

Town of Manchester

2026 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Prepared by Kennebec Valley Council of Governments



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Introduction: The Planning Process

History of the Comprehensive Plan

Maine enacted the Growth Management Act in 1988, which specifies the format and goals for local comprehensive planning. Subsequent revisions to the Act require local Comprehensive Plans to undergo a new State review for consistency every 10-12 years, incorporating new data and findings into the planning process, as well as designating areas earmarked for future growth and locations to be maintained as rural.

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

Manchester's Planning History

Manchester has a long history of comprehensive planning, beginning with its first plan in 1978. A major public effort in 1986 led to the adoption of a new plan in 1988. Later that same year, the State enacted the Growth Management Law, prompting the Town to complete a focused update to bring the 1988 Plan into compliance while preserving its core direction. This update began in 1990, supported by a state planning grant and a 25 percent local match, and was adopted at Town Meeting in April 1991.

In 1992, the Town enacted its current Land Use and Development Ordinance based on recommendations from the 1991 Plan. Although the Ordinance was amended periodically, the comprehensive plan itself was not updated again until 2012.

In the interim, the Town identified gaps in its long-term vision and, in 2003, appointed a Long Range Planning Committee to develop a plan for public facilities and town-owned lands. As the work progressed, the preservation of open space emerged as the primary concern. This effort resulted in the Long Range Public Facilities and Open Space Plan, adopted in June 2004, which outlined strategies to protect natural resources while expanding recreational and public facilities. Many of its recommendations informed the 2012 comprehensive plan.

The 2026 Comprehensive Plan updates the 2012 Plan, which expired both in practice and under state requirements in 2022. Manchester initiated this new update in 2024, following the State's revised planning guidelines.

The Comprehensive Plan and Manchester's Future

Why create a Comprehensive Plan?

At its core, a Comprehensive Plan helps a community prepare for the future. By taking a thorough look at local conditions- current data, issues, and existing policies- the planning process encourages informed discussion among residents and helps the town avoid the pitfalls that can arise when decisions are made piecemeal.

A Comprehensive Plan serves as a roadmap for a town's future. It is **not** an ordinance or a set of regulations; rather, it is a guiding document that helps local officials ensure the community is moving in a direction shaped by residents' values and priorities. It offers a "snapshot in time" of the town today, identifies the desired direction for the next decade, and provides guidance on how to achieve that vision.

Good planning makes strong communities. A well-crafted Comprehensive Plan should help the town:

- Encourage thoughtful, orderly growth and development in suitable areas.
- Protect rural character, maintain working forests, and support ongoing revitalization of the village center.
- Reduce the cost of public services by focusing growth where development already exists.
- Preserve a healthy landscape and promote a walkable community.
- Support appropriate and sustainable economic development.
- Identify future housing needs and outline strategies to meet them.
- Balance economic opportunity with a high quality of life.
- Foster productive community dialogue.
- Provide a solid foundation for sound municipal decision-making.

In summary, a Comprehensive Plan guides orderly growth while protecting the town's rural identity and natural resources. It promotes efficient use of public services, helps prevent sprawling development, and encourages communities to plan proactively rather than reactively. Ultimately, good planning helps ensure the town grows in a way that protects residents from unnecessary future costs.

The Importance of Community Involvement

A strong Comprehensive Plan begins with a bold, inclusive planning process that engages the public in meaningful ways. Without robust public participation, a plan risks lacking broad community support- or becoming so minimal and risk-averse that it provides little real guidance.

Communities should always strive for a high level of outreach and engagement. In practice, however, many towns struggle to sustain public interest over the extended period required to develop a plan. Even with deliberate efforts to be inclusive, committees often face low turnout at meetings and diminishing involvement over time. Frequently, the largest wave of public input comes only at the final town vote, when residents ultimately express their support or opposition.

There is no simple formula for increasing and maintaining public participation. Encouraging ongoing involvement becomes more challenging as the process progresses, making creativity, persistence, and strategic communication essential to counteract declining interest.

Strong public involvement is central to creating genuine “buy-in.” Residents are unlikely to support change unless they understand the issues the plan seeks to address. Committees may struggle to advance important local and state planning goals unless they clearly and convincingly communicate why those goals matter for the community’s future. Broad public support is necessary before the town can collectively work toward solutions.

Fostering a sense of community ownership over the plan’s goals and concepts is critical. This helps dispel the perception that the plan exists solely to meet state requirements. Without real public support, implementation becomes difficult and the plan’s effectiveness is significantly diminished. Ideally, communities cultivate long-term awareness of planning efforts and how they advance shared objectives that benefit residents.

Creating lasting public ownership of the plan and its goals, policies, and strategies- is essential to its success. A community should work to ensure the plan reflects its own needs and aspirations, not merely compliance with outside requirements.

Manchester's Public Outreach

To gather broad community input, the CPC launched a comprehensive survey in June 2025, available both electronically and on paper, and kept it open through February 2026. The survey sought feedback on a wide range of topics, including current and future land use, transportation, housing, municipal services, the local economy, and town governance. Several open-ended questions allowed residents to provide unprompted comments. The survey was promoted on the Town's website, through QR codes placed in common areas, and via direct outreach from Committee members. In total, 117 responses were received- approximately a 6 percent response rate among Manchester residents age 20 and older.

As each chapter of the plan was reviewed and revised, it was posted on the Town's website for public review. Once all chapters were completed, draft policies and strategies were also made available online for additional community feedback.

The Committee also hosted a public Question-and-Answer session on May 14, 2026, at the Manchester Fire Department. The event included a brief presentation by the Kennebec Valley Council of Governments and provided residents with an opportunity to ask questions and offer comments.

Manchester's vision statement was drafted and refined by the CPC with direct input from the public. The resulting vision statement is presented below.

Manchester envisions a future where its natural beauty, historic character, rural landscapes, and recreational assets are conserved in a vibrant, healthy and safe community by supporting strong community connections between residents and visitors alike.

Concentrating growth in the village area and along Route 202 will support a vibrant, mixed-use center while preserving Manchester's rural character, open space, and natural resources.

This balanced approach supports thoughtful development and conservation, enabling residents to live, work, and age in place while fostering a cultural and tourism hub. Manchester remains committed to environmental stewardship, preparing for and responding to environmental challenges brought by a changing climate by investing in resilient infrastructure, energy efficiency, and sustainable development. Thoughtful planning meets the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors, strengthens the economy, and preserves Manchester's unique character, values, responsible stewardship of resources, and sense of community.

Implementation

Nearly every chapter of this comprehensive plan has resulted in policies and strategies along with specific recommendations for implementing parties and an established timeframe for completion. The success of this plan relies heavily on how well these recommendations can be put into action, necessitating a robust implementation plan and clear metrics for measuring progress.

Responsibility for implementation will predominantly rest with the leadership of the town, often delegated to the appropriate boards, committees, commissions, and town staff. While many policies and strategies from previous plans have been executed, there remains a commitment to strive toward the implementation of all viable and reasonable recommendations contained within this updated plan.

This plan has been developed by the Manchester Comprehensive Plan Committee, Planning Board, and Select Board, with contributions from relevant town officials. Stakeholders, including elected officials, community committees, individual residents, and other affiliated organizations- share a common goal: to secure the future of Manchester. It is their civic duty to ensure that the recommendations of the plan are actively pursued.

To monitor progress and address any challenges that arise, the following implementation and evaluation strategies are recommended:

The Manchester Select Board, as the legislative body responsible for implementing this plan, will conduct reviews, at least annually, with department heads, boards, and commissions charged with implementing the strategies outlined in the Policies and Strategies section of this Plan. These reviews will evaluate previous activities, progress, and establish priorities for the next review period. It will also serve as a venue for recommending updates or amendments to the Comprehensive Plan as needed.

Implementing parties will submit quarterly progress reports to the Select Board, detailing the strategies they worked on during that quarter, actions taken, progress, barriers in implementation, relevancy of strategies, and any other relevant details.

In addition, Manchester's Code Enforcement Officer (CEO), in coordination with the Planning Board, should track and monitor all issued permits.

The Planning Board and CEO should review permit trends at least annually to ensure that growth is occurring in appropriate locations. If development exceeds projections or moves away from the community's vision, the town should take appropriate action to address the situation.

Tracking the following applications is recommended:

- The location of all new residential structures.
- The location of all new commercial structures.
- Conversions from seasonal camps to year-round residences.

The Planning Board and CEO will prepare an annual written report summarizing the permit tracking data, which will be shared with the Select Board and Town Manager for review and discussion.

Following each review of the Planning Board and CEO's report, the Select Board and Town Manager will provide recommendations for the upcoming year. Adjustments to policies and strategies will be suggested based on any challenges encountered in achieving the plan's goals.

The Planning Board and town officials should continue to regularly review the Land Use and Development Ordinance to ensure it reflects changing community needs, ideally aligning these reviews with the annual budget process.

Because land use planning outcomes are often similar across municipal boundaries, this Plan also recommends that Manchester periodically meet with neighboring communities to coordinate land use designations and regulatory and non-regulatory strategies.

This systematic review process will help ensure accountability among town staff, boards, commissions, committees, and elected officials as they carry out the Plan's policies and strategies. Regular reviews will also track progress and identify any barriers to implementation.

By providing ongoing oversight and feedback, this process will keep the Plan dynamic and relevant over time. It will also signal when revisions or updates are needed, with the next full evaluation scheduled for 2036.

Town of Manchester's Vision Statement:

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Concentrating growth in the village area and along Route 202 will support a vibrant, mixed-use center while preserving Manchester's rural character, open space, and natural resources.

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Town of
Manchester
MAINE

Community Assessment

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

1: Historic and Archeological Resources



Overview of Manchester

The area that makes up the Town of Manchester was settled as part of a larger area that included Augusta, Hallowell, Readfield, and Winthrop, detailed further in the publication, *Manchester Maine 1775 – 1975*, published by the Manchester Bicentennial Committee in 1975 and available at the Manchester Town Office. The first settlements appeared around 1774, with the arrival of Nathaniel Floyd in the southern part of town, and Thomas Allen in the northern part. In 1776 Captain John Evans, Francis Fuller, and Reuben Brainard arrived, followed by Samuel Cummings in 1778, and many more families after that. The Manchester Community Church was organized in 1830.

The town annexed land from Readfield in 1852 and from Farmingdale and Hallowell in 1870, and ceded land to Winthrop, Readfield, Augusta and Hallowell through 1873. These changes in land delineation between towns contributed to the apparent population fluctuations at the time. Manchester was incorporated as a town in 1850 with the name of Kennebec; in 1854 the name was changed to Manchester after the town of Manchester, Massachusetts, from which many of the residents came. Census records indicate that there were 813 people living in Manchester in 1860.

Manchester was originally an agricultural community, well known for its fine orchards. In the mid-1800s, Manchester prospered as a small industrial center, producing such items as oil cloth, granite wedges, and hay forks. In 1886, Manchester was home to three churches and seven public schoolhouses. Between 1890 and 1900, following the opening of the west for homesteading, Manchester and surrounding towns experienced a decline in population. The industrial revolution drew more residents away from town and into nearby cities for employment. As a result, Manchester reverted largely back to its roots as an agricultural community.

The area known traditionally as “Manchester Forks”, and as “Hallowell Crossroads”, where Route 17 and the Pond Road meet Route 202, became the center of growth for Manchester during the 20th century. The town office, school, post office, and fire department are all located on Route 17 near this intersection. The strip of Route 202 that connects Augusta and Winthrop also experienced substantial growth in retail and service-related business developments during this time.

The historic patterns of development are still evident in Manchester; the original areas of village growth (The Forks) and residential settlement (Prescott Rd, Pond Road (Shore Road), etc.) are generally still characterized by these land uses today.

Historic Properties

The Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) is responsible for identifying archaeological sites, helping towns enhance measures to protect sites and to encourage research at significant sites. The primary focus of archaeological research in Maine is the early colonial period. This period is then divided into three time periods: Early Settlement (1604-1675), Indian Wars (1676 to early 18th century) and Resettlement Period (early to mid-18th century). Other sites of importance represent the earliest introduction of Europeans or Early Americans into an area, regardless of the time period.

The Cummings Cemetery is the only property identified as eligible to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places by the MHPC. This cemetery contains the graves of several notable early residents of Manchester including Samuel Cummings, Sr. and Jr., both of whom served as Minutemen in the Revolutionary War.

MHPC recommends that a full survey be conducted to identify any locations that may be eligible for enrollment into the National Historic Register.

Prehistoric Archaeological Sites

The MHPC has identified seven prehistoric sites in Manchester (see *Historic Resources Map* in the Appendix). Five are located around the Cobbosseecontee Outlet and dam, with two of these being listed on the National Register, already. Some discovered components range in age from 1,000 to 7,500 years in age. Two additional sites are located approximately ½ mile north of the Cobbosseecontee Lake outlet.

MHPC has recommended that the areas that have not yet been surveyed around Cobbosseecontee Lake and Stream, Hutchinson Pond, and Jimmie's Pond be surveyed.

Historic Archeological Sites

MHPC has documented one location in Manchester as a historic archaeological site (see *Historic Resources Map* in the Appendix). Called the Roderick-Hadfield Artifacts, these are Anglo-American domestic artifacts that have been dated to the late 18th or 19th century. Their eligibility for listing on the National Historic Register is undetermined currently. Again, MHPC recommends that a full professional survey should be conducted with a focus on agricultural, residential, and industrial sites.

Locally Important Historic Places

There are several interesting historic sites and old homesteads in Manchester, many of them dating back to the town's original settlers (see *Historic Resources Map* in the Appendix). A more complete reference to these homes can be found in the book, *Manchester 1775 – 1975*. A preliminary inventory of historic structures done in March of 2010 showed four existing structures built before 1800, 44 built from 1800 to 1855, and 55 built from 1856 to 1918. At least 23 old cellar holes have been identified. Additionally, the town's assorted cemeteries contain a cache of valuable genealogical data.

A cluster of historic objects or buildings may also be considered a historic landscape because of their significance to settlement and development patterns for Manchester. Locally important historic places include Rockwood Road, a historic carriage road and the old trolley bed, both still evident in portions of town.

There are also several homes with interesting stories and special significance and/or unique architectural value in town, regardless of listing to the National Historic Register.

The three most notable buildings in Manchester with locally important historic value include:

- Manchester Community Church
- North Manchester Meeting House
- Manchester Grange

These three buildings are owned by private nonprofit organizations. They are generally in good condition. The North Manchester Meeting House is a long-standing building in Manchester. The Meeting House has stood as a landmark in Manchester for almost 200 years but was actually built in neighboring East Readfield, originally. As people moved to what is now North Manchester, they became less willing to travel to church in East Readfield. After ten years of discussion, the building was dismantled, moved, and reassembled where it has stood for almost two centuries.

Other notable sites and buildings with locally important historic significance include Knowles Road, and Summer Haven. More detail on these places and others can be found in the book, *Manchester 1775 – 1975*.

Another critical link to our heritage are cemeteries. The town has an obligation to protect and maintain some cemeteries, while others are private or family cemeteries. The Manchester Cemetery Committee is a combination of a town-employed Sexton, and volunteer members who work to maintain and manage the cemetery grounds, monuments, and markers.

There are eleven cemeteries in Manchester, listed in Table 1, below.

TABLE 1: CEMETERIES AND LOCATIONS

Cemetery Name	Location
Annie Hill Cemetery	Prescott Road, near junction of RT 135
Benson Cemetery	Benson Road, at the south end of town
Cottle Farm	57 Cottle Road, north of the farmhouse
Cummings Cemetery	Western Avenue (RT 202)
Dummer Family Cemetery	Prescott Road
Fifield Cemetery	Fifield Road
Friends Cemetery	Patch Road, on the left, going east
Manchester Forks Cemetery	Granite Hill Road, in the center of town
Saint Mary's Cemetery	Western Avenue (RT 202), near Augusta town line
Sanford Cemetery	North end of town on discontinued portion of Mt. Vernon Rd
Scribner Hill Cemetery	Scribner Hill Road, east side of North Manchester Meeting House

Source: Comprehensive Plan Committee

In addition to those detailed above, there are several other structures in Manchester that are important cultural landmarks that, while not on the National Register of Historic Places, are nonetheless historic and valued by the community. The first is a road marker chiseled on a large stone, dating back to the “Coos Trail” days, which reads, “5M to K River” (5 miles to Kennebec River).

The other is a large rock called “Footprint Rock”, located beside the North Manchester Meeting House. It has one larger footprint, and one smaller footprint implanted in the granite rock. There are several theories on how the footprints got there, but one local lore states that a construction worker from centuries ago swore that “he’d sell his soul to the Devil for this rock to be moved” after it was found to be immovable by regular means. Another theory is that the rock was a trail marker made by Native Americans when they traveled through Manchester.



Threats to Historic Resources

There are no historic districts in Manchester, and none of the structures or locations eligible to be listed on the National Historic Register have been surveyed, nor are they owned by a government entity to provide them with protection.

The threat to the historic resources is not specific to Manchester but includes all of Maine and extends to the effects of weather events and climate change. These historic structures and sites have withstood the test of time to this point, and communities should be cognizant in recognizing their cultural and historical importance when planning for future weather events. The MHPC has established a website to assist entities across the state with planning for the effects that climate events have on historic and cultural resources (<https://www.maine.gov/mhpc/programs/protection-and-community-resources/climate-change>).

The North Manchester Meeting House, Manchester Community Church, and Manchester Grange are all owned by private, nonprofit entities; therefore, their maintenance, protection, and upkeep is at the discretion of those organizations.

Private homes that are eligible for listing on the National Historic Register or other privately owned structures do not receive any formal protection based on their intrinsic historical importance.

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

No known significant historical resource has fallen into disrepair; however, it is possible that is because there have not been official surveys to determine the historical significance that eligible structures have not been identified. The Manchester Historical Society has identified this as a future goal.

Historic Resources Analysis and Key Issues

The Land Use and Development Ordinance, which regulates minimum lot size, multi-family housing development, commercial development review, and subdivision creation require that applicants certify, in the permit application, that no historic or archeologic resources will be impacted. This has proven effective in safeguarding Manchester's history.

The Manchester Historical Society is an integral part of historic preservation in Manchester. The Society was organized in 2009 and received non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation status in 2010. Since the Historical Society's inception, membership has grown to roughly 30 dues paying members.

The Society has been involved in numerous projects throughout town, including producing and distributing informational booklets about Manchester's history, working to identify sites and structures of historical importance, and striving to get eligible site/structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Currently, there are limited protections in place to preserve the integrity and character of historic and archaeological resources in Manchester. The town's Land Use and Development Ordinance (2024) outlines the regulations and requirements associated with development in Manchester.

The subdivision portion of this Ordinance requires applicants to identify areas of Secondary Conservation, including existing historic structures, on the Existing Features Plan prepared as part of the application process (Article II, Section I2b). The identified conservation areas are used in determining possibilities for open space within the subdivision.

Article II, Section 8L(3)e of this Ordinance states the following requirements regarding wireless telecommunications facilities and historic buildings:

- i. A wireless telecommunications facility(ies) located on or within an historic structure shall not alter the character-defining features, distinctive construction methods, or original historic materials of the building.
- ii. Any alteration made to an historic structure to accommodate a wireless telecommunications facility(ies) shall be fully reversible.
- iii. wireless telecommunications facilities authorized by this subsection shall be concealed within or behind existing architectural features, or shall be located so that they are not visible from public roads and viewing areas.

Article III of the Ordinance, outlining site plan review, provides the following guidelines pertaining to historic and archaeological structures. Section 8A states that the planning board, before granting approval for a project, will ensure that "the proposed activity will not have an undue adverse impact on ...historic sites".

2: Manchester Community Profile



LIGHTHOUSE, LAKE COBOSSEECONTEE, MANCHESTER.

Demographic statistical data of a particular place, like Manchester, are incredibly valuable and greatly affect future decisions. Demographic data can affect and impact nearly every decision made on the municipal level. For example, the amount of money from taxes the town needs to generate is affected by things like services the town offers for its senior citizens, infrastructure, the size of the school system, expected future school enrollment, waste management services, and the quantity of recreational amenities provided. The level of services the town needs for senior citizens can be assumed using demographic data, just as the school system size will be affected by total family households in the area.

Manchester is evolving and although the population has not changed significantly in numbers in the last several decades, the characteristics of that population are undeniably changing. The changing demographic requires innovative ideas and strategies to accommodate the changing population.

The information supplied in this chapter will be used throughout the plan and will help inform us about how the community has changed. Future changes are also discussed. Growth projections will help in planning for the increased housing and public service demands that are expected over the next couple of decades. Similar information can be found in the Housing Chapter of this plan.

****Note: You may notice that the population number varies between 2,387 and 2,456. This is because the 2,387 is from the American Community Survey (ACS) and is an estimate. It has been used in certain charts because the data was calculated based on this number from the ACS. To change the population and recalculate the data would be inaccurate. It is important to understand this because it could be construed as a mistake, and it is not. These discrepancies have been annotated in several places.

Historical Population Trends

Over the course of its existence, Manchester has experienced a rise and fall of population, similar to its neighbors and the State. Economic and cultural factors have influenced population changes displayed in Table 1 and graphed in Figure 1 below.

TABLE 1: POPULATION COUNT BY CENSUS YEAR

Year	Population	Year	Population
1860	813	1950	664
1870	732	1960	1,068
1880	623	1970	1,331
1890	612	1980	1,949
1900	518	1990	2,099
1910	601	2000	2,465
1920	485	2010	2,580
1930	492	2020*	2,456
1940	626		

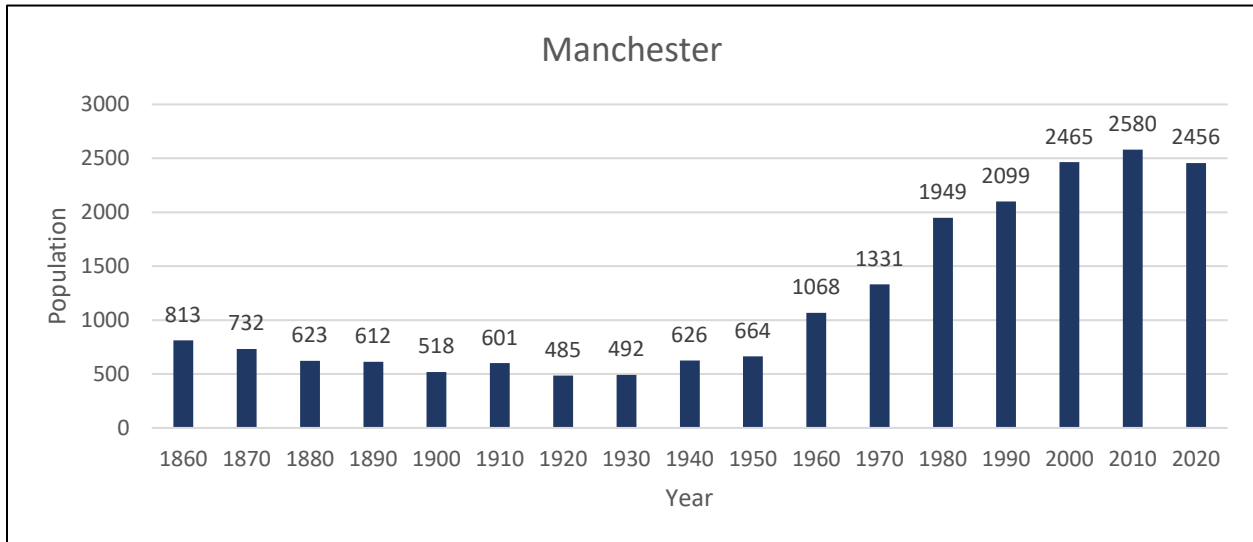
Source: U.S. Census

Following the Civil War, and lasting until the early 20th Century, virtually all of Maine lost population. With the enactment of the Homestead Act of 1862 and the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869, the draw of western expansion was hard to resist and caused many Americans to leave their homes. Like many other towns and cities across Maine and the United States, Manchester saw its lowest population during the 1920's. While the drop in population is expected and typical in many Maine towns between the 1920's and 1930's due to World War I and II and the Great Depression; the fast rebounding of the population after this time is unique. Most notably, Manchester saw a drastic rise in population since the 1950's, with the population growing by approximately 270% in less than 80 years.

This sudden increase in population could be attributed to several possibilities. Maine's capital city was originally Portland; however, in 1832 the capital was moved to the more centrally located city of Augusta. This move had a ripple effect, and the City of Augusta and state government grew simultaneously. As Maine's state government continued to grow, Manchester became the ideal bedroom community within easy commuting distance to Augusta. In fact, Manchester's identity is that it is a bedroom community for the capital city of Augusta.

Additionally, Manchester is also ideally located to be a bedroom community for other, larger cities, too. For example, Manchester's proximity to Waterville, Lewiston, and Auburn make it a practical choice for anyone working in any of those locations. Manchester's location in proximity to more populated areas is a major driver in the town's population changes.

FIGURE 1: POPULATION TRENDS SINCE 1860



Source: United State Census

Additional Census or American Community Survey information can paint a broader picture to help with long-term planning for Manchester. One such example is that the average age of Manchester residents is increasing and although the number of households is still increasing, the number of single-person households is increasing faster. Except in college towns (like Waterville), single person households tend to be elderly households.

The effect of the median age and makeup of a community's population is far reaching. For example, the increasing median age could lead to a decrease in school age children, which has potential to affect the school system. Whereas a community with a population aging in place will likely need to dedicate more resources to municipal services. Furthermore, the available workforce will fluctuate depending on those in the region who are able to work and the various positions that are typical with each age group.

Table 2, below, highlights age trends since 2000. Manchester, unlike many communities in Maine, is not losing a significant number of workforce age residents (age brackets 20-44, 45-59, and 60-64); regardless of numerical population changes. Since 2000, the age bracket of 20-44 years of age decreased by 4.8 percent, and the age bracket 45-59 years of age decreased by 5.5 percent. However, the age bracket of 60-64 years of age increased by 124.8 percent.

The population of children under five year of age declined by 12.8 percent, a concerning trend given that this age group represents the community's future generations. Meanwhile, the age bracket of 65-84 years of age increased by 50.7 percent.

Interestingly, the number of individuals 85 years old and older has decreased significantly in the last 20 years, after a small increase in 2010. This could be a result of lack of available appropriate housing or elderly care options for this age group, or it could be related to other factors. Without further investigation, that is outside of the scope of this plan, there is no way to determine a cause; however, the decline in population for this age bracket is worth noting.

The primary trends that the statistical data presented in Table 2 details are the increasing age of Manchester residents and the fact that there are fewer school-aged children. The other trend that Manchester has adhered to is the increase in those 60 and older.

TABLE 2: AGE TRENDS 2000-2020

General Population Characteristics				
	2000 Census	2010 Census	2020 Census	20 Year Trend
Total Population	2,456	2,580	2,542	3.5%
Median Age	39.4	48.5	47.4	20.3%
Persons less than 5 years	133	116	116	-12.8%
Persons 5 to 19 years	548	516	508	-7.3%
Persons 20 to 44 years	724	544	693	-4.8%
Persons 45 to 59 years	565	802	534	-5.5%
Persons 60 to 64 years	125	129	281	124.8%
Persons 65 to 84 years	315	397	474	50.7%
Persons 85 years and over	55	101	36	-34.5%

Source: United State Census – American Community Survey

Another recent trend observed statewide is the increase of multigenerational housing. Oftentimes born out of necessity during the COVID-19 pandemic, these arrangements became permanent. Multigenerational homes are typically composed of three or so generations, parents, their adult children, and grandchildren. The 2022 American Community Survey recorded that nine households in Manchester were grandparents living with their children and grandchildren.

Just as significant in its effect is the overall decrease in household size. Since 2000, Manchester went from 2.52 persons per household to 2.49 in the 2010 American Community Survey and 2.44 persons per household in the 2022 ACS (Table 3). The ACS defines household size as the number of people living in one place, who may or may not be related. This contrasts with average family size, which was 2.77 in the 2022 ACS; average family size is defined as people living in one location who are related to one another.

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

Smaller families and couples typically will not be searching for the large sprawling farmhouse homes that Maine is known for, instead they will be looking for more compact dwelling units or one floor living.

There may also be a desire for more maintained communities, where homeowners or renters are able to rely on property management for landscaping and road maintenance. A potential impact of decreasing household size is that municipalities may have fewer children entering the school systems and participating in extra-curricular activities; instead, they will need to offer or expand offerings of age-friendly programs for all abilities.

Components of Population Change

This data is imperative when considering the population and housing demands for the future (covered more thoroughly in the Housing chapter). If the number of people in each household continues to decrease as projected, the community will require not only more houses, but likely a housing stock made up of smaller houses.

TABLE 3: POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS: 2000 - 2022

General Population Characteristics	2000	2010	2022*
Total Population	2,456	2,580	2,542
Male Population	1,194	1,309	1,155
Female Population	1,271	1,270	1,232
Median Age	41.8	48.5	47.4
Total Households	977	1,044	975
Family Households	740	723	719
Married Couple Family Households	630	631	665
Nonfamily Households	243	283	265
Nonfamily Households Living Alone	201	298	192
Households with children (under 18)	330	284	252
Single-Person Household 65 years +	79	175	121
Average Household Size	2.52	2.49	2.44

Source: 2000, 2010 Census

**2022 Data from ACS*

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

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

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

However, population trends can be combated in several ways. Manchester has plenty of available land and is a short drive to Augusta, Lewiston, Auburn, and Waterville for either employment or entertainment. Access to waterbodies and other outdoor recreational activities are abundant both in Manchester and in neighboring towns. While the rate of natural change cannot be impacted with town policy, the rate of migration can be affected by managing land use controls, promoting economic sectors that fit the character of the town, and offering public services that town residents want and need.

Population & Housing Density

Population growth and changes can be affected and managed by the rate of housing development and the style of houses being constructed. Additionally, local policies can affect the rate of housing growth through their influence on the cost of development or land use restrictions.

Trends can be managed, to a certain extent, to produce desired results. For example, if the local economy or housing market changes, that in turn affects how the community grows and changes, as well. Municipal regulation and policy can have an influence on the size and types of new houses constructed, which in turn will drive population demographics. Neighborhoods with large lots tend to add to building costs and require expensive homes to be built. Many times, these homes are 3-, 4-, or 5-bedroom houses suitable for large families with young children. On the other extreme, housing units can be designed exclusively for senior populations with 1- and 2-person households. This type of development would more closely match Manchester's demand for housing but would not add as much to the growth potential of the town.

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

TABLE 4: MUNICIPAL HOUSING DENSITY

Land Area and Housing Density					
	Square Land Miles	2000 Housing Count	2010 Housing Count	2020 Housing Count	2020 Unit per Sq. Mile
State	30,864	651,901	721,830	739,072	23.9
Kennebec County	867	56,364	60,972	62,607	72.2
Belgrade	43.24	1,178	2,198	2,267	39.13
Readfield	29.16	1,148	1,293	1,320	42.65
Manchester	21.39	1,181	1,255	1,259	58.86
Winthrop	31.22	2,495	3,171	3,278	104.99
West Gardiner	24.63	1,314	1,575	1,668	67.72
Hallowell	5.88	1,243	1,339	1,259	214.12

Source: U.S. Decennial Census

Table 4 above compares housing density for Manchester, surrounding towns, Kennebec County, and the state. Based on 2020 data, the state has the lowest housing density (23.9 units per mi²), Hallowell has the highest housing density (214.12 units per mi²), and Manchester is in the middle with 58.86 units per mi².

Population density, detailed in Table 5 below, is a gauge of residents per square mileage of land. While the total area of Manchester is documented at 22.62 square miles, of which 21.39 square miles is land, leaving 1.23 square miles as water. Of the 21.39 square miles of land, there is a population density of 115.24 residents per square mile.

TABLE 5: MUNICIPAL LAND AREA AND POPULATION DENSITY

Land Area and Population Density							
	Land Square Miles	2000 Population	2000 Density	2010 Population	2010 Density	2020 Population	2020 Density
State	30,864	1,274,923	41.3	1,328,361	43.0	1,362,359	44.1
Kennebec County	867	117,114	135	122,151	140.9	123,642	142.6
Belgrade	43.24	2,978	68.87	3,189	73.75	3,250	75.16
Readfield	29.16	2,360	80.93	2,598	89.09	2,597	89.06
Manchester	21.39	2,465	115.24	2,580	120.61	2,456	114.82
Winthrop	31.22	6,232	199.61	6,149	196.95	6,121	196.06
West Gardiner	24.63	2,943	119.48	3,389	137.59	3,380	137.23
Hallowell	5.88	2,467	419.56	2,381	404.93	2,570	437.07

Source: U.S. Decennial Census

Manchester’s population is largely concentrated in or near the Village District and the Community Residential District. Nearly all the population is close to the corridors for Routes 202 and 17 and roughly a mile radius from the town’s center and immediate lake frontage.

Seasonal Population

All the analysis and data cited above refers to year-round residents. While the classification of a resident vs. non-resident is multi-faceted, generally a person is considered a resident of the State of Maine when they spend more than 183 days in the State and maintain a permanent place of abode in Maine.

According to the 2022 American Community Survey, there were 173 housing units classified as seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. The vacation or tourist season in Maine is associated with the months of May, when the weather begins to warm, through October, which is the height of foliage change or “leaf peeping.” If the 173 seasonal housing units are occupied by the average family size for the United State of 3.15, this would account for an additional 544.94 people present in the community.

As discussed in the Population and Housing Density portion of this chapter, the population density of Manchester is 114.82 people per square mile. The additional 544.94 seasonal people in Manchester causes the population density to rise to 140.29 people per square mile.

This seasonal fluctuation has significant effects on the town such as increased traffic, demand for commercial/retail establishments, use of public safety services and more. But the seasonal populations' contribution is not all negative. In fact, Manchester is financially dependent upon this seasonal population in terms of property taxes and the local economy. Those who own seasonal property in Manchester pay higher taxes because the properties are generally on lake frontage. And, since the individuals who own these properties are not full-time residents, they use fewer municipal services, especially the school systems. As a result, the significant seasonal population keeps taxes lower for full-time residents.

Local businesses and restaurants are dependent upon the seasonal fluctuations. Families that own the seasonal residences often bring extended family or encourage other families and friends to join them, resulting in an even more significant seasonal population increase. But this in turn boosts local businesses.

While town residents want to continue to encourage the seasonal population, there are related concerns. The town will need to find a way to balance their financial reliance on the seasonal population with some of the potential negative impacts this population may have. Some of those concerns are outlined below:

- The large seasonal population has driven housing prices up, as people from other areas buy both seasonal houses or year-round houses and use them only seasonally.
- There has been an uptick in conversions from seasonal dwellings to year-round. Because many of these are on lake front properties, care must be given to these conversions regarding wastewater disposal.
- Seasonal conversions result in increased demand on municipal services in areas of town that were not densely populated in the past.
- In some instances, people who only spend time in Manchester seasonally are not invested in the town, which may have a negative impact.
- There has been an increase in people buying older camps and tearing them down completely and rebuilding them. Many of these camps are on small lots along the lake. This scenario has potential to cause friction between neighbors.

It is also noteworthy that the timeframe that was once considered 'seasonal' has changed and increased. This change seems to have been initiated by the COVID 19 pandemic and has not reverted to what it was previously. Seasonal residents are staying at their properties for longer periods of time than they did in the past. This could be the result of changing climate patterns both in Maine and in Florida, where much of the seasonal population resides. Or it could be that the seasonal population can no longer afford to stay in their other place of residence for as long a period as they could previously.

Whatever the reason for the continued change, this too will undoubtedly have effects on Manchester.

Perhaps, however, the biggest concern around the seasonal visitors for Manchester residents is that increasingly, the seasonal population is staying at short term rentals rather than camps which they own. Currently, short-term rentals are an unregulated entity in Manchester, and the town is considering the best approaches to their regulation. Manchester residents are concerned about the potential effects short-term rentals may have because people staying in them are even less invested in the town than if they owned the property, even though they still bolster the local economy.

Regional Perspective

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

Table 6, below, compares Manchester to neighboring communities in terms of population change since 2000. Manchester lost 78 residents overall between 2000 and 2022, despite a gain of 100 from 2000 to 2010. In the comparison in Table 6, the only towns with population decline between 2000 and 2022 were Winthrop and Manchester; the other towns had an increase in population.

TABLE 6: POPULATION COMPARISON TO NEIGHBORING TOWNS

Town	2000	2010	2022*
Manchester	2,465	2,580	2,387
Belgrade	2,978	3,189	3,258
Readfield	2,360	2,598	2,616
Winthrop	6,232	6,149	6,138
West Gardiner	2,943	3,389	3,667
Hallowell	2,467	2,381	2,558

Source: U.S. Census

**Source: 2022 ACS*

The region’s towns are also somewhat similar in the other two high-impact population trends: increasing median age and decreasing household size, as mentioned above. Since 2000, Manchester’s median age has gone from 41.8 to 47.4, an increase of 5.6 years in the median age. Manchester’s household size shrank from 2.52 people per household in 2000 to 2.42 people per household in 2022. These changes are reflected in neighboring towns as well.

TABLE 7: MEDIAN AGE AND HOUSEHOLD SIZE OF NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES 2022

Town	Median Age	Household Size
Manchester	44.3	2.37
Belgrade	53.0	2.45
Readfield	45.0	2.59
Winthrop	41.8	2.36
West Gardiner	47.1	2.93
Hallowell	49.5	1.84

Source: 2022 ACS

It is significant in Table 7 that the median age in Manchester is slightly lower than that of surrounding towns, except for Winthrop. Manchester, as with Winthrop, is a bedroom community for Augusta, perhaps contributing to the slightly lower median age.

In the decreasing household and family sizes and increasing median age, Manchester is not an anomaly in Kennebec County or the State of Maine. In fact, the State's overall median age is higher, and the average family size is smaller than that of Manchester. However, as seen in Table 7, these statistics are not reflected in the United States.

TABLE 8: STATE, COUNTY, TOWN STATISTICS

Town/ County/ State/ Country	Population Change		% Change	Average Family Size*	Median Age
	2010	2020			
Manchester	2,580	2,456	-4.8%	2.80	44.3
Kennebec County	122,151	123,642	1.2%	2.9	44.1
Maine	1,328,361	1,362,359	2.6%	2.9	44.8
United States	234.6 million	331.4 million	7.4%	3.15	38.2

Source: 2020 Census

*This differs from the Average Household Size, which is 2.44 for Manchester. Household Size refers to those living together, related or not. Family Size refers to those who are living together and are related.

School Enrollment Data

Table 9 shows school enrollment data for the past 9 years collected by the Department of Education. For obvious reasons, as a community’s median age increases, typically its school enrollment decreases. The fewer younger families, the fewer school aged children. That trend is evident in Table 9 below for Kennebec County, Winthrop, Readfield, and Belgrade. The only towns that seem to be stable are Manchester and West Gardiner.

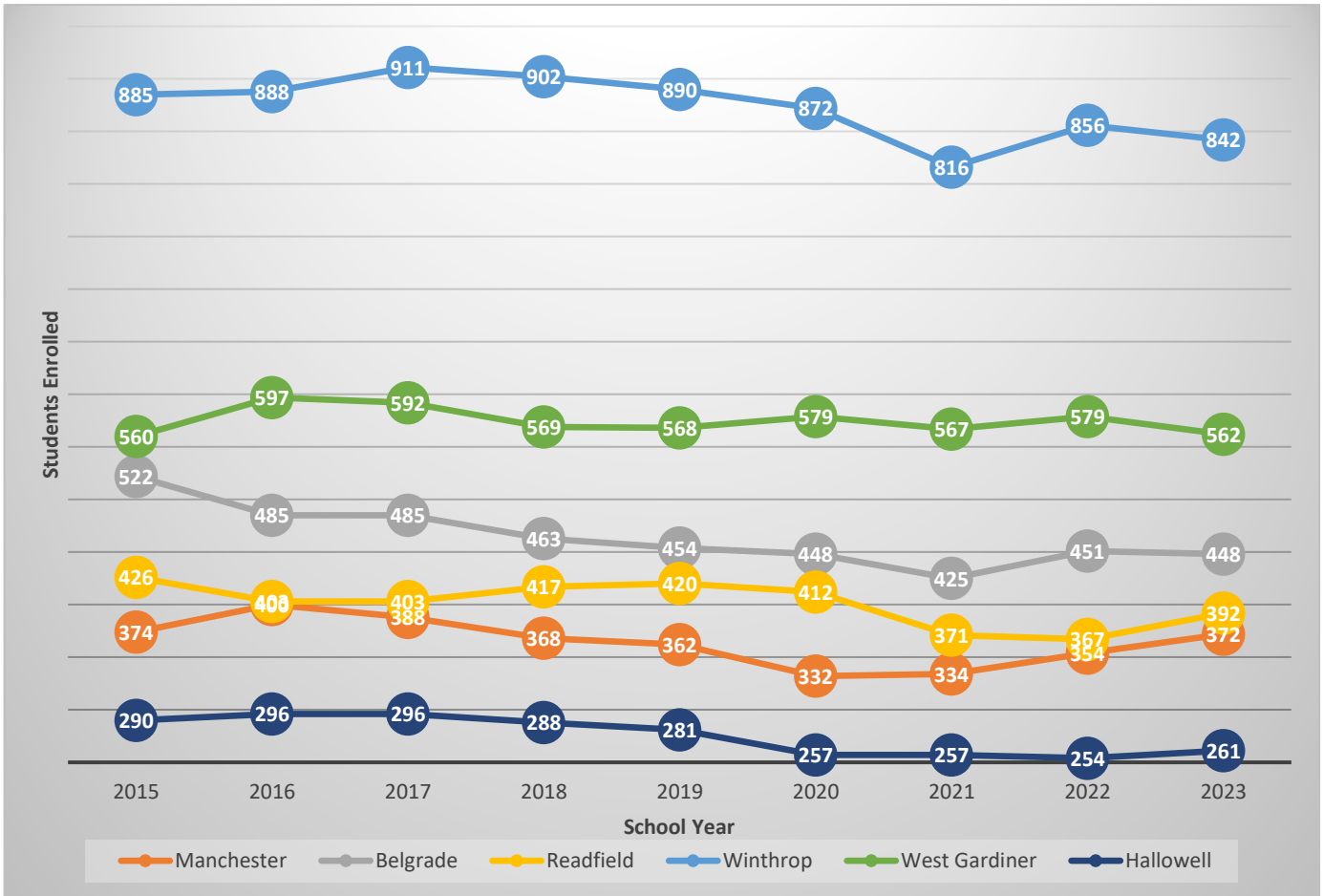
When young families are considering where to buy a house, a determining factor is often the quality of the school system available in each town. Manchester’s school system is known for being above average, which may contribute to the town’s stable school enrollment data.

TABLE 9: PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT BY MUNICIPALITY

County/Town	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	10 Year Average
Manchester	374	400	388	368	362	332	334	354	372	366.70
Belgrade	522	485	485	463	454	448	425	451	448	470.20
Readfield	426	403	403	417	420	412	371	367	392	405.30
Winthrop	885	888	911	902	890	872	816	856	842	872.30
West Gardiner	560	597	592	569	568	579	567	579	562	573.10
Hallowell	290	296	296	288	281	257	257	254	261	276.10
Kennebec County	16,965	16,957	16,798	16,891	16,790	16,621	15,843	16,140	16,150	16,646.5

Source: Maine Department of Education, Student Enrollment Data

FIGURE 2: PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT GRAPHED



Source: Maine Department of Education, Student Enrollment Data

From Table 9 and Figure 2, a trend is apparent for school enrollment in this region. In the past several years there has been a steady decline followed by an uptick in school enrollment, not only for Manchester, but also for surrounding towns and Kennebec County. Despite this, it is yet to be determined if the downward trend will continue or if the uptick in students will continue through the 2024 school year and on.

As stated previously, Maine’s overall median age is increasing, and the population of younger generations is decreasing. This trend has been progressing for nearly ten years, depending on datasets, and is not likely to change trajectory on its own accord. Each town will undoubtedly be affected by this trend; planning strategies should be discussed to consider possible impacts. When considered together, the implications of increased housing costs, increased median age, and declining family size results in decreased school enrollment on a state level. Just as the state considers and prepares for fluctuating school enrollment, so too should Manchester. On a town level, Manchester should be prepared for this possibility, given the trends outlined above; regardless of the current stable nature of enrollment. The potential decline in school enrollment could affect everything including but not limited to school bus routes, teaching jobs, school buildings, teaching styles, and the quality of education provided.

Population Projection and Impacts

Population projections provide a short and easy answer. These are mathematical extrapolations of past population growth and factors such as age distribution and household size.

The Office of the State Economist publishes a projection to the year 2040. They estimate Manchester's population will be 2,373, a decrease of 3.4 percent from the current population in 16 years. This is based partially on the advancing age of the residents and the overall observable trend, not necessarily a reflection of the popularity of the town. It is imperative to bear in mind that this is just a projection based on past trends and data. But since the COVID pandemic, climate change, and the influx of refugees, trends and projections are anything but reliable. Regardless of accuracy and potential variables, this projection provides a rough population estimate for planning purposes for the future.

As mentioned above, the smaller the average household size becomes, the more houses we need to hold the same number of people. The estimate assumes that household size has continued the decades-long trend, going from 2.49 in 2010 to 2.44 in 2020. That trend appears to be slowing, but even if it levels out at 2.20 in 2030, that computes to about six new houses per year.

And, due to Manchester's ideal location as a bedroom community for Augusta and other more populated areas, if more housing were available, it would undoubtedly be filled. Currently, any houses in Manchester that are listed for sale are sold almost immediately. This will be covered further in the Housing chapter.

The rate of housing development is an effective way to estimate population growth, but it is also an effective way to manage it. Local policies can affect the rate of housing growth through their influence on the cost of development or land use restrictions, which in turn, affects population growth. Growth in population and households increases the demand for public services and commercial development. Unless specifically designed for senior citizens, each new household must have one or more jobs to support it. Younger, larger households will generate school children. Nearly all households require added waste management and road maintenance costs. All these factors must be considered when projecting population growth.

Going back to the initial population projections (State: 2,373 by 2040) and using the assumption of six new homes a year as the break-even level with shrinking household size, we can look at the range of development possibilities.

Under the state's projection, the town will lose 83 residents between 2020 and 2040. Even at the current average household size, that population will require only 972 housing units, 69 units less than what currently exists in Manchester. A loss of 69 housing units over 16 years would likely be noticeable, but to compound that, even more would have to disappear because new homes would still be built. Disappeared units may be evidenced by a higher vacancy rate or the departure of mobile homes, for example.

Economically, this scenario seems quite unlikely, as Manchester is at the edge of both Augusta and Waterville's urban influences, and within a short drive to Auburn, and Lewiston.

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

Climate Change

This plan will have a climate change component incorporated into each chapter. The climate change section of the chapter will detail the effects of climate change in relation to that specific chapter topic. The purpose of this is to raise awareness of the widespread effect climate change will have on every aspect of life.

Currently, some of the climate related challenges Manchester and every other community in Maine are faced with include, but are not limited to changing temperatures, changes in precipitation, and storm intensity. Looking forward, Manchester and all of Maine's communities will continue to be faced with significant challenges because of climate change. If the effects of climate change are not managed properly, the town will become an undesirable place to live.

Just a few of the actions Manchester is taking to remediate these effects are sizing up culverts and improving stormwater management systems to counteract the increase intensity of storms.

Manchester strives to be proactive instead of reactive in the face of climate change to continue to provide a desirable place to live. The analysis in these chapters has several purposes:

1. To make people aware of how climate change affects every part of our lives;
2. To detail actions and considerations the town has already made towards preparedness; and,
3. To spark discussions amongst Manchester residents about climate change and possible ways to counteract the effects.

3: Manchester's Local Economy



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

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

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

Manchester's economic development has progressed slowly and deliberately as the town prioritized allowing development that was right for the town, such as agricultural endeavors. Manchester has focused on reducing and avoiding urban sprawl and managing growth while ensuring all development aligned with the character of the town. For this reason, encouraging and promoting economic development has not been the primary focus of the town, and any development that took place occurred organically, similar to much of the region.

Currently, since Manchester is a crossroads for the region, the town has a more service-oriented economy, as well as offering retail establishments.

Per Capita Income Vs. Household Income

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

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

One use of PCI is comparison among geographic areas, such as towns. According to the 2023 American Community Survey (ACS), Manchester had a per capita income (PCI) of \$45301, and HHI of \$89,459, most like Belgrade and Readfield (Table 1 and Figure 1).

For HHI, Manchester was higher than all surrounding towns, except for West Gardiner, though Belgrade and Readfield were in a similar range (Table 1 and Figure 1).

TABLE 1: COMPARISON OF PCI VS. HHI FOR SURROUNDING TOWNS

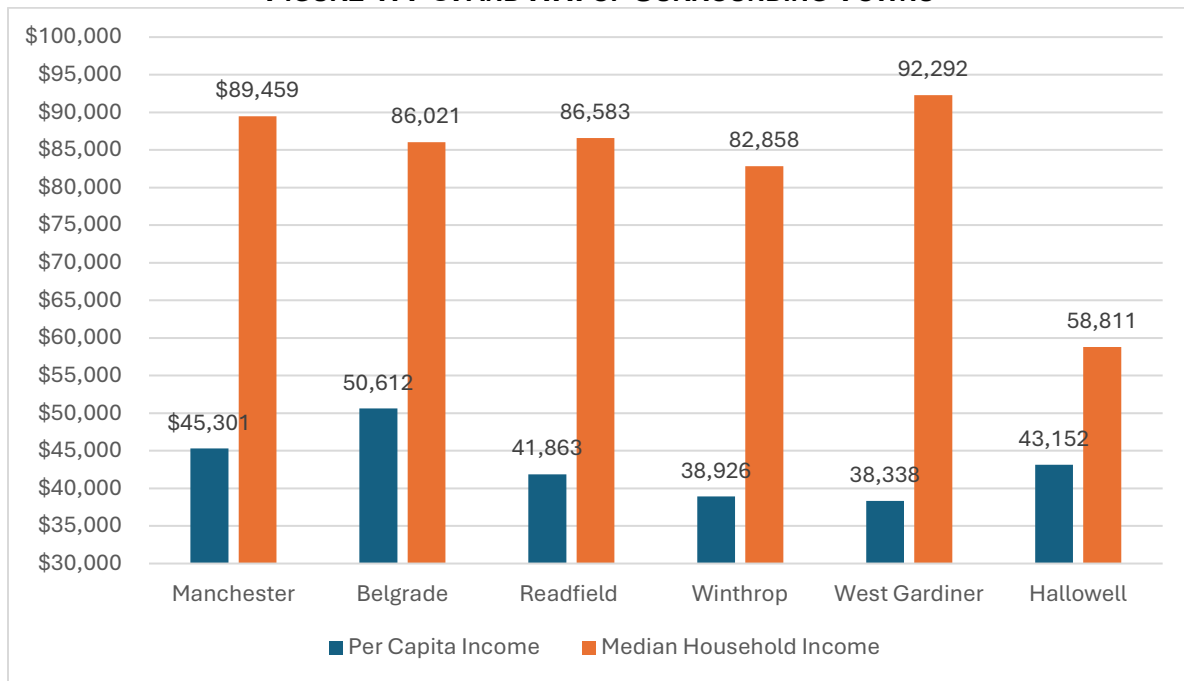
	Manchester	Belgrade	Readfield	Winthrop	West Gardiner	Hallowell
Per Capita Income	\$45,301	\$50,612	\$41,863	\$38,926	\$38,338	\$43,152
Median Household Income	\$89,459	\$86,021	\$88,583	\$82,858	\$92,292	\$58,811

Source: 2023 American Community Survey

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

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

FIGURE 1: PCI AND HHI OF SURROUNDING TOWNS



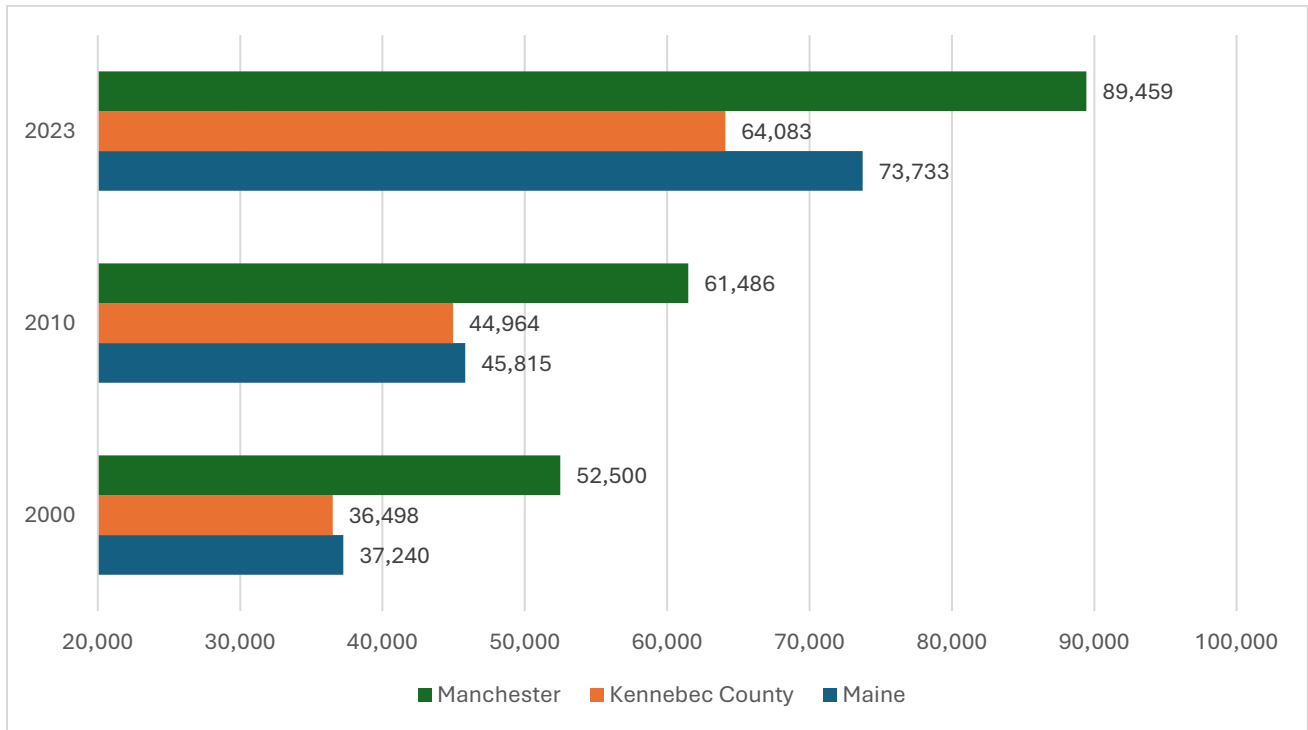
Source: 202 American Community Survey

Manchester's income profile most closely resembles that of Belgrade and Readfield. As an additional comparison, the State of Maine has a PCI of \$42,936 and a HHI of \$73,733. Kennebec County has a PCI of \$ 35,971 and a HHI of \$64,083.

The historic changes to Manchester's household income over time is illustrated in Figure 2, below.

From 2000 to 2010, there was almost a 28 percent increase, and from 2010 to 2020 there was nearly a 37 percent increase in median household income. When considering the recent upswing in economic conditions generally, that change is not surprising; however, it is considerably larger than the changes seen in the state.

FIGURE 2: INCREASE IN MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME*



Source: 2000 Census, 2010 and 2023 ACS
*Inflation adjustments included

In the 20-year analysis period, Manchester consistently had a higher household income than both the state and the county. The State of Maine has had a slightly higher median household income than Kennebec County over the last 20-year period.

These income levels are also a way to assess housing affordability. A house is considered affordable if a household whose income is at or below 80 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI) can live there without spending more than 28 percent of their income on housing costs (including heat, electricity, insurance, etc.). What this means in practice differs for rental and ownership units. For rentals to be considered affordable at 80 percent of the AMI, the household should be able to live there without spending 30 percent of their income on housing expenses.

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

Family of 1: \$48,750	Family of 5: \$75,200
Family of 2: \$55,700	Family of 6: \$80,750
Family of 3: \$62,650	Family of 7: \$86,350
Family of 4: \$69,600	Family of 8: \$91,900

This data is from April 1, 2024 and can be found on the Maine Housing website (https://www.mainehousing.org/docs/default-source/homeimprovement/80-ami-income-limits.pdf?sfvrsn=6df08615_5).

In Manchester, 80 percent of the median household income is \$71,567. Roughly 36 percent of Manchester’s 1,016 households earn less than this income level.

The American Community Survey identified 302 households with social security income, about 30 percent of all households. It also identified 297 households with retirement income. The Census defines retirement income as pensions, survivor or disability income, including income from a previous employer or union, or any regular withdrawals or distributions from an investment account or an account specifically designed for retirement, excluding Social Security. The 2023 ACS identified 60 families with public assistance income.

Local Labor Force and Employment

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

In 2023 Manchester’s labor force consisted of 1,304 people, 64.9 percent of the working-age population. This has been a decrease of 8.6 percent or 122 individuals since 2010.

Of the 1,304 individuals in the labor force, 547 are female and 757 are male. Of those 547 females in the labor force, 99 percent are employed. According to 2023 ACS data, Manchester’s unemployment rate is 1.2 percent. For 1,304 individuals in the labor force, 1,279 are employed.

Table 2 below shows employment and labor force trends in Manchester.

TABLE 2: LABOR FORCE DATA

Year	Working-Age Population	In Labor Force (% of Working-Age Population)	Employed	Females in Labor Force	Males in Labor Force	Unemployed
2023*	2,010	1,304 (64.9%)	1,279 (63.6%)	547 (41.9%)	757 (58%)	25 (1.9%)
2010*	2,147	1,426 (66%)	1,348 (62.8%)	632 (59.5%)	794 (55.7%)	78 (3.6%)
2000	1,938	1,324 (68%)	1,257	631 (48%)	693 (52%)	63 (3.3%)

Source: 2000 Census, *2010 & 2023 ACS

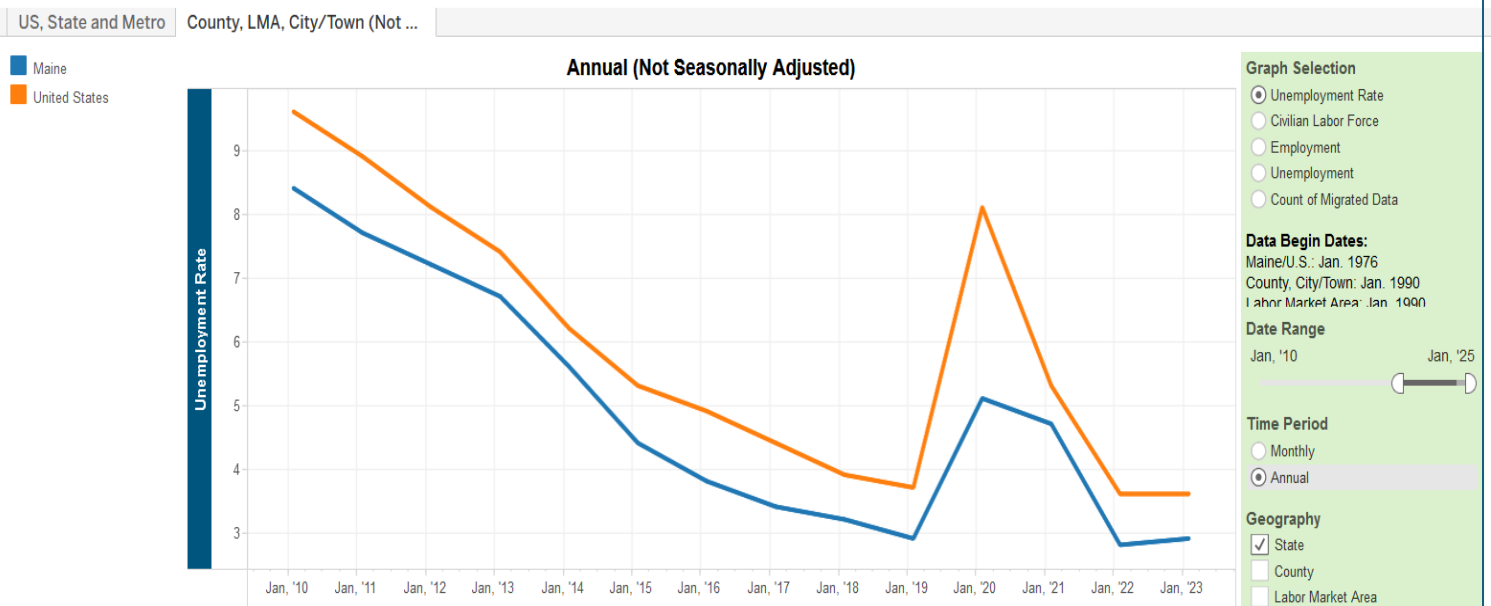
At 41.9 percent in 2023, Manchester has a significant number of working female spouses, and this number has decreased since 2010, when Manchester’s labor force consisted of nearly 60 percent women.

Being in the labor force is not the same as being employed. The labor force is the sum of the employed plus the unemployed. According to the 2023 ACS, 25 people in Manchester were unemployed for an unemployment rate of 1.9 percent. In 2010, the unemployment rate was 3.6 percent. It should be noted that the Census defined “unemployment rate” only as representing the number of unemployed people as a percentage of the civilian labor force. It does not specify if those counted toward the unemployment rate were only those collecting unemployment.

For that reason, unemployment is better reported by the Maine Department of Labor, which conducts surveys. The MDOL defined unemployment as the number of people who are not employed but are actively seeking work. Included are those who are waiting to be called back from a layoff or are waiting to report to a new job within 30 days. The unemployment rate is measured monthly through a sample of households surveyed.

Figure 4 is a graph of unemployment in the United States and the State of Maine, of which Manchester is a reflection.

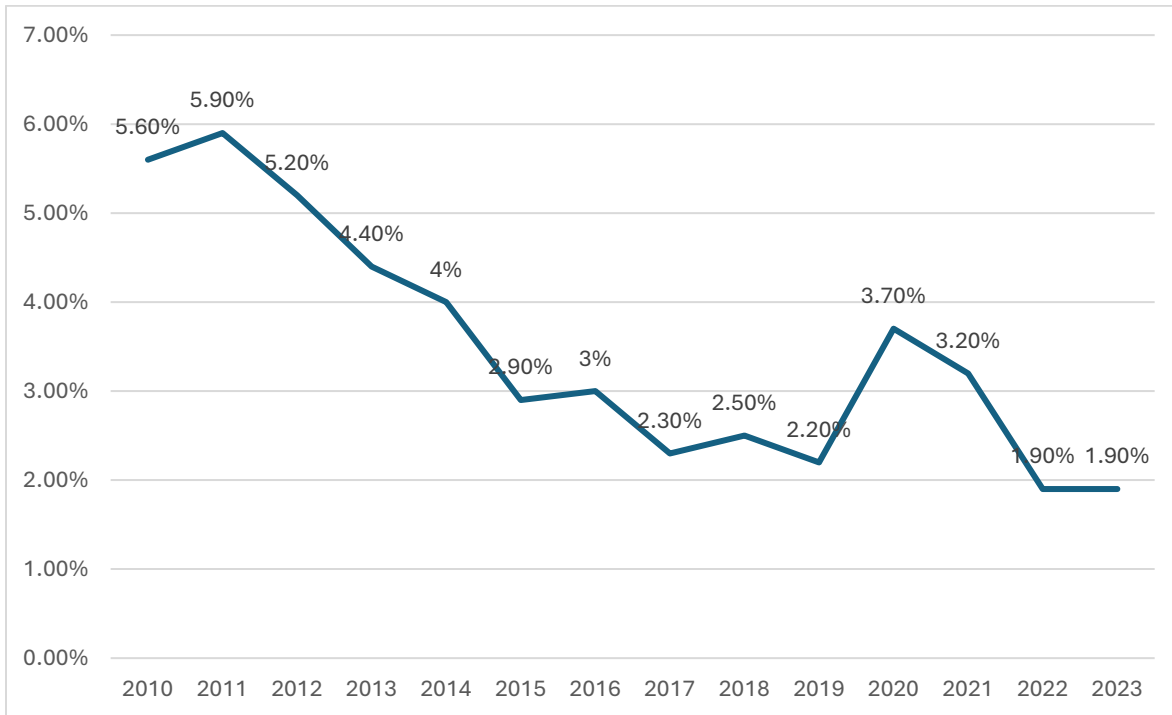
FIGURE 3- UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN MAINE AND UNITED STATES



Source: *Maine Department of Labor*

The graph in Figure 4 depicts the trend of decreasing unemployment until 2020 when the global pandemic hit, then the unemployment rate skyrocketed until approximately mid-2021. Maine did not see the extremes in high rates of unemployment or for as long as the United States during the pandemic.

