere.... I would favor **normal** businesses that would bring good "normal" jobs to local people but not to build big businesses where it will impact neighborhoods that are quiet with a large uptick it traffic for them to deal with. If it's a busy street already then that would be a good place.
Not having marijuana stores in our town.
Open access to outdoor activities. Maintaining the rural character of the town.

Ordinances
Places that are junk yards and also home owners that have more than on RV set up on their lots and renting out
Promotion of small, local businesses.
Protect West Gardiner and it's residents
Public recreation spaces should be numerous and dispensed.
Putting businesses in nonresidential areas
Rapid Expansion of storage units.
Recreational Marijuana, storage facilities, solar farms, large business
Regulations on Developments
Residential/Agriculture - we do not need any more storage units or solar panels let's keep WG rural.
Restricting cannabis dispensaries, limiting solar farms and slowing population growth in the town.
Self storage and cannabis Businesses
Self storage and solar
Self storage facilities are poorly placed and lack any thought for neighboring homes
self storage cannabis
Self Storage, site planning
Setbacks of at least 50 ft from property lines and screening of any storage units No large visible solar farms
Should have as many restrictions as possible on things forced on the town by the state, like solar fields and cannabis related businesses which are still federally illegal.

Size of commercail projects and how many could be in the town (limit number of commercail places)
Slowing development down
Solar don't do more big fields
Solar Farms- I am concerned about the long term affects, why do you need to remove 5ft of dirt after the lease is up? Can it affect well water. What about fire? The Fire Department cannot respond to those fires because they are so toxic- what about the community surrounding one of those fires?
Solar farms. Marijuana farms.
Solar panels & storage units
Solar panels and storage facilities.
Solar, storage anything commercial or larger scale
Solar, windmills, personal shops, tattoo shops, topless pubs, pubs.
Something to help tax base. Not cannabis related, not solar farm, not self storage and not hazardous.
Sports complex
Start with zoning rules.
stop the solar farms
Stop the storage units and don't let Dollar General here.
Stop the storage units and stop the pot shops! It's country living or USED TO BE anyways!!
storage buildings and canabis stores
Storage facilities and solar panels taking over land

Storage facilities are the fastest growing non-residential construction occurring within the past few years. They're ubiquitous, and ugly. Large tracks of land are being swallowed up by these kinds of businesses of which should be better utilized. I strongly advocate the town encourage agriculture and low income senior housing instead.
Storage facilities popping up everywhere you look and Marijuana store not ok
Storage facilities, solar farms, cannabis. When considering these businesses setbacks
Storage units , cannabis, solar panels
storage units property boundaries/set backs
Storage units, cannabis growing and selling vacinities, solar panels not needed in West Gardiner
Storage units, cannabis storefronts (medical and adult use), and solar farms should be banned.
Storage units, large trucking companies, solar farms.
Storage units. Too many.
Storage units; solar panels; subdivisions; land development; marijuana facilities; cultivating facilities; business development
stronger subdivision rules
The massive storage facilities are horrible; so obtrusive. Not in keeping with the natural beauty of West Gardiner. Please, no further development! West Gardiner is unique and that's why we love it here. Please keep it that way. Thank you

<p>The minimum lot size needs to increase. The town is growing at an alarming rate and quickly losing the very character that made it a unique "small town". Everything we need is a very short commuting distance away (Gardiner, Litchfield, Augusta, Lewiston, etc). There is no need to bring any of those industrial or residential efforts to the town.</p>
<p>The over development of self-storage units! They're taking over the town! We have three separate sites now and third going in on 126! WHY!?</p>
<p>The people of this town asked to ban storage, solar and marijuana and we have been ignored more than once</p>
<p>The recent addition of multiple self storage buildings strongly detracts from the rural/ farming setting of West Gardiner. The reason we moved here 40+ years ago was the lovely rural character of the town. These buildings are an eye sore. If they have to be built, then perhaps a location a good distance off a paved road.</p>
<p>the self storage units and solar farms are eating up open spaces and it is unclear what the financial return is for the town. It would be nice to have a return on investment vs cost for the town on these types of uses.</p>
<p>The storage facilities, they are an eye sore just like the solar farms. If you want to have those...hide them behind trees...no one wants to see them on every corner!</p>
<p>The town must have a governing structure, including a planning board that proactively engages on development issues -whatever they may be. The current setup is ripe for corruption and mismanagement, it is unsustainable and must be addressed. At a minimum we need to expand the select board - we must adjust and change as the town grows.</p>
<p>There has been rapid expansion of solar farms in the area recently, which is necessary for future power needs. However, careful placement of such facilities needs to be addressed by town officials thoughtfully in order to maintain the rural nature and aesthetic qualities of West Gardiner.</p>

Things to generate taxes for the town for the School district to utilize
Too late now that they have already been constructed
too many new residences coming too fast.
Town should oversee/monitor cannabis sales
We are going to exceed the 4000 resident limit that means we have to follow/have building codes soon and should have a plan, zoning, codes written and a code enforcement officer before that happens
We need a planning commission and basic zoning ordinances
We need to be sure that we aren't messing up underground water sources packing all these houses together. It's easy to contaminate an entire underground water source by over drilling.
Yes. The town should not allow any further storage facilities to be built.
I feel town citizens should connect with our trusted selectmen so they can learn more about what is in process, rather than on a Facebook page.
No solar fields or storage facilities

26. Would you support the construction of large-scale commercial or industrial facilities in West Gardiner?

- ☐ Yes - 13%
- ☐ No - 75%
- ☐ No Opinion – 12%

If yes, please specify what type or describe in the box below.

Depends what it is.
Absolutely NOT.
I moved closer to this area to be away from this type of thing.
It depends on what it is- this question is too vague.
Large commercial no, medium-larger industrial? If the potential new business makes a point of hiring locals and being a good neighbor then I'm on board
People who do not live here are coming in and making a mess of the town because we have no rules and taxes are relatively low
Road upkeep is bad enough and we are already dreading what the tax hike will be now, not to mention if we have a greater amount of heavy 18 wheelers and have to repair more frequently.
This has environmental disaster written all over it.
Any type that employs people and provides a living wage
Anything that increases the tax base.
Away from the bulk of the residential spaces yes
By highway warehouse or commercial trucking facilities
By turnpike exit ONLY.
Depending on the location, it might generate additional tax monies to help keep residential taxes down.
Depends on what it is and how and where constructed
I have no type in mind, more of a location, allowing this type of development in the areas near the interstate makes sense and should be explored
I would provided the surrounding landowners are involved and notified prior to acceptance of what will be built.

If this facility were not a large polluter or noise maker and was located near the interstate exits I would not oppose it. Would increase tax base and employment opportunities without changing town too much. I would be less excited to see this type of development in the more rural areas away from the highway.
Light manufacturing/industrial retail provided they were placed in a zoned area for that use
Manufacturing, non drug food type farming related businesses, equipment manufacturing or sales, forestry type businesses, sawmills etc.
Only along the rt. 126 corridor
Only if they are done with environmental and other surroundings properties being protected
There is no need for any.
yes, depending on the location
Yes, if they were developed in undeveloped areas with suitable soils away from water and housing developments

27. Do you feel that there are any specific natural resource areas in town that should be preserved?

- ☐ Yes – 62%
- ☐ No – 10%
- ☐ No Opinion – 12%

If yes, please specify what type or describe in the box below.

28. If you wish to protect areas, please indicate how important you think each of the following natural resources are to you.

Very Important – Important – Neutral – Unimportant – Very Unimportant

Lakes/Ponds	<input type="checkbox"/> 75%	<input type="checkbox"/> 19%	<input type="checkbox"/> 5%	<input type="checkbox"/> 0%	<input type="checkbox"/> 1%
Wetlands	<input type="checkbox"/> 53%	<input type="checkbox"/> 30%	<input type="checkbox"/> 13%	<input type="checkbox"/> 4%	<input type="checkbox"/> 0%
Farmlands	<input type="checkbox"/> 59%	<input type="checkbox"/> 33%	<input type="checkbox"/> 7%	<input type="checkbox"/> 1%	<input type="checkbox"/> 0%
Streams	<input type="checkbox"/> 68%	<input type="checkbox"/> 27%	<input type="checkbox"/> 5%	<input type="checkbox"/> 0%	<input type="checkbox"/> 0%
Woodlands					
And Fields	<input type="checkbox"/> 58%	<input type="checkbox"/> 29%	<input type="checkbox"/> 11%	<input type="checkbox"/> 2%	<input type="checkbox"/> 0%

29. How do you rate the importance for the protection of farms and farmland in West Gardiner?

☐ Extremely Important – 61%

☐ Important – 33%

☐ Not Important – 3%

☐ No Opinion – 3%

30. Please list any specific properties or parcels which you think should be targeted for conservation in the event that they become available.

ALL
All that become available
Route 126 farm fields, all of them. Collins Mills Road near the dam. High Street near Cole Stream. Indiana Road fields
N/A
Any that can be used for recreation or community farming/gardening
Food comes from farmers not grocery stores. Protecting farmland is extremely necessary.
I cannot point to anything specific
Any that can be used for recreation or community farming/gardening
Food comes from farmers not grocery stores. Protecting farmland is extremely necessary.
Town should not be buying should be offered tax breaks to help existing owners
No opinion
Fields/woods/trails/Rt. 126 fields - all woods (no more housing developments)
Fields along Rt. 126
Prioritize anything connected to a natural water source.
water frontage
any property that abuts town own land and schools and also where entry points to the streams and ponds etc. This could provide better use of the areas

31. Open space is land which is set aside, either in a natural state or for recreational and/or passive purposes and is protected from future development in perpetuity. Open space may include nature preserves (wildlife habitat, natural resource areas), wetlands (tidal and inland), farms, cemeteries, forests, parks, beaches, and other recreational facilities. It may be privately owned (by a land trust or neighborhood association, for example) or publicly owned (by the town or the state). Some open space land is available for public use, while access to other land is restricted. Open space planning can link land parcels to form wildlife corridors or protect important wetland systems, or provide trails for passive recreation.

In your opinion, the Town of West Gardiner:

☐ Has Enough Open Space – 27%

☐ Needs More Open Space – 53%

☐ No Opinion – 20%

Other – Please specify below.

We have enough of it is preserved.
Need to research, obtain and specify areas that need protection (all mentioned above).
No further development
Not sure as I'm unaware where/if spaces currently exist.
Protect and help farmers

Public water access
seems like we are losing our farms in Maine
Seems that the solar farms are the new cash crop, popping up anywhere there is open land, ruining that land for generations to come.
Some additional community spaces would be great. A dog park, additional nature trails and/or park space that's not a school.
We need to be proactive about preserving open space.
Would like additional walking trails. Road are very dangerous to walk in WG.
Has more than enough
These recreational corridors woll become vital to the quality of life in the near future, we should start securing these now.
Hard to tell. The town doesn't have tax maps. I appreciate West Gardiner's low taxes and community supports of each other as well as little regulation on use of land. I would want us to think carefully about changing that.
I HAVE NO IDEA HOW MUCH OPEN SPACE WEST GARDINER HAS. BUT IT IS NICE TO LIVE IN WEST GARDINER WHERE THERE IS OPEN AREAS
I think we have enough right now. But we can't afford to lose anymore.
Not currently sure how space in West Gardiner is open

32. Do you think the Town of West Gardiner should use taxpayer money to purchase and maintain open space in the town?

☐ Yes – 54%

☐ No – 27%

☐ No Opinion – 19%

Other – Please specify below.

Identify areas to preserve possibly work with Land for Maines Future. Kennebec Land Trust for funding, matching funding.
We should hold votes when taxpayer money is used for such.
By vote of the people
Maybe. Depends on what the space is, where it is, and who it would be purchased from.
or gets involved with Kennebec Land Trust
unsure
Depends on the purchase and how much.
Neither in favor nor against.
As long as it is used for open space, recreational use and not development.
Depends on what you plan to use it for. Eventually another cemetary will be needed down the road as an example.
For community use- like the walking trails
I think we need more walking trails and public access to the streams
I would encourage starting a land conservation fund
If it protects the feel of the town and if its in the best interest of the residents that live around this purchase area.
If owned by WG
It depends

land purchased should be used to give access to nature to the residents, so parks or trails, recreation
Only for public recreational use.
Only to keep it clear of any and all business or structures.
Provided that it remains unbuildable/conservation land.
This is a tricky one because I don't think the town should go into the park business - not all taxpayers want to subsidize this type of activity. However, I do think that the town should be proactive if possible and identify areas to protect, then work with Kennebec Land Trust or other organizations to try and protect them. I also think careful zoning or planning can prevent or discourage development of valuable areas.
Use the money for this rather than the Boys & Girls club and the Gardiner Library. Way TOO MUCH MONEY going to these 2 associations.
We need a park
With town vote of specific locations.
Yes but not for lease to other businesses
Yes but should be voted on before anything is done

33. Please indicate how important each of the following open space categories is to you.

Very Important – Important – Neutral – Unimportant – Very Unimportant

Active ☐ 18% ☐ 34% ☐ 30% ☐ 12% ☐ 6%

Recreation

(Ball fields,

Biking, tennis

Pools)

Passive

Recreation 39% 42% 14% 3% 2%

(Walking trails,

Nature

Preserves)

Protection of

Wildlife Habitat 50% 37% 10% 2% 1%

Protection of

Streams 56% 35% 8% 1% 0%

Protection of

Wetlands 46% 35% 16% 2% 1%

Protection of

Town

Aesthetics and 54% 26% 15% 4% 1%

Character

Protection of

Large,

Unfragmented 39% 31% 23% 6% 1%

Tracts of land

Provide More

Boating and 19% 33% 38% 9% 2%
Fishing Access

Protect Ridges

And Hilltops 27% 24% 38% 9% 2%

34. Please indicate how important each of the following recreation categories is to you, whether there is one in West Gardiner or not.

Very Important – Important – Neutral – Unimportant – Very Unimportant

Swimming

Areas 24% 38% 29% 7% 2%

Boat Launch 25% 37% 30% 5% 3%

Hiking/

Walking/ 40% 43% 13% 3% 1%

Nature Trails

Community

Center 8% 34% 38% 14% 6%

Softball/

Baseball

Fields

10% 37% 35% 13% 5%

Outdoor

Basketball

Courts

10% 28% 39% 15% 8%

Outdoor

Tennis Courts

4% 17% 43% 26% 10%

Playgrounds

Parks

16% 48% 25% 7% 4%

Access for

Fishing

19% 56% 19% 4% 2%

Skating/

Hockey Rinks

8% 20% 43% 21% 8%

Boating Access

16% 42% 33% 6% 3%

Cross Country

Skiing

6% 35% 44% 9% 6%

ATV Trails	<input type="text"/> 10%	<input type="text"/> 30%	<input type="text"/> 39%	<input type="text"/> 14%	<input type="text"/> 9%
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Bike Paths

Bike Lanes	<input type="text"/> 11%	<input type="text"/> 35%	<input type="text"/> 37%	<input type="text"/> 11%	<input type="text"/> 6%
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Snowmobile

Trails	<input type="text"/> 16%	<input type="text"/> 35%	<input type="text"/> 35%	<input type="text"/> 7%	<input type="text"/> 7%
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Other - Please specify below.

None specified

35. Public facilities include schools, roads, parks and municipal buildings and other structures. These facilities and the services they provide are paid for, in large part, through the property taxes that citizens pay. The following questions are designed to allow the town to determine what level of facilities that residents may be interested in and any improvements to existing ones that may be supported by the responder. Please indicate how important each of the following capital improvement categories are to you.

Very Important – Important – Neutral – Unimportant – Very Unimportant

Improve

Municipal	<input type="text"/> 8%	<input type="text"/> 42%	<input type="text"/> 39%	<input type="text"/> 7%	<input type="text"/> 4%
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Buildings

Improve

Transfer Station ☐ 13% ☐ 48% ☐ 33% ☐ 4% ☐ 2%

Develop

Recreational ☐ 11% ☐ 30% ☐ 39% ☐ 12% ☐ 8%
Facilities

Develop/Build

Community/
Youth Center ☐ 8% ☐ 23% ☐ 40% ☐ 18% ☐ 11%

Purchase

Open Space ☐ 12% ☐ 33% ☐ 38% ☐ 11% ☐ 6%

Improve

Accessibility @

Public Buildings ☐ 12% ☐ 40% ☐ 40% ☐ 5% ☐ 3%
& Properties

Post Office

(Federal level ☐ 10% ☐ 19% ☐ 29% ☐ 22% ☐ 22%
Approval needed)

Other – Please specify.

By the most part the Board of Selectmen have kept the town owned buildings in good upkeep. Please keep that up!
Depends on costs, what renovations/improvements needed
I think in a ruralish area like WG, protection of people should be important. Therefore, things like an accessible and promoted shooting range with a limitation of shooting on unowned land or in neighborhoods (better education, options, and support) - as there are new neighborhoods and people using wooded land more and more. With that, noise ordinances should be considered for guns and loud engines. Since WG is very 'aesthetically' concerned right now, perhaps trash clean up on major roads should be considered by supporting businesses (as there is more trash in and around both the Fuller's and Four Corners neighborhoods - perhaps these stores should be held partially responsible). It would also be great 'aesthetically' if dead and feral animals were cleaned up on the side of the road and in derelict yards.
I think we need to lobby hard for a Post Office and ideally a different zip code to Gardiner, it will hopefully improve service but also create a distinct identity for West Gardiner.
It would be nice to have more than just the fire station and Aux hall for useable space in town.
Multi use facilities
No need for a Post Office in West Gardiner
No need for federal post office
The town needs a facility for public use rather than utilization of the fire station for public events. The auxiliary hall should have been turned over to the historical society and funding for a new building used for a community center that benefits a larger demographic

There is a difference between maintaining and improving. The town should maintain its properties and they should be accessible to all. I don't think we need a post office and do think we can be served by amenities within nearby towns - like the library in Gardiner. There are many things it make more sense to contribute to that are nearby than to replicate just for West Gardiner
Transfer station: It would be nice to be able to recycle plastics beyond number 2. I think it's important that all town owned buildings be accessible to folks with disabilities.
We need our own zipcode for identity different from Gardiner.
Would like to see the transfer station reconfigured to allow one way movement around the hopper building. This would ease congestion and help eliminate parking issues.