FIGURE 4: MANCHESTER'S UNEMPLOYMENT RATE



Source: Maine Department of Labor

Figure 5 shows Manchester's unemployment rate, taken from the first month of each year. Manchester did not see the high rates of unemployment as the state and country during the pandemic, but it has taken longer to rebound from those effects.

Labor Market

In 2010 the Maine Department of Labor (DOL) estimated there were 1,541 people in the labor force in Manchester. By 2015, the DOL estimated there were 1,523 persons in the labor force, a decrease of only 18 individuals in five years. Between 2010 to 2023, the lowest Manchester's labor force got was 1,473 people in 2020 and the highest number of individuals in the labor force was 1,563 in both 2011 and 2013.

Manchester is a contributor to the regional Augusta Labor Market Area (LMA), which covers roughly the lower half of Kennebec County and must be considered in any economic development analysis. Manchester is also within the Augusta Micropolitan Area, as well as the Augusta Labor Market Area, detailed further in Table 2, below.

The August Micropolitan Area had a labor force of 41,635 in 2010; of this, Manchester contributed 1,541 workers, or 3.7 percent of the labor force. Table 2 shows Manchester's contribution to the LMA from 2010 to 2023.

TABLE 3: LABOR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT IN MANCHESTER AND THE AUGUSTA LABOR MARKET AREA

Year	Geography	Civilian Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
2023	Augusta Micro	41,186	40,168	1,018	2.5%
	Manchester	1,529	1,500	29	1.9%
2021	Augusta Micro	40,706	38,994	1,712	4.2%
	Manchester	1,504	1,456	48	3.2%
2019	Augusta Micro	40,585	39,510	1,075	2.6%
	Manchester	1,518	1,485	33	2.2%
2017	Augusta Micro	41,299	40,004	1,295	3.1%
	Manchester	1,553	1,517	36	2.3%
2015	Augusta Micro	40,684	39,064	1,620	4.0%
	Manchester	1,523	1,479	44	2.9%
2012	Augusta Micro	41,456	38,731	2,725	6.6%
	Manchester	1,550	1,469	81	5.2%
2010	Augusta Micro	41,635	38,534	3,101	7.4%
	Manchester	1,541	1,454	87	5.6%

Source: Maine Department of Labor

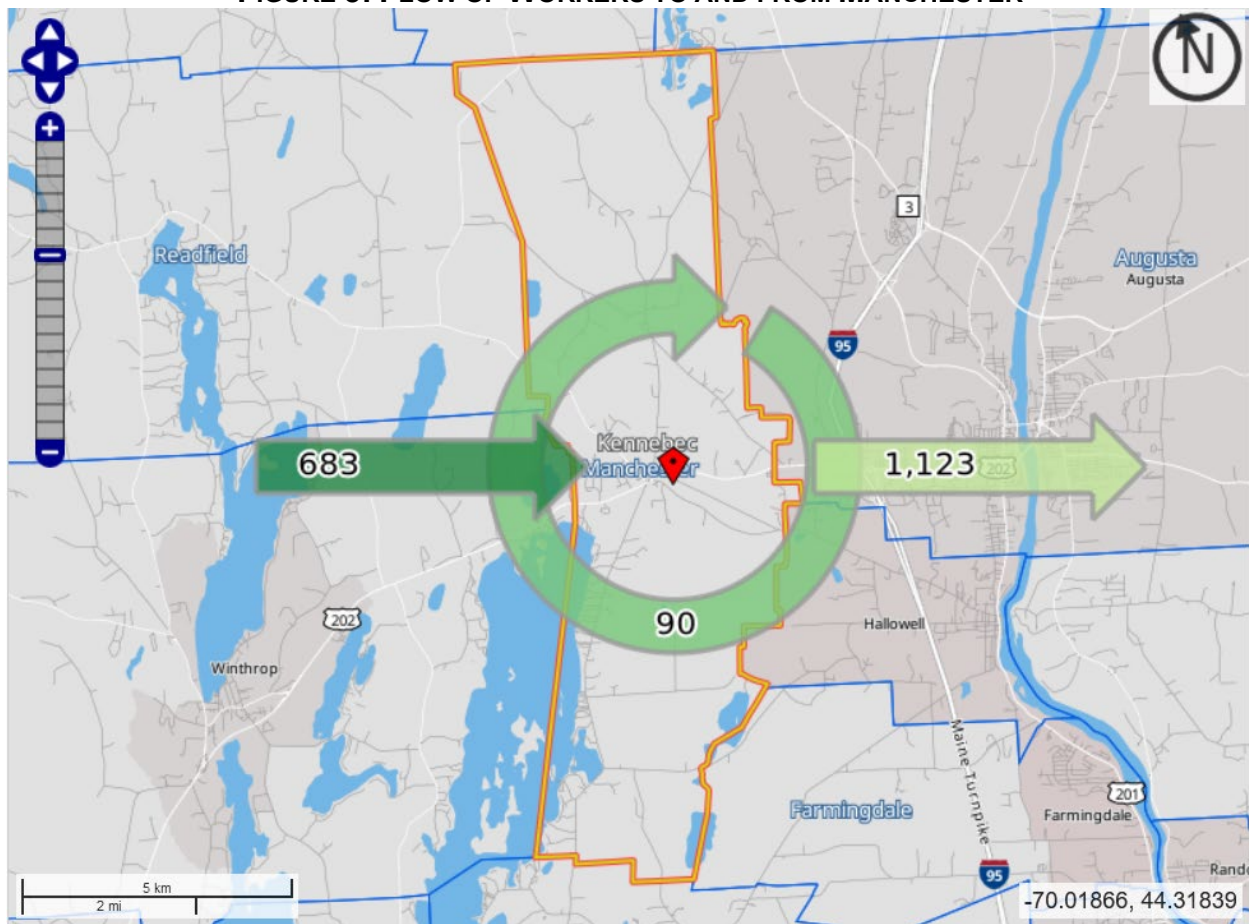
Table 2 depicts Manchester’s statistical labor market data, which reflects the Augusta LMA, with a few variations and typically trending slightly lower.

Commuting to Work

Manchester is a net contributor of workers to the regional economy as are all small towns in the area. Augusta is the only net importer of workers. Of the 2022 ACS respondents, 683 people reported that they lived outside of Manchester and commuted to Manchester for work, 1,123 people reported that they lived in Manchester and commuted to work in another area, and 90 people reported that they both lived and worked in Manchester.

It is important to note that the workers represented in the following figures are year-round workers only; no information on seasonal workers was available. It's also important to note that the numbers in these figures are slightly different than the employment numbers used elsewhere. For this analysis, the most recent data available was from 2022.

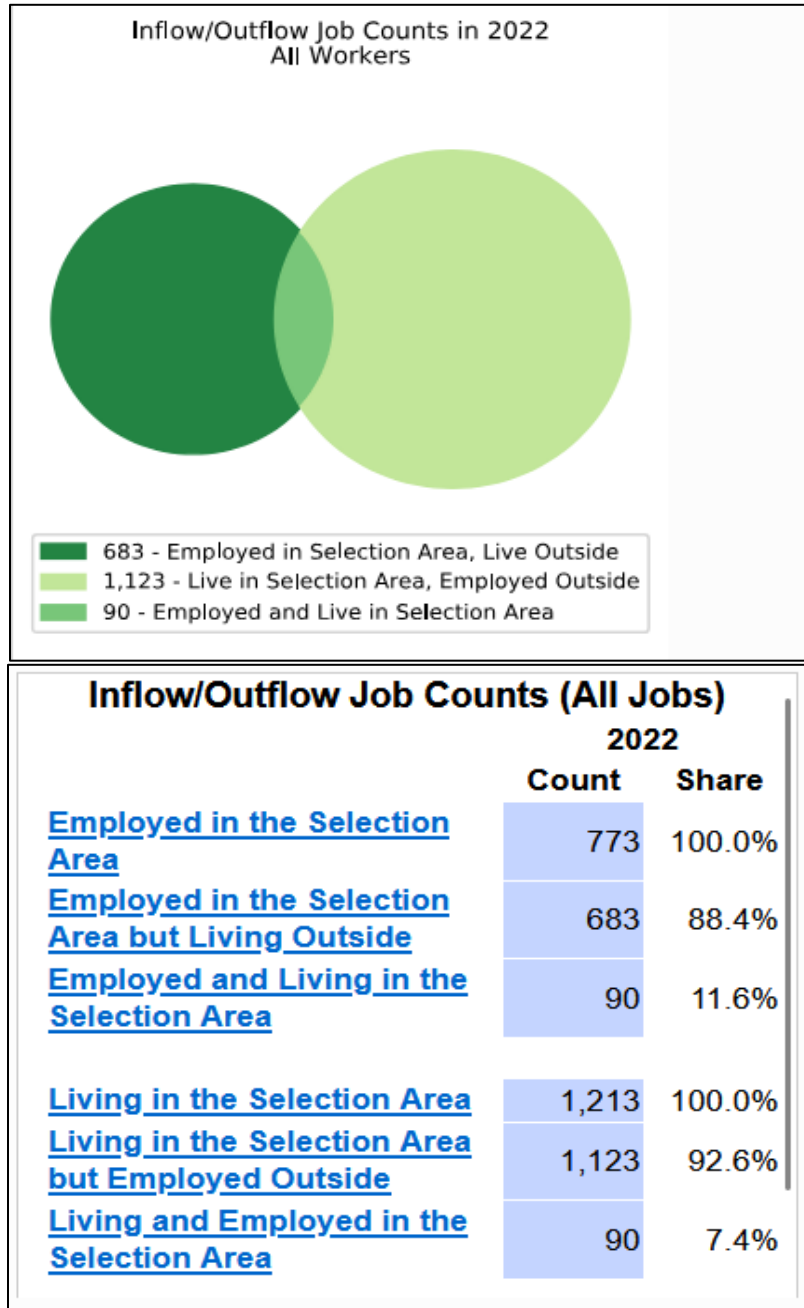
FIGURE 5: FLOW OF WORKERS TO AND FROM MANCHESTER



Source: 2022 ACS

Figure 8 shows the 683 workers who live elsewhere and commute to Manchester to work as the green arrow going into the circle. The circular arrow represents the 90 workers who live and work in Manchester. The light green arrow out of the circle represents the 1,123 workers who live in Manchester and work elsewhere.

FIGURE 6: SHARE OF WORKERS WHO COMMUTE INTO/OUT OF MANCHESTER













Source: 2022 ACS

The dark green circle in Figure 9 represents the 683 individuals employed in Manchester but living elsewhere. The larger, light green circle represents the 1,123 individuals who live in Manchester but are employed elsewhere. The overlap of these two circles represents the 90 individuals who live and work in Manchester.

Below, Figure 10 shows the destination for those who leave Manchester and travel to another area for work. By far, Augusta draws the most employees from Manchester.

FIGURE 7: WORK DESTINATION FOR MANCHESTER RESIDENTS

Job Counts by Places (Cities, CDPs, etc.) Where Workers are Employed - All Jobs		
2022		
	Count	Share
<u>All Places (Cities, CDPs, etc.)</u>	1,213	100.0%
 <u>Augusta city, ME</u>	405	33.4%
 <u>Gardiner city, ME</u>	47	3.9%
 <u>Waterville city, ME</u>	46	3.8%
 <u>Lewiston city, ME</u>	40	3.3%
 <u>Auburn city, ME</u>	37	3.1%
 <u>Bath city, ME</u>	37	3.1%
 <u>Hallowell city, ME</u>	34	2.8%
 <u>Portland city, ME</u>	34	2.8%
 <u>Winthrop CDP, ME</u>	23	1.9%
 <u>South Portland city, ME</u>	22	1.8%
All Other Locations	488	40.2%

Source: 2022 ACS

Not considered in any of the above information is the growing number of people who work remotely. The Census does not include remote workers in the calculation for those who work in the town in which they live. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of people who primarily work from home in the United States more than tripled between 2019 and 2021, with the percentage of remote workers jumping from 5.7 percent to 17.9 percent of the workforce.

Manchester saw a similar trend, though on a smaller scale, as detailed in the table below.

TABLE 4: REMOTE WORKERS AS PERCENT OF MANCHESTER'S WORKFORCE

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Workforce	1,395	1,324	1,271	1,156	1,235
Percent of Workforce Working Remotely	5.8%	6.0%	10.2%	12.5%	11.3%

Source: 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 ACS

Though many companies are requiring their employees to return to in-office work, there are just as many organizations that have found allowing their employees to work remotely has increased productivity while lowering overhead costs. It is likely that the percentage of those working remotely will not decrease significantly in the foreseeable future.

Job Types

Though Manchester provides a relatively small percentage of workers to the Augusta Labor Market Area, the ratio is slightly higher in some professions. Table 3 lists the occupational categories of Manchester’s workers for 2010 and 2020.

TABLE 5: OCCUPATIONAL PROFILE FOR MANCHESTER’S WORKERS

Occupation	2010	% Of Total	2022	% Of Total
Number in Labor Force	1,426	100%	1,304	100%
Management, business, science, and art	631	46.8%	641	50.1%
Service	85	6.3%	145	11.3%
Sales and Office	347	25.7%	279	21.8%
Natural resource, construction, and maintenance	112	8.3%	125	9.8%
Production, transportation, and material moving	173	12.8%	89	7.0%

Source: 2010 & 2020 ACS

From Table 3, the job category of management, business, science and art employs the most of Manchester’s labor force, as it did in 2010, as well. The ACS breaks this category down to include management, business, and financial occupations, computer and mathematical occupations, architectural and engineering occupation, life, physical, and social science occupations, community and social service occupation, legal occupations, educational instruction and library occupations, art, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations, health diagnosing and treating practitioners and other technical occupations, and finally health technologists and technicians.

This all-encompassing occupational category is the reason for such a high number of employments results and surpasses other job categories.

Also in Table 3, the service job category employs fewer of Manchester’s residents. Having more workers in careers that are typically considered higher pay likely accounts for the relatively high income of Manchester residents.

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

TABLE 6: INDUSTRIAL CLASSIFICATION FOR MANCHESTER’S WORKERS

Industry	2010	% Of Total	2022	% Of Total
Employees in Labor Force	1,426	100%	1,304	100%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining	31	2.3%	31	2.4%
Construction	87	6.5%	119	9.3%
Manufacturing	121	9.0%	88	6.9%
Wholesale trade	37	2.7%	0	0%
Retail trade	180	13.4%	179	14%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	32	2.4%	19	1.5%
Information	23	1.7%	50	3.9%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	124	9.2%	105	8.2%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	129	9.6%	147	11.5%
Educational services, health care and social assistance	377	28.0%	332	26%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	35	2.6%	85	6.6%
Other services, except public administration	38	2.8%	36	2.8%
Public administration	134	9.9%	88	6.9%

Source: 2010 & 2020 ACS

This data shows that the major industry for Manchester’s workers in both 2010 and 2020 was the educational services, health care and social assistance by a significant percentage in both decades. For 2022, the industry with the next highest percentage was retail trade. The retail trade category had roughly the same number of employees from 2010 to 2022.

Other notable changes between 2010 and 2022 include:

- 37 percent increase in construction
- 27 percent decrease in manufacturing
- 100 percent decrease in wholesale trade
- 117 percent increase in information
- 14 percent increase in professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services
- 12 percent decrease in educational services, health care and social assistance
- 143 percent increase in arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services
- 34 percent decrease in public administration

As anticipated, these figures are fairly consistent with the Augusta Labor Market Area.

This data has implications for local or regional economic growth. Manufacturing, for example, grabs the headlines when another plant shuts down. Yet, it is clear from the figures that Manchester does not rely heavily on manufacturing jobs.

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

Manchester's current economy developed because of the town's proximity to Augusta. As the state's capital grew, the entire region was affected by outward growth. Since many state departments are in Augusta, employees must live within reasonable commuting distance, making many of the towns surrounding Augusta, including Manchester, ideal bedroom communities.

Additionally, as Augusta became more crowded, some people began seeking more rural places to live within driving distance of the larger service center of Augusta. The ease of access to the interstate and other main roads serves to increase Manchester's appeal.

Manchester's Local Business Climate

The retail/commercial economy in Manchester is comprised of small businesses primarily in the service and retail sectors that serve the needs of Manchester residents and the commuter traffic. The major retail/commercial centers are located largely along Route 202 which carries a substantial amount of traffic through Manchester daily. Manchester is in the direct path of a commercial strip expanding outward from Augusta, which provides ample economic growth opportunities along Route 202 through town.

The commercial establishments in Manchester represent a range of retail and service stores including restaurants, automobile related, recreational/lodging, greenhouse/landscaping, agricultural enterprises (Lakeside Orchards, Longfellow Greenhouses), and farms.

Manchester's business community does not have a strong individual identity. The town's energies are primarily focused on improving the regional economy. For example, Manchester participates in a regional economic development initiative as a member of the Kennebec Regional Development Authority (FirstPark). After losing money for close to the full 25 years of its existence, KRDA broke even in 2020 and is finally delivering returns for the member communities.

FirstPark is a business park located in Oakland, Maine encompassing 285 acres of pre-permitted sites with protective covenants that incorporate innovative technologies and infrastructure into its site plans. Its proximity to Interstate 95 provides ease of travel north to Canada or south to other New England states. This development site attracts skilled workers and new generations of talented business resources to the region. FirstPark works with both state and federal grant funding programs, while revitalizing economic development for the region. This initiative provides jobs for Maine residents, including several in Manchester, while simultaneously providing services and supplies to the state and other areas.

The town is also a member of the Kennebec Valley Council of Governments and takes advantage of the services offered regionally. And, since most Manchester residents work out of town, they are essentially contributing to the regional economy.

Manchester has a Tax Increment Finance District (TIF) in the General Development District along the Route 202 corridor. This TIF is a 33-acre office park named Manchester Professional Park, established in July 2012. The TIF is part of a commercial subdivision and is located adjacent to the Village District.

While the land in the TIF is fully developed, there is land behind the existing TIF that is available for expansion. An expansion would require that a proposal was brought forward to the town, and the town would vote on allowing the expansion.

Historically, Manchester's boards and commissions were known to be set in their ways regarding economic growth; however, in more recent years that seems to be changing with the turnover of board and commission members. Manchester's current boards and commissions embrace and prioritize appropriate development but would prefer not to see convenience store chains in their town.

While the town does not have specific economic development priorities, the members of Manchester's boards are dedicated to taking a more creative, flexible approach in managing growth to attract the types of businesses that align with the character of the town. As an example, the town has a definite preference for agricultural related businesses compared with larger, commercial establishments.

Manchester's Businesses

Manchester's economy is not just affected by the businesses in town, but also by major employers in the region. Most of Manchester's workforce travels to Augusta for employment in a variety of different job types.

Some of the larger local and regional employers include the following (not a complete list):

- State of Maine- various state departments
- Maine General and Togus VA Medical Center- hospitals
- Maine Cabin Masters (Kennebec Property Services)- recently added 25 construction jobs
- Cameron Building- building contractor
- Equipment rental- Maine Equipment Rental
- SR1- RV and Trailer sales, service
- Western View Golf Club- golf course
- Scott Lyon Construction LLC-construction company
- Lyon Construction-earth work
- B&S Paving & Construction- paving contractor
- RSU 38- regional school district
- Longfellow's Greenhouse- garden center

Most of these employers offer necessary services and are well established; therefore, their future outlooks are stable.

While Manchester supports home occupations in town, permitting has declined in the last several years with no new applications recently. Home occupations are not a significant factor in Manchester currently. Unfortunately, most of the home occupations permitted most recently including crafting and home day care center are no longer in operation. It is inevitable that there are internet-related businesses in Manchester, as with every town, that have gone unpermitted.

Regulation of Economic Development

Manchester's Land Use and Development Ordinance, originally adopted in 1992, was updated and reformatted in 2024. The Ordinance breaks the town into seven different land use districts (Article II- Land Use Districts and Uses). For this chapter, the following districts allow varying scales of commercial, retail, or industrial development:

Manchester Village- generally allows a mixture of residential, civic, cultural and commercial, all of which must be compatible with existing uses and character.

General Development- managed to continue to accommodate compatible commercial, residential, and other non-residential developments in proximity to the Route 202 corridor. Traditionally, with few exceptions, this district has been the primary business district.

The General Development district is approximately 70 percent at capacity and is considered the primary location for future development due to the availability of connections to public infrastructure. However, this district is near a lake watershed, so it is somewhat constrained by natural resources. For that reason, all land use proposals will be subject to site plan review to ensure projects meet performance standards.

Any proposed land use activities, regardless of district, must comply with Article II, Section 6- General Performance Standards and/or Section 8- Performance Requirements and Standards for Specific Activities. The Land Use table (Article II, Section 4) details what type of permit is required for activities in each district, and what, if any, additional standards or reviews are required. For example, certain proposals require Site Plan Review by the Planning Board before issuance of a permit (Article III- Site Plan Review).

Generally, Site Plan Review categorizes projects as either Minor Developments, or Major Developments. Minor Developments shall include:

1. Projects involving the construction, addition or conversion of less than five thousand (5,000) square feet of gross floor area;
2. Projects involving the construction or establishment of less than ten (10) lots or dwelling units except for any of the above projects which are deemed by the Planning Board to require review as a major development in order to protect the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of Manchester.
3. Projects which are deemed by the Planning Board to require review as Major Projects because proposed construction may impact Natural Resources (streams, lakes, ponds, wetland, rare natural communities, aquifers, important agricultural soils, etc.

After the determination of level of development, the Land Use and Development Ordinance set specific performance standards and requirements, detailed in the Ordinance (<https://www.manchesterme.org/media/2231>).

Manchester's Land Use and Development Ordinance identifies and details appropriate areas within town for commercial development, specifically the General Development District. The General Development District has fewer regulatory requirements for commercial development than the other districts in Manchester, though there are still performance standards to ensure compatibility with surrounding land uses and town character. Industrial development is generally not encouraged in town.

While the two districts detailed above are the primary locations where the town would like to encourage commercial development, certain appropriate commercial development is also allowed in the Rural Residential district. Any such development in the Rural Residential district would require a Special Exception permit from the Planning Board following site plan review of the proposal, provided that the applicant proves there are no alternative sites that are suitable or available to the applicant. The applicant must also provide an environmental neighborhood impact assessment, showing there would be minimal adverse impacts on the neighboring land uses.

The application process for businesses in the Rural Residential district was noted as an area that needs improvement in Manchester's Land Use and Development Ordinance.

The town's existing public facilities are adequate to accommodate the anticipated amount of economic development activity; however, the infrastructure is older and needs updating. There is a portion of Western Avenue that does not have water/sewer connectivity, but that has not contributed to this area being underdeveloped. In fact, the availability of public water and sewer has not prevented development anywhere in Manchester, although it does limit development.

Where public water and sewer are not available, larger lot sizes and good soil are necessary, resulting in increased cost for commercial development and decreased densities in residential development.

Broadband is available throughout nearly the entire town. Fidium offers high-speed internet, and there are options for other carriers as well.

Three-phase power is not a limiting factor for commercial development in Manchester, either, as it is available where it is needed in town.

Unique Assets

Manchester's downtown or village area was wiped out when Route 202 was created. The village was essentially bifurcated by this main road, which changed the town in many ways, for better or worse.

Without a traditional village, Manchester is more of a crossroads for those traveling to other destinations; though the town does have more than its fair share of tourist attractions, detailed below. Further, there are many seasonal homes along the lakeshores in Manchester, leading to an influx of tourists in all seasons.

Being a crossroads town is both a blessing and a curse for Manchester. Due to its location, Manchester is a frequent stopover for people traveling through to other areas, which boosts the local economy. And, as Augusta grows and changes, it has become more of a travel destination, which benefits Manchester because frequently visitors travel to towns on Augusta's outskirts. Augusta efforts in increasing housing also benefit Manchester. Many Augusta residents travel to more rural areas in search of outdoor activities, which are abundant in Manchester.

As tourism is an important part of Manchester's economy, the town has considered ways to take advantage of its crossroads location and encourage people to stop and *stay* in Manchester. Manchester has also benefited from spillover tourism from other, larger metropolitan areas such as Boston and New York, which are within a short drive away.

Manchester's other unique assets include:

- Maine Cabin Masters is a major tourist attraction. They often host concerts and have food trucks, all of which draw a large crowd.
- The great hiking and biking trails throughout town.
- Fishing tournaments on Cobbosseecontee Lake.
- Proximity to Augusta and the increased amount of people coming to visit the state capital.
- Longfellow's Greenhouse frequently hold events and is another tourist attraction.
- The local Lions Club holds events.
- Lakeside Orchards hosts concerts that frequently draw a crowd.
- Maine Isshinryu Karate Academies (MIKA) holds after school activities for kids.

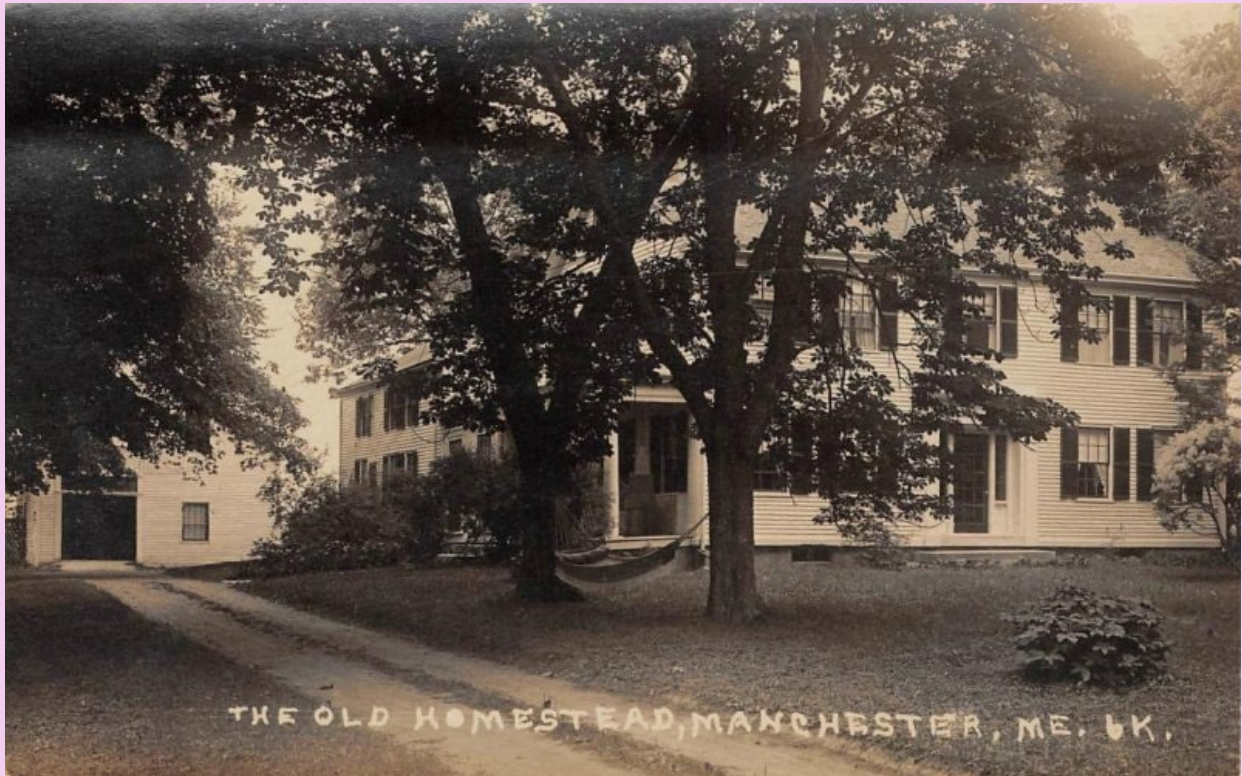
Additionally, the local Lions Club and local churches hold events that draw people to town, and the Grange Hall periodically hosts dinners and events.

The town has taken careful steps to ensure continued tourist traffic, including protecting its waterbodies, mitigation of invasive species, development and promotion of hiking and biking trails, and showcasing public lands in town.

Local Economy Analysis and Key Issues

- Manchester's household median income and per capita income is on par with that of the surrounding towns.
- 80 percent of the median household income in Manchester is \$71,567; roughly 36 percent of households earn less than the median household income.
- Manchester's labor force decreased by 8.6 percent since 2010, though the unemployment rate decreased from 5.6 percent in 2010 to 1.9 percent in 2023.
- As expected, most of Manchester's residents are employed outside of Manchester with the majority commuting to Augusta.
- The occupational category of management, business, science, and art remains the predominant category for Manchester residents, as it did in 2010.
- In that occupational category, most Manchester residents held a job in educational services, health care and social assistance, which was also true in 2010.

4: Manchester's Housing Profile



Manchester's housing supply and prices determine the potential for future growth in the town, as well as the diversity of opportunities. A mixture of housing types encourages a mixture of residents – young and old, singles and large families, as well as different economic classes.

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

****Note: Throughout this plan, Manchester's population number varies between 2,464 and 2,456. This is because 2,464 is from the 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) and is an estimate, based on survey responses. It is used throughout this plan in certain charts and tables because it is the most up-to-date data available and other data is calculated based on this number.

Using the 2020 Census population figures and recalculating the data would render it inaccurate. Likewise, the 2020 Census data shows that Manchester has 1,259 housing units, with 1,065 occupied, and 194 vacant for a total of 1,259. The 2023 ACS data shows Manchester as having 1,016 occupied housing units and 193 vacant for a total of 1,209. Table 2 highlights these important differences.

It is important to understand these differences because use of either statistic could be construed as a mistake, and it is not. Data sources have been annotated throughout.

The Housing Stock

Manchester's Community Profile chapter documents a steady decline in the average household size over the last several decades. Counterintuitively, this trend means that more housing is required even if the population is not growing rapidly or at all.

Based on projections by the Office of the State Economist, by the year 2040 (issued in 2021) Manchester's population is estimated to be 2,373, a decrease of 91 residents. With the current average household size of 2.37 (2023 ACS data), this projected population of 2,373 would need approximately 1,000 houses. This would be a reduction of approximately 48 housing units over the next 15-year period.

As stated in the Community Profile section, it is important to remember that there are many outside factors that influence changes in a population. Population projections are rarely accurate because there are so many unforeseen variables that affect population size. To compound this, population projections are based on past trends. With the changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is not possible to predict the future based on past trends. The pandemic resulted in changes that were not possible to predict.

Regardless, population projections are a starting point or at least a consideration when planning for the future, and as such, they are considered in this Plan.

Based on past trends in 2000, 2010, and 2020, Manchester's population has not fluctuated greatly. The projection of a decrease of 91 residents is not an unlikely scenario.

The average household size statistic relates directly to the type of housing as well as the quantity of houses needed. Young and old households (seniors and singles) typically tend to prefer smaller houses. A specific type of housing suits them, such as apartments or retirement communities; whereas large lot subdivisions generally attract families with children. With the impending demographic trend being the retirement of baby boomers, there is a good chance the market for large family housing will be greatly reduced in favor of smaller, more efficient housing.

The 2020 Census shows Manchester has 2,456 total housing units, 1,065 occupied units, and 194 vacant units. In contrast, the 2023 ACS data shows Manchester as having 1,209 total housing units, 1,016 occupied units, and 193 vacant units. Table 1 below highlights the disparities between the 2020 Census data and the 2023 ACS data.

TABLE 1: 2020 CENSUS VS. 2023 ACS DATA COMPARED TO 2010 CENSUS DATA

	2020 Census Data	2023 ACS Data	2010 ACS Data	Percent Change *2020 Census Vs. 2010 Census
Population	2,456	2,464	2,580	-124 -4.8 %
Total Housing Units	1,259	1,209	1,209	50 4%
Occupied Housing Units	1,065	1,016	1,037	28 2.7%
Vacant Housing Units	194	193	172	22 12.8%
Seasonal Use Only	141	161	141	0
Households	1,065	1,016	1,037	28 2.7%

Source: 2020 Census, 2010 & 2023 ACS

For the purposes of this Comprehensive Plan, a housing unit is defined by the Census and used throughout this Plan as:

A housing unit is a house, an apartment, a group of rooms, or a single room intended for occupancy as separate living quarters. Separate living quarters are those in which the occupants live separately from any other individuals in the building and which have a direct access from the outside of the building or through a common hall.

In accordance with this definition, each apartment unit in an apartment building is counted as one housing unit. Housing units, as distinguished from "HUD-code" manufactured (mobile) homes, include conventional "site-built" units, prefabricated, panelized, sectional, and modular units.

Housing unit statistics also exclude group quarters (such as dormitories and rooming houses), transient accommodations (such as transient hotels, motels, and tourist courts), moved or relocated buildings, and housing units created in an existing residential or nonresidential structure.

Units in assisted living facilities are considered to be housing units, however, units in nursing homes are not considered to be housing units.

In Table 2 below, 2023 ACS data was used for comparison, because not all the 2020 Census data was available, and calculations were made (by the Census Bureau) using the ACS data. To switch back and forth between data sources would render data inaccurate. Table 2 shows the development of housing by type since 1980 (there are other discrepancies since the Census changed its definition of seasonal unit in 1980).

TABLE 2: HOUSING: TYPE AND OCCUPANCY FROM 1980 TO 2023

	1980	1990	2000	2010	2023*
Total Housing Units	824	1,003	1,181	1,209	1,209
Occupied Housing Units	-	-	977	1,037	1,016
Vacant Housing Units ¹	-	-	204	172	193
Seasonal Housing Units	98	163	168	141	161
Mobile Homes	21	56	87	39	67
Owner Occupied Housing	-	-	851	922	831
Renter Occupied Housing	-	-	126	115	185
Single Family Housing Unit** (attached and detached) Including Mobile Homes (out of total housing stock)	-	-	875	1,074	1,023
Multifamily (3+ units in one structure)	126	128	112	105	186

Source: Manchester's 2011 Comprehensive Plan

** Data source 2010 & 2023 ACS*

*** Duplexes are included in the tally for single family housing units*

¹ The U.S. Census defines "vacant" as a housing unit in which no one is living at the time of the interview, unless its occupants are only temporarily absent. In addition, a vacant unit may be one which is entirely occupied by persons who have a usual residence elsewhere. Seasonal units are included in the vacant housing unit calculation, unless otherwise noted.

The numbers don't add up in Table 2 because the Census Bureau changed the definitions for mobile homes and seasonal units.

Table 2 Highlights

- The total number of housing units increased by 385 homes between 1980 and 2023, although there has not been a significant boom in housing construction from any specific decade. In fact, the total number of housing units remained the same between 2010 and 2023.
- Mobile home construction increased gradually until 2010 when there was a significant reduction in their numbers that is likely inaccurate or incorrectly reported.
- The number of vacant units has declined about 5 percent since 2000. A vacant unit may be one which is entirely occupied by persons who have a usual residence elsewhere. Seasonal units are included in the vacant housing unit calculation, unless otherwise noted.
- There was a significant increase (77 percent) in multifamily housing units between 2010 and 2023. This type of housing is likely in the highest demand by Manchester's aging population and single householders.

There is no data directly addressing how many renters live in houses versus apartments, but there is data on how many housing units there are in a building, or multifamily housing. According to data from the ACS, as of 2023 there were 1,018 attached and detached single family homes (including mobile homes) in Manchester and 186 multifamily homes, classified as such because they contain three or more housing units in one structure.

Manchester’s housing statistics are similar to surrounding towns and cities, as detailed in Table 3 below.

TABLE 3: COMPARISON OF HOUSING DATA FOR NEIGHBORING MUNICIPALITIES

	Manchester	Belgrade	Readfield	Winthrop	West Gardiner	Hallowell
Total Housing Units	1,209	2,327	1,335	2,583	1,441	1,436
Occupied Housing Units	1,016	1,316	980	3,342	1,355	1,317
Vacant Housing Units (including seasonal)	193	1,011	355	759	86	119
Seasonal Housing Units	161	965	265	532	86	59
Mobile Homes	67	116	70	361	268	26
Owner Occupied Housing	831	1,316	873	2,221	1,201	754
Renter Occupied Housing	185	103	107	362	154	563
Single Family Housing Unit (attached and detached) Including Mobile Homes	1,023	2,284	1,283	3,045	1419*	943
Multifamily (3+ units in one structure)	186	43	52	297	13*	493

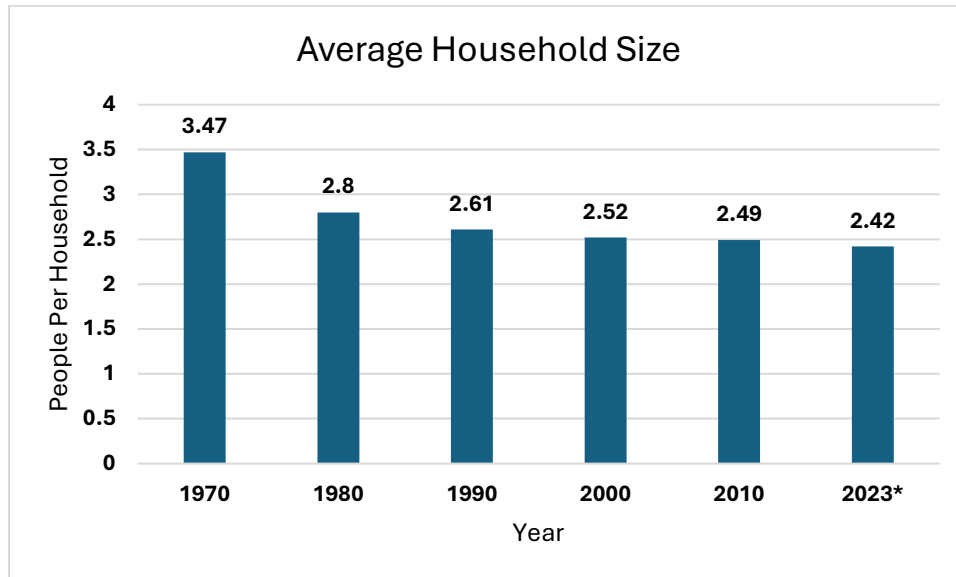
Source: 2023 ACS

* The data for types of housing in West Gardiner do not add up.

Table 3 Highlights

- Manchester has the fewest housing units when compared to surrounding municipalities.
- The number of seasonal homes in Belgrade far surpasses that of any other town.
- West Gardiner and Winthrop had the most mobile homes.
- Hallowell had the highest number of renter-occupied homes.
- Hallowell has the most multi-family structures, followed by Winthrop, then Manchester.

FIGURE 1: AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE 1970 TO 2020



Source: Manchester's 2012 Comprehensive Plan
*2023 ACS

An essential aspect when considering housing is the average household size because the smaller the average household size becomes, the more housing will be needed to accommodate the same size population. Average household size is defined by the American Community Survey as those living together, related or not. This is opposed to average family size, which strictly refers to those living together and who are related.

Figure 1 shows the average household size for all households in Manchester. The average household size, according to the 2023 ACS was 2.42 people per household.

As an interesting comparison, the average household size for those who rent is almost 38 percent smaller than for those who own and live in their own homes. The average household size for owner-occupied homes is 2.55 people per household; whereas the average household size for renter-occupied homes is 1.85 people per household. Smaller households tend to be more in flux than larger ones and they tend to be renters. Manchester has 185 renter-occupied units (nearly a 61 percent increase since 2010) and 831 owner-occupied units (nearly 10 percent decrease since 2010), based on 2023 ACS data.

The average number of persons in a household in Manchester has been shrinking steadily, as seen in Figure 1 above. This is a national trend. Almost all social and economic factors favor smaller households – more independent living among youth and elderly, smaller families, and more single-parent families. While there are early indications that this trend may be reversing in some parts of the country, it has not yet plateaued in Manchester, based on the last three decades.

Seasonal Housing

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

Table 2 shows that the number of houses classified as seasonal by the Census Bureau has risen steadily over the decades. While there are undeniably more seasonal homes in Manchester in recent decades, these numbers are self-reported by individuals responding to Census surveys, so their accuracy is not guaranteed, as with all Census data.

Seasonal homes as percentage of overall housing stock:

In 2023, seasonal homes accounted for 13 percent of the total housing stock.

In 2010, seasonal homes accounted for 12 percent of the total housing stock.

In 2000, seasonal homes accounted for 14 percent of the total housing stock.

When considered as a percentage of total housing stock, seasonal homes have fluctuated minimally in the last three decades.

Some houses that are only used seasonally may have originally been constructed as year-round; likewise, there are homes that were originally intended to be used seasonally that have undergone conversion to be year-round homes. There have not been many seasonal homes that have been converted into year-round homes, though; nor has the conversion of year-round homes into seasonal homes been significant. There is a possibility that not all conversions are accounted for; however, these scenarios have had little impact on the community.

The Code Enforcement Officer will continue to review permit applications for seasonal conversions, perform inspections, and document the conversion rate, as part of their job.

Perhaps more of a concern than seasonal conversions is the increased use of seasonal homes for short term vacation rentals and the overall increased length of the seasonal use duration. Families renting seasonal homes as short-term vacation rentals are not invested in the community the same way they would be if they owned the seasonal homes, creating less accountability and a situation where there is potential for conflict amongst neighbors.

The increased duration of use for seasonal homes means that Manchester has a higher seasonal population for a longer period of time than in previous years. The longer seasonal duration has both pros and cons for Manchester. For example, the longer seasonal duration puts a strain on public services and road maintenance, but the longer season also bolsters the local economy and has other financial benefits to the town.

Housing Conditions

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

The 2023 ACS indicates that 100 percent of Manchester's occupied housing units met the standard criteria for complete plumbing facilities and all had complete kitchens. Although 9 homes were noted as not having telephone service, this is likely related to the preference for cell phones instead of landlines. Complete kitchens and plumbing are common identifiers used to determine the condition and quality of homes in a given community; however, the camp-style homes have potential to skew the numbers.

A Census tally of substandard living conditions is intended to identify poverty housing conditions. According to ACS data, Manchester does not have a problem with substandard housing, although 15 houses had more than one person to a room.

The age of housing structures can often be used as an indicator of housing conditions with varying degrees of accuracy. While some older homes are structurally very sound, they may have inadequate wiring, inefficient insulation, or contain hazardous materials like lead paint or asbestos. Homes built in the 1960's and 1970's tend to have inadequate insulation, whereas homes built more recently mostly conform to modern building code requirements.

TABLE 4: AGE OF HOUSING STOCK IN MANCHESTER, MAINE

Age of Housing Units*		
Year Structure was Built	# Of Homes	Percent of Total
1939 or earlier	234	19.4%
1940-1949	40	3.3%
1950-1959	47	3.9%
1960-1969	113	9.3%
1970-1979	241	19.9%
1980-1989	242	20%
1990-1999	151	12.5%
2000-2009	105	8.7%
2010-2019	31	2.6%
2020 or later	5	0.4%

*2023 ACS

Table 4 Highlights

- 23 percent of all occupied homes in Manchester were built prior to the start of World War II in 1939.
- 25 percent of all occupied homes in Kennebec County were built prior to the start of World War II in 1939.
- 534 homes (53 percent of occupied homes) in Manchester were built after 1980.
- 50 percent of occupied homes in Kennebec County were built after 1980.

Table 4 shows an uneven spread of home ages in Manchester. About 20 percent were constructed in 1939 or earlier. In the decades that followed, housing construction was minimal. Construction picked back up in the decade between 1960-1969. The following decades were when the majority of Manchester’s housing stock was constructed, until 2010-2019 when construction decreased again. Since 2020, housing construction has been minimal. It should be noted that this age estimate (provided by Census responders) does not tally at all with actual number of homes shown in ACS data.

As with any town, there are houses in town that visibly need repairs; although there are not any major housing issues such as particular neighborhoods that are rundown. The biggest challenge related to housing is the lack of affordable housing or rental housing. The short supply of affordable housing or rental housing has resulted in people living in campers or trailers that are ill-equipped as permanent housing.

The homes that visibly need repair are scattered throughout town and not consolidated in any one area. Notably, the occurrence of homes that are in disrepair is more frequent in the Rural Residential district on the periphery of town and less in the town's center. Manchester does not have many requests for general assistance, though as with any town, there are inevitably families that are struggling to make ends meet.

Housing Price and Affordability

The price and affordability of housing is often a significant factor in the economic life of a town. Housing prices are generally set by the open market, but if supply and demand get out of whack it can result in insufficient housing availability, unaffordability for prospective workers, and it could result in residents relocating to another town because they cannot afford local housing.

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

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

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

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

Family Size	Income Limit for Family Size
Family of 1	\$48,750
Family of 2	\$55,700
Family of 3	\$62,650
Family of 4	\$69,600
Family of 5	\$75,200
Family of 6	\$80,750
Family of 7	\$86,350
Family of 8	\$91,900

Source: https://www.mainehousing.org/docs/default-source/homeimprovement/80-ami-income-limits.pdf?sfvrsn=6df08615_5

This data is from 2024 and can be found on the Maine Housing website listed in the source.

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

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

	2000	2010	Change
Median Value* of Specified¹ Housing Units	\$124,300	\$182,600	\$58,300 (47%)
Number of Units Valued at:			
Less Than \$50,000	25	22	-3 (-12%)
\$50,000 - \$99,999	188	131	-57 (-30%)
\$100,000- \$149,999	218	133	-85 (-39%)
\$150,000 - \$199,999	86	272	186 (216%)
\$200,000 - \$299,999	68	201	133 (196%)
\$300,000 - \$499,999	39	128	89 (228%)
\$500,000 - \$999,999	14	35	21 (150%)
\$1,000,000 or more	0	0	0 (0%)

Source: 2000 & 2010 U.S. Census

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

¹ "Specified" units excludes one-family houses on ten or more acres and units with a commercial establishment on the premises. In 2000, mobile homes were excluded as well, but not in 2010, accounting for the discrepancies.

Table 6 Highlights

- 47 percent increase in median value of owner-occupied home between 2000 and 2010.
- Decrease in number of houses under the \$150,000-199,999 price range.
- Increase in number of houses over the \$150,000-199,999 price range.

TABLE 7: VALUE OF OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS FROM 2010 TO 2023

	2010	2023	Change
Median Value* of Specified¹ Housing Units	\$182,600	\$284,700	\$102,100 (56%)
Number of Units Valued at:			
Less Than \$50,000	22	30	8 (36%)
\$50,000 - \$99,999	131	14	-117 (-89%)
\$100,000- \$149,999	133	28	-105 (79%)
\$150,000 - \$199,999	272	116	-156 (-57%)
\$200,000 - \$299,999	201	267	66 (33%)
\$300,000 - \$499,999	128	199	71 (55%)
\$500,000 - \$999,999	35	131	96 (274%)
\$1,000,000 or more	0	46	46 (100%)

Source: 2010 & 2020 ACS

* “Value” is the Census respondent’s estimate of how much the property would be sell for if it were for sale.

¹ “Specified” units excludes one-family houses on ten or more acres and units with a commercial establishment on the premises. In 2000, mobile homes were excluded as well, but not in 2010, accounting for the discrepancies.

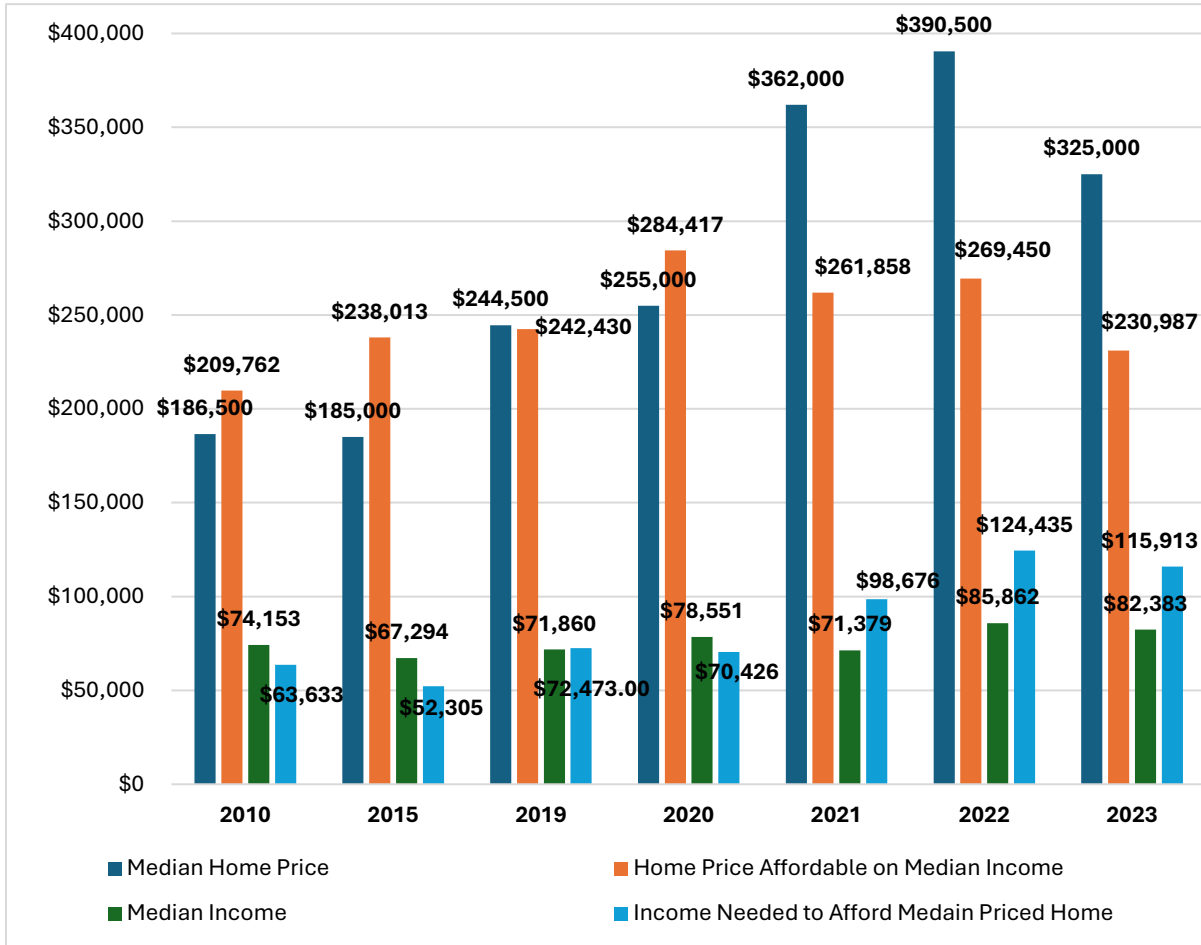
Table 7 Highlights

- 56 percent increase in median home value between 2010 and 2023.
- Fewer houses are between \$50,000 and \$199,999.
- Significant increase in houses valued at \$200,000 and up.

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, it is important to bear in mind that the estimated values of the houses in Tables 6 and 7 are supplied to the Census by the homeowners and do not represent what the home would actually sell for or even the appraised value. It’s also important to take into consideration the extremely high prices of homes during the Covid pandemic and the following years. It’s easier to fathom the above information presented in Table 6 when these circumstances are taken into consideration.

FIGURE 2: HOME PRICE AND INCOME ANALYSIS 2010-2023

Source: <https://www.mainehousing.org/policy-research/housing-data/housing-affordability-indexes>



[affordability-indexes](#)

Figure 2 Highlights

- In 2010 the median household income was adequate for affording a median priced home in Manchester.
- The increase in median home price between 2010 and 2015 was not significant, nor was it significant between 2019 and 2020.
- The increase in median home prices between 2020 and 2021 was drastic.
- The reasons for the decrease in home prices in 2023 were likely multifaceted:
 - Interest rates increased drastically;
 - There was an increase in the number of homes available on the housing market;
 - Some of the people who moved to Manchester from other states may have moved back after the pandemic, increasing available housing;
 - After the pandemic, many people moved to be closer to family, increasing available housing.

Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA) tracks actual sales data, though it is sometimes out of date by the time it is published. According to MSHA, the median price (actual sales) for a home in 2023 in Manchester was \$325,000. Of the years represented in Figure 2, the median home price in Manchester was considered affordable in 2010, 2015, and 2020. The data from MSHA will differ from the estimate put out by the ACS.

Maine State Housing Authority determines affordability by using a point system (column on the far left in Figure 3 below). The Homeownership Affordability Index is the ratio of Home Price Affordable at Median Income to Median Home Price. An index of less than 1 means the area is generally unaffordable- i.e. a household earning area median income could not cover the payment on a median priced home (30-year mortgage, taxes, and insurance) using no more than 28 percent of gross income.

FIGURE 3: AFFORDABILITY INDEX FOR THE STATE OF MAINE

Name	Year	Index	Median Home Price	Median Income	Income Needed to Afford Median Home Price - Annual	Home Price Affordable to Median Income	Households Unable to Afford Median Home (%)	Total Households	Percentage of Homes Sold Unaffordable at Median Income	Total Homes Sold
Maine	2023	0.55	\$360,000	\$70,652	\$128,390	\$198,106	79.1%	590,231	82.9%	13,750
	2022	0.64	\$334,000	\$68,316	\$106,225	\$214,805	71.9%	584,747	76.5%	16,949
	2021	0.80	\$295,000	\$63,421	\$79,202	\$236,223	61.7%	575,521	64.8%	20,585
	2020	0.91	\$255,000	\$63,335	\$69,691	\$231,742	55.6%	572,751	56.4%	20,162
	2019	0.90	\$225,000	\$59,571	\$66,044	\$202,947	56.0%	571,085	56.3%	18,336
	2018	0.87	\$215,000	\$56,983	\$65,124	\$188,124	57.2%	567,489	58.1%	17,974
	2017	0.92	\$199,999	\$53,185	\$57,959	\$183,527	55.5%	565,293	53.9%	20,652

Source: <https://www.mainehousing.org/data-research/housing-data/housing-affordability-indexes>

In Maine, the percentage of homes sold between 2020 and 2023 dropped by nearly 32 percent and the median price of a home increased by 41 percent in that same period (Figure 3). When considered as an entire state, Maine has not been over the affordability index of 1 since 2015.

Kennebec County was last considered affordable (based on MSHA's affordability index) in 2020.

FIGURE 4: AFFORDABILITY INDEX FOR KENNEBEC COUNTY

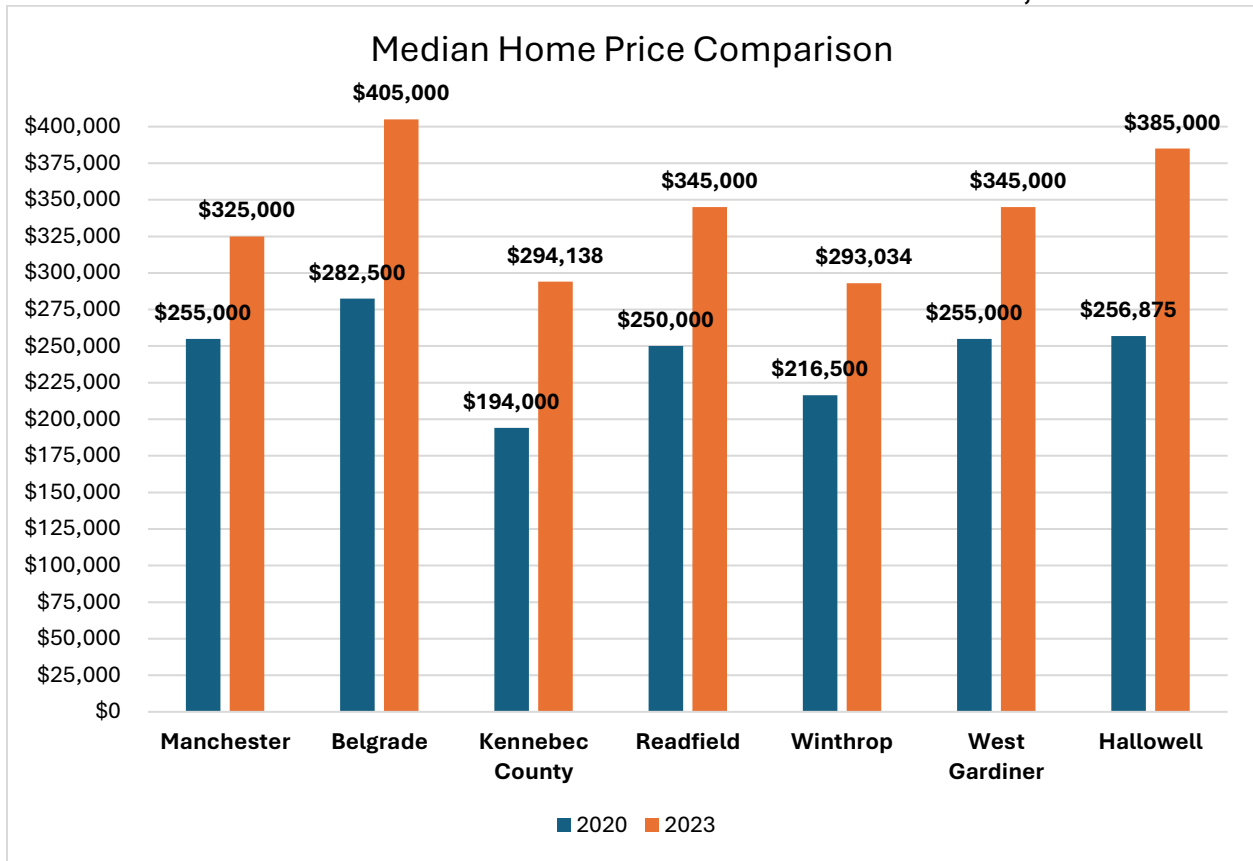
Name	Year	Index	Median Home Price	Median Income	Income Needed to Afford Median Home Price - Annual	Home Price Affordable to Median Income	Households Unable to Afford Median Home (%)	Total Households	Percentage of Homes Sold Unaffordable at Median Income	Total Homes Sold
Kennebec County	2023	0.61	\$294,138	\$64,708	\$106,040	\$179,491	73.0%	53,920	87.2%	1,308
	2022	0.74	\$265,000	\$62,556	\$84,734	\$195,640	64.2%	53,174	78.7%	1,545
	2021	0.84	\$243,000	\$55,866	\$66,606	\$203,816	58.3%	52,205	66.3%	1,852
	2020	1.08	\$194,000	\$57,610	\$53,543	\$208,733	47.4%	51,984	46.1%	1,786
	2019	1.12	\$169,000	\$55,895	\$49,992	\$188,958	45.6%	51,896	41.8%	1,616
	2018	1.11	\$160,000	\$53,901	\$48,584	\$177,510	46.1%	51,008	41.5%	1,572
	2017	1.12	\$150,000	\$48,750	\$43,586	\$167,772	46.4%	50,390	36.8%	1,725

Source: <https://www.mainehousing.org/data-research/housing-data/housing-affordability-indexes>

Highlights for Figures 3 & 4

- In the analysis period, Maine was not considered affordable, even prior to the pandemic (Figure 3).
 - This is likely due to the prices of housing in southern and coastal Maine.
- Kennebec County became unaffordable only after the pandemic began (Figure 4).
 - This is likely due to the observable trend of people living in cities in southern Maine moving north and people from out of state moving to more rural parts of Maine.
- Unfortunately, even though the pandemic is over, housing prices have not returned to what they previously were, leaving Kennebec County unaffordable.

FIGURE 5: MEDIAN HOME PRICE COMPARISON WITH NEIGHBORING TOWNS, 2020 & 2023



Source: Maine State Housing Authority

Figure 5 Highlights

- Manchester’s median house price in 2020 was lower than Belgrade and Hallowell, and the same as West Gardiner, but higher than Kennebec County, Readfield, and Winthrop.
- Manchester’s 2023 median house price was lower than Belgrade, Readfield, West Gardiner, and Hallowell, but higher than Kennebec County and Winthrop.

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

Household Income

The data from the Maine State Housing Authority is different than the 2023 ACS data, which is presented in Table 8, below. This table shows the breakdown of household income levels as estimated by the 2023 ACS.

TABLE 8: MANCHESTER'S ESTIMATED HOUSEHOLD INCOMES

Total Households: 1,016	Household Income (approximate)
Less than \$10,000	23 (2.3%)
\$10,000 - \$14,999	22 (2.2%)
\$15,000 - \$24,999	44 (4.3%)
\$25,000 - \$34,999	64 (6.3%)
\$35,000 - \$49,999	87 (8.6%)
\$50,000 - \$74,999	120 (11.8%)
\$75,000 - \$99,999	199 (19.6%)
\$100,000 - \$149,999	293 (28.8%)
\$150,000 - \$199,999	89 (8.8 %)
\$200,000 or more	75 (7.4%)
Median income	\$89,453

Source: 2023 ACS

The 2023 ACS data in the table above shows that most Manchester residents make between \$35,000 and \$200,000 or more, which is a significant range.

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

According to 2023 data compiled by MSHA, the median home price in Manchester of \$325,000 is considered unaffordable based on the 80 percent of median income rule detailed above. MSHA calculates an affordable home at various income levels, factoring in interest rates and other variables, and using the rule of thumb that a homeowner should pay no more than 30 percent of its monthly income on housing costs.

For a house to be affordable in Manchester, the median household income would need to be \$115,913; while the actual (2023) median household income is \$82,383, which is \$33,530 less than required to afford a median priced house. The household income needed to afford a median priced home calculates to \$55.73 an hour, based on a full-time, 40-hour work week, to meet the 80 percent rule.

The housing price that is affordable based on the actual, current median income is \$230,987. Based on 2023 ACS data and this information, at present, approximately 68.5 percent of households living in Manchester cannot afford a median-priced house. Another way of looking at this is, out of the housing units sold in Manchester, approximately 96 percent are considered unaffordable at median household income.

That means Manchester is not affordable for 739 households out of 1079 total households (Maine State Housing Authority has different data for number of households than the Census or ACS).

The MSHA conducts an annual analysis of housing sales data and median household income by community to create the affordability index. The MSHA describes the index this way: *the Homeownership Affordability Index is the ratio of Home Price Affordable at Median Income to Median Home Price. An index of less than 1 means the area is generally unaffordable- i.e., a household earning the area median income could not cover the payment on a median priced home (30-year mortgage, taxes, and insurance) using no more than 28 percent of gross income.*

For Manchester, the 2023 affordability index was 0.71, which makes sense since the difference between income needed to afford a median price home was \$33,530 more than the actual median income. Table 9 compares the index of neighboring towns, county, and state.

TABLE 9: AFFORDABILITY INDEX FOR HOMEOWNERSHIP

	Year	Median Home Index Price	Median Home Price	Median Income	Income Needed to Afford Median Priced Home	Home Price Affordable to Median Income
Maine	2023	0.55	\$360,000	\$70,652	\$128,390	\$198,106
	2022	0.64	\$334,000	\$38,316	\$106,225	\$214,805
	2021	0.80	\$295,000	\$63,427	\$79,201	\$236,243
	2020	0.91	\$255,000	\$63,340	\$69,691	\$231,762
	2019	0.90	\$225,000	\$63,340	\$66,044	\$202,959
Augusta Micropolitan Housing Market*	2023	0.62	\$302,250	\$67,737	\$108,683	\$188,379
	2022	0.72	\$285,000	\$65,651	\$90,690	\$206,313
	2021	0.85	\$255,000	\$59,072	\$69,361	\$217,175
	2020	1.06	\$210,000	\$60,799	\$57,560	\$221,814
	2019	1.12	\$182,400	\$60,004	\$53,591	\$204,228
Manchester	2023	0.72	\$325,000	82,383	\$115,913	\$230,987
Belgrade	2023	0.64	\$405,000	\$90,579	\$141,496	\$259,262
Readfield	2023	0.71	\$372,500	\$93,750	\$132,848	\$262,871
Winthrop	2023	0.68	\$293,034	\$75,332	\$110,435	\$199,890
West Gardiner	2023	0.78	\$345,000	\$89,360	\$115,031	\$268,007
Hallowell	2023	0.43	\$385,000	\$61,645	\$143,608	\$165,184
Kennebec County	2023	0.61	\$294,138	\$64,708	\$106,040	\$179,491

Source: <https://www.mainehousing.org/data-research/housing-data/housing-affordability-indexes>

*The Augusta Micropolitan Area includes:

Augusta	Belgrade	Chelsea	China
Farmingdale	Gardiner	Hallowell	Litchfield
Manchester	Mt Vernon	Palermo	Pittston
Randolph	Readfield	Rome	Sidney
Somerville	Vassalboro	Wayne	West Gardiner
Whitefield	Windsor	Winthrop	

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

Year-Round Rental Housing

With approximately 18 percent of Manchester’s population, or 185 households, living in rental housing, the affordability of renting is a crucial aspect to consider.

Table 10 below shows changes over the last two decades in the cost and affordability of rental housing in Manchester (2023 ACS). The number of residents who rented increased by 72 percent and the median cost of renting increased by 77.6 percent between 2010 and 2023.

TABLE 10: COST OF RENTING IN MANCHESTER

	2010	2023	% Change
Renter Occupied Units	100	172	72%
Median Monthly Rent Specified Renter-Occupied Units	\$545	\$968	77.6%
Less than \$500	33	0	-100%
\$500 - \$999	88	94	6.8%
\$1,000 - \$1,499	0	63	100%
\$1,500 - \$1,999	3	15	400%
\$2,000 - \$2,499	0	0	0%
\$2,500 - \$2,999	0	0	0%
\$3,000 or more	0	0	0%
No Rent Paid	15	13	-13 %
Rent as a Percent of Household Income			
Less than 20%	39	78	100%
20 – 35%	38	73	92%
35% or more	23	21	-8.7%
Not Computed	15	13	-13%

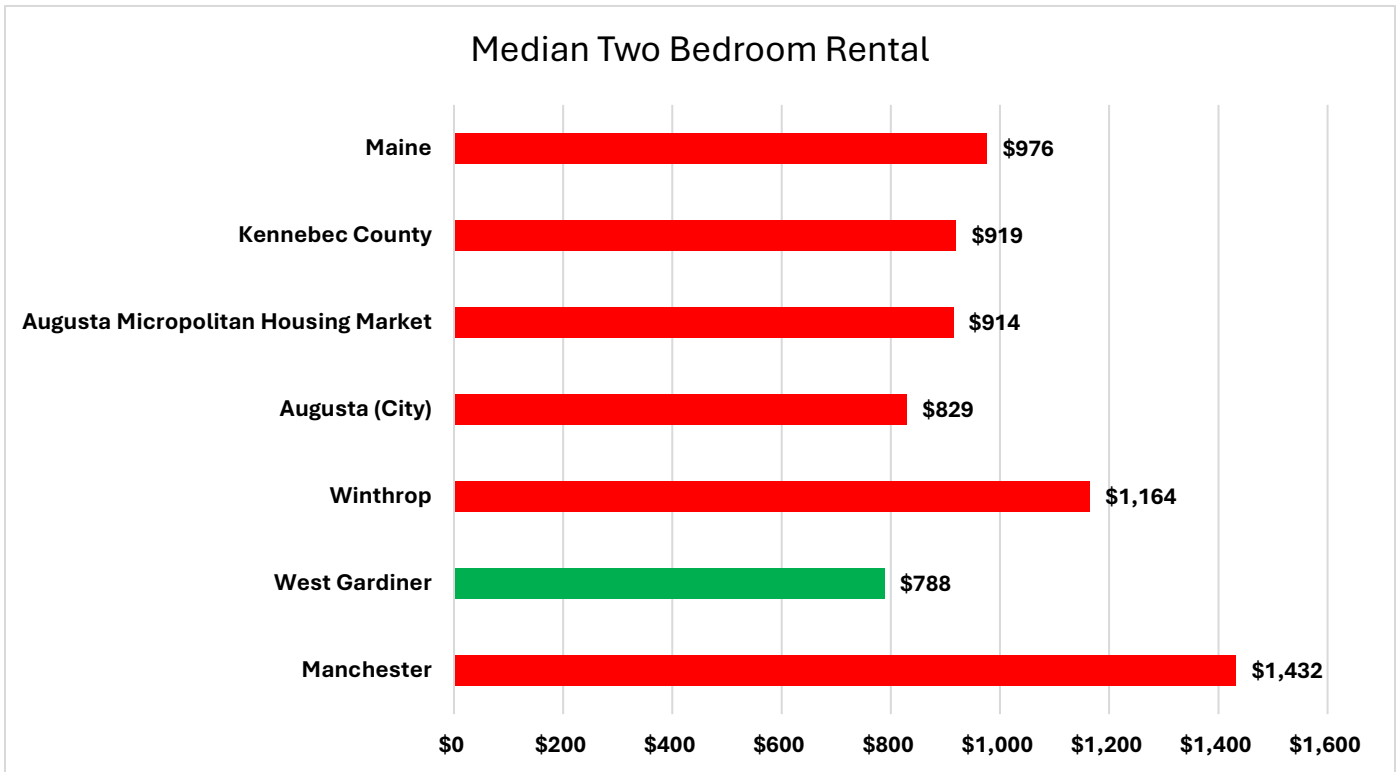
Sources: 2010 & 2023 American Community Survey

Table 10 Highlights

- The cost of renting increased more 77.6 percent between 2010 and 2023.
- Rents under \$500 did not exist in 2023.
- Renters paying less than 20 percent and those paying between 20-35 percent of their incomes increased significantly between 2010 and 2023.
- Renters paying 35 percent or more of their income for rent decreased by 8.7 percent.

Comparatively in Figure 6 below, according to MSHA statistics, in 2017 (more recent data was not available) the median cost of the average two-bedroom rental in Manchester was considered unaffordable at \$1,432 per month. According to MSHA’s data, renters’ household median annual income was \$32,825; an annual income of \$57,279 was needed to afford the median cost of renting in Manchester in 2017. Data shows the in 2017 there were 150 families renting, and of them, 68.7 percent were unable to afford the median rent price for an average 2-bedroom rental.

FIGURE 6: MEDIAN COST OF RENTING NEIGHBORING TOWN COMPARISON- 2017



Source: Maine State Housing Authority
*More recent data is not available.

Figure 6 Highlights

- Manchester's 2017 median price to rent a 2-bedroom apartment was significantly higher than neighboring towns, Kennebec County, and the Augusta Micropolitan Housing Market.
- Kennebec County and the Augusta Micropolitan Housing Market had similar costs for median rent.
- West Gardiner was the only town in the comparison that was considered affordable; however, West Gardiner's sample size is likely too small to be considered accurate.

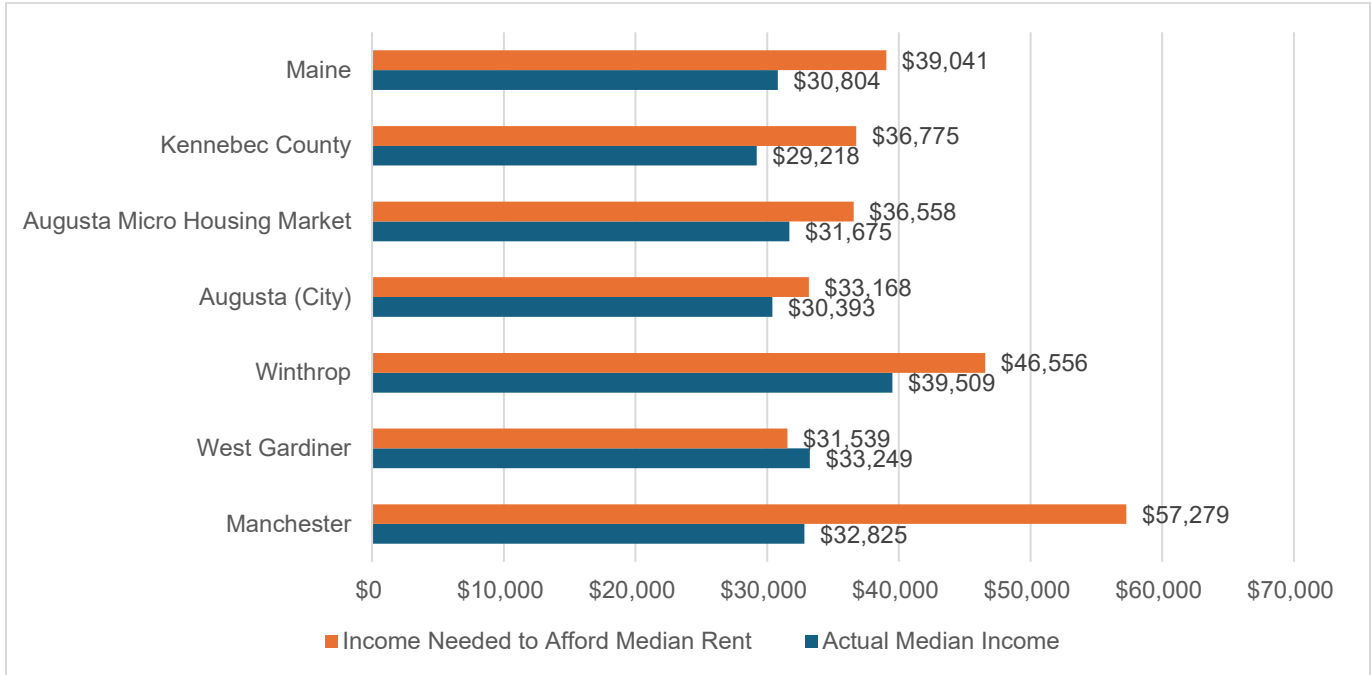
While Maine State Housing Authority's 2017 data on rental prices in Manchester may not be accurate, rental prices in Manchester have historically been higher than rental prices in surrounding towns. It's also important to bear in mind that this data does not include apartments that are subsidized; it is strictly out of pocket expenses.

There are several likely reasons for higher rental prices in Manchester.

- Most of the rentals are large houses, not apartments, which would be more costly to rent.
- There are fewer rentals in Manchester than there are in other neighboring towns, which increases rental costs.
- The lack of apartments in Manchester (small sample size) likely skewed the data.
- Manchester is a desirable area due to its easy commuting distance to Augusta, which also drives the rental prices up.

Data was not available for median rental costs in other neighboring towns, aside from those in Figure 6. In this comparison, the only location with a median monthly rental cost considered affordable, based on median income, was West Gardiner.

FIGURE 7: COMPARISON OF ACTUAL VS. REQUIRED INCOME TO AFFORD MEDIAN PRICED RENTAL*



Source: <https://www.mainehousing.org/data-research/housing-data/affordability-indexes>

*2017 is most recent data

Figure 7 Highlights

- The difference between actual and need household incomes was around 54 percent in Manchester in 2017.
- In the comparison, the only town with rentals that were considered affordable was West Gardiner.
- The difference between actual and need household incomes was around 24 percent in the State of Maine in 2017.
- The difference between actual and need household incomes was around 23 percent in Kennebec County.

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

The town of Manchester does not participate in any subsidized rent programs at this time, nor are there currently regional or workforce housing coalitions in Manchester.

Lindenbrooke Park, a privately owned entity, managed by a property maintenance company, provides the following amenities:

- Sixteen apartments - 12 one-bedroom and 4 two-bedroom apartments.
- Available to households who's head or co-head is elderly (62 years or older) or a person with a disability or handicap regardless of age.
- Rent is based on 30 percent of the adjusted household income
- Kennebec County income limits apply.
- Community rooms and laundry facilities in each building
- Onsite resident parking
- 24 Hour emergency maintenance
- Utility allowance provided

Aside from Lindenbrooke Park, there are no other senior accommodation available in Manchester.

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

Projections

Referring to the population projections in the Demographic Profile, the Maine Office of the State Economist project Manchester will have a population of 2,373 by 2040, which is a decrease of 3.4 percent in a 15-year period. The projections were made in April 2021; so, the full extent of the effects the Covid pandemic had on the population had not been fully realized.

Populations are affected by regional trends, such as increasing median age and decreasing household size. Manchester's median age has been increasing for decades but is beginning to show signs of plateauing. The average household size, or the number of people living in each household, has slowed in decline; however, it is still decreasing. Both trends will have an impact on housing type and needs.

Table 11: Median Age and Average Household Size Statistics

Source and Year	Median Age	Average Household Size
2020 Census	49.3	2.80
2021 ACS	44.6	2.47
2022 ACS	47.4	2.44
2023 ACS	44.3	2.42

Hypothetically, if the average household size were to continue to decline by another 5 percent in conjunction with the State Economist's population projection, the average household size would be around 2.4 people per household.

Manchester’s current housing stock is 1,209 housing units, of which approximately 161 are seasonal homes, meaning only 1,048 houses are available for year-round habitation.

Table 12 below shows different scenarios using the population projection from the State Economist’s Office, the current average household size, and the hypothetical decrease in average household size by 5 percent.

TABLE 12: POPULATION PROJECTIONS AND HOUSING NEEDS

	Population Projection	Total Current Housing Units (Minus Seasonal)	Average Household Size	Amount of Housing Needed	Deficit?
Current	2,464	1,048	2.42	1,016	N/A
State Economist’s Population Projection	2,373	1,048	2.42	981	No, surplus of 67 houses
State Economist’s Population Projection with Decreased Average Household Size	2,373	1,048	2.4	988	No, surplus of 60 houses

Based on Table 12, Manchester would not need additional housing to accommodate its residents for the population projected by the State Economist with the current average household size, or if the average household size continues to shrink by 5 percent. Manchester has sufficient housing stock to accommodate either scenario with this population projection.

While it is difficult to anticipate any future demand at all for housing under this population projection, this does not consider the housing shortage created by the pandemic or the increasing age throughout the state. Nor does it consider Manchester’s ideal location within close proximity to job centers.

Manchester’s current housing stock may appear sufficient in accommodating the projected population, but if consideration is given to the types of housing that will be in high demand, Manchester may fall short. Right sized housing for seniors, single people living alone, or two-person households will likely be the highest demand. That can be either through small houses, one-floor homes, apartments, condos, multifamily homes, or even elderly housing. Ideally, these types of houses would be constructed with easy access to services.

Houses with 3-4 bedrooms on large lots are probably not going to be in as high demand, as these types of homes are more suited to families with young children, or young couples who will be starting families.

Housing can get caught in what essentially acts as a domino effect: the older generation wants to downsize but would have to choose between leaving town or staying in their current, too-large home due to lack of available, right-sized housing. Their current homes are often more suitable for young families, but the older generation does not have many, or sometimes, any options for right-sized homes to transition into. This scenario prevents older generations from moving into homes that would be a better fit, and it prevents younger families from moving into town. Without smaller, more affordable homes, community growth is stymied.

The effects of decreasing average household size and increasing median age will continue to be felt for many years, even after they start reversing direction. Population projections and demographic statistics are a starting place when planning for the future. The most likely scenario for Manchester is continued population change in terms of numbers and demographics. Housing stock will fluctuate as new houses are built, year-round houses are converted to camps, and camps are converted to year-round housing.

Development in the rural areas is a worst-case scenario typical of sprawl. Even without a significant need for additional housing, new houses will undoubtedly still be constructed. Placement of 75 percent of new housing units in the town's designated growth area is consistent with the comprehensive planning guidelines to reduce the cost of providing public services to residents and decrease development in rural areas.

Manchester's Land Use and Development Ordinance will need to be reviewed upon completion of this Plan to ensure it aligns with the policies and strategies outlined throughout and works to direct new development into appropriate areas.

Other potential concerns are that much of the housing stock in Manchester is old. In the past several decades, housing construction has been minimal, and the houses that have been constructed are large 3–4-bedroom houses on large lots. Throughout the data analysis in this chapter, it has become readily apparent that the type of housing most needed is smaller, right sized housing for smaller households.

Further, as also apparent in the data analysis, there is an undeniable need for additional low- and moderate-income housing and senior housing. If more right-sized, affordable housing options were available and seniors could afford to downsize, larger homes more appropriate for families with young children would become available.

Current Housing Regulations

Manchester's Land Use and Development Ordinance (detailed more thoroughly in the Existing Land Use chapter) includes shoreland zoning and subdivision requirements. It was adopted in 1992 and has been amended through 2024. This is the main ordinance that exerts regulatory pressures on all land uses. It divides the town into the following seven districts:

- Manchester Village
- Community Residential
- General Development
- Rural Residential
- Shoreland Residential/Recreational District
- Aquifer Management Overlay
- Resource Protection

Of these districts, the following are intended to accommodate various types of future housing development:

- Manchester Village
- Community Residential
- General Development
- Rural Residential (not a designated growth area, but still available for appropriate residential development)

Each of these districts has its own minimum lot size and dimensional requirements, depending on several factors, particularly access to public sewer. In addition to land use districts standards, and requirements, Manchester's Land Use and Development Ordinance also includes provisions for (not an exhaustive list):

- Non-conformance (use, lot, structure)
- General performance standards and requirements for various land uses
- Building code
- Site plan review requirements for commercial/industrial development

Table 13 identifies the permit type required for assorted housing types in each of the four districts where housing is encouraged.

TABLE 13: PERMIT REQUIREMENTS FOR HOUSING TYPE BY DISTRICT

	MV	CR	GD	RR
Accessory Dwelling Unit	P	P	P	P
Duplex	P	P	P	P
Manufactured Housing	P	P	P	P
Mobile Home Park	N	C	C	N
Multi-Family Housing	C	C	C	S
Single-Family Dwelling	P	P	P	P
Subdivision	C	C	C	C

Source: Manchester’s Land Use and Development Ordinance

MV= Manchester Village CR= Community Residential
 GD= General Development RR= Rural Residential

P= Construction or use permit issued by the CEO
 C= Conditional Use permit issued by the Planning Board following site plan review
 S= Special Exception permit issued by the Planning Board, subject to specific criteria

In most districts, only a construction or use permit is required from the Code Enforcement Officer for the development of housing, provided the proposed development meets the lot standard requirements, which serves to promote housing through simplifying the permitting process. The Ordinance is thorough, clear, and well-written, which also reduces barriers in obtaining a permit.

Aside from easing the permitting process, the Land Use and Development Ordinance does little to encourage or promote the development of affordable housing or workforce housing, such as reducing lot sizes in certain areas to decrease building cost. Table 14 below details the lot size requirements per district.

TABLE 14: MINIMUM LOT AREA PER HOUSING TYPE BY DISTRICT

Minimum Lot Area (sq. ft. in thousands)	MV	CR	GD	RR
Single-Family Dwelling Unit				
With public sewer	20	20	20	60
Without public sewer	40	60	60	80
Multi-Family Dwelling Unit				
With public sewer	15/5*	20/10*	15/5*	60
Without public sewer	10	60	60	80

Source: Manchester’s Land Use and Development Ordinance

*Indicates amount of land area required for first unit/land area required for each additional dwelling unit.

Possibly the most effective option to encourage housing development where desired is to reduce lot size requirements where connection to public sewer is feasible. Thoughtfully decreasing minimum lot size in certain areas would reduce building costs thereby increasing the likelihood of affordable housing construction, promote walkability in neighborhoods, and increase housing density in already built-up locations.

Cluster Subdivisions or Cluster Developments are allowed with Planning Board review, which promotes flexibility of design and efficient use of the land to increase density while setting aside permanent, common open space. These types of development are encouraged, particularly in the Rural Residential district to reduce sprawl as they promote increased housing density, while setting aside land that will not be developed. Since this development technique has been available, there have been two such developments of this type: Garden Crest and Ballard Acres. There have not been any Cluster Subdivisions or Cluster Developments created in Manchester in more than 10 years. This is another option the town could encourage to promote housing density on smaller sized lots.

As a whole, Manchester's Land Use and Development Ordinance is robust and provides districts throughout town for various land uses and development types, while providing protection to natural resources. The Ordinance is reviewed and updated regularly.

Housing Analysis and Key Issues

- Population changes are not fluctuating greatly. State Economist projected a decrease of 91 residents by 2040.
- Manchester currently has (2023 ACS):
 - Population- 2,464,
 - Total housing units-1,209
 - Occupied housing units- 1,016
 - Vacant housing units- 193
 - Seasonal housing units- 161
- Average household size has been declining steadily for decades. It is currently 2.42 people per household.
- There has not been a significant number of conversions from seasonal homes into year-round homes.
- Seasonal housing stock has not increased significantly.
- Median housing prices are rapidly outpacing median household income.
- Median home price in 2023 was \$325,000, while the home price that is affordable on median income was \$230,987.
- Roughly 68 percent of households currently living in Manchester could not afford a median priced home there now.
- 96 percent of homes sold in Manchester are considered unaffordable to those making the median income.
- The median cost of rent increased by 77.6 percent between 2010 and 2023.
- Manchester's median rent is higher than the state, the county, Augusta Micropolitan Area, and other surrounding towns.
- While the population is projected to decrease, it is anticipated there will be a need for additional housing and right-sized housing to accommodate the aging population and the decreasing average household size.
- Manchester's existing Land Use and Development Ordinance does not encourage or discourage the development of housing.

5: Public Facilities and Services



Municipal Services

Planning for the future of municipal services and infrastructure is one of the key elements of the comprehensive plan. As with any business, the town can only keep its costs under control by ensuring that it is operating as efficiently as possible while providing for residents' needs. This is done by continually forecasting trends and anticipating large expenditures. The comprehensive plan is an opportunity to compare the daily operation of the town government with larger trends of land use, economic development, evolving resource constraints, outside influences, and other factors.

Manchester, though relatively small in population, supports a variety of public services because of its well-run management structure. Most Maine towns with a population of 2,500 do not have public water and sewer systems, an arterial highway, a professional quality fire department, a full-time town manager, and several other benefits that Manchester residents enjoy.

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

Manchester's Municipal Government

The primary purpose of local government is to provide public services. Each unit of government must balance what the citizens of a community want for services with how much they are willing to pay for them. Once the legislative body of a community determines the level of services to be provided, the local officials then have the responsibility for providing those services and collecting the taxes and revenues necessary to pay for them. Citizen participation is needed so that municipal officials understand just what citizens want, and what form of government is best suited for the community to enable those officials to accomplish their responsibility.

Municipal government, like its federal and state counterparts, must be structured to carry out legislative, executive and judicial functions. Its legislative function is to determine what the laws (ordinances) will be and annually adopt the municipality's budget; the executive function is to carry out, enforce, and administer the budget and those local laws; and the judicial function is to settle disputes that arise as laws are enforced. The judicial function does not involve courts and judges but instead "quasi-judicial" boards or committees, such as the Board of Appeals and the Board of Selectmen.

To carry on these functions, and meet the needs of its citizens, municipal government in Maine operates under several basic forms of government. Manchester's town government style is the Town Meeting-Selectmen-Manager.

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

The Town Office

The Manchester Town Office is the base of operations for general government services. It includes offices for the town clerk, tax collector, assessor, town manager, general assistance, finance office, and code enforcement officer, as well as meeting space for municipal boards and committees. The town office is open 36 hours a week, Monday through Friday.

The Town Office is located at the intersection of Routes 202 and 17 (12 Readfield Road). The original building dates from the 1970's, with an addition completed in the 1990's. The Town Office is generally considered adequate for most functions, although some larger meetings are now held in the fire station. There are no capital needs associated with the Town Office at this time; it is in generally good condition. Any work required would fall under general maintenance.

The Town Office is currently adequately equipped with both staff and physical condition for meeting changes in population and demographics. The building is handicapped accessible, including automatic doors. The size of the Town Office building is anticipated to sufficiently accommodate any changes in population size.

In the future, the town may need to consider hiring a maintenance person to provide minor maintenance tasks in and around the Town Office. The miscellaneous tasks would range from minor building maintenance, to shoveling snow, or emptying the trash at the playground.

General government services are considered satisfactory by residents, with no major issues or complaints. The small, full-time staff is supplemented in their work by appointed officials and active volunteer boards and committees. Augmenting the Board of Selectpersons, Manchester has a Budget Committee, Planning Board, Board of Appeals, Cemetery Committee, Conservation Commission, Historic Preservation Committee, and Road Committee. The work of some of these committees is outlined in the discussion of specific services below.

Public Safety

Aside from fire protection, Manchester's public safety is provided by outside entities, such as the county, state, or through services provided by other neighboring towns. Public safety services are detailed in this section.

Police Protection

Manchester does not have its own police department; it is served by the Kennebec County Sheriff's Office and Maine State Police. Manchester does not appropriate funds for a dedicated police officer. Most public safety calls in Manchester are for motor vehicle violations or accidents, with one percent or less being investigation of crimes such as burglary or assault.

In 2024, Kennebec County Sheriff's Office responded to 1,033 calls, an average of slightly less than three calls per day. The types of calls include, but are not limited to, domestic disturbances, burglary, theft, mental health crisis, assaults, child abuse, citizen assistance, animal complaints, traffic complaints and traffic crashes. The average call response time is considered reasonable for emergencies.

Manchester's police services meet current needs and are expected to remain sufficient as the population grows and changes. Additional law enforcement presence may be needed in the future to enforce speed limits.

Fire Department

The Manchester Fire Department is predominantly a volunteer department, except for the Fire Chief, who is a full-time town employee. There are no issues with manpower or training. The fire station was constructed in 2009, and solar panels were installed in 2011. The town sets aside \$10,000 per year in a vehicle replacement reserve, with a plan to retire and replace one apparatus every 15 years.

The Fire Chief will be assuming the role of Emergency Preparedness Director for the town. Manchester is up to date with their planning and preparation requirements. The Fire Chief is responsible for creating and maintaining a 10-year plan for all equipment needs for the fire department, including trucks. With this plan, Manchester is budgeting and has a plan in place for replacing fire apparatus at staggered time intervals to defray the cost as much as possible. All improvements and anticipated future expenses are accounted for in the Fiscal Capacity and CIP chapter of this plan but summarized here.

- Yearly- Evaluate and replace fire gear/equipment, as needed. Estimated cost of \$10,000.
- 2030- Replace fire truck with funds from truck reserve account in addition to other finance options. Estimated cost of \$1 million, but it will depend on the apparatus being replaced.
- 2035- Expansion of fire department through grants and/or bonds. Estimated cost of approximately \$1.5 million.

One of the most essential functions of the department is training to keep abreast of modern practices and building standards. The Fire Chief holds training every Tuesday evening for 2-3 hours. Additionally, the fire department has two new members who will be going through the Fire 1 program. Manchester currently has eight volunteer fire fighters and one junior member.

These hours put in training can be attributed to the town's Insurance Safety Officer (ISO) rating which is a 6 and considered a particularly good rating for a rural town. This rating is a score that encapsulates how well-equipped the community's fire department is to put out fires. The ISO rating system ranks fire departments from 1 - 10, with those deemed more capable of putting out fires receiving a lower number. The ISO rating influences homeowner's and business fire insurance rates.

Manchester has a mutual aid agreement with both Hallowell and Winthrop. The services provided by the Manchester Fire Department meet the current needs of both Manchester residents and the towns with whom the mutual aid agreement is held and are expected to remain sufficient as the population grows and changes. Generally, the call response time is better than average, particularly for emergencies.

Ambulance Service

Ambulance service is contracted from the Winthrop Regional Service. Winthrop also serves Wayne, Readfield, Mt. Vernon, and Fayette. Depending on the location and nature of the call, transport may be to any of several different hospitals. The ambulance service and equipment occupy a facility in Winthrop. Since Manchester is provided with this service through a contract, the town has no responsibility for the equipment, ambulance, or staff.

The ambulance service provided by this arrangement meets the current needs of Manchester residents and is expected to remain sufficient as the population grows and changes. The average call response time is considered reasonable for emergencies.

Manchester's Public Safety Analysis

Manchester's current public safety system adequately serves the community and is expected to remain sufficient for the foreseeable future.

The only public safety service provided directly by the town is fire protection. Police protection is provided by the state and county, and ambulance services are provided through a contract with Winthrop. For this reason, Manchester has little control over response times for services provided through outside entities.

Healthcare Facilities

Manchester has limited healthcare facilities, with only a physical therapist on Bowdoin Street currently operating and a chiropractor office opening soon. However, a wide range of healthcare services is readily accessible in nearby Augusta, Lewiston, Waterville, and Winthrop—all within a short drive. Winthrop Family Medicine, a medical clinic, is in neighboring town of Winthrop and is a satellite facility for MaineGeneral Hospital. For emergencies, there is an Urgent Care facility at the Turnpike Mall in Augusta, as well as the MaineGeneral hospital also in Augusta.

The town's Public Health Officer is a doctor, and the town maintains a General Assistance fund, of which the Town Manager is the administrator. These services adequately meet the needs of the community.

While there are few healthcare facilities in Manchester, there are many options within the region that are adequate in meeting the needs of the community.

Utilities

The availability of public water supply and sewer systems is a principal factor in growth and development. The availability of public sewer connections enables homebuilders to avoid the state-minimum 20,000-square-foot lot size mandate, permitting greater density of development. All but the smallest and lowest-impact commercial uses demand more water and waste disposal service than can be met through on-site facilities. Public utilities in Manchester are limited to a portion of Route 17, Route 202, Pond Road, Ballard Acres, and Garden Crest. Essentially, the areas zoned Community Residential have both water and sewer.

The Greater Augusta Utilities District (GAUD) supplies public water and sewer service in portions of Manchester.

Public Sewer

The Manchester Sanitary District is a quasi-governmental entity operating separately from the town. Manchester's sewers feed into a multi-community trunkline on Route 202. The trunkline carries waste (including septage) from Winthrop and Monmouth to the Greater Augusta Utilities District Sanitary Treatment Plant. However, the trunkline does not serve all of Route 202, relying on gravity feed from part way up Pelton Hill to a junction near the village. The trunkline was originally sized to serve Carleton Woolen Mills in Winthrop as well as several other industrial users who are now shut down, so there are more concerns for lack of flow than capacity.

Past town policy regarding utility extensions has been to permit them when privately financed. Developments within 300 feet of the public sewer are required to connect, but beyond that is the developer's option. As development along Route 202 expands, the sewer line has been extended a parcel at a time. At this time, no expansion of the public sewer system is anticipated.

Since Manchester Sanitary District is part of the GAUD, the town is not responsible for the facilities or services. Manchester's sole input regarding sewage service is setting a cost for residents.

Current municipal services are expected to adequately meet the future needs of a changing population and demographics. Currently, there are about 400 Manchester residents on Manchester Sanitary, roughly about 17 percent of the town's total population.

Manchester is only partially served by public sewer, though this is not preventing them from accommodating the current or projected growth.

Public Water

The public water supply in Manchester is also provided by GAUD. The main feed of the water line comes from Augusta through northern portions of Manchester, then distributes into the village. There are no known capacity, volume, or pressure issues with the water system. No expansion of the public water system is currently expected. Manchester is not responsible for the public water facilities or services. Unlike with the public sewer system, the town also has no say in the cost of public water services.

Current municipal services are expected to adequately meet the future needs of a changing population and demographics. Currently, there are about 300 Manchester residents on public water, which is roughly about 13 percent of the town's population.

Manchester is only partially served by public sewer, though this is not preventing them from accommodating the current or projected growth.

Communications Center

Initial PSAP (E911) calls come into the Androscoggin County Communications Center and are forwarded for the appropriate response, as dispatched by the Town of Winthrop. No improvements are needed in the telecommunications infrastructure.

Power Service

Electric power is distributed in town through Central Maine Power facilities. Manchester itself has no significant generation capabilities. Three-phase power is generally available in the commercial areas of town and is not an issue. Broadband internet access is easily accessible in the developed area and on primary roads.

Manchester's Public Utilities Analysis

Manchester's public utilities are provided by entities outside of the town; thus, the town is not responsible for their improvements or maintenance. The public utilities are in good condition and are not at capacity. No future expansion is necessary or expected in the next 10 years.

Solid Waste Disposal

Solid waste disposal is a continuing issue in Manchester. Right now, residents contract with private haulers for curbside collection. The town also pays a per capita fee to the City of Augusta for access to the Hatch Hill Landfill. Manchester's current recycling options are limited to plastic recycling through NexTrex, which repurposes plastics into products like benches.

The town is actively working with other towns to find a solution to the limited recycling options

Septic Waste Disposal

Manchester is partially served by private septic systems and partially by public sewers, as detailed above. When pumping of private septic systems is needed, the town is not involved in the disposal process. When pumping is needed for a private system, it is accomplished through a third-party licensed contractor. Manchester does not have any community policies or regulations regarding septic waste collection or disposal.

Public Works

Public works functions include local road maintenance, waste management, and cemeteries. Manchester does not have a separate department to provide these services. For the most part, they are contracted services managed by local committees.

The town has minimal public works equipment or facilities since they rely on contracts to perform these duties. The sand and salt shed is the only structure of this kind, and it is included in the Capital Improvement Plan for replacement in 2030. The town has already begun budgeting for the estimated \$75,000 replacement cost for the sand and salt shed.

Manchester's current contract arrangements for road maintenance and cemeteries are adequate in meeting the community's needs. The issues around waste management are detailed above in the subheading, *Solid Waste Disposal*.

Manchester does not have a street tree program, though the town does have a Tree Board which evaluates trees on public property and advises town officials.

Stormwater Management

Manchester's stormwater is managed through a series of ditches along roadsides and culverts. Manchester is currently in the process of documenting and evaluating all culverts throughout town. This documentation will include culvert size, age, recent maintenance conducted, future needs, and any other relevant information. This project will be performed by a private contractor, as Manchester does not have a public works department.

Other existing stormwater management facilities are adequately maintained, though improvements are being considered due to the frequency and increased severity of recent precipitation events. Improvements would include more frequent cleaning of catch basins and alternatives to ditching the sides of the roads. Any necessary improvements to culverts will be assessed on an individual basis.

The effects of growth on the stormwater system will also be analyzed on an individual basis when applications are reviewed for permitting.

The town's existing stormwater management system can sufficiently handle the expected future development in this planning period. Manchester does not have any combined sewer overflows.

Cemeteries

Of the eleven cemeteries in town, Manchester is only responsible for the maintenance of four, as the other seven are privately owned or family cemeteries.

The Sexton and Cemetery Committee manage and maintain the public cemeteries in Manchester. The principal public cemetery, Manchester Forks in the center of town, is up to date and has adequate capacity. St. Mary's Cemetery, a privately maintained cemetery, on the Augusta city line, also has capacity.

As for other cemeteries, it is unclear if they are at capacity due to lack of historic documentation.

Town-Owned Lands

Manchester is also fortunate to have permanently conserved/preserved scattered throughout town. These properties are conserved or preserved in a variety of ways. They are detailed further in the Natural and Water Resources chapter of this Plan.

Education

Public education in Manchester is incorporated into Regional School Unit #38 (RSU 38), which includes the towns of Readfield, Mt. Vernon, and Wayne. Manchester Elementary School serves Manchester primary students, while Maranacook Middle and High Schools serve the region's secondary students. Table 1 below details the specifics of each school in the region.

Currently, the schools have adequate capacity, and no future expansion is needed or anticipated. The school buildings are generally in good condition, with no known need for repairs.

There is no immediate opportunity to directly promote new residential development around the existing school buildings.

TABLE 1: RSU 38 SCHOOL FACILITIES

School	Location	Grades Served
Manchester Elementary School	Manchester	Pre-K – 5
Maranacook Middle School	Readfield	6 – 8
Maranacook High School	Readfield	8 – 12

Source: <https://www.maranacook.org/>

Manchester Elementary School- The active and involved Parent Teacher Community Organization (PTCO) add support and enrichment for both staff and students alike. The Pre K program is new and has been a success. The school also participates in an active reading program and hosts the Kennebec Valley Book Award Ceremony. Two lead teachers are involved in district and school professional development.

Maranacook Community Middle School- Currently has 30 teachers, 12 Ed Techs, a full-time guidance counselor, and a nurse. In addition, there is an advisor/advisee program and a one-to-one laptop program supported by a Technology Integration Specialist. This school was named a Spotlight Middle School by the New England League of Middle Schools from 2008-2010.

Maranacook Community High School- Offers a wide range of academic opportunities, including three foreign languages, AP classes in several subjects, access to the Capital Area Technical School, and specialized electives from Virtual High School. All students have laptop computers, and many classes use online materials. The advisor/advisee system is a cornerstone of the school, reflecting important core values and beliefs while preparing students for successful futures. Additionally, the school has an award-winning School-Based Health Center, offering a wide range of services, as well as co-curriculum activities and athletic teams. Over 90 percent of students graduate with post-secondary plans that include four-year colleges, community colleges, apprentice programs, and the military.

Declining enrollment has been an issue in the past and threatens to increase the costs of education. While declining enrollment does not directly raise overall school costs, it increases per-student spending by spreading fixed expenses such as facility maintenance and administration across fewer students. At the same time, reduced enrollment lowers revenue, forcing difficult budget decisions such as staff reductions or potential school closures. Because many districts cannot quickly scale back fixed costs, the result is a higher cost per student. Factors that contribute to increase per-students costs include:

- Fixed costs stay constant as enrollment falls
- Funding declines with fewer students
- Staffing rules and pay trends limit cost cuts
- Course offerings reduced in smaller schools
- School closures add costs and disruptions

Student enrollment has steadily declined over the last few years, reaching its lowest during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020). Currently RSU 38, enrollment hovers around 1,160 students and Manchester Elementary School has around 173 students. Tables 3 and 4 below shows declining school enrollment for all schools that are part of RSU 38, Kennebec County, and specifically for Manchester.

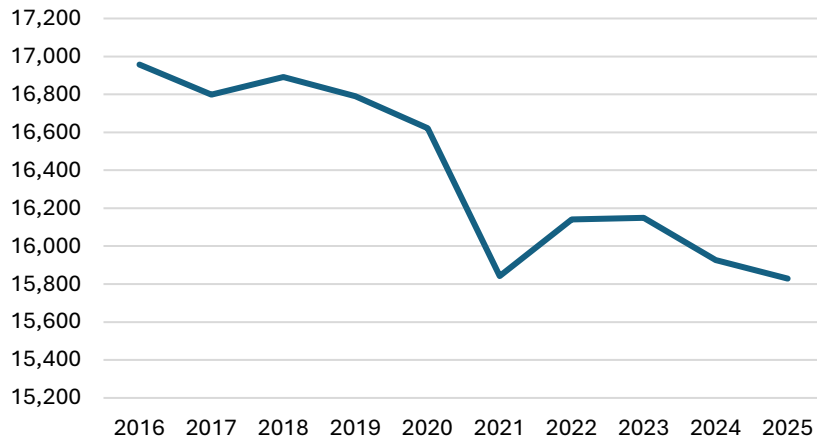
TABLE 2: SCHOOL ENROLLMENT FOR MANCHESTER

County/Town	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	10 yr Ave
Kennebec County	16,957	16,798	16,891	16,790	16,621	15,843	16,140	16,150	15,926	15,829	16,394.5
Manchester	400	388	368	362	332	334	354	372	368	344	362.20

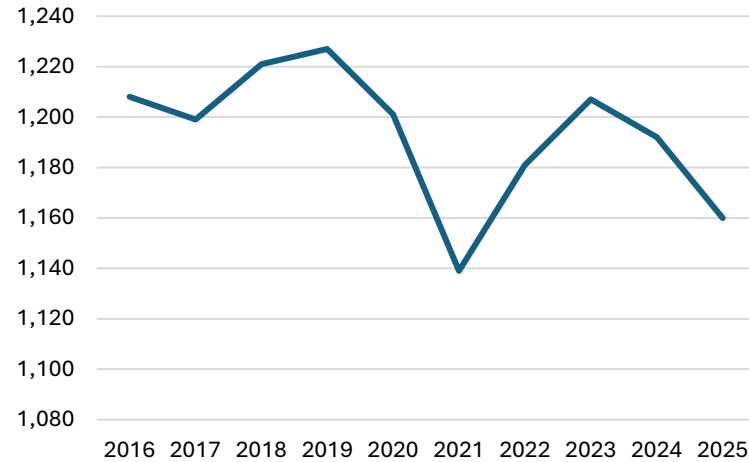
Source: Maine Department of Education

FIGURES 1 AND 2- COUNTY VS REGIONAL STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Kennebec County Student Enrollment



RSU 38 Student Enrollment



Source: Maine Department of Education

Figure 1 & 2 Highlights:

- Not surprisingly, Kennebec County and RSU 28 mirror each other in the fluctuations of student enrollment.
- Both the region and the county saw a dramatic decline in student enrollment between 2020 and 2021.
- Both the region and the county rebounded from this decline, though the county did not rebound as quickly as the region.

TABLE 3: RSU 38 SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

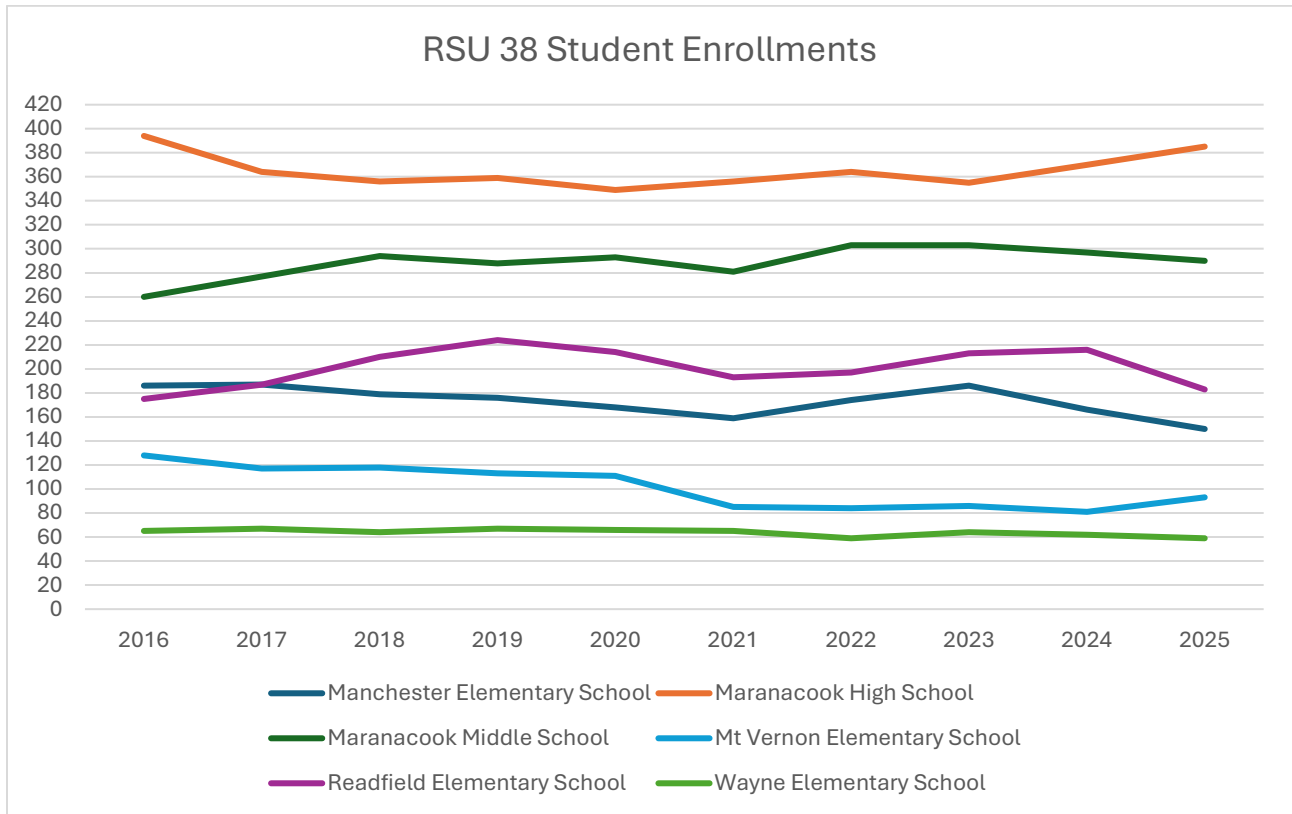
District / School / Grade	School Year										10 Year Average
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	
RSU 38 (All grades)	1,208	1,199	1,221	1,227	1,201	1,139	1,181	1,207	1,192	1,160	1,193.50
Manchester Elementary School (Grades PK-5)	186	187	179	176	168	159	174	186	166	150	173.10
Maranacook High School (Grades 9-12)	394	364	356	359	349	356	364	355	370	385	365.20
Maranacook Middle School (Grades 6-8)	260	277	294	288	293	281	303	303	297	290	288.60
Mt Vernon Elementary School (Grades PK-5)	128	117	118	113	111	85	84	86	81	93	101.60
Readfield Elementary School (Grades PK-5)	175	187	210	224	214	193	197	213	216	183	201.20
Wayne Elementary School (Grades PK-5)	65	67	64	67	66	65	59	64	62	59	63.80

Source: Maine Department of Education

Table 2 & 3 Highlights:

- Student enrollment for Kennebec County declined after 2020, with a small rebound between 2022 and 2023.
- This same pattern was reflected, to varying degrees, by every school in the region around this time.
- Figure 3 below shows the overall student enrollment for each school in RSU 38 as a line graph.

FIGURE 3- STUDENT ENROLLMENT FOR RSU 38 SCHOOLS



Source: Maine Department of Education

Figure 3 Highlights:

- Wayne Elementary School has the smallest student population, so the changes appear to be minimal at the scale of this chart.
- Mt Vernon Elementary School saw a decline in enrollment between 2020 and 2021. Enrollment did not start rebounding until 2025.
- Readfield Elementary School experienced increasing enrollment until 2021, after which time it rebounded slowly, but has not reached the pre-Covid enrollment levels.
- Manchester Elementary School’s enrollment began declining in 2018. Enrollment numbers saw an increase in 2023 but then dropped off in 2024 and 2025.
- Maranacook Middle School’s enrollment seems to have been the least affected by Covid; though there was a slight decrease in enrollment around 2021.
- Maranacook High School has the highest enrollment numbers out of all the RSU 38 schools. Enrollment fluctuated prior to the Covid pandemic, which caused a nominal decrease. Currently, enrollment has been increasing since 2023.

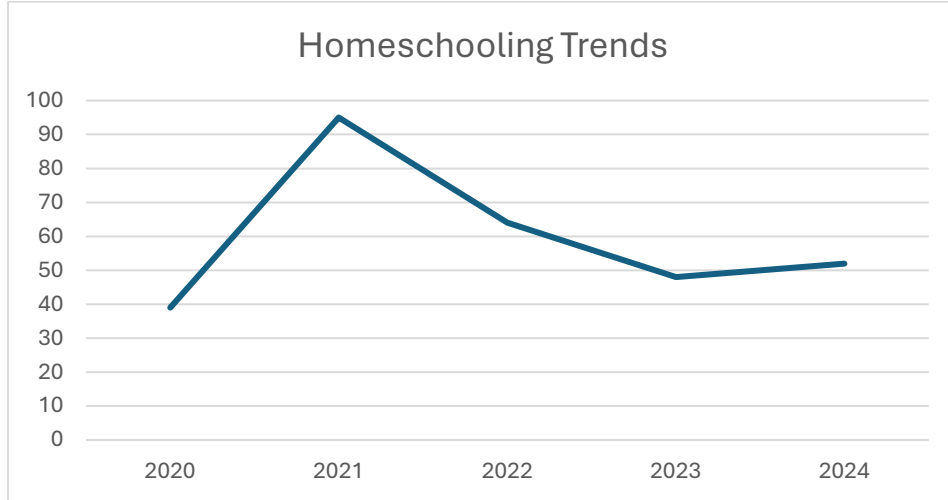
Another factor to consider is the increase in children who are home schooled. Table 5 and Figure 4 below shows the number of children in the RSU 38 region who are home schooled.

TABLE 4: HOME INSTRUCTION COUNTS BY YEAR FOR RSU 38

2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
39	95	64	48	52

Source: Maine Department of Education

FIGURE 4: HOMESCHOOL ENROLLMENT



Source: Maine Department of Education

Not surprisingly, Table and Figure 4 show an inverse of regional school enrollment. Where regional school enrollment decreased due to the pandemic, homeschool numbers increased.

Manchester’s school buildings and school offerings are adequate in accommodating the anticipated student enrollment for the planning period.

Summary of Town-Owned Public Facilities

Manchester’s town-owned public facilities and services are in good condition. The town has long-range budgeting plans to continue to optimize their operations and maintenance. Future investments in facility improvements are directed into the growth areas to the extent necessary and as needed.

Public Facilities and Services Analysis and Key Issues

- Manchester's government style is Town Meeting-Selectmen-Manager.
- The Manchester Town Office is in good condition with no major foreseeable capital improvement needs.
- The public safety of the town is largely supplied by outside entities, besides fire protection, which is through the Manchester Fire Department.
- The Greater Augusta Utilities District supplies both public water and sewer services to parts of Manchester; the remainder of the town is served by private wells and septic systems.
- The town has adequate power service and three-phase power where needed.
- Solid waste disposal is an ongoing issue in Manchester, with no easy remedy, though the Town Manager is exhausting every option to find a solution.
- The town is working to evaluate existing culverts through a culvert study. This will improve the town's stormwater management.
- Both public and private cemeteries in town are not at capacity.
- There is no current need to expand the school buildings. The existing buildings are in adequate condition.
- Student enrollment has fluctuated over the last ten years and appears to be on an upswing for 2025.

6: Transportation



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

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

Maine DOT Road Classification

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

Functional classification is the process by which public streets and highways are grouped into classes according to the character of service they are intended to provide. Generally, highways fall into one of three broad categories:

Arterials: These serve countywide, statewide, or interstate travel, linking cities and large towns to an integrated highway network. As a rule of thumb, speeds on arterial systems are relatively high, although speeds may be lower through urban areas. Volumes and traffic typically range from thousands to tens of thousands of vehicles per day. Arterials are further divided between principal and minor arterial roads

Arterial roads are designated for their capacity to carry large volumes of traffic efficiently between commercial or service centers. DOT has restrictive access standards on arterial roads to preserve this mobility function. These highways generally carry a federal route number designation, such as U.S. 201 which is a Principal Arterial.

- Route 202 is classed as Minor Arterial

Collectors: These roads link smaller towns, villages, neighborhoods, and major facilities to the arterial network. Traffic is collected from local residential roads and delivered to the nearest arterial. Daily traffic volume generally ranges in the thousands. Collectors are divided between rural and urban collector roads. Collectors are further divided into “major” and “minor,” depending on the proportions of federal, state, and local money available for maintenance and improvements.

- Route 135 and Pond Road are Minor Rural Connectors.
- Route 17 and Granite Hill Road are classed as Major Rural Connectors.

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

- All other roads that are not arterials or collectors are considered local roads.

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

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

- Routes 202, 17 and 135 are classed as State Highways.

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

- Pond Road and Granite Hill Road are classed as State Aid Highways.

Town Ways: These roads are all other roads not included in the State Highway or State Aid Highway classifications that are maintained by municipalities or counties. These roads correspond with the federal 'local' road classification.

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

Manchester's Highway System

Manchester's road system radiates out from the village area like spokes on a wheel. The hub of that wheel is the village, clearly designating it as the critical element of the town's transportation system.

Past plans and expressions of public opinion have supported the re-establishment of a village setting, but the presence of a five-lane highway bisecting the village has been an obstacle to that objective. The overall effect has been a lack of cohesion among development and lack of alternatives to auto trips. Commercial development has occupied a long segment of Route 202, following, for the most part, the availability of public sewer.

The logical extension of this trend is the complete buildout of Route 202 until it connects with development coming out of Augusta. The resulting proliferation of commercial driveways and traffic generators would create serious congestion concerns within a corridor already identified by Maine DOT as in need of attention.

Traffic at the primary downtown intersections is an imminent concern. At least five roads converge with Route 202 within the space of about 300 yards, together with several commercial driveways. Most major traffic generators are close to this convergence, including the Oakes and Parkhurst commercial center, the elementary school, several service stations, and the post office.

Other major traffic generators in this area include Fielder's Choice Ice Cream at the corner of Rt 202 and McArdle Street, several stores, cannabis shops, and the Woodshed at Kennebec Cabin Company (Cabin Masters).

There is typically a steady stream of traffic coming from Puddledock Road onto Rt 202. Traffic is also generated by events at The Woodshed and the usual rush hour. Traffic in this area is particularly troublesome when trying to make a left-hand turn anywhere in the center of town from Rt 202.

U.S. Route 202, the principal highway through Manchester, is also one of the state's major highway corridors. It connects Augusta with Lewiston on a modern, well-built highway. This road's federal classification is Minor Arterial; its state classification is State Highway. This means it is an essential highway that bisects the village area in Manchester.

To the east of the downtown, Route 202 narrows to three lanes and then to two. Growing traffic volumes and commercial development have burdened this section. Widening or alternative improvements to ease traffic flow have been the subject of study and conversation for decades, with very little concrete action being taken. Responsibility for improvements lies with the Maine DOT, which is relying heavily on local input.

- Most of the Route 202 corridor through Manchester received Highway Preservation Paving in 2020. The road is in good condition and does not require any improvements.

ME Route 17 originates in Manchester village and leads to Readfield and northwest. It is a two-lane, major collector road, approximately two miles in Manchester. Route 17 provides access to several public facilities, such as the town office, post office, elementary school, and village residential development. It tapers to a rural highway before exiting the town.

- Route 17 received Highway Preservation Paving in 2017. Route 17 is generally in good condition.

Granite Hill Road enters the village from the Hallowell city line. While it is also classified as a major collector highway, this road has not been largely improved and remains relatively narrow with a fair travel surface in Manchester. About 1.6 miles traverses Manchester, extending southeast from Route 202 in the village area. The road is moderately developed with roadside houses but has the potential to service much development on back lots.

- Granite Hill Road received light capital paving in 2024. This road is generally in good condition.

ME Route 135 is a north-south route running from Winthrop to Belgrade, cutting through the northwestern corner of Manchester. It does not provide significant transportation options for residents. As a minor collector, this category of road will never be improved unless the Town pays a third or more of the improvement cost.

- Route 135 received light capital paving in 2021. Rt 135 is generally in good condition.

Pond Road is also part of the state highway network, classed as a minor collector. It extends approximately 4.7 miles south from the intersection with Route 202 in the village center.

- Pond Road received light capital paving in 2019. Pond Road is generally in good condition, though there are places where the pavement is rough. There are also known parts of this road that have issues with drainage and erosion. Pond Road sees heavy traffic that frequently exceeds the speed limit.

Possibly the most significant use conflict related to Manchester's transportation system is that Route 202 traversing the center of town makes the possibility of creating a village environment impossible. This is exasperated by heavy traffic volumes and traffic that frequently exceeds the speed limit

Town Ways/Local Roads

The town maintains 36 miles of town ways. This does not include State Aid roads; those are maintained by the state in the summer, and the town is responsible for plowing in the winter. The function and condition of these roads varies, from downtown streets to narrow, rural roads. The town maintains a complete inventory of these roads. Significant roads are detailed on Table 1, below.

TABLE 1: MANCHESTER TOWN ROADS AND WAYS

Road Name	Mileage	Road Name	Mileage
Allen Hill Drive	0.08	McArdle Street	0.34
Apple Tree Lane	0.18	Meadow Hill Road	1.6
Benson Road	1.37	Mount Vernon Road-South end	0.47
Buck Trail	0.28	Myrtle Street	0.42
Collins Road	1.16	Old Winthrop Road	0.29
Cottle Road-East End	0.27	Parkway Lane	0.10
Country Club Road	0.36	Pelton Road	0.43
Cram Road	0.24	Prescott Road	6.00
Cross Street	0.13	Puddledock Road	1.67
Elliot Avenue	0.26	Ryan Drive	0.22
Fifield Road	0.28	School Street	0.12
Forest Circle	0.17	Scribner Hill Road	1.78
Foye Road	0.24	Smith Road	0.14
Gilbert Drive	0.25	Summerhaven Road	2.03
Heather Street	0.11	Sylvan Way	0.34
Hillside Road	0.12	Sylvester Drive	0.23
Ingraham Street	0.18	Tanning Brook Road	0.07
Kennison Street	0.25	West Street	0.24
Kerns Hill Road	1.71	Woodridge Drive	0.48
Knowles Road	0.24	Worthing Road	1.17
Lyons Road	0.65	–	–

Source: Manchester Town Office

Failing culverts, flooding, and drainage are the most prominent transportation system concerns for town roads. Fortunately, Manchester recently (2025) secured grant funding through the State’s Community Resilience Partnership (CRP) to conduct a town-wide culvert survey and analysis. The information attained through this survey will allow the town the capability of documenting culvert size, age, condition, and maintenance to prevent future culvert failure and plan for necessary improvements.

Two examples of drainage issues are Prescott Road and Kennison Street. On Prescott Road there is frequent issues with drainage and erosion. The town is already in the process of addressing flowage issues on Kennison Street.

Manchester utilizes ditching on the roadsides to channel water from the increased intensity and frequency of storms and precipitation events, but ditching for stormwater does not come without issues. For instance, on Scribner Hill, the deep ditches that channel stormwater are a safety concern for pedestrians, as well as people on bicycles or horseback. Also, channelizing water flow in ditching over long distances or on steep slopes facilitates erosion and can become a point source for pollution. A better solution would be to direct and disperse the flow in several areas along the length of the road so it can seep into the ground.

Ditching for stormwater management requires routine maintenance by the town to ensure functionality. Routine maintenance includes not just removal of debris in the ditch, but also street sweeping to remove sand berms that build up in the winter and prevent water reaching the ditches by channeling it along the road instead.

McArdle Street was noted for having several issues. Although this road is less than a mile long, it traverses densely settled neighborhoods. To combat historic speeding issues, speed tables have been installed; though they are ineffective at slowing speeders. This road is frequently used to bypass Route 17 to access Rt 202, so much of the traffic on this road is through traffic. The increased use of this road for through traffic has made the intersection between McArdle and Rt 202 progressively problematic.

Many of the smaller roads that intersect with Rt 202 have difficult intersections, such as McArdle Street, detailed above and Gardencrest. Traffic volumes during normal conditions make left turns a challenge; however, if there are any events such as sporting events, events hosted by Longfellows or The Woodshed, then traffic volume is intensified exponentially.

Other Roads

Due to the numerous lakeside camps throughout Manchester, the town has an abundance of private roads. The town also has many “paper roads”. Paper roads are those that were laid out in a subdivision plan but were never actually built or were never “accepted” as town roads by the town (never approved as town ways).

As with discontinued town ways, the status of such roads may depend on certain critical dates - in this case, the date on which it was recorded in a subdivision plan. The laws determining the fate of these roads changed as of September 29, 1987, so determining whether the subdivision plan was recorded before or after that date is critical. Even if a paper street was never accepted as a town way, and even if the road was never in fact built or used, towns can retain the option for accepting such roads for years, complicating matters further.

Problems in Manchester relating to paper roads have arisen with enough frequency for the issue to be included in this chapter. Problems related to discontinued roads include questions of legal ownership, adequacy of road frontage, maintenance responsibilities, and others.

In fact, Manchester is not alone in dealing with complications around paper roads; these issues are state-wide. Manchester should consider proactive approaches in documenting paper roads to try to address problems before they arise. To compound the challenges with paper roads, often no survey was ever conducted. Additionally, for every paper road, the circumstances around them are different, which requires different approaches.

From the perspective of the Planning Board, these paper roads and other private roads present different obstacles. One issue is that if a subdivision with five or more lots was approved after June 10, 2005, and the sole access is on an existing private road, that private road must be upgraded to town road standards.

This is problematic because the private road is already constructed and, in most cases, and subsequent divisions would then require the existing roads to be upgraded to town road standards as detailed in the Land Use and Development Ordinance. Upgrading the existing road to the standards required for it to be accepted by the town would be prohibitively costly.

Another issue that has come before the Planning Board is that of road frontage on divided lots that were originally large parcels and frontage for properties on dead end roads.

In general, an overall review of Article II, Land Uses and Districts, Section 6. General Performance Requirements and Standards, A. Access to Lots, of the Land Use and Development Ordinance, is necessary to address these issues.

Traffic Volumes

The quality of the transportation system depends not only on its physical condition, but on the usage it receives. Government is generally responsible for the infrastructure itself, but in the past has not had much control over how or how much it is used. Traffic levels are a function of the location of trip points (traffic generators); traffic conflicts such as crashes are often the unintended consequence of those locations.

Traffic levels have generally been growing over the past few decades. Freight (truck) traffic has risen noticeably, and it is not unheard of for people to commute for an hour each way to work. In terms of volume, automobile traffic has a greater impact than truck traffic. Most trips originate in the residence and move to employment centers, schools, or shopping. A sprawling land use pattern results in more rural residents driving longer distances to get to their destinations.

The volume of traffic is a measure of the intensity of road use and the potential for traffic delays, congestion, or unsafe conditions. Economic developers also use traffic volumes to determine potential customer base. Historic traffic count data, measured in Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT), equivalent to vehicles per day, is compiled by MDOT for state roads in several locations throughout Manchester. Unfortunately, data from the previous year's traffic counts was not available for comparison; however, data from 2014, 2015, and 2017 provides a historic point of reference. Traffic volumes are also shown in the *Traffic Volume Map* in the Appendix of this plan.

TABLE 1: AVERAGE ANNUAL DAILY TRAFFIC COUNT

Location	2014	2015	2017	2023
Scribner Hill Rd W/O 337				520
Benson Rd S/O Collins				510
Summerhaven NR/O Prescott Rd				790
Pelton Hill Rd NR/O SR 11/US202				230
Prescott SE/O Puddledock				1,160
Puddledock S/O Prescott Rd				1,240
Prescott Rd SE/O Belgrade (SR 135)	890		810	1,010
Worthing Rd NE/O SR 17 (Readfield)				160
Puddledock NE/O SR 11/17/100/202		1,250		1,420
Collins Rd E/O Pond Rd	730			690
Pond Rd N/O Meadow Hill				2,880
Pond Rd N/O Collins Rd	1,820			2,190
Pond Rd SW/O Collins Rd	1,940			2,150
Pond Rd SW/O Acorn Ln				3,330
Pond Rd SW/O SR 11/17/100/202		3,170	3,490	3,720
SR 11/17/100/202 W/O Pond Rd		16,040	17,390	18,300
SR 11/17/100/202 W to Winthrop TL	14,230		15,850	
SR 11/17/100/202 W/O Pelton Hill		20,290	19,710	20,400
SR 135 (Belgrade Rd) SW/O Prescott	1,200		910	1,020
SR 135 (Belgrade Rd) N/O Prescott	1,880		1,350	1,650
SR 17 (Readfield) NW/O School St		6,270	6,370	6,330
SR 17 (Readfield) NW/O Worthing			5,250	5,400
SR 17 (Readfield) SE/O Worthing	5,140		5,440	5,780
Granite Hill SE/O SR 11/17/100/202		3,750	3,200	

Source: Maine DOT Traffic Volume annual report, 2014, 2015, 2017, 2023

Key for Table 1:

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

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

SR= state route

Traffic volumes generally increased on all roads in this nearly ten-year span. A few exceptions include traffic flowing both north and southwest on Rt 135 near Prescott Hill Road. Between 2014 and 2023, the average traffic decreased by roughly 200 cars per day. The average daily traffic also decreased slightly on Collins Road for those traveling east, near the intersection of Pond Road and Granite Hill Road for those traveling southeast near the intersection of Routes 11/17/100/202.