36. Please indicate how important each of the following public services are to you.

Very Important – Important – Neutral – Unimportant – Very Unimportant

Fire

Department ☐ 74% ☐ 22% ☐ 3% ☐ 1% ☐ 0%

Gardiner Public

Library ☐ 27% ☐ 25% ☐ 30% ☐ 10% ☐ 8%

Animal Control

Services ☐ 24% ☐ 41% ☐ 27% ☐ 5% ☐ 3%

Code

Enforcement 18% 40% 28% 7% 7%

Recreational

Programming 19% 36% 33% 8% 4%

And Youth

Sports

Trail and

Conservation 21% 49% 24% 3% 3%

Management

Maintenance and

Public Works 38% 49% 9% 3% 1%

Services

Recycling

Services 37% 43% 16% 2% 2%

Cemetery

Services 26% 46% 23% 2% 3%

General

Assistance and

Heating 14% 46% 33% 4% 3%

Assistance

Government ☐ 1% ☐ 6% ☐ 30% ☐ 30% ☐ 33%

TV Station

Age Friendly

& Older

Resident ☐ 17% ☐ 51% ☐ 28% ☐ 2% ☐ 2%

Support

Services

37. Currently, West Gardiner's police services are provided through the Kennebec County Sheriff's Office and the State Police. Do you think there is a need for additional police services in the Town of West Gardiner?

☐ Yes – 11%

☐ No – 74%

☐ No Opinion – 15%

Other – Please specify below.

I don't feel we need our own police force if that is what you are looking for. A little more patrol once in a while would be nice though. The speeding and

dangerous driving is rampant everywhere though and even more patrol wouldn't change that.
I say no for now, but if we continue to grow at the pace we're going then this is going to become an unfortunate necessity
Loud vehicles. Speeding vehicles. Burn outs, tire marks, make the town less valuable, and people will leave as they feel unsafe, high street is absolutely terrible, everyday vehicles do 80 miles an hour, someones kid will be killed soon, near miss yesterday with a bus
More police services around Old Lewiston and Lewiston Roads. Too many drivers traveling faster than the speed limit, especially near the GRMS and side road across the street from the middle school.
Prior to making a decision, I would be interested in receiving police logs and determine if the need was present.
The Kennebec County Sheriff's office and the Maine State Police do a great job at protecting the Town of West Gardiner and its residents.
The only thing that could use more enforcement is roads, people drive like lunatics because they figure were out in the country no one is going to bother them
The service is more than adequate as long as we keep the trouble out and don't support low income housing, or apartment buildings, trailer parks of any type. This would bring the drugs and problems into our community.
There are more than 50 people that make a living in law enforcement that live in town. Go away from this town And its called copland
They barely do anything now...why increase?
They seem responsive enough and I do not see a need for full time town patrol.
Yes, if crime stats are increasing.

38. Currently, all Emergency Medical Services (EMS – Ambulance) come from Gardiner. Do you believe there is a need for additional EMS services in West Gardiner?

☐ Yes – 12%

☐ No – 70%

☐ No Opinion – 15%

Other – Please specify below.

Due to Gardiner Rescue's large call volume and areas of responsibility, the West Gardiner volunteer firefighters should be offered an opportunity to train as EMRs/EMTs and first respond to medical calls. We have several licensed providers living right here in town. Gardiner will not be able to support us forever as the area keeps growing, so we should make it a 10 year goal to become a Basic Life Support ambulance service at a minimum.

Gardiner needs more ambulances and more employees

It seems adequate as is but I don't know - the people providing the service would know the answer to that I would imagine.
--

It takes Gardiner 20 plus minutes to get here

Maybe

Prior to making a decision, I would be interested in receiving ambulance logs and determine if the need was present.
--

They do a great job. Also, the cost to start an ambulance service in West Gardiner would be huge....estimate at close to \$1 million in vehicles and staff just to start.

Unsure - not much experience.

Unsure if it would be worth having a town specific crew.

Well, it depends. Without knowing how many calls there are, and how the distance required to travel from Gardiner to assist West Gardiner residents has an adverse effect on treating those in need in a timely manner, it's hard to know how necessary it is. More info needed.

Yes, if stats see substantial increase

39. About 78% of your tax bill pays for Education (MSAD #11), about 10% for County taxes, and 12% for Municipal Infrastructure and Services. Is the level of spending:

☐ Too Low – 5%

☐ Just Right – 66%

☐ Too High – 29%

40. How important is it to create health/safety programs for the following?

Very Important – Important – Neutral – Unimportant – Very Unimportant

Local

Immunization 9% 20% 33% 23% 15%

Clinics

Water Quality

Information 28% 42% 23% 3% 4%

General Health

Screenings 9% 23% 42% 15% 11%

Mental Health

Screenings 15% 26% 39% 11% 9%

Services for

Lower Income 14% 36% 38% 8% 4%

Residents

Other – Please specify below.

All of these services are offered right in Gardiner.
Don't make this area appealing for the people that want free services unless you want to ruin the town forever. Neighbors and family can help low income residents or if able they can work harder like we do to get our money. Instead of sitting home on drugs all day while I work from sun up to sundown....
Health services can be accessed in Gardiner, Augusta, etc. Why recreate the wheel? Just improve transportation services to get residents to those clinics.
It isn't clear on why West Gardiner would do any of the above alone instead of in partnership with other towns or organizations? I am not in favor of raising taxes to do more services at the local level when we are so close to larger communities that do provide them.
Local immunizations clinics are available in Gardiner, as well as health screening. The State of Maine provides great(ish) resources currently for community members to utilize, if needed.
Preventative care is likely the most important health service to support and encourage.
Provide info on regional resources for health services, screenings, immunizations, etc
These services are available in Augusta and other local towns. No need to duplicate in WG.
We should do more than we currently do, that is for sure. We can't do everything of course, but more ought to be done.

41. Are you satisfied with West Gardiner's network of town roads?

☐ Yes – 90%

☐ No – 5%

☐ No Opinion – 5%

Other – Please specify below.

All roads could be better built and signed but the Board does a good job with the Budget provided

Having children who need bus services, I would really like to see the bus go by our house. It's a plenty wide and paved road, Seth's Way (not talking a bumpy narrow dirt back road). In fact, we already have a bus that comes down part of it for the autism program. From my understanding, it's in the works to be transferred to the town (and only until that happens will the bus come down it), but we've been here 7 yrs. and it still hasn't happened. It impacts our working schedules that the kids can't get on the bus at our own home, and I have to drive them to the end of the road in order to get on the bus. This needs to happen SOONER than later.

I don't understand the intent of the question

I think the town should maintain all roads and if they don't, those folks should get a discount so they can have an association to cover the maintenance. I do not live on a private road.
--

not enough side of road space to walk or ride bikes

<p>The town does a great job on the roads.</p> <p>We should consider moving away from sand salt mix and use low applications of salt on our winter roads instead so the guys can focus on other summer jobs instead of ditching sand all summer.</p>
<p>There are some roads that are under water and cause hydroplaning during heavy rains. They should be looked at to see if they need additional paving/construction to allow a better runoff of water.</p>
<p>Town roads are taken care of greatly by employees</p>
<p>Town should take over more of the private roads in order to attract residents and increase the value of homes. Road associations are sometimes a barrier to buying a home, many people don't want that hassle, and some road associations are not competent so residents become unhappy with living in West Gardiner.</p>
<p>We don't need more roads, but the ones we have need to be better maintained year round.</p>
<p>West Gardiner has some of the best maintained roads in the state.</p>
<p>What does this question even mean? If it's about the quality of the roads, more could be done to keep them in good shape.</p>
<p>Would be nice to build a connector somewhere between high street and SR-126 to ease commuters and emergency services from the long distance around. Something like a highway-side service road that runs from High Street at the turnpike overpass to the rotary at SR126.</p>

42. How important are each of the following areas to the future of transportation in West Gardiner?

Very Important – Important – Neutral – Unimportant – Very Unimportant

Building

Additional	<input type="text"/> 6%	<input type="text"/> 7%	<input type="text"/> 43%	<input type="text"/> 31%	<input type="text"/> 13%
Public Roads					

Paving					
Publicly Owned	<input type="text"/> 14%	<input type="text"/> 33%	<input type="text"/> 34%	<input type="text"/> 19%	<input type="text"/> 0%
Gravel Roads					

Providing					
Public Snow	<input type="text"/> 61%	<input type="text"/> 29%	<input type="text"/> 7%	<input type="text"/> 1%	<input type="text"/> 2%
Removal					
(town crew &					
Equipment on					
town roads)					

Bicycle &					
Pedestrian	<input type="text"/> 8%	<input type="text"/> 29%	<input type="text"/> 39%	<input type="text"/> 14%	<input type="text"/> 10%
Paths					

Sidewalks	<input type="text"/> 5%	<input type="text"/> 14%	<input type="text"/> 37%	<input type="text"/> 26%	<input type="text"/> 18%
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General Public					
Transportation					
Options like	<input type="text"/> 2%	<input type="text"/> 14%	<input type="text"/> 35%	<input type="text"/> 30%	<input type="text"/> 19%
Local Bus					
Services					

Focused

Transportation

Services for 11% 36% 40% 7% 6%

Those with

Limited

Mobility or

Restricted

Driving Ability

43. How important are each of the following modes of communication between town government and residents?

Very Important – Important – Neutral – Unimportant – Very Unimportant

Public Meetings 47% 40% 11% 1% 1%

And Hearings

Periodic mailings 28% 47% 19% 4% 2%

Signage and

Message Boards 21% 42% 28% 5% 4%

Local

Publications

(KJ and Kennebec Current)

<input type="checkbox"/>	13%	<input type="checkbox"/>	33%	<input type="checkbox"/>	35%	<input type="checkbox"/>	13%	<input type="checkbox"/>	6%
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Facebook and

Social Media

<input type="checkbox"/>	29%	<input type="checkbox"/>	44%	<input type="checkbox"/>	23%	<input type="checkbox"/>	4%	<input type="checkbox"/>	0%
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West Gardiner

Website

<input type="checkbox"/>	50%	<input type="checkbox"/>	41%	<input type="checkbox"/>	8%	<input type="checkbox"/>	1%	<input type="checkbox"/>	0%
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Email and Email

Subscription Lists
(through the Website)

<input type="checkbox"/>	24%	<input type="checkbox"/>	42%	<input type="checkbox"/>	26%	<input type="checkbox"/>	4%	<input type="checkbox"/>	4%
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Direct Text

Messaging
(Not currently Done)

<input type="checkbox"/>	7%	<input type="checkbox"/>	26%	<input type="checkbox"/>	42%	<input type="checkbox"/>	15%	<input type="checkbox"/>	10%
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West Gardiner's

Weathervane Newsletter

<input type="checkbox"/>	24%	<input type="checkbox"/>	38%	<input type="checkbox"/>	28%	<input type="checkbox"/>	5%	<input type="checkbox"/>	5%
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Public Access ☐ 5% ☐ 11% ☐ 39% ☐ 23% ☐ 22%

Television

In the block below, please state which of the items from the above list you and/or your family utilize for communication.

Not Utilized

44. With the increasing changes at the State and County level, the workload for some of the Town's employees has increased significantly. Do you have any recommendations that may assist the Town?
i.e: Zoning Board, Planning Board, Full-Time Code Enforcement Officer, Town Manager.

Please add any suggestions below.

Zoning board, and planning board would certainly help the Town Administrators. The days of "the wild west" are over. We cannot continue to have the "do anything you want" enviroment.

If the work load is heavy, hire more employees to help. It sounds like we do need a zoning board to help control growth and to deal with new and upcoming trends.

If more employees are needed, hire them! Zoning Board & Planning board - based on how the storage units were snuck in here due to no ordinances, and some tried to do large scale solar panels too, it is sounding like WG needs to step up on planning & zoning laws so something like that does not happen again. Out of stater companies like this area due to no zoning laws - WG could be sunk soon with what people are allowed to build here if no zoning laws. Get zoning laws on the books now that protect WG land, keep it family friendly, & rural.
Also, must keep looking forward to watch out for the newest trends so this does not happen again!!!

None

Planning Board might help. Perhaps zoning board if zoning implemented.
Hire as needed. Don't stress town employees
Which employees have had a significant increase in work load? What caused the increase?
More community volunteer opportunities
Increasing town office hours to a 40 hour week
Zoning, Planning, Code Enforcement all require specific knowledge, so no.
Increase staff as needed
No
A planning or zoning board seems necessary since selectmen seem to have ignored what the tax payers are asking for
Board of Selectmen need to do a study on each employee (maybe get MMA to do it) find whether work load is correct etc. Then decide based on any rules passed what the requirement of work will be involved to direct what type of employee is needed. Code enforcement etc.
Planning board is very necessary.
Volunteers, Community Service by high school students, those who receive financial or other town assistance should be required to help if physically able to do so.
all of the mentioned. As our town grows, there will be more work to do and more people will be needed to handle all of that.
No
This question is vague. Are you looking for volunteers? Do you want to know if we would approve hiring more people? What exactly are you asking? Be more transparent.
We need a full-time code enforcement officer
Advisory council, citizen reps
Limit building and business or we try to fund more infrastructure to help town workers - which would require raising taxes
Get townspeople more interested in helping and being involved. Find out what the community might like to help out with or get support for (no mention here of diversity projects, small business assistance, educational assistance, community social groups, etc). Perhaps these 'boards' could be shared between residents to encourage more direct action with the limited direct democracy hoped for.

Planning board
Zoning and code
Can't read this question in its entirety as its cut off
give them more money
The girls in the office only work part-time 8 - 1 PM. For full time pay. They should be there 8Am to 5 PM like the rest of the world.
Part-time office worker. Part-time Town Manager.
Return to normal 32-40 hour work week. Hire a part-time office employee if necessary.
Text alerts for labor intense things like copying, stuffing envelopes. Free coffee & doughnuts goes a long way, basically volunteers meet for anything "unskilled" to help.
Hire where needed.
Lets hire more staff
Town Manager to assist Select Board, zoning and planning boards, budget committee, full- time code enforcement officer
We need zoning and planning boards, a budget committee, full-time code enforcement officer and perhaps a hybrid town manager/Select Board combination. Too much has gone by the wayside over the years, resulting in proliferation of storage facilities, marijuana grows/medical sales, and proposed or existing solar arrays/systems. I feel for the town office staff and Select Board as the workload has skyrocketed.
I hate to see zoning board etc, but do understand things are changing.
Code Enforcement
Make the additional workload known to the town. Keeping us informed of the additional demands that are being put on the town will make it feel more cohesive. Also, maybe remove or opt-out of programs that are unnecessary.
Stay the same.
These should be staffed, by adding hours with pay to current town employees or buy adding and redistributing the work load

no zoning, no planning boards, no need for full time code enforcement. no changes except need more open dialogue regarding town happenings etc with ALL towns people-not just a select few!!!! Send out mailings not everyone is able to get out to the town office area. not everyone has access to fb or web pages. Feel a lot of people are being left out of decisions and a few are making all decisions.
The more the merrier. All of the above are good suggestions.
Add some positions if necessary, contract someone out?
No opinion
I agree with planning board, and like the idea of town manager
Full time Code Enforcement that also helps with Zoning and Planning, we need to get ahead of the inevitable growth
Leave it as is. If the State doesn't like it, tough cookies! Guess enforcement will just have to "suffer"
More code enforcement, need a planning board. Need assessors that are trained and independent of the selectboard, the assessing process in WG is dysfunctional.
Work harder
Hire a part time floating employee that can assist where needed
Using funds to create more positions.
N/A
Office workers should work all day not 8 - 1.
Yes, zoning board, planning board, full time code enforcement, town manager . Our goal should include the common good of the community.
Planning Board.
No
None of the above listed.
None of the above.
Planning committee 100%! 3 selectmen are not sufficient to Shepard the town forward as we grow, in fact it actually hurts the town and keeps us in the dark ages.

We need a zoning board, period. We need FIVE Selectpersons on the board. My primary gripe: there is no oversight of our town's government. Every role is appointed, and we residents have NO idea how qualified our town's officials and workers are. And since the town is now, admittedly over the 4,000 resident threshold, we need greater accountability, people we know are definitively skilled at carrying out their duties, etc.
Planning board - seems our selectmen are not fully cognizant of plans they submit and/or costs.
I don't know enough about this to understand what would be helpful at the lowest cost.
Depends. What work load increased? Computers should have reduced a lot of paperwork.
Need zoning even if limited. Should have a Planning board if nothing else
No I don't
Hiring individuals who know how to do the job full time will benefit the town of course, but also balance minimal tax increase is always supported as well. No direct ideas, I don't know anything about what employees have to deal with.
Planning board is a great idea.
The town needs a planning board.
Just keep our form of government Keep it simple
Planning board, zoning board
No recommendations
Planning board and tax maps on the Town of West Gardiner. Set back for all property.
I think embracing automation of some tasks would free up their time. I recently renewed boat registration online, something I typically do in person in the office. It saved me a trip and saved them (I think) time by me not going in there. I think streamlining as many of these routine/mundane processes as possible would free them up to work on more intensive activities.
A planning board, with oversight from the Selectmen and final approval by voters would be helpful and provide transparency and information to residents.
eventually we will need each of these offices.
Additional employees to be hired with specific areas of focus (part time planners etc) Qualified employees to be stressed
Perhaps later

Hire more people so that the amount of work is evenly divided between employees
If the workload has increased to the point where not everything can be done, or done well, and considering that the town is growing perhaps it's time to hire additional staff.
Planning board.
Perhaps later
Hire more people so that the amount of work is evenly divided between employees
If the workload has increased to the point where not everything can be done, or done well, and considering that the town is growing perhaps it's time to hire additional staff.
Hire as needed to manage town government.
I hope that we take good care of the guys at the transfer station to keep them happy. These guys seem very dependable and provide a vital service imo they deserve to be well compensated for thier efforts. Switch PW to a salt priority in the winter maine local roads could help with this transition and I think it would provide safer travel, get the PW guys home that are out there plowing quicker and ultimately save the town money moving forward.
Hire more.
Perhaps a full time code enforcement officer Don't want a planning or zoning board.
More money for the girls in the office - they work hard.
I would need more information in order to answer this question- would it be possible to increase hours? Bring on additional staff? Engage in a job share?
THEY HAVE A GOOD SALARY SO THEY COULD WORK LONGER HOURS.
Volunteer offering, put the word out what is needed
Part of what we love about West Gardiner is that things are done the old fashioned way. If you've worked hard for and earned yourself a plot of land, you can do with it what you see fit. I am concerned about the increasing interest in limiting and controlling what others' do with their own land.
Code enforcement if it needs to be increased then it needs to be prioritized. We cannot allow growth to continue without oversight.
Stop complicating everything. Growth is inevitable and we should welcome growth! Growth and taxes go hand in hand, we need not be so worried about how to stop the growth and focus more on how we can stay out of each others business and how we will deal with implications of growth when they inevitably arrive.