Not surprisingly, for 2023, the combined travel corridor of Routes 11/17/100/202 near both Pond Road and Pelton Hill had the highest traffic volume 18,300 vehicle trips and 20,400 vehicle trips, respectively.

Overall, traffic volumes are increasing as more people travel further distances to work and more goods are shipped throughout the state. Some roads in Manchester are more frequently used as travel corridors for commercial traffic, such as Pond Road, Prescott Road, Puddledock Road, Granite Hill Road, and Rt 17. These roads were generally not constructed to accommodate the amount of traffic they are currently experiencing. This has resulted in dangerous intersections and other areas of concern, as detailed in other parts of this chapter.

In general, the volume and the speed of the traffic are the primary transportation concerns in Manchester.

Additionally, more traffic means more wear and tear as well as conflicts for road users. Maine DOT has permitting requirements for all new driveway entrances on state roads, which includes Route 202. Part of the permitting requirement is an extensive review of major developments to maintain the mobility of the road. Since Route 202 has been and continues to be the focus of Manchester's commercial development corridor, this extra level of review is beneficial.

Traffic Controls and Calming

As noted above, traffic speed is a problem throughout town: in neighborhoods, along major travel routes, and on rural roads.

Despite having a heavily used major highway bisecting the town, Manchester has not yet been overwhelmed with traffic controls. Two signalized intersections on Route 202 serve to slow traffic in the downtown area. Unfortunately, these signals cannot be linked together because they are too far apart and there are too many variables between lights.

The signal at Route 202/Route 17/Pond Road is the primary control. Both Route 17 and Pond Road have channelization islands approaching the intersection, whereas Route 202 has a dedicated center left turn lane. "Slip lanes" allow westbound Route 202 traffic to turn right at Route 17, and eastbound traffic to turn right onto Pond Road. The former allows traffic to turn onto Route 17 without a significant loss in speed, which creates conflicts with prospective pedestrian traffic in an area with the elementary school, church, town office, and post office.

A second signal is located at the Route 202/Granite Hill Road intersection. Between the two traffic signals, Puddledock Road and Kerns Hill Road intersect with Route 202. These roads are controlled only by STOP signs, creating potential for significant conflicts and congestion.

McArdle Street is the only road in town that has speed tables, which are traffic calming measures. In general, these and other types of traffic control and calming measures are difficult and expensive to maintain. However, as Manchester and the surrounding towns continue to grow, the town may want to explore viable, manageable options for other traffic calming measures. Locating these appropriately may be a challenge because of the configuration of the roadways and flow of traffic, most additional traffic controls in the downtown area would not be helpful.

Traffic Safety

With a major intersection and the hub of most of Manchester' traffic passing through the most built-up and busiest part of town, traffic safety is an important and legitimate concern. While strict enforcement of speed limits is effective, it is also expensive. For example, assigning a police officer to work full-time in the downtown would be beneficial; however, one full-time officer may not have enough impact on traffic speeds.

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

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

FIGURE 1: HIGH CRASH LOCATION LINES AND NODES



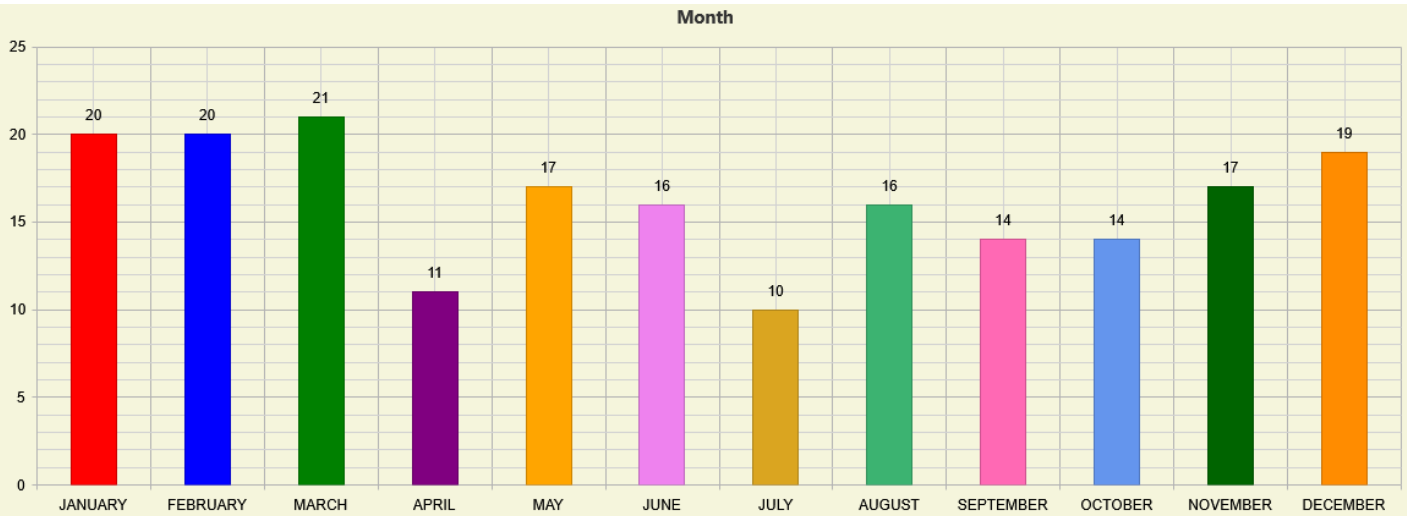
Source: MDOT Public Map Viewer

Figure 1 Highlights:

- Figure 1 above shows current High Crash Location Lines (red line) and one High Crash Location Node (red star) in Manchester.
- There are two High Crash Location Lines in town- one near the middle of town, and one along Route 17 heading towards Readfield.
- There is only one High Crash Node in Manchester- it is in the middle of town.

With the volume of traffic and major intersections in Manchester, it is inevitable that there will be crashes. According to Maine Department of Transportation's Public Crash Query Tool, between 2023 and March 2025, there were 195 total crashes in Manchester. The specifics on those crashes are detailed below.

FIGURE 2: CRASHES BY MONTH

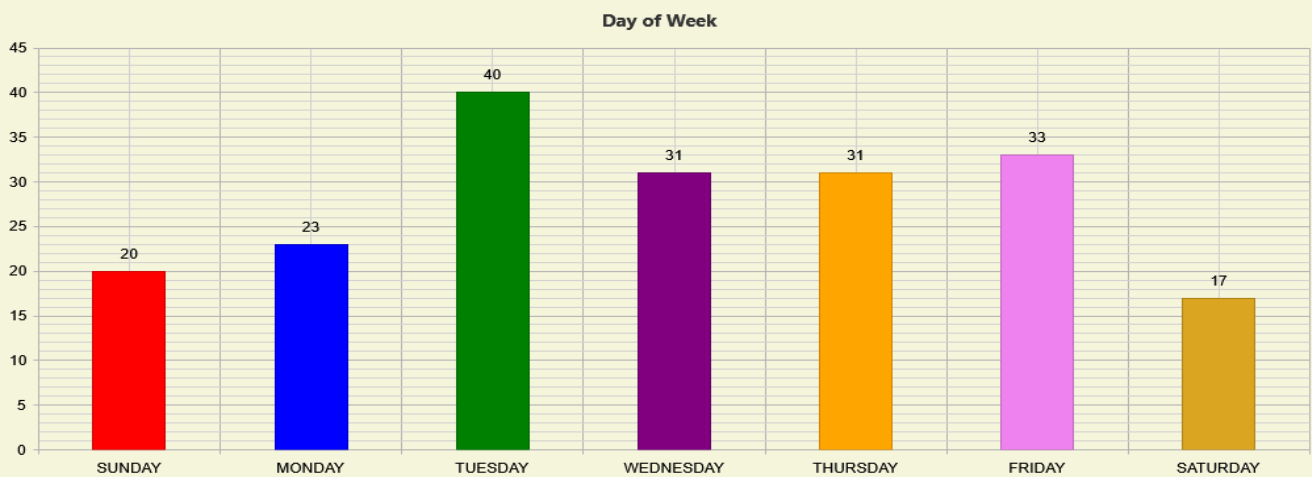


Source: Maine Public Crash Query Tool

Figure 2 Highlights:

- More crashes happened between December and March- likely due to poor weather conditions.
- School being in session may increase the crash rate during some of these months, as well.

FIGURE 3: CRASHES BY DAY OF THE WEEK

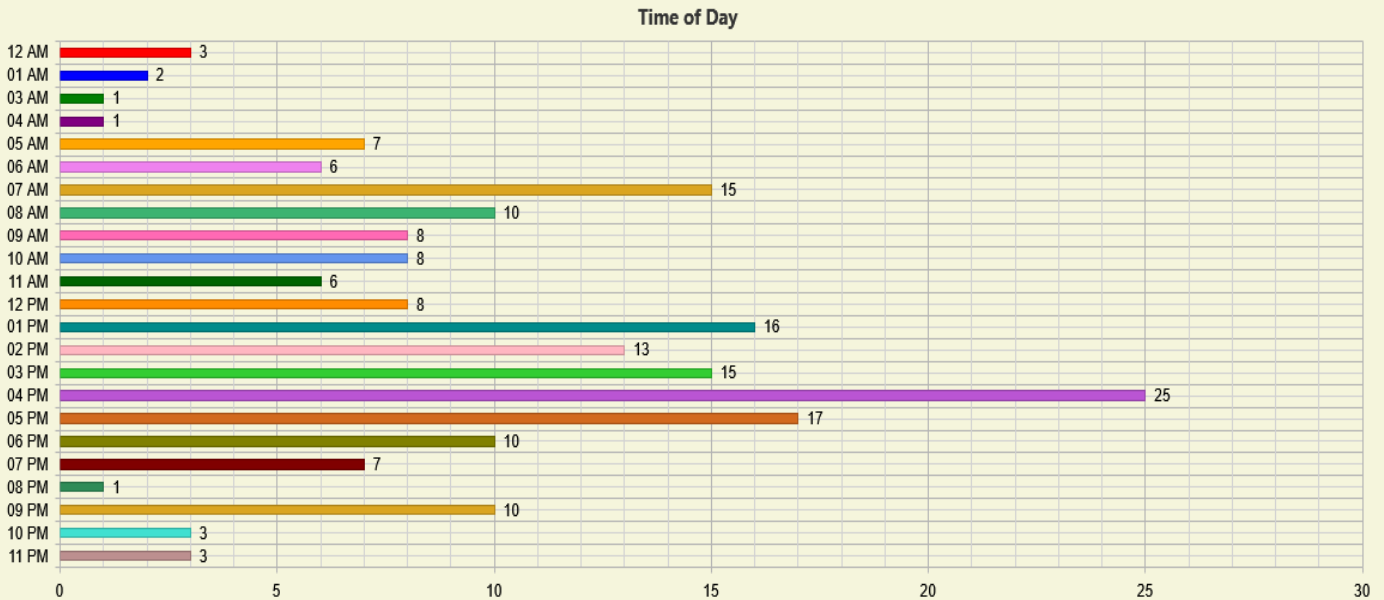


Source: Maine Public Crash Query Tool

Figure 3 Highlights:

- Most of the crashes happened during the week.
- The two days with the highest crash rates were Tuesday and Friday.
- It is likely that most of the crashes were people commuting to or from work.

FIGURE 4: CRASHES BY TIME OF DAY

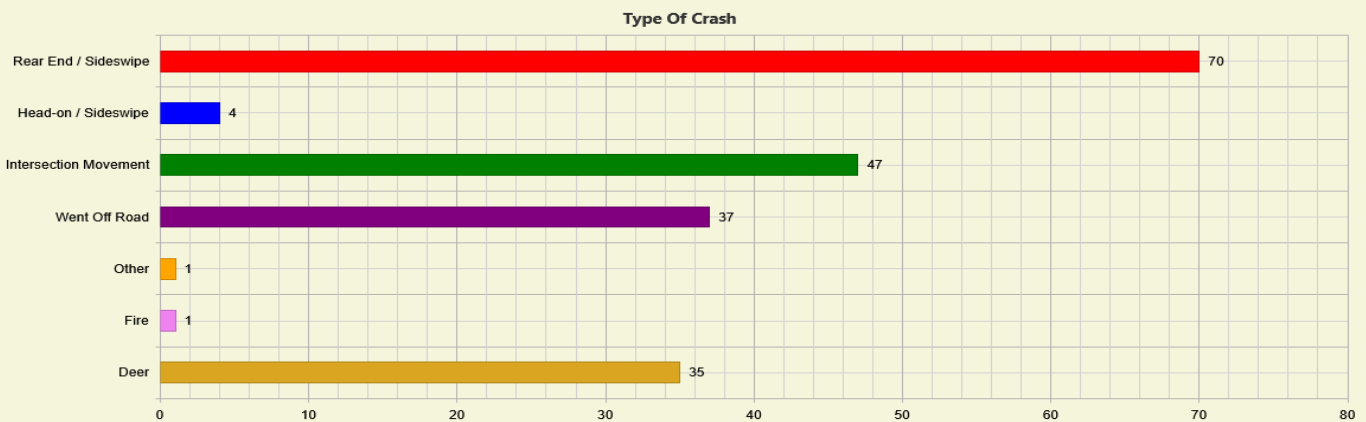


Source: Maine Public Crash Query Tool

Figure 4 Highlights:

- The times of day that has the highest number of crashes coincide with when people would be commuting to work/school.
- Outside of those times, the crash rate decreased dramatically.
- One outlier is the increase in crashes at 9pm.

FIGURE 5: CRASHES BY TYPE

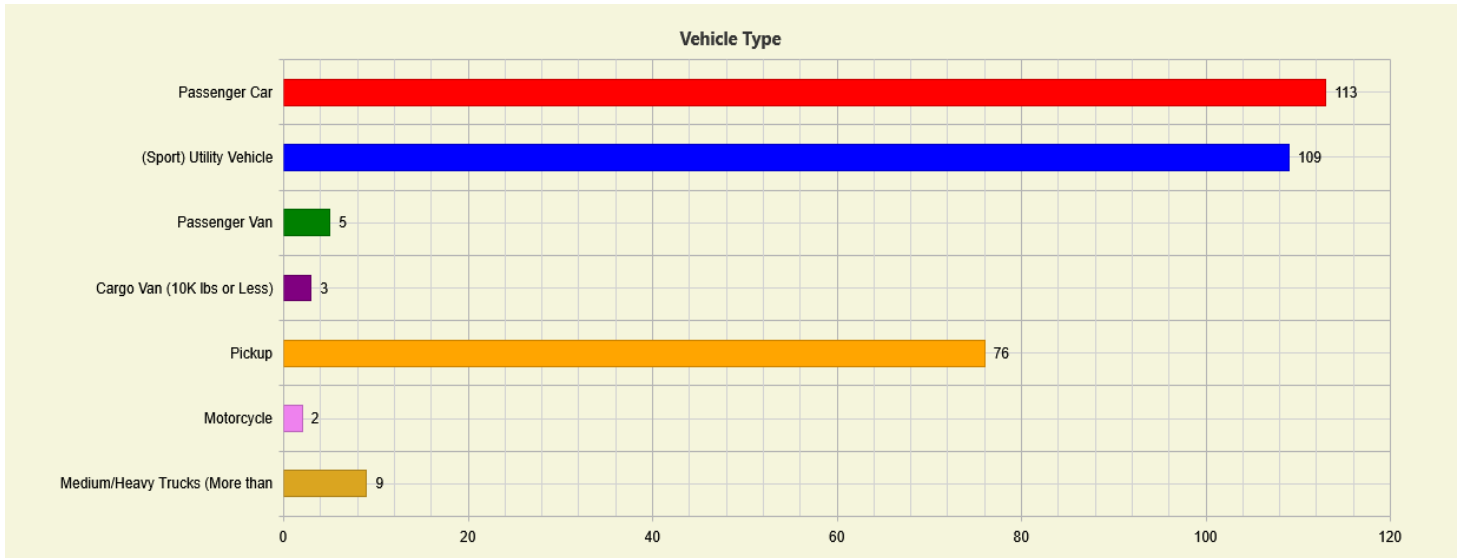


Source: Maine Public Crash Query Tool

Figure 5 Highlights:

- The most common type of crashes are rear end/sideswipes, which is typical of a driver not paying attention.
- The second most common type of crash is intersection movement. This could be indicative of issues with Manchester’s busy intersections.

FIGURE 6: CRASHES BY VEHICLE TYPE



Source: Maine Public Crash Query Tool

Figure 6 Highlights:

- Underscoring that most of the crashes are related to those commuting to work, the vehicle types most commonly involved in crashes are passenger cars, followed closely by sport utility vehicles.
- The third highest vehicle type involved in crashes is pickup trucks- which could be for personal commuting or used as commercial vehicles.
- Notably, there are few crashes involving medium or heavy trucks or cargo vans, even though Rt 202 is a major travel corridor for moving good.

Based on this data, it appears that most of the collisions were related to people commuting to or from work, at peak rush hour, during winter months, and in passenger vehicles.

Support Infrastructure for the Road System

To function efficiently, the highway system needs certain additional elements of infrastructure. These include bridges and parking.

Bridges

Out of necessity, Manchester's road system includes many stream crossings. Many of these are small culverts, which are the responsibility of the town to maintain. Culverts are cleaned and inspected regularly and replaced as necessary. The town recently received grant money through CRP to conduct a survey of all culverts in town to track maintenance and repairs.

TABLE 2: DOT BRIDGE INVENTORY SUMMARY

Local Name	Outlet
Bridge ID #	5708
Location	1 Mile north of town line
Year Built	1958
Length (ft)	102.1
Type	Bridge on town way or state aid road
Owner	MaineDOT
Average Annual Daily Traffic	2,150
Major Deficiencies	6- Satisfactory Condition (minor deterioration)
Federal Sufficiency Rating	74.6

Source: MDOT- Public Bridge Inventory

The Federal Sufficiency Rating is required by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and is determined through a formula involving load rating in conjunction with other bridge inventory and inspection information. Each span receives a Federal Sufficiency Rating – based out of 100 points this numerical score that indicates the health based off four categories:

- Structural Adequacy and safety
- Serviceability and Functional Obsolescence
- Essentiality for Public Use
- Special Reductions.

A Federal Sufficiency Rating under 40 is cause for concern.

Outlet Bridge spans Cobbossee Stream and is a concrete slab-style bridge. The MDOT Public Bridge Inventory details the statistics on Manchester's bridge and demonstrates that it is in working order. There are no noted issues or pending concerns.

Parking

Manchester has the benefit of adequate and accessible public, municipal, and private parking areas. The following lists public parking available in Manchester:

- The Drum lot, off Cottle Street, across from Fielder's Choice Ice Cream. This lot is used as a park and ride. There are roughly 50-60 parking spaces, though they need to be restriped.
- The municipal lot allows parking (not near the building) and is frequently used during sporting events.
- Oaks and Parkhurst commercial mall
- Manchester Community Church
- Tennis courts on McArdle Street

Although parking issues are not common, parking can be somewhat limited at certain locations during events. Known parking issues in Manchester include the following:

- Parking may be limited at The Woodshed during events.
- Fielder's Choice Ice Cream may have parking issues during their busy season.
- Parking may be limited at Longfellows Greenhouses during events.

Manchester's Land Use and Development Ordinance (Article II-Land Use Districts and Uses, Section 6- General Performance Requirements and Standards, L. Off Street Parking and Loading) requires parking based on land use type, activity, or square footage of the establishment. Typically, the Ordinance requires more parking than is necessary. Currently, the Ordinance requires every retail establishment to supply a predetermined amount of parking, based on parameters set in the Ordinance.

It would be useful to review this section of the Ordinance and perhaps allow the approach of tailoring the parking requirements based on the proposed new establishment. A good example is the Woodshed. This establishment is frequently crowded during events, while many other establishments are often not even close to reaching parking capacity.

The requirements of the Ordinance has resulted in an abundance of parking throughout Manchester. These parking requirements may be a deterrent to developers, as they require far more parking than is often necessary. The parking requirements outlined in the Land Use and Development Ordinance should be reviewed and updated based on these observations.

Parking in Manchester is traditionally provided by the entity responsible for generating demand. Most business sites provide their own on-site parking lots. This includes the school and municipal buildings downtown. The exception to this is where churches or other older public buildings were put in place before car travel became ubiquitous.

On-street parking is not permitted on Route 202, where most of the development is new enough to provide parking lots, but on-street parking is common along other roads.

Manchester's Land Use and Development Ordinance (Article II, Section 6, L.) requires off-street parking for all new, expanded, or remodeled uses in Manchester, including changes of use. Additionally, no parking space can serve more than one use, unless specific parameter detailed in Article II, Section 6, L. 2e are met.

Regulation for Development and Traffic Management

Major traffic generators in Manchester include the following:

Fielder's Choice Ice Cream

Longfellows Greenhouses

The Woodshed

Mulligans

Oakes and Parkhurst

Several gas stations

Walgreens

Dollar store

Schools

Traffic in Manchester is more common through traffic generated by people traveling to or from neighboring towns and just passing through. For example, major traffic generating towns are Augusta and Lewiston. Even major traffic generators within Manchester have less of an effect than the through traffic.

Manchester's Land Use and Development Ordinance attempts to channel development into the areas immediately surrounding the town center. This should lead to a reduction in the growth of traffic. However, the Ordinance has not been effective in directing all development to desired locations. Additionally, the existing growth areas do not currently permit sufficient density of development to justify investment in sidewalks, bike facilities, or other alternatives.

The Maine DOT has established a set of regulations for new developments impacting state highways. Traffic Movement Permits are required for major developments, such as shopping centers or large subdivisions. For all other developments on state highways, driveway access permits are required. Permitting rules contain different standards based on road classification. Route 202 has the tightest access rules; the remaining roads have relatively moderate rules. All the rules have some standards for sight distance, driveway width, spacing, safety, and drainage.

Both commercial and residential development increase the number of driveways and intersections, contributing to traffic conflicts and safety concerns. The town has standards for the location of those driveways, though this only provides for a case-by-case approach. The town should consider encouraging more interconnection between developments.

There are several other ways in which the town can further influence the impact of development on transportation. They include:

- Updating local road design and construction standards to reflect current practices.
- Offering different road design options based upon anticipated use and traffic volume.
- Rear lot access options to reduce road frontage development.
- Incorporating pedestrian and bicycle travel lanes into public roads and major developments.
- Proper design and location of major land use activities.
- Implementation of the ongoing road maintenance plan.

Decisions pertaining to driveway permitting and road construction are the purview of the Planning Board and/or the Road Committee. Currently, Manchester's Land Use and Development Ordinance does not regulate dead end roads such as allowing for future expansion or encouraging shorter dead ends on newly created subdivisions, aside from mandating an adequate area to turn around. The Ordinance requires that streets be designed to discourage through traffic on minor streets within residential subdivisions.

Manchester has not had any new residential subdivisions in decades. Further, no new roads have been constructed in town in many years. Because of that, no planning has gone into new projects; essentially, the town has essentially inherited the existing infrastructure.

Additionally, Manchester's Land Use and Development Ordinance includes standards for access management for both commercial and residential development, including requirements for driveways, except on Rt 202 as that is covered by the state. The evaluation and determination of whether a proposed commercial project will cause traffic issues is regulated in the Site Plan Review section of the Land Use and Development Ordinance.

Manchester's road design standards are basic and do not support the community's desired land use patterns; in fact, they impede the community's desired land use patterns by not mandating consideration for pedestrian or bicycle friendly design. Furthermore, there have been several concerns brought up recently about road frontage issues. This may be an area in the Ordinance the town will need to review and amend in the future.

Financial Stability

The transportation system is costly to maintain. The system is in a constant state of deterioration, and deferring maintenance accelerates the pace and costs of repair. Even without improvements, the roads in Manchester require a budget of \$350,000 a year in upkeep.

Manchester's road maintenance budget is broken down by the following categories (detailed further in the Fiscal Capacity/CIP chapter):

- Paving
- Plowing
- Sand/salt

The above categories include labor (ex.- fixing issues from flooding), brush clearing, street sweeping, and more.

Regional and Statewide Trends

More than any other public service, the transportation system is heavily connected to trends and events outside the town's boundaries. Commercial growth in Manchester and new residential growth in surrounding towns puts traffic on Manchester's road systems, as does the interstate miles away. Sensitivity to these influences – and what others are doing about them – will help in preparing Manchester for the future.

One of the most impactful and undeniable trends in Manchester is a trend observed state-wide: increasingly heavy traffic, particularly on Rt 202.

Scenic and Environmental Impacts

The varying effect roads and other forms of transportation can have on the natural environment are frequently overlooked. These impacts range from interfering with wildlife movements to providing improved access to lake frontage for vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians. The more frequently people use the transportation system, the greater the impact. In this respect, a development design or location that minimizes demand for the transportation system can also reduce environmental impacts and pollution.

The road system throughout Manchester and beyond has had significant negative impacts on wildlife and the environment, specifically water quality. Several examples are detailed below:

- Weston Brook, which parallels Route 202, has been significantly impacted due to its location.
- Deep ditching along Scribner Hill Road channels water right into Shed Pond.
- Pond Road and the other numerous camp roads leading to Manchester's waterbodies have potential to degrade water quality.

- The drain under Granite Hill Road that goes through the Woodfords building and comes out on the other side of the parking lot creates erosion where it daylight. The stormwater running through this travels directly into Weston Brook, carrying with it any pollutants picked up along the way.

A contributing factor in stormwater runoff is impervious surface, such as paved roads, parking lots, and buildings. In the previous Comprehensive Plan, it was noted that Route 202 was the largest source of impervious surface adjacent to Cobbossee Lake. Today, the development along and adjacent to Route 202 has increased the impervious surface in this area, perhaps exceeding the impervious surface area created by Rt 202. Taken together, these impervious surfaces cause sheet flow runoff into open drainage ditches, which increases the chances of pollutants reaching Manchester's waterbodies.

Manchester's Land Use and Development Ordinance includes standards and requirements for erosion control prevention related to road construction for all land use districts, though the requirements and restrictions are much more stringent in the Resource Protection District.

This Ordinance has strong mechanisms to protect waterbodies from impairment due to road construction activities as well as post-construction runoff. The town also follows Best Management Practices in maintenance of its own roads.

The sections of the Land Use and Development Ordinance that regulate future road construction, earth-moving activities, and road maintenance need to be evaluated and updated regularly to protect Manchester's natural and water resources.

It is noteworthy that with the increasing intensity and severity of storms, the previous practices used for stormwater management are no longer sufficient. The town is working to manage this by conducting a survey of culverts throughout town. There is also an opportunity to work with DOT to reduce runoff impacts.

Light pollution is an environmental concern, as well. The town maintains about 90 streetlights along public roads. Commercial lighting is regulated by the town's Land Use and Development Ordinance, and no problems from glare are evident. Although Route 202 is a constant source of noise, there is minimal residential development immediately along the highway, and it is not seen as an issue.

Transportation Choices

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

Manchester' public transit is limited, as is that of all other towns in the Central Maine region. Further, Manchester does not have enough development density to support public transit or rail service, as are the most common alternatives. There is no rail line in Manchester, though freight access is conceivably available from either Augusta or Auburn.

Public transit is not readily available in Manchester. For special needs services, or lower income individuals, Kennebec Valley Community Action Program (KVCAP) provides an on-demand bus service, but their capacity is not adequate to meet the needs of the region. Other surrounding towns have set up a volunteer organization called Neighbors Driving Neighbors, but this is dependent upon peoples' schedules and availability. There are private, paid public transportation services in Manchester, such as Uber or Lyft, but no taxi services. Informal ride-sharing arrangements are common, but undocumented.

Aside from the arrangements detailed above, Manchester does not have any bus or van services that provide public transportation.

There is no quick or easy solution for the lack of public transportation in Manchester. There is an identifiable need; however, the problem needs to be addressed on a regional level, as providing such a service is far outside the scope of any individual municipality.

Air Travel

There are no public or private airports in Manchester. Augusta State Airport is the nearest airport.

Bicycle Amenities

Manchester is close enough to Augusta so commuting by bike should be an option, but due to road design, it is not. Bicycle touring is a large and growing component of tourism, especially in scenic areas such as Manchester. However, nearly all of Manchester's rural roads, as well as Route 202, are narrow, and the shoulders are too poor to permit safe biking (or walking). Maine's Bicycle Map shows one bicycle tour, labeled the "Capitol Tour," that originates in Augusta, comes into Manchester village on Granite Hill Road, and passes out via Pond Road.

Road bicycling in Manchester is limited by a lack of consistent, safe shoulders and consistent and safe roadways. The community's desire for the development of bike lanes on roads has increased exponentially since the last Comprehensive Plan update. There has also been a vast increase in interest in off-road cycling for recreational purposes in Manchester, as well.

With such a substantial fraction of Manchester's population driving the need for more bicycle friendly amenities, the town should consider options to become more bike-friendly, such as providing bike lanes, bike storage facilities, and even promoting bicycle-friendly destination points in and around Manchester.

Due to Manchester's ideal location near Augusta, there is an opportunity to promote alternative commuting options such as e-bikes or mopeds, but this, too, would require safe travel corridors.

Pedestrian Modes and Sidewalks

Pedestrian traffic is limited by the same factors that limit road bicycling. The primary conflict point for walking in the village is along Route 17, where it runs through a densely developed area adjacent to the intersection with Route 202. A relatively short stretch of road accesses the elementary school, post office, town office, fire station, local church, and several neighborhoods.

Sidewalk connectivity between points of interest and residential neighborhoods in Manchester is limited for several reasons. The traffic in and around Manchester's center prevents safe pedestrian travel. Since Manchester does not have a public works department to maintain sidewalks, few have been created. And the volume of traffic at the complicated intersection in the middle of Manchester is a notable deterrent for those wishing to cross the streets on foot.

Since there are few sidewalks and marginal connectivity in town, these are integrated minimally into the town's transportation network. This is a scenario that is not easy to change or address under current circumstances.

Some of the major pedestrian traffic generators in town are the Woodshed during events and the schools.

Walking Paths for Accessing the Town Center

There are opportunities for Manchester to increase walkability throughout town through other means besides sidewalks. For example, the creation of a trail from Gardencrest to Ballard Acres to encourage students to walk to school would be a welcomed addition.

The development of other trails has potential to create a sense of place and community for residents, as it would increase the walkability of the downtown without the need for sidewalks.

Transportation Analysis and Key Issues

- There are two highway classifications in Maine: Highway Functional Classification and State Highway System
- Under the Highway Functional Classification-
 - Route 202 is classified as a Minor Arterial
 - Route 135 and Pond Road are Minor Rural Connectors
 - Route 17 and Granite Hill Road are Major Rural Connectors
- Under the State Highway System-
 - Routes 202, 17 and 135 are classed as State Highways (state maintained year-round)
 - Pond Road and Granite Hill Road are classed as State Aid Highways (maintained by MDOT in the summer and by municipalities in the winter)
 - All other roads are town ways (maintained by town)
- Manchester maintains 36 miles of town ways.
- The combined travel corridor of Route 11/17/100/202 on both Pond Road and Pelton Hill saw the highest traffic volume of 18,300 vehicle trips and 20,400 vehicle trips, as of 2023 data.
- There are two traffic signals in Manchester: one at the intersection of Route 202/Route 17/Pond Road, the other is at the intersection of Route 202 and Granite Hill Road.
- The intersection of Route 202/Route 17/Pond Road is a current and historic High Crash Node.
- There are two current High Crash Lines in Manchester, one is on Rt 202, east of the traffic signal, the other is on Rt 17 heading towards Readfield.
- Parking, road design and construction, and driveways for most roads are regulated under the Land Use and Development Ordinance.
- Road design and construction standards do not support the community's desired land use patterns, as they do not require any consideration in design for bicycling and pedestrian traffic.
- Manchester's Land Use and Development Ordinance also sets standards to provide environmental protection during road construction, though these standards should be reviewed and updated to provide optimal protection.
- Manchester currently does not have traditional public transit.
- The biggest concerns around Manchester's transportation system are:
 - Traffic volume and speed throughout town; and,
 - Roads are not pedestrian and/or bicycle friendly.
- The sections of Manchester' Land Use and Development Ordinance pertaining to road frontage, subdivisions, private roads, road construction, and additional road uses need to be reviewed and updated.

7: Recreation and Culture



Recreation is an invaluable element of community life, particularly in an evolving town such as Manchester, which offers an abundance of diverse recreational opportunities. Most forms of recreation can generally be classified into two categories:

1. **Organized**, or “active,” recreation –examples include activities usually supported by developed facilities and programs.
2. **Nonorganized**, or “passive,” recreation, which includes activities that may have supporting facilities, but are more often independent or family pursuits; not necessarily activities that have structured programs.

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

Organized (active) Recreation

Manchester provides organized outdoor recreation opportunities for children and adults alike. Most of the youth recreation opportunities are related to the shared Regional School Unit. For that reason, some team sporting activities for middle and high school students are shared with Readfield. Aside from that, Manchester does not have any joint recreation programs or a municipal recreation department.

The town does, however, have a variety of playing fields for baseball, softball, soccer, and other activities located in several parts of town. Further, the Manchester Seniors' Club provides activity opportunities for the town's adult population. Table 1 below details the public facilities that offer a location for recreational activities.

TABLE 1: PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FACILITIES FOR RECREATION

	Baseball	Softball	Playground	Soccer	Multi-Use	Swimming	Tennis	Basketball	Karate	Trails	Afterschool/ Summer Programs	Golf	Pickleball	Miscellaneous	Football
Public within Manchester															
Manchester Castletown and facilities	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X				X	
Manchester Elementary School								X							
Private within Manchester															
Lion's Club	X	X		X											
Augusta Country Club						X	X					X		X	
MIKA									X		X				
Public Outside of Manchester															
Maranacook Community Middle School and High School	X	X		X	X			X		X				X	X
UMA Leisure Center										X					
Hallowell Recreation Area						X				X					
Private Outside of Manchester															
YMCA Augusta						X	X			X				X	
Camp KV						X					X			X	
Kent's Hill	X	X		X			X	X	X	X		X		X	X

Source: Town of Manchester

As for the amenities offered within Manchester, there are no toilet facilities for the sports fields, but porta-potties are brought in for the various sport seasons. Manchester Castletown and facilities, and the town-owned playground behind the Elementary School, need upgrading to increase handicapped accessibility and meet ADA standards. The towns has already had discussions about these upgrades.

Organized (active) Youth Recreation

Organized sports activities are available for school-aged children and are provided by both the schools and other leagues, mostly through the efforts of volunteers. Funding for the programs comes from community fundraising, small program fees, and town support when requested.

Organized youth recreation programs include activities such as youth soccer, basketball, softball, baseball, hockey, and other. These programs are provided either in Manchester or in neighboring towns and are a part of the Regional School Unit in which Manchester falls.

As detailed in the Demographic Profile chapter of this Plan, the town's population and the number of school-aged children is not expected to exceed the capacity of existing offerings or facilities. The most likely need will be for additional opportunities for adult recreation, described below. Therefore, the existing recreational facilities within and around Manchester are anticipated to meet the future demand for both youth and adult programs.

One area noted for potential future improvements is increasing the walkability around town through the development of trails that connect neighborhoods such as Ballard Acres and Gardencrest.

Adult and Age Friendly Recreation

The previous comprehensive plan noted inadequacies in adult recreation offerings. Historically, most of the recreation programs offered to adults were indoor activities, but the current generation of retiring seniors is more likely to enjoy "active recreation". The trend is for a preference in such activities as hiking, biking, bird watching, dog walking, and boating.

Manchester is aging and the population over the age of 65 has increased. Anticipating the demand for age friendly recreation is crucial in continuing to meet the needs of residents.

Manchester is fortunate to have an active Seniors' Club that meets regularly. The club, open exclusively to seniors, provides opportunities for social connections and activities such as knitting, bingo, birding, dog walking, outings, luncheons, guest speakers, and potlucks. It is well organized and includes approximately 30 members.

An adult basketball league also met periodically at the Elementary School, though there have been discussion recently about reinstating the league. Outside of Manchester, adult education opportunities are available through the University of Maine at Augusta, Augusta Adult Education, Buker Community Center, Lithgow Library, and Maranacook School.

A major challenge to expanding programs and activities in town is the lack of available space. The Seniors' Club meets at the Fire Station; however, scheduling conflicts frequently arise with Fire Department needs. The facility is used so often that a clear need has emerged for a shared community space to host events, programs, services, and civic functions.

Given the high demand for use of the Fire Station, it is likely that additional community space would allow for more programs and services. At present, the only other public facility available for such use is the Elementary School.

Nonorganized (Passive) Recreation

Nonorganized recreation typically refers to outdoor facilities or properties that are open for public use but generally do not have structured hours or specific programs. This type of recreation can be divided further into water-based and land-based activities.

Water-Based Activities

Manchester has access to water-based activities, but the limiting factor tends to be in the available access points. Areas that provide water access are detailed below, in Table 2.

TABLE 2: WATER ACCESS AND ACTIVITIES

Public Water Access within Manchester			
Water Body	Boat access	Type of boat access	Fishing?
Jamie's Pond	Jamie's Pond Rd via Outlet Rd in Hallowell or Collins Road in Manchester	Hand carry boats and canoes; small trailers	Yes
Shedd Pond	Access through Allen Whitney Memorial Forest to Gannet Woods	Small boat carry in (1/4 mile walk to put-in)	Yes
Tyler Pond	DIFW maintains a boat access site on the north end.	Hand carry boating	Yes
Lower Silver Lake	Southwest end of Silver Lake, located off Summerhaven Rd	Small trailer boat or carry-in	Yes
Hutchinson Pond	Unimproved road off Benson Rd Access via the outlet which crosses Collins Rd	Walk-in, carry-in only; permission required from landowner to access via Collins Rd. outlet	Yes
Fairbanks Pond	Carry in access	Kayak/canoe	Yes*
Cobbossee Lake	Bridge on the corner of Pond Road and Collins Road	Carry in small boat or canoe/kayak	Yes
Public Water Access Outside of Manchester			
Water Body	Boat access	Type of boat access	Fishing?
Maranacook Lake	Rt 41, Readfield, Maine	Trailer boat access	yes
Cobbossee Lake	Off Route 202 Winthrop Note: difficult put-in & off South Rd., Monmouth	Trailer boat	Yes
Little Cobbossee Lake	Outlet north of route 202	Hand carry boating and canoes	Yes
Maranacook Lake	Winthrop and Readfield	Trailer or hand carry	Yes
Annabessacook Lake	Unimproved launch located along Waugan Road	Unimproved launch along Waugan Road	Yes
Minnehonk Lake	Village of Mt Vernon	Trailer boat	Yes
Torsey Pond	Off Old Kents Hill Rd., Readfield	Hand carry; personal watercraft prohibited	yes
Echo Lake	North shore in Mt. Vernon off State Route 41	Trailer boat	Yes
Kennebec River	Public access in Hallowell and Augusta	Trailer boat	Yes

Source: Town of Manchester

* The Town of Manchester is currently working with the State to have Fairbanks Pond stocked for fishing.

These waterbodies are detailed further in the Natural and Water Resources chapter.

There are also limited swimming opportunities in and around Manchester (detailed in Table 3, below). Swimming access is limited more than water access for boating and fishing in and around Manchester. Currently, there are no public swimming areas on any of Manchester's waterbodies; although, there is private access for members of the Augusta Country Club and Cobbossee Lake Association.

TABLE 3: SWIMMING AREAS WITHIN AND AROUND MANCHESTER

Access Within Manchester				
Private	Body of Water	Beach area	Fee	Details of fee
Augusta Country Club	Cobbosseecontee Lake	Sandy beach	Yes	Social membership required
Cobbossee Lake Association	Cobbosseecontee Lake	Sandy beach	Yes	Small yearly fee for membership in club
Access Outside of Manchester				
Public	Body of Water	Beach area	Fee	Details of fee
Readfield Beach	Maranacook Lake	Sandy Beach	Yes	Predetermined number of passes available for Manchester residents at a fee of \$100.00.
Mt Vernon	Minnehonk Lake	Sandy beach	No	Available for both residents and non-residents
Hallowell	Hallowell Reservoir	Sandy beach	No	Available for both residents and non-residents

Source: Town of Manchester

There is a general feeling of inadequacy for swimming access, particularly for Cobbossee Lake in Manchester. As noted in the table above, there is no public access for swimming within Manchester.

Land-Based Activities

Land-based recreation consists of activities such as hunting, hiking, birdwatching, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, cycling, and many more. These activities take place throughout town, but many depend- in large part- upon public access to the tracts of undeveloped land. This access can be in the form of publicly owned or managed tracts of land but can also include easements or landowner agreements permitting public use of private land, such as with snowmobile trails. Continued access to private land relies on the goodwill of landowners. Respectful use of these lands is essential to maintaining that goodwill and ensuring their continued usability.

Preservation and documentation of recreational open space was one of the principal goals of the 2004 Open Space Plan. The table below includes and expands upon the open space properties detailed originally in the Open Space Plan. These properties are detailed more completely in the Natural and Water Resources chapter of this Plan.

TABLE 4: RECREATION AND CONSERVATION LANDS

Property	Ownership	Uses/Description*	Approximate acreage
Within Manchester			
Town of Manchester Recreation area	Manchester	Municipal park- public use & elementary school.	Recreation fields: 3.67 acres
Tennis/Pickleball Courts	Manchester	Recreation facility	1.0 acres
Fairbanks Pond	Manchester	Open to non-motorized travel, swimming, and snowmobiles on designated trail use	65 acres, 778 feet of frontage on pond
Tyler Pond WMA	Maine DOC	Hunting, boating, fishing, multiuse trails.	128 acres
Allen Whitney Forest	New England Forestry Foundation	Non-motorized trails; hunting, skiing, hiking, and biking. Snowmobiles on designated trails only. Managed forestland.	708 acres
Gannett Woods	KLT	Protected open space with public access. Uses include hunting and hiking trails. Some restrictions apply. Trailhead is in Manchester (the section right along the pond), but most of the property and trail are in Readfield.	120 acres
North Acres	KLT	Hiking, non-motorized use, horseback riding, hunting.	160 acres
Lakeside Orchards	Privately owned-easement held by Land for Maine's Future	Town-owned open spaces with limited public access. Home of the annual Apple Festival. Interested in establishing public trails. Snowmobile trails cross the property.	189 acres
Town-owned Woodlot (off Patch Rd.)	Manchester	Town-owned open spaces with public access- hunting, biking, and hiking. Managed forestland.	184 acres
Jamie's Pond and Wildlife	MDIF&W	Protected open space with public access- hiking, skiing, hunting and fishing.	550 acres
Manchester Woods	Manchester	Hiking and biking trails. No motorized vehicles. Connecting trail between Manchester Woods and Hallowell Reservoir.	Roughly 300 acres

Property	Ownership	Uses/Description*	Approximate acreage
Snowmobile trails	Various	Snowmobiles only- overseen by Manchester Country Riders Snowmobile club	N/A
Outside of Manchester			
Wyman Memorial Forest	KLT	Protected open space with public access. Hiking trails. Possible links to Gannett Woods trail and NEFF trails.	40 acres
Maranacook Trails	Maranacook Community School	Located in Readfield. Recreation/exercise trails.	Approximately 300 acres
Bond Brook Trails	City of Augusta	Located in Augusta. Multi-use trail network.	270 acres
Hallowell Reservoir Recreation Area	City of Hallowell	Walking/Hiking, mountain biking, swimming (no lifeguard), ball field, picnic tables, XC skiing. Open to non-residents of Hallowell. This connects to Manchester Woods through the Kerns Hill Trail.	Approximately 180 acres
Kennebec River Trail	Managed by Friends of the Kennebec River Rail Trail	From Augusta to Gardiner. Multi-use trail.	6.5-mile trail- one way
Vaughn Woods, Hallowell	Privately held, easement-KLT	Public walking trails, nature preserve, house museum, and education center.	Approximately 165 acres
Mount Pisgah	KLT & Town of Winthrop	Located in Winthrop. Hiking trails.	Approximately 2,000 acres
Islands owned by Kennebec Land Trust	KLT	Protected open space with public access. Located in Winthrop.	Various separate preserves

Source: Town of Manchester

* Allowed uses may be different than those listed. Please research any location before planning a trip.

Development in rural areas and expanded posting of land could potentially limit future outdoor recreational opportunities in Manchester unless the town continues to take steps toward preserving open space.

Trails System

There are numerous informal and developed hiking and walking trails in Manchester. The table above details those trails. Some of the trails are poorly mapped and marked. Mapped trails can be found [here](#) or on Manchester's town website (<https://www.manchesterme.org/media/846>)

Generally, the recreation trails in Manchester are adequately maintained with minimal, if any, use conflicts. Trails maintenance is accomplished through a variety of sources including the Conservation Commission, Central Maine New England Mountain Bike Club, KLT, and other entities.

The Manchester Country Rider Snowmobile club maintains a network of trails throughout town. The trail system changes every year, and trail access is dependent upon the favor of private landowners. The trails in Manchester connect with trails in adjacent towns and are part of the Interconnected Trails System (ITS), which crisscross the state.

Bicycling is becoming increasingly popular as a recreational activity as well as a form of transportation. Except for mountain biking, most cycling takes place on public roads. Very few off-road or designated road bike routes exist in Manchester. This is a significant, untapped opportunity. A bicycle network linking the lakes, village area, and other attractions would not only alleviate some motorized transportation-related problems but could serve as a tourist attraction and health asset.

As the roads currently exist, road biking is not safe due to lack of shoulders and lack of bike lanes. Manchester's mountain biking trails are well maintained and frequently used.

Public Use of Private Land

A sizable portion of outdoor recreation, including hunting, fishing, biking, hiking, and snowmobiling occurs on private land with the generous permission of private landowners. Maine has a strong tradition of allowing access to private land for recreational purposes, as well as traditional beliefs of how individuals should respect private land. Unfortunately, in some circumstances people have abused this tradition and caused property damage. Access to private land is contingent upon the continued goodwill of landowners, and respectful use of these properties helps ensure their ongoing availability.

Hunting

Hunting has long been part of Maine's heritage on both public and private lands. Protecting existing hunting opportunities helps sustain that tradition, and hunters are expected to follow all state laws and secure landowner permission before hunting on private property.

Public properties in Manchester that are open to hunting include Tyler Pond WMA, Allen Whitney Forest, and Jamies Pond WMA, Many of Kennebec Land Trust's properties are open to hunting, as well. The KLT website (<https://www.tkl.org/>) includes information on allowable land uses for each property.

Regional Recreational Resources and Community Partners in Preserving Land

In addition to the recreational opportunities within Manchester, there are other options within a short drive, detailed throughout this chapter.

Since Manchester does not have a municipal recreational department, recreational opportunities are dependent on non-municipal entities or a combination of municipal entities, residents who volunteer their time, or other non-municipal organizations. Examples of various recreational programs offerings include;

- The Manchester Conservation Commission works with the Central Maine New England Mountain Bike Club to provide trail maintenance, trail development, and various programs.
- Kennebec Land Trust provides nature education programs, such as the Full Moon Walk.
- Manchester Country Riders Snowmobile Club maintains snowmobile trails in and around town. They are an active club and hold fundraising events and landowner outreach.

Further, there are multiple organizations who are actively involved in preservation and conservation of land in and around Manchester. For example, the Town of Manchester and the Manchester Conservation Commission partner with such entities listed below (not an exhaustive list):

- Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIF&W)
- Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP)
- Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (MDACF)
- New England Forestry Foundation (NEFF)
- Land for Maine's Future (LMF)
- Cobbossee Watershed District
- Watershed Friends
- Maine's Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program (VLMP)
- Summerhaven Lakes Association
- Bond Brook Salmon Restoration
- Cobbossee Lake Association
- Kennebec Land Trust (KLT)
- Central Maine Chapter of New England Mountain Bike Association
- Ag Allies, through the county Soil and Water Conservation District
- Small Woodlot Owners of Maine
- Manchester Country Riders

- Central Maine Power
- GAUD- Greater Augusta Utilities District

In addition to partnering with various entities to preserve land, Manchester implemented the Conservation Reserve Fund (also known as the “Wood Fund”) which is an open space fund, earmarked for the acquisition of development rights or land. The Wood Fund is funded by proceeds from timber harvesting on town land. In the past, the money in this account was used for forest and conservation purposes but the amount has not grown enough to purchase land outright.

Recreation Analysis and Key Issues

- Manchester has organized and nonorganized (active and passive) recreation opportunities for all ages.
- Manchester has a Senior’s Club which is becoming more active and well attended.
- The town has numerous waterbodies; however, swimming access is inadequate.
- Water access for boating and fishing meets the community's needs.
- Because the town has been proactive in preserving land for open space and recreation, Manchester has developed a strong and well-connected trail network.
- Manchester has partnered with outside entities to preserve open space.
- The Manchester Conservation Commission is active in promoting and protecting natural resources and open space in the community.
- There are several properties that provide public access for hunting opportunities in town.

8: Agriculture and Forestry



In Maine, agriculture and forestry were the traditional economic backbones and the original engines that drove the local economy, and in many ways, they still do. Farm Credit East's Northeast Economic Engine report, completed in 2020, calculated that Maine's agriculture industry contributes over \$3.6 billion in economic impact and supports approximately 27,000 jobs statewide. Likewise, according to the Maine Forestry Action Plan 2020, the forest products industry remains a key player in the state's economy. In 2017, the forest products industry supported 19,000 jobs, \$990 million in earnings, and contributed \$1.6 million to Maine's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

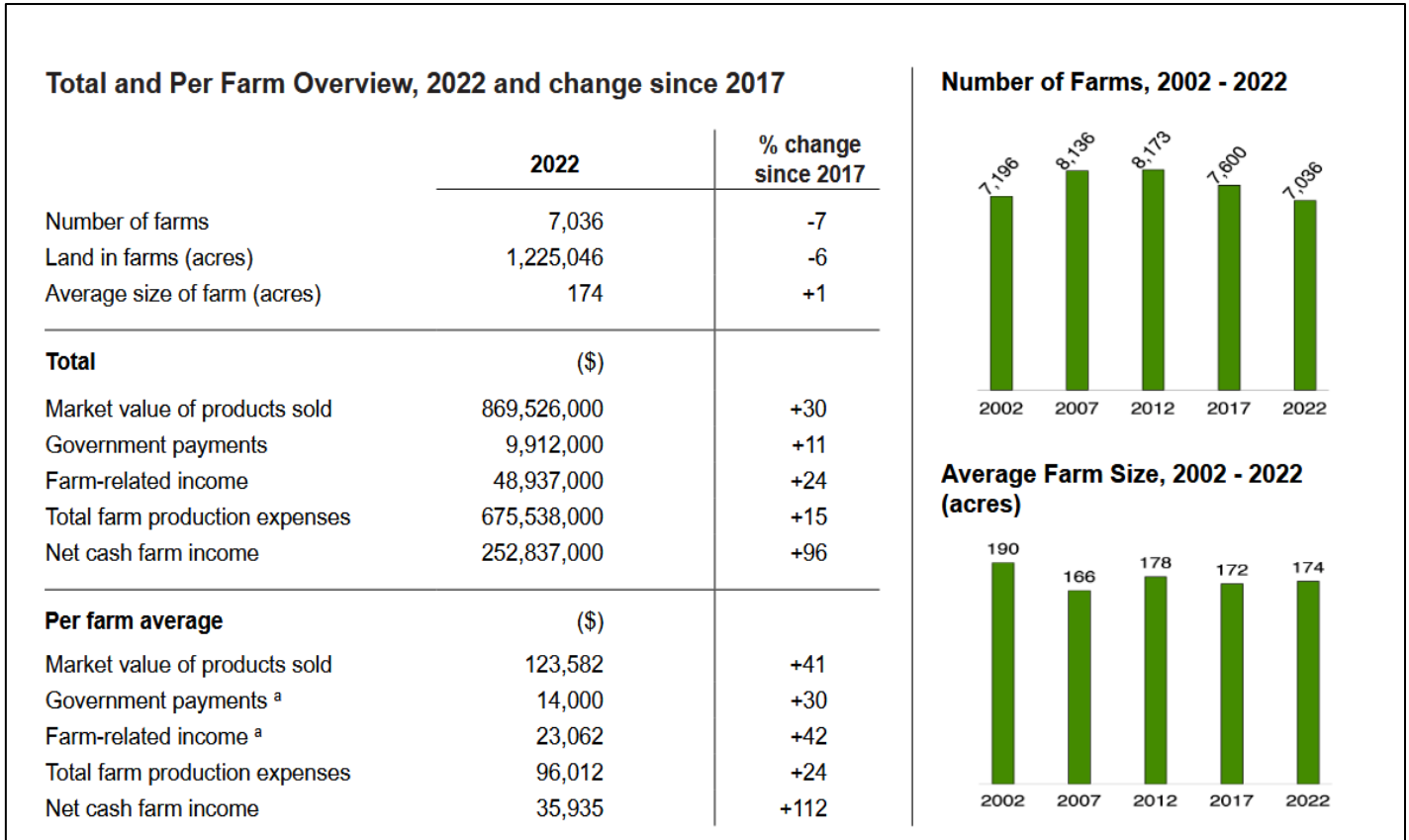
In Manchester even today, there are still families that rely on agriculture and forestry related industries for employment or on revenues from their woodlots. Farm and forest land also provides open space, wildlife habitat, and aesthetics, all which Manchester residents consider elemental to their community's rural character and critical to outdoor recreation.

This chapter profiles the current state of agriculture and forestry in Manchester, as well as the resources for supporting these activities.

Agriculture in Maine

Maine has ranked number one in the United States for wild blueberry production since the 1950s. As of 2020, Maine ranked third in the production of maple syrup and ninth for potato production. The United States Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service does a Census of Agriculture every five years. The overview of those results for Maine are detailed in Figure 1 below.

FIGURE 1: 2017 TO 2022 USDA AG CENSUS



Source: 2022 USDA Census of Agriculture
https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2022/Online_Resources/County_Profiles/Maine/cp99023.pdf

Figure 1 Highlights:

- Maine is still very much a farming state, though the number of farms decreased by 7 percent.
- While the acreage of farms has declined since 2017, the average farm size increased by 1 percent.
- Both total and average market value of products sold has increased significantly in the last five years.
- Also notable, for both total and average market value, the net cash farm income has increased drastically.

Agriculture in Kennebec County

As of the 2017 Census of Agriculture (most recent data), out of the 16 counties in Maine, Kennebec County ranked fifth out of the top five for agricultural production.

FIGURE 2: KENNEBEC COUNTY'S STANDING IN AGRICULTURAL SALES

Top 5 counties in agricultural sales, 2017	Total receipts percent of State	Total receipts 1,000 dollars
Total receipts		
1. Aroostook County	30.3	201,974
2. Somerset County	12.6	83,931
3. Washington County	10.4	69,253
4. Penobscot County	7.6	50,915
5. Kennebec County	7.3	49,007
State Total		666,962

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service, 2023

From equipment repair to agriculture supply stores and veterinarian services, farming and agriculture create a diverse economic base for the region. The economic impact of agriculture extends even further; agritourism provides alternative opportunities for the public to interact with and observe farming activities.

Farms in Manchester

Manchester's rural resources – agriculture and forest land – can be credited for the town's current, traditional landscape. Although there are few full-time farmers and loggers left in Manchester, rural and suburbanizing towns still value the traditional land uses that keep their community healthy and productive, while providing the bucolic landscape so valued by residents.

There are additional reasons to maintain farms, forests, and other open space land — one being its positive effect on the local tax base. While it is often assumed that expanding development increases revenues and helps offset rising taxes and service demands, studies have shown that this is not always the case. In many communities, undeveloped land can help keep taxes lower overall because, although it generates less in property taxes, it also requires minimal public services.

Manchester's 2004 *Long Range Public Facilities and Open Space Plan* includes farmland and working farms as high-value assets and recommends the use of conservation easements and other tools for preserving working farms.

The principal farming enterprises in Manchester were historically a mixture of beef, hay, horses, vegetables, sheep, poultry, orchards, dairy farms, and sustenance farms rather than large, commercial-scale operations. Recent trends in Maine and elsewhere indicate that small, specialty farms, also known as micro farms, are growing in number and replacing large, commodity-based farms.

Farms of all sizes, including smaller to mid-sized but in particularly large farms, require prime farmland, hired labor, transportation infrastructure, and support services -- a mixture hard to find and maintain in Maine, whereas micro farms require only a local market for their products. These small farms can be managed part-time on small parcels of land. They can diversify into niche and value-added products, and they are flexible enough to shift products when necessary. The recent public emphasis on “local” and “organic” is an effort to highlight the importance of small farms. Examples of small farms and agroforestry enterprises are local vegetable stands, pick-your-own strawberries, maple syrup producers, and nursery operations.

The trend toward smaller farms and micro farms is apparent in Manchester, as well. There are fewer large-scale commercial farms and an increased number of smaller, niche farms in recent years. Table 1 is a list of local farms in Manchester; this list is by no means exhaustive as there are too many farms to list.

The farms and agricultural organizations that remain in town are an important part of Manchester’s community identity. The town’s agricultural community includes vegetable and cattle farms, orchards, stables, greenhouses, cut flowers, maple products, Christmas trees, as well as acres of pastureland, mowed fields, hayfields, and diversified farmland. The biggest concentration of active farms are in the Prescott Road/Puddledock Road area, though Lakeside Orchard, 188 acres on Route 17, is the only farm with an agricultural easement in place.

TABLE 1: CURRENT LOCAL FARMS IN MANCHESTER

Farm Name	Product/Specialty
Whitten Farms	Hay, beef cattle
Maine Lee Morgan Horse Farm	Horses and hay
Lakeside Orchard	Apples
Robinson Farm	Cattle

Source: Manchester Comprehensive Plan Committee members

These agricultural areas are a vital part of Manchester’s economy, and the scenic views provided by the farms, fields and open spaces is a character that Manchester values and has sought to protect through its *Open Space Plan*, and provisions in its Land Use and Development Ordinance, detailed further below.

Farming Infrastructure

Over the past several decades, there has been a noticeable decline in agricultural activity through Manchester and the region, taking the area further from its agricultural roots. The *Agricultural and Forest Resources Map* in the Appendix shows the location of farms and areas of agricultural use in Manchester.

An important factor for viable farming is soil type. There are several types of soil known to be excellent for farming activities. They are:

- Prime Farmland Soil
- Farmland Soil of Statewide Importance
- Farmland Soil of Local Importance

Prime farmland is defined as land that is superior in producing food, feed, forage, and other crops. Prime farmland has soil quality (as designated by the USDA Soil Conservation Service and identified through soil taxonomy), growing season, and moisture supply required to economically produce sustained high yield of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Prime farmland soil produces the highest yields and farming in these areas may result in less damage to the environment.

The *Soil Map* in the Appendix of this Plan delineates the extent of “Prime Farmland soils” in Manchester.

While soil type is an important factor in farming and forestry, there are other necessary considerations, as well. The availability of markets for agricultural produce is particularly important for the new style of small producers. Local farmers’ markets, roadside stands, pick-your-own, and nursery/greenhouses are also examples of local marketing styles necessary for today’s farmers.

Community Collaboration

Many agricultural support organizations are responding to the trend of small-scale farming. Among them are the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF), with its “buy local” promotions and programs, the USDA, with programs like grants for building winter greenhouses, and the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA), with buy local and organic certification programs. The key, from a local perspective, is that the new business model for agriculture relies much less on investment in land, machinery, and prime soil, and much more on developing local markets.

Manchester does not currently have a farmer’s market; however, residents have easy access to locally grown foods at several nearby farmer’s markets (Gardiner, Augusta, Hallowell). Other structured programs that provide support for local agriculture, including farm Community Shared Agriculture (CSAs) and community gardens, are limited in Manchester, but the local orchard is popular during apple season.

The DACF, Maine Farmland Trust (MFT), and the MOFGA advocate for farming-friendly communities through a variety of land-use policies and farmland protections, and by promoting and building the population of farmers.

The Agricultural Resource Development Division of the DACF provides a variety of programs, resources, and information that help individual businesses in agriculture flourish and succeed despite the challenges of farming in Maine. A few examples include a grants and loans webpage, information on exhibitor opportunities, energy efficiency opportunities, training and education programs, Market Promotion and Special Events Program, and more.

The DACF also has information and programs available on its webpage for the consumer, such as Explore, Experience, Discover, and Connect with Maine Farms, Maine Agritourism, State Fairs, Maine Maple Sunday, Open Farm Day, Farmers' Markets, Maine Maple Sunday, and Open Farm Days.

The Maine Farms for Future Program is another great example of a program provided by DACF's Agricultural Resource Development Division. This program provides grants to farm business owners to conduct research and strategic business planning that brings about changes aimed at long-term, maintainable, farm profitability, and net worth.

There are also many publicly sponsored programs to support local agriculture, including the Maine State Grange, University of Maine's Sustainable Agriculture program, and the Farmlink Program through Maine Farmland Trust, which matches prospective farmers in search of land with retiring farmers in search of successors, to name a few.

Moreover, the town and private landowners' partner with organizations that are taking important, non-regulatory steps toward protecting ecological aspects of traditional farming and forestry, such as Ag Allies. Ag Allies provides funding for farmers and landowners who maintain fields to support breeding birds such as bobolinks and meadowlarks (detailed further in the Water and Natural Resources chapter).

Additionally, conservation easements are available where appropriate and have involved local land trusts, such as the Kennebec Land Trust. Manchester and private landowners have partnered with several entities to permanently preserve land through formal conservation easements (detailed under Non-Regulatory Farmland and Forestry Protection Efforts below).

Perhaps one of the biggest forms of community support for agricultural and forestry operations is in the form of lack of restrictions, detailed below.

Land Use Policies Relating to Farming and Forestry

Manchester's Land Use and Ordinance defines seven districts in town with various allowable uses in each district. Of those seven districts, three are specifically designated for protecting natural resources and include state-mandated language regarding agricultural and forestry practices.

One district, the Rural Residential District, is specifically intended for continued forestry and agricultural practices.

*The purpose of this designation is to continue to encourage rural residential, **forestry and agricultural uses** as well as a variety of other uses compatible with the rural character of Manchester and other existing uses. The Rural Residential areas would be maintained for rural residential and limited low intensity stores, etc., agricultural, timber harvesting, recreational and other natural resource dependent uses that would be compatible with and not impair the existing uses and resources. Provisions in this Ordinance would discourage development sprawl by establishing subdivision open space ratios of at least sixty percent (60%), encouraging cluster developments and other planning mechanisms.*

Under Article II- Land Use Districts and Uses, Section 8- Performance Requirements and Standards for Specific Activities, J- Subdivisions of the Land Use and Development Ordinance, low intensity agriculture and forestry in the common open space created by an open space subdivision is allowed.

Also, under Article II- Land Use Districts and Uses, Section 6- General Performance Requirements and Standards, B. Agriculture of the Land Use and Development Ordinance states: *Agricultural activities in the Shoreland and Resource Protection Districts shall conform to the Following land use standards. In other land use districts, such activities must comply with applicable State and Federal regulations.*

Aside from the language above and the table of allowable uses in each district, there is minimal language relating to or restricting agricultural and forestry practices in other districts (Table 2).

TABLE 2: AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY PRACTICES AND ZONING DISTRICTS

Use/Structure	Land Use Districts						
	MV	CR	GD	RR	SL	AM	RP
Accessory Structure (<5,000 SF)	P	P	P	P	P	P	N
Accessory Structure (= or >5,000 SF)	C	C	C	C	C	C	N
Agriculture	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ag Packaging and Storage	C	N	C	C	S	S	N
Ag Products and Processing	N	N	C	C	N	N	N
Animal Breeding or Care	N	N	C	C	S	S	N
Farm Stand	P	P	P	P	P	P	N
Forestry		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Kennels/Stables	N	N	C	C	S	S	N

Source: Land Use and Development Ordinance

Districts Key:

MV= Manchester Village
 GD= General Development
 SL= Shoreland
 RP= Resource Protection

CR= Community Residential
 RR= Rural Residential
 AM= Aquifer Management

Permissibility Key:

Y= Allowed use (no permit required, but the use must comply with all applicable land use standards.