Full time Code Enforcement.
Perhaps look at a fulltime code enforcement officer.
Keep our local government as small as possible- if there are specific things that may require some kind of "board" or additional employees, make a proposal to the residents- allow discussion and a town vote.
No. If we pump the brakes, slow down on development, and realize that not every idea is a good idea we can save ourselves a lot of hassle. No need for a zoning board or full time code enforcement officer. If we reach that point then we've let West Gardiner go too far.

45. What do you like best about West Gardiner?

Rural and peaceful lifestyle. Low taxes.
Small town size, friendly. Low taxes are important. I like the 2 stores we have for local items and local food options. There are some local services we use such as automotive repair and tree services. I enjoy and am proud to say that I live in WG.
Rural, single family, most areas are safe. West Gardiner Nature Trails. Water access. All the natural habits & wildlife. - Preserve them!!
I have lived here my entire 62 years. I like the small town feel.
Living on Cobbossee
small town.
The open country feel to the area. Not being in a city
The winter when the massholes aren't here! Ladies in the town office are top notch Transfer station has awesome guys Road crew is on top of it Fire reports
The low taxes, and non commercial/industrial development.
Tax rate, and the town has always allowed land owners the leeway to do what they want as long as it conformed to local and state codes.
Rural, small town character with minimal regulation.

<p>The feeling that I'm home</p> <p>The friendly, helpful neighbors</p> <p>I'm surrounded by the beauty of nature</p> <p>Town employees are terrific, so helpful</p> <p>Thursday night open door policy</p> <p>Four Corners - best pizza and sandwiches!</p> <p>Wayne Hickey's animals and lovely pasture</p> <p>Mike Wing's musings</p>
Friendly community
The community! The lake. The casual lifestyle. The (awesome) transfer station, swap shop and helpful employees. The farms. Our taxes aren't crazy. The website.
<p>Rural setting</p> <p>Town meetings</p> <p>Wildlife/land and water</p> <p>Transfer station/swap shop</p>
<p>Moderate control of properties</p> <p>low taxes</p> <p>past fiscal responsibilities</p>
Rural feel, somewhat close to services that are needed.
Natural beauty & the new planning committee!
The land and great neighbors
Neighbors seem very willing to help each other
At home feeling
It is rural !!!
The helpful employees at the town office, at the transfer station, the highway crew, the firemen the selectmen all the volunteers in all departments and those I have failed to mention. Also, the residents themselves who are always ready to help those I need no matter what the situation. Just ask and you will be amazed at how many people will step up to help.
I like its rural character.
Friendly town with great neighbors
The town is located near Cobbossee Lake, has streams running through it and the people at the Town Office is friendly as well as those at the Transfer station. The

town has farms and open fields, woods and is close to shopping centers. Fire Department seems like it has improved the past year
small community. mostly friendly folks. quiet rural setting.
The small community "vibe".
We are very new here. The few people we have met have been very kind and welcoming. We enjoy and look forward to exploring all of the water and trails.
Currently rural, small town feeling, small town government
I enjoy the rural feel and look of West Gardiner. I'm not anti business, but sometimes people think with \$\$ vs what is best for the community and neighborhood. What we need is thoughtful development or we will end up looking like neighboring towns with cannabis retail and storage units on every corner. Ugh!
Transfer station. They work hard, they're helpful, they're friendly. Joe and the guys are great.
I love our small town and its history, I love the people, and I love the proximity to all areas in each direction.
It's mostly quiet and the ponds are close.
The helpful employees at the town office, at the transfer station, the highway crew, the firemen the selectmen all the volunteers in all departments and those I have failed to mention. Also, the residents themselves who are always ready to help those I need no matter what the situation. Just ask and you will be amazed at how many people will step up to help.
I like its rural character.
Friendly town with great neighbors
I like the potential of being able to be your own self in your own space without infringement from town politics, large developments or industry. I like the peace I can occasionally get (barring the guns and engines) and the loveliness of nature.
Low taxes
Its a close net small community
Low taxes, low regulation live and let live We know most of our neighborhood
Lack of crime, quiet, local elementary school, friendliness of citizens

Quiet country living
Been here 30 + years and liked the smaller town it used to be. Not liking a lot of newer/recent changes to town.
Rural, quiet
It's a friendly TOWN
The lack of so many useless ordinances
The friendly atmosphere and the knowledge of the appointed staff
the way it is now
peace and quiet
It's home and would love to keep the small town feeling
The simplicity.
Being in the country.
Community. Rural but close enough to Augusta for shopping and medical facilities along with the City of Gardiner. Location in the State overall, not far to lakes, ocean, mountains, etc.
Town is run by local residents not people from away who think they know everything and justify high salaries.
I love that we care. I love that we all show up.
Rural character, libertarian like/minimal gov't, low taxes
Small town, low taxes
The property taxed are reasonable, Town Office Starr are very pleasant and always willing to help you. The Town Office staff know you.
Rural atmosphere People
People! Established residents and new ones. More rural atmosphere. How people support each other. The Transfer Station and staff. The Town Office staff - always helpful and accessible.
It's quite, well most of the time

Its a great town. Low taxes and fairly low crime. People can be kind and helpful (although lately they seem to have forgotten that).
That it is a residential community. We are close enough to Gardiner and Augusta for commercial/shopping to be there and West Gardiner to focus on residential and agriculture
The town and the people are awesome.
The open spaces. The rolling hills. The great snowplowing by town. The small town aspects. The small population. The quietness. The open areas.
Small town, honest people, respect for the integrity of what West Gardiner has been, and should be. Some change is ok, but don't make it a city. Rural areas, good people, residents helping residents,. Ability to manage our own property within reason Best plowing and winter road care. Families Peter Pan Fair
The privacy and open space.
Friendly neighbors. Roads kept up in the snow. Seems pretty inclusive with no negative interactions so far. Far enough away from nonsense, but close enough to stores, major roadways.
We moved from a more commercial, industrial town in Maine. Thought we hit the jackpot when moving to West Gardiner. I imagine change inevitable. Not everyone is looking forward to change. I would hope it is done slowly. All those home on West Road, (Gardiner) looking out the back windows looking at a field of solar panels. When six months ago, looking at cows prior. Is that what is in everyone's future? I sure hope not, nor do I hope for a cannabis store.
Low property taxes
small town feel. no one telling one another what/how to do
The charm of the residents.

I love that for the most part I feel there is little to no crime in our area, it's a safe place for my kids to be (except High Street seems to be a raceway!) I love that there is not a pot shop on every corner or ugly storage facilities all over the place.
The tax rate but mostly how people connect with each other and how it feels like a 'normal' area to live. Safe, quiet and comfortable living with great town workers.
I like that you're only 10-15 minutes from major towns that have all the stores, restaurants and services you may need, but when you go back to West Gardiner, it's like being on vacation. Places are locally owned, there aren't too many people, and it feels like a home town. It doesn't need to be a city.
Wes Gardner is a beautiful, quiet town and I've enjoyed it here since I moved here back in 1997. I hope the town will stop allowing cannabis in storage facilities to overtake our beautiful Town.
The lack of regulation
Rural lifestyle.
The way it is do not try to make it a city like all the other ones in this state
Quiet small town living that is perfect fo raising a family
I love the country feel. Keep the traffic low, low taxes, not too many houses or businesses.
The small town feel.
Country living
obviously small town vs. city life. raised our children here. Our wonderful Fire Dept, they are the best!!!
Recycling, low taxes, seeing people I know,
Freedom
rural, residential town. I like living in a town that is about living, and then go to another town for working, commercial, etc. Only commercial development I'm in favor of is small businesses (and I'm fine with cannabis business in limited amounts, like have a certain # of permits allowed), restaurants/cafe/pubs, small stores, farm stands. Prefer no chain businesses, no industrial, any solar farms not be visible from the road in order to preserve our rural feel.
I love the small town, country feel with the access to anything you need. And the community support from everyone, whether you know them or not.

Love the small town feel. The town office and transfer station are amazing thanks to the wonderful people there.
And I love that I feel safe because I know who my neighbors are. Love how close it is to Augusta, and really love the low property taxes!
Love the Rod and Gun club!! They need the towns full support!
Small town feel, friendly, clean.
The people
It's quiet and there's wild life everywhere
Lots of room for my kids to run and play. Good schools and it's quiet.
Small country town, friendly people, self sufficient little town. Want to see it stay small and clean
I love that we are close enough to the city of Gardiner for convenience of stores and schools. But I absolutely love being in the woods!! I've made West Gardiner my home for the last 20 years and have enjoyed every minute... my neighbors are amazing and willing to help each other at anytime.. Helen Thompson is a great school with some fantastic teachers... I enjoyed seeing my 3 kids learn and grow over the years, starting school right here in West G and graduating at GAHS. West Gardiner is a safe beautiful town to live in...
The small town community feel. Not overpopulated
The fact that you are allowed to live your life without the town breathing down your neck or looking over your shoulder all the time. We are all adults and know the difference between right and wrong, we are allowed to live by doing what we think is right and generally speaking folks think about others and respect their neighbors
Great school, beautiful land and natural resources, friendly people, close to the interstate.
Small community
Low density, low taxes and it's rural nature
Native resident
The residents are kind and helpful. Beautiful place to live in a country setting but close to town.

Limited Government oversight. Lower taxes Small town feel.
The friendly people
Small community, farms, land, lakes, history.
Farms, hunting on the land, lakes.
It's character and lifestyle. Good neighbors not too many people from away. Small town atmosphere. Low taxes, beautiful land
Some of the best features of West Gardiner is the low tax rate, the ability to do what you want with your property when you want to and how you want to, and the rural landscape. Having the ability to build a deck, put in a pool, or add a garage without having to hassle with a code enforcement officer, or get permits is gold in itself.
It's home
I like the people, the fact that there is no light or air pollution, that it's quiet, that I can live freely as I wish with minimal invasion from town authorities and neighbors.
Unobtrusive governing
Small Town atmosphere. Quiet neighborhoods.
The people are wonderful. The rural feel of West Gardiner is important. And senior dinners!
We moved to West Gardiner for the low property taxes above all. West Gardiner's taxes have allowed one of us to retire because it so significantly lowered that cost. I also like the recreational trail and connection to snowmobile trails. West Gardiner is also very convenient to Gardiner, Augusta and jumping on I-95 to Lewiston or Portland for work meetings. I love Horseshoe Pond and Cobbossee Stream as recreational bodies of water and very much want them protected. I also like West Gardiner's attitude about allowing people to do what they want with their own property.
Residents... Those that are here to help each other and be kind. Environment... the beautiful fields and forested areas that are all around us. The nature path near the Town Office. The school... we have fabulous teachers and I feel that we financially support our school system well. The fact that we are (were?) small enough to not need permits for every little thing we do with our property, etc.
the small community where you know most people, country living close to town

Its lack of needless ordinances. This is very significant.
We moved to West Gardiner in 2017. I like the rural nature of the town and the small town feel. Business with the town office is easy and friendly. I love that West Gardiner recycles so much material and the ease of using the transfer station. Communication with the public about town business is good although improvements can always be made.
Rural
Quiet rural nature and easy accessibility to amenities such as shopping and medical offices
I love the rural countryside/ farming community the people here and the low taxes. I am extremely bothered by the fact there are no females actively training or hired at the fire department. I don't count Vicky and am disappointed that some have applied and were rejected. All volunteers matter and bring something to the table and community. I guess this town has just an overwhelming amount of volunteers and don't need anymore? I also feel that we should do senior safety buckets of salt/sand. Buckets are usually donated and if we have people to fill and deliver to any or all that sign up it can lessen the fall injuries and demands on Gardiner ems rescue calls.
you get to go home where it's quiet to get away from the businesses, vehicles and loud people. If we don't keep the population/houses down and so many business out we will no longer have a country setting we will be city folks on a postage stamp with no land to hunt or grow vegetables on:(
It's rural character and "live & let live" attitude. Also its self reliance and willingness to help neighbors.
That I am left alone
Quiet rural atmosphere outdoor recreation opportunities
The taxes are reasonable, the people are friendly, and their is not a ton of busy body rules
Frugal town government. Low taxes. Good neighbors.
Close enough to stuff. People mostly let each other live and let live. Not over regulated but also not a free for all.
Lowest taxes in the area but still provide services. I like the transfer station, snow removal, and the school system. I like how as a homeowner I'm not overburden with codes and permits when it comes to home improvement projects.

The small town rural feel, which is why I hate to see the takeover by things like self-storage units. Totally unnecessary and ruins the small town rural setting. That land could be better used for things like single family housing.
West Gardiner very nice town to live and raise your family. People are friendly and always ready to help those in need.
Our neighborhood (Windy Acres), the elementary school, proximity to the highway and to Gardiner, the transfer station
The ability to do what you want with your own land
Freedom as a property owner to do what we'd like, also that it is rural
Easy access, friendly, not over developed
All the services that Gardiner provides. But also appreciate being in a rural area.
I appreciate people reaching out to neighbors and caring for each other. I value engagement in town meeting and accessibility of town officials. I was glad for open space and access to woods and waters as my children were growing up. I love the dark skies and relative quiet.
That it is a small town and the people look out for one another. That is why allowing those horrible storage units, the cannibas store front and solar farms in this town are so divisive. The storage units built and owned by James and Whitney were built because there were no rules and they can't be seen from the homes they live in! It was taking full advantage with no regard for the people who live next to them. These ventures also bring people into this town who do not care about the townspeople and will invite trouble. Wait and see.
The simplicity and friendliness of this town. Its ability to remain true to itself and its people and not be taken over by politic and committees that don't have knowledge of its history.
Small town
West Gardiner is a very nice town.
I like that there are some quieter more rural areas that still have easy access to Gardiner and Augusta. I like that the town government is fairly simple and mostly stays out of people's way, although I recognize that there are definite downsides to that. I think that in general the priorities of the town, i.e. maintaining schools and infrastructure and having a transfer station are fairly well run and balanced. I like that there is still a small town feel even though it's growing.
Easy access to 95 - Augusta, Waterville, Portland, Brunswick, Southern NH & Mass.

I like that, within reason, West Gardiner is a live and let live town without a ton of rules and regulations and a place where neighbors still step up to help neighbors. I also like that it is still a democracy where people can go to town meeting and have a say in how things are run. I've returned here in retirement but have roots here for over 60 years, beginning in high school. I've always loved West Gardiner.
The people, the quietest
It's quiet, low taxes, and people are concerned about maintaining the "small town" feel. It's important to the residents and we're not looking for continued growth. We have just the right amount of services, costs are reigned in and there's no bloat in the annual budget. Let's keep it that way.
The country feeling. Open land and sparse houses. Farmland and active farming.
the community
Its quiet and in the woods. I moved here five years ago and after a week I never wanted to leave. I have lived all over the country and around the world and I am good here. Its also safe and neighbors care about each other.
It's independent style and it's unofficial tittle " The Wild Wild West"
The peace and quiet of the country while still be close to Augusta for shopping
Low tax rate and very well plowed roads.
There are ample opportunities to be a very involved citizen if one chooses to.
Grew up here low taxes
I like the sense of community and the natural beauty.
We moved here because the town is beautiful and small town, taxes are low but we are not lacking services. Keep it small town, keep the taxes low. We don't want to be a city - if we did, we would have bought in Augusta or Gardiner. We hope West Gardiner will remain the small town we all love.
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Quite, respectable folks. Good care of our roads
The whole package
Small town feel.
The people, ***the low mill rate***, the country common sense and town leadership, quietness, hunting opportunities, abundant wildlife, close proximity to Gardiner, Augusta and Rt.95-295, the ability to go to the town office late on Thursdays if needed, i love the ability to go to the transfer station with anything that i may have and i appreciate that its open on Saturdays because its the only day i have off work, these guys are friendly and are good workers. I like everything about this town. It's obvious the town is operated by people that have good common sense and they dont want to turn this place into Downtown Portland.... Thank you
The quaint small town feel and rural aspect of the community
That it's not packed and it's quiet.
That I can still walk into a public area where I know people and am known...I don't believe that happens in the bigger towns...my family has a history here and it still counts for something.
Low tax rate
Friendly, low taxes, everyone seems to know everyone and are always willing to help out when needed. Also, not a lot of restrictions, which allows landowners more freedom
it is rural, but close to urban areas. The transfer station (which I wish had better hours.)
Taxes are OK.
The quaintness of it, it's clean, most residents are friendly and respect each other.
That people mind their own business, at least for the most part (except for a few)
Freedom of doing what you want with your land and house without the need for permits.
The people who live here

It has always been a welcoming place. Mert Hickey was the first person I met in West Gardiner. He immediately invited me to a party to meet the neighbors.
The location and the hope that it won't get over developed. Close to businesses but not too close.
Rural community and open space
I love the wide open spaces and how friendly everyone has been
Small town/community School- Helen Thompson is amazing!
COUNTRY LIVING. QUIET. PEOPLE ARE FRIENDLY
We are free to do what we want and we are a town...
I like the freedom that we have of living here, and that things just move a little more slowly here. I don't want to see a ton of organized structures and recreational facilities that we have to pay to keep up. I don't want more services that will ultimately just raise our taxes. The reason I love living here is because it's a simple life with low taxes. If I wanted to live somewhere with more goods and services, I would move to Portland, or Freeport, or Manchester.
West Gardiner has always been a town where people can do what they please with their own property and that's how our town should remain. Someone in the past had complained that the selectmen were "running the town like a business", and I don't believe there is any better way. I run a business and I want the best possible people to give the best possible experience at the best cost for my business and for the people who walk through our doors. West Gardiner should keep allowing citizens to use their land as they please and should support one another and go to the town office and selectmen for information — not someone typing on Facebook.
Low taxes and lower population density.
The freedom to raise my family without the hustle and bustle of a large city. If I wanted planning boards and regulations/ultimatums, I would move to a large city. Mert Hickey kept things simple, our younger generation is not interested in keeping things simple. I love the guidance but our town provides without suffocation. We are lucky and I hope we can get back on track with this trajectory.
The rural, small town feeling

I like that we let residents be the owners of their property. I don't feel like an indentured servant paying a fortune to live on what I own. I like that we are a small town. I like that we have been cautious in our budgeting and spending for these last 18 years. It's a relief to have people care about those they serve and not just keep pushing for things that aren't needed. I like that we are willing to buy used trucks for the transfer station rather than a brand new one for 10x the price.
Its the beauty and pace of a small Maine town, with easy access to larger towns and cities. I love that our town is surrounded by waterways and sprawling fields.
It is still a small town feel with friendly residents. Everyone in the Town Office is great, friendly, helpful. The Selectboard has always worked well together and not let personalities get in the way of Town business.
Location to interstates and services
The small town/country/undeveloped way of living- while still being close to amenities in other communities. Town meetings are great "old way" of governing.
I grew up here and lived here all my life. Enjoy being able to walk out back and go hunting in the fall. The open space for snowmobiling, 4-wheeling, working, and excited to see my children have the same childhood I had. Away from the hustle and bustle of neighboring towns or cities. Great neighbors.