P= Use requires construction or use permit from CEO

C= Use requires conditional use permit from Planning Board following site plan review.

S= Use requires special exception permit from Planning Board following site plan review, provided that the applicant shows by substantial evidence:

- There is no alternate site which is both suitable to the proposed use and reasonably available to the applicant.
- That an environmental neighborhood impact report shows that there will be minimal adverse impacts on neighboring uses.
- a and b may be waived by the Planning Board for minor developments, if it is deemed that impact or hazards would be minimal.

N= Prohibited use.

Manchester’s Land Use table, above, allows agriculture activities in all districts without a permit of any kind, if the activity complies with all land use standards. Forestry activities are allowed in all of Manchester’s districts without a permit, as well, except for Manchester Village where it is not applicable.

Manchester's Land Use and Development Ordinance minimally regulates agricultural land uses in all districts, when feasible. Agriculture-related activities that are potentially more impactful requires either a permit issued by the CEO or a Conditional Use Permit issued by the Planning Board. For certain agricultural-related land uses in the Aquifer Management District and the Shoreland District, a Special Exception Permit issued by the Planning Board is required, following a Site Plan Review, due to the sensitive nature of these areas.

Non-Regulatory Farmland and Forestry Protection Efforts

Manchester works with multiple entities to protect farms and forestland, including Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry (DACF), Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW), as well as several other organizations detailed below:

- **Kennebec Land Trust (KLT)** works cooperatively with landowners and communities to permanently protect and conserve forests, shorelands, fields, and wildlife habitat. This is done by donation, fee purchases, and conservation easements. KLT offers educational programs and field trips for schools and other interested organizations, on relevant natural history, land stewardship, and conservation themes. KLT has also created miles of trails and conducts ongoing monitoring and land management.
- **Maine Farmland Trust** is a member-powered, statewide organization that protects farmland, supports farmers, and advances the future of farming. It strives to protect Maine farmland and to revitalize Maine's rural landscape by keeping agricultural lands working and helping farmers and communities thrive. It accomplishes this by working with farm families and collaborating with other partners, such as statewide groups, local and regional land trusts, and municipalities. Maine Farmland Trust has permanently protected one farm in Manchester through an Agricultural Conservation Easement – the Cobb Heritage Farm. Maine Farmland Trust offers three programs aimed at protecting farmland: Farmland Protection and Access Program, Policy and Research Program, and Maine Farmlink Program.
- **Land for Maine's Future (LMF)** is the primary state-administered funding vehicle for conserving land for its natural and recreational value. Types of land conserved by this program include mountain summits; shorelines of rivers, lakes, and ponds; coastal islands; beaches; forests; grasslands; wildlife habitat; farmland; and wetlands. Land acquired is from willing sellers only. The LMF pursues a mission defined by the public, providing a tangible return to all who cherish Maine's landscape (from hunters, hikers and snowmobilers to birdwatchers), and leverages federal and private funding for state priority purchases.

- **New England Forestry Foundation (NEFF)** conserves forestland and advances Exemplary Forestry to help sustain New England’s way of life, protect wildlife habitat, and address climate change. Guided by values of integrity, innovation, collaboration, and respect, NEFF works through land conservation, active forest management, policy advocacy, public education, and partnerships. It manages demonstration forests, supports private landowners, and keeps over 150 forests open to the public. With a long-term, inclusive, and impact-driven approach, NEFF is committed to preparing the region for a climate-resilient future and advancing the Wildlands and Woodlands vision to conserve 30 million acres of New England forest.

The state has many provisions available to farmers for their protection and to aid them in continuing operation of viable farms. One example is Maine’s Agriculture Protection Act (commonly known as the Right to Farm Law) that protects farmers from complaints regarding odors, noise, and other aspects of farming operations.

An additional option Manchester could consider is Maine’s Voluntary Municipal Farm Support Program. Through this program, towns are allowed to develop a system of “farm support arrangements” with eligible farmland owners. The farmland owners voluntarily apply and may then be formally accepted by the town’s legislative body. If accepted, they may be granted a 20-year agricultural conservation easement to the town in exchange for full or partial reimbursement of property taxes on their farmland and farm buildings during that 20-year period.

These and other strategies for supporting and encouraging agricultural and forestry practices in appropriate areas are detailed further in the Policies and Strategies table of this plan.

Farmland and Open Space Tax Law Programs

Another way the state supports agriculture and farming is by offering multiple tax programs aimed at improving and protecting agriculture and forestry operations. There are three current-use tax programs that relate to forestry or agriculture in Manchester: Farmland Tax Law, Open Space Tax Law, and Tree Growth Tax Law (Tree Growth will be addressed later in this chapter). These programs are detailed below.

- Farmland Tax Law: This tax law was adopted to encourage the preservation of farmland and open space land and to protect farmland and open space land from competing with higher-valued uses. The farmland program provides for the valuation of farmland based on its current use as farmland, rather than based on its fair market value for other potential uses. This reduced land value results in lower property tax bills for owners of farmland. Lower taxes are designed to function as an incentive to preserve Maine’s farming communities. In addition to reducing the farmland owner’s tax burden, the municipality avoids costs associated with development and state subsidies are positively impacted.

- **Open Space Tax Law:** This law provides for the valuation of land based on its current use as open space, rather than its highest and best use. To qualify for open space classification, land must be preserved or restricted for uses providing a public benefit. This classification encourages landowners of open, undeveloped land to prevent or restrict its use from development by conserving scenic resources, enhancing public recreation, promoting game management, or preserving wildlife, and/or wildlife habitat. This is mutually beneficial, as the landowner's proportionate tax burden is reduced, the municipality avoids costs associated with development, and state subsidies are positively impacted.

TABLE 3: PARCELS OF LAND IN MANCHESTER ENROLLED IN THE FARMLAND TAX LAW

	2015	2023	% Change
Number of Parcels	1	1	0%
Acres First Classified	0	0	0%
Farmland Acres	15	15	0%
Farmland Valuation	\$6,150	\$6,150	0%
Woodland Acres	9	9	0%
Woodland Valuation	\$2,619	\$2,770	5.8%

Source: 2015 & 2023 Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary

TABLE 4: PARCELS OF LAND IN MANCHESTER ENROLLED IN THE OPEN SPACE TAX LAW

	2015	2023	% Change
Number of Parcels	4	2	-50%
Acres First Classified	0	0	0%
Total Acres	207	115	-44%
Total Valuation	\$89,200	\$10,900	-87.8%

Source: 2015 & 2023 Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary

Table 3 and 4 Highlights:

- Parcels enrolled in the Farmland Tax Law did not change between 2015 to 2023, except for their valuation.
- There was a 50 percent decrease in parcels enrolled in the Open Space Tax Law, which was only a decrease of two parcels.
- The decrease of two parcels resulted in a decrease of 92 acres or 44 percent.
- The valuation of land in the Open Space Tax Law programs declined dramatically with this decrease.

Manchester's property taxes are especially favorable to large landowners and farmers—so much so that few enroll in the Farmland or Open Space Tax Law programs, which impose additional restrictions.

Threats to Farmland and Farms

The greatest challenge to farming in Manchester and nearby areas is the shortage of available labor and the declining number of young people entering the field. As a result, the average age of farmers has risen steadily over the past few decades. Without meaningful incentives to attract younger farmers, this trend is unlikely to change.

As older farmers retire, their land may become vacant, raising questions about its future. These fields could either revert to forest or be developed—both outcomes that would fundamentally change Manchester’s rural character. Some landowners view open space as a financial opportunity rather than something to preserve, and farms are often sold or subdivided into smaller lots over time.

To help sustain agriculture and protect open land, Manchester has maintained a tax structure that favors farmers. At present, no major tracts appear at risk of development, and nearby residential growth has not interfered with normal farming operations.

Forestry

As with other towns in this region, forestry has not played a major role in Manchester’s economy in recent decades. However, limited small-scale timber harvesting activities do occur throughout the community. There are no large tracts of industrial forest land in Manchester, and clear-cutting is not a problem, by strict definition.

That is not to say that clear-cutting and forestry operations are not occurring in Manchester; in recent years there has been a significant uptick in private landowners harvesting their woodlots. New England Forestry Foundation (NEFF) has also conducted selective harvesting on much of their land in recent years.

The town owns about 250 acres of land which is managed for non-intensive timber harvesting practices by Two Trees Forestry, with whom the town contracts for forest management. The revenue from these harvests goes to the town’s wood account (75%), and the Manchester Conservation Commission (25%). The 2004 *Open Space Plan* recommends that this revenue go to capitalize a conservation account, to be used to negotiate for easements or open space land.

The Allen-Whitney Memorial Forest, located in North Manchester, is a 700-acre tract managed by the New England Forestry Foundation as a demonstration forest. There are also several tracts of state-owned land, managed primarily as wildlife areas. Manchester has identified its desire to preserve more forest land as open space in the community, as outlined in their *Open Space Plan*, and structures in the Land Use and Development Ordinance.

Manchester established a Tree Board in 2024 to provide tree planting, health and maintenance advice to the town and its residents. Currently, the Tree Board is in the process of surveying trees on Manchester’s public property to document size, condition, species, health, future concerns, and other important information in optimally maintaining these trees. The town; however, does not have a formal street tree program in place.

Manchester is active in preserving open space, including several forested parcels permanently preserved throughout town. Examples include the Fairbanks Pond Parcel, Tyler Pond WMA, Allen-Whitney Memorial Forest, Gannett Woods, town-owned woodlots near Bog Pond, Jamies Pond WMA, and several islands owned and managed by the Kennebec Land Trust. These properties are detailed more thoroughly in the Natural and Water Resources chapter.

Of these, the town owns and actively manages the woodlots, Manchester Woods, near Bog Pond. These parcels were originally tax acquisitions. They are relatively isolated and almost landlocked, which limits their usefulness for other activities. Essentially, they would only be desirable to an abutter on an adjacent property. None of these properties are permanently protected or conserved through formal arrangements.

Table 5 below shows the forestry harvest data from 1991 to 2021, along with totals and averages from each category.

TABLE 5: FORESTRY HARVEST INFORMATION

Year	Selection	Shelter wood	Land Use Change	Clearcut	Totals	# of Reports
1991-2003	3,052	423	180	78	3,733	109
2004-2013	1,641	95	111	43	1,890	66
2014-2018	917	373	0	0	1,290	27
2019-2023	724	62	38	0	824	25
Total	6,334	953	329	121	7,737	227

Source: Data compiled from Confidential Year End Landowner Reports to Maine Forest Service. Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry - Maine Forest Service Report summary date October 10, 2025

Table 5 Highlights:

- The reported acreages of different forest harvest methods are indicative of the interplay of forest types, forest management objectives and thoughtful approaches to forest resource management.
- The reported harvested acreages reflect different management methods based on forest types, land characteristics, foresters' recommendations and landowner objectives. These are mostly consistent with sound principles of forest management.
- The relatively low acreage that was clearcut compared to shelterwood harvest acres and other harvesting methods may be an indication of active forest management planning in Manchester or of a tradition of thoughtful and active forest management.

While selective harvesting is frequently considered to be more sustainable and better forest management practices, this is not always the case. Good forest management practices are far more complex than clear cut vs. selective harvesting, depending upon what is selected and why. Selective harvesting can be indicative of high-grading, which is not a thoughtful forestry practice. High-grading is when a logger comes in and takes all the highest-value timber and selects only certain species, leaving a low-diversity of poor-quality and undesirable trees as the minimum residual – which is also a poor seed source for the next rotation. This degrades timber quality and forest resiliency over time. Depending on how and the time of year this is done, the impacts to the land and residual trees can also be severe.

Another term for poor forestry management practices is “disruptive forestry practices”, which covers high-grading, inappropriate tree cutting, as well as cutting with inappropriate equipment inappropriate seasons or locations.

Tree Growth Tax Law Program

As of 2023, 12 parcels in Manchester were classified as Tree Growth properties under the State’s Tree Growth Tax Law Program, detailed in the table below. This program, like the Farmland and Open Space Tax Law programs, provides landowners with an opportunity to have their land valued for its productivity rather than its market value.

TABLE 6: MANCHESTER PARCELS ENROLLED IN THE TREE GROWTH TAX LAW PROGRAM

	2015	2023	% Change
# Of Parcels	10	12	20%
Acres First Classified	0	27	100%
Softwood Acres	326	256	-21.5%
Mixed Wood Acres	576	868	50.7%
Hardwood Acres	316	214	-32.3%
Total Acres	1,218	1,338	9.9%
Total Value	\$322,001	\$398,984	23.9%

Source: 2015 & 2023 Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary

Table 6 Highlights:

- Since 2015, there has been a 20-percent increase in the number of parcels participating in this program.
- There has been a 9.9 percent increase in total acres enrolled.
- Mixed wood acreage had the biggest increase by 50.7 percent.
- Total valuation of the land enrolled in the Tree Growth Tax Law Program increased by 23.9 percent.

In contrast to the Farmland Tax Law and the Open Space Tax Law programs, the State reimburses municipalities for a portion of lost tax revenues from properties enrolled in the Tree Growth Tax Law Program. Additionally, local participation is typically higher because this tax law allows multiple uses on the designated property, if the parcel remains primarily used for the growth of trees to produce forest products that have commercial value. As with the Farmland Tax Law and the Open Space Tax Law programs, land withdrawn from the Tree Growth Tax Law Program before maturity is subject to financial penalties.

Threats to Forestry in Manchester

Possibly one of the most serious and potentially impactful threats to forests today are invasive forest pests. Invasive forest pests threaten the health of forests and therefore, also the diversity and resiliency of all forest resources. Invasive tree pests specifically, can threaten infrastructure as tree health is impacted along roadways and near utilities.

Inventories of trees near infrastructure is a way that the Manchester Tree Board can help the town plan present and future tree pruning and removal work. In the 'urban' setting, a municipal street tree inventory implemented by the Tree Board in 2025 will allow Manchester to document what species currently exist, their condition, and aid in future decisions regarding trees. Inventory efforts can be expanded as needed.

Forest growth is also impacted by invasive species, which grow in standing forests but are especially prone to take hold following timber harvests, even if done appropriately. NEFF and KLT are attempting to address these in their woodlands; however, it is unclear if and how private landowners are addressing these issues. Inappropriate or unlicensed use of herbicides and other pesticides by private landowners is a potential issue though there are no known instances of this at this time.

Agriculture and Forestry Analysis and Key Issues

- Historically, forestry and agriculture played a more substantial role in Manchester. Today, the town and the town's residents are less reliant on these industries, but they are still hugely important to the State of Maine.
- Today, residents appreciate the pastoral landscape Manchester strives to maintain, promote and protect.
- Manchester's 2004 *Long Range Public Facilities and Open Space Plan* values working farms and recommends tools like conservation easements to preserve them.
- Currently, Manchester is home to farming, agroforestry, and forestry operations of all sizes.
- These agriculture and forestry operations are valued not just for what they produce, but also for the character and scenic views they provide.
- Farming operations are on the decline in Manchester, for a number of reasons including lack of labor, the increasing age of farmers, cost of production, as well as other reasons.
- The town, region, and state have collaborated with several organizations to support and encourage agriculture.
- Manchester's land use policies are not restrictive to farming or agricultural, thus supporting these efforts.
- Parcels of land throughout Manchester are permanently protected through various easements, held by several entities- all in the name of protecting farmland, forestland and open space.
- Forestry is not a major contributor to Manchester's economy, though there are timber harvesting operations throughout town, including a town forest and several woodlots.
- Threats to forestry operations include invasive species, changing weather patterns, poor forestry management, and others.

9: Natural and Water Resources



Manchester is fortunate to be surrounded by exceptional natural beauty and a high-quality environment. As part of the Winthrop Lakes Region, Manchester is roughly 6 percent or 787 acres of water. Manchester's land area is approximately 13,690 acres, including natural resources of productive forests and farmland, clean water, and wildlife habitat. The most noticeable natural feature in Manchester is the abundance of waterbodies of all sizes found throughout town. The town's rural areas, scenic trails, and waterbodies provide opportunities for residents, summer visitors, and tourists to enjoy the outdoors.

The waterfront properties around the lakes and ponds contribute significantly to the town's tax base because they are appraised at a higher value than non-waterfront properties. The resulting tax base supports public services, municipal government, public schools, and contributes to maintaining the overall quality and natural beauty of the town.

One of the functions of this plan is to ensure that growth and development can occur concurrently with preservation of the natural environment. It is possible, but it requires foresight. Some forms of development have greater potential for negative environmental impacts, and some locations are more suitable for development than others. It is in the best interest of the town to ensure that future development is appropriate and appropriately located to allow for preservation of the natural assets valued by residents and visitors.

Manchester developed an Open Space Plan in 2004. This Plan utilizes three parallel initiatives to protect critical natural resources: 1) Use of "set asides" or outright purchases of areas for their natural, scenic, or recreational values; 2) Protection of critical natural areas by regulatory means; and 3) Conservation by means of public and landowner education and awareness of valuable natural features within the "high value natural areas" defined by the 2004 Open Space Plan or as found in other parts of Manchester.

The success of Manchester's Open Space Plan is largely dependent upon communication between the Planning Board and other entities, such as the Conservation Commission and DEP, prior to development in any area that potentially contains critical natural resources or high value natural areas. More information on the 2004 Open Space Plan can be found in the body of this chapter.

This chapter identifies and documents Manchester's natural and water resources and the physical limitations the natural environment imposes on the planning process for future development.

Natural Land Resources

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIF&W) administers a program called Beginning with Habitat (BwH) to identify significant wildlife habitat and critical natural areas under the National Resources Protection Act.

BwH, a collaborative program of federal, state, and local agencies and non-governmental organizations, is a habitat-based approach to conserving wildlife and plant habitats on a landscape scale. The goal of the program is to maintain sufficient habitat to support all native plant and animal species currently growing and breeding in Maine. BwH compiles habitat information from multiple sources, integrates it into one package, and makes it accessible to towns, land trusts, conservation organizations, and others to use in a proactive approach to conservation. This information can be seen on Manchester's *Critical Natural Resources Map* in the Appendix, with descriptions of essential features throughout this chapter.

Geology and Soils

Manchester's soils – and the bedrock that supports them – influence the topography and the type of vegetation, and can constrain endeavors of development, farming, and forestry.

The advance and retreat of glaciers molded Manchester's landscape. As glaciers advanced, the ice mass scoured the ground. Retreating, they left a mixture of sand, silt, clay, and stones. Today, much of Manchester is covered by this glacial till, consisting of a heterogeneous mixture of sand, silt, clay, and stones. Till usually overlies bedrock but may underline or include sand and gravel. Additionally, glacially formed hills may consist of till deposits over 100 feet thick.

The State Plumbing code also has its list of soils that are unsuitable for subsurface waste disposal. The plumbing code concentrates on those soils in which septic systems will not function, because water is too near the surface, or the slope is too steep. Soils with water too near the surface are:

Biddeford silt loam

Monarda silt loam

Walpole fine sandy loam

Leicester stony Loam

Peat and muck

Limerick silt loam

Manchester's *Soil Map* (Appendix) shows soils by type and location. Maps of these soils involve a degree of generalization. A mapped area of poor soil does not by itself exclude development; however, it does make potential developers aware of challenges.

Regardless of soil type, when cleared of vegetation, all soils are subject to accelerated erosion. Eroding soil contributes to the degradation of water quality. Silt can reduce visibility, harm fish populations, and contribute phosphorus and other destabilizing nutrients into waterbodies. Phosphorus is a naturally occurring nutrient that, when present in high concentrations, can cause algal blooms. Eroding soil and unmanaged stormwater runoff have been documented as the primary source of increased phosphorus levels in Maine's lakes, resulting in reduced property values and recreational opportunities.

Manchester's Land Use and Development Ordinance contains performance standards to protect against excessive erosion during and after construction.

Topography

Manchester, like much of Maine, has often-challenging topography, as depicted on the *Topographic Map* (Appendix).

The lakes and waterbodies represent the low points of topography. The topography of an individual site accounts for much of the cost, difficulty, and potential adverse impact of land development. Development on slopes greater than 15 percent accelerates stormwater runoff velocity, erosion, and sedimentation, particularly in sensitive watersheds. The state Plumbing Code limits the installation of septic systems to land with an original slope of 20 percent or less. Road construction on steep slopes becomes expensive and road maintenance costs increase significantly. Therefore, large contiguous areas with slopes of more than 20 percent are impractical for new construction.

Manchester's Land Use and Development Ordinance classifies areas of two or more contiguous acres, with sustained slopes of 20 percent or greater, as a Resource Protection District. Resource Protection Districts fall under the state's mandatory Shoreland Zoning guidelines, which include standards governing allowable land uses for these areas.

The topography of the land is responsible for the array of lakes and drainage basins or watersheds. A watershed is the area of land within which all precipitation drains to a single waterbody. The delineation of watersheds (*Water Resources Map*) shows how water runs off the land, where it accumulates, and how it collects into larger bodies of surface water. Manchester has 4 separate watersheds, with many sub watersheds within the primary watersheds. Since planning for lake water quality is closely integrated with watershed planning, information on watersheds can be found detailed further under *Watersheds*, below.

Scenic Resources

Topography and geography are the primary components of scenic vistas and resources. While it is said that the quality of a scenic vista is “in the eye of the beholder,” it is often the case that varied topography and overlooking perspectives rank consistently high. Manchester’s Open Space Plan inventoried and documented two dozen areas determined as valuable for either scenic purposes or natural beauty. A few examples include:

- Prescott/ Puddledock/Lyons Road area
- The Trolley Line
- Hutchinson Pond
- Bog Pond and Jamie Pond
- Prescott Road Gateway
- Shed Pond- view of Monk’s Hill
- Summerhaven Ponds area
- Allen Hill
- Pond Road- view of Cobbossee Lake
- Lakeside Orchard- Cobbossee Lake

Many of these views are from public roads. Of the others, Bog Brook has been formally protected by MDIF&W via the Kennebec Land Trust (KLT). Others are “threatened” by housing development or already have housing on them.

Water Resources

Floodplains

A floodplain is an area adjacent to a waterbody that is subject to periodic flooding. Manchester’s 100-year floodplains are depicted on the *Critical Natural Resources Map* in the Appendix. A 100-year flood is one in which there is a 1-percent chance of flooding in any given year. The 100-year designation is significant because Federal Law mandates that areas with a one percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year be given special protection.

Floodplains in Manchester are fairly limited, in most cases to wetland areas and the immediate banks of local streams and ponds. Areas designated as 100-year floodplain do not seriously impede prospective development. Nevertheless, Manchester has adopted and maintains a Floodplain Management Ordinance.

Groundwater & Aquifers

Groundwater is generally abundant and accessible throughout Manchester. For residential purposes, there are no constraints on the volume available or the quality, and at the density of development permissible, residential development does not pose a threat to groundwater supply or quality.

Some areas within the town are covered by shallow sand and gravel aquifers, which can provide considerably higher yields than areas with only fractured bedrock. These areas may be tapped for large-scale public water supplies.

For example, the northeastern part of town overlies a significant portion of a large aquifer, running from the Belgrade town line to approximately Lyons Road in Manchester (see *Water Resources Map*). This aquifer is the source of drinking water for the Greater Augusta Utilities District (GAUD). Because of the gravel deposits associated with this aquifer, its surface area is also the site of major gravel pits in Manchester and Augusta. This aquifer is identified in the Manchester Land Use and Development Ordinance and protected by the Aquifer Management Overlay District. This District provides additional protection and land use restrictions to preserve and enhance water quality.

Naturally occurring water-quality threats in Manchester include radon and arsenic at levels above state drinking level limits. There is no uniform distribution of high-arsenic wells in Manchester; they are scattered throughout town.

In 2021, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) opened an investigation into the presence of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) from the land application of sludge and/or septage in many towns throughout Maine. Currently, Manchester does not have a documented problem with the presence of PFAS; however, additional, thorough testing is necessary to make a more exact determination.

Drinking Water

According to the Maine Drinking Water Program (DWP), there are nine public water supply wells in Manchester. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines public water supply systems as those that supply water for human consumption through pipes or other constructed conveyances to at least 15 service connections or serves an average of at least 25 people for at least 60 days per year. A public water system may be publicly or privately owned. DWP provides the following information about each of these sources (information is from 2003):

Lakehurst Acres. There are two wells that serve as the water supply systems for Lakehurst Acres.

The first (known as Downhill Well, Source ID# 90815101) is a bedrock well with a 300-foot wellhead protection radius. It is considered by DWP to be at moderate risk of contamination due to its type and site geology (unknown overburden thickness). Its existing risk of contamination is moderate (there is a septic system located within 300 feet of the well) and has a high risk of future acute contamination (limited or no land protection around the well). There is a low existing risk of chronic contamination, but a high future risk.

The second public water supply system serving Lakehurst Acres (Uphill Well, Source ID# 90815102) is inactive. It is a bedrock well with a 300-foot wellhead protection radius, and an overburden thickness of 300 feet. There is a low existing risk of contamination from type and site geology. The well has a low existing risk of contamination, but a high risk of future acute and chronic contamination, because of limited or no land protection around the well.

Maine Medical Association, Hanley Building. Source ID# 94557101. This public water supply system is a bedrock well, 260 feet deep and produces five gallons per minute. It has a 300-foot protection radius. It is considered at moderate existing risk of contamination due to type and site geology (unknown overburden thickness). It has a low risk of chronic contamination, moderate existing risk of acute contamination (septic system located within 300 feet of the well), and a high risk of future acute contamination (limited or no land protection around the well).

Augusta Country Club. Source ID# 94747101. The public water supply system that serves the Augusta Country Club is a 244-foot-deep bedrock well, producing 100 gallons per minute. It is considered to be moderately at risk of contamination due to type and site geology (unknown overburden thickness). The well has a low existing risk of acute contamination, and a moderate risk of future acute contamination, due to limited land ownership and control.

Woodfords Family Services. Source ID# 94472101. This public water supply system is a drilled bedrock well, 325 feet deep. It has an unknown overburden thickness, putting it at a moderate existing risk of contamination due to type and site geology. The well has a low existing risk of acute contamination, and a moderate risk of future acute contamination, due to limited land ownership and control.

Thai Spice. (Info from 2011) Source ID# 94810101. This public water supply system is a 240-foot drilled bedrock well. It's 105 feet of overburden put it at low risk for well type and site geology. It has a moderate risk for existing acute contamination due to a septic system 120 feet from the well. The well has a high risk of future acute contamination due to limited land ownership and control in the wellhead protection radius.

Little Debs Day Care Center. (Info from 2012) Source ID# 95017101. This is a 140-foot bedrock public supply system that supplies water at 12 gallons per minute. It's 40 feet of overburden put it at low risk for well type and site geology. Both future and existing risk of acute contamination are moderate for this well because there is a leach field within 100 feet and due to limited land ownership and control in the wellhead protection radius.

Public water supply systems for Hope Baptist Church (Source ID# 92734101), Longfellows Greenhouse (Source ID# 94936101), and Manchester Place (Source ID# 92426101) did not have any source drinking water program information.

Surface Waters

An interconnected system of surface waters begins as brooks and flow through a system of streams, ponds, and wetlands, eventually reaching the sea. Wetlands and lakes are critical points along this network of surface waters. Wetlands serve important natural functions such as wildlife habitat and stormwater regulation and are particularly susceptible to development. Lakes and rivers contribute to the natural beauty of any area. They are an attraction for residents, economic development, and outdoor recreation. All waterbodies are vulnerable to pollution and overuse, which in turn can lower property values.

Many land use practices can impact surface water quality. For example, improperly functioning or unsuitably located wastewater disposal systems may cause bacteria to contaminate surface waters. Poor agricultural practices can result in nutrient enrichment of waterbodies (e.g., phosphorus). Construction activities create erosion and siltation, potentially reaching waterbodies. Any improperly managed land use or land-based activity can accelerate degradation of water quality. The first step in managing the community's surface waters is to understand the systems, their existing quality, and factors that influence their quality.

All waterbodies are required by state law to be locally protected through the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance. Manchester's regulatory protections are detailed in the Regulatory Protections subsection of this chapter and can be found in the town's Land Use and Development Ordinance.

Rivers and Streams

The state has four classifications for freshwater rivers, streams, and brooks: AA, A, B, and C. The classification system should be viewed as a hierarchy of risk more than for use or quality assessment. Ecosystems that are more natural in their structure and function can be expected to be more resilient to new stressors and to show more rapid recovery. The classifications are detailed below.

Classes AA involve little risk since activities such as waste discharge and impoundment are prohibited. The expectation to achieve natural conditions is high and degradation is unlikely.

Class A waters allow impoundments and very restricted discharges, so the risk of degradation, while quite small, does increase since there is some small human intervention in the maintenance of the ecosystem.

Classes B has fewer restrictions on activities but still maintains high water quality criteria. Class B is considered more at risk than a Class A stream. The risk is the possibility of a breakdown of the ecosystem and loss of use due to either natural or human-caused events.

Classes C has the least restrictions on use and the lowest (but not low) water quality criteria. Classes C waters are still good quality, but the margin for error before significant degradation might occur in these waters in the event of an additional stress being introduced (such as a spill or a drought) is the least.

All rivers and streams in Manchester are Class B. As noted in the Water Classification hierarchy above, Class B waterbodies are not of lesser value; they are simply more susceptible to degradation. Class B waterbodies are suitable for drinking water supply, recreation in and on the water, fishing, industrial processes and cooling water supply, hydroelectric power generation, navigation and unimpaired habitat for fish and other aquatic life.

The *Water Resources Map* (Appendix) shows Manchester's streams, lakes, ponds, and wetlands. Streams are bound by the Shoreland District or the Resource Protection District in Manchester's Land Use and Development Ordinance.

Although not an exhaustive list, streams and brooks in Manchester include:

- Tanning Brook
- Bond Brook (Mill Brook)
- Jimmie Brook
- Weston Brook
- Spring Brook
- Bog Brook
- Mears Brook
- Cobbosseecontee Stream

Of these streams, Maine DEP lists the following on their Nonpoint Source Priority Watershed List:

Bond Brook (in Augusta- the portion in Manchester does not appear to be included, though it is worth including) is on the Impaired Streams Priority List due to Highways access-related development threat and development threat.

Tanning Brook and Weston Brook are on the Threatened Streams Priority List under Watch List.

Additionally, Tanning and Weston Brooks are listed on DEP's Integrated Report as "Insufficient information to determine if designated uses are attained (one or more uses may be impaired).

Watersheds

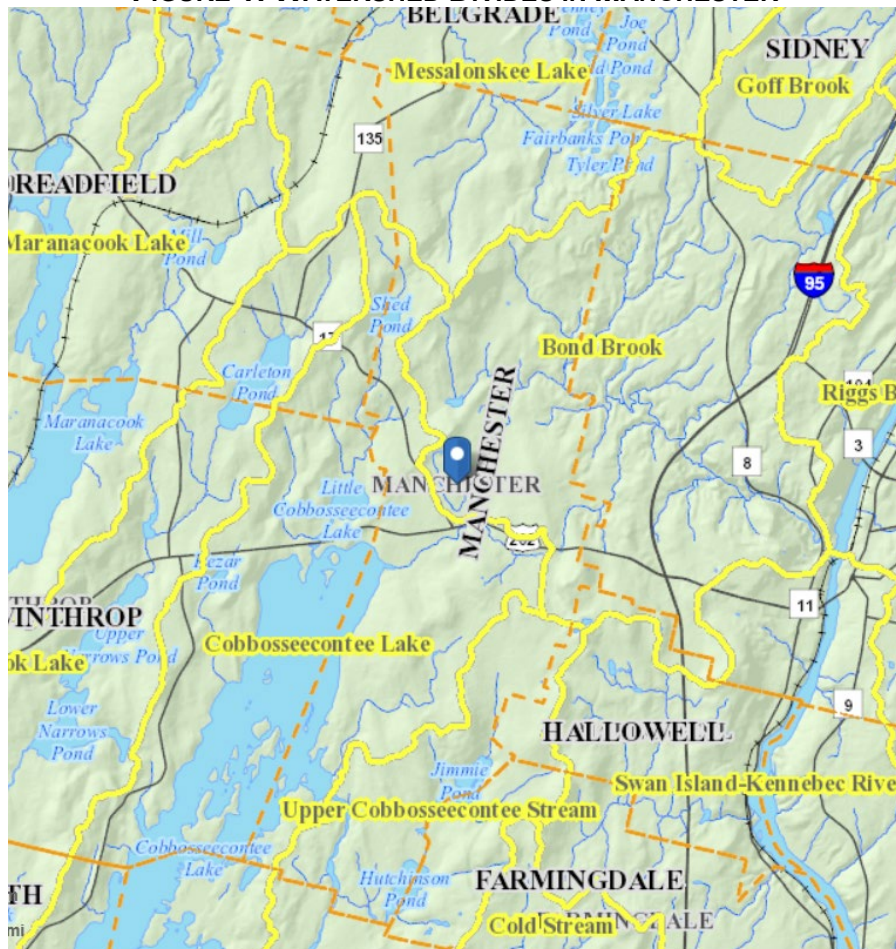
A watershed is a natural drainage basin that collects precipitation and sends it to a body of water through an interconnected system of streams, brooks, and other wetlands. Unmanaged or improper human activities in any part of a watershed can negatively affect the water quality of the body into which the watershed drains.

Cobbosseecontee (Cobbossee) Lake, Jimmie Pond, Little Jimmie Pond, Hutchinson Pond, Bog Pond, and Shed Pond are in the Cobbossee watershed. Tyler Pond, Silver Lake, Fairbanks Pond and Lily Pond are in the Messalonskee watershed.

Lake Cobbossee and its watershed are also part of Manchester's downtown and growth areas. Promoting development in this area while continuing to protect the water resource so vital to Manchester may seem to be an impossible contradiction. But there are methods to allow each to co-exist if research, oversight, and planning is done carefully. It is far easier to protect water quality than to restore it after damage has been done. Many lakes and ponds across Maine have lost ecological viability and recreational appeal due to poor planning and are paying the price for this in lost property values, loss of recreation and tourism, and loss to wildlife, and high restoration costs.

Major watershed drainage divides in Manchester are shown in Figure 1 below.

FIGURE 1: WATERSHED DIVIDES IN MANCHESTER



Source: Beginning with Habitat

It is imperative in protecting and maintaining water quality that Manchester continues to partner with organizations such as Cobbossee Watershed District, Watershed Friends, Cobbossee Lake Association, and others to educate the public about their role in maintaining the town's invaluable water resources.

Wetlands

Wetlands are essential parts of a healthy environment. As natural low points, they absorb flood waters. As a lush and moist habitat, they are the best and sometimes only breeding areas for fish and wildlife, including most waterfowl. They have been proven to hold sediments and nutrients from water before they reach streams, straining out pollution. Wetlands also serve as important travel corridors for many species of wildlife and provide open space for some forms of recreational enjoyment and/or aesthetic appreciation.

While a precise definition of a wetland is not universally accepted, making it difficult for local authorities to enforce the laws, wetlands share three essential elements. They all have non-permeable soils, a water table at or near the surface, and there is a presence of water-loving vegetation (rushes, cattails, red maple).

There are over a dozen wetlands located in Manchester, large and small, valuable and marginal, as illustrated in the *Critical Natural Resources Map*. Inevitably, some wetlands are threatened by development, while others are in more remote areas of town. To provide the utmost protection, it is essential to document and map the existing wetland areas throughout town. Manchester adopted the standard Shoreland Zoning requirements that are the State's model shoreland zoning guidelines. While they are adequate, there are areas for improvement, such as providing more protection to wetlands that are not attached to ponds or larger streams and do not fall under Resource Protection.

Vernal Pools

A vernal pool is defined as a naturally occurring, temporary to permanent inland body of water that forms in a shallow depression and typically fills during the spring or fall and may dry during the summer. Vernal pools contain no viable populations of predatory fish, and it provides the primary breeding habitat for wood frogs, spotted salamanders, blue spotted salamanders, and fairy shrimp. The presence of any one or more of these species is usually conclusive evidence of a vernal pool. The presence of water is not an indicator of a vernal pool; the presence of certain plant and animal life is an indicator of vernal pools.

Vernal pools do not fall under the protection provided to wetlands by the Maine Natural Areas Program, a facet of the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry that maintains a database of areas designated as ecological reserves. But, as of September 2007, significant vernal pool habitats are protected under the Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA). A vernal pool is considered "significant" if it has a high habitat value, either because 1) a state-listed threatened or endangered species uses it to complete a critical part of its life history, or 2) there is a notable abundance of specific wildlife. This regulation protects areas within a 250-foot radius of the spring or fall high-water mark of a significant vernal pool, which is considered critical terrestrial habitat. Any activity on, in, or over these areas must be approved by the Maine DEP and requires either a Permit by Rule or individual NRPA approval.

To date, significant vernal pools have yet to be mapped in Manchester. They were; however, mapped in Hallowell and a significant vernal pool exists on the Manchester/Hallowell town line, just north of Jimmie Pond.

With new attention to their importance in the ecosystem, the town should consider conducting a vernal pool survey and incorporating some protection for vernal pools into its development standards. Extra protection through Shoreland Zoning is a consideration for these sites, as well.

Challenges may exist with conducting vernal pool surveys, such as gaining access to private properties. If feasible, the vernal pool survey should be started on public land followed by surveying the land of willing landowners who allow access to their property.

Lakes and Ponds

Manchester's lakes and ponds are the defining feature of the town's landscape. Large, open bodies of water provide scenic views, a variety of recreational opportunities, important fish and wildlife habitats, sources of drinking water, and prime real estate development opportunities.

The quality of water in any lake or pond depends on many factors, including the surface area and depth of the lake; the flushing rate of the lake; the size of the watershed surrounding the lake; the extent of development along the shore; the extent of agricultural activity in the watershed; and the degree to which obvious sources of pollution, such as septic effluent, sewage, agricultural fertilizers, and manure are kept from entering the waterbody.

The state designates waterbodies encompassing 10 acres or more as Great Ponds. Great Ponds and their shorelands are subject to special regulations through Shoreland Zoning and Maine's Natural Resources Protection Act. The state has one standard of classification for both Great Ponds and natural lakes and ponds less than 10 acres in size; this classification is GPA. The water quality attainment goal for Class GPA waterbodies is that they are suitable for drinking water, recreation, fishing, hydro-electric power generation and as natural habitat for fish and other aquatic life. If a waterbody is not meeting its attainment goal, it is described as a "nonattainment" lake.

None of Manchester's waterbodies currently meet the GPA classification for a variety of reasons. As with the water classification system for rivers, the classification should be viewed as hierarchy for risk, rather than for use or quality assessment, with the risk being the possibility of a breakdown of the ecosystem and loss of use due to either natural or human-caused events.

The following section describes the natural features and characteristics of the numerous great ponds, lakes, and ponds in Manchester. Included in these descriptions are an assessment of water quality based on eight indicators, when that data is provided. Those indicators are listed along with the State's averages below.

Water Quality Assessment and State Averages (2022)	
Transparency	Factors that reduce water clarity are algal blooms, zooplankton, the color of the water, and silt, with algae being the most abundant. Productive = 4 m (13 ft) or less; Moderately Productive = 4 - 8 m (13 - 26 ft); Unproductive = 8 m (26 ft) or greater. In Maine, the current overall average for transparency is 5.5 meters.
Chlorophyll	This test measures the green pigment found in plants, including microscopic algae. This measure is used to estimate algal biomass --the higher the chlorophyll content, the higher the quantity of algae in the lake. Epilimnetic Chlorophyll-a has varied from 0.3 ppb to 182 ppb in Maine lakes, with an average of 5.4 ppb.
Phosphorous	Phosphorus is a major plant nutrient; however, high phosphorus levels are often a sign of pollutants entering the waterbody. As levels of phosphorus increase, the quantity of algae increases, resulting in reduced water quality. Maine lakes show variation in Epilimnetic TP from 1.0 ppb to over 426.0 ppb, with an overall average of 11.1 ppb.
Color	This measure refers to the amount of dissolved organic acids such as tannins and lignin, resulting in tea-colored water. The unit of measure for color is Standard Platinum Units or SPU. Color reduces the lake's transparency and increases phosphorus readings. True Color ranges from 0 to 197 SPU in Maine lakes, with an overall average of 20.7 SPU.
Alkalinity	This is the measure of the water to neutralize acids (called buffering). A waterbody's ability to buffer acids is affected by the natural geology of the surrounding area, and the presence of naturally available bicarbonate, carbonate, and hydroxide ions. It is measured in milligrams per liter (mg/L). Epilimnetic alkalinity samples in Maine lakes have varied from - 1.5 milligrams per liter (mg/L) to 190.0mg/L, with an overall average of 11.7 mg/L.
pH	Like alkalinity, pH is the measure of acidity of the water. How acidic or basic the water is will determine which plant and animal life will be present. The measure of acidity is on a scale of 1 to 14, with 7 indicating neutral acidity, 1 being highly acidic, and 14 being highly basic. A one-unit change in pH represents a 10-fold change in the concentration of hydrogen ions, which determines the acidity of the water. Epilimnetic pH samples in Maine lakes can vary from 4.2 to 9.6 in Maine, with an overall average of 6.8.
Conductivity	Specific conductivity measures the ability of the water to carry an electrical current and is related to the dissolved ions (charged particles) in the water. Conductivity is measured in microSiemens per centimeter. This quality is used to calculate fish yield estimates. Specific conductivity will increase if there is an increase in pollutants entering the water, usually in the form of runoff from urban or residential areas and roadways. The average conductivity for all Maine lakes is 53.0 μ S.cm (micro-Siemens per centimeter).
Dissolved Oxygen	Adequate levels of dissolved oxygen (DO) in waterbodies are essential to most life in the water. DO is an important indicator of water quality and it influences water chemistry. DO levels are strongly affected by water temperature: warmer water is less dense and its ability to hold oxygen is reduced.

Source: Lakes of Maine- 2025

Epilimnion: the warmer top layer of water in a stratified lake which rests on top of cooler bottom waters. The epilimnion is the section of the lake that usually receives the most light, wind activity, and mixing, and contains most of the biological organisms living in the lake. Many water samples are taken from the epilimnion because of its importance to the biota and productivity of the lake.

Cobbosseecontee Lake (Cobbossee Lake)

Area: 5,516 acres

Maximum Depth: 100 feet

Mean Depth: 37 feet

Invasive species: Eurasian water milfoil & Eurasian frog-bit (confirmed 2018), variable-leaf milfoil (confirmed 2020)

Fisheries management: coldwater & warmwater

Fish Species	
American Eel	Northern pike
Banded Killifish	Pumpkinseed
Black crappie	Rainbow smelt
Brook trout	Redbreast sunfish
Brown bullhead	Rudd
Brown trout	Smallmouth bass
Chain pickerel	White perch
Emerald shiner	White sucker
Fourspine stickleback	Yellow perch
Golden shiner	Rainbow smelt
Landlocked alewife	Redbreast sunfish
Largemouth bass	

Source: Lakes of Maine

Plant species: (not an exhaustive list) aquatic moss, bladderwort, coontail, pickerel weed, pondweed, water lily, water marigold, waterweed, and wild celery.

Mussels: Eastern elliptio, Eastern lampmussel

Crayfish: No information available.

Loon counts have taken place on Cobbossee Lake since 1983. The loon population has varied over the years.

Loon Counts								
Year	#Adults	#Chicks	Year	#Adults	#Chicks	Year	#Adults	#Chicks
1983	27	2	1997	15	1	2011	68	2
1984	30	2	1998	44	2	2012	73	5
1985	37	6	1999	35	3	2013	82	3
1986	55	9	2000	38	2	2014	82	8
1987	37	5	2001	38	3	2015	73	9
1988	2	0	2002	26	3	2016	95	9
1989	33	1	2003	31	7	2017	47	8
1990	33	4	2004	58	8	2018	54	3
1991	39	2	2005	51	8	2019	72	11
1992	28	0	2006	56	3	2020	84	8
1993	26	5	2007	53	2	2021		
1994	33	3	2008	51	4	2022	73	2
1995	40	7	2009	66	3	2023	80	7
1996	23	0	2010	77	3			

Source: Lakes of Maine

The information in the Water-Quality Assessment table below compares the water quality for Cobbossee Lake to state averages.

Water Quality Assessment

Variable	State Average	Cobbossee Lake
Transparency	5.5 M	4.0 M
Chlorophyll	5.4 ppb	8.8 ppb
Phosphorous	11.1 ppb	16 ppb
Color	20.7 SPU	16 SPU
Alkalinity	11.7 mg/L	18.1 mg/L
pH	6.8	7.04
Conductivity	53.0 μ S/cm	62 μ S/cm

Source: Lakes of Maine *flush rate is per year*

Dissolved Oxygen: Cobbossee Lake appears to have reduced DO levels during warmer months, as expected, but the levels of DO are stable in cooler months.

The above information indicates that Cobbossee Lake's water quality is slightly below the state average; although, Cobbossee Lake's transparency and color levels are above the state average.

More recent data provided by the Cobbossee Watershed District shows that Cobbossee Lake's transparency for June 2025 has improved to 6.6 meters in South Cobbossee Lake and 6.5 meters in North Cobbossee Lake.

Maine DEP lists Cobbossee Lake on its Non-Point Source Priority Watershed List under the Threatened Lakes Priority List. While Cobbossee Lake is considered unimpaired, unimpaired lakes are assessed based on threats to water quality and value of the resource. Threatened lakes include lakes on the DEP Watch List, lakes having a recent or long-term significant negative trend in water clarity, lakes determined as being sensitive to additional phosphorus inputs, and lakes having a recent increased threat to the watershed by development or agriculture.

Cobbossee Lake's listing status and information are as follows:

Watch List- Lakes included on the Watch List if they were recently impaired and therefore still sensitive, or data suggests their water quality is near the impairment threshold. Since Cobbossee Lake was recently listed as impaired, it is still on the DEP's Watch List.

Sensitive- This classification includes lakes that are sensitive to additional phosphorus inputs due to the lake's hydrology and threats in the watershed. Lakes are determined to be sensitive based on a calculation using DEP's vulnerability modeling.

Sensitive- sediment chemistry- This classification includes lakes that are sensitive due to sediment chemistry. Sediment chemistry has been analyzed in a subset of Maine lakes to determine susceptibility to internal phosphorus release. Studies have shown that lake sediments with certain ratios of aluminum to iron and aluminum to phosphorus are more susceptible to the release of sediment-bound phosphorus, which can lead to internal phosphorus loading. Various criteria are analyzed in evaluating lakes for sensitivity due to sediment chemistry before placing a lake in this classification.

Maine DEP's 2024 Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report lists Cobbossee Lake's water quality as "slow, yet persistent improvement". As of 2024, in this report, Cobbossee Lake is listed as 2*- "attains some of the designated uses; no use is threatened; and insufficient data or no data is available to determine if the remaining uses are attained or threatened (with presumption that all uses are attained)". This is a vast improvement from 2004 when it was listed as 4A- meaning it was impaired or threatened.

Cobbossee Lake's water quality is improving, thanks to significant collaboration and efforts between organizations such as Cobbossee Watershed District, Watershed Friends, Cobbossee Lake Association, and the towns that border the lake. The watershed is still listed as a non-point source priority threatened watershed by the DEP due to the lake's recent impairment.

The southwesterly boundary of Manchester borders on the northeasterly shore of Cobbosseecontee. Approximately 7.8 miles of actual lake shoreline falls within the boundaries of Manchester, all of which is privately owned and developed as lakeside camps and year-round residential property or recreational industry. The lake is an integral part of Manchester's economy, bringing in significant revenue from residential taxes and tourism.

Access to Cobbossee Lake is fairly restricted; there are only two public boat landings—one in Winthrop and another in Monmouth.

Additionally, Cobbossee Lake is a back-up water source for the Greater Augusta Utilities District (GAUD). According to GAUD, while Cobbossee is an extremely unlikely source, it remains as an option with an intake in the lake and a pump station that can draw water from it to supply an existing, but not used, drinking water filtration plant on Carlton (Carleton) Pond Road in East Winthrop.

Of Manchester's lakes, Cobbossee is the one whose water quality is most threatened. In 1995, the Cobbossee Watershed District was awarded a Section 319 grant from DEP to address non-point source pollution in the watershed. With the collaboration of DEP and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) were calculated for optimum watershed improvement and management, and public education efforts were stepped up. Maine DEP in conjunction with the Cobbossee Watershed District generated a TMDL report that included a plan for improving water quality. Since this time, the water quality of Cobbossee Lake has gradually improved, and in 2006 the lake was removed from DEP's list of most threatened waterbodies. The lake's water quality continues to improve through joint efforts and public outreach and education.

The report can be found here:

<https://www.maine.gov/dep/water/monitoring/tmdl/2000/tmdlcobbrep.pdf>

Significant effort through several towns and other entities is being put into maintaining Cobbossee Lake's water quality. One challenge is that Manchester's growth area falls partially in the Cobbossee Lake watershed, a fact that is discussed more thoroughly in the Existing Land Use chapter and Future Land Use Plan. This area was developed prior to the adoption of any Shoreland Zoning requirements and remains a logical location for future development; however, this means that additional protections, restrictions, requirements, and review criteria are necessary to continue to protect water quality.

Another consideration in the physical maintenance is that the dam on Cobbossee Lake needs either repair or replacement. While it is owned by Manchester, its continued functionality affects Litchfield, West Gardiner, Gardiner, Monmouth, and Winthrop. The evaluation and eventual repair or replacement of the dam will be a multitown effort

Jimmie (Jamies) Pond:

Area: 99 acres

Maximum Depth: 75 feet

Mean Depth: 34 feet

Invasive species: unknown

Fisheries management: coldwater

Fish Species	
American Eel	Brook trout
Banded Killifish	Brown Bullhead
Chain Pickerel	Rainbow Smelt
Redbreasted Sunfish	Smallmouth Bass
White Perch	Common shiner
Golden shiner	Largemouth bass
Pumpkinseed	Rainbow smelt
Redbreast sunfish	White sucker
Yellow perch	

Source: Lakes of Maine

Plant species: (not an exhaustive list) aquatic moss, bladderwort, pickerel weed, pondweed, water lily, waterweed, and wild celery.

Mussels and Crayfish: No information available.

Loon counts have taken place on Jimmie Pond sporadically since 1983. The loon population has varied over the years.

Loon Counts					
Year	# Adults	# Chicks	Year	# Adults	# Chicks
1984	0	0	1993	0	0
1985	0	0	1994	2	0
1987	0	0	1995	0	0
1989	0	0	1996	1	0
1990	0	0	2023	2	0

Source: Lakes of Maine

The information presented in the Water-Quality Assessment table below compares the water quality for Jimmie Pond to state averages.

Water Quality Assessment

Variable	State Average	Jimmie's Pond
Transparency	5.5 M	5.3 M
Chlorophyll	5.4 ppb	3.9 ppb
Phosphorous	11.1 ppb	8 ppb
Color	20.7 SPU	30 SPU
Alkalinity	11.7 mg/L	10.3 mg/L
pH	6.8	6.74
Conductivity	53.0 μ S/cm	35 μ S/cm

Source: Lakes of Maine

The water quality in Jimmie Pond is comparable, or slightly above the state average.

Jimmie Pond is in southeastern Manchester. It has been previously used as a public water supply for Hallowell. Much of the shoreline of the pond is owned by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIF&W), and features carry-in boating, hiking and fishing in a natural environment, making it ideal for tourists. There is some residential use on the shoreline, which has some steep slopes. The water quality of the pond is slightly above average when compared to state averages.

Jimmie Pond is classified as sensitive on the DEP's Non-Point Source Priority Watershed List under the category of Threatened Lakes Priority. Lakes classified as sensitive are those that are susceptible to phosphorus inputs due to the lake's hydrology and threats in the watershed.

The Jimmie Pond watershed is classified by the DEP as at Risk even though a considerable fraction of the watershed, and 90 percent of the shoreline, is state-owned conservation land.

Jimmie Pond is categorized by the DEP as "attaining some designated uses, insufficient information for others".

Little Jimmie Pond

Little Jimmie Pond, a five-acre waterbody, is also located in the southeastern part of Manchester. It is relatively undeveloped. There is no lake information or water quality data available for this pond.

Hutchinson Pond

Area: 105 acres

Maximum Depth: 24 feet

Mean Depth: 10 feet

Invasive species: unknown

Fisheries management: warmwater

Fish species:	
American Eel	Blacknose dace
Fallfish	Brown Bullhead
Golden shiner	White perch
Yellow perch	Largemouth Bass
Pumpkinseed	White Sucker

Source: Lakes of Maine

The Lakes of Maine website did not have any information available on aquatic plants, mussel species or crayfish species for Hutchinson Pond.

Loon counts have taken place on Hutchinson Pond sporadically since 1983.

Loon Counts					
Year	# Adults	# Chicks	Year	# Adults	# Chicks
1983	2	0	1985	0	0
1984	0	0	1991	0	0

Source: Lakes of Maine

The information in the Water-Quality Assessment table below compares the water quality for Hutchinson Pond to state averages.

Water Quality Assessment		
Variable	State Average	Hutchinson Pond
Transparency	5.5 M	5.6 M
Chlorophyll	5.4 ppb	3.1 ppb
Phosphorous	11.1 ppb	9 ppb
Color	20.7 SPU	N/A
Alkalinity	11.7 mg/L	12.1 mg/L
pH	6.8	N/A
Conductivity	53.0 μ S/cm	N/A

Source: Lakes of Maine

Although some water quality data for Hutchinson Pond was not available, the data that is available is comparable to the state averages.

Hutchinson Pond, in southeastern Manchester, is categorized by the EPA as “attaining some designated uses, insufficient information for others”. Like Jimmy Pond and Little Jimmie Pond, Hutchinson Pond is fairly marshy with little access and a limited number of ownerships. The Kennebec Land Trust (KLT) owns an access point from the road, which includes carry-in boat access. Central Maine Power owns a portion of the shoreline.

Hutchinson Pond is categorized by the DEP as “attaining some designated uses, insufficient information for others”.

Bog Pond

Bog Pond is a small, one-acre pond in south-central Manchester. It is undeveloped and protected by MDIF&W, which owns abutting Jamie’s Pond. It is used recreationally for hiking, cross-country skiing, and bird watching. The shoreland of Bog Pond is managed forest land.

Shed Pond

Area: 51 acres

Maximum Depth: 12 feet

Mean Depth: 5 feet

Invasive species: unknown

Fisheries management: warmwater

Fish species:	
American Eel	Blacknose dace
Chain pickerel	Brown Bullhead
Creek chub	White Sucker
Golden shiner	Pumpkinseed
Yellow perch	

Source: Lakes of Maine

The Lakes of Maine website did not have any information available on aquatic plants, mussel species or crayfish species for Shed Pond.

Loon counts have taken place on Shed Pond sporadically since 1983.

Loon Counts					
Year	# Adults	# Chicks	Year	# Adults	# Chicks
1985	2	1	1995	2	2
1986	2	0	1996	2	0
1987	2	1	1997	2	1
1989	0	0	2000	2	0
1990	1	0	2001	2	2
1991	2	0	2002	2	0
1993	2	2	2003	2	0
1994	1	1	-	-	

Source: Lakes of Maine

The information in the Water-Quality Assessment table below compares the water quality for Shed Pond to state averages.

Water Quality Assessment

Variable	State Average	Shed Pond
Transparency	5.5 M	2.4 M
Chlorophyll	5.4 ppb	9.6 ppb
Phosphorous	11.1 ppb	19 ppb
Color	20.7 SPU	46 SPU
Alkalinity	11.7 mg/L	15.5 mg/L
pH	6.8	7.07
Conductivity	53.0 μ S/cm	51 μ S/cm

Source: Lakes of Maine

The water quality data for Shed Pond indicates that there is possibly an excess amount of plant material in this pond, based on the reduced transparency, high chlorophyll levels and high color levels.

Shed Pond in the northwest part of Manchester is also protected by the Kennebec Land Trust. The shores of this pond have seen increased residential development and wood harvesting in the watershed. There are steep slopes that exacerbate runoff. This pond is popular for hiking and birdwatching.

Shed Pond is categorized by the DEP as “attaining some designated uses, insufficient information for others”.

Tyler Pond

Area: 25 acres

Maximum Depth: 70 feet

Mean Depth: 24 feet

Invasive species: unknown

Fisheries management: coldwater

Fish species:	
Brook trout	Brown bullhead
Golden Shiner	Rainbow Smelt

Source: Lakes of Maine

The Lakes of Maine website did not have any information available on aquatic plants, loons, or crayfish species for Tyler Pond. BwH identifies Fall Fimbry as a species of special concern as well as awned sedge and dwarf bulrush as threatened species present at Tyler Pond.

Mussel Species: Eastern elliptio, Eastern floater

The information in the Water-Quality Assessment table below compares the water quality for Tyler Pond to state averages.

Water Quality Assessment

Variable	State Average	Tyler Pond
Transparency	5.5 M	7.4 M
Chlorophyll	5.4 ppb	1.7 ppb
Phosphorous	11.1 ppb	11 ppb
Color	20.7 SPU	14 SPU
Alkalinity	11.7 mg/L	32.9 mg/L
pH	6.8	7.24
Conductivity	53.0 μ S/cm	85 μ S/cm

Source: Lakes of Maine

The water quality data for Tyler Pond indicates that it is comparable, or slightly better than the state averages. This pond is categorized by the DEP as “attaining some designated uses, insufficient information for others”.

Tyler Pond, in the northeastern part of Manchester, is managed by the MDIF&W; it is stocked with brook trout. The shores of the pond are undeveloped. Its hiking and carry-in boating opportunities make it popular for fishing and with tourists. It maintains water quality despite steep slopes containing some erosion from both human and illegal ATV access.

Tyler Pond is part of the BwH Belgrade Esker and Kettle Complex Focus Area.

Silver Lake (Figure Eight Pond)

Area: 34 acres

Maximum Depth: 62 feet

Mean Depth: 17 feet

Invasive species: unknown

Fisheries management: coldwater

Fish species:	
Banded Killifish	Blacknose Dace
Brook Trout	Brown Bullhead
Golden Shiner	Largemouth Bass
Rainbow Smelt	Smallmouth Bass
Yellow Perch	

Source: Lakes of Maine

The Lakes of Maine website did not have any information available on aquatic plants, loons, mussel species, or crayfish species for Silver Lake.

The information in the Water-Quality Assessment table below compares the water quality for Silver Lake to state averages.

Water Quality Assessment

Variable	State Average	Silver Lake
Transparency	5.5 M	5.7 M
Chlorophyll	5.4 ppb	4.1 ppb
Phosphorous	11.1 ppb	10 ppb
Color	20.7 SPU	10 SPU
Alkalinity	11.7 mg/L	8.7 mg/L
pH	6.8	6.82
Conductivity	53.0 μ S/cm	44 μ S/cm

Source: Lakes of Maine

The water quality data available for Silver Lake indicates that it is comparable, or slightly better than state averages.

Silver Lake is located half in Manchester and half in Sidney. It is popular for swimming and fishing, and it has a boat landing. Silver Lake faces some threat from development. Silver Lake is categorized by the DEP as “attaining some designated uses, insufficient information for others”.

Fairbanks Pond

Area: 16 acres

Maximum Depth: 35 feet

Mean Depth: 10 feet

Invasive species: unknown

Fisheries management: cold water & warmwater

Fish species:	
Brook Trout	Brown Bullhead
Brown Trout	Chain Pickerel
Golden Shiner	Largemouth Bass
White Perch	Yellow Perch

Source: Lakes of Maine

The Lakes of Maine website did not have any information available on aquatic plants, loons, mussel species, or crayfish species for Fairbanks Pond.

The information in the Water-Quality Assessment table below compares the water quality for Fairbanks Pond to state averages.

Water Quality Assessment

Variable	State Average	Fairbanks Pond
Transparency	5.5 M	3.6 M
Chlorophyll	5.4 ppb	12.5 ppb
Phosphorous	11.1 ppb	15 ppb
Color	20.7 SPU	23 SPU
Alkalinity	11.7 mg/L	4.6 mg/L
pH	6.8	6.16
Conductivity	53.0 μ S/cm	27 μ S/cm

Source: Lakes of Maine

From the table above, the water quality in Fairbanks Pond is similar to the state's average; however, there appears to be more plant matter in this pond. Steep slopes and shallow water with relatively little turnover, and residential development pose threats to water quality.

Fairbanks Pond is in northeastern Manchester. Unfortunately, there is no longer a boat launch at this pond and the only available access points for putting in a new launch are too steep. MDIF&W will not stock fish if there is no public boat launch/accessibility. Regardless, it is still a popular location for fishing. The town has right-of-way through Fairbanks Road that is adequate for walking access to the pond. Parking is limited and it is not easy to find.

The lake is categorized by the DEP as "attaining some designated uses, insufficient information for others".

Lily Pond

Area: 4 acres

Invasive species: unknown

The Lakes of Maine website did not have any information available on fish species, aquatic plants, loons, mussel species, or crayfish species for Lily Pond.

The information in the Water-Quality Assessment table below compares the water quality for Lily Pond to state averages.

Water Quality Assessment

Variable	State Average	Lily Pond
Transparency	5.5 M	1.8 M
Chlorophyll	5.4 ppb	16.5 ppb
Phosphorous	11.1 ppb	N/A
Color	20.7 SPU	33 SPU
Alkalinity	11.7 mg/L	17.0 mg/L
pH	6.8	6.40
Conductivity	53.0 μ S/cm	53 μ S/cm

Source: Lakes of Maine

Water quality in Lily Pond is below the average for the state. Based on the high levels of chlorophyll, color, and reduced transparency, it seems as if there is an abundance of plant material in this pond.

Lily Pond is in the northeastern corner of Manchester, near Fairbanks Pond, Tyler Pond, Silver Lake, and Mud Pond. The DEP classified Lily Pond as “attaining some designated uses, insufficient information for others”.

Mud Pond

Area: 3 acres

There was no information on invasive species, fish species, loon counts, aquatic plants, mussels, or crayfish for Mud Pond.

The information in the Water-Quality Assessment table below compares the water quality for Mud Pond to state averages.

Water Quality Assessment

Variable	State Average	Mud Pond
Transparency	5.5 M	1.5 M
Chlorophyll	5.4 ppb	12.6 ppb
Phosphorous	11.1 ppb	26 ppb
Color	20.7 SPU	35 SPU
Alkalinity	11.7 mg/L	12.0 mg/L
pH	6.8	6.48
Conductivity	53.0 μ S/cm	42 μ S/cm

Source: Lakes of Maine

Water quality in Mud Pond is slightly below state average. Based on the high levels of chlorophyll, color, and reduced transparency, it seems as if there is an abundance of plant material in this pond.

Mud Pond is in the northeastern corner of Manchester. The DEP classified Mud Pond as “attaining some designated uses, insufficient information for others”.

Threats to Manchester’s Water Resources

Sources of potential threats to water quality are too numerous to list extensively, but a few include increased and poorly managed development, impervious surfaces related to development, faulty or failing septic systems, agricultural fertilizers, poor stormwater management, erosion, and much more.

Phosphorus

The single greatest threat to water quality at present is the introduction of phosphorus through runoff from within the watershed. Phosphorus is a naturally occurring element and a plant nutrient; however, in excess, phosphorus is responsible for causing nuisance algae blooms and extreme aquatic plant growth. Algal blooms can result in reduced dissolved oxygen levels which lead to fish die-offs.

The level of phosphorus entering a waterbody is a direct function of disruption in the watershed, primarily from human-induced activities. Manchester’s main watersheds are Cobbosseecontee Lake Watershed, Bond Brook Watershed, Messalonskee Lake Watershed, and Upper Cobbosseecontee Stream Watershed. Since most of these areas have some degree of development, there is potential for pollution introduction.

Runoff

Impervious surfaces can cause runoff and result in erosion during precipitation events if not effectively managed. When the water runs off impervious surfaces, it collects pollutants that end up in stormwater drains and eventually find their way into waterbodies. Typically, the erosion related to poorly maintained camp roads and gravel driveways within watersheds is the biggest contributors to runoff and increased phosphorus intake in waterbodies.

Septic Systems

Faulty or failing septic systems in older or seasonal homes in the Shoreland Zone are another threat to water quality. Many seasonal homes that have been converted to year-round use may have septic systems that are inadequate. Many older homes may have faulty septic systems.

Fertilizer

Fertilizer associated with agricultural activities or used on lawns can run off land into surface water, resulting in algal blooms. If severe enough, algal blooms can drastically reduce water quality. The lack of natural, vegetative buffer from lawn to waterbody is known to cause serious water quality degradation.

Infrastructure and Development

Work on public infrastructure near and in the water has to be managed to avoid erosion and sedimentation. Careful consideration must be given to the miles of ditching, and hundreds of road culverts that are town-maintained. Best Management Practices (BMPs) for activities such as culvert replacement, street sweeping, and salt/sand pile maintenance are essential in protecting water quality. BMPs and strategies are gathered and utilized from many sources but primarily from Maine DOT.

Manchester is preparing to conduct a survey of existing culverts to assess condition and capacity to handle increased storm flow. There have been multiple culvert washouts and road damage in recent years due to precipitation events.

Aquatic and Terrestrial Invasive Species

An increasing concern in relation to water quality is the threat of invasive water plants. Maine, for years isolated from the plague of milfoil, is now seeing increasingly frequent occurrences. Eurasian water milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum* L.), the most aggressive species, was found in Manchester's Cobbossee Lake in 2018, along with European frog's bit (*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*). Variable leaf watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum heterophyllum*) has also been found in Cobbossee Lake in 2020. More information on invasive aquatic plants can be found here: <https://www.maine.gov/dep/water/invasives/>

Another growing area of concern is invasive terrestrial plants (<https://www.maine.gov/dacf/php/horticulture/invasiveplants.shtml>). These plants outcompete native plants and change their habitat so it can no longer support native plants. The state breaks invasive plants into the following categories:

- **Do Not Sell Invasive Plant List**: The Do Not Sell List is also sometimes referred to as the Prohibited Plant List or the Banned Plant List. It is illegal to import, export, buy, sell or intentionally propagate for sale the species listed on the Do Not Sell Plant List.
- **Watch List**: Plants on the Watch List have been evaluated using the same criteria as the plants on the Do Not Sell List and while they meet some of the invasive plant criteria, the evidence is insufficient to add the plants to the Do Not Sell List at this time. The Watch List is intended to guide the evaluation process the next time the Invasive Plant Rule is reviewed. The plants on the Watch List may continue to be sold.
- **Plants of Special Concern**: These species can be sold but must have a sign or label indicating that the plants may be invasive in some habitats and alternative plants should be considered.

Point and Nonpoint Source Pollution

Pollution can occur in one or two ways: either from a direct, identifiable source, or an indirect, unidentified source.

Point Source Pollution can be linked back to one location, or point, such as a leaking oil tank. Point sources come from a direct source and are easily identified and managed.

Nonpoint Source Pollution cannot be traced to one sole source. One example is stormwater runoff. Stormwater can come from anywhere, especially impervious surfaces. Stormwater is water that does not soak into the ground during a precipitation event, but flows on top of the ground instead, to a body of water. As this water travels across the surface of the ground, it collects pollutants such as petroleum products, heavy metals, fertilizers and manure, which can originate from any location within a watershed. Where stormwater runoff erodes soil, the soil itself transports phosphorus into waterbodies.

Known point sources of pollution, both current and past, in Manchester include (not a complete list):

- Four leaking above ground oil tanks- (Pond Road, Williamson Road, Readfield Road, Prescott Road)
- Two leaking below ground storage tanks- (Pond Road, Rt 202)
- Dry cleaners
- Various waste spills
- RCRA medium and small quantity generators
- Salt and sand storage areas
- Several resource excavation activities
- Ash utilization site on Prescott Road

The DEP does not have any record of combined sewer outfalls, combined sewer overflows, or overboard discharge programs in Manchester.

Non-point source pollution with no single, identifiable source, has historically been a threat in Manchester. The development of Manchester's shorelines and tributaries with incremental increases in impervious surface has contributed to non-point source pollution of the water resource. Agriculture and forestry can also be significant non-point contributors, and both are practiced in Manchester. Active gravel pits over the Bond Brook aquifer threaten non-point source pollution of a different type.

Threats to the water resource are generally addressed through both regulatory and non-regulatory methods. Manchester, in partnership with various advocacy groups and stakeholders, seeks to meet the challenges which may emerge in the future through facility upgrades, owner education, monitoring and management in the case of shorelands, and through its Land Use Ordinance.

Manchester's Land Use and Development Ordinance regulates activities that have potential to have an adverse impact on the environment, such as mineral exploration, timber harvesting, and waste disposal in the following sections:

- Article II- *Land Use Districts and Uses*, Section 6- *General Performance Requirements and Standards*;
- Article II- *Land Use Districts and Uses*, Section 8- *Performance Requirements and Standards for Specific Activities*;
- Article III- *Site Plan Review* includes further standards and requirements for protecting the town and the environment.

Manchester's ordinances will be reviewed in full under subheading, **Regulatory Protections**, below.

Remediation Sites

Manchester has two remediation sites listed by the DEP.

- Manchester Fire Department- 18 Readfield Rd, 0.43 acres.
 - Program- Brownfields.
 - Status- Remedy in place- Closed.
 - Status Date- 4/23/2020
- Hilliard Junkyard- 85 Foye Rd, no acreage cited.
 - Program- Uncontrolled sites.
 - Status- Remedy in place. Closed.
 - Status Date- 6/17/2020

Wildlife Habitat in Manchester

Waterbodies, watercourses, and wetlands are necessary habitats for the continued survival of many wildlife species. Unfragmented blocks of land are as essential to high-quality habitat as the many watercourses and wetlands found in Manchester because they provide sanctuary for woodland birds, and other wildlife species, including critical habitat for some rare or endangered species.

The extent and quality of wildlife and their habitat is an indicator of not just the richness and diversity of the flora and fauna in Manchester, but the overall health of the ecosystem. The availability of high-quality habitat for plants, animals, and fish is essential to maintaining abundant and diverse populations for ecological, economic, and recreational purposes.

Significant habitats, as defined by MDIF&W, include species appearing on the official state or federal list of endangered or threatened species, high and moderate value deer wintering areas, and high and moderate value waterfowl and wading bird habitats.

Before conducting any activities in, on, or over significant wildlife habitats, a National Resources Protection Act (NRPA) permit must be obtained. Activities include construction, repair, or alteration of any permanent structure; dredging, bulldozing, removing or displacing soil, sand, or vegetation; and drainage or filling. The standard for protecting significant habitats highlights mitigation and compensation. Actions must be taken to A) avoid negative impacts on habitats, B) minimize the impacts if unavoidable, C) restore or rehabilitate impacted habitats, D) reduce an impact over time, or E) replace the affected habitat.

Deer Wintering Areas

Although white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) are common in Manchester, their existence is predicated on sufficient habitat. Summer habitat is commonly referred to as “edge habitat,” which includes farm fields, orchards, and open areas adjacent to forested lands. The habitat limitations for deer occur in the winter when there is heavy snow and extreme cold. Deer wintering areas (DWA) are defined as a forested area used by deer when snow depth in the open/hardwoods exceeds 12 inches; deer sinking depth in the open/hardwoods exceeds eight inches and mean daily temperatures are below 32° F. Non-forested wetlands, non-stocked clear cuts, hardwood types, and stands predominated by Eastern Larch are included in DWAs only if less than 10 acres in size. Agricultural and development areas within DWAs are excluded regardless of size. Deer wintering areas that have yet to be confirmed through professional survey are considered “Candidate Deer Wintering Areas” until otherwise verified through a survey.

Manchester has approximately six “Candidate Deer Wintering Areas,” either entirely or partially within town boundaries. They have yet to be confirmed through a survey. They are scattered throughout town in no uniform way (see *Critical Natural Resources Map* in Appendix).

There are no specific protections in place for deer wintering areas in Manchester, and some of the areas identified by BwH could face pressure from development (especially along the Prescott Road, Scribner Hill Road, and east of the Pond Road). MDIF&W does not recommend limitations on development or timber cutting to preserve deer wintering areas but encourages landowners to adopt management practices that will preserve their integrity.

Other Wildlife

Raccoons, beavers, and red foxes are the most common furbearers in Manchester, along with mink, fisher, coyote, otter, and various waterfowl.

Accurate or even estimated population counts of waterfowl populations are not available, aside from the loon survey by the Maine Audubon Society. MDIF&W has been conducting an ongoing survey of wild duck populations, of which the information is not yet available.

Other than generalized habitat protection measures, primarily for wetlands, the state has no coordinated program for maintaining species populations. Various conservation groups and lake associations engage in programs to promote local populations such as putting out nesting boxes for ducks or platforms for loons.

There are numerous waterfowl and wading bird habitats scattered throughout Manchester, varying in size. These include freshwater breeding, migration staging, and winter habitat locations for inland waterfowl, and breeding, feeding, migration and roosting areas for inland wading birds. There are several of these locations in and around Cobbosseecontee Lake and Stream, Hutchinson, Jimmie, and Shed Ponds, Vaughn Brook, Bog Brook, Tanning Brook, and Sanford Brook.

Since 2006, Maine's Shoreland Zoning Regulation requires that waterfowl and wading bird habitats, as designated by MDIF&W, must be protected by a 250-foot buffer.

Manchester has upwards of 20 known inland waterfowl/wading bird habitats designated by MDIF&W; they can be seen on the *Critical Natural Resources Map* in Appendix. They are around Manchester's numerous lakes, ponds, and wetland areas.

There are numerous locations throughout Manchester that have been delineated by the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI). NWI uses aerial photography to approximate wetland locations; it is not a comprehensive mapping wetland resources and typically under-represents the presence of wetlands on the landscape. Because of this, the presence of wetlands needs to be determined in the field prior to conducting activities that could result in wetland disturbance.

The BwH maps also show an abundance of wetland areas valuable for wildlife that are not regulated as inland waterfowl and wading bird habitats, so they are not afforded the protection of the 250-foot buffer.

Rare, Endangered, and Valuable Species and Habitats

The Beginning with Habitat (BwH) program also compiles data on rare, endangered, and valuable species and habitats in Manchester (see *Critical Natural Resources Map* in Appendix). This information covers not just rare, threatened, or endangered wildlife, but also rare or exemplary plants and natural communities, essential wildlife habitats, and significant wildlife habitats.

The sections below detail Manchester's rare and endangered species and noted valuable habitat areas.

Animals

There are several locations known to be habitat to species of Special Concern, and one location known to be habitat for an Endangered Species in Manchester.

One of the locations known to be in the habitat of Great Blue Herons (*Ardea herodias*) has been identified in the northern part of town, off Prescott Road, near Wilderness Drive. The other location known to be Great Blue Heron habitat is near Bog Brook and Meadow Hill Road. The location is somewhat general for the birds' protection.

Great Blue Herons are a species of Special Concern in Maine. A species of Special Concern is any species of fish or wildlife that does not meet the criteria of an Endangered or Threatened species but is particularly vulnerable, and could easily become endangered, threatened, or extirpated due to restricted distribution, low or declining numbers, specialized habitat needs or limits, or other factors. Special Concern species are established by policy, not by regulation, and are used for planning and informational purposes; they do not have the legal weight of Endangered and Threatened species. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife reviews the list of Special Concern species at the beginning of each calendar year and based on criteria in the Maine Endangered and Threatened Species Listing Handbook, revises the list as appropriate.

North Acres Wildlife Conservation Area off Lyons Road is actively managed to support two grassland birds of special concern: the Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*) and the Bobolink (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*).

Eastern Meadowlark – Considered rare in Maine, these bright yellow-breasted birds inhabit grasslands, hayfields, and pastures. They nest on the ground in woven grass nests, often in depressions or hoofprints. Once more common due to farmland expansion, their populations have declined over the past 20 years due to habitat loss and human encroachment.



Bobolink – Known for their striking black-and-white plumage and bubbly song, Bobolinks breed in Maine's grasslands before migrating up to 6,000 miles to South America. They nest on the ground in tall grass, which makes them vulnerable to mowing. Bobolinks have declined steeply since the 1960s, largely due to habitat loss, fragmentation, and threats along migration and wintering routes.



Grassland birds like these are declining across their range. The Somerset County Soil and Water Conservation District's Ag Allies Grassland Bird Project partners with landowners to improve nesting success through technical assistance, outreach, and incentive programs. In Manchester, farmers are protecting these species by delaying hay cutting and using other conservation strategies, highlighting the importance of public education and landowner participation.

The Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) was identified along Granite Hill Road, on the Hallowell town line. Peregrine Falcons were federally delisted in 1999; however, the breeding population in Maine is still considered endangered under Maine's Endangered Species Act.

The Peregrine Falcon is famously known as the fastest bird in the world. The dramatic "stoop" (a high-speed dive with wings folded) enables the Peregrine Falcon to reach speeds of 200 miles/hour.

Peregrine Falcons were once endangered globally and were federally listed in the United States in 1970 due to DDE (a byproduct of the insecticide DDT) and other human influences, which impaired nesting falcons. Between 1984 and 1997, a total of 153 young Peregrines were reintroduced to Maine; though, they remain relatively rare.



Plants

Maine Natural Areas Program (MNAP) through Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry (DACF) ranks species on both a global level and a state level. A 5-point ranking system from critically imperiled (1) to secure (5) facilitates a quick assessment of a species or habitat type's rarity. Each species or habitat is assigned to both a state (S) or global (G) ranking on the scale of 1-5. Factors such as range extent, the number of occurrences, intensity of threats, as well as other factors, contribute to the assignment of state and global ranks. The definitions for state and global ranks are comparable but applied at different geographic scales; for example, something that is state imperiled may be globally secure.

There is one location in Manchester providing habitats for a species of rare plant, and one natural community (detailed below).

Fall Fimbr (*Fimbristylis autumnalis*) is a species of special concern in Maine. This plant has been identified on the north shore of Tyler Pond, in northeastern Manchester.

Its state ranking is S2S3. This S#S# ranking is used to indicate any range of uncertainty about the status of the species. In other words, S2S3 falls between:

S2- Imperiled in Maine – At high risk of extirpation in the jurisdiction due to restricted range, few populations or occurrences, steep declines, severe threats, or other factors.

S3- Vulnerable in Maine – At moderate risk of extirpation in the jurisdiction due to a fairly restricted range, relatively few populations or occurrences, recent and widespread declines, threats, or other factors.

The Fall Fimbry's global ranking is G5 which means it is globally secure and at a very low risk for extinction globally due to a very extensive range, abundant populations, or occurrences, and little to no concern from decline or threats.

Habitat: Sandy or peaty shores and low ground. [Open wetland, not coastal nor rivershore (non-forested, wetland)].

Ecological Characteristics: In Maine, *Fimbristylis* grows in sandy wet soils of pondshores where the water level drops over the summer (Outwash Plain Pondshores). It is typically found growing beneath the canopy of other herbaceous plants such as Brown-fruit Rush, Three-way Sedge, and Goldentop. It is not known to occur in shrubby or wooded parts of wetlands.

Range: Georgia to Louisiana, north to central Maine, southwest Quebec and southern Ontario. Also listed as rare in Vermont, but not elsewhere in New England.

Known Distributions in Maine: This rare plant has been documented from a total of 22 towns in the following counties: Androscoggin, Cumberland, Franklin, Kennebec, Oxford, Penobscot, Sagadahoc, Waldo, York.

Phenology: Flowers August - October; fruits September - October.

Reasons for Rarity: Near northern limit of range, and Outwash Plain Pondshore habitat (detailed below) naturally scarce.

Conservation Considerations: Heavy all-terrain vehicle use of the sandy habitats where this occurs has degraded the habitat in some locations and continued use will be detrimental to the plant populations.



Important Habitat

The **Outwash Plain Pondshore community** or scientifically known as Three-way Sedge – Goldenrod Outwash Plain Pondshore is a special natural community. This community's conservation status is S1-

S1- Critically Imperiled in Maine – At very high risk of extirpation in the jurisdiction due to very restricted range, very few populations or occurrences, very steep declines, severe threats, or other factors.

Community Description: This community, found around Lily Pond, consists of concentric zones of different herbs around a central pond. A band of shrubs (highbush blueberry, maleberry, buttonbush, leatherleaf) is typical at the upland/pondshore edge. Moving pondward, the next zone is dominated by narrow-leaved goldenrod and three-way sedge, with patches of flat-sedge and brown-fruited rush. In a narrow band at the top of this zone, golden pert and meadow beauty are characteristic and may form dense patches. The next zone, exposed less frequently and for a shorter time, is dominated by pipewort and spikerushes. There is no well-developed bryoid layer.



Soil and Site Characteristics: This community forms a band around the perimeter of shallow, sandy bottomed ponds in glacial outwash plains. It occurs on shores that are inundated for the early part of the growing season and exposed later in the growing season, although actual exposure varies from year to year. The substrate is sandy, occasionally mucky, and usually saturated to the surface or nearly so.

Conservation, Wildlife and Management Considerations: This extremely rare natural community is under pressure from adjacent land uses and recreational impacts. The periphery of several sites has been developed or converted to other uses. At the few known sites on conservation lands, the major recreational impact is off-road vehicle use. At low water, ATV use has significantly altered vegetation at some sites. Hydrologic integrity is also a concern; as water use increases from neighboring homes and businesses, aquifer drawdowns could impair these water dependent systems and lead to vegetational changes.

These outwash plain pondshores provide excellent foraging habitat for the ribbon snake. The pondshores also provide habitat for the big bluet, a rare damselfly. Other more wide-ranging rare insects are likely to be found in this community. At sites close to the coast, this community may also provide important feeding habitat for rare wading birds such as the little blue heron.

Distribution: Extreme southwestern Maine (Eastern Broadleaf Forest Province), extending southward along the coast to Massachusetts; disjunct in Nova Scotia and Ontario. Landscape Pattern: Small Patch.

Brook Trout Habitat

Maine supports the most extensive distribution and abundance of wild brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) in their native range within the United States; more than 1,200 lakes and ponds are managed for brook trout, of which approximately 60 percent are sustained by natural reproduction. In addition, brook trout occurs in an estimated 22,248 miles of stream habitat, the vast majority of which are wild. Although brook trout populations are declining across their historic range within the United States (Maine to Georgia), a 2006 range-wide assessment by the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture found that Maine is the only state with extensive, intact populations of wild, self-reproducing brook trout in lakes and ponds, including some lakes over 5,000 acres in size. Lake populations of brook trout are intact in 185 sub watersheds (18 percent) of their historic range in Maine, and only six intact watersheds throughout the 16 other states. Maine is the last true stronghold for stream dwelling populations of wild brook trout, supporting more than twice the number of intact sub watersheds as the other 16 states in the eastern range combined.

Beginning with Habitat delineates Spring Brook and Rockwood Brook, which feed Bond Brook, as significant wild brook trout habitat. These stream habitats are priority conservation areas for wild brook trout and include a recommended 100-foot (on either side) no disturbance buffer around the waterbodies. These areas may also be candidates for instream habitat restoration actions and/or stream connectivity enhancement.

Focus Area

Beginning with Habitat Focus Areas of Statewide Ecological Significance are areas to prioritize collaborative, non-regulatory conservation actions that benefit biodiversity in Maine.

Focus Areas were mapped to highlight natural areas of statewide biodiversity importance and areas that contain high concentrations of at-risk species and habitats. Though Focus Areas occupy only about 11.5 percent of Maine's land area, collectively they include examples of over 85 percent of rare, threatened, and endangered plant and animal species and high-quality examples of all natural community types.

Voluntary and collaborative conservation actions for Focus Areas are diverse and may include purchasing land or conservation easements from willing sellers, wetland restoration, aquatic or terrestrial road crossing improvements, municipal planning, public outreach and education, invasive species management, and private landowner technical assistance and financial incentives.

The Focus Area that extends into Manchester's northeast corner also spans Belgrade and Sidney. The entire area covers 5,988.8 acres and is made up of two separate but overlapping Focus Areas known as the Belgrade Eskers and Kettle Complex (in Manchester) and Messalonskee Lake Marsh (not in Manchester).

Focus Areas are landscape scale areas with exceptionally rich concentrations of at-risk species and habitats. They are non-regulatory designations intended as planning tools for landowners, conservation entities and towns, and to help support conservation initiatives in those areas of the landscape with the greatest biodiversity significance. More information on focus areas can be found here: <https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mnap/focusarea/factsheets.htm>

The Belgrade Eskers and Kettle Complex- This Focus Area extends from Great Pond's Foster Point in Belgrade to Tyler Pond in North Augusta. Geologists have long considered it one of the very best esker systems in Maine. It includes fine examples of kettlehole ponds and wetlands that are associated with the esker system. Most of the esker itself has now been removed from the landscape due to sand and gravel extraction. However, a few portions remain that are worth conservation attention. The largest are the Colby – Marston Bog and environs at the north end of the system, and the Penney Pond to Tyler Pond area at the south end of the system. More information on this area can be found here: https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mnap/focusarea/belgrade_esker_kettle_complex_focus_area.pdf

Undeveloped Habitat Blocks and Conserved Land

There is a distinct, direct relationship between the quantity and variety of wildlife and the size of their habitat. Of course, there is urban wildlife such as skunks and mourning doves that do not require significant portions of land to thrive. However, many other types of animals are much less conspicuous and depend upon unbroken stretches of forest for survival. As roads, farms, and houses intrude on the habitats of these creatures, the large habitat blocks become fragmented, displacing the wildlife that relies on them.

Development in rural areas often causes these fragmentations, reducing the land's value as wildlife habitat. Wildlife travel corridors linking individual habitat blocks together are critical to accommodate animal movement. Ensuring wildlife travel corridors helps preserve the region's biodiversity and maintains rural community character. Limiting development at the edges of unfragmented habitat also helps maintain environmental integrity by giving forest-dwelling creatures a natural buffer.

The Beginning with Habitat program maps these unfragmented habitat blocks. The BwH maps include information such as who owns the habitat block and how it is conserved (federally protected, state protected, municipally owned and protected, or through conservation easement). The *Critical Natural Resources Map* in the Appendix shows these unfragmented blocks, as well.

Aside from the town center, roadways, and dense development on the lakeshores, Manchester is, for the most part, surprisingly unfragmented. In fact, one of the larger unfragmented blocks (at 2,216 acres) is just south of the town center.

Manchester is also fortunate to have permanently conserved/preserved land scattered throughout town. These properties are conserved or preserved in a variety of ways. Below is a list of properties and their conservation statuses:

Fairbanks Pond Parcel

This town-owned parcel totals 65 acres and was tax-acquired. It includes 778 feet of frontage on Fairbanks Pond, which is a lovely “kettle hole” pond, surrounded by steep-sided sand eskers. The surrounding area, known as Summerhaven, contains many such ponds and eskers, which are high narrow ridges of sand and gravel formed by ancient glaciers. There are several tote roads and trails throughout the property. Access is difficult, as the right-of-way via Fairbanks Road is unclear, and Scenic Drive is in very poor repair. The primary use of the property is currently for tree harvesting. The State's ATV trail, along with club snowmobile trails, traverse the southeast corner. The Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry (DACF) owns the adjacent land surrounding Tyler Pond and has an agreement with the town to allow ATV use on the designated trail, which makes a 6-mile circuit. (See “Tyler Pond WMA” below.)

Uses and restrictions: All nonmotorized travel, swimming. ATVs on designated trails only. Snowmobiles on designated trails only. No camping or fires.

Tyler Pond Wildlife Management Area

The Tyler Pond WMA comprises 128-acres. A small kettle pond is the centerpiece of the property which the Maine Department of Conservation (DOC) (now DACF) purchased in the 1970s with federal Land and Water Conservation Funds to be “forever dedicated as recreation land to be available for public use and enjoyment.” Because the department's plans to develop the property as a state park failed to materialize, it entered into an agreement with the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) in 1992 to manage the area as a wildlife management area. The agreement between the two agencies states that “the MDIFW shall not deny the public reasonable access to the property (including Tyler Pond and Lily Pond) for the purposes of fishing, swimming, and recreational boating.” MDIFW primarily manages the pond for cold water fishing, and maintains a boat access site on the north end. In addition, DACF coordinates the use of the property with that of surrounding landowners, including the town of Manchester, for an ATV trail network. Swimming is not allowed on land owned by the department.

Uses and restrictions: All nonmotorized travel. ATVs on designated trails only. Snowmobiles on designated trails only. ATVs and snowmobiles have right of way on designated trails. Hunting, fishing, hand-carry boating. No swimming, camping, or fires.

Allen-Whitney Memorial Forest

Edward A. Whitney donated this 708-acre tract of land to the New England Forestry Foundation in 1955. The Allen family settled on a portion of the land during colonial times. Now the area is one of the organization's 125 demonstration forests in New England where land is managed to teach woodlot owners about sustainable forestry. An internal road system, built in the 1960s, provides access to all portions of the property for forest management and public access to the forest and Shed Pond. The Manchester Country Riders maintain snowmobile trails through the property. A network of non-motorized trails has been developed as well, with more trails being planned. Trailhead access is at the North Manchester Meeting House Church on Scribner Hill Rd. Limited parking is also available at the sign at the crest of the hill on Scribner Hill Rd. Recent tree harvesting in 2006 have made some trails difficult to follow. Trails have been expanded and maintained by the Central Maine ND Mountain Bike Club.

Uses and restrictions: All nonmotorized travel. Snowmobiles on designated trails only. ATVs are prohibited except by permission. Hunting, fishing, and nature study are allowed. No camping or fires.

Wyman Memorial Forest

This 40-acre upland area, including the top of Monk's Hill, has a red pine forest and a mixed growth forest typical of reclaimed farmland. The area offers excellent birding in the spring for many woodland species. Deer and turkey are commonly observed. A trail (old woods road) transects the property from the access point on Route 17 to privately owned fields on the north side of the property. The trail climbs moderately to the top of Monks Hill, about a 250-foot elevation change from Route 17. Parking is in front of the Case Cemetery on Route 17 in Readfield near the Manchester line. From the cemetery walk west approximately 300 yards on Route 17 to the right-of-way leading to the Wyman Forest. A small KLT sign marks the access point. A large memorial plaque is located on the property.

Uses and restrictions: All nonmotorized travel on designated trail only. Snowmobiles on designated trails only. No ATVs, no camping.

Gannett Woods

This 120-acre preserve protects important wildlife habitat and woodland and includes Shed Pond. In 2004 John and Pat Gannett donated this property to the Kennebec Land Trust to ensure the shoreline of Shed Pond would remain free of development. Access is via the Allen-Whitney Memorial Forest (see above) and by KLT entrance on Scribner Hill Road.

Uses and restrictions: All nonmotorized travel on designated trail only. Snowmobiles on designated trails only. No ATVs, no camping.

Lakeside Orchards

Jacob Pope planted the first apple trees here in the 1870s. The farm now encompasses 189 acres with thousands of apple trees. In 1999 the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry acquired a conservation easement on Lakeside Orchards with funding from the state Land for Maine's Future and the federal Farmland Protection programs. Lakeside Orchards operates a retail store on Rte. 17.

Uses and restrictions: Public access is by permission only.

Town Woodlots near Bog Pond (Manchester Woods)

The town owns three landlocked parcels in this area, two just to the northeast of Bog Pond, the other on the Hallowell line. All were tax-acquired and are managed as woodlots.

Access is via the Pipeline Trail. Trails have been built by the mountain bike club and are available for hiking and other non-motorized access. The parcels do not have conservation easements.

Uses and restrictions: All nonmotorized travel, hunting. Snowmobiles on designated trails only. No ATVs, camping, or fires.

Jamies Pond Wildlife Management Area

This quiet pond and 550 acres of surrounding woodlands were purchased in 1991 from the Hallowell Water District with funds from the Land for Maine's Future, the City of Hallowell, and an anonymous donor. In 1991, the Land for Maine's Future Board acquired another 85 acres, the Norton Parcel in Manchester, from the Kennebec Land Trust. In 2001 the town of Manchester subsequently donated two tax-acquired properties totaling 8.1 acres to the wildlife management area.

The area was subsequently expanded with the addition of about 175 acres from the UMA Collins property. The area now encompasses close to 800 acres straddling Manchester and Hallowell. Stewardship help is from the Hallowell and Manchester Conservation Commissions, who have developed and maintain an extensive network of well-marked trails. Kennebec Land Trust has played an active role in conserving this property. The pond itself covers 107 acres and is 75 feet deep. It is stocked with brook trout and splake and contains small and large mouth bass and pickerel. The property hosts numerous birds, including herons, hawks, loons, osprey and a wide variety of songbirds. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife manages the area primarily for wildlife.

Uses and restrictions: All nonmotorized travel, hunting, fishing, hand-carry boating. No swimming, ATVs, snowmobiles, camping, or fires.

Islands owned by the Kennebec Land Trust

KLT owns parts of several islands on Cobbossee Lake in Winthrop that are open to quiet public access.

Horseshoe Island Preserve- KLT owns four properties on Horseshoe Island totaling 23.5 acres: two 7.5-acre parcels on the eastern arm, a 5-acre lot on the west arm, and a 3.5-acre piece including the tip of the eastern arm of the island. The land at the northeast end of Horseshoe Island supports an impressive stand of large white pine trees.

Hodgdon Island Preserve- This 17-acre parcel is protected as a permanent preserve for its scenic beauty and natural values. The preserve includes a sandy beach on the southwestern side.

Perry Island Preserve- This 6-acre island, with a mature mixed forest is the largest undeveloped island on Cobbossee Lake. Formerly known as Sheep Island, this area is maintained as a nature preserve and is available for quiet public use. Access is by personal watercraft in the summer or by foot, snowshoe or cross-country skis in the winter when the lake is frozen. A public boat launch is located on the southwest shore in Monmouth. A KLT sign is on the east shore of the eastern arm.

Uses and restrictions: All nonmotorized travel. No hunting, fires, or camping.

Other conserved lands throughout town includes:

- North Acres Wildlife Conservation Area, a 132- acre piece of farmland donated to the Kennebec Land Trust. The 40 acres of farm fields and surrounding woodlands are also valuable wildlife habitats for grassland birds, hawks, eagles, deer, turkey, fish and many other Maine wildlife species. Two streams on the property, Tanning Brook and Spring Brook, merge to form Bond Brook, which supports some of the strongest brook trout populations in the capital area.
- Manchester Woods, a tax acquired parcel with access from a small parking lot on Kerns Hill Road or through the Hallowell Reservoir/Pipeline trail. The Manchester Woods trail system is a non-motorized recreational trail system for walking/hiking, mountain biking, trail running, wildlife viewing, snowshoeing/XC-skiing and similar activities. The approximate 4-mile loop is adjacent to the Hallowell Recreational Area (The Res). The Property consists of several sections including the Kerns Hill Connector (KHC); the "Pipeline" utility right-of-way; and "Rock and Crafts" parts one and two.
- A small woodlot of about 58 acres north of Bog Pond that was donated to Small Woodlot Owners Association of Maine in 2024. This parcel was previously part of the Fifield family farm and has reverted into woods. The parcel has been harvested several times, most recently in 2021, to remove most of the red pine from a plantation that was established in the 1950s. Now, except for a remaining red pine stand near the brook on the southern part of the parcel, the property is primarily a mixture of white pine and hardwoods.

Regulatory Protections

In addition to state and federal standards to protect water quality, Manchester's Land Use and Development Ordinance includes language to provide further protection of natural and water resources (see Existing Land Use chapter for more information). The Land Use and Development Ordinance includes Shoreland Zoning requirements that are consistent with state guidelines.

The Land Use and Development Ordinance, adopted in 1992 and amended through 2024, provides some protection to critical natural areas. This Ordinance breaks Manchester down into seven land use districts:

1. Manchester Village (growth area)
2. Community Residential (growth area)
3. General Development (growth area)
4. Rural Residential
5. Shoreland District
6. Resource Protection
7. Aquifer Management Overlay

Of these, the Shoreland District and Resource Protection District are designated for the purpose of protecting natural and water resources.

Shoreland District: The Shoreland District covers land areas within two hundred fifty (250) feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high-water line of any great pond, river Weston Brook and upland edge of those freshwater wetlands shown on the Official Land Use District Map and seventy-five (75) feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high-water line of other streams in Manchester. The Shoreland District generally provides for seasonal and year-round residential and recreational development. Development in the Shoreland District, due to its proximity to surface waters, requires closer scrutiny than development situated farther away to protect the water resources of the Town.

Resource Protection District: The Resource Protection District is the critical natural resource areas in Town which, based upon their resource value, should remain essentially undisturbed. The purpose of this land use classification is to preserve fragile and significant environmental areas from intrusions which adversely affect these systems or creates threats to public health and safety. This district includes areas in which development would adversely affect water quality, productive habitat, biotic systems, or scenic and natural values. This area includes:

- Significant lakes, ponds and streams
- Areas within two hundred fifty (250) feet, horizontal distance, or the upland edge of freshwater, wetlands and wetlands associated with great ponds, which are rated as moderate to high-value waterfowl and wading bird habitat including nesting and feeding areas, by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, that are depicted on a geographic information system data layer maintained by MDIF&W or the Department of Environmental Protection as of May 1, 2006. For the purposes of the paragraph “wetlands associated with great ponds and rivers” shall mean areas characterized by non-forested wetland vegetation and hydric soils that are contiguous with great pond or river and have a surface elevation at or below the water level of the great pond or river during the period of normal high water. “Wetlands associated with great ponds or rivers” are considered to be part of that great pond or river.
- Areas of two (2) or more contiguous acres with sustained slopes greater than twenty percent (20%), or unstable soil subject to slumping, mass movement, or severe erosion, when these areas are two (2) acres or more in size.
- Areas of two (2) or more contiguous acres supporting wetland vegetation and hydric soils, which are not part of a freshwater wetland, as defined, and which are not surficially connected to a waterbody during normal spring high-water.
- Other significant wildlife habitat
- Flood plains as defined by the one hundred (100) year flood or the flood of record, or, in the absence of these, by soil types identifiable as recent flood plain soils.
- Natural sites of significant scenic or aesthetic value;
- Areas designated by the Federal, State or Municipal Government as natural areas of significance to be protected from development; and
- Other significant areas.

Although the Resource Protection District does encompass significant portions of the critical natural areas identified by Beginning with Habitat and outlined above, there are some areas of waterfowl and wading habitat that extend beyond the areas identified as Resource Protection, and any inclusion of deer wintering areas and high value habitat for priority trust species appears to be coincidental. The rare plant locations around Tyler Pond are within the Resource Protection district.

The Land Use and Development Ordinance also establishes an **Aquifer Management (AM) Overlay District**. This is within the Bond Brook Aquifer located in the northeast corner of the Town. The purpose of this Overlay District is to preserve and improve water quality and the quantity of surface water resources by limiting the intensity of development and controlling nutrient loading into important waterbodies. All new land use activities within this overlay district must meet the requirements specified for this Overlay District.

Land uses in the Aquifer Management Overlay Districts should be reserved for low intensity uses. Some low intensity residential, recreational, agricultural and timber related uses may be accommodated through the application of existing State regulations related to septic system design and soil conditions and the Town's site plan review process.

All extraction of groundwater within the Aquifer Management Overlay Zone is to be used solely on-site for residential purposes. Any and all resale or commercial exportation of groundwater is strictly prohibited.

The **Rural Residential District** also offers protection to natural resources. The purpose of this designation is to continue to encourage rural residential, forestry and agricultural uses as well as a variety of other uses compatible with the rural character of Manchester and other existing uses.

The Rural Residential areas would be maintained for rural residential and limited low intensity stores, etc., agricultural, timber harvesting, recreational and other natural resource dependent uses that would be compatible with and not impair the existing uses and resources. Provisions in the Land Use and Development Ordinance discourage development sprawl by establishing subdivision open space ratios of at least 60 percent, encouraging cluster developments and other planning mechanisms.

Manchester's Land Use and Development Ordinance, which includes provisions for Shoreland Zoning and Subdivision are the first lines of protection for watersheds and water quality, since development and other human-related activities within a watershed are the largest contributors to degraded water quality.

Development can be designed to minimize phosphorus runoff, by mandating BMPs for construction and Low Impact Development (LID) design criteria (LID Guidance Manual for Maine Communities, Approaches for Implementation of Low Impact Development Practices at the Local Level, 2007, or as amended). LID describes land planning and engineering design approaches to manage stormwater runoff that mimics natural processes, resulting in the infiltration, evapotranspiration, or use of stormwater to protect water quality and associated aquatic habitats.

To preserve and protect water quality, it is imperative that the Zoning and Subdivision ordinances are reviewed and updated regularly. Regular updates will ensure the most current standards and practices are included, such as LID and BMPs for phosphorus control and stormwater management.

Local and Regional Coordination

Manchester is fortunate to partner with both local and regional organizations to protect the town's critical natural resources and waterbodies.

Local Partners:

Manchester's Conservation Commission- The Conservation Commission in Manchester consist of seven dedicated volunteers, as well as associate and honorary members. This dedicated group is broken down further into committees assigned to oversee specific tasks.

Manchester Tree Board- The Tree Board acts as an advisory committee, advising the Planning Board on which tree species should/should not be planted for buffering, throughout town, or on town-owned land.

Regional Partners:

- Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
- Maine Department of Environmental Protection
- Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
- New England Forestry Foundation
- Land for Maine's Future
- Cobbossee Watershed District
- Watershed Friends
- Maine's Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program (VLMP)
- Summerhaven Lakes Association
- Bond Brook Salmon Restoration
- Cobbossee Lake Association
- Kennebec Land Trust
- Central Maine Chapter of New England Mountain Bike Association- maintain trails throughout town.
- Ag Allies, through the county Soil and Water Conservation District
- Small Woodlot Owners of Maine

Manchester has worked closely with the Cobbossee Watershed District (CWD), headquartered in Winthrop, for many years. The CWD has served Manchester well by providing professional assistance in efforts to protect, conserve and manage the lakes, ponds and streams of the Cobbossee watershed, including setting standards to sustain lake phosphorus at a safe level that maintains water quality and property values while allowing ongoing use of lakes and streams. The CWD also identifies erosion and other threats to surface waters, assists in development reviews, and provides an educational component for the public.



Manchester's participation with the CWD is a non-regulatory tool to maintain and improve water quality.

The town should continue to fund the efforts of the Cobbossee Watershed District, Watershed Friends, and other organizations that provide public education about water quality.

Open Space Plan

Manchester is one of only a few towns in the region that officially adopted an open space plan, called the Long Range Public Facilities and Open Space Plan (Open Space Plan). Developed in 2004 by the Long Range Planning Committee with the assistance of a hired consultant, the plan includes extensive survey results, an inventory of existing conditions and properties already conserved, recommendation for both public facilities and conserved properties, and a detailed implementation plan.

The need for an open space plan was identified due to the large expanses of open space the town had come to own, which support a variety of land-based and aquatic wildlife and recreational opportunities. The surveys leading up to the development of the Open Space Plan showed residents supported maintaining open space lands for quality of life, preservation of town identity, enhancing property values, maintaining wildlife habitat, protecting water quality and supply, and to support tourism, hiking, hunting, and fishing opportunities.

This Plan utilizes three parallel initiatives to protect critical natural resources: 1) Use of "set asides" or outright purchases of areas for their natural, scenic, or recreational values; 2) Protection of critical natural areas by regulatory means; and 3) Conservation by means of public and landowner education and awareness of valuable natural features within the "high value natural areas" defined by the 2004 Open Space Plan or as found in any other part of Manchester.

Another function of the Open Space Plan was to identify areas in Manchester that should be conserved as feasible. They include:

- Eight separate regions in towns that it labels "high Value Natural and Scenic Resource Areas." Its identification of these areas is based on several criteria, including wetland areas, deer wintering areas, riparian and other habitat areas, exemplary natural communities, and scenic views. The Plan ranks these areas based on BwH data available at the time. Land ownership did not directly impact the choice of these areas, although in many cases the areas contained high natural or scenic values in part because of the character of ownership.
- Scenic areas throughout town within designated high value natural areas.

The Plan summarizes a series of strategies from the 1992 Comprehensive Plan as well as strategies developed specifically for the Plan relating to preserving the high-ranking areas, as determined in the Plan. Many of these strategies are still yet unimplemented and should still be a priority for protecting Manchester's critical natural resources.

One of the most noteworthy strategies that has been implemented is the development of a Conservation Reserve Fund which is an open space fund, earmarked for the acquisition of development rights or land. The Conservation Reserve Fund is also unofficially known as the “Wood Fund” which is proceeds from timber harvests on town land. The money has been used for forest and conservation purposes but has not grown large enough to purchase land.

Overall, the Open Space Plan is an excellent non-regulatory tool that can be built upon and adapted as needed. The town should continue to update this Plan periodically to reflect actions taken and strategies implemented. The continued preservation of additional land is as important as maintaining an inventory and documentation of the statuses of current properties.

Natural and Water Resources Analysis and Key Issues

- Manchester has a plethora of scenic resources due to its naturally hilly topography.
- Manchester spans over a large aquifer shared with Belgrade which is the primary source of water for the Greater Augusta Utilities District.
- More than half of Manchester is served by private wells; the remainder depends upon public water.
- Radon and arsenic are naturally occurring well water contaminants, not uncommon in Manchester.
- There are nine public water supply wells in Manchester.
- All of Manchester's rivers and streams are Class B waterbodies.
- Manchester's major watersheds are:
 - Messalonskee Lake
 - Bond Brook
 - Cobbosseecontee Lake
 - Upper Cobbosseecontee Stream
- There are over a dozen wetlands in Manchester, many that support wading birds and/or inland waterfowl habitat.
- Manchester has numerous lakes and ponds of varying sizes and water quality.
- The most visible waterbody is Cobbossee Lake. After years of efforts, the water quality in Cobbossee Lake has improved dramatically.
- There are two closed remediation sites in Manchester, Manchester Fire Department and Hilliard Junkyard.
- Manchester is home to numerous wildlife species and provides abundant wildlife habitats.
- There are multiple locations known as habitat for species of special concern, rare plants, and an endangered animal species.
- There is one location that is known to be a habitat for a rare plant species.
- The Outwash Plain Pondshore community, a critically imperiled community in Maine, can be found in Manchester.
- There is one focus area in Manchester: The Belgrade Eskers and Kettle Complex
- The town's ordinances, taken together, are well written, and up to date.
- Manchester has an Open Space Plan to manage the town's abundant preserved parcels.
- The town has a dedicated Conservation Commission that strives to protect the town's natural resources. Manchester also works collaboratively with a number of regional organizations on water quality issues, threats and improvements, and to protect natural resources.

10: Existing Land Use



Vision

Manchester envisions a future where its natural beauty, historic character, rural landscapes, and recreational assets are conserved in a vibrant, healthy and safe community by supporting strong community connections between residents and visitors alike.

Concentrating growth in the village area and along Route 202 will support a vibrant, mixed-use center while preserving Manchester's rural character, open space, and natural resources.

This balanced approach supports thoughtful development and conservation, enabling residents to live, work, and age in place while fostering a cultural and tourism hub. Manchester remains committed to environmental stewardship, preparing for and responding to environmental challenges brought by a changing climate by investing in resilient infrastructure, energy efficiency, and sustainable development. Thoughtful planning meets the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors, strengthens the economy, and preserves Manchester's unique character, values, responsible stewardship of resources, and sense of community.

Introduction

Existing and future land uses are central to a community's Comprehensive Plan, influencing every chapter. Aligning the vision statement with these sections ensures consistency throughout the plan.

A vision succeeds only with actionable strategies ranging from regulatory updates to interlocal and public-private collaboration, supported by clear priorities and implementation steps.

As communities grow, land uses shape character, whether that character is a small city, a farm town, or a suburb. Residents often value this character, but it can shift over time. Managing change requires balancing regulation with personal choice to maintain desirability. Unwanted trends—loss of open space or farmland, rising service costs, or declining village vitality—can be mitigated through thoughtful growth management.

The Existing Land Use chapter reviews Manchester's growth patterns and development over the past 10 years. Like many rural central Maine towns, Manchester is a residential community near larger regional hubs such as Augusta and Lewiston. The town is committed to environmental stewardship, addressing climate challenges through resilient infrastructure, energy efficiency, and sustainable development.

Manchester's Land Regulation

Manchester's first Comprehensive Plan was in 1991, followed by an update in 2011-2012, and subsequently by this 2025-2026 Comprehensive Plan update. Each update resulted in revisions to the town's Land Use and Development Ordinance, in addition to periodic updates with the most recent occurring in June of 2025 to reflect new affordable housing legislative requirements and revisions to minimum lot requirements.

At the completion of this 2025-2026 Comprehensive Plan update, the Land Use and Development Ordinance will need to be reviewed to ensure it aligns with this Plan, as well as the latest standards and legislation.

Manchester's Land Use and Development Ordinance is complete and thorough. It is a comprehensive Ordinance that incorporates the following regulations and requirements: Zoning, Subdivision, Commercial Site Plan Review, and Shoreland Zoning. The Floodplain Management Ordinance is separate. The Land Use and Development Ordinance specifies which districts are designated for growth, as well as the types of growth desired in each district.

All aspects of the Land Use and Development Ordinance, including the building code, are enforced by the Code Enforcement Officer, a part-time employee who is also responsible for maintaining the GIS system, tracking new development, receiving, reviewing and issuing permits, as well as documenting and maintaining records of land use activities, such as applications, denials, permits, etc.

As Manchester grows and changes, there is an undeniable need for additional Code Enforcement capacity. Presently, Manchester has a part-time CEO who is in the office on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:00pm to 8:00pm by appointment. To provide additional support and coverage, Manchester retains the services of another CEO in the summer who is available Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Friday, though the schedule and times may vary. While the town has no complaints about the current CEO's work, a need has been identified to add Code Enforcement capacity in a more permanent way. One option is hiring Code Enforcement office support for reviewing applications, digitizing documents, responding to emails, and other tasks that would allow the CEO to do his job more efficiently and effectively.

Currently, permit tracking is accomplished through an antiquated system and an Excel spreadsheet. If Manchester had the added capacity of an office assistant for Code Enforcement, the town could pursue digitizing its documentation system, including permit applications and issued permits. This would expedite the permit review process, while allowing for a more organized documentation system.

Approvals for subdivisions or site plans are issued by the 7-member Planning Board, who are involved and care about what happens in their community. While the Planning Board members have the capacity to administer the town's Land Use and Development Ordinance, they would be interested in attending more training sessions, particularly with the recent changes to land use legislation.

Manchester's Land Use and Development Ordinance includes:

- Article 1- General Provisions
- Article 2- Land Use Districts and Uses
- Article 3- Site Plan Review
- Article 4- Administration, Enforcement, and Penalties
- Article 5- Appeals
- Appendix A- Definitions

Summary of Article II- Land Use Districts and Uses

The Land Use and Development Ordinance identifies seven separate districts – six geographic districts plus one overlay district (see the *Existing Land Use Map* in the Appendix):

- Manchester Village
- Community Residential
- General Development
- Rural Residential
- Shoreland District
- Resource Protection
- Aquifer Management Overlay District

Manchester's land use districts are intended to promote different types of land uses and development. For example, the Land Use and Development Ordinance regulates design standards for certain districts, such as encouraging development design in keeping with traditional village character in Manchester Village and requiring site plan review in the General Development District to ensure new development aligns with the purpose of the district.

Each district sets dimensional lot standards, as well. The availability of public sewer is a significant factor in lot dimensional requirements. Minimum lot size and other dimensional requirements are detailed further in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1: CURRENT DISTRICT DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS

Dimensions	Land Use District						
	Growth Areas			Rural Areas			
	MV	CR	GD	RR	SL	RP	AM Overlay
Minimum Lot Area (SF in thousands) Single Family Dwelling Unit							
With Public Sewer	20	20	20	40	60	130	120
Without Public Sewer	20	30	30	40	80	218	200
Minimum Lot Area (SF in thousands) Multi-Family Dwelling Unit* (per dwelling unit)							
With Public Sewer	15/5	20/10	15/5	40/20	60	N/A	120
Without Public Sewer	20	30/15	20/20	40/40	80	N/A	200
Minimum road frontage, ft (public or private)							
With Public Sewer	100	100	100	150	100	175	250
With Public Sewer Multi-Family (per dwelling unit)	100	100	100	150	100	N/A	250
Without Public Sewer	100	100	100	150	125	200	300
Minimum Lot Depth, ft	150	150	150	200	200	200	200
Minimum Setbacks (Principal and Accessory Structures)							
Other State Roads	50	50	50	75	75	75	75
Town or Private Roads	30	30	30	60	25	30	30
Rear/Side Setback (Principal Structure)	15	20	20	30	30	30	30
Rear/Side Setback (Accessory Structure)	15	15	15	20	20	20	20
Driveway and Parking Area Side Setbacks	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Maximum Lot Coverage (%)							
Building Coverage	50	20	40	20	20	20	20
Impervious Area	70	30	60	20	20	20	20

Source: Manchester Land Use and Development Ordinance <https://www.manchesterme.org/media/3921>

* Indicates requirements for 1st dwelling unit/each additional dwelling unit.

MV= Manchester Village

GD= General Development

SL= Shoreland

AM Overlay= Aquifer Management Overlay

CR= Community Residential

RR= Rural Residential

RP= Resource Protection

Table 1 Highlights:

- Manchester has three districts designated for growth (highlighted green).
- Public sewer connectivity is available in parts of all three growth districts and throughout town.
- The minimum lot size for all districts within the designated growth area is 20,000 square feet, regardless of whether they are connected to public sewer.
- Appropriately, the districts outside of those designated for growth have larger dimensional requirements.

Growth Areas Explained: The Maine Growth Management Act requires towns to prepare Comprehensive Plans to designate locations preferred for new development, called “growth areas,” and locations where new development is not encouraged, termed “rural areas.” This approach directs new development to parts of town with amenities and capacity for growth and away from areas with environmental or other constraints. The purpose of the Growth Management Act is to prevent sprawl. Sprawl in rural areas increases the town’s expense in road maintenance and other municipal services. It also has a negative environmental impact on natural resources, such as habitat, biodiversity, water quality, and loss of farmland.

The descriptions below were taken from the Land Use and Development Ordinance and include the intended purposes for each of Manchester’s land use districts.

Manchester Village

The purpose of this district is to maintain and re-create the village atmosphere in Manchester. The area designated as the Village District was part of the historic village of the Town of Manchester, which served as the cultural and civic center of the community. However, because of increased vehicular traffic on Route 202 over the years and the resultant road-widening activities and other traffic improvements, the village area has been largely diminished and much of the village atmosphere has been lost. The goal of Manchester Village is to encourage the re-creation of the traditional village components that would accommodate a wide variety of land uses that are compatible with the traditional uses and historical character of this area. The Town of Manchester has designated the Village area as a designated growth area due to its suitability for the projected growth of Manchester and it contains the infrastructure to support said growth.

Land uses in the Manchester Village District would generally be managed for a mix of residential, civic, cultural and commercial uses that are compatible with the existing uses and the character of this area, which may consist of compatible building design, signage, etc.

Community Residential

The purpose of the Community Residential District is to preserve areas intended for residential use and to protect homeowners from encroachment by incompatible or potentially value-reducing land uses.

This district has historically supported single-family homes that are consistent with surrounding low-impact land uses and natural resources. These areas have long provided a stable residential environment compatible with the town's overall development pattern.

The Community Residential District is not yet at capacity and still contains land suitable for future development, including some areas with access to public utilities. Reducing minimum lot size requirements is expected to encourage appropriately scaled residential growth and increase housing density where suitable.

General Development

The purpose of this district is to continue to accommodate compatible commercial, residential and other non-residential development likely to occur along and in close proximity to, a major arterial such as Route 202. Traditionally, except for the area located between Route 202 and Granite Hill Road, this area has served as the primary business district of Manchester and is at least seventy percent (70%) or more developed. The town of Manchester has designated the General Development district as a designated growth area due to its suitability for the projected growth of Manchester and it contains the infrastructure to support said growth.

Future development in this area will be restricted due to the natural resource constraints presented by the lake watershed. All land development proposals will be subject to site plan review in an effort to insure that development results in:

- attractive buildings and sites,
- discourages sprawl,
- minimizing curb cuts and access ways,
- avoiding unsightly strip development along the highway,
- minimizing adverse impacts upon traffic, public facilities, the natural environment and neighboring properties and uses.

Rural Residential

The purpose of this designation is to continue to encourage rural residential, forestry and agricultural uses as well as a variety of other uses compatible with the rural character of Manchester and other existing uses.

The Rural Residential areas would be maintained for rural residential and limited low intensity stores, etc., agricultural, timber harvesting, recreational and other natural resource dependent uses that would be compatible with and not impair the existing uses and resources. Provisions in the Land Use and Development Ordinance would

discourage development sprawl by establishing subdivision open space ratios of at least sixty percent (60%), encouraging cluster developments and other planning mechanisms.

Shoreland District

The Shoreland District covers land areas within two hundred fifty (250) feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high-water line of any great pond, Weston Brook, and upland edge of those freshwater wetlands shown on the Official Shoreland Zoning Map and seventy-five (75) feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high-water line of other streams in Manchester. The Shoreland District generally provides for seasonal and year-round residential and recreational development. Development in the Shoreland District, due to its proximity to surface waters, requires closer scrutiny than development situated farther away in order to protect the water resources of the town.

Resource Protection

The Resource Protection District is the critical natural resource areas in town which, based upon their resource value, should remain essentially undisturbed. The purpose of this land use classification is to preserve fragile and significant environmental areas from intrusions which adversely affects these systems or creates threats to public health and safety. This district includes areas in which development would adversely affect water quality, productive habitat, biotic systems, or scenic and natural values. This area includes:

- Significant lakes, ponds and streams
- Areas within two hundred fifty (250) feet, horizontal distance, or the upland edge of freshwater, wetlands and wetlands associated with great ponds, which are rated as moderate to high-value waterfowl and wading bird habitat including nesting and feeding areas, by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, that are depicted on a geographic information system data layer maintained by MDIF&W or the Department of Environmental Protection as of May 1, 2006. For the purposes of the paragraph “wetlands associated with great ponds and rivers” shall mean areas characterized by non-forested wetland vegetation and hydric soils that are contiguous with great pond or river, and have a surface elevation at or below the water level of the great pond or river during the period of normal high water. “Wetlands associated with great ponds or rivers” are considered to be part of that great pond or river.
- Areas of two (2) or more contiguous acres with sustained slopes greater than twenty percent (20%), or unstable soil subject to slumping, mass movement, or severe erosion, when these areas are two (2) acres or more in size.
- Areas of two (2) or more contiguous acres supporting wetland vegetation and hydric soils, which are not part of a freshwater wetland, as defined, and which are not surficially connected to a water body during normal spring high-water.
- Other significant wildlife habitat.
- Flood plains as defined by the one hundred (100) year flood or the flood of record, or, in the absence of these, by soil types identifiable as recent flood plain soils.
- Natural sites of significant scenic or aesthetic value;

- Areas designated by the Federal, State or Municipal Government as natural areas of significance to be protected from development; and
- Other significant areas.

Aquifer Management Overlay District

The Aquifer Management Overlay District is the Bond Brook Aquifer located in the northeast corner of the town. The purpose of this Overlay District is to preserve and improve water quality and the quantity of surface water resources by limiting the intensity of development and controlling nutrient loading into important water bodies. All new land use activities within this Overlay District must meet the requirements specified in this Ordinance.

Land uses in the Aquifer Management Overlay Districts should be reserved for low intensity uses. Some low intensity residential, recreational, agricultural and timber related uses may be accommodated through the application of existing State regulations related to septic system design and soil conditions and the town's site plan review process.

All extraction of groundwater within the Aquifer Management Overlay Zone is to be used solely on-site for residential purposes. Any and all resale or commercial exportation of groundwater is strictly prohibited.

Article III- Site Plan Review

The purpose of the Site Plan Review section of the Land Use and Development Ordinance is to ensure extra municipal oversight for potentially harmful projects, preservation of the town's rural character and natural resources through development standards, and safeguard residents' health, safety, and welfare.

The Site Plan Review requirement applies only to land uses requiring a Conditional Use Permit or Special Exception permit, both of which are issued by the Planning Board. The Site Plan Review requirement is not triggered by single-family homes or accessory dwelling units within the town's growth areas; however, multi-family housing triggers Site Plan Review regardless of where it is proposed.

Generally, the Site Plan Review requirement is intended for more impactful land uses, such as commercial land uses, or for proposals in Shoreland, Resource Protection, or Aquifer Management districts.

Projects requiring Site Plan Review are categorized as either minor or major developments. Minor developments include:

1. Construction, additions, or conversions totaling less than 5,000 square feet of gross floor area.
2. Construction or creation of fewer than 10 lots or dwelling units, unless the Planning Board determines a major review is necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of Manchester residents.
3. Projects the Planning Board determines require major review due to potential impacts on natural resources such as streams, lakes, ponds, wetlands, rare natural communities, aquifers, or important agricultural soils.

Previous Future Land Use Plan Implementation

The Future Land Use Plan in Manchester's 2011-2012 Comprehensive Plan noted that directing most new growth into the designated growth areas under their current conditions and current zoning, was impractical at the time, in part because of the following reasons:

- The Manchester Village District is fundamentally built out,
- The Community Residential District has several areas constrained by natural resources and other impediments to development;
- The General Development District had limited undeveloped land left available as well as significant natural resource constraints.

Generally, the growth areas were not large enough with the zoning at the time to meet the anticipated future growth. The Plan also made the following recommendations as possible solutions to the noted problems:

- Increasing the permissible density in the existing growth areas;
- Increasing the size of the existing growth areas; or,
- Adding new growth areas.

In response to the previous Comprehensive Plan, the General Development district's size was increased and the recommendation to increase the Community Residential district's size was partially adopted. In addition, Manchester's Planning Board has been thoughtfully reviewing their existing zoning standards and increasing the allowable density in certain areas to accommodate future development and growth. This review has resulted in increased allowable density by reducing lot minimum size requirements in the following districts:

- Manchester Village
- Community Residential
- General Development
- Rural Residential

The intent of reducing lot size requirements in the Rural Residential was less about increasing density in that area and more about reducing sprawl since this is the location where much of the new housing development is occurring. Additionally, road frontage requirements were also reviewed and strategically reduced in some districts to increase density. Maine's recent legislative mandates for affordable housing have required the allowance of increased density across all land use districts.

The various land uses are detailed further below.

Residential Land Uses

Housing construction in Manchester is primarily shaped by economic conditions, with land availability in the Rural District being the principal factor influencing where new homes are built. Access to public services- such as roads, sewer, and water- also plays a significant role. The town has not built new roads in decades, nor has it expanded its sewer system, and these long-standing limitations continue to discourage construction in the districts intended for growth.

While Manchester's Land Use and Development Ordinance does not directly inhibit new housing, it provides limited incentives to encourage it. One exception is that mobile homes are permitted in all land use districts, though mobile home parks are restricted to the Community Residential and General Development Districts.

Manchester Village is largely built out, and only a few lots remain available for development. In the designated growth areas, the small amount of undeveloped land is privately owned and therefore generally unavailable for new projects. As a result, residential development has become dispersed across town rather than concentrated in growth areas. Findings indicate that, in addition to the broader trend of homebuyers seeking land in rural settings, the primary constraint on development within the growth districts is simply the scarcity of developable land.

Although Manchester's population has remained stable for many years, most new housing since the 1990s has been constructed along rural roads. This pattern increases traffic and the potential for driveway conflicts, consumes farm and forest land, alters the community's pastoral character, and raises costs for services such as school bussing and emergency response.

Compounding these issues is the town's limited ability to direct growth to the few remaining properties within the growth areas. There have been no major infrastructure investments in these districts- no expansion of public water or sewer, no road upgrades, and no village enhancements- to make these areas more attractive to developers or prospective residents compared to rural locations.

The importance of public water and sewer service for housing affordability cannot be overstated. These utilities significantly reduce construction costs and expand feasible housing types. For multifamily or higher-density development, public sewer is particularly critical, making such projects economically viable and allowing substantially smaller lot sizes than would be required in areas without public utilities.

Recent revisions to the Land Use and Development Ordinance have modestly increased development opportunities by allowing greater residential density through reduced minimum lot size requirements and reduced road frontage requirements, as described under the subheading "Manchester's Land Regulation" above.

Manchester already contains a mix of housing types including multi-family housing within the Village and General Residential Districts, and opportunities remain for additional units on underutilized or vacant properties and buildings throughout town.

Over the past decade, most new residential construction in Manchester has occurred in the Rural Residential district. Although this district lies outside the designated growth areas- and development there does not fully align with the goals of the Growth Management Act- building in rural areas is inevitable given the large size of these zones relative to others in town. While directing growth toward designated growth areas remains the preferred approach, the Rural Residential district is intended to accommodate housing and other compatible uses in Manchester's more rural settings. Accordingly, new development in this district should prioritize the protection of natural resources, scenic character, recreational assets, and the community's remaining open spaces.

Subdivision Developments

Manchester's Land Use and Development Ordinance regulates subdivisions through requiring cluster or open space subdivision design with the required ratio of open space increasing from village to rural districts to ensure alignment of character.

The analysis and statistics on the number of subdivisions in Manchester is based on the state definition of "subdivision." Maine defines subdivision as:

The division of a tract or parcel of land into three or more lots within any five-year period that begins on or after September 23, 1971. This definition applies whether the division is accomplished by sale, lease, development, buildings or otherwise. The term "subdivision" includes the division of a new structure or structures on a tract or parcel of land into three or more dwelling units within a five-year period, the construction or replacement of three or more dwelling units on a single tract or parcel of land and the division of an existing structure or structures previously used for commercial or industrial use into three or more dwelling units within a five-year period.

For comparison, the state does not consider the following to be subdivisions:

1. Gifts [of land]to relatives,
2. Transfer to governmental entity,
3. Transfer to conservation organizations,
4. Transfer of lots for forest management, agricultural management, or conservation of natural resources,
5. Unauthorized subdivision lots in existence for at least 20 years.

The specific details relating to what constitutes subdivision and what does not are outside the scope of this plan. For a deeper understanding, review the enabling statutes (MRS Title 30-A §4401 et seq. Municipal Subdivision Law, and MRS Title 12, §682-B. Exemptions from Subdivision Definition).

There have been minimal new subdivisions created in Manchester in the past 20 years. This could be attributed to a variety of reasons: construction costs, lack of desirable lots available, the availability of infrastructure, or the availability of public water and sewer. Other possible factors include traffic congestion and more restrictive ordinances than surrounding towns.

Adding to the cost of construction, there are not many parcels of land left under current lot size restrictions that could take advantage of the town's 21 miles of public water and sewer. If Manchester could expand public utilities to areas of undeveloped land, the price for future development would be less prohibitive, although expanding these services has its own challenges, outlined in the Public Facilities and Services chapter of this Plan.

For these reasons, most of the new residential development that has occurred in Manchester has been on a lot-by-lot basis, rather than in approved subdivisions.

Commercial Development

Manchester does not have industrial development to speak of, nor does the town want to encourage this type of development.

Unlike residential growth, Manchester has had little difficulty keeping commercial development within designated growth areas; commercial growth is more concentrated in appropriate areas and thus aligns with the community's vision. The General Development District was established specifically for commercial land uses, although it can also accommodate residential land uses as well. This district is largely supported by public water, sewer, and access to the arterial highway.

The General Development district is not as built out as the districts intended for residential development. In addition to natural resource constraints, the other primary constraints are the limited reach of public utilities and restricted road access in portions of the commercial areas.