46. What do you like LEAST about West Gardiner?

The recent rush to put commercial endeavors in place with no restrictions. Storage sheds are prime example
While the idea of being in control of your own land is appealing, it is clear that some control for all must be imposed. A planning and zoning board would help. I also wish the town government (selectmen) would give is more information as to local events affecting us. For example, we should have received explanations for some of the items on the warrant before we got to the meeting. We also need more transparency of the town's business. I think a lot of social media gossip could be eliminated with simple communication from the town office. Maybe minutes from the weekly town meeting on Thursday could be posted.
Storage sheds. Large growth. Seem to be behind on zoning & thinking forward.

The storage units have changed the landscape of French's Corner dramatically. Two large units on that one corner then a short drive down the road another storage unit. One was fine but the following 2 ruin the drive.
Self Storage monstrosities
new storage buildings
Rapid growth and lack of zoning laws to help regulate growth
People not minding their own business rube not necessary comments on FB page
No tax maps online.
Rapid growth and lack of zoning laws to help regulate growth
Storage facilities, incompatible, hodgepodge development
Lack of control over properties that are an eyesore
The overbuilding of storage units, the POOR mail service, the abundance of convenient store/gas stations with little town love (anymore).
storage sheds
Too much spending all at once
Low key, relaxed living
There are a lot of eye sores here. The house next to the storage units at four corners is one example. The 'business' at the corner of High and Hallowell/Litchfield Road is another one.
The new giant storage units
solar panels
Lack of rules has encouraged businesses coming in and making a mess of residential neighborhoods. I also cannot stand looking at other people's junk in their yards. It makes the town look like a dump
sometimes the so call "good old boys" decided what and not the general public
New people moving into town because they like it (and the low taxes) but immediately tell us how to change the town and make it "better".
Nothing at present. Only a concern that outside factors will exert influence which would alter the character of West Gardiner in the future.
I like least the proliferation of pot use.

Speeding vehicles
Seems like lots of trash along the roads, large branches hanging over the roads (on the opposite side of power lines) that can be dangerous, lots of black tire marks throughout the town, several residential sites have trash, broken vehicles, mattresses, burned out mobile homes that are eye sores. Would be nice to have road crew brush all the sand, dirt & rocks of peoples lawns along the roads from snow plowing.
it's getting to big.
Not sure at this time
The growth, more traffic
The lack of flow of information from the town office to residents. Fortunately someone will see a notice and post on the unofficial town facebook page. There are close to 4,000 residents on that page. Use it! If you don't like the administrator, get over it! The point is to be transparent and get the info to residents. Residents shouldn't have to do a scavenger hunt to find things out.
I'm a very liberal Democrat and at times, I feel quite isolated by the more Libertarian mindset that projects itself so strongly here. Not only in the town in general but also from the members of the town council.
The over-arching tone of the town is to keep a very light touch on all things. The 'keep things as they are' mindset is not only wrongheaded but fast becoming outdated. Just look at how West Gardiner has been developing in only a few short years? Storage facilities everywhere you look. Is that all this town has to offer? It's disappointing. It shows a blatant lack of vision.
Currently, the landscape of storage units has cheapened the look of our town. I don't believe they add any value to our town.
There is a very poor selection of resources for groceries and gas nearby.
Nothing at present. Only a concern that outside factors will exert influence which would alter the character of West Gardiner in the future.
Not many places we can go for a walk
Storage units. Town office expenditures.
The lack of inclusiveness if you're not from Maine I've lived in West Gardiner for 36 years and this is the first time I've been asked for an opinion.
Commercialization seems to be important to town officials

The growth of business verses residential living
Increasing self storage units and solar farms
The increase on storage facilities and solar panels
No complaints
No possibility of taxes going to whatever school we want our children to attend.
Too much solar power so close to the roads and streets. Too many storage units!
current commercial growth and speeding cars
no tax maps, that being said the taxes are fair for not having them
The influx of storage buildings and new homes being built.
More and more all the time. I feel the selectmen are corrupt. They do what they want without even asking the citizens. I>E> solar foelds on Town land. No public bids for Town work. ETC.
Speeding traffic on Hallowell-Litchfield Rd among other local roads as well. No police presence to discourage it.
Too much of an 'Ole boys' network. Times are changing and we have to get with it or get left behind ... more get run over.
Can't think of anything
Lack of transparency on part of Select Board. Recent spats on social media that encourage misinformation and impede Select Board and staff from being able to do their jobs effectively. Has had horrible effect on morale.
Recent lack of transparency by Select Board. Galloping development and resulting harm to abutters of storage facilities and solar arrays/systems. I am very concerned about training and equipment for fire fighters given the vagaries and dangers of solar wastes.
The number of cars that race around the streets
How it has become, honestly. Times change and things change, but its sad that land/area my kids use to be able to run around on, snowmobile on and be kids on, have been turned into house lots. There are so many house lots.....

I do get that times change, like I said, but i know I also dont want to be told what to do on my own residential land.
Gossip
There is no town center/downtown.
The new solar field. It's a terrible way to treat the land.
Storage facilities, Frank Folsom's yard.
Large scale storage facilities
No main street or centralized place for small businesses. Need to go out of town if you need more than essentials.
Properties that are allowed to continuously degrade, amount of RV's on the property used for storage looking like an active junkyard. The forgotten yards, are eyes sores, can only imagine how many rodents live. I get it's an owner property, pay taxes. However, has to be a safety concern as well.
The fact we do not have our own post office or zip code.
How petty everyone is lately. how a select few feel it is a majority when only a few hundred made decisions. Defin dont care for loss of land in west gardiner, but also enjoy the lack of codes for every little thing.
Trashy properties and the 2% of residents who are disrespectful
The storage facilities and the idea of Large Solar Farms. I'm a supporter of Medical marijuana but we don't need it in our town, there's plenty of store fronts close by! McGee and Gero are 2 names I'm not fond of!
Probably code enforcement? Some residents do not care for the appearance of their homes i.e. the 'pink' house near the highway. Where excess garbage and items have lowered the value of surrounding houses.
All the storage units and housing developments taking up all the land.
The increased population, the influx of people from out state that came to get away from all the regulations and rules that now want to have all sorts of regulations and rules.
Increased traffic.

Solar panels , dope sales, medical dope sales or stores
Absolutely nothing
Storage units
Dogs roaming wherever they want go. People let them out and they just are allowed to go wherever they want to
Lack of law enforcement presence will ultimately reduce people's willingness to live in WG, speeding details and police presence is needed now, people need to feel safe and the roads are not safe in WG. Everybody knows it, do something now before someone or someone's kid gets killed
right now the " politics " being played out. need to remember that everyone is working for the same reason hopefully, family and community.
Dirt bikes, noise
Speeders
Lack of trash pickup and that my road is private and maintained by McGee's at random times so sometimes I'm snowed in. I'd like the road to be taken over by the town.
The unwillingness to contribute more for education.
I hate to see it getting so crowded. Hate that people want to come here and change the way things have always been.
Town government is to reliant on a 3 person selectboard and needs additional boards and positions and take some power away from selectboard. We need an assessor.
Storage units and solar farms
Everything closes too early and no places deliver food to our town but Chinese and that's limited too. Sometimes you just don't want to go anywhere an don't feel like cooking an wishes something other then Chinese delivered without costing an arm an leg for doordash fees because it's close an within range of your home.
All the storage units and pot shops opening up.
Not enough communication to the town, not everyone goes by the town office to see the sign, more mailings or texts of when there are town meetings

<p>There's not much I don't like- please limit solar panels- it absolutely ruins the look of our beautiful fields- it's not good for wildlife... and they can't be recycled.. well some parts.</p> <p>Also please encourage more plastic recycling other then just #2 So many plastics are #1,5,7</p>
How some residents maintain their property
The amount of storage facilities that have been allowed to pop up on valuable west gardiner road front in recent years.
The growth, too many people moving in, school too small and the people that feel the need to know what you are doing all the time
People stuck in the mud about supporting our school district.
Limited public boat access
Subdivisions, Loss of land to builders.
The current business development that we have had with storage units, solar panels and and businesses from out of town profiting from it.
Too many new residents from 'away' bringing their bigotry ideas to change our town by increasing our taxes.
The mean people
All the subdivisions, storage units, solar panels.
Housing developments, storage units and solar panels.
Insulated town government that isn't open or transparent. The way the ordinances went down was shameful - the selectmen didn't listen to the residents and then seemed shocked when people were upset. This is OUR town and the selectmen need to listen to the people. Input should be solicited and it should be easier for people to participate in the process - transparency matters.
People taking advantage of the low taxes for commercial use. The fact that new houses get assessments at a higher value and houses a few years old don't get adjusted up to match. (A new 2200 Sq ft house gets assessed at 520k while a 3 or 4 year old house thats bigger has a lower price equal assessment it seems.) People with money buying up land and subdividing for profit, people putting up poorly built houses and selling for top dollar taking advantage of our towns lax code enforcement.

Changes that get proposed by people that have brought terrible ideas with them.
For as much as this town insists that we keep our community from underneath the "authoritarian rule of the local, state and federal law and politicians," I think the few men and women (and spouses) who run this town hold way too much power. There is absolutely no accountability or oversight and, frankly, I was incensed (but not terribly shocked) at how the last three Selectmen carried themselves with the whole Solar, Self-Storage, and Marijuana ordinances. The fact that they appeared to be shocked by the town's increasing resistance to "jamming through" these ordinances—which benefited the few, and were antithetical to the "don't tread on me" mentality of this town—and the beat red face and exacerbation of one Selectmen in particular—speaks to just how out of touch they are with the community they govern. We must live the values we preach and hold so dear in this town. We, the taxpayers who pay these town officials' salaries and keep this town running, deserve full transparency, oversight committees, accountability, and a broader town government structure (to include planning boards, appeals boards, open Selectmen meetings, more communication with the town) NOT so that we can have a "larger government," per se. But to instill confidence that not three men own and run this town at their sole discretion, but that we, the people, govern ourselves and we dictate what happens in our community. It's gross and embarrassing to see this concentration of power. And, let's be honest, the bullying by our town officials (and their spouses) of anyone who tries to jump in as a new official, or a resident who tries to organize to make other residents aware of official happenings.
Roads are too narrow. Biking or jogging on many West Gardiner roads is a death wish.
Lack of communication between selectmen and residents. Noise level is increasing. I do not think the historical building is worth the expense that they are incurring. I don't think that even the need for this building is worth it. I prefer to work towards the future - not the past.
The storage units
I do not love the self storage units that are now surrounding many formerly beautiful areas or the solar farms. I also am sad at the strong seeming dislike to newcomers.
STORAGE UNITS EVERYWHERE!! Not real thrilled with all of the sub-developments going in and I feel like our population is growing a bit too rapidly.
the fact that we have town meetings and discussions then things magically change at last minute to what the selectmen decide.
It's appeal/desirability for others to locate here.

Commercial growth taking land forever
Junk yards and unsecured unihabited properties that are falling in.
The amounts of garbage and empty cans(beer&liquor) Trash being dumped in and on our roads!
All the new businesses and houses! Most of the hunting land is gone now
Any deviation from above. Also more land is being posted, which is affecting both the hunting and the welcoming nature of the town..
Town's refusal to deal with masses of junk piling up on properties, and flagrant disregard for deed restrictions
Solar panels taking over fields subsidized by wasteful spending Busy body residents Pot heads yelling and screaming at the disc golf place
The current trend in which a small group of people in town are advocating to create policies that will tell people what they can do with their own land...no storage units, no solar panels. This used to be a town that valued that allowed people as much freedom as possible to do as they pleased. That was one of the reasons we moved here. Maybe we will start posting our land and closing down our snowmobile trails.
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As I state how I like the low codes and regulations above, I wish that there was some regulation in place about tearing down dangerous structures (as my barn has been knocked over, I know I'm in this boat as well). For instance, there are multiple homes and barns collapsed on the Lewiston rd. and requiring those structures to be torn down would increase home values on that stretch of road, along with cleaning up a massive eye soar.

Commercialization of town land.
West Gardiner is now getting out of hand. School budgets are getting out of sight. We want to stay a small country town with less development coming to town.. Its why everyone wants to move here. Taxes have been lower for one reason.
Some vocal residents who are less than welcoming to newcomers and to change.
People trying to change it
Growth, outsiders trying to change things
Bickering on fb group
No tax maps.
Resistance to change - thinking that the way we always done it is the best way, as opposed to being open to change and improvement, modernizing and taking some healthy risks. I welcome new people and new ideas and think some don't welcome new people or new ways of doing things.
That the small town charm has taken a real blow with the storage units, cannibas store front and solar farms issues. It also feels like West Gardiner is becoming too crowded.
Junk on property. Not fair to neighbors.
Getting larger population
No Town Tax Maps. It is very to answer many questions with the Town not having Tax Maps.
I'm worried that the nearly nonexistent regulations have sort of made the town a target for easy development and exploitation.
Has nothing to offer except housing.
I don't like seeing people move in here from away because they wanted something better and then trying to change things to be more like where they moved from. I hate seeing the " so-called progress" to be like everywhere else, especially the cannabis businesses and solar ! One of the things I like most, very few restrictions, has allowed the things I hate most to " rear their ugly heads"!
Nothing
It would be helpful to have clarity on what selectmen are working on so people understand there is no perception of "conflict of interest". What happened at the two town meetings/vote is not what West Gardiner is all about. people are generally

friendly and work together, but the negativity, name calling and assumption of conflict of interest - due to lack of transparency or understanding, was and is uncalled for.
Too many people and businesses want to come here. Farms are being neglected and bought out for houses.
i believe residents should be able to do what they want with their property, commercial or otherwise.
Town drama with longstanding memories. The Hatfields and McCoys are Southern we should be better
The encroachment of State and Federal mandates.
A lot of bad drivers and idiots on the roads
The junky yards people have and the people that find it necessary to make a mess of the road with their tire marks. And no map and lot numbers. There needs to be better of records for the land that we own.
I'm not sure how much public opinion is sought after when big decisions are made that affect many...i.e. construction of self storage buildings
The whiny Karen's that want to control what other people do with their property. Shady town officials!!!
Storage facilities (too many), and lack of recreational activities/areas for kids.
The storage units that were put up on Collins Mills & Townhouse Roads; the lack of enforcement of those properties littered with junk and trash - no enforcement on residents of those properties to clean them up; lack of enforcement of farm animals being kept on properties that obviously cannot support them (too small, not enough grazing area for goats, cows, etc) - and the pests those animals bring to neighbors like rats.
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No idea
The Facebook page. People are very brave behind the keyboard. I want people to care about the town and have positive conversations and not nasty battles.
I don't like seeing litter, trailer parks or weed shops, or anything that supports easy access to street drugs/alcohol. Or a yard full of junk, broke down cars, tires, trash where everyone can see it.
New self storage buildings
The current attitude that if someone appears the slightest bit suspicious that the first response is "I have a gun and will use it". God forbid someone get lost and pull over in front of the wrong house. Sad that the assessors needed to do there job in a marked vehicle in case someone got the wrong idea. Facebook is a huge problem in this regard because like minds just egg each other on and if anyone tries to talk reasonably they are mocked for being ignorant and out of touch with reality. Who knows?? Maybe they are. I suspect I am.
Seems to be a lot of drinking and driving going on based on the amount of beer and liquor bottles on the side of the road.
Some of the noise which came with new residents, and all the new self storage units. One was fine, but 3???!!!
Unofficial facebook page
The fact that it is country life. Don't want it to become over run with commercialism.
Lack of police presence. People fly on our roads. There is also no place to walk in West Gardiner along town roads, it's very unsafe-again with how fast everyone drives.
The few people that think they have more to say than everyone else
There is no publis access to the lake either for swimming or boating in Town.
Nothing at all

It needs to face reality that development will happen and we must regulate that development or it will be just a sprawl like the self storage facilities.
<p>The rapid rate of growth. If you want a house or building every 1.....acres you should live in Gardiner or Augusta. Houses being built on a "postage stamp" size lots isn't rural living.</p> <p>I realize that this is concern being worked on.</p>
<p>Large businesses on small roads (sooooo disrespectful of rural living!!!!).</p> <p>Junk yards that are NOT fenced in and NOT outside of 500 yards of neighbor's personal property (State of Maine Law).</p>
There's a lot of derelict/run down houses and a number of houses with a lot of junk in their yards. This can lead to decreased home worth and broke down vehicles/equipment can leak chemicals into the local soil causing contamination.
NEW PEOPLE MOVING IN AND WANT TO CHANGE WHAT WE HAVE.. IF YOU MOVE HERE == LEAVE IT ALONE. IT IS PERFECT
Growth and becoming a low poverty area draw
I dislike that people are trying to change our town and create committees, add additional services that we have never needed and don't need now, trying to limit what I can and can't do with my own land, etc.
Facebook posts and family politics and personal issues that are spread throughout the town.
The amount of growth and sub divisions. I don't feel we are looking at the amount of pollution and wear and tear on roads the increased housing is causing!
The recent misinformation and slander happening on the unofficial Town Facebook page. The slander and belittling of people who have lived and worked in this town for their entire life do not deserve the recent events associated with the voting process. I have never felt so disrespected in that I had a different opinion but since others voices were louder, my opinion didn't matter. The dishonesty and exaggeration felt like a violation, and that is NEW West Gardiner, that is not why I chose to raise my family in this town.
That it's getting built up very quickly, especially with storage units
The amount of sub developentswant to pay for.

Some of the road maintenance is abysmal. We live on the Pond Road and there has been a huge bump just before the overpass, heading toward Litchfield. It should have been repaired before the town had the road resurfaced. When I called the town office, they told me it was Richmond's DOT that was responsible for it. I felt like my concern was unheard and then passed off to another organization that didn't take responsibility for it either.

This past winter was one of the worst snow clearings I have experienced in my 18 years of living in the town.

Facebook and the lack of personal accountability.

When some residents talk about others online in cruel ways or make untrue statements on social media.

I have only lived here a relatively short time, but there appears to be some conflicts of interest and drama amongst "prominent" town figures and leaders.

What used to be field is now houses. What used to be woods is now houses. Less and less space. It seems like people come from away with different money making schemes and initiatives. I'm all for small business success but its a balance because on one hand I don't think anyone should be able to say what someone can or can't do on their own land. But on the other hand its sad to see land go to sale for developments, etc.

47. What PROBLEMS would you most like to see local government address?

High cost of public education. Get control of any future development by establishing a set of zoning and code enforcement objectives.

Transparency in the town's business would be very helpful.

I would like to see the transfer station be reconfigured for one-way traffic around the hopper building. Marked parking sites at the transfer station would help as well.

Overall the transfer station is good but the traffic gets congested (and people don't pay attention).

More recreational areas if the land is available. The new boat launch from a few years ago is a great beginning.

More community gatherings such as the events the past few years put on by the fire department. The fireworks, public suppers, and pancake breakfasts were all very enjoyable.

Would also like to see more street lights put in. Mainly on Neck road. I drive this at night and it can be very dark.

Encourage high speed internet options. I believe most of WG is serviced but are the pockets that are not?

More transparency from the town on everything - i.e. on board meetings & notes. If a decision is made - post it. If something is being looked into - post it & state what it is. If there is an emergency meeting post it AND tell the reason for it. I don't have the time to keep calling the office & asking what the various emergency meetings are for, or if the meeting notes are correct - or why they aren't correct.

For the town meeting - in addition to the items we were to vote on - we should have received explanations on the unusual items & the citizen initiatives BEFORE we got to the meeting. IE - using the WGNT for solar - you created a lot of upset residents by blindly putting that in there. Put in an explanation. The articles on solar, storage & marijuana were taken out until worded correctly by an expert (Great!), but we should have known about this ahead of time. Stop blind siding the residents. Put detailed info on the town website then the residents don't have to speculate & spread rumors on social media. Put all the details out there to forestall questions, panic, & rumors.

Transfer station - needs signs for driving & parking. Some people think they always have the right away. It's an accident waiting to happen. Marked parking spaces and driving lanes. Wish they would accept more items that can be recycled.

More nature areas for the public to enjoy.

Lack of planning, zoning

tax rate

favoritism some people its ok others not so much

The current ones of commercial development of any kind of business

Business development drastically changing landscape of town
Better and or more consistent communication to the residents
Mail service Zoning and permitting with the heart of the small town in mind.
Making sure that people follow land use rules
transparency
Pressures on our schools, a zoning plan that helps implement the top priorities as determined by this survey & the comprehensive planning committee
less solar panels and storage sheds
See info in question 46
More open on the Board of Selectment,,, minutes of each meeting and made public on web site, maybe a quarterly report to the town via web site on the town going ons
Speeding on our roads
I'd like to see an ordinance against more pot facilities of any kind; retail, medical or commercial growing.
Those I listed above in 46. The amount of property owners that haven't paid their taxes for several years.
more with the elderly. Assistance with food, heat and transportation if it is needed.
Unknown at this time due to recently relocating here.
How to keep WG the rare gem it is, we live here instead of other suburbs because it is still a country feel. I would rather not have to move further north because this quaint town becomes another overpopulated, over taxed suburb
See above. Transparent communication with residents. Ensuring the town doesn't go to pot...literally! Also how many storage units do we really need?
This town needs a fully rounded comprehensive plan. This town needs to expand building codes, address derelict properties and crack down on land owners that treat their properties like junk yards.
The lack of open communication
Building code issues

I think there is space for the community to come together to solve their own problems (perhaps seasonal town get-togethers or events). It would be nice if local gov't could address the safety issues needed for communities (such as the elderly and the struggling - access to health/transportation), and other avenues of care like PFAS, lead, and arsenic in the water and land, promote clean watershed/streams/lakes/wetlands and encourage responsible outdoor recreation.
marijuana shops and storage units
The growth of commercial verses residential
No comment that was not addressed in above questions.
No more solar or storage facilities
Road conditions
speeding drivers
keep out commercial and industrial unless it's by the highway
The junk piles that have been on peoples properties for years.
What the people want!! No solar. No storage units. No pot stores. No more housing developments.
See # 46 above.
We need dedicated legal advice and a planning board. Those may be right here in the community willing to volunteer.
Is there a way to increase the town resident's participation in town meetings and elections. There was less than 25% of the town at the last town meeting. There will need to be a bigger meeting area for town meetings. The Fire Station is not going to be big enough.
Growth
Growth - type and location Communication with the public so Facebook and ignorance and rumors don't predominate. Adjusting property taxes for those abutting controversial development for solar/storage/marijuana. Their homes' values have plummeted.
Racing cars and the number of JUNK cars

Transparency in ALL ACTIVITIES that happens with town meetings of any kind! More ways of informing the people. (not sure of answer)
Need for affordable housing to bring in and keep our young adults and families
As few as possible. I love the low taxes/small government situation.
Stop any other solar farms.
No more storage facilities No solar farms No more Marijuana shops
Commercial businesses moving in, more focus on small businesses.
communications with ALL residents. TOTAL TRANSPARENCY OF ALL TOWN MEETINGS AND any/all town happenings.
We need a sit-down restaurant
Postal issues
No direct problems at this time
The roads. How small HTS is. Commercial buildings. Things that aren't owned by west gardiner residents.
Speeding on town roads
People with junk yards in their lots
Self storage units Solar farms Weed shops
Lack of law enforcement Leash law, or language to prevent people from just letting their dogs roam free
communications with ALL residents. TOTAL TRANSPARENCY OF ALL TOWN MEETINGS AND any/all town happenings.
We need a sit-down restaurant
Postal issues
No direct problems at this time

Our youth is our future, like to see more attention on them. The clubs seem focused on the older generations. The children definitely have school and youth sports, scouts, but I would like to see more. Also at the town meeting I noted a young man step up to the mike twice with comments/ questions, new to our town, I thought wouldnt it be wonderful to have a gathering maybe once a year to welcome new residents. have all elected officials, teachers, road commissioner, and any one that wants to come!
Too many storage facilities
Speeding
Zoning,
Keep the children from being exposed to cross-dressers and explicit materials in the schools. I can remember visiting my children's classes, how come we can't do that anymore? Schools should be welcoming in parents with open arms.
Term limits for selectboard, and move to a 5 member board.
Trash in yards
Types of business moving into the area
Non, no more government involvement than needed
Busses going down most side roads.
Limit solar fields
Solar panels
Growth, Proper bidding process on projects
The lack of ordinances to control business use. I would like to see more control given to the town to control subdivisions regulated to slow growth, regulate land use and business development. Keeping the land regulated for residential use in moderation. The local government needs to more control for the common good of the town.
No solar farms covering beautiful fields and open spaces.
Subdivisions - too many housing developments, lot sizes need to be increased for subdivisions, growing too fast.
Housing developments

Zoning. We must have zoning and an independent review board (planning committee) to oversee these issues. The selectmen have too much power and zero accountability- it's a recipe for disaster. We must change with the times and that means proactive planning.
All the above
More services for the elderly and children through some of the services I am in favor of earlier in this survey. More governing bodies (planning board, zoning board, appeals board, larger selectboard). We need more people with varying points of view. Not a single body of similarly-minded people dictating what does and does not happen. Sorry to harp on that. But none of my opinions matter if we do not have a more diverse and more transparent town government.
Reduce commercial properties. Awareness of what the residents would like or not like is very important, this survey is an excellent step in the right direction.
Ban use of AR-15's in residential areas. Target practicing to be done at Rod & Gun Club.
I am not sure I see a lot of problems that make sense for the local government to address. I do think it is important to maintain a good school system, protect the amenities already in place, and maintain the roads and buildings. I also am proud of our fire department. The only additional problem that makes sense to me is to play our part in protecting the Cobbossee watershed. To lose that - to milfoil, pollution or loss of the dams - would be a huge loss.
rules and regulations . Building codes. Review of all growth.
Those items listed above and not accepting roads unless inspected by a state engineer who can verify if it meets state requirements. They can dig on the side of a paved road to
Milfoil infestation in the Cobbossee watershed. Encourage land owners to keep their land open for public use.
Federal and state intrusion into the rights of private citizens
None come to mind at the moment
I think the transfer station has gotten dangerous. There should be a better flow of traffic there.
Try keeping West Gardiner a small town. This is not the city. Keep it that way.
Capacity of the elementary school
Growth

Water conservation
Create more ways for public discussion/engagement as well as more community gatherings and celebrations so we get to know each other. I would appreciate our property have a map and lot identifier.
Do something about that horrible building on the corner of the Townhouse Road and the Hallowell Litchfield Road that looks like a Taco Bell before someone gets hurt at that intersection. The intersection of the Spears Corner Road and the Lewiston Road also needs to be looked at. It is a dangerous corner and the blinking light has zero effect.
I have also heard that children from other towns in MSAD #11 are coming to Helen Thompson instead of attending the school in their own town. I do not have any information to know if this is true or false. If true, it needs to be addressed, as it appears the school is busting at the seams.
Every town meeting/event needs to have an audio system working and available so that all residents can hear what is being said. Many of our residents could not hear a word John Clark was saying at the town meeting and running 1 microphone around was ineffective. The moderator needs a microphone. The selectboard members each need one and should be expected to speak and participate and then there needs to be a runner going to the residents with a microphone when they are recognized to speak.
Junk in yards
Tax maps and Ordinances
I think school funding could always be increased. I think limited oversight/planning isn't a bad thing and can shape the future of the town to promote development without wrecking the character of the town.
Biases towards less fortunate.
I'd like them to be able to get a better handle on the situations being force on us by our state government, without us having a say. I don't know how to do that, but keeping an idea in what the legislature is doing would be a start.
don't know
See above.
Controlling the growth of West Gardiner. Keep certain places for residential, business, and farmland. Protect and support local farms.
no opinion

Neglected properties, eyesores.
Generating more local business (not weed stores) Useful business to majority of people
The theft of town sand and misuse of the transfer station by non residents.
Not sure. I am not sure of the current problems in WG.
The increased interest in commercial building in town. It seems that the reason people would want to live here, or move here, is the "ruralness" of our community. West Gardiner's close proximity to Gardiner and Augusta should address any needs people might have.
Lack of taxable businesses I.w. Restaurants, athletic complexes market place in. Retail shops. bars. Entertainment. DESPERATELY NEED! Lighting and security camera at the boat launch and parking area on Collins Mills dam access. Someone parked down there and broke into my house. and before that a lady overdosed and died down there. and I've personally caught people shooting up drugs down there!!!!
See answer to 46 above
They need to address what the towns people feel is the most important and not the agenda of the just a few people.
No weed shops or growing period! Let's set an example of how Maine used to be and still is.
Lack of access to fiber optic internet
"It's my property and I'll do what I want with it...to hell with anyone else". There has to be a happy medium somewhere.
None government is not the answer
Excessive speeding on side roads, drunk driving, littering, and seems like there's a problem with people driving around and checking out homes (people always posting about this on FB). Not sure if they are soliciting or casing?
Not sure
Request to take down the facebook page Create a database to track all development in town, whether commercial, industrial, or residential....just numbers and locations and types of development and who is creating or paying for it.
Speeding

I think they are doing fine now
But land on the lake and develop a public right of way with a launch and parking facilities.
Secure public open spaces before they become too expensive.
The rate of development
Junk yards. Limit big businesses especially those that do not abide by the laws.
I'd like to see issues of access inequality addressed. I'd also like more transparency on the political affiliations of the people currently in office.
Keep town from developing commercial property, solar farms
JUNK YARDS NEIGHBORHOODS ARE NOT FOR FREE RANGE ANYTHING. I
Slow growth and preserve our town
I'd like to see the misinformation that is being spread on the unofficial town facebook page addressed and us to go back to a time when we didn't run false smear campaigns to push an agenda.
Water ways and wet lands being ruined by run offs from housing and roads
The recent misinformation and slander happening on the unofficial Town Facebook page. The slander and belittling of people who have lived and worked in this town for their entire life do not deserve the recent events associated with the voting process. I have never felt so disrespected in that I had a different opinion but since others voices were louder, my opinion didn't matter. The dishonesty and exaggeration felt like a violation, and that is NEW West Gardiner, that is not why I chose to raise my family in this town. Town officials should NOT be on Facebook. It is wildly inappropriate. The transparency is there is the folks are inclined to put in the leg work.
Finding a way to let residents pick which percentage of their taxes go to each service. I would love to take the money from the school and move it into improving existing services like fire and public works. We don't agree with how it is managed and the lack of control teachers have over their students is appalling. I should not be forced to support an institution that goes against my faith and core beliefs.
Road maintenance and care.
They are working on it, as always. No one is perfect.
Send out more mailings with updates on town government and what is going on.
Minimum lot sizes need to increase!

48. In a couple of sentences, please DESCRIBE the West Gardiner in which you would like to live.

A rural town without any more commercial or industrial growth Preserve our lakes and wetlands as well as supporting farmers if any left.
I would like to live in a community with low taxes, well maintained roads, friendly services, and a government that works on problems without being too intrusive. I look forward to coming home every night and am able to relax once a I get here.
A town that appreciates its residents, sticks to its roots (rural, single family, small family owned business). Appreciates all nature has to offer. Stop trying to grow to meet & compete with Augusta or someplace else. No large commercial buildings. No buildings over 2 stories tall (so No high rise apartments)
Keep West Gardiner a small community of farms and homes, quaint businesses.
I would like keep West Gardiner the same small town. No more need to build schools. No need of police force.
People helping people
The beautiful residential community that it is, growing at a normal pace. If we all love it, why wouldn't more people/families fall in love when they see it also.
Open country space with agricultural and outdoor recreation areas for towns people to use
The one we currently have.
A peaceful, undeveloped, nature loving paradise!
The West Gardiner of 11 years ago when we purchased our property
Similar to the way it is now
A kind, affordable West Gardiner bordering a beautiful, healthy lake. A town with small businesses, natural beauty and strong environmental, fiscal and educational focus.
The way it is!
Town center to include gas, restaurant, post office, larger school, park/playground, municipal buildings

One where folks could have access to activities & transportation locally; maybe even healthcare!
Lots of land and great neighbors helping neighbors
With very little work to fine touch some thing the town right now
No comment
Just keeping it small town and peaceful. More town gatherings would be nice: picnic or parades and family fun days.
West Gardiner has been a relatively quiet and small town place ever since we moved here. I personally like and enjoy the area, and in general appreciate the more libertarian to conservative nature this town has had since moving here. I really would like to see us encourage some level of growth, but to keep our town from being over run by people that may not share similar values and views.
Freedom to do as we please with our land such as raising livestock. Living in a friendly community where we can enjoy the natural resources the town has to offer.
What it is now
Residential community, with recreational areas for the community to get together.
I'd like this town to embrace protecting the Cobbossee watershed and doing everything possible to preserve and rehabilitate the one thing this town can offer every resident: Safe and accessible access to one of the most beautiful things we have. Additionally, I'd like to see the town strongly encourage agricultural development. This town is one of the last in this area with large enough tracks of property for that purpose. People gotta eat. Let's eat locally grown food. Finally, Maine seniors need accessible, affordable housing. West Gardiner is perfectly positioned in Kennebec county for this. Otherwise, as older residents get old and unable to live their homes, they'll have to leave this town for some other place. Likely far away from where they raised their families, made friends, ultimately losing the community they've made.
The West Gardiner in which I would like to live has continued low taxes while maintaining the services we currently have. Being mindful of the types of businesses we allow in our to bring value to our way of life. A town where all residents are valued and heard. A town that takes pride in our facilities and properties through maintenance and updating. A town where the roads are well maintained in all seasons.

One that cultivates an environment where people want to live here but maintains a rural ethos
I would like to live in a WG that considers preventative care for our nature (no spray, no salt, helping people out with land/water problems, limited damaging recreation), is supportive of diversity (POC, LGBTQIA, the elderly, struggling and single parent families, disabled, etc), and where I don't have to worry that my child can hike in the woods (on our property) and not be shot or harassed. I would like to live in a WG that considers that it is not an isolated place but connected to the rest of the world and therefore is responsible for its actions beyond its borders. I would like to live in a WG that cares about its neighbors (human and otherwise) and how it behaves directly with them.
small safe affordable community with walking trails.
Low expenditures low tax. Low regulation High on support for our neighbors done through neighbors to neighbors not government
More residential housing, less big businesses
Quiet Country living!
Would like to slow the growth of the town. The more residents cost more money to maintain services.
Where our voices are heard and respected. Neighbors being kind to one another
No more development of storage or solar - keep our town as is.
I am already living in it.
Stay friendly , keep the residents informed
the way it is now
few people with plenty of woods and trails to enjoy the maine life of hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, hiking etc.
A small town that is quiet.
The one that was here 30+ years ago.
Keep it country, not commercialized. Small cottage industry is fine like folks selling eggs + baked goods, maple syrup, soaps + crafts.