Because commercial uses tend to place greater demands on public services than residential uses, planning efforts must account for these impacts. Future expansion of commercial activity is most likely to occur along Route 202, east of the village, where two important factors come into play:

- **Utility limitations:** Public sewer extends only partway up the Route 202 hill, and public water reaches the base. Sewer access is required for some businesses and incentivizes many others. Since sewer extensions are currently the developer's responsibility, this can deter investment. Manchester could explore options- such as TIFs or impact fees- to facilitate extensions while still ensuring developers bear the cost.

- **Traffic and safety:** Existing traffic conditions on Route 202 already raise safety concerns. Proposed MaineDOT improvements may influence business access, while additional growth could compound congestion and hazards. This underscores the need for a proactive, strategic transportation plan for the Route 202 corridor rather than a reactive approach.

The General Development District is also well-suited for higher-density residential development such as multi-family housing (which would fall under commercial land uses, anyway), given the available infrastructure and existing protections from commercial impacts. Multi-family housing on public sewer requires 15,000 ft² with an additional 5,000 ft² for every additional unit. With the reduced minimum lot size, multi-family housing that is not on public sewer requires 20,000 ft² for the first dwelling with another 20,000 ft² for every additional unit. This reduction in lot size requirements has potential to decrease building costs and increase density.

All new commercial proposals and changes of use require a Conditional Use or Special Exception Permit, both of which trigger Site Plan Review. Historically, commercial development has concentrated along Route 202, though many small home-based businesses operate throughout Manchester. Though predominantly in the Rural Residential district, home occupations are permitted in all districts with CEO approval, supporting local entrepreneurship that aligns with community values and contributes to the local economy.

Continued commercial growth along the Route 202 corridor is expected due to its public utilities and convenient access. Commercial development in this area directly aligns with the community's vision, as it would provide a mixed-use center while preserving Manchester's rural areas.

The Institutional and Service Sector

A variety of businesses in Manchester offer essential services to residents and the surrounding region. Most public facilities and services—such as the Town Office, Fire Department, Post Office, churches, Lions Club, Grange Hall, and the school—are located within Manchester Village.

Any future development of similar facilities would likely occur on an individual lot basis, though no new institutional or service-oriented businesses are currently expected. The feasibility of these uses depends largely on the availability of public utilities and the district in which they are proposed.

Overall Land Use Trends

New development in Manchester has been limited in recent years across residential, retail, and commercial sectors. Most recent projects have occurred on a lot-by-lot basis scattered throughout town, with the majority being residential construction. Few new subdivisions or commercial developments have been created; most new businesses locate in existing buildings.

Directing residential growth into designated growth areas is more difficult than guiding commercial development because there are fewer incentives- regulatory or otherwise, and far less land available.

Commercial developers typically seek sites with public water and sewer (a natural nonregulatory incentive), while single-family home construction rarely depends on these services. Additionally, many people moving to Manchester value its rural character, which contributes to continued residential development in rural areas.

Non-Regulatory Measures

In addition to formal regulations through the Land Use and Development Ordinance, Manchester could also use non-regulatory approaches to encourage development in suitable areas that reflect the town's character and support the community's vision. These options include, but are not limited to:

- Work with the Greater Augusta Utilities District to explore the possibility of facilitating the expansion of water and/or sewer lines. This could be accomplished through grants or cost sharing.
- Work with Maine DOT to facilitate a traffic study, which would include creating bike lanes where feasible, improving pedestrian ways, and increasing general traffic safety. All these examples would improve the quality of Manchester Village and increase safety which would result in an increased sense of place.
- Consider creating or improving green spaces or outdoor places for people to gather. These public gathering spaces not only revitalize an area but create a sense of community.

These strategies would promote growth in areas that are already developed and areas targeted for future development that are supported by existing infrastructure. Another way to guide development is by discouraging growth in rural areas or near sensitive natural resources, which can be achieved through a variety of methods:

- Continue collaboration with natural resource-based organizations and municipal committees, such as the Conservation Commission, Kennebec Land Trust, and New England Forestry Foundation to continue to permanently conserve/preserve open space, farmlands, and forestlands.
- Continue to encourage residents to enroll their land into one of the State's Tax Law Programs.
- Support agriculture, forestry, and farming throughout town.
- Continue to seek ways to preserve Manchester's important natural resources.

The non-regulatory measures described above would complement the town's existing regulatory tools. They also align with the community's vision by directing and supporting growth in Manchester Village and along Route 202, while preserving Manchester's rural character, open spaces, and natural resources in other parts of town.

Manchester's Rural-Urban Balance

The Rural Residential District is the largest zoning district in Manchester. With about 11 percent of the land in a State Tax Law program and nearly 20 percent conserved in some form, including town-owned properties, Manchester provides residents with a blend of rural charm and urban convenience.

While Manchester's rural areas are less likely to see any high-density or commercial development simply because they lack the public utilities necessary to support these land uses, development sprawl in the rural areas is costly to the town in a number of ways, unsightly, and does not align with the community's vision.

Floodplain Management Ordinance

The town participates in the National Flood Insurance Program and agrees to comply with the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (P.L. 90-488, as amended) as outlined in the Floodplain Management Ordinance, adopted in 2011. Maps are updated with federal data releases.

Projections

Referring to the population projections by the Maine Office of the State Economist, detailed in the Demographic Profile and Housing chapter, Manchester will have a population of 2,373 people by 2040; a decrease of 3.4 percent in a 15-year period. It is important to bear in mind that this population projection was made in April 2021; so, the effects the Covid pandemic had on the population had not been fully realized.

To account for all possible scenarios, if it is hypothetically assumed that the average household size declined by 5 percent and the State Economist’s population projection of 2,373 was reached by 2040, the average household size would be around 2.4 people per household.

Manchester’s current housing stock is 1,209 housing units, of which approximately 161 are seasonal homes, meaning that 1,048 houses are available for year-round habitation.

The table below shows different scenarios using the population projection from the State Economist’s Office, the current average household size, as well as the hypothetical decrease in average household size of 5 percent.

TABLE 2: POPULATION PROJECTIONS AND HOUSING NEEDS

	Population Projection	Total Current Housing Units (Minus Seasonal)	Average Household Size	Amount of Housing Needed	Deficit?
Current	2,464	1,048	2.42	1,016	N/A
State Economist’s Population Projection	2,373	1,048	2.42	981	No, surplus of 67 houses
State Economist’s Population Projection with Decreased Average Household Size	2,373	1,048	2.4	988	No, surplus of 60 houses

Based on the data in Table 2, Manchester would not need additional housing to accommodate its future population as estimated by the State Economist with the actual average household size or the hypothetical average household size showing a decrease of five percent.

Although the data suggests no future housing demand, it overlooks the pandemic-driven housing shortage, the increasing median age of the state’s population, and Manchester’s desirable location near job centers. Increasing housing availability would likely boost demand.

The baseline scenario for Manchester is no or minimal population change; however, this does not mean no growth or change at all. Even if Manchester’s population *numbers* do not change significantly by 2040, the *components* of the population will most assuredly be different. Currently, the trends with the greatest impact on growth is the declining average household size and Manchester’s aging population.

These trends mean more people are living alone, and the median age is increasing. The result of these trends will be a high demand for right sized housing intended for seniors, housing for single people living alone, or two-person households, whereas the demand for 3–4-bedroom houses on larger lots will be much less based on the population demographic.

Regardless of existing housing stock and trends, new houses will continue to be built based on the desires of the builder or owner. Each new house requires land, infrastructure, and public services.

As an example, if 15 new houses were built over the next 10-year period, their location within the town would determine the amount of land each house requires. Table 3 below is part of the larger land use table (Table 1) (growth areas are highlighted in green).

TABLE 3: MINIMUM LOT SIZES (FT² IN THOUSANDS)

	MV	CR	GD	RR	SL	AM	RP
Single-Family Dwelling							
Public sewer	20	20	20	40	60	130	120
No public sewer	20	30	30	40	80	218	200
Multi-Family Dwelling (per dwelling unit)							
Public sewer	15/5	20/10	15/5	40/20	60	N/A	120
No public sewer	20	30/15	20/20	40/40	80	N/A	200

Source: Manchester' Land Use and Development Ordinance

<https://www.manchesterme.org/media/3921>

If all hypothetical 15 new houses were single-family homes, built in the Resource Protection district, without access to public sewer, they would consume 1,800,000 square feet of land, or roughly 41 acres. Conversely, if all 15 hypothetical houses were single-family homes constructed in the Manchester Village district and were able to connect to the public sewer, they would consume 300,000 square feet of land, or just under seven acres. Neither hypothetical scenario considers the land required for utilities or other necessities that go along with new home construction; these approximations are just the minimum lot sizes in these districts.

Manchester will undoubtedly experience new development within its existing residential districts. Ideally, those new homes would be in the designated growth areas, which is consistent with comprehensive planning guidelines.

Commercial development in Manchester has been minimal over the past decade, with no significant new growth projected. That is not to say there are no new businesses coming into Manchester, just that these new businesses are moving into existing buildings rather than building new ones.

Existing Land Use Analysis and Key Issues

- Manchester's Land Use and Development Ordinance is a comprehensive ordinance that includes Zoning regulations, Subdivision regulations, Shoreland Zoning, and Site Plan Review. It was last updated in 2024.
- The Land Use and Development Ordinance breaks the town into seven land use districts- six of which are geographic, and one is an overlay district.
- Of these land use districts, three are earmarked as designated growth areas. Of the remaining four, three are intended to protect natural resources, while the Rural Residential district is intended for residential and other rural compatible land uses.
- New development in Manchester has largely been residential in nature, though no new subdivisions have been created in many years.
- Most of the residential development in the last decade has not been in the growth areas.
- Parts of the growth areas are largely built out and there is not much land available for new development- especially in Manchester Village.
- The Planning Board has been thoughtfully increasing density in certain districts by decreasing minimum lot sizes and road frontage requirements.
- Most new commercial development that has come into Manchester in the last decade or so has been along the Route 201 corridor and have taken up existing buildings, which aligns with the vision.
- The Land Use and Development Ordinance regulates commercial development, in part, through the Site Plan Review section.
- The location of commercial development is largely dependent upon the availability of public sewer and water connections, making it easier to direct into designated growth areas; whereas residential development is less influenced on public sewer and water connections.
- Non-regulatory and regulatory measures combined can work towards direct growth and development to appropriate areas. Manchester already embraces several non-regulatory measures for directing growth.
- In a statistical analysis, it appears that Manchester does not need to increase the available housing stock, but if the changes in population demographics are considered along with the overall housing shortage in the state, there is an undeniable need for housing, specifically smaller housing options.

Recommendations

- I: General Recommendations**
- II: Future Land Use Plan**
- III: Capital Investment Planning Process**
- IV: Regional Coordination**

Recommendations Part I: Policies and Strategies

This section of the Plan lists general recommendations, in the form of policies and strategies, for each element of the plan. These recommendations are intended to address the issues raised in the review and analysis of the chapters in the *Community Assessment* section. The matrix also shows a suggested implementation timing and responsible party.

For this section, the implementation priority is divided into near-term, mid-term, long-term, and ongoing, defined as the following:

- **“Short term”** is presumed to be activities which can be completed within two years. These are primarily changes to Zoning and other ordinances and are easily achievable actions.
- **“Mid-term”** activities will be commenced and/or completed between two and five years after adoption of the plan. These consist of lower-priority activities or those which require additional planning or preparation to accomplish.
- **“Long-term”** activities are those which are more nebulous, and for which the path to implementation has not yet come into focus.
- **“Ongoing”** is used to identify strategies which are currently in place and should continue.

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Historic Resources- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p>Manchester’s active and involved Historical Society is integral in preserving the town’s valued heritage and history. There are several noteworthy, historic buildings and sites that the Society strives to preserve throughout town. There are many more sites and buildings of local importance to Manchester residents than those recognized by the National Register of Historic Places.</p> <p>Though the town embraces and celebrates their history, unfortunately standards above those mandated by the state for site assessments and preservation measures have been adopted.</p> <p>State Goal: To preserve the State's historic and archeological resources.</p>		
Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p>1. Protect to the greatest extent practicable the significant historic and archaeological resources in the community.</p>	<p>1.1 For known historic archeological sites and areas sensitive to prehistoric archeology, through local land use ordinances require subdivision or non-residential developers to take appropriate measures to protect those resources, including but not limited to, modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, and/or extent of excavation.</p> <p>1.2 Adopt or amend land use ordinances to require the planning board (or other designated review authority) to incorporate maps and information provided by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission into their review process.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO, Historical Society. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO, Historical Society. Mid-term.</p>

Historic Resources- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	<p>1.3 Work with the local or county historical society and/or the Maine Historic Preservation Commission to assess the need for, and if necessary, plan for, a comprehensive community survey of the community’s historic and archaeological resources.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Historical Society. Long term.</p>
	<p>1.4 Continue to seek more volunteers and town representation to collaborate with the Historical Society, other groups, and committees.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Historical Society. Ongoing.</p>
	<p>1.5 Assist in nominating buildings/sites for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Historical Society. Ongoing.</p>
	<p>1.6 Adopt a set of standards to use as a guide in determining whether a site meets historic preservation criteria.</p>	<p>Historical Society. Short term.</p>
	<p>1.7 Develop a dedicated display space in town for historic information and artifacts for public education.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Historical Society. Mid-term.</p>

Historic Resources- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	<p>1.8 Educate the public through public engagement and outreach about the importance of historical sites and artifacts.</p> <p>1.9 Educate owners of historic structures (including homes) via outreach about the need to prepare for greater impacts from climate change and resources available to protect historic resources after reviewing Maine Historic Preservation Commission’s weblink: www.maine.gov/mhpc/programs/protection-and-community-resources/climate-change.</p>	<p>Historical Society. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Historical Society. Short term.</p>
<p>2. Recover lost items of the town’s history through photos and texts.</p>	<p>2.1 Prioritize a list of projects to preserve the town’s history and identify the time and money needed for completion.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Historical Society. Short term.</p>
<p>3. Continue to support the efforts of the Manchester Historical Society to raise awareness and interest in the town’s history.</p>	<p>3.1 Consider options for and explore interest in fundraisers, historical walking tours, lecture series, family events, active social media postings and more to create excitement and involvement about Manchester’s history to engage the community to be more involved.</p> <p>3.2 Establish a historical marker program for locally identified historical sites and buildings in Manchester.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Historical Society. Ongoing</p> <p>Town Manager, Planning Board, Historical Society. Mid-term.</p>

Historic Resources- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	3.3 Consider promoting the Manchester Historical Society by adding a page to the town's official website.	Town Manager, Historical Society. In progress.

Local Economy- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
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Manchester’s local economy is an essential contributor to the health and vitality of the town and is linked to many other areas of town policy. Like many other communities, Manchester is facing trends that are unfavorable, such as decreasing population, and declining labor force. But Manchester has several assets as well – the town’s ideal location near Augusta, its waterbodies, recreational opportunities, and good quality of life. The town should continue to promote these assets, cooperate with private businesses and regional economic players, while maintaining a focus on suitable economic development to succeed in building a sustainable, robust economy.

State Goal: To promote an economic climate which increases job opportunities and overall economic well-being.
Local Economic Development Goals:
Provide adequate opportunities for a variety of economic activities, while promoting Manchester as a place to do business, while continuing to support the goals of Manchester’s citizens.

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
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<p>1. To support the type of economic development activity the community desires, reflecting the community’s role in the region.</p>	<p>1.1 If appropriate, assign responsibility and provide financial support for economic development activities to the proper entity (e.g., a local economic development committee, a local representative to a regional economic development organization, the community’s economic development director, a regional economic development initiative, or other).</p> <p>1.2 Explore ways to help existing businesses stay in Manchester.</p> <p>1.3 Promote and support tourist destinations and services in Manchester.</p>	<p>Select Board, Town Manager. Mid-term.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board. Short term.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Conservation Commission. Ongoing</p>
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Local Economy- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	<p>1.4 Promote and support all businesses and recreational activities in Manchester.</p> <p>1.5 Continue to require a high standard of architectural design, sign control, and landscaping for new development.</p> <p>1.6 Encourage businesses that are clearly desired by residents.</p> <p>1.7 Include agricultural opportunities in economic development plans.</p>	<p>Select Board, Town Manager, Conservation Commission. Ongoing</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Ongoing.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Ongoing.</p>
<p>2. To make a financial commitment, if necessary, to support desired economic development, including needed public improvements.</p>	<p>2.1 Enact or amend local ordinances to reflect the desired scale, design, intensity, and location of future economic development.</p> <p>2.2 If public investments are foreseen to support economic development, identify the mechanisms to be considered to finance them (local tax dollars, creating a tax increment financing district, a Community Development Block Grant or other grants, bonding, impact fees, etc.)</p> <p>2.3 Explore grant opportunities for appropriate economic development.</p>	<p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board. Mid-term</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p>

Local Economy- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	<p>2.4 Explore options for adaptive reuse of underutilized/historic buildings to develop a strategy for their rehabilitation and reuse.</p> <p>2.5 Consider ways to establish and promote Manchester as an ideal location for remote work, such as providing public internet access in areas where people congregate.</p> <p>2.6 Explore options and continue collaborating with Greater Augusta Utilities District (GAUD) to ensure the viability for public water and sewer.</p> <p>2.7 Consider future expansion of public water and sewer to promote economic growth within the General Development District.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, GAUD. Ongoing.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board, GAUD. Long term.</p>
<p>3. To coordinate with regional development corporations and surrounding towns as necessary to support desired economic development.</p>	<p>3.1 Participate in any regional economic development planning efforts.</p> <p>3.2 Explore options to coordinate with the regional school system for training opportunities for young workers.</p>	<p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, School Board. Mid-term.</p>

Local Economy- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p>4. Consider long-term strategies for continued economic viability and resiliency.</p>	<p>4.1 Continue to promote and encourage home occupations and small home businesses throughout town.</p> <p>4.2 Consider creating and maintaining a business directory on the town website or accessible via a link on the town website.</p> <p>4.3 Continue to support good management of natural resources.</p> <p>4.4 Improve and promote the availability of multi-use trails, snowmobiling, and other recreational assets in the Manchester area through literature, the town website, and other internet outlets.</p> <p>4.5 Create an economic development plan that recognizes gaps, evaluates current village areas, and supports all existing, new, and desired businesses, including home businesses.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager. Long term.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Conservation Commission. Ongoing.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Conservation Commission. Ongoing.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Long term.</p>

Local Economy- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	<p>4.6 Consider the value in joining regional Economic Development initiatives such as the Augusta Area Chamber of Commerce, and Maine Tourism.</p> <p>4.7 Consider ways to promote Age Friendly Communities.</p>	<p>Select Board, Town Manager. Mid-term.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager. Mid-term.</p>
<p>5. Continue to improve and promote Manchester’s economic climate.</p>	<p>5.1 Continue to promote pedestrian safety and walkability in the downtown area.</p> <p>5.2 Continue to work toward maintaining existing parks or green spaces throughout town or creating new ones.</p> <p>5.3 Continue to improve the infrastructure in Manchester to make it a more attractive place to visit.</p> <p>5.4 Support future economic growth compatible with the environment and landscape of the village area by improving public access, sidewalks, updating infrastructure, bury utilities, and promoting connected parking lots to improve walkability.</p>	<p>Select Board, Town Manager. Ongoing.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager. Ongoing.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager. Ongoing.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager. Long term.</p>

Local Economy- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	<p>5.5 Continue to ensure the town’s role in economic development by encouraging, but not overly regulating new proposals.</p> <p>5.6 Continue to provide clear regulatory guidance, to allow decisions to be predictable, clear, and based on objective, measurable criteria for new development.</p> <p>5.7 Use community events to highlight local businesses and encourage public participation.</p> <p>5.8 Continue to participate in local/regional economic development groups.</p>	<p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager. Mid-term.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager. Ongoing.</p>
<p>6. Strive to guide growth in a way to preserve the overall aesthetic beauty, the recreational viability, and residential land values respectively, in town.</p>	<p>6.1 Explore options for the establishment of an Economic Development Committee, a local chamber of commerce, or board of trade, to oversee requests and review the unmet needs of future development, and work to attract new businesses in the General Development District, while promoting Manchester as a place to do business.</p> <p>6.2 Consider the development of an Economic Development Plan for Manchester.</p>	<p>Select Board, Town Manager. Mid-term.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager. Mid-term.</p>

Local Economy- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	<p>6.3 Continue to review Manchester’s Land Use and Development Ordinance to ensure regulatory fairness, promotion of a mixture of uses, including, where appropriate, residential uses in the growth area, while protecting Manchester’s core community values.</p> <p>6.4 Evaluate and amend Manchester Land Use and Development Ordinance where necessary to continue to promote commercial growth in desirable locations, while ensuring future growth aligns with existing land uses.</p>	<p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p>

Housing- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p>Manchester has a growing housing stock, mostly of a rural nature, despite designated growth areas in more developed parts of town, such as the village area. Considering the changing demographic structure of the town, the town can anticipate the need for more rental housing and senior housing. Affordability is an issue for both owner-occupied and rentals homes, partly because of the housing tight market.</p> <p>State Goal: To encourage and promote affordable, decent housing opportunities for all Maine citizens.</p>		
Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p>1. Encourage and promote adequate affordable and workforce housing to support the community’s and region’s economic development.</p>	<p>1.1 Maintain, enact or amend growth area land use regulations to increase density, decrease lot size, setbacks and road widths, or provide incentives such as density bonuses, to encourage the development of affordable/workforce housing.</p> <p>1.2 Maintain, enact or amend ordinances to allow the addition of at least one accessory apartment per dwelling unit in growth areas, subject to site suitability.</p> <p>1.3 Create or continue to support a community affordable/workforce housing committee and/or regional affordable housing coalition.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p>

Housing- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	<p>1.4 Designate a location(s) in growth areas where mobile home parks are allowed pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A. §4358(3)(M) and where manufactured housing is allowed pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A. §4358(2).</p> <p>1.5 Consider engaging Maine State Housing Authority's affordable housing tax increment financing to assist in creating affordable housing development in the Community Residential District.</p> <p>1.6 Make financial and technical assistance information available to residents for improvements.</p> <p>1.7 Seek out grant opportunities for improvements to housing stock, including vacant homes and rental units and make this information available to residents.</p> <p>1.8 Continue to allow mobile home parks where currently permitted in Manchester.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Ongoing.</p>

Housing- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p>2. Ensure that land use controls encourage the development of quality affordable housing, including rental housing.</p>	<p>2.1 Support the efforts of local and regional housing coalitions in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.</p> <p>2.2 Provide training for the Code Enforcement Officer, Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals, aimed at providing town staff and volunteers with relevant knowledge in their subject areas to ensure they are equipped to make decisions and implement policy.</p> <p>2.3 Ensure municipal ordinances, including but not limited to the Land Use and Development Ordinance, encourage the development of high-quality affordable housing, including rental housing.</p> <p>2.4 Investigate and promote opportunities to provide energy-efficiency improvements to reduce home ownership costs.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, Board of Appeals, CEO. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.</p>

Housing- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	<p>2.5 Work with local hospitals/senior organizations to develop a plan for senior/assisted housing within the community or region.</p> <p>2.6 Educate homeowners about National Fire Protection (NFPA) guidance aimed at decreasing harm to houses from wildfires: https://www.nfpa.org/education-and-research/wildfire/preparing-homes-for-wildfire</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.</p>
<p>3. To encourage and support the efforts of the regional housing coalitions in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.</p>	<p>3.1 Seek to achieve a level of at least 10% of new residential development built or placed during the next decade be affordable.</p> <p>3.2 Explore options to encourage workforce housing development to support community and regional economic development.</p> <p>3.3 Identify unutilized or underutilized buildings throughout town that could be redeveloped to provide a variety of housing options, styles, and locations.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Long term.</p>

Housing- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p>4. Make sure Manchester’s municipal ordinances regulating, related to, or impacting housing are reviewed at regularly scheduled intervals, kept up to date, and do not create unnecessary barriers in housing development, while maintaining consistency with the town’s rural and residential character.</p>	<p>4.1 Ensure all ordinances are up to date and comply with related, current Maine Statutes.</p> <p>4.2 Encourage multi-family housing within existing and newly created housing units in appropriate locations.</p> <p>4.3 Explore options where the development of multi-family housing would be suitable and in keeping with the town’s character.</p> <p>4.4 Review and amend Manchester’s Land Use and Development Ordinance to favor well-planned new development and/or redevelopment.</p> <p>4.5 Increase flexibility of subdivision rules to promote infill in the growth districts, make bonus density provisions functional, and promote increased housing of all price ranges in growth areas.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p>

Housing- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	<p>4.6 Review ordinances for obstacles to affordable housing, particularly in the growth districts, and revise as necessary.</p> <p>4.7 Increase flexibility of site-review and subdivision ordinances with respect to road building standards for subdivisions of 10 units or less.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p>
<p>5. Investigate and assess the condition and environmental impact of waterfront housing stock on the waterbodies in town.</p>	<p>5.1 Explore ways to limit the impact of short-term rentals on both the community and the environment.</p> <p>5.2 Balance housing growth with preservation of water quality in Cobbossee Lake.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, CEO. Ongoing.</p>
<p>6. Consider ways to ensure new housing development meets the current and future needs of Manchester’s changing population.</p>	<p>6.1 Consider forming an Age Friendly Committee to work towards increasing the development of senior housing options.</p> <p>6.2 Identify Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA) programs that may be of use to current or prospective residents and make information available through the town office.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.</p>

Housing- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	<p>6.3 Investigate methods of promoting and encouraging the creation of and development of senior housing throughout town.</p> <p>6.4 Review ordinances and revise to make senior housing an allowed use in predetermined areas at a higher density.</p> <p>6.5 Create and task a committee to work with regional nonprofit organizations to identify opportunities to increase the availability of senior housing in Manchester.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board. Long term.</p>
<p>7. Protect all natural resources and Manchester’s rural character, both of which attract tourists to town, while promoting housing development.</p>	<p>7.1 Maintain a permit tracking system to determine the quantity of new developments in the designated growth area.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Ongoing</p>

Housing- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	<p>7.2 Promote water-quality preservation through ordinance revisions by using a combination of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Low impact development strategies and b. Runoff mitigation banking in the Cobbossee watershed, thereby promoting development in compliance with Cobbossee watershed phosphorus runoff rules. 	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p>
<p>8. Strive to encourage needed and appropriate housing in Manchester’s designated growth area.</p>	<p>8.1 Encourage higher density development and/or subdivisions in designated growth areas.</p> <p>8.2 Explore the feasibility of creating more access to public water and sewer services in the growth areas through cooperation with Maine DOT, the Greater Augusta Utility District and the Manchester Sanitary Sewer District.</p> <p>8.3 Encourage residential growth where water and sewer are available.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Long term.</p> <p>Planning Board, CEO. Ongoing.</p>

Housing- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	<p>8.4 Consider ways to encourage more affordable housing, with at least 10 percent of new housing affordable to households' making 80 percent of median household income.</p> <p>8.5 Review multifamily ordinance provisions and revise to permit greater density in the growth districts.</p> <p>8.6 Develop a joint (public-private) development strategy for financing extensions of public water and sewer systems to new areas in the designated growth areas.</p> <p>8.7 Revise housing ordinances for targeted growth areas that will increase the variety and availability of housing in those areas.</p>	<p>Planning Board, CEO. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p>

Public Facilities and Services- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p>Manchester offers limited public services, with the town primarily responsible for fire protection. Other essential services are provided through partnerships with neighboring towns, the county, and the school district. The town does not operate a public works department and instead contracts out those services.</p> <p>Public water and sewer services are managed by the Greater Augusta Utilities District, while residents outside that service area rely on private wells and septic systems.</p> <p>Due to its limited services and reliance on external providers, Manchester has minimal control over many service details. As a result, the town must be proactive and efficient in managing its budget to ensure continued, cost-effective service delivery—a key priority for both the town and its residents.</p> <p>State Goal: To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.</p>		

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p>1. To efficiently meet identified public facilities and service needs.</p>	<p>1.1 Identify any capital improvements needed to maintain or upgrade public services to accommodate the community’s anticipated growth and changing demographics.</p> <p>1.2 Locate new public facilities comprising at least 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments in designated growth areas.</p> <p>1.3 Continue to explore participation in regional initiatives for services that can provide better value to the town than other available sources.</p>	<p>Select Board, Town Manager. Ongoing</p> <p>Select Board, Planning Board, Town Manager. Ongoing</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager. Ongoing.</p>

Public Facilities and Services- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	<p>1.4 Investigate the future capacity of the town cemeteries.</p> <p>1.5 Develop a long-term maintenance plan and budget for all town-owned buildings and properties.</p> <p>1.6 Assess and prepare for the potential future expansion of law enforcement resources.</p>	<p>Cemetery Committee.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager. Ongoing.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager. Ongoing.</p>
<p>2. To provide public facilities and services in a manner that promotes and supports growth and development in identified growth areas.</p>	<p>2.1 Encourage local sewer and water districts to coordinate planned service extensions with the Future Land Use Plan.</p> <p>2.2 If public water supply expansion is anticipated, identify and protect suitable sources.</p> <p>2.3 Explore options for regional delivery of local services.</p>	<p>Select Board, Town Manager, Road Committee, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Road Committee. Ongoing.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Road Committee, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p>
<p>3. Improve and encourage citizen participation in town government and community affairs by keeping residents informed of town activities and opportunities.</p>	<p>3.1 Explore ways to encourage residents to volunteer for local boards, committees, and activities.</p> <p>3.2 Consider options for implementing an e-newsletter to complement the town website and annual Town Report.</p>	<p>Select Board, Town Manager. Ongoing</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board. Mid-term.</p>

Public Facilities and Services- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	<p>3.3 Ensure the town website includes information such as opportunities and town events.</p> <p>3.4 Annually recognize individual volunteers who have made significant contributions of their time.</p> <p>3.5 Consider additional methods, such as social media, to increase public awareness.</p>	<p>Select Board, Town Manager, various boards/committees. Ongoing.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, various boards/committees. Short term.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager. Mid-term.</p>
<p>4. Continue to hold annual community events/festivities/programs to foster community spirit and reinforce the rural character of the town.</p>	<p>4.1 Encourage participation and elicit feedback and suggestions for ways to improve and revitalize various community events from residents.</p> <p>4.2 Consider the creation of a committee to oversee community events.</p>	<p>Select Board, Conservation Commission, snowmobile club, mountain bike club (CeMENEMBA), landowners (KLT, NEFF, etc.). Ongoing.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager. Long term.</p>

Transportation- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p>Transportation is an essential element for both the local economy and community. At its simplest, it provides access to jobs, services, and supplies. Without transportation and road access, a community could not exist. Manchester’s transportation system provides access both within the town and to larger market areas. The road network serves primarily motor vehicles and is generally in good condition.</p> <p>There are several main intersections in the middle of town that serve a high volume of traffic. Route 202 essentially bisects the village, which is both a benefit and challenge at the same time.</p> <p>The town has no real pedestrian network, especially outside of the village area, and no direct access to public transportation.</p> <p>State Goal: To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.</p>		
Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p>1. To prioritize community and regional needs associated with safe, efficient, and optimal use of transportation systems.</p>	<p>1.1 Develop or continue to update prioritized improvement, maintenance, and repair plan for the community’s transportation network.</p>	<p>Select Board, Town Manager, Road Committee. Ongoing</p>
<p>2. To safely and efficiently preserve or improve the transportation system.</p>	<p>2.1 Initiate or actively participate in regional and state transportation efforts.</p> <p>2.2 Work with MDOT to improve the existing transportation system.</p> <p>2.3 Take into consideration scenic road corridors when planning, designing, and executing roadway improvements.</p>	<p>Select Board, Town Manager, Road Committee. Ongoing</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Road Committee. Ongoing</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Conservation Commission. Ongoing</p>

Transportation- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	<p>2.4 Ensure that road maintenance and improvement operations minimize erosion, phosphorus runoff, protect groundwater and maintain safety.</p> <p>2.5 Evaluate and update the parking standards in the Land Use and Development Ordinance, as needed, to ensure parking is optimized and is adequate but not excessive.</p> <p>2.6 Investigate the demand for installing Electronic Vehicle charging stations and continue to seek grants to install Electronic Vehicle charging stations.</p> <p>2.7 Continue the town road management program utilizing the recommendations from the Road Committee, including increasing the annual funding for road maintenance projects.</p>	<p>Select Board, Town Manager, Road Committee, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Road Committee, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Road Committee. Mid-term</p> <p>Select Board, Road Committee. Ongoing.</p>

Transportation- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p>3. To promote public health, protect natural and cultural resources, and enhance livability by managing land use in ways that maximize the efficiency of the transportation system and minimize increases in vehicle miles traveled.</p>	<p>3.1 Explore options for connecting points of interest, such as schools and other public areas, to make them more accessible and safer for walking and bicycling.</p> <p>3.2 Consider developing a process for tracking the evaluation, maintenance, and repairs for culverts to ensure they are in good working condition as well as adequacy for anticipated increased storm intensity.</p> <p>3.3 Explore possible ways to document paper/abandoned/discontinued roads and existing public rights-of-way.</p>	<p>Select Board, Town Manager, Road Committee, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Road Committee. Ongoing.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Road Committee, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p>
<p>4. To meet the diverse transportation needs of residents (including children, the elderly and disabled) and through travelers by providing a safe, efficient, and adequate transportation network for all types of users (motor vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists).</p>	<p>4.1 Maintain, enact or amend local ordinances as appropriate to address or avoid conflicts with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Policy objectives of the Sensible Transportation Policy Act (23 M.R.S.A. §73); ○ State access management regulations pursuant to 23 M.R.S.A. §704; and ○ State traffic permitting regulations for large developments pursuant to 23 M.R.S.A. §704-A. 	<p>Select Board, Town Manager, Road Committee. Ongoing</p>

Transportation- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	<p>4.2 Explore feasible options that would provide transportation for elderly, disabled, or low-income community members.</p> <p>4.3 Consider creating a committee or subcommittee to help facilitate the development of a transportation study with timelines to make Manchester more bicycle and pedestrian friendly. Including exploring initiatives with state and local entities.</p>	<p>Select Board, Town Manager. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Conservation Commission. Mid-term.</p>
<p>5. To promote fiscal prudence by maximizing the efficiency of the state or state-aid highway network.</p>	<p>5.1 Maintain, enact or amend ordinance standards for subdivisions and for public and private roads as appropriate to foster transportation-efficient growth patterns and provide for future street and transit connections.</p>	<p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p>
<p>6. Increase the availability of pedestrian access, bike paths, and multi-use trails throughout town.</p>	<p>6.1 Continue collaboration in developing bike paths.</p> <p>6.2 Seek opportunities to collaborate with DOT to increase bike lanes throughout town.</p>	<p>Select Board, Conservation Commission, snowmobile club, mountain bike club (CeMENEMBA), landowners (KLT, NEFF, etc.). Ongoing.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p>

Transportation- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	<p>6.3 Promote the availability of multi-use trails, snowmobiling, mountain biking, and other recreational assets through literature, internet, and other outlets.</p> <p>6.4 Evaluate the sidewalks for connectivity, ADA compliance, maintenance, and work to improve any identified issues.</p> <p>6.5 Continue to budget for sidewalk improvement and maintenance.</p>	<p>Select Board, Conservation Commission. Ongoing.</p> <p>Road Committee, Select Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Road Committee. Ongoing.</p>
<p>7. Continue to address ways to enforce traffic speed and pedestrian safety with the intent of making the village area more pedestrian friendly.</p>	<p>7.1 Explore grant options to improve the village area.</p> <p>7.2 For Readfield Road, by Manchester Elementary School, request a school zone speed limit sign and light from MDOT.</p>	<p>Select Board, Town Manager, Road Committee. Ongoing.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Road Committee. Short term.</p>

Recreation- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p>Manchester offers a wide range of recreational opportunities that include both organized (“active”) and nonorganized (“passive”) activities. The town provides several sports fields, trails, and community programs, though it lacks a municipal recreation department and adequate indoor space for adult programs. Manchester’s numerous open spaces, protected lands, and trail networks support hiking, biking, bird watching, dog walking, hunting, and water-based recreation; however, swimming access remains limited. Strong partnerships with regional organizations and proactive land conservation efforts have helped the town maintain an impressive system of recreational resources and preserved open space.</p>		
<p>State Goal: To promote and protect the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities for all Maine citizens, including access to surface waters.</p>		
Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p>1. To maintain/upgrade existing recreational facilities and public water resources as necessary to meet current and future needs.</p>	<p>1.1 Create a list of recreation needs or develop a recreation plan to meet current and future needs. Assign a committee or community official to explore ways of addressing the identified needs and/or implementing the policies and strategies outlined in the plan.</p> <p>1.2 Continue to support the town’s community parks, ballfields, tennis courts, and community buildings, as well as looking for opportunities for expansion.</p> <p>1.3 Continue to improve school-based recreation facilities.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Conservation Commission. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, School Board. Ongoing.</p>
<p>2. To preserve open space for recreational use as appropriate.</p>	<p>2.1 Work with public and private partners to extend and maintain a network of trails for motorized and non-motorized uses. Connect with regional trail systems where possible.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Conservation Commission, multiple non-municipal entities. Ongoing.</p>

Recreation- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	<p>2.2 Work with an existing local land trust or other conservation organizations to pursue opportunities to protect important open space or recreational land.</p> <p>2.3 Provide educational materials regarding the benefits and protections for landowners allowing public recreational access on their property. At a minimum this will include information on Maine’s landowner liability law regarding recreational or harvesting use, Title 14, M.R.S.A. §159-A.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Conservation Commission. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Conservation Commission. Short term.</p>
<p>3. To seek to achieve or continue to maintain at least one major point of public access to major water bodies for boating, fishing, and swimming, and work with nearby property owners to address concerns.</p>	<p>3.1 Continue to maintain existing water access points.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.</p>
<p>4. Investigate opportunities to promote, protect, and support a wide range of public recreation activities and programs, both indoor and outdoor, for all ages, particularly adults.</p>	<p>4.1 Consider what deficiencies the town currently has in meeting the future needs of older citizens and anticipate ways to fulfil those deficiencies.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Age Friendly Committee. Ongoing.</p>
<p>5. Work to establish and expand the year-round community events.</p>	<p>5.1 Incorporate town events into promotional literature, town newsletters, and websites.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, various other boards and committees. Mid-term.</p>

Recreation- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
6. Ensure public buildings and recreation facilities meet current ADA standards to provide handicapped access to people of all ages.	6.1 Explore the possibility of doing an assessment of town-owned buildings and properties to determine ADA accessibility.	Town Manager, Select Board. Mid-term.
7. Plan and develop a townwide system of interconnected trails for multiple forms of recreational use, considering landowner relations, environmental protection and public safety.	7.1 Work with public and private partners to extend and maintain a network of trails for motorized and non-motorized uses. Connect with regional trail systems where possible. Formalize these arrangements with easements or licenses whenever possible. 7.2 Maintain communications with owners of private recreation resources and work cooperatively to address issues of public use.	Town Manager, Select Board, Conservation Commission. Ongoing. Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.
8. Strive to improve accessibility and ecological sustainability of existing trails.	8.1 Replace approximately 650 ft. of bridge in Gannet Woods. 8.2 Improve 1,500 ft. of road/trail in Allen Whiteny Forest to connect to Shed Pond. 8.3 Make drainage improvements to trails in Shedd Pond area. 8.4 Replace trail bridging and make drainage improvements to trails in Jamies Pond area.	Town Manager, Select Board, Conservation Commission. Long Term. Town Manager, Select Board, Conservation Commission. Long Term. Town Manager, Select Board, Conservation Commission. Long Term. Town Manager, Select Board, Conservation Commission. Long Term.

Recreation- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	8.5 Replace 100 ft. of trail bridging and make drainage improvements to trails in Hutchinson Pond area.	Town Manager, Select Board, Conservation Commission. Long Term.
	8.6 Make 2,200 ft. of trail/road improvements to stream access road and drainage improvements to trails in North Acres.	Town Manager, Select Board, Conservation Commission. Long Term.
	8.7 Replace bridging and make drainage improvements to trails at Kerns Hill.	Town Manager, Select Board, Conservation Commission. Long Term.

Agriculture & Forestry- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
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Agriculture and forestry were Manchester’s first forms of economic development. In more recent years, farming in both the town and at the state level has evolved from a commodity-based market industry to locally based, smaller businesses that produce specialty products on smaller land parcels. Supporting and encouraging small local farms is a meaningful opportunity for the town.

Forest management is supported by markets for wood products that are beyond local control, but since forest gains value from one year to the next, it can generally withstand temporary fluctuations.

State Goal: To safeguard the State’s agricultural and forest resources from development which threatens those resources.

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
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1. To safeguard lands identified as prime farmland or capable of supporting commercial forestry.

1.1 Consult with the Maine Forest Service district forester when developing any land use regulations pertaining to forest management practices as required by 12 M.R.S.A. §8869.

Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Ongoing.

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

Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, Conservation Commission. Ongoing.

1.3 Amend land use ordinances to require commercial or subdivision developments in critical rural areas*, if applicable, maintain areas with prime farmland soils as open space to the greatest extent practicable.

Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, Conservation Commission. Mid-term.

*<https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/30-a/title30-Asec4301.html>

Agriculture & Forestry- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	<p>1.4 Limit non-residential development in critical rural areas (if the town designates critical rural areas) to natural resource-based businesses and services, nature tourism/outdoor recreation businesses, farmers’ markets, and home occupations.</p> <p>1.5 Consider making Open Space Subdivisions mandatory where applicable to preserve critical rural agricultural land.</p> <p>1.6 Retain subdivision standards in the Land Use and Development Ordinance that protect high value farmland and requires lots to be sited on soils least suitable for agriculture, to the extent practicable.</p> <p>1.7 All new commercial development in rural areas must strive to preserve prime farmland soils as open space to the greatest practical extent.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, Conservation Commission. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Planning Board, Conservation Commission. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Planning Board, Conservation Commission. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Planning Board, Conservation Commission. Mid-term.</p>

Agriculture & Forestry- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p>2. To support farming and forestry and encourage their economic viability.</p>	<p>2.1 Encourage owners of productive farm and forest land to enroll in the current use taxation programs.</p> <p>2.2 Permit land use activities that support productive agriculture and forestry operations, such as roadside stands, greenhouses, firewood operations, sawmills, log buying yards, and pick-your-own operations.</p> <p>2.3 Include agriculture, commercial forestry operations, and land conservation that supports them in local or regional economic development plans.</p> <p>2.4 Provide information at the town office and on the town’s website for agricultural support such Future Farmers of America (FFA), the Maine Organic Farmers and Growers Association (MOFGA), the Maine Farmland Trust, Maine Farm Bureau, and 4H in supporting and expanding the agricultural sector.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, Conservation Commission. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, Conservation Commission. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Conservation Commission. Mid-term.</p>

Agriculture & Forestry- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
3. Use the most current standards available for erosion and stormwater control, site reclamation and vegetative buffers in approving mineral extraction operations.	3.1 Continue to review and update the town ordinances regularly to reflect most up to date requirements. 3.2 In high value natural and scenic resource areas limit non-residential development to natural resources- based businesses, nature tourism, outdoor recreation, farm markets, and home occupations.	Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board. Ongoing. Town Manager, Planning Board, Conservation Commission. Mid-term.

Natural Resources- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
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Manchester contains large expanses of open space supporting a variety of land based and aquatic wildlife. Manchester residents have indicated strong support for maintaining these open spaces and resources for a variety of reasons – quality of life, preservation of town identity, enhancing property values, maintaining wildlife habitat, protecting water quality and supply, and to support tourism, hiking, hunting, and fishing opportunities. This support has been evidenced, among other ways, by the adoption of an Open Space Plan in 2004.

State Goal for Natural Resources: To protect the State's other critical natural resources, including without limitation, wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, sand dunes, shorelands, scenic vistas, and unique natural areas.

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
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1. To conserve critical natural resources in the community.

1.1 Ensure that land use ordinances are consistent with applicable state law regarding critical natural resources.

Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board. Ongoing.

1.2 Designate critical natural resources as Critical Resource Areas in the Future Land Use Plan.

Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board, Conservation Commission. Short term.

1.3 Through local land use ordinances, require subdivision or non-residential property developers to look for and identify critical natural resources that may be on site and to take appropriate measures to protect those resources, including but not limited to, modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, and/or extent of excavation.

Select Board, Town Manager, Conservation Commission. Ongoing.

Natural Resources- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	<p>1.4 Through local land use ordinances, require the Planning Board (or other designated review authority) to include as part of the review process, consideration of pertinent Beginning with Habitat (BwH) maps and information regarding critical natural resources.</p> <p>1.5 Educate the public about the town’s critical natural resources to raise awareness and improve protection efforts.</p> <p>1.6 Require additional biological information and/or studies in the application process when critical natural areas or species may possibly be affected by proposed development.</p> <p>1.7 Minimize the fragmentation of large parcels of undeveloped land, seek to preserve a variety of different habitats and seek to ensure that wildlife travel corridors connect wildlife habitats.</p> <p>1.8 Ensure the Floodplain Management Ordinance receives regular review and is updated to keep current with state and federal guidelines with specific attention to protecting natural resources.</p>	<p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board, Conservation Commission. Ongoing</p> <p>Town Manager, Planning Board, Conservation Commission. Short term</p> <p>Town Manager, Planning Board, Conservation Commission. Short term</p> <p>Planning Board, Conservation Commission Short term</p> <p>Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Short term.</p>

Natural Resources- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	<p>1.9 Designate and protect as Critical Resource Areas in the Land Use Plan the current Resource Protection District, Aquifer Management Overlay District and High Value Natural Areas cited in 2004 Open Space Plan.</p> <p>1.10 Utilize GIS mapping to better define boundaries of deemed Critical Resource Areas, which include Resource Protection District and High Value Natural Areas identified in 2004 Open Space Plan.</p> <p>1.11 Promote and establish connections between High Value Natural Areas identified in 2004 Open Space Plan through greenways, trails, and wildlife travel corridors including links with village neighborhoods.</p> <p>1.12 Strengthen current Land Use and Development Ordinance standards that protect critical natural resources including but not limited to open space subdivision provisions and buffering/screening provisions.</p> <p>1.13 Maintain current Shoreland Zone districts, setbacks, and other provisions regardless of changes in state law or rules.</p>	<p>Planning Board, Conservation Commission. Ongoing.</p> <p>Conservation Commission, Planning Board. Short Term</p> <p>Conservation Commission, Planning Board. Short term.</p> <p>Code Enforcement Officer, Conservation Commission Short Term.</p> <p>Planning Board, Conservation Commission. Ongoing.</p>

Natural Resources- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	<p>1.14 Notify Conservation Commission of proposed development in Shoreland District, in or near High Value Natural Areas identified in the 2004 Open Space Plan, or any major development prior to Planning Board review. Email agendas and relevant application details at least 4 days prior to a meeting when project will be discussed or considered. Provisions are to be included in Land Use and Development Ordinance.</p> <p>1.15 Allow Conservation Commission and applicable state agencies to offer review comments on development proposals and provide a copy of site plans and other supporting documents upon request.</p> <p>1.16 Incorporate into the site plan review process consideration of impacts on critical natural resources by review of maps and information provided by State Beginning with Habitat program, High Value Natural and Scenic Resource Areas maps from 2004 Open Space Plan, and 1992 Visual Resource Inventory and Evaluation. Applicants will be required to identify potential impacts and alternatives.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Planning Board, Code Enforcement Officer, Planning Board Secretary, Conservation Commission. Short Term.</p> <p>Planning Board, CEO, Conservation Commission. Short Term.</p> <p>Planning Board, Conservation Commission, CEO. Short Term</p>

Natural Resources- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	<p>1.17 Require MDIFW written comments when a portion of a major development is within a High Value Plant and Animal Habitat Area as indicated on State Beginning with Habitat map to minimize negative impacts on these habitats.</p> <p>1.18 Research available dark-sky lighting standards for the Land Use and Development Ordinance, to further minimize night glare from nonresidential development and land use activities.</p> <p>1.19 Explore options for providing financial incentives to landowners who allow public use of their open space.</p> <p>1.20 Maintain Planning Board capacity in shoreland zoning by attending DEP workshops, training and other avenues.</p>	<p>Planning Board, Conservation Commission, CEO. Short Term</p> <p>Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Short Term</p> <p>Conservation Commission, Town Assessor, Select Board. Mid-Term</p> <p>Planning Board, CEO. Ongoing.</p>

Natural Resources- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p>2. To coordinate with neighboring communities and regional and state resource agencies to protect shared critical natural resources</p>	<p>2.1 Initiate and/or participate in interlocal and/or regional planning, management, and/or regulatory efforts around shared critical and important natural resources.</p> <p>2.2 Pursue public/private partnerships to protect critical and important natural resources such as through purchase of land or easements from willing sellers.</p> <p>2.3 Distribute or make available information to those living in or near critical or important natural resources about current use tax programs and applicable local, state, or federal regulations.</p> <p>2.4 Investigate potential grants and other tools aimed at the removal/eradication of invasive species.</p>	<p>Select Board, Town Manager, Conservation Commission, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Conservation Commission. Mid-term</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, CEO. Ongoing.</p> <p>Conservation Commission. Mid-term.</p>

Natural Resources- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p>3. Provide education and outreach to the community to work towards improving habitat.</p>	<p>3.1 Offer public field trips/talks annually focused on contemporary conservation related issues such as optimizing pollinator habitat and identifying, controlling, or eradicating invasive species.</p> <p>3.2 Organize workdays for students focusing on municipal conservation work.</p>	<p>Conservation Commission Short term.</p> <p>Conservation Commission Short term.</p>
<p>4. Continue to work towards protecting and preserving important areas of open space, habitat, forestland and other natural areas throughout Manchester.</p>	<p>4.1 Evaluate the 2004 Long Range Public Facilities and Open Space Plan for progress and update to reflect current conditions.</p> <p>4.2 Consider the use of local land bonds to purchase land or easements from willing sellers and/or to establish a land acquisition fund.</p> <p>4.3 Designate 100% of “Wood Account” revenue to utilize as seed money or matching funds for acquisition, protection or stewardship of High Value Natural Areas identified in 2004 Open Space Plan.</p>	<p>Conservation Commission, Town Manager, Select Board. Mid-term.</p> <p>Conservation Commission, Town Manager, Select Board, Mid-term.</p> <p>Conservation Commission, Select Board, Short Term</p>

Water Resources- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p>Manchester’s water resources are extremely important to the town. Manchester features 10 named lakes and ponds, providing scenic beauty, recreational opportunities, tourism, and property value enhancement. It has numerous streams and flowage that provide open space, wildlife habitat, storm water storage and water quality protection. The town lies over a significant portion of a large aquifer providing the primary source of water to the Augusta Water District.</p> <p>State Goal for Water Resources: To protect the quality and manage the quantity of the State's water resources, including lakes, aquifers, great ponds, estuaries, rivers, and coastal areas.</p>		

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p>1. To protect current and potential drinking water sources</p>	<p>1.1 Adopt or amend local land use ordinances as applicable to incorporate stormwater runoff performance standards consistent with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Maine Stormwater Management Law and Maine Stormwater regulations (Title 38 M.R.S.A. §420-D and 06-096 CMR 500 and 502). ○ Maine Department of Environmental Protection's allocations for allowable levels of phosphorus in lake/pond watersheds. ○ Maine Pollution Discharge Elimination System Stormwater Program ○ LID standards from LID Guidance Manual for Maine Communities; https://www.maine.gov/dep/land/watershed/materials/lid-guidance-manual.pdf that apply to new residential subdivisions, multifamily and commercial development that are not covered by Ch. 500 Maine’s Stormwater Management Law. 	<p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, CEO. Short term.</p>

Water Resources- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	1.2 Maintain groundwater protection standards for use and storage of toxic or hazardous materials and mineral extraction.	Planning Board. Ongoing.
2. To protect significant surface water resources from pollution and improve water quality where needed.	<p>2.1 Where applicable but especially for Weston Brook, develop an urban impaired stream watershed management or mitigation plan that will promote continued development or redevelopment without further stream degradation.</p> <p>2.2 Identify potentially impaired streams.</p> <p>2.3 Draft a Riparian Buffer Ordinance that includes first order streams.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Conservation Commission, CEO. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Conservation Commission Short term.</p> <p>Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Short term.</p>
3. To protect water resources in growth areas while promoting more intensive development in those areas.	<p>3.1 Maintain, enact or amend public wellhead and aquifer recharge area protection mechanisms, as necessary.</p> <p>3.2 Encourage landowners to protect water quality. Provide local contact information through the municipal office for water quality best management practices (BMPs) from resources such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Soil and Water Conservation District, Maine Forest Service, and/or Small Woodlot Association of Maine.</p>	<p>Planning Board, CEO, Town Manager. Ongoing.</p> <p>Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Town Manager, CEO. Mid-term.</p>

Water Resources- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	<p>3.3 Maintain up-to-date and flexible regulatory standards for land-use activities to protect water quality.</p> <p>3.4 Maintain standards for earth-moving and land-clearing activities in lake watersheds.</p> <p>3.5 Utilize the latest edition of Department of Environmental Protection's handbook, <i>Phosphorus Control in Lake Watersheds</i>, to aid in establishing density, design, and development standards to maintain water quality.</p> <p>3.6 Research options to determine stormwater increases from single lot housing expansions in growth districts to apply to a phosphorus mitigation system.</p> <p>3.7 Consider setting more stringent restrictions/additional review criteria for development proposed in the part of Manchester's growth area that falls in the Cobbossee Lake watershed.</p>	<p>Planning Board. Ongoing</p> <p>Planning Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Planning Board, Conservation Commission. Ongoing.</p> <p>Conservation Commission, Planning Board. Short term.</p> <p>Planning Board, Conservation Commission. Short term.</p>

Water Resources- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p>4. To minimize pollution discharges through the upgrade of existing public sewer systems and wastewater treatment facilities.</p>	<p>4.1 Adopt water quality protection practices and standards for construction and maintenance of public and private roads and public properties and require their implementation by contractors, owners, and community officials and employees.</p> <p>4.2 Work to identify funds to assist homeowners in voluntary upgrading of inadequate septic systems.</p>	<p>Planning Board, Select Board, Town Manager, Conservation Commission. CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board. Long term.</p>
<p>5. To cooperate with neighboring communities and regional/local advocacy groups to protect water resources.</p>	<p>5.1 Engage in and support efforts by Cobbossee Watershed District, Cobbossee Lake Association, and other local and regional efforts to protect and improve water quality and solicit assistance when an impaired stream watershed management or mitigation plan is being developed and implemented.</p> <p>5.2 Provide funding for boat monitoring efforts and support distribution of educational materials regarding invasive species at boat launches and appropriate locations.</p> <p>5.3 Provide educational materials at appropriate locations regarding aquatic invasive species.</p>	<p>Planning Board, Conservation Commission. CEO, Cobbossee Lake Association. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Conservation Commission. Short Term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Conservation Commission. Short Term.</p>

Water Resources- Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p>6. Develop a catalogue of certain water resources to provide better protection.</p>	<p>6.1 Work towards mapping vernal pools, starting with those on public land and eventually working to map those on private land with willing landowners.</p> <p>6.2 Work towards mapping wetland areas that are not attached to or associated with ponds or large streams.</p> <p>6.3 Consider enacting stronger protections of wetlands that are not attached/associated with ponds or large streams.</p> <p>6.4 Explore ways to educate the public about vernal pool identification and the importance of vernal pools.</p>	<p>Conservation Commission. Long term.</p> <p>Conservation Commission. Mid-term.</p> <p>Planning Board, Conservation Commission. Mid-term.</p> <p>Conservation Commission. Ongoing.</p>

Recommendations Part II: Manchester's Future Land Use Plan

Manchester's Comprehensive Plan Vision

Manchester envisions a future where its natural beauty, historic character, rural landscapes, and recreational assets are conserved in a vibrant, healthy and safe community by supporting strong community connections between residents and visitors alike.

Concentrating growth in the village area and along Route 202 will support a vibrant, mixed-use center while preserving Manchester's rural character, open space, and natural resources.

This balanced approach supports thoughtful development and conservation, enabling residents to live, work, and age in place while fostering a cultural and tourism hub. Manchester remains committed to environmental stewardship, preparing for and responding to environmental challenges brought by a changing climate by investing in resilient infrastructure, energy efficiency, and sustainable development. Thoughtful planning meets the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors, strengthens the economy, and preserves Manchester's unique character, values, responsible stewardship of resources, and sense of community.

Overview

This section outlines Manchester's growth over the past decade and sets a path to preserve the qualities residents value. Sustainable growth and environmental conservation are central and can be achieved through thoughtful land use strategies.

Future land use priorities focus on protecting the town's natural beauty, historic character, and rural landscape, while promoting recreation, community connections, and directing development to appropriate locations.

As Manchester grows, planning must balance development with the protection of natural resources and historic landmarks, supporting economic activity while safeguarding these assets for future generations.

Manchester's Future Land Use Plan Explained

The Future Land Use Plan includes a map and narrative outlining Manchester's designated growth and rural areas, along with strategies—regulatory and non-regulatory—to guide development. It builds on the previous Comprehensive Plan, existing ordinances, and current development trends.

The plan assumes continued growth in economic activity, public services, housing, and employment, while emphasizing the protection of Manchester's rural character and natural resources. This chapter focuses on the physical impact of that growth.

To manage public service costs, the plan prioritizes concentrating growth where services are most efficient. Aligning development with historic patterns and managing rural pressures helps maintain sustainability, reduce expenses, and advance the community's vision.

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan and its Future Land Use component is to identify community issues, define desired outcomes, and outline strategies to achieve them. It does not directly create new regulations; any changes would be carried out through the town's usual procedures, including ordinance revisions, Select Board decisions, and opportunities for public input.

When identifying or expanding growth areas, location is critical. Growth areas should align with access to public water, sewer, and transportation, and ideally be near utilities, schools, and service centers. Natural constraints— wetlands, watersheds, and similar features— must also be considered. New growth areas should logically extend existing ones and remain appropriately sized based on anticipated growth and environmental limits.

Effective land use management protects Manchester's natural resources and rural character. A core strategy is directing at least 75 percent of municipal growth-related capital investments into designated growth areas, reinforcing development in appropriate locations and reducing pressure elsewhere. Routine maintenance in rural areas does not count as a growth-related investment.

This section details specific changes proposed for the land use regulatory system in Manchester. It includes a *Future Land Use Map* and suggested changes to the Land Use and Development Ordinance. The essence of the Future Land Use Plan is the distinction between growth areas and rural areas. The intent of the plan is to shift growth from the rural area to the designated growth areas to the extent practicable.

Existing Growth Area

Currently, the following districts are Manchester's designated growth areas: Manchester Village, Community Residential, and General Development (see the *Existing Land Use Map* in the Appendix). For some time, Manchester has struggled to direct most growth to these districts, resulting in much new development occurring outside the designated growth areas. Several factors have hindered the ability to guide growth as intended, including:

- Given its large land area, the Rural Residential district is more prone to accommodating new development,
- Insufficient developable land within certain districts of the growth area,
- Manchester Village approaching build-out,
- Natural resource constraints,
- There is limited remaining land that is suitable for the targeted uses,
- Incomplete water and sewer service coverage within designated growth areas.

Each district within the designated growth area will be detailed further in this chapter. The previous Comprehensive Plan identified a lack of developable land within the designated growth area as a likely factor contributing to increased building in rural parts of town and recommended expanding the growth area into specific locations. The previous Plan also noted that Manchester Village was nearly built out, the Community Residential District faced significant development constraints due to natural or physical factors, and the remaining parcels in the General Development District were more suitable for commercial rather than residential use.

Some of the suggestions in the previous Comprehensive Plan were adopted, such as increasing the General Development district's size, and partially increasing the size of the Community Residential district. Additionally, to counteract the limited availability of land in the existing growth areas, the Planning Board opted to thoughtfully review and reduce the minimum lot size requirement in certain areas, where feasible. The purpose of this approach is to make the existing designated growth area more compact, rather than extending the growth area to create a more sprawling effect.

Minimum lot size requirements are detailed in the table below.

TABLE 1: REDUCTION IN MINIMUM LOT SIZE REQUIREMENTS

Dimensions	Land Use Districts						
	Growth Areas			Rural Areas			
	MV	CR	GD	RR	SL	RP	AM Overlay
Minimum Lot Area (SF in thousands)- Previous Lot Size Requirements							
With Public Sewer	20	20	20	60	60	130	120
Without Public Sewer	40	60	60	80	80	218	200
Minimum Lot Area (SF in thousands)- Existing Reduced Lot Size Requirements							
With Public Sewer	20	20	20	40	60	130	120
Without Public Sewer	20	30	30	40	60	130	120
Multi-Family Dwelling (per dwelling unit)							
Minimum Lot Area (SF in thousands)- Previous Lot Size Requirements							
With Public Sewer	15/5	20/10	15/5	60	60	N/A	120
Without Public Sewer	40	60	60	80	80	N/A	200
Minimum Lot Area (SF in thousands)- Existing Reduced Lot Size Requirements							
With Public Sewer	15/5	20/10	15/5	40/20	60	N/A	120
Without Public Sewer	20	30/15	20/20	40/40	80	N/A	200
Minimum road frontage, ft (public or private) Previous Road Frontage Requirements							
With Public Sewer	100	100	100	175	100	175	250
With Public Sewer Multi-Family (per dwelling unit)	100/25	100/25	100/25	175	100	N/A	250
Without Public Sewer	125	200	200	200	125	200	300
Minimum road frontage, ft (public or private) Existing Reduced Road Frontage Requirements							
With Public Sewer	100	100	100	150	100	175	250
With Public Sewer Multi-Family (per dwelling unit)	100	100	100	150	100	N/A	250
Without Public Sewer	100	100	100	150	125	200	300

Source: Manchester Land Use and Development Ordinance <https://www.manchesterme.org/media/3921>

MV= Manchester Village

CR= Community Residential

GD= General Development

RR= Rural Residential

SL= Shoreland

RP= Resource Protection

AM Overlay= Aquifer Management Overlay

Table 1 Highlights:

- In the growth areas, without access to public sewer, the lot size requirement stayed at the state minimum.
- Outside the growth areas, in the Rural Residential district, with either private septic or public sewer access, was reduced to 40,000 square feet. The other districts outside the growth area did not change.
- In the growth areas, with access to public sewer, the lot size requirement was reduced by half in all districts.
- Multi-Family Housing:
 - In the growth areas and with access to public sewer, the minimum lot size did not change.
 - Outside growth areas, in the Rural Residential district, with access to public sewer, the lot size was reduced to 40,000 SF with another 20,000 SF for each additional unit.
 - In the growth areas and without access to public sewer the minimum lot size was reduced significantly, depending on the district.
 - Outside growth areas, in the Rural Residential district, without access to public sewer, the lot size was reduced to 40,000 SF with another 40,000 SF for each additional unit.

Manchester’s designated growth areas are largely served by public utilities and include a significant portion of land along Route 202, which is already densely developed. Encouraging higher-density development in these locations—through carefully reducing lot size requirements where feasible—supports the community’s vision by creating more compact, vibrant growth areas. This strategy also helps protect natural resources by focusing development within the growth areas and reducing pressure on rural lands.

Delineating Future Growth Area

Population projections indicate minimal change for Manchester, with the State Economist estimating a decrease of about 100 people, bringing the population to roughly 1,373 by 2040.

This does not preclude growth, which is expected to be modest and primarily residential. As noted in the Housing and Demographic profile chapters, projections are based on models that may not fully capture local trends.

The most likely scenario is minimal population change, but encouraging housing development—through higher-density lots within growth areas—could help address the statewide housing shortage and potentially counteract population decline.

However, considering the population projection, current population, and limited land available in the current growth areas, it is prudent and foresightful to consider thoughtfully expanding the growth area into appropriate locations.

For more accurate details on the exact location of the designated growth areas, please see the *Future Land Use Map* in the Appendix of this plan.

The designation of growth area does preclude Shoreland Zoning requirements. The areas chosen for the designated growth area were selected only after significant consideration and deliberation and have been so designated because they are already predominantly developed or are areas where Town officials believe future growth should and could well occur.