This one, the one we are trying to preserve. We know we live in a beautiful place, with a sence of community. We just need to keep the money & greed from turning it into a place we don't want to live. There is a huge difference between greed and prosperity. We need a planning board who can see past the promised dollar signs and protect what is real.
I would like to see West Gardiner stay a rural community.
We like things the way they are right now. Nothing needs to change.
We cannot recapture what we once were, but we can complete the Comprehensive Plan process to guide us and try to retain what was, is and what will be.
A mix of housing types with sufficient lot sizes. A town with a variety of residents (age and background) who support each other, the school/library/Boys and Girls Club, as well as "homemade" groups like the Senior Citizens Club, and the Snowmobile and Rod and Gun Clubs.
One that my kids/grandkids can grow up in and be safe and be able to afford it. For people to acutally listen to others.
I would like West Gardiner to be a residential and agricultural community with excellent schools. I would like areas of higher density residential (apartments, condos, tiny home park) balanced with public parks/greenspaces for the residents in that housing.
The safe and small town. No big traffic and keep open spaces.
Small town life style Laid back attitude Recreational areas for kids, boating, swimming, town events Family oriented Town Gatherings
Akin to how it was 3 years ago, more residential is A-OK
More community events. Website is very basic and needs to be modernized, more local info.
We are living in a community we are proud to be part of, we are in an area that is sparse, yet know that our neighbors would help if the need presented itself. My main concern if that to many outsiders move in and want their ideas of how things ran in their other towns/states. My wife an I feel lucky everyday we drive to our home.
Friendly, helpful,

A slightly more developed area, maybe like a "Main Street" type of feeling, but otherwise don't change much else.
West Gardiner, a small quaint town with a true "country" feel, in the summer you can swim and fish, winter time you can skate, ice fish and snow shoe! Everyone knows each other in this beautiful little town and most are willing to help when they can!
I enjoy the West Gardiner I live in now
A small town. Everyone knows everyone and everything. You can't see your neighbors. Peaceful and quiet, no big stores or restaurants or anything. I want it how it was 20 years ago.
I wish West Gardiner would be the same as what it was when I moved out here in 1997. There were less homes and beautiful land to take in.
I moved to West Gardiner 50 years ago from Augusta. I found it delightful when I could write a check at either store and not have to pull out ID and give the a phone number because they just knew where I lived and who I was anyway. It's not like that now.
Leave it the way out founders made it and don't try to make it Portland or Lewiston
The current town
I want to live in a place that's not over crowded, little traffic, and quiet
Peaceful Safe My home should be not be interrupted by speeding vehicles, loud vehicles. Squeeling tires and neighbors dogs in my yard
Quieter, friendlier
Quiet neighborhood
Seems pretty good already.
A rural, agricultural bedroom community with excellent schools and recreational opportunities for families, with well planned multi-unit affordable housing so that our children can live in their hometown once they grow up and start their own families. Allowance of accessory dwelling units so that multi-generational families can share the family property in ways that give everyone privacy and that can be rented out once no longer needed for family. Maybe a rule that ADUs cannot be rented out for the first year after construction (ie must be used by family/friend of the homeowner).
I live in the West Gardiner in which I would like to live, please don't change!

A beautiful place with low taxes, that's not crowded, that let's people do what they wish. That doesn't force regulations on its people. Address the problems and let the rest of us live our lives as we wish as long as we are not causing anyone problems, just stay out of my business.
The town is great now except that we have been victim of our own ignorance in not keeping up with a comprehensive plan, and have allowed a 3 person selectboard many of which have been in Office a long time dictate the way the town will function. We need to have more open communication and not allow this to continue.
I would like to live in a town where road associations don't exist and restaurants that do delivery and places for adults to hang out on date night without children or places that children can go and have a great time like an activity place
Peaceful and respectful.
The same as it is now in 2023!
Small local owned businesses, that fit the aesthetic of our rural country community, places where friends can gather for entertainment and conversation... Being able to take a short drive to your favorite watering hole for kayaking, fishing and swimming... Along with places to go for beautiful nature walks to escape the hustle of everyday life... To be honest the way it is right now????
A free West Gardiner where you can do what you want within the laws of the state and town with a school big enough to accommodate all the children and a community that supports places being developed for the kids to play and get outside
The one that currently is
Current status
30 years ago.
Preserving our farm land and open spaces.
Small town with low taxes A good retirement community.
Small town feel, friendly people, helping the community working together.
Like to see the Town of west Gardiner like it was in the 60's when I was a kid!
Just freeze it like it is now!

One where it doesn't feel like a good-old-boy, backroom deal, secret handshake kind of place. I know there are a LOT of amazing, kind, thoughtful, wonderful people in West Gardiner, which is why I live here. But I do not like the way the town is governed at all. Sometimes I walk into the town office and feel eyes upon me. I am a taxpayer. I don't need my butt kissed, but I should not feel like I can't be heard by town officials or wonder: boy, are the ladies in the office going to glare or smile at me today? It just doesn't seem friendly when it comes to the people in power in West Gardiner. So, when you ask me what I would like West Gardiner to be: simply put, reflective of its residents at all levels with clean, open spaces, autonomy for property owners, but systems in place to grow and develop the town responsibly, and in favor of those who live here. Not the guy who owns the biggest construction company in Kennebec County or a Selectmen's childhood best friend.
A quiet residential rural community.
The same quiet neighborhood that I have lived in for 42 years. Less giving financial resources until the economy levels.
With the exception of storage units and lot sizes I think our town and our people are fantastic!!
Haha.... the West Gardiner of a few years ago.... Before Covid struck and everyone moved in....
the current West Gardiner is good for me that is why we moved here
The same West Gardiner that we live in now. Banning solar farms, pot shops, storage facilities, etc. are one-off "remedies" that will really not help us in the long run. Planning efforts, geared toward a comprehensive plan/town philosophy would serve us much better. Thanks for this survey, in that regard.
A town rural in nature of mostly single family homes and restrictions on commercial development
Quiet clean slow organized development with appropriate visual appeal with a organic feel.
The old one.
A farming community that cares about its residents liberties, never demands its residents to disobey their conscience, and fights to preserve the country we grew up in.
A family friendly community that values education, privacy, and a simple way of life.
The same town I've lived in for 47 years. People are friendly and willing to help those in need. Try to keep down being over populated.

Rural
Not over developed! No strip malls or chain stores
Open, inclusive, valuing diversity, prioritizing conservation for people/wildlife as well as more trails to encourage more active lifestyle - more hiking, biking, skiing. I would like to see more of a sense of community and trust and curiosity in our neighbors.
I have lived in this town for 55 years. It has grown exponentially. With growth comes challenges and opportunities. There needs to be a planning board in this town to manage these challenges and opportunities and there needs to be a selectboard that understands the needs and wants of the average resident and acts on their behalf and for the future of this town.
Residential development only.
I like it just the way it is.
Great
I'd like to live in a town with a friendly feel and a nice school, with clean well maintained roads. I'd like to see open meadows, clean water in streams and the lake, and stretches of undeveloped woods. I'd like government to be accessible and civil, and serve its purpose without being over controlling.
I like living in the current West Gardiner just fine. I came here to be closer to family, not for what it could offer in amenities. As family declines, I will probably leave.
I'd like to live in a West Gardiner where people love our town and have enough pride in it to keep it looking neat , without needing rules to force that. I'd like to continue seeing people involved and interested and willing to lend a hand to neighbors when needed. For the most part, we have that. I love the small town atmosphere.
I love it right where I am
A "small town" with lots of friendly people willing to help one another. Low taxes with only required services. Let's not become a city.
A rural community with farming and forests abounding.
Community events and celebrations. Anything to bring people together so we can get to know people in the town.
A small town Norman Rockwell place with the services people need
A friendly community that allows an easy relaxed life style.

I want to live in a town with a low crime rate and that helps its citizens who need help.
The West Gardiner I would like to see would have more trees than storage units, more farm fields than solar farms, more streams and walking trails than stores.
Free from uneducated MAGA Karen's!
A community with ample opportunities for connection.
The small town feel and appearance of West Gardiner is what made us buy our house here. In 17 years, we have seen a lot of development and we aren't real happy about it. I want to keep the country, keep the small town, keep the low taxes. Keep having neighbors watch out for neighbors. I don't want West Gardiner to turn into a city. I hope the traditions of our town are also kept. We have loved living here since 2006.
Right where I am.
Very happy right where I am
I love the small town feel of West Gardiner. I like that I know my neighbors and if an emergency, I can call many people to help. Love having the transfer station.
A quiet small town with like minded, honest, hard working people.
Exactly how it is.
Here's where I demonstrate just how out of touch I am. I would like to see a town where people know each other, not because they are the jerk who causes problems for everyone else, but because they care about the town and their neighbors.
One where people don't infringe on the rights of their neighbors rights to do with their property as they please. (if it isn't costing any tax money it's not their business)
Friendly people, neighbors aren't too close, not too many people from away trying to make WG like the place they left. Love the country/rural life.
A safe, rural community with excellent plowing services in the winter and road maintenance in the summer. A place where I can walk and enjoy outdoor activities and live in peace and quiet.
Where people are friendly and do not talk about other residents or post undocumented info on facebook pages.
No more Marijuana shops, no more storage sheds and definitely no solar farms.

A place where Tammy Hickey doesn't have any influence at all.
Lake access, coffee/pastry shop, ice cream stand, pub and the freedom to have a love one build a home on the small 1.3 acre lot that we have left to give away!
I like it here. I have lived in seven states. None better than Maine or more welcoming than West Gardiner.
A rural town with controlled growth.
Right where I am--with town requiring junk yards to fence in their junk.
I would like to see more open spaces for public use. If the town does vote to allow construction of things like apartment buildings and condos, I would like to see town land used for an allotment system so that folks living in those more enclosed spaces have access to outdoor growing spaces.
I AM LIVING IT
Slow pace, open fields, farmland, peaceful countryside, center of town facility where we can have town gatherings annually
I'd like to live in the West Gardiner in which I've always lived in. People talk about issues person to person. Government stays out of our business. We have the freedom to do what we want with our land. Taxes are cheap. The necessities are taken care of (transfer station, public education, roads).
Quiet tight family community .
Peaceful, private and welcoming community focused on helping one another.
I want to see fewer businesses and storage facilities being built
I'd love to stay a small town with a small government the way it's been since i moved here. We have a great community and I don't want to become just another swamped boarder town.
Laid back, slow paced, like something from the past. A place to relax and enjoy the nature that surrounds our beautiful town.
It's here.
A town where all can be friendly and not gossip about others. A town where neighbors can be considerate of their neighbors and their property.
I would like to live in a West Gardiner that remains small in population, where there is still plenty of privacy and nature around. Small government and low taxes.

See my answer to #45: I grew up here and lived here all my life. Enjoy being able to walk out back and go hunting in the fall. The open space for snowmobiling, 4-wheeling, working, and excited to see my children have the same childhood I had. Away from the hustle and bustle of neighboring towns or cities. Great neighbors.

49. What is something that you appreciate in our community today that exists thanks to the decisions and efforts of people who lived here more than 10 years ago?

low cost of local town government.
I do like the transfer station that has changed greatly since we moved here in 1995. The recycling center and the swap shop is very useful to us and the community. I am also glad to see the travel plaza as a "gateway" to WG. It provides a service without being in the middle of the town. It fits well there.
For the most part it is still rural, single family homes. No large businesses. There are enough businesses & services within 10 minutes, WG does not need large business to come in. The natural areas! Homes are all spread out.
Transfer station
school playground for kiddos Trails
Efforts to keep community rural and outdoor usage
Common sense decision making. Not letting the loud voice of bathe few drown out the voice of the many
Over the years the philosophy of town leaders has been very refreshing. The master of such thinking was Mert Hickey. West Gardiner is incredibly fortunate to have enjoyed his practical vision for the town and its quality of life.
Mert Hickey mindset
Lake zoning and schools.

<p>Weathervane newspaper</p> <p>Transfer station continuation</p>
<p>local control</p> <p>town meetings</p> <p>transfer station</p> <p>boat launch</p>
<p>Water access, recreation trails</p>
<p>With all the problems other towns are having with waste management, the town transfer station was a great move, and improving the town road services</p>
<p>I do not know</p>
<p>The lack of town restrictions and permits needed.</p>
<p>I appreciate their efforts to spend wisely.</p>
<p>Recycling committee, transfer station. other clubs</p>
<p>The nature trail. The scouts have done a remarkable job keeping it up and it is an easy walk. The playground is nice at the school too. The new boat landing is nice.</p>
<p>As stated above, I love the small town vibe, and the fact that generally people get to know one another. I like the more libertarian/conservative values that the town and its residents share.</p>
<p>Walking trails. Haven't had much time to explore or familiarize ourselves with the area yet.</p>
<p>Lot size requirements (though bigger per dwelling unit would be even better), no public water/sewer.</p>
<p>Unknown</p>
<p>I'm elated the town is building the historical society building and even more happy the Margaret Peacock garden will be built alongside.</p>
<p>Always keeping the fiscal impact on taxpayers to a minimum.</p>
<p>The preservation of lake/pond access.</p>
<p>I'm not sure, I think I appreciate that you have sent out this survey in the hopes that the future of WG cares and continues to make an effort.</p>
<p>We love the transfer station with the swap shop and the way it has grown.</p>
<p>Lot size and low regulation</p>
<p>I enjoy the less commercialized living</p>

Volunteer fire department and all involved over the years to keep up the equipment and volunteers.
Small town feel, most willing to help others
The protection of our Town's existence just the way it is.
More transparency!!!
farm land
The Town land. The boat launch. Nice Fire Dept. Cemetary. Nice Town roads.
Not a lopt of government control like having to get certain building permits or keeping a building historically accurate (like Hallowells historic district). That the mil rate has kept taxes very reasonable.
The nature trail and designated powerline trail.
That kept the town small.
The ability to talk, to investigate problems and try to solve them and the unselfish work done for little money by past Select Boards.
A love of land, privacy, individual decisionmaking, service to others and to our town.
LOW TAXES. Small town feel. No permits (i know will change as size of town increases).
Helen Thompson school
Improvements at the rod and gun club. Improvements to fire department/station.
We all know each other and help each other, small town environment
Open spaces
The sense of community. Not over building.
Low taxes and they have been kept low!!!
The way town meeting is run. Full transparency. The other hearings/meetings and ideas need to be openly communicated to the residents.
The water sheds!
The town office and transfer stations.

Paved roads- thanks to Chet Thompson.
Good neighbors and every one helps each other
The culture
The transfer station
The improvements to our roads, the Auxiliary hall and fire station.
Most are friendly
our beautiful school
New firetrucks, Cherry Hill, public works building, new school
Helen Thompson school staff, the statues, playground are the primary identity of the town and what makes it different from Gardiner. A middle and high school should be planned for now before they are needed so it's well thought out. That would really make West Gardiner it's own full community
The Rod and Gun Club. It should ALWAYS meet with the towns support.
The character and cleanliness of the town, and the welcoming feel
Fire department and a beautiful school playground.
Our own transfer station, little country stores, low taxes and beautiful woodlands
The boat landing area to the Cobb stream on Collins mills road... I remember back in the 90's how rough it was to get down in there on the other side...
How the community assists those in need with many different problems. Plowing driveways, lost pets, in need
people trying to help the kids and get them active after the 2 years of COVID
Protection and accessibility of natural resources.
The transfer station and town office
Lifers trying to maintain what was.
The ability to work together and value the town as a small residential community. Many did a great job with the help of the elected officials in preserving our community and from development.
Having Town meetings and Selectmen who are concerned about keeping our taxes from rising and taxing out our senior residents.

Local families that donate their time, talents, skills to the Town of West Gardiner. Long time families that have stayed in this Town to raise generations of families.
The Hickey Family Community Services for all these years.
I don't know
Boat ramp, snowmobile trails, nice modern town facilities
Keeping our small town still small. Allowing the tax rate to stay low, while also upgrading town services like the fire department equipment, and the town public works.
Not giving in to horrible ideas.
Live and let live mindset, which I think is a quality most Mainers have. I think our farmland and most land parcels are gorgeous. I like that West Gardiner feels like stepping back in time. All of that is a result of those who preceded my time here.
Excellent town government.
Low taxes.
Protection of watershed and contribution to maintaining the relevant dams. The recreational trail and snowmobile trails. The transfer station and recycling options.
Everything. This town has always had great people looking out for the betterment of this community.
Lack of needless legislation. West Gardiner is such an easy going town to get things done in; a town respectful, up to now, of the concept of private property.
Rural
Paved & maintained town roads public access to trails and Cobbossee Stream
The lack of pretense, frugality and common sense
Keeping the town rural with the current building lot size. I feel that increased housing can be accomplished without the need to build on top of each other.
Transfer Station, rod and gun club, snowmobile club, fire department, elementary school, boat landings.
keep West Gardiner the same. Don't need big developments.
Transfer station, recycling, swap shop
Recycling efforts, Weathervane, fire department growth and improvements, Historical Society

Not sure
Our functional transfer station with swap it shop, although wish that we could recycle more materials.
I appreciate the relatively new Kennebec Land Trust property called the Wakefield Sanctuary.
We have a nice school building. We have town equipment that protects us and provides for our safety (e.g. fire trucks, plow trucks, etc.). We have committed volunteers that truly care about the town. We are very fortunate to have our transfer station.
The fire department and their outreach to this town.
Keeping taxes low.
We have a nice elementary school, that while in need of expansion or updating, has been a great place for kids to go to school. We also have a well designed transfer station that promotes recycling.
Diversity
I love the freedom experienced while living here and the “down home” feeling. West Gardiner makes me feel safe. It’s nice having fewer rules and relying on the pride and common sense of the residents to keep West Gardiner looking it’s best!
Low taxes, friendly and competent people in the town office.
I like that I can build on my lot without anyone else needing to approve it. I like that most people stay out of my personal affairs. I like the country feel that was protected by them.
no opinion
I dont know because I wasnt here 10 years ago.
I like the new boat launch on Collins Mills Road
Reasonable taxes
No build permits!!
There always seemed to be the philosophy of doing what needs to be done for the town and its people without spending a fortune and causing taxes to go up.
A low mill rate and the tough decisions that have kept it that way. Thank you
No idea I've been here 3 years.

Volunteer fire department, transfer station, recycling, historical society
Low taxes
Not sure, but would love to know that history.
I'm not sure
the boat launching on Collins Mills Road the fire department
The ability to go to the meetings.
The freedom to do what we desire on our land and the ability to build without unnecessary restrictions.
Not letting the town get to big and everyone working together
Fire department
THE ROAD CREWS DO A GREAT JOB. FIRE DEPARTMENT IS AWESOME
Open space,no zoning, slower pace of life
Our transfer station is awesome, and our freedom to do what we like with our time and our property is awesome too. I'm thankful for the officials, like Mert Hickey, who knew to stay out of peoples' business.
The tight cap on taxes
Again a small town that provides essential needs and let's the community provide what else is needed.
The walking path by Helen Thomson School.
We try to be good neighbors both within town and without.
The Selectboard has done a great job over the years to keep this town running, keep the taxes down, and be fair to the residents. The Town Office staff have done a great job working with the residents and helping them in any way that they can. I have always appreciated what they do and the residents of this Town need to understand the work involved in running a town and also appreciate what we have here.
The local businesses that are here now and have been around for a while. Hard workers.

50. What might we choose to do today that will be appreciated by people who will live here 10 or more years from now?

insure we maintain the rural nature of the town. No development of industry. Keep our woods and open spaces Do not decrease lot size for residential building. Planning board to set rules for future growth
maybe getting a handle on growth and keeping the town rural.
Keep the town true to its roots!
Limit commercial, support farms and family homes.
Exactly what you folks are doing
Hold the tax rate.
community center
Keeping outdoor recreation areas accessible and maintained. Trails, fishing, boating etc
Common sense decision making
Control unplanned over-development and preserve natural lands.
Keep it in it's natural state Tear down the storage units
Be proactive on environment. Be fiscally responsible.
Zoning
local control town meetings transfer station boat launch
Establish guidance on new construction without losing the more relaxed style of West Gardiner
Support for our elders and our children
No overcrowding of buildings. Love walking in woods.
More open with people and a procedure to do this, then all the other decisions with the Town will be open and fair

Keep it rural.
Restrict or at least limit the growth of : self storage units, marijuana cultivation facilities and retail caregiver storefronts , as well as commercial solar energy systems.
Preserve open space and not make the tax burden too heavy.
Create a Comprehensive Zoning/Development Plan for the town, encourage groups to have a Clean Up West Gardiner day,
maintain all that we have. Keep the simple in our town. Slow growth of commercial things and keep it rural and homey.
I think it would truly be wonderful if our town not only had its own small post office seeing how many people have been affected by the Gardiner P.O.'s employment issues, etc, but I would love to see some sort of community center. A place to be able to take kids to go swimming, take swim lessons, and all sorts of other activities. West Gardiner doesn't have a lot of local swimming spots, which is one of the biggest reasons I mention a local swimming pool.
Create job opportunities and more housing while maintaining the small town feel and the natural resources West Gardiner has to offer.
Preserving it as it is. Having more public land to leave undeveloped
More mindfulness in developing the town. Think about residents quality of life.
Preserving and obtaining more land for public use. Walking and hiking trails, access to the Cobbossee watershed, committing to aggressively preserving that resource.
Preserve the integrity of our town and our way of life.
Keeping taxes low :)
Preserve open space and not make the tax burden too heavy.
Create a Comprehensive Zoning/Development Plan for the town, encourage groups to have a Clean Up West Gardiner day,
maintain all that we have. Keep the simple in our town. Slow growth of commercial things and keep it rural and homey.
We can listen and connect with each other to find out what our community values are and how to help each other get the best out of living here. Caring for the natural environment will help leave something of worth to future generations.
Keep the community safe and clean.
Low regulation, low taxes and property rights

Not allow commercial solar farms!
Protect our waters, land and resources
Less development keeping room for our wildlife. Too many housing developments going up.
Protect our current way of life.
Clean land with green spaces
stop commercial growth
keep the simple quiet lifestyle, there is plenty of stores for all your needs within 20-30 minutes in any direction
Have open space. Have woods/fields for kids to play/grow, etc. No more growth!!
Not to have apartment complexes or rows of condos built. Not having houses built close together because it was decided to lower the acreage requirements. Not having commercial business in amongst stretches of family homes.
Decent, community based affordable housing, whether that's private garage conversions or basement dwellings or tiny house communities.
Land use planning and controlling growth
Keeping the town small with little regulations.
We need to protect and save areas for public use, open spaces. We need to conserve and protect our wetlands, lakes and streams. Create public parks and playgrounds.
Controlled development on a range of subjects- residential, commercial/business, recreation, education, environmental (water/land/forest/farmland)
Restructure our town government and allow for greater transparency. Look at 1990 Comprehensive Plan. Keep what applies/works in it to guide development of the new 2023 Comprehensive Plan, with conscientious decisionmaking by elected officials, guided by residents' input. Protect our natural resources - land, air, water. Listen to each other so we can hear others non-judgmentally. Change has come. We must never forget that. The next ten years will be crucial to protecting the heart of this small town.
Keep this town rural

Keep taxes low. Keep small town feel going. Dont let large out of area/state corporations in.
Build a community center/library with public park and playground.
Filling out this survey.
Saving land and open fields.
Keeping small local businesses, small town attitude, cohesive community.
Maintain open spaces and roads
I can attest neighbors that purchase land/homes do not want commercial buildings, solar bringing down their property values. No matter how many believe their saving the planet.
Keep LARGE commercail entities out. Keep taxes Low. Keep zoning out.
Public fishing and boating access to Cobbossee lake
No solar farms that have no way to be disposed of!
Conservation of natural wildlife habitats and waterways. Protecting our children's future
Not build commercial/ industrial buildings. Leaving more land for hunting, fishing, walking, skiing, snowshoeing, etc. All the things that the townspeople love to do.
Keep the big time politicians out
Open spaces and trails
Get some law enforcement here for people to feel safe, and make people respect each other and each other's property
1) How about community spring/fall clean up ? like other towns and cities? I know that many seniors and disabled folks could use the help! Maybe get high school kids from our town involved, use as their community service?
Free Wi-Fi
Affordable housing, rental housing by small landlords (ie ADUs, garage apartments, etc), and active Code Enforcement for rental properties with less interference with homes that are owned by the resident so that older folks with poorly maintained homes aren't driven out by Code Enforcement, minimal restrictions on things like putting up a fence or shed or having chickens, etc (although if you can get the pink house on High St by the highway to keep their animals out of the road and clean up their property, that would be great)

Limiting solar farms and keeping the population low.
Nothing! The less the town can do the more it will be appreciated by others 10 years down the road.
Increase the openness of town government, and have selectboard meetings that are held in an open conference and not in a small conference room that does not allow for residents to participate on a weekly basis. The selectboard is not open and accessible to the general public.
More Restaurants that deliver or mom and pop shops, marijuana dispensaries, pharmacies.
Preserve land for recreation and youth athletics.
Keep it small
Protecting our land... from over development.
Limit people moving here, expand the school so future kids don't have to be in trailers, support the development of recreational areas for families to get out and play
Continue and expand accessibility to waterfront for public.
Maintain our low property taxes
Close the gates.
Control the growth and set rules and regulations in place that will withstand the years to come. regardless of who are selectmen/women are elected to allow our community to maintain a residential community with regulated growth, that serve the town not hinder it.
Keep taxes low.
Slow down subdivisions and housing developments by increasing lot sizes in the developments.
Slow down the housing developments, increase land size for building to at least 3 acres in housing developments.
Keep west gardiner the same!
keep lot sizes where they are. Not too big and not too small. If people want to live closer to one another they can live in a subdivision, and if they want more space and keep land open they can do that away from a subdivision.
Don't be like any other town.

Thoughtful growth and town planning. Accepting that times are changing and that a new generation of people will be (and are starting) to become the majority here. Plus people "from away," like me who will be needed to carry this town forward. We need to thoughtfully plan. Three old school Selectmen doesn't cut it.
Keep West Gardiner rural.
Limit solar farms that will destroy the land they are on. I wouldn't even walk my dogs on toxic lands once used for solar.
Keep us a small town as it now is. Slow down growth as much as possible.
Protection of beautiful open spaces. The ability for people to afford to live here.
Limit commercial solar, storage units, any large commercial/industrial eyesores. Maintain our waters/forests/fields for our children and generations to come!
Planning. A comprehensive, written plan to guide the town in future years.
Better communications
Control commercial growth
Keep it COUNTRY!
Try to maintain the character of the town as we manage the inevitable changes.
Encouraging respect and freedom
Business friendly without overburdening residential housing to bring in taxes.
Stop the over commercialization of town land!
Keep West Gardiner small town. Support the people here and what they want. Leave big development to cities. Don't bring cities to us here.
Slow down growth
Leveling off of the recent growth
Don't overdevelop!
Bicycle paths, woodland and fields multi-use trails. Preserved areas of wild and scenic shoreline and access to public use areas.
I would appreciate a welcoming gathering place in town - for recreation and conversation - perhaps a cafe near book store/playground where people can gather and enjoy something to eat as well as each other's company.

Stop allowing people to build things with no regard for neighbors or public safety. Protect our open spaces and farmland.
Historical Society becoming active community service
Leave things as they are. We don't need change.
Tax maps and ordinances
Come up with a way to allow development without promoting overdevelopment and without preventing people from using their land how they see fit. Example: someone wants to subdivide their 3 acres so a family member can build a house. Let them do that, but on a limited one or two lot scale. Someone else wants to put 10 house lots on their 15 acres. Maybe they should only be able to sell 5 lots.
The lack of regulation is one of the things that makes West Gardiner great, but it's in danger of exploitation. I think we need to find a way to allow people leeway without allowing development to negatively impact the rest of the people.
Diversity
Hopefully, we can slow or stop the effects of "progress" that has already moved into our town, or is trying to, and maintain as much of the small town atmosphere and qualities as possible.
Thank them for their continued dedication and love for West Gardiner.
We can control growth so that we continue to have a rural appeal.
no opinion
A close knit community with low property taxes is always appreciated. But the needs of the people cant be ignored with proper services
More town government conditions that prevent State and Federal interference.
Make a good plan that can adapt as it grows, this world is changing quickly and where it will be in 10 years is anybodies guess.
Better water access and a public beach. Keep the town clean.
Maintain the low tax rate and keep West Gardiner a rural community
Not hinder progress
Protection of natural areas and the building of community.
Keep it small town; do what needs to be done in a way that takes care of the town and its citizens without overspending and raising taxes.

Grow the transfer station.
Keep it the same and resist big changes that would change the feel and the we'll being of the town.
Leaving the town how it is.
Slow the growth...don't let this become a suburb of Augusta
Let people use their land as they see fit
Keep West Gardiner current, but still rural. Be cautious and thoughtful of adding commercial properties.
Get along with each other and respect each others property
Put a solar farm behind the dump to help with the electric bills.
Al the thing I just listed in 48 and 49.
Secure public recreation spaces
Controlled growth so we don't become a bedroom community for Augusta, Brunswick, Portland etc.
Keep WG a small, rural community.
Invest in keeping West Gardiner rural, keeping access to water, trails and not developing land.
KEEP THE COUNTRY LOOK
Preserve West Gardiner, have a community center
Continue to keep our noses out of other peoples' business. Stop trying to change this town. If you want a town with more services and rules, go live in a town with more services and rules.
Keeping urban sprawl from happening here.
Keeping the wide open Spaces
Preserve the wildlife that surrounds us. Add more water access for fishing and swimming and nature trails.

Understanding what the Town officials do that keeps this town running and have patience and listen to what officials say. We need to not make assumptions based on hearsay and rumors. If a resident has a question, he or she should go to the Town Office to get an answer and not ask someone on Facebook, via text, or email. The future of this town depends on how we act and what we do today to instill confidence in our residents and future generations who will live in this town.
Restrict growth of the town, keep taxes low, don't allow us to develop to meet the needs of larger communities over developing. Don't allow land lease/property agreements for solar or wind energy sources.
Keep the town small. Its tough because the secret it out - but the very reason people are attracted to West Gardiner is because it is still holding onto the small town vibe. Housing developments need to cease.
insure we maintain the rural nature of the town. No development of industry. Keep our woods and open spaces Do not decrease lot size for residential building. Planning board to set rules for future growth
maybe getting a handle on growth and keeping the town rural.
Keep the town true to its roots!
Limit commercial, support farms and family homes.
Exactly what you folks are doing
Hold the tax rate.
community center
Keeping outdoor recreation areas accessible and maintained. Trails, fishing, boating etc
Common sense decision making
Control unplanned over-development and preserve natural lands.
Keep it in it's natural state Tear down the storage units
Be proactive on environment. Be fiscally responsible.
Zoning
local control town meetings transfer station boat launch

Establish guidance on new construction without losing the more relaxed style of West Gardiner
Support for our elders and our children
No overcrowding of buildings. Love walking in woods.
More open with people and a procedure to do this, then all the other decisions with the Town will be open and fair
Keep it rural.
Preserve open space and not make the tax burden too heavy.
Create a Comprehensive Zoning/Development Plan for the town, encourage groups to have a Clean Up West Gardiner day,
maintain all that we have. Keep the simple in our town. Slow growth of commercial things and keep it rural and homey.
I think it would truly be wonderful if our town not only had its own small post office seeing how many people have been affected by the Gardiner P.O.'s employment issues, etc, but I would love to see some sort of community center. A place to be able to take kids to go swimming, take swim lessons, and all sorts of other activities. West Gardiner doesn't have a lot of local swimming spots, which is one of the biggest reasons I mention a local swimming pool.
Create job opportunities and more housing while maintaining the small town feel and the natural resources West Gardiner has to offer.
Preserving it as it is. Having more public land to leave undeveloped
More mindfulness in developing the town. Think about residents quality of life.
Preserving and obtaining more land for public use. Walking and hiking trails, access to the Cobbossee watershed, committing to aggressively preserving that resource.
Preserve the integrity of our town and our way of life.
Keeping taxes low :)
Restrict or at least limit the growth of : self storage units, marijuana cultivation facilities and retail caregiver storefronts , as well as commercial solar energy systems.
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We can listen and connect with each other to find out what our community values are and how to help each other get the best out of living here. Caring for the natural environment will help leave something of worth to future generations.
Keep the community safe and clean.
Low regulation, low taxes and property rights
Not allow commercial solar farms!
Protect our waters, land and resources
Less development keeping room for our wildlife. Too many housing developments going up.
Protect our current way of life.
Clean land with green spaces
stop commercial growth
keep the simple quiet lifestyle, there is plenty of stores for all your needs within 20-30 minutes in any direction

<p>Have open space.</p> <p>Have woods/fields for kids to play/grow, etc.</p> <p>No more growth!!</p>
<p>Not to have apartment complexes or rows of condos built.</p> <p>Not having houses built close together because it was decided to lower the acreage requirements.</p> <p>Not having commercial business in amongst stretches of family homes.</p>
<p>Decent, community based affordable housing, whether that's private garage conversions or basement dwellings or tiny house communities.</p>
<p>Land use planning and controlling growth</p>
<p>Keeping the town small with little regulations.</p>
<p>We need to protect and save areas for public use, open spaces. We need to conserve and protect our wetlands, lakes and streams. Create public parks and playgrounds.</p>
<p>Controlled development on a range of subjects- residential, commercial/business, recreation, education, environmental (water/land/forest/farmland)</p>
<p>Restructure our town government and allow for greater transparency.</p> <p>Look at 1990 Comprehensive Plan. Keep what applies/works in it to guide development of the new 2023 Comprehensive Plan, with conscientious decisionmaking by elected officials, guided by residents' input.</p> <p>Protect our natural resources - land, air, water.</p> <p>Listen to each other so we can hear others non-judgmentally.</p> <p>Change has come. We must never forget that.</p> <p>The next ten years will be crucial to protecting the heart of this small town.</p>
<p>Keep this town rural</p>
<p>Keep taxes low. Keep small town feel going. Dont let large out of area/state corporations in.</p>
<p>Build a community center/library with public park and playground.</p>
<p>Filling out this survey.</p>
<p>Saving land and open fields.</p>
<p>Keeping small local businesses, small town attitude, cohesive community.</p>
<p>Maintain open spaces and roads</p>

I can attest neighbors that purchase land/homes do not want commercial buildings, solar bringing down their property values. No matter how many believe their saving the planet.
Keep LARGE commercail entities out. Keep taxes Low. Keep zoning out.
Public fishing and boating access to Cobbossee lake
No solar farms that have no way to be disposed of!
Conservation of natural wildlife habitats and waterways. Protecting our children's future
Not build commercial/ industrial buildings. Leaving more land for hunting, fishing, walking, skiing, snowshoeing, etc. All the things that the townspeople love to do.
Keep the big time politicians out
Open spaces and trails
Get some law enforcement here for people to feel safe, and make people respect each other and each other's property
1) How about community spring/fall clean up ? like other towns and cities? I know that many seniors and disabled folks could use the help! Maybe get high school kids from our town involved, use as their community service?
Affordable housing, rental housing by small landlords (ie ADUs, garage apartments, etc), and active Code Enforcement for rental properties with less interference with homes that are owned by the resident so that older folks with poorly maintained homes aren't driven out by Code Enforcement, minimal restrictions on things like putting up a fence or shed or having chickens, etc (although if you can get the pink house on High St by the highway to keep their animals out of the road and clean up their property, that would be great)
Limiting solar farms and keeping the population low.
Nothing! The less the town can to the more it will be appreciated by others 10 years down the road.
Increase the openness of town government, and have selectboard meetings that are held in an open conference and not in a small conference room that does not allow for residents to participate on a weekly basis. The selectboard I not open and accessible to the general public.
More Restaurants that deliver or mom and pop shops, marijuana dispensaries, pharmacies.
Preserve land for recreation and youth athletics.

Keep it small
Protecting our land... from over development.
Open space, trail access
Limit people moving here, expand the school so future kids don't have to be in trailers, support the development of recreational areas for families to get out and play
Continue and expand accessibility to waterfront for public.
Maintain our low property taxes
Close the gates.
Control the growth and set rules and regulations in place that will withstand the years to come. regardless of who are selectmen/women are elected to allow our community to maintain a residential community with regulated growth, that serve the town not hinder it.
Keep taxes low.
Slow down subdivisions and housing developments by increasing lot sizes in the developments.
Slow down the housing developments, increase land size for building to at least 3 acres in housing developments.
Keep west gardiner the same!
keep lot sizes where they are. Not to big and not to small. If people want to live closer to one another they can live in a subdivision, and if they want more space and keep land open they can do that away from a subdivision.
Don't be like any other town.
Thoughtful growth and town planning. Accepting that times are changing and that a new generation of people will be (and are starting) to become the majority here. Plus people "from away," like me who will be needed to carry this town forward. We need to thoughtfully plan. Three old school Selectmen doesn't cut it.
Keep West Gardiner rural.
Keep us a small town as it now is. Slow down growth as much as possible.
Protection of beautiful open spaces. The ability for people to afford to live here.

Limit commercial solar, storage units, any large commercial/industrial eyesores. Maintain our waters/forests/fields for our children and generations to come!
Planning. A comprehensive, written plan to guide the town in future years.
Better communications
Control commercial growth
Keep it COUNTRY!
Try to maintain the character of the town as we manage the inevitable changes.
Encouraging respect and freedom
Business friendly without overburdening residential housing to bring in taxes.
Stop the over commercialization of town land!
Keep West Gardiner small town. Support the people here and what they want. Leave big development to cities. Don't bring cities to us here.
Leveling off of the recent growth
Don't overdevelop!
Bicycle paths, woodland and fields multi-use trails. Preserved areas of wild and scenic shoreline and access to public use areas.
I would appreciate a welcoming gathering place in town - for recreation and conversation - perhaps a cafe near book store/playground where people can gather and enjoy something to eat as well as each other's company.
Stop allowing people to build things with no regard for neighbors or public safety. Protect our open spaces and farmland.
Historical Society becoming active community service
Leave things as they are. We don't need change.
Tax maps and ordinances
Come up with a way to allow development without promoting overdevelopment and without preventing people from using their land how they see fit. Example: someone wants to subdivide their 3 acres so a family member can build a house. Let them do that, but on a limited one or two lot scale. Someone else wants to put 10 house lots on their 15 acres. Maybe they should only be able to sell 5 lots.
The lack of regulation is one of the things that makes West Gardiner great, but it's in

danger of exploitation. I think we need to find a way to allow people leeway without allowing development to negatively impact the rest of the people.

Diversity

Hopefully, we can slow or stop the effects of “progress” that has already moved into our town, or is trying to, and maintain as much of the small town atmosphere and qualities as possible.

Thank them for their continued dedication and love for West Gardiner.

We can control growth so that we continue to have a rural appeal.

no opinion

A close knit community with low property taxes is always appreciated. But the needs of the people cant be ignored with proper services

More town government conditions that prevent State and Federal interference.

Make a good plan that can adapt as it grows, this world is changing quickly and where it will be in 10 years is anybodies guess.

Better water access and a public beach. Keep the town clean.

Maintain the low tax rate and keep West Gardiner a rural community

Not hinder progress

Protection of natural areas and the building of community.

Keep it small town; do what needs to be done in a way that takes care of the town and its citizens without overspending and raising taxes.

Grow the transfer station.

Keep it the same and resist big changes that would change the feel and the we'll being of the town.

Leaving the town how it is.

Slow the growth...don't let this become a suburb of Augusta

Let people use their land as they see fit

Keep West Gardiner current, but still rural. Be cautious and thoughtful of adding commercial properties.
Get along with each other and respect each others property
Secure public recreation spaces
Controlled growth so we don't become a bedroom community for Augusta, Brunswick, Portland etc.
Keep WG a small, rural community.
Invest in keeping West Gardiner rural, keeping access to water, trails and not developing land.
KEEP THE COUNTRY LOOK
Preserve West Gardiner, have a community center
Continue to keep our noses out of other peoples' business. Stop trying to change this town. If you want a town with more services and rules, go live in a town with more services and rules.
Keeping urban sprawl from happening here.
Keeping the wide open Spaces
Preserve the wildlife that surrounds us. Add more water access for fishing and swimming and nature trails.
Understanding what the Town officials do that keeps this town running and have patience and listen to what officials say. We need to not make assumptions based on hearsay and rumors. If a resident has a question, he or she should go to the Town Office to get an answer and not ask someone on Facebook, via text, or email. The future of this town depends on how we act and what we do today to instill confidence in our residents and future generations who will live in this town.
Restrict growth of the town, keep taxes low, don't allow us to develop to meet the needs of larger communities over developing. Don't allow land lease/property agreements for solar or wind energy sources.
Keep the town small. Its tough because the secret it out - but the very reason people are attracted to West Gardiner is because it is still holding onto the small town vibe. Housing developments need to cease.

51. Please include any additional thoughts and comments.

<p>I really do enjoy living in WG. Overall I believe the biggest problem is lack of clear communications between the town and its people. Often we hear or read about an event or situation after the fact rather than before hand. Somethings we may have participated in if we had known about it.</p> <p>Thanks for the chance to have an input to our town.</p>
<p>Appreciate the hard work of all the selectmen over the years.</p>
<p>None</p>
<p>Listening and following through with the requests of the majority of the town people</p>
<p>Personally I am in favor of allowing land owners to sell or build the storage units and solar farms. Common sense tells us that these are good for the town they add tax revenue without affecting our infrastructure.</p>
<p>Please limit development near the lake or waterways which run off. Please monitor our drinking water closely.</p>
<p>With the steady growth in town, the school is becoming a major concern. We need to be involved with any changes planned for upgrades and not settle for low bids.</p>
<p>We really need our own Post Office. It would be nice to extend hours at the Town office during the day.</p>
<p>We've lived in West Gardiner for 15 years. We live in a darling little spot and love our home. We want to stay here. Not only until we retire but I really plan on leaving this earth from my home feet first. Like most elderly Mainer's we're concerned about what life will be like as we age in a rural town where access to the most basic of services is up to 30 minutes away. I'd like this town to keep that in mind as they plan for the future.</p> <p>Encouraging single family homes in cozy little cul-de-sacs is nice but if this is all the town is willing to offer than you've missed the point entirely.</p>
<p>Thank you for creating this survey and creating a place for all citizens to be able to share their thoughts and ideas.</p>
<p>Great place to live</p>
<p>N/A</p>
<p>Happy that this survey is being done as well as the comprehensive plan. It is my understanding the last time this was done was 30 years ago with a directive to update every 10 years. Why didn't the selectmen in office didn't address this for the last 20 years? Be proactive vs reactive.</p>

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<p>Don't like voting machines. Virginia Curtis always told me that voting and counting votes was extra income and not that hard in a small town. Think we should still be paying people to hand count our votes. Also pushing people to do things online is wrong.</p>
<p>I just want to keep my quiet country living !</p>
<p>None</p>
<p>We need to discourage the welfare handouts. People seeking handouts should stay in the cities. No more low income housing. This will just bring more issues to our little town.</p>
<p>thank you for keeping things the way they are</p>
<p>The good ole boys in Town Office needs to change. The select should not be the tax assessors. They have no training at all and they aren't fair. Plus assess their own property. Not right. Town should have a independent person doing the assessing. Office staff paid too much for part time work.</p>
<p>I'm grateful for the work and thought that went into this survey. It's nice to be asked! Grateful for the hard work of the Town Office as well. Thank you all.</p>
<p>Grow slow!</p>
<p>The town should take over some of the private roads with residential developments like Rabbit Ridge to ensure that they are maintained so that residents can get to work in the winter, etc.</p>
<p>Please stop any new solar farms. They are so bad for the land and those who have to see them or live near them. Also, they are so bad for animals.</p>
<p>I don't want to see West Gardiner turn into a corporate type of town, we need to keep the home town feel. We have cities close enough to utilize for what the town doesn't have or offer.</p> <p>Thank you for the survey.</p>

Thank you for allowing the opportunity to express our opinions.
I have lived here all my life. I have also traveled all over the US and other countries. There is no place comparable to West Gardiner. West Gardiner feels like home. It's peaceful and full of townspeople that love where they live. It feels removed from big towns and cities but you're only 10-15 minutes away from anything you want. Generations of families have lived in West Gardiner for a reason; because they like the small town feel and all the nature that surrounds them.
My opinion of this survey is that it is to many questions and makes me think your heading to zoning and a planing board where just a few people make all the decisions for the town, also need to have other means for the people of this town to vote on issues that are voted on by show of hand because some people that have lived in this town 60+ years work out of town and can not be heard or are penalized because they can't be here for a public meetings
I wish I had a motion at the last meeting to take some money away from the historical society and put it towards helping the food banks.
It's time to stop fighting the town getting bigger and embrace it so that it can be done mindfully and with the future economy in mind so affordable, smaller homes/lots and multi unit housing with shared open space
I love this town and would hate to live anywhere else.
<p>We all need to work together to better our community, we need to listen to all opinions and ideas, we need to come together to make good choices for our future and our children's future.. Keeping West Gardiner safe from over development is highly important...</p> <p>I value what nature has to offer us, if we can make sure that all development that happens is done in a safe way with out interference of wildlife and without the looks of big industrial buildings..</p> <p>Small shops that go with the country appeal and that are locally owned is the way to go...</p> <p>Sincerely, West G resident of 20 yrs</p>
Keep it simple and slow down.
Thank you
<p>For concerned as I am about how our town's government is structured and functions, I LOVE WG. But I am a for the people, by the people. And I don't think any opinions matter if we don't install a more inclusive body of people to help govern this town. A body that represents all backgrounds, "from away" vs. local statuses, ages, socioeconomic statuses, etc. This town won't thrive or survive in any meaningful way without differing views and visions for how to keep this town intact.</p> <p>Thank you for creating this survey. It feels good to be heard.</p>

<p>More help to assist people on putting solar panels on their roofs to defray the cost of power. The cost of 6 free lunches to senior citizens could be better placed for help for the poor. The thought is appreciated but I don't think one lunch a month will prevent starvation.</p> <p>Stop giving money to the snowmobile club. That will benefit just a small group of people. If they can afford a snowmobile they don't need a club house on tax dollars for their hobby.</p>
<p>Senior dinners are fantastic but I'd like to see more social activities for our seniors so that they can get out of the house and be around other people.</p> <p>(Could poll seniors for their input and ideas.)</p> <p>P.S. Seniors love bingo!!</p>
<p>Please be very cautious and judicious in the creation of so-called "technology ordinances." Most of them are either illegal or do not survive well over the years. The technology changes too fast. Zoning is a better approach to control of technologies.</p>
<p>West Gardiner is my home and a great little town. Please don't mess it up.</p>
<p>Please don't ruin this town and force my family to leave</p>
<p>This survey was too broad, too long, and too repetitive. I appreciate the intent but this should not have been presented to the public in this form.</p>
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<p>Loved living in West Gardiner for 47 years. Its now starting to get out of hand.</p>
<p>Thanks for doing this.</p>
<p>Thanks for asking and making the effort to do some planning. Intentional consideration of improvements is bound to lead to good things. Thank you.</p>
<p>I know for many years this town was proud of the "no rules" motto. Times have changed and West Gardiner needs a minimum set of rules and planning to protect our neighbors from outside interests who do not care about us and what their business ventures do to our quality of life.</p>
<p>Keep up the good work you have been doing.</p>
<p>I'm glad this process is under way. The town is having some growing pains and there are an awful lot of opinions about what should be done. When outside interests are taking advantage of West Gardiner's low barriers, maybe it's time to put some thought into where people want the town to go.</p>

Getting older and whiter is not a growth demographic. Is West Gardiner better off with growth or without it? Lack of growth means higher taxes as costs go up. Growth brings new challenges but also new money.
I think I've pretty much covered it all! I hope many people complete this survey!
Thank you for doing this survey. I hope that you're able to update the comprehensive plan and settle down the people of the town. We are better than that!
Addressing speeders. Way to many solar farms and storage panels. I feel that with all the storage units there's some money laundering going on.
Just love this town.
All decisions need to be voted on paper ballots. Not a town meeting from the 1800s.
Doing this survey is a great idea! Any input from a town's citizenry is imperative.
Be careful of who tries to run for selectman and tries to change this town into what it should not be. Keep the small town attitude in our government. Keep an eye on salaries being paid and expenses being charged to the town.
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Great place to live
It would be nice if the residents that lived on private town roads could get a couple of loads of crushed gravel delivered in a pile if needed each year so we can better maintain the roads ourselves and avoid certain residents that live on these roads to absorb all of the cost while others skate by doing nothing to help. This would make everyone at least pay something for the private gravel roads without having to deal with agreements or the need to develop road associations where everyone argues about everything. Thank you for all of your hard work and the time that you spend away from your families to make this town a great place to live for us all. Thank you
Thank you for asking
Do we really need a Comprehensive Plan?

Thank you to the town's fathers for the job they are doing.
I don't think you really want to know.
The town officials are appreciated
WE LOVE LIVING IN WEST GARDINER. WE DO NOT WANT TO SEE SOLAR FARMS IN OUR FIELDS. WE LOVE LOOKING AT HE OPEN FIELDS TO SEE DEER MOOSE ETC.. WE
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<p>I feel as though this survey is very slanted/one sided and tailored to the few people who have been griping on Facebook for a few months. I would hate to see the town take action on any issues for the 3,800+ residents based on a biased survey that 200-300 people participated in. The people who would be opposed to the actions that are alluded to in this survey (more municipal facilities, recreation facilities, zoning and ordinances on how people are allowed to use their land, etc.) are often people who are not tech savvy to take this survey, or may not have gone to the meeting to even know about this survey.</p> <p>Also, what is stopping the very vocal Facebook crew from completing this survey many times to make sure their voices are "heard" moreso than others? I don't believe this survey has any integrity to represent the 3,800 members of the town fairly.</p> <p>I'm so disappointed to live in a town that is disrespecting it's true character of live and let live, and hate that there are so many people trying to turn this into a metropolitan utopia with increased taxes. Mert Hickey worked hard to keep things going the old fashioned way, to meet people where they were at, to keep taxes low, and to protect peoples' freedom. He would be so disappointed.</p>
<p>If we have public tv access to meetings it is not well known.</p> <p>Please keep the health of nature and preserve the environment before it's too late. Put a moratorium on sub divisions and big business til we look at environmental effects.</p>
Thank you for sending this survey out. Thank you for serving our town and getting the opinion of the townspeople.
Thank you to the employees/officials of the Town of West Gardiner, past and present. They have done a great job.
I favor increasing the minimum lot size. Personally I would recommend something closer to 4 acres. But I think that's a tough sell, so maybe 3 is more palatable..

I really do enjoy living in WG. Overall I believe the biggest problem is lack of clear communications between the town and its people. Often we hear or read about an event or situation after the fact rather than before hand. Somethings we may have participated in if we had known about it.
Thanks for the chance to have an input to our town.
Appreciate the hard work of all the selectmen over the years.
None
Listening and following through with the requests of the majority of the town people
Personally I am in favor of allowing land owners to sell or build the storage units and solar farms. Common sense tells us that these are good for the town they add tax revenue without affecting our infrastructure.
Please limit development near the lake or waterways which run off. Please monitor our drinking water closely.
With the steady growth in town, the school is becoming a major concern. We need to be involved with any changes planned for upgrades and not settle for low bids.
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I don't want to see West Gardiner turn into a corporate type of town, we need to keep the home town feel. We have cities close enough to utilize for what the town doesn't have or offer. Thank you for the survey.
I truly love this town, long before I moved here I spent many summers here with a camp on Cobbossee. I'd love to see it remain as docile as possible, less businesses will hopefully continue to mean less crime! IF someone wants to buy or use land for housing, go for it! Not for commercial property that will be eye sores and cause future issues, technology has already ruined enough!
Thank you for allowing the opportunity to express our opinions.

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The town officials are appreciated

I feel as though this survey is very slanted/one sided and tailored to the few people who have been griping on Facebook for a few months. I would hate to see the town take action on any issues for the 3,800+ residents based on a biased survey that 200-300 people participated in. The people who would be opposed to the actions that are alluded to in this survey (more municipal facilities, recreation facilities, zoning and ordinances on how people are allowed to use their land, etc.) are often people who are not tech savvy to take this survey, or may not have gone to the meeting to even know about this survey.

Also, what is stopping the very vocal Facebook crew from completing this survey many times to make sure their voices are "heard" moreso than others? I don't believe this survey has any integrity to represent the 3,800 members of the town fairly.

I'm so disappointed to live in a town that is disrespecting it's true character of live and let live, and hate that there are so many people trying to turn this into a metropolitan utopia with increased taxes. Mert Hickey worked hard to keep things going the old fashioned way, to meet people where they were at, to keep taxes low, and to protect peoples' freedom. He would be so disappointed.

If we have public tv access to meetings it is not well known.

Please keep the health of nature and preserve the environment before it's too late. Put a moratorium on sub divisions and big business til we look at environmental effects.

Thank you for sending this survey out. Thank you for serving our town and getting the opinion of the townspeople.

Thank you to the employees/officials of the Town of West Gardiner, past and present. They have done a great job.

I favor increasing the minimum lot size. Personally I would recommend something closer to 4 acres. But I think that's a tough sell, so maybe 3 is more palatable..

Thank you very, very much for the time you have taken to complete this survey. It is very important information that will help West Gardiner move forward with its new Comprehensive Plan.