The previous Comprehensive Plan delineated an expansion for both the Community Residential district and the General Development district, detailed below.

The General Development District was proposed to be expanded slightly along Puddledock Road. The proposed expansion generally encompassed two existing commercial properties adjacent to the district – Longfellow’s Greenhouse and B & S Paving. The expansion also included a parcel of undeveloped land behind the paving plant. The proposed and eventually adopted expansion would not continue to Prescott Road, because there is an identified High Value Resource Area adjoining it (“Prescott Road Gateway area”). The total expansion was 133 acres.

In 2014, Manchester residents voted and approved the 133 acres zoning changes to expand the General Development district, as suggested by the 2011/2012 Comprehensive Plan and detailed above. This expansion was a logical extension of a developed area into another area that was becoming less rural and more built up.

The Community Residential District was proposed to be expanded in two areas. The first was along Route 17 as far as Worthing Road. Prior to this change, the district ended just beyond Myrtle Street. The expansion was only along the east side of the road; the west side is Lakeside Orchards. The road frontage is largely undeveloped, and the parcels are close to 1,000 feet deep. The land has no resource constraints. The total acreage of this expansion was 162 acres.

The second, larger area consisted of land adjacent to Kearns Hill and Granite Hill Roads. This land generally abuts south of the General Development District. Both roads have already experienced quite a bit of residential development. A minor impediment is the amount of frontage already developed. As frontage is locked up, it cuts off access to back lots, making them more challenging and expensive to develop. This is a situation that will only increase as more land in Manchester is developed along roadsides. The proposed district expansion was deep enough to make it economical for a developer to create a good-sized subdivision without impacting public roads.

In addition to some already developed land, this area had a few additional resource constraints. The terrain was hilly, though in no location was it too steep to build. There was an existing wetland with Resource Protection zoning, which formed the eastern extent of the proposed district. The total acreage of the proposed expansion was 352 acres, of which roughly one-third was already developed.

Also in 2014, the town voted to expand the Community Residential district by the first suggestion encompassing 162 acres, but not the 352-acre parcel to the west of Manchester Village- the expansion of the Community Residential district was only partially enacted.

For the Future Land Use Plan, this Comprehensive Plan update maintains the second part of the suggestion for expanding the Community Residential district as detailed above.

Infrastructure within the proposed growth area is fair, but adequate. Granite Hill Road is a state aid road. Kearns Hill Road is a town road which is relatively narrow, but also sufficient. Granite Hill Road is signalized at the intersection with Route 202 in Manchester and links to downtown Hallowell as well as the commercial areas in Augusta.

Neither public water nor sewer is available to most of the area. The sewer force main runs along Granite Hill Road, so extending a new gravity line to the pump station at the base of the grade would likely be feasible. However, the current residential density does not support the investment currently.

The proposed expansion of the Community Residential district adjacent to Kearns Hill and Granite Hill Road would remove land from the Rural Residential district, but the existing development density in this area no longer fits the description for the Rural Residential district, and more accurately aligns with the Community Residential district.

Due to existing development density, this location is a logical choice for future growth. Unifying and aligning the current land uses with the appropriate zoning designations and intended future use will prevent potential use conflicts. The proposed designated growth area would also provide the town with more capacity in which to direct desired development. Because these areas have already been built up more than other rural areas, directing additional growth to these areas would be more cost-effective in the provision of public services.

The proposed expansion of the growth area is due to the fact the current growth areas have nearly reached capacity, particularly Manchester Village district. There is little developable land left in Manchester Village district, and to achieve the community's vision for the town, a designated growth area with capacity for future development is essential. Providing land for future development would prevent sprawl, protect natural resources, preserve rural areas, and ultimately be more cost-effective for the town.

Although the Future Land Use Plan makes suggestions such as re-delineating portions of land from Rural Residential district to expand the designated growth area, that does not mean these suggestions must be embraced and acted upon as written. They are suggested based on many factors that lead to the creation of this plan; however, if upon closer examination these suggestions are not feasible or are unfavorable, not all changes must be adopted.

Land Use Districts within Manchester’s Current Growth Areas

The Existing Land Use chapter details Manchester’s current land-use patterns as well as the Land Use and Development Ordinance. The Land Use and Development Ordinance establishes six geographic land use districts and one overlay district for the purposes of guiding and directing development so it will not conflict with natural resource protection, public health, safety, flood damage prevention, and economic well-being. Existing land-use controls have built a strong foundation to preserve the rural character of the town with the intention of directing growth into appropriate, predetermined locations, and away from rural areas.

The town’s designated growth areas include three districts with a range of allowable uses. These areas are defined by existing development density and access to public infrastructure, providing locations for residential, commercial, and municipal uses. Manchester’s Future Land Use Plan builds on current development patterns, designating areas that are already more densely settled, including Manchester Village, the Community Residential district, and the General Development district.

Manchester Village District

The Manchester Village District represents the town’s most densely developed area, as shown on the *Future Land Use Map* and *Existing Land Use Map* in the Appendix. Historically shaped by early settlement patterns near mills and railways, this district has evolved into a vibrant mix of residential, commercial, recreational, municipal, and public uses. Its compact layout, multiple road junctions, and established infrastructure make it uniquely suited to support continued growth.

Over time, increased traffic along Route 202 and related infrastructure changes have eroded much of the original village character. In response, the Town of Manchester has designated this area as a growth district to encourage the re-creation of traditional village elements while accommodating modern needs. The goal is to foster a development pattern that is compact and dense—rather than sprawling—by promoting a mix of compatible land uses that reflect the district’s historical integrity and cultural significance.

Manchester Village is envisioned as a place where residential, civic, cultural, and commercial uses coexist harmoniously, supported by thoughtful design standards for buildings, signage, and public spaces. This approach aligns with the community’s vision for sustainable growth, helping to minimize sprawl in rural areas and protect natural resources while revitalizing the town’s historic core.

Community Residential District

The purpose of the Community Residential District is to provide areas for residential use away from encroachment by incompatible or potentially value-reducing land uses. This district historically supported single-family homes that are consistent with surrounding low-impact land uses and natural resources. The Community Residential district provides a stable residential environment, compatible with the town's overall development pattern.

The areas zoned as Community Residential district support residential land uses that harmonize with other surrounding land uses as well as the natural environment, making them well-suited for continued residential growth.

The Future Land Use Plan proposes an expansion of the Community Residential district along both Kearns Hill and Granite Hill Road, south of the General Development district (see *Future Land Use Map* in the Appendix).

General Development District

The General Development District is intended to support a mix of compatible commercial, residential, and other non-residential uses, particularly in areas adjacent to major arterial roads such as Route 202. This district has generally served as Manchester's primary business hub and is currently more than 70% developed. Recognizing its capacity to support future growth, the Town of Manchester has designated this district as a growth area, supported by existing infrastructure.

Future development within the district will be carefully managed due to environmental constraints, particularly those related to the lake watershed. All proposed land uses will undergo site plan review to ensure that development:

- Features attractive buildings and well-designed sites
- Discourages sprawl
- Minimizes curb cuts and access points
- Avoids strip-style development along the highway
- Reduces negative impacts on traffic, public services, the natural environment, and neighboring properties

This approach aims to balance growth with environmental stewardship and community character.

Although this district is largely built out, there remains many properties, lots, and buildings that are underutilized and underdeveloped, including properties within Manchester's TIF district. Encouraging thoughtful development or redevelopment of these underdeveloped and underutilized properties is the key to accessing this district's full potential as a growth area.

There are also several vacant properties that are currently for sale within the General Development district. The challenge with encouraging the sale and eventual appropriate development on these properties is that commercial properties are difficult to market and they are privately owned.

Development in Manchester's Growth Area

Residential Development Within Manchester's Growth Area

In the last decade, most of Manchester's new residential development has been outside of the designated growth areas and located instead in old farm fields, along rural road corridors, and predominantly along lakeshores. In accordance with the community vision statement, Manchester's residents value the protection of the town's rural character, natural landscapes, and environmental resources. This does not mean that development should or even could be disallowed in certain districts- the Rural Residential district is, after all, intended for appropriate residential development.

However, if residential development could be directed into parts of town that are already developed it would be less impactful on the bucolic landscape and less costly for the town to provide services to areas further from the town's center.

To support this goal, the Planning Board reduced minimum lot sizes for residential uses within the growth areas to increase development capacity and density. The intent is to encourage new development to locate in these areas. The Planning Board has adjusted minimum lot sizes where feasible, and future development applications and permits will need to be monitored to assess whether this strategy effectively directs growth to the desired locations.

Commercial Development Within Manchester's Growth Area

Commercial development is more predictable and easier to locate than residential land uses, due to its reliance on public utilities and transportation access. Most commercial growth is limited by the availability of public sewer and to a lesser extent, public water access.

Commercial growth also has the more stringent review process of the Site Plan Review section of the Land Use and Development Ordinance, as well as the Land Use Districts provision. Ongoing efforts to encourage suitable commercial development in strategic locations are consistent with the community's vision for a vibrant, healthy community and a strong tourism base.

For these reasons, new, non-residential development has mostly been within Manchester's designated growth areas. This aligns with the community's vision of concentrating growth into the village and along Route 202 to support a mixed-use center while protecting the rural areas.

Constraints and Natural Opportunities for Development

There are two basic categories of constraints on development: **environmental constraints** and **public service constraints**. Environmental constraints are covered in the Natural Resources chapter of this Plan. The main types of constraints are wetlands, steep slopes due to erosion potential, aquifer groundwater protection, and floodplains. The *Topographic Map*, *Water Resources Map*, and *Critical Natural Resources Map* in the Appendix of this Plan show the locations of many of these constraints.

Manchester's Environmental Constraints

While steep slopes are not as significant of a concern in Manchester's growth area, wetlands, floodplains, and groundwater aquifers are. Another concern is that the center of Manchester is located within major watersheds for both Cobbosseecontee Lake and Bond Brook, requiring thoughtful review of each permit application to protect these waterbodies.

The town has a Floodplain Management Ordinance, updated and adopted in 2011, to protect the floodplain from development. The Aquifer Management Overlay district is intended to provide a layer of protection, as well, as this area restricts certain land uses, though for the most part the restriction only apply to commercial and/or industrial development that uses chemicals that could potentially seep into the groundwater.

While certain soils are preferable for septic systems and for supporting foundations, poor soils can be engineered to support development, though this is more costly. For this reason, soil type is less of a natural constraint in designated growth areas. The *Soil Map* in the Appendix shows the pattern of soil throughout town.

Manchester's Public Service Constraints

Public service constraints are a concern because developers often don't take them into consideration and assume the town will provide the service, which results in increased taxes. Examples include rural road maintenance, the extension of electrical power, fire protection, and limited extent of public sewer and water service.

The most significant public service constraint in Manchester is the limited reach of its sewer and water utilities. Because these services do not extend throughout the entire growth area, certain land uses are restricted on the limited number of available lots.

Aside from the constraints detailed above, there are no extraordinary constraints in the designated growth areas or proposed designated growth area that would limit their potential for development. There are, however, numerous natural opportunities for development in the designated growth areas, including historic growth patterns, numerous road junctions, existing development, proximity to municipal services, and public utilities. The designated growth areas consist of locations with suitable land for development and are home to many if not all public facilities. The growth areas are the most developed parts of town, and any expansion adjacent to these areas would be logical and in line with the community's vision.

The proposed expansion of the Community Residential district aligns with the natural opportunities since it is adjacent to a district that is largely developed, is along major travel corridors, and has experienced dense development already.

Although neither public water nor sewer is available in this area, future expansion may be feasible in the future, depending on circumstances such as necessity. Currently, the residential density does not support this expansion.

Though there are natural resource constraints such as hilly topography, and a wetland area at the eastern side of this proposed district expansion; this area is not so hilly that it impedes development, and the wetland is protected by Resource Protection zoning.

Land Use Districts Outside of the Designated Growth Areas

The land use districts detailed in this section were designated as rural areas to protect natural resources, public drinking water supplies, and the character of the town. By excluding them from the designated growth area, Manchester is striving to direct development into areas appropriately designated for growth and away from these areas. Protecting the rural areas and natural resources aligns with the community's vision statement.

The Land Use and Development Ordinance identifies and describes three land use districts outside of the designated growth areas, and one overlay district. These districts are detailed below.

Rural Residential

This designation is intended to support rural residential, forestry, and agricultural uses, along with other land uses that complement Manchester's rural character and existing development patterns.

The Rural Residential district is preserved for rural housing and low-intensity commercial uses, as well as agricultural, timber harvesting, recreational, and other natural-resource-based activities that are compatible with existing land uses and do not diminish local resources. Provisions in the Land Use and Development Ordinance help limit development sprawl by requiring open space subdivisions, encouraging cluster development, and other planning approaches.

Shoreland District

The Shoreland District includes all land within 250 feet, measured horizontally, from the normal high-water line of any great pond, river, Weston Brook, and from the upland edge of freshwater wetlands shown on the Shoreland Zoning Map. It also includes land within 75 feet of the normal high-water line of other streams in Manchester. This district generally accommodates both seasonal and year-round residential and recreational development. Because of its proximity to surface waters, development within the Shoreland District requires more careful review than development located farther away, in order to protect the town's water resources.

Resource Protection

The Resource Protection District encompasses critical natural resource areas that, due to their environmental value, should remain largely undisturbed. The purpose of this classification is to safeguard fragile and significant ecological areas from activities that could degrade these systems or pose risks to public health and safety. This district includes areas where development would negatively impact water quality, wildlife habitat, ecological functions, or scenic and natural values. These areas include:

- Significant lakes, ponds and streams,
- Areas within 250 feet, horizontal distance, or the upland edge of freshwater, wetlands and wetlands associated with great ponds, which are rated as moderate to high-value waterfowl and wading bird habitat including nesting and feeding areas, as depicted on a GIS data layer maintained by MDIF&W or the Department of Environmental Protection as of May 1, 2006. For the purposes of the paragraph "wetlands associated with great ponds and rivers" shall mean areas characterized by non-forested wetland vegetation and hydric soils that are contiguous with great pond or river and have a surface elevation at or below the water level of the great pond or river during the period of normal high water. "Wetlands associated with great ponds or rivers" are considered to be part of that great pond or river;
- Areas of two or more contiguous acres with sustained slopes greater than 20 percent, or unstable soil subject to slumping, mass movement, or severe erosion, when these areas are two acres or more in size;

- Areas of two or more contiguous acres supporting wetland vegetation and hydric soils, which are not part of a freshwater wetland, as defined, and which are not surficially connected to a water body during normal spring high-water;
- Other significant wildlife habitat;
- Flood plains as defined by the 100-year flood or the flood of record, or, in the absence of these, by soil types identifiable as recent flood plain soils;
- Natural sites of significant scenic or aesthetic value;
- Areas designated by the Federal, State or Municipal Government as natural areas of significance to be protected from development; and
- Other significant areas.

Aquifer Management Overlay District

The Aquifer Management Overlay District encompasses the Bond Brook Aquifer located in the northeast corner of Manchester. The purpose of this district is to protect and enhance the quality and quantity of the town's surface and groundwater resources by limiting development intensity and managing nutrient loading into important water bodies. All new land use activities within this overlay district must comply with the requirements established for it.

Land uses within the Aquifer Management Overlay District should remain low intensity. Limited residential, recreational, agricultural, and timber-related uses may be allowed, provided they meet applicable State regulations governing septic system design and soil suitability, as well as the town's site plan review standards.

Any groundwater extracted within the Aquifer Management Overlay District must be used exclusively on-site for residential purposes. The resale or commercial export of groundwater is strictly prohibited.

Anticipated Growth

The Existing Land Use and Housing chapters conclude with population projections from the Maine Office of the State Economist and corresponding land-consumption estimates based on past trends, current conditions, and local ordinance requirements. The State Economist projects Manchester’s population to reach 2,373 by 2040—a 3.4% decline over 15 years. These projections were made in April 2021, before the full effects of the Covid-19 pandemic were known.

Manchester currently has 1,209 housing units, including approximately 161 seasonal homes, leaving 1,048 year-round units. The table below presents scenarios, including a hypothetical five percent decrease in average household size, to assess potential housing needs under different conditions.

TABLE 2: POPULATION PROJECTIONS AND HOUSING NEEDS

	Population Projection	Total Current Housing Units (Minus Seasonal)	Average Household Size	Amount of Housing Needed	Deficit?
Current	2,464	1,048	2.42	1,016	N/A
State Economist’s Population Projection	2,373	1,048	2.42	981	No, surplus of 67 houses
State Economist’s Population Projection with Decreased Average Household Size	2,373	1,048	2.4	988	No, surplus of 60 houses

Manchester’s population projections indicate that no additional housing would be needed to accommodate future growth, even with a five percent decrease in average household size. However, these estimates do not consider pandemic-related housing shortages, the state’s aging population, or Manchester’s desirability as a community near major job centers—all factors that could increase housing demand.

Although the baseline forecast shows little to no overall population growth by 2040, the community’s demographic makeup will change. Smaller household sizes and an aging population will lead to more single- and two-person households, increasing demand for smaller, appropriately sized homes while reducing the need for larger 3–4-bedroom homes on large lots.

Regardless of population trends, new homes will continue to be built based on market preferences, each requiring additional land, infrastructure, and public services. While construction may not be driven by population increase, shifting demographics are still likely to create demand for additional housing or for different types of housing than what currently exists.

The desirable, logical locations for new housing would be within the designated growth areas, through redevelopment of existing structures or new construction on available lots. The Community Residential district is the best location for any future residential development. However, the least desirable outcome, continued residential development in rural areas, has been the dominant pattern over the past decade.

Residential growth is more difficult to steer than commercial development, and even with reduced lot sizes or expanded growth areas, some level of new housing development in rural areas is still likely to continue.

Another consideration is the appropriate location for future commercial development. Depending on the scale and potential impacts, new commercial uses could locate in any of the designated growth area districts. Low-impact businesses that complement the village character may be suitable for existing buildings within the Village District, which requires a minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet for all lots, regardless of the availability of public sewer connection.

More intensive commercial uses should be focused within the General Development District. Portions of this district are served by public sewer, developable parcels remain, and it offers convenient access to Manchester's primary travel corridors and major transportation routes.

Although the timing and scale of future commercial growth are uncertain, Manchester's access to public water and sewer, proximity to major transportation routes, and closeness to larger municipalities make it an attractive location for new businesses. The town has proactively identified districts that can accommodate a variety of commercial activities to help minimize potential land use conflicts.

The Site Plan Review section of the Land Use and Development Ordinance provides additional guidance for commercial development by granting the Planning Board oversight when evaluating proposals. Recent trends indicate that new commercial businesses are more likely to occupy vacant or underutilized buildings rather than construct new facilities. Through the Site Plan Review process, the town can assess the suitability of proposed locations and impose conditions as needed to protect natural resources.

Comprehensive Plan Implementation

The challenge in preparing this Plan is to guide current growth in a manner that preserves Manchester's rural character, protects natural resources, and avoids overburdening municipal services. The most effective strategy is to encourage new development near existing public services and adjacent to established development. Manchester's designated growth areas meet these criteria, but the town must implement effective regulatory and non-regulatory measures to direct the majority of new development into these areas and support its long-term vision.

To evaluate the effectiveness of directing development to the designated growth areas and the impact of reduced minimum lot sizes, Manchester's Select Board will conduct reviews, at least annually, with the department heads, boards, and commissions charged with implementing the strategies outlined in the Policies and Strategies section of this Plan.

Implementing parties will submit quarterly progress reports to the Select Board, detailing the strategies they worked on during that quarter, actions taken, progress, barriers in implementation, relevancy of strategies, and any other details.

In addition, Manchester's Code Enforcement Officer (CEO), in coordination with the Planning Board, should track and monitor all issued permits.

The Planning Board and CEO should review permit trends annually to ensure that growth is occurring in appropriate locations. If development exceeds projections or moves away from the community's vision, the town should take appropriate action to address the situation.

Tracking the following applications is recommended:

- The location of all new residential structures.
- The location of all new commercial structures.
- Conversions from seasonal camps to year-round residences.

The Planning Board and CEO will prepare a quarterly written report summarizing the permit tracking data, which will be shared with the Select Board and Town Manager for review and discussion.

The Planning Board and town officials should continue to regularly review the Land Use and Development Ordinance to ensure it reflects changing community needs, ideally aligning these reviews with the annual budget process.

Because land use planning outcomes are often similar across municipal boundaries, this Plan also recommends that Manchester periodically meet with neighboring communities to coordinate land use designations and regulatory and non-regulatory strategies.

Future Land Use Plan Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p>Manchester’s Land Use and Development Ordinance attempts to manage growth and sprawl by clearly setting parameters for allowable land uses in each district as well as designating land use districts intended for future development. By providing land use districts with different minimum lot sizes and different land use allowances, Manchester is providing residents, potential residents, and businesses with options to best fit their needs.</p> <p>Close monitoring will be necessary to ensure that reducing minimum lot sizes achieves the intended outcomes: higher density, lower construction costs, and more available land in the town’s more developed areas. Manchester’s Future Land Use Plan will retain the existing designated growth areas and expand the Community Residential District, consistent with the previous Comprehensive Plan.</p> <p>The town must remain vigilant to continue to balance growth with protecting the area’s abundant natural resources and rural landscape that are so important to Manchester’s identity.</p> <p>State Goal: To encourage orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of each community, while protecting the state's rural character, making efficient use of public services, and preventing development sprawl.</p>		

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p>1. To coordinate the community’s land use strategies with other local and regional land use planning efforts.</p>	<p>1.1 Assign responsibility for implementing the Future Land Use Plan to the appropriate committee, board or municipal official.</p> <p>1.2 Meet with neighboring communities to coordinate land use designations and regulatory and non-regulatory strategies.</p>	<p>Select Board, Town Manager. Short term.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager. Ongoing.</p>

Future Land Use Plan Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	<p>2.4 Investigate possible grant opportunities to extend public sewer and water lines to areas designated as growth areas.</p> <p>2.5 Develop a schedule for the Select Board to meet at least annually and review progress of Comprehensive Plan implementation with department heads, boards, committees, and other implementing parties.</p> <p>2.6 Explore options for and consider creating a long-range plan for development of the town center, including bike lanes, open space areas, future public building needs, traffic calming measures, neighborhood connectivity, and pedestrian safety measures.</p> <p>2.7 Continue the town’s current policy on mobile home parks.</p>	<p>Select Board, Town Manager. Long term.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager. Mid-term.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO, Conservation Commission. Long term.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Ongoing.</p>
<p>3. To support the level of financial commitment necessary to provide needed infrastructure in growth areas.</p>	<p>3.1 Direct a minimum of 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments into designated growth areas identified in the Future Land Use Plan.</p> <p>3.2 Include in the Capital Investment Plan anticipated municipal capital investments needed to support proposed land uses.</p>	<p>Select Board, Town Manager. Ongoing.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager. Ongoing.</p>

Future Land Use Plan Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	<p>3.3 Continue to promote enrollments in current-use agricultural and tree growth tax programs.</p> <p>3.4 Look to develop and expand usage of village area parks generally such as the Drum Lot, incorporating public spaces and places to hold community events.</p> <p>3.5 Continue to market any available land and buildings for commercial development or redevelopment.</p> <p>3.6 Develop areas as a gateway to the community, with improved entry signs at village area and town lines.</p> <p>3.7 Consider options to improve amenities and attractions in the village area and minimize commercial vacancies.</p> <p>3.8 Prioritize road improvements to give preference to roads in growth areas as part of the road improvement plan.</p>	<p>Select Board, Town Manager, Assessor. Ongoing.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager. Mid-term.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager. Long term.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager. Long term.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager. Ongoing.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Road Committee. Ongoing.</p>

Future Land Use Plan Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p>4. To establish efficient permitting procedures, especially in growth areas.</p>	<p>4.1 Provide the Code Enforcement Officer and Planning Board with the tools, training, and support necessary to enforce land use regulations, and ensure that the Code Enforcement Officer is certified in accordance with 30-A M.R.S.A. §4451.</p> <p>4.2 The CEO/Planning Board should explore options for summarizing the findings of tracking permits in a yearly report which could be shared annually with the Select Board. The results of this report should be considered with the goals, policies, and strategies of the Comprehensive Plan.</p> <p>4.3 Continue to update the Land Use and Development Ordinance at regularly scheduled intervals to ensure it aligns with any new legislation, best management practices, and latest land use standards.</p>	<p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p>
<p>5. To protect critical rural, critical waterfront, and natural areas from the impacts of development.</p>	<p>5.1 Track new development in the community by type and location.</p> <p>5.2 Digitize the Shoreland Zoning map and include it on the town's website for public use.</p>	<p>Town Manager, CEO, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p> <p>Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Short term.</p>

Future Land Use Plan Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	<p>5.3 Explore public-private partnerships and purchase of land or easements with willing sellers in critical resource areas and other areas identified in the 2004 Open Space Plan.</p> <p>5.4 Involve the Conservation Commission in development reviews.</p> <p>5.5 Strive to ensure that all new commercial development in rural areas preserves prime farmland soil as open space to the greatest practical extent.</p> <p>5.6 In high value natural and scenic resource areas, limit non-residential development to natural resource-based businesses, nature tourism, outdoor recreation, farm markets, and home occupations.</p> <p>5.7 Research and make recommendations for tax relief or other forms of financial assistance for farmers and foresters who are actively working their land, especially those who allow access to their land.</p>	<p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board, Conservation Commission. Ongoing.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board, Conservation Commission. Short term.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board, Conservation Commission. Ongoing.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, CEO. Short term.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board, Conservation Commission. Mid-term.</p>

Future Land Use Plan Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
<p>6. Encourage development (large scale housing or non-natural resource commercial development) to occur with the town’s designated growth area.</p>	<p>6.1 Review the Land Use and Development Ordinance upon completion of this Comprehensive Plan update to ensure that it includes the most up-to-date standards for Shoreland Zoning and Subdivision requirements.</p> <p>6.2 Review the Land Use and Development Ordinance to remove any barriers in locating appropriate, desirable development within the town’s growth area.</p> <p>6.3 Explore the need for amending the Land Use and Development Ordinance to allow for different zoning techniques, such as Planned Development Districts or different Zoning Overlays, to promote desired development in certain areas while protecting areas of natural resources.</p> <p>6.4 If changes to existing Ordinances are deemed insufficient to encourage development in the growth area and protect natural resources, decide whether any approaches should be considered by the town.</p>	<p>Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-Term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Long term.</p> <p>Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Long term.</p>

Future Land Use Plan Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	<p>6.5 Identify infrastructure and parking improvements, façade improvements, and amenities for the designated growth area.</p> <p>6.6 Explore incentives to encourage the redevelopment/revitalization of existing vacant or underutilized structures in the downtown area.</p> <p>6.7 Explore options for increasing the availability of right-sized housing to include housing for a variety of citizens’ needs such as work force housing, senior housing, and housing for singles.</p> <p>6.8 For newly developed housing units, consider encouraging that a certain number or percentage be designated specifically for seniors.</p> <p>6.9 Promote senior housing in locations with easy access to stores, health services, and other needed services.</p> <p>6.10 Explore options to encourage mixed-use housing in the growth area, specifically in existing, underutilized buildings.</p>	<p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Long term.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Long term.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board. Long term.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board. Long term.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Mid-term.</p>

Future Land Use Plan Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	<p>6.11 Review and explore the need for amending the Land Use and Development Ordinance to streamline the permitting process, such as adopting online permitting.</p> <p>6.12 Review and explore the need for revising the Land Use and Development Ordinance to streamline the process of converting a single-family home into a multifamily home.</p>	<p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Long term.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board, CEO. Long term.</p>
<p>7. Continue to promote and market Manchester as an outdoor recreational destination.</p>	<p>7.1 Seek ways to collaborate with various, appropriate committees, boards, citizens, etc., on the creation, promotion, expansion, and maintenance of outdoor recreational opportunities.</p>	<p>Select Board, Town Manager, Conservation Commission. Ongoing.</p>
<p>8. Ensure all new amendments to the town ordinances require the utmost protection of natural resources.</p>	<p>8.1 Regularly review Shoreland Zoning restrictions for ongoing regulatory compliance and appropriateness.</p> <p>8.2 Explore the feasibility and need for updating the Open Space Plan.</p> <p>8.3 Review ordinances for obstacles related to allowing infill of undeveloped land in all districts in the designated growth area.</p>	<p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board, Conservation Commission. Ongoing.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board, Conservation Commission. Mid-term.</p> <p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board. Ongoing.</p>
<p>9. Explore options for improving Manchester's transportation network.</p>	<p>9.1 Work collaboratively with MaineDOT to facilitate a traffic study to improve traffic flow, traffic safety, and increase options for alternative modes of transportation.</p>	<p>Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board. Mid-term.</p>

Future Land Use Plan Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
	9.2 Explore options for increasing flexibility of design for subdivision road standards to reduce development costs. 9.3 Apply best practices and standards that reduce the environmental impact of road building without sacrificing public safety.	Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board. Long term. Select Board, Town Manager, Planning Board. Ongoing.

Recommendations Part III: Fiscal Capacity and the Capital Investment Planning Process

Fiscal Management

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

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

Local property values were last assessed in 2006. Manchester has budgeted and scheduled for a property revaluation in 2026, as this was last done nearly 20 years ago.

The town has a clear accounting and budgeting system in place which has resulted in sound financial management. Because of this, Manchester has had the means to pay for capital improvements. And, because of sound financial management, Manchester has been in compliance with 30 MRSA, Section 5061, as amended, since 2019. This statute requires that no municipality incur debt that exceeds 15 percent of the state valuation. Manchester’s debt that previously exceeded the 15 percent limit, was due to a bond for necessary upgrades to the fire station.

TABLE 1: MANCHESTER’S DEBT ANALYSIS

Year	Total Debt	% of Valuation
2018	880,000	0.29%
2019	800,000	0.25%
2020	720,000	0.23%
2021	640,000	0.20%
2022	560,000	0.17%
2023	480,000	0.15%
2024	320,000	0.06%
2025	240,000	0.04%

Source: Manchester Annual Reports and Town of Manchester

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

Tax Exempt Properties	2023
State & U.S, Total Exemptions in Manchester	\$783,500
Blind Exemption	\$3,400
Benevolent & Charitable	\$1,673,900
Total exempt churches and parsonages	\$2,440,700
Fraternal Organizations	\$476,800
Renewable Energy	\$92,550
Total Value Veteran exemptions	\$425,000
TOTAL (All Exemptions)	\$11,097,350
STATE VALUATION	\$326,632,450
Percent Exempt	3.40%

Source: 2023 Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary

Table 2 displays the portion of the town’s tax base that is exempt from taxation. These properties account for about 3.4 percent of the entire state valuation for 2023 (not all data for 2024 was available).

TABLE 3: SEVEN YEARS OF STATE VALUATIONS FOR MANCHESTER

Year	State Valuation
2018	\$308,370,800
2019	\$314,446,400
2020	\$313,537,000
2021	\$317,529,800
2022	\$320,445,940
2023	\$326,632,450
2024	\$524,300,000
2025	\$562,450,000

Source: Municipal Valuation Statistical Summary and Town of Manchester

Manchester’s state valuation is detailed in Table 3 for the past seven years. In this period, there was a 70 percent increase in valuation. The assessing agency adjusted assessed values in Manchester to meet State requirements in 2024, accounting for the significant increase between 2023 and 2024.

TABLE 4: FIVE YEARS OF MANCHESTER'S BUDGET INFORMATION

YEAR	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
STATE VALUATION	\$308,370,800	\$314,446,400	\$313,537,000	\$317,529,800	\$320,445,940
EDUCATION APPROPRIATION	\$4,313,645	\$4,477,789	\$4,643,097	\$4,499,037	\$4,246,883
MIL RATE	0.01690	0.01735	0.01760	0.01750	0.01600
REVENUES					
Property & Excise Taxes	\$5,758,819	\$6,000,923	\$6,133,311	\$6,254,245	\$5,785,752
Intergovernmental	\$299,853	\$347,464	\$416,521	\$577,470	\$987,322
Interest	\$6,552	\$14,338	\$16,327	\$9,623	\$7,441
Charges for Services	\$65,688	\$62,660	\$67,443	\$80,189	\$85,762
Miscellaneous	\$4,231	\$28,160	\$5,073	\$4,950	\$578
TOTAL REVENUES	\$6,135,143	\$6,453,545	\$6,638,675	\$6,926,477	\$6,866,855
GENERAL EXPENDITURES					
General Government (includes County Tax)	\$501,843	\$505,238	\$536,809	\$525,344	\$611,941
Public Safety	\$228,418	\$246,541	\$284,563	\$331,043	\$295,102
Roads and Highways	\$633,231	\$687,653	\$579,155	\$847,000	\$836,390
Social Services	\$16,769	\$13,200	\$14,911	\$14,911	\$15,890
Recreation	\$44,165	\$12,465	\$10,571	\$11,512	\$14,904
Solid Waste	\$45,746	\$35,997	\$25,800	\$25,800	\$25,895
Education (Special Assessments)	\$4,313,645	\$4,477,789	\$4,643,097	\$4,499,037	\$4,246,883
Town Events, Cemeteries, Gen. Assistance	\$18,863	\$17,172	\$23,856	\$18,009	\$17,394
Watershed Management/Public Facilities	\$26,504	\$27,299	\$28,186	\$28,186	\$29,595
Debt Services	\$123,600	\$120,000	\$116,200	\$112,400	\$108,400
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$5,952,784	\$6,143,354	\$6,263,148	\$6,413,242	\$6,202,394
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over (under) expenditures	\$182,359	\$310,191	\$375,527	\$513,235	\$664,461

Source: Town of Manchester

TABLE 5: TWO YEAR OF MANCHESTER'S BUDGET INFORMATION

YEAR	2023	2024
STATE VALUATION	\$326,632,450	\$524,300,000
EDUCATION APPROPRIATION (Special Assessment)	\$4,060,380	\$4,427,168
MIL RATE	0.01575	0.01660
REVENUES		
Property & Excise Taxes	\$5,778,659	\$6,160,578
Intergovernmental	\$753,963	\$677,375
Charges for Services	\$34,874	\$45,144
Licenses and permits	\$16,172	\$16,424
Investment Income	\$34,710	\$159,679
Other revenues	\$31,935	\$42,386
TOTAL REVENUES	\$6,650,313	\$7,101,586
EXPENDITURES		
General Government (includes County Tax)	\$633,342	\$731,484
Public Safety	\$331,884	\$360,952
Roads and Highways	\$572,894	\$906,695
Solid Waste	\$25,800	\$26,284
Education (Special Assessments)	\$4,060,380	\$4,427,168
County tax	\$400,928	\$407,221
Debt services	\$104,400	\$100,400
Organizations and Social Services	\$11,226	\$16,280
Other	\$71,515	\$84,059
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$6,212,639	\$7,060,543
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over (under) expenditures	\$437,943	\$41,043

Source: Town of Manchester

Tables 4 and 5 are the town's annual income compared with expenses broken down by category for the past seven years. This information is broken down into two separate tables because Manchester procured the services of Keel J. Hood, Certified Public Accountant from 2018 through 2022 for an independent auditors' report. For 2023 and 2024 the town paid Maine Municipal Audit Services, PA to conduct an independent auditors' report. Because the audit reports were done by two different businesses, there is a slight difference in how budget items are classified.

Tables 4 & 5 Highlights:

- The most obvious trend is the overall increase in expenditure, requiring the town to generate more revenues to cover their costs.
- Overall expenditure increased by nearly 19 percent in this seven-year period.
- Overall revenues increased by around 16 percent
- Property and excise taxes increased marginally by 7 percent.
- The cost of supplying public safety services increased by 58 percent.
- Road maintenance increased by 43 percent.
- The cost of education fluctuated.

The town's mil rate is a calculated value which means taxpayers pay the mil rate for each thousand dollars of their property's assessed value. For example, for the 2024 tax year, for property assessed at \$150,000.00, the assessed taxes were calculated by multiplying \$150,000 by the mil rate: $150,000 \times 0.01660 = \$2,490$.

Education appropriation is Manchester's biggest expense, accounting for nearly 63 percent of the town's expenditure for 2024.

Property taxes are the largest contributor to the town's budget. Those are broken down further in Table 6 below.

TABLE 6: TAXABLE PROPERTY BY TYPE AND YEAR

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Taxable Land Valuation	\$131,415,200	\$132,708,100	\$132,875,400	\$133,415,000	\$133,263,640	\$133,965,100
Taxable Building Valuation	\$172,492,200	\$176,103,900	\$175,507,800	\$178,297,600	\$181,766,700	\$187,249,950
Total Taxable Land and Buildings	\$303,907,400	\$308,812,000	\$308,383,200	\$311,712,600	\$315,030,340	\$321,215,050
Mil Rate	0.01690	0.01735	0.01760	0.01750	0.01600	0.01575
State Valuation	\$308,370,800	\$314,446,400	\$313,537,000	\$317,529,800	\$320,445,940	\$326,632,450
Total Taxable Personal Property	–	\$5,634,400	\$5,153,800	\$5,817,200	\$5,415,600	\$5,417,400
TIF District Tax Revenue	\$34,396	\$32,996	\$34,088	\$29,850	\$29,383	\$30,886
Motor Vehicle Excise Tax	\$582,902	\$596,076	\$577,346	\$696,674	\$673,740	\$719,565
Distribution and Transmission	\$12,827,699	\$13,274,335	\$13,333,980	\$13,438,312	\$13,167,200	\$13,395,300

Source: Municipal Valuation Statistical Summary (2018-2023)

*2023 is the most recent data available

Table 6 Highlights:

- The mil rate decreased in this time period.
- Motor vehicle excise taxes increased.
- Overall, there were no significant or unexpected increases or decreases in the categorized analyzed in Table 6.

Accounting Practices

The town has its financial records audited annually. Between 2018 and 2022, Keel J. Hood, Certified Public Accountant performed the independent audit. Maine Municipal Audit Services, PA conducted the 2023 and 2024 audits. All audit reports were favorable in their characterization of the town's approach to financial management.

Grant Income

Grant income is kept out of the regular budget, so it does not appear in the tables in this section. The Community Resilience Partnership (CRP) recently awarded Manchester a \$25,000 grant that is divided to cover two purposes: \$10,000 is intended to supplement the cost of this Comprehensive Plan update including documentation of the effects of climate change and integration of actions to increase resiliency; and, \$15,000 is earmarked for a culvert inventory and boundaries assessment.

Tax Increment Finance District

Another modification to valuation is one tax increment financing (TIF) district for infrastructure improvements, which was \$30,886 in 2023. Manchester's TIF district has an expiration date of June 2027. The town will have to begin exploring options and gaining public input on how to spend the money put into the TIF.

Tax Collection Rate

Through prudent fiscal management, the Town of Manchester has maintained a property tax rate that is considered reasonable and affordable for many taxpayers. The collection rate for the current year has remained consistent, and both elected and appointed officials continue to exercise vigilance in minimizing the overall tax burden.

Summary and Findings for Fiscal Capacity

The Town of Manchester has put obvious consideration into proper budgeting and financial management. This is evident when analyzing the town's debt-to-the-income ratio and the overall debt. Manchester's minimal overall debt has remained in compliance with the Maine Bond Bank recommended LD1 limits and state statute since 2019. The previous years that Manchester exceeded the 15 percent debt limit were due to a bond for necessary infrastructure upgrades.

Capital Investment Plan

Description of Existing Process

The Capital Investment Plan (CIP) component of the Comprehensive Plan identifies growth related capital improvement and investments, as well as a strategy for accommodating them. The CIP anticipates future expenses, sets priorities and timetables, and proposes a mechanism to fund them. The plan is important because it alerts both municipal officials and citizens about future expenses and allows the town to find the most cost-effective way to finance the improvements.

The Capital Investment Plan will include items identified in this comprehensive plan which are called capital expenses. A capital expense is defined as having a cost that is not a maintenance or operating expense. Manchester does basic capital planning for its municipal facilities. The town should maintain a prioritized list of anticipated capital needs.

While Manchester does not have a formal CIP outside of what is detailed here, there have been discussions about developing a plan since the last comprehensive plan update.

The creation and development of a formal municipal CIP is the responsibility of the Town Manager. However, the Town Manager must rely on town staff and committees to submit needs and cost estimates and set priorities. Thus, the CIP process should ideally be prepared alongside the annual budget, so that a portion of the annual budget is set aside to fund the CIP. This can be in the form of contributions to a reserve fund, one-time appropriations, or commitment to pay interest on a loan.

Manchester's Select Board, in conjunction with the Town Manager, should consider the development of a formal CIP by incorporating the guidelines needed to reach the goals of the initial project list presented in this plan. The capital investments listed below include both those identified by this Plan and other capital improvement projects that have come up in town discussions over the past five years.

Going forward, any reference to a CIP will be the data detailed in this section.

Why is a CIP Important?

The development and maintenance of a Capital Investments Plan allows Manchester to forecast upcoming major expenses with minimal surprises. Developing a CIP presents the town with the opportunity to:

- Engage in a reasoned discussion about priorities.
- Prepare a pre-planned list that better enables Manchester to take advantage of unexpected opportunities, such as grants, low interest rates and price drops.
- Forecast, plan, and mitigate property tax impacts.

Financing the CIP

A source of funding for each item has been identified. The less certain the item is, the more speculative the funding can be. The principal threat to a stable budget is the one-time, large ticket expenditure, such as an expense brought on by an emergency or a new building. In Manchester, capital investments are funded through a combination of appropriations, reserve funds, grants, lease programs, or bonding.

- Annual appropriations: While funding a major purchase in a one-time annual appropriation can be disruptive to the budget, it works for lower-priced items or when a continuing monetary stream can be tapped for regular needs.
- Undesignated fund: In keeping with its fund balance policy, the town maintains at least three months of operating expenses in undesignated funds. Funds more than those required by the policy may be used for one-time capital expenditures or to address emergencies or even catastrophic needs that may unexpectedly arise.
- Reserve accounts: Manchester's use of saving funds in capital reserve accounts to pay for capital improvements has increased from past practice.
- Bonding/lease-purchase agreements: Manchester used bonding for infrastructure improvements for the fire station. The bond was obtained more than five years ago, and it has been paid down so that it accounts for less than 10 percent of the town's state valuation. While Manchester has the borrowing power for another bond, the town has no intention of doing so. Permission is through the legislative body.
- Grants: Grants are competitive and cannot be relied upon. A grant is acceptable for "wish list" items, but not for essentials. A grant search should be part of the annual CIP update process.
- Outside contributions: In many cases, other organizations may join with the town to contribute to a project of joint benefit. This may include other towns or organizations such as the Kennebec Land Trust, or Cobbossee Watershed District. While these funding sources may be more reliable than grants, it requires coordination with timetables outside of the town's control.

Financing of the CIP may come from any number of sources, but the most crucial element is to ensure the impact on the annual town budget is spread out over time. Under this Plan, the major impacts will come from capital investment funds.

Manchester has sufficient borrowing power but has not taken advantage of this option for the last several years due to successful budget planning and oversight. While borrowing is a viable option, the town would rather make purchases outright, using capital investment funds, where feasible.

Shared Investments

Manchester has historically been proactive in planning for future expenses and collaborating with neighboring towns to maximize opportunities. For example, the dam on Cobbossee Lake needs to be evaluated and either fixed or replaced. While the Town of Manchester actually owns the dam, the continued functionality of the dam affects Litchfield, West Gardiner, Monmouth, Gardiner, and Winthrop. For that reason, Manchester town officials will reach out to these towns to coordinate this project.

Priority Level

L= Low M= Medium H= High

EMERGENCY SERVICES:

Department	Project/Need	Priority	Estimated Replacement Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Primary Funding Source
Fire Department	Fire truck	M	2030	\$1 million or TBD depending on apparatus	Truck reserve account
Fire Department	Expansion of Fire Department	L	2035	TBD	Grants or bonds
Fire Department	New Fire Gear	H	Evaluated and replaced annually, as necessary	\$10,000/yearly	Equipment budget

PUBLIC WORKS:

Department	Project/Need	Priority	Estimated Replacement Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Primary Funding Source
Town of Manchester	Sand and salt shed	M	2030	\$75,000	Budgeted
Town of Manchester	Road maintenance contract	Ongoing	Evaluated annually	\$350,000	Budgeted
Town of Manchester	Snow plowing contract	Ongoing	Annually	\$350,000	Budgeted

RECREATION:

Department	Project/Need	Priority	Estimated Replacement Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Primary Funding Source
Playground	Replace playground equipment	M/H	2027	TBD	Possibly TIF income/TBD
Trails	Maintenance/Development	M	Ongoing	TBD	Budgeted

Fiscal Capacity & CIP Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
------------------	--------------------	--------------------------------------

Manchester is in acceptable financial condition, with minimal debt and sound financial management. In general, revenues have been reasonably stable in the last seven years. The Town Manager and Select Board are committed to achieving a balanced budget and seek innovative and sustainable solutions to achieve this goal.

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

Policies:	Strategies:	Implementing Party/Timeframe:
------------------	--------------------	--------------------------------------

1. To finance existing and future facilities and services in a cost-effective manner.	1.1 Formalize, review, and update the Town’s Capital Investment Plan on an annual basis, incorporate improvements into the annual budget, and expand its scope to 10 years into the future. 1.2 Support legislative initiatives to increase state financial support to towns and schools.	Town Manager, Select Board. Short term. Town Manager, Select Board. Mid-term.
2. To explore grants available to assist in the funding of capital investments within the community.	2.1 Maintain a working knowledge and listing of grants and deadlines for financing special projects.	Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.
3. To reduce Maine’s tax burden by staying within LD 1 spending limitations.	3.1 Explore opportunities to work with neighboring communities to plan for and finance shared or adjacent capital investments to increase cost savings and efficiencies.	Town Manager, Select Board. Ongoing.

Recommendations Part IV: Regional Coordination

The benefits of regional cooperation are clear and substantial. This section summarizes Manchester's past, current, and anticipated collaborative efforts that support both shared and local interests.

Most of the Town's regional partnerships involve public services, including solid waste and recycling, fire protection, and ambulance services. Manchester also hosts a school within the regional school district. The Town works with neighboring communities to expand recreational opportunities and advance joint projects.

Manchester further participates in regional public safety services. Police coverage is provided by the Kennebec County Sheriff's Office, and emergency dispatching is coordinated through the Town of Winthrop.

Collectively, these cooperative efforts enhance the quality and efficiency of services available to Manchester residents and to the wider region.

Current regional activities and provisions include:

This is not an exhaustive list.

- The Manchester Fire Department has a mutual aid contract with several neighboring towns.
- Manchester's emergency services are through a partnership with Winthrop.
- Manchester utilizes shared police protection services through Kennebec County.
- The public water and sewer services throughout Manchester are provided by the Greater Augusta Utilities District.
- The Town is also a member of the Kennebec Valley Council of Governments (KVCOG).

Further information and details on specific regional efforts can be found in the analysis chapters of this plan. For this comprehensive plan, several of the recommendations contain a regional component. The following is an incomplete listing of those policies and strategies:

Local Economy

- Policy 1. To support the type of economic development activity the community desires, reflecting the community's role in the region.
- Strategy 1.1: If appropriate, assign responsibility and provide financial support for economic development activities to the proper entity (e.g., a local economic development committee, a local representative to a regional economic development organization, the community's economic development director, a regional economic development initiative, or other).
- Strategy 2.6: Explore options and continue collaborating with Greater Augusta Utilities District (GAUD) to ensure the viability for public water and sewer.
- Policy 3. To coordinate with regional development corporations and surrounding towns as necessary to support desired economic development.
- Strategy 3.1: Participate in any regional economic development planning efforts.
- Strategy 3.2: Explore options to coordinate with the regional school system for training opportunities for young workers.
- Strategy 4.6: Consider the value in joining regional Economic Development initiatives such as the Augusta Area Chamber of Commerce, and Maine Tourism.
- Strategy 5.8: Continue to participate in local/regional economic development groups.

Housing

- Policy 1. Encourage and promote adequate affordable and workforce housing to support the community's and region's economic development.
- Strategy 1.3: Create or continue to support a community affordable/workforce housing committee and/or regional affordable housing coalition.
- Strategy 1.5: Consider engaging Maine State Housing Authority's affordable housing tax increment financing to assist in creating affordable housing development in the Community Residential District.
- Strategy 2.1: Support the efforts of local and regional housing coalitions in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.
- Strategy 2.5: Work with local hospitals/senior organizations to develop a plan for senior/assisted housing within the community or region.
- Policy 3. Encourage and support the efforts of regional housing coalitions or groups with similar purposes in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.
- Strategy 3.2: Explore options to encourage workforce housing development to support community and regional economic development.
- Strategy 6.2: Identify Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA) programs that may be of use to current or prospective residents and make information available through the town office.
- Strategy 6.5: Create and task a committee to work with regional nonprofit organizations to identify opportunities to increase the availability of senior housing in Manchester.

Public Facilities and Services

- Strategy 1.3: Continue to explore participation in regional initiatives for services that can provide better value to the town than other available sources.
- Strategy 2.3: Explore options for regional delivery of local services.
- Strategy 6.2: Work with the school board to undertake long-term school facilities planning.
- Strategy 6.3: Receive from the Fire Department an annual assessment of the adequacy of and need for future replacement of fire equipment.
- Strategy 6.5: Continue to plan for long-range solid waste disposal and recycling needs.
- Policy 7. Continue to seek increased opportunities for regional cooperation with neighboring towns.
- Strategy 7.1: Establish a protocol to look at opportunities for equipment sharing, including purchases of new equipment.
- Strategy 7.2: Engage neighboring towns in planning for disaster mitigation.
- Strategy 7.3: Continue contacts and discussions with neighboring towns and regional entities on new ways to provide more efficient services.
- Policy 8. Work with state and county officials to increase enforcement of traffic laws, especially in residential areas along Route 201.

Transportation

- Policy 1. To prioritize community and regional needs associated with safe, efficient, and optimal use of transportation systems.
- Strategy 2.1: Initiate or actively participate in regional and state transportation efforts.
- Strategy 2.2: Work with MDOT to improve the existing transportation system.
- Strategy 6.2: Seek opportunities to collaborate with DOT to increase bike lanes throughout town.

Recreation

- Strategy 2.1: Work with public and private partners to extend and maintain a network of trails for motorized and non-motorized uses. Connect with regional trail systems where possible.
- Strategy 2.2: Work with an existing local land trust or other conservation organizations to pursue opportunities to protect important open space or recreational land.

Ag & Forestry

- Strategy 2.3: Include agriculture, commercial forestry operations, and land conservation that supports them in local or regional economic development plans.
- Strategy 2.4: Provide information at the town office and on the town's website for agricultural support such Future Farmers of America (FFA), the Maine Organic Farmers and Growers Association (MOFGA), the Maine Farmland Trust, Maine Farm Bureau, and 4H in supporting and expanding the agricultural sector.

Natural Resources

- Policy 2. To coordinate with neighboring communities and regional and state resource agencies to protect shared critical natural resources.
- Strategy 2.1: Initiate and/or participate in interlocal and/or regional planning, management, and/or regulatory efforts around shared critical and important natural resources.

Water Resources

- Policy 5. To cooperate with neighboring communities and regional/local advocacy groups to protect water resources.
- Strategy 5.1: Engage in and support efforts by Cobbossee Watershed District, Cobbossee Lake Association, and other local and regional efforts to protect and improve water quality and solicit assistance when an impaired stream watershed management or mitigation plan is being developed and implemented.

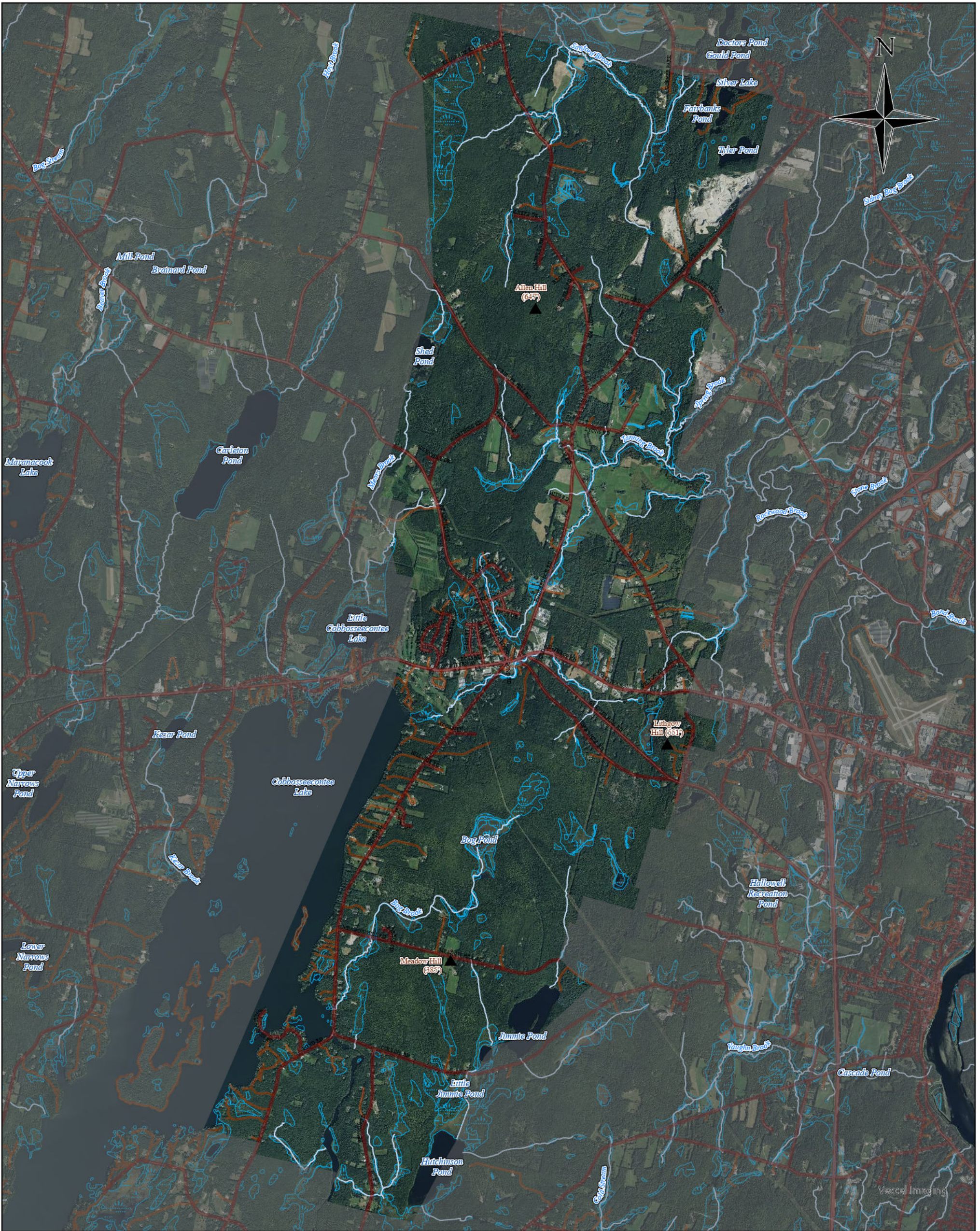
Future Land Use Plan

- Policy 1. To coordinate the community's land-use strategies with other local and regional land-use planning efforts.
- Strategy 1.2: Meet with neighboring communities to coordinate land-use designations and regulatory and non-regulatory strategies.
- Strategy 9.1 Work collaboratively with MaineDOT to facilitate a traffic study to improve traffic flow, traffic safety, and increase options for alternative modes of transportation.

Appendices

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****Note**** Manchester's *High Value Natural Areas* map was not included as part of the 2025/2026 Comprehensive Plan update. It can be viewed on page 126 of the Manchester 2012 Comprehensive Plan, located on the town's website: www.manchesterme.org/ordinances-policies.



Map Legend	
	Public Roads
	Private Roads
	Streams
	Wetlands
	Peaks

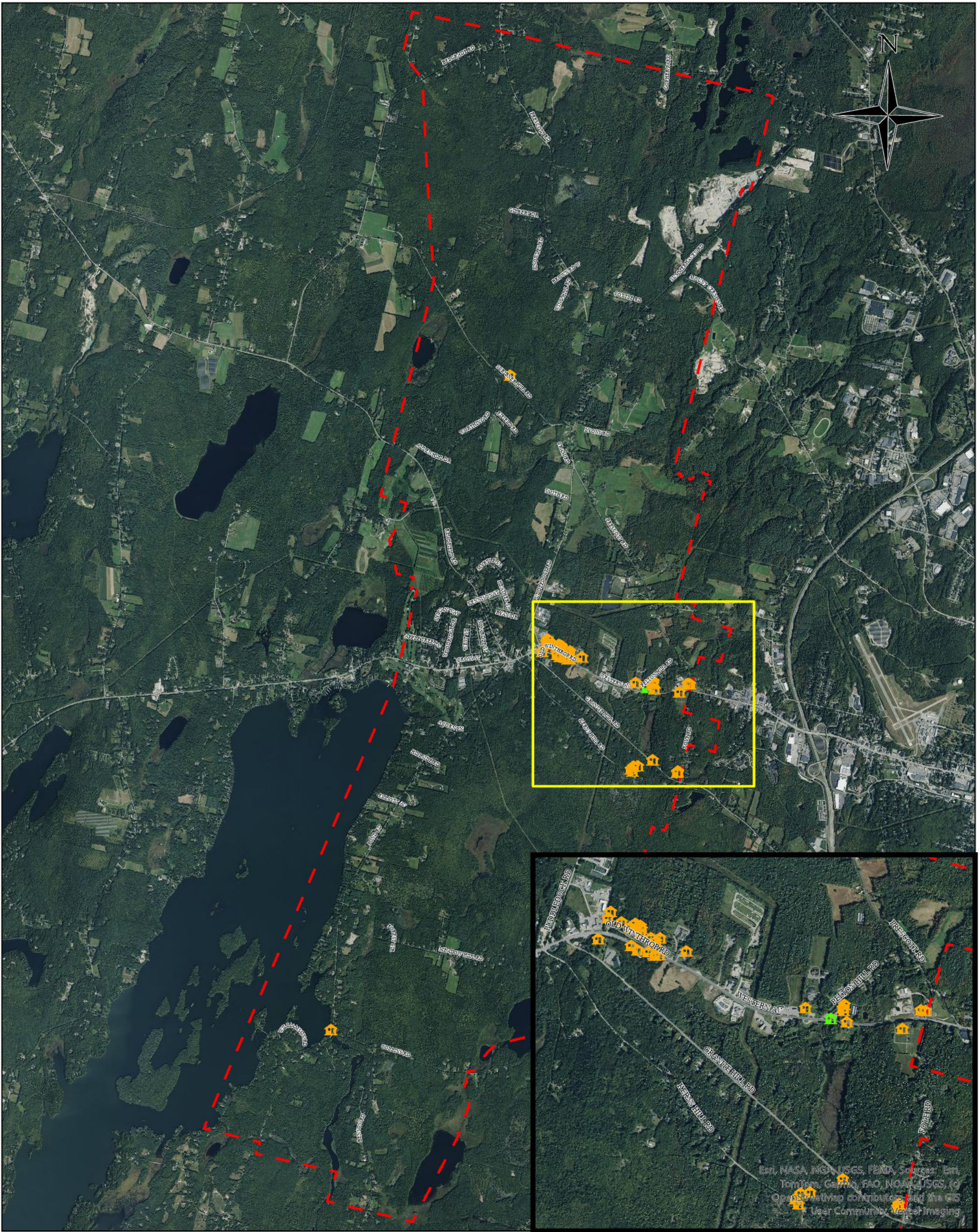
Town of Manchester
Kennebec County, Maine

Base Planning Map
Comprehensive Plan 2025






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 Created: 11-2025 by TA





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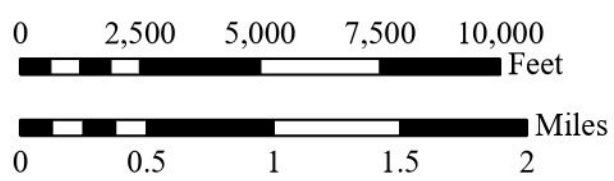
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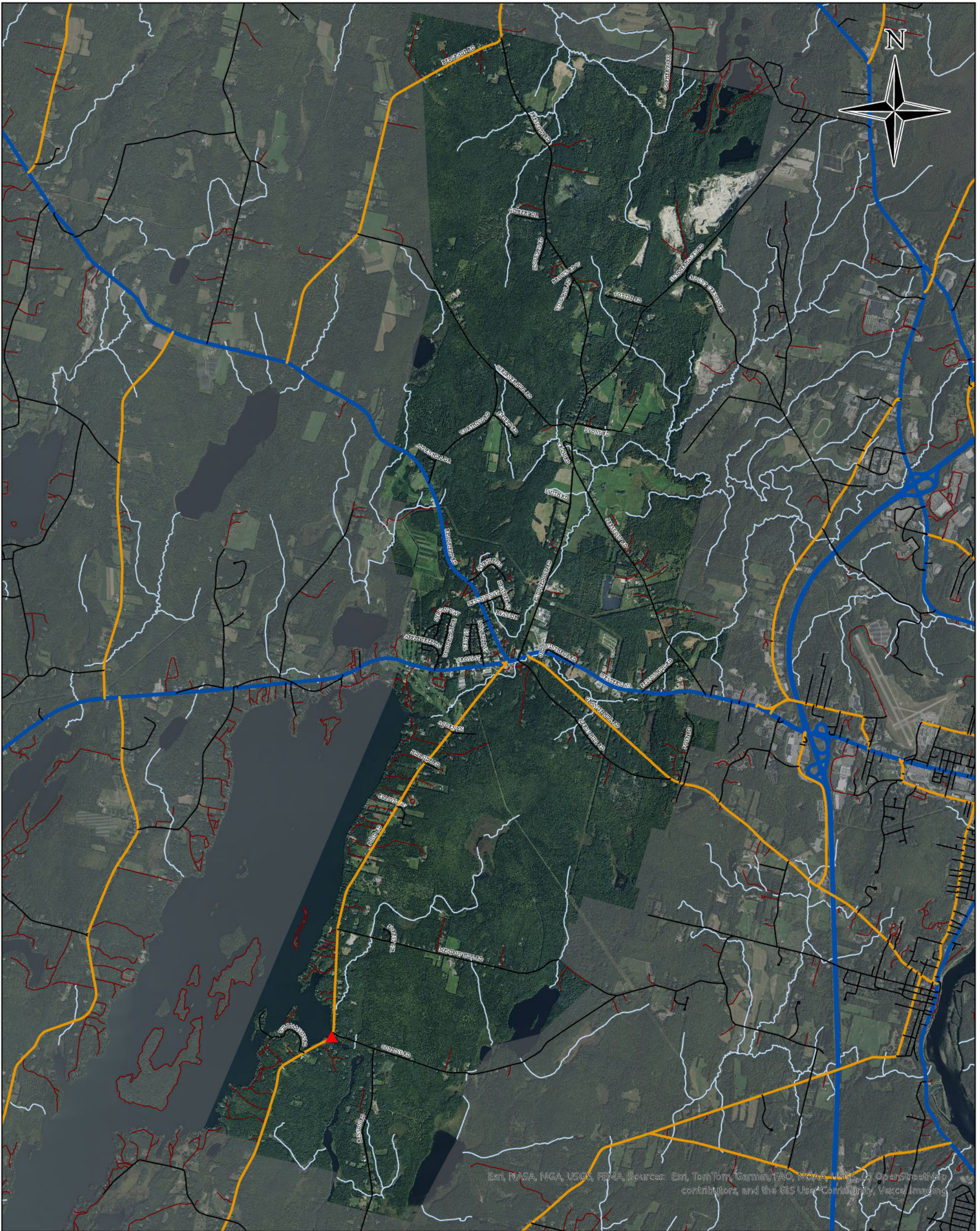
-  Town Boundary
-  NOT DETERMINED
-  NOT ELIGIBLE

Town of Manchester Kennebec County, Maine

Historic Resources Comprehensive Plan 2025

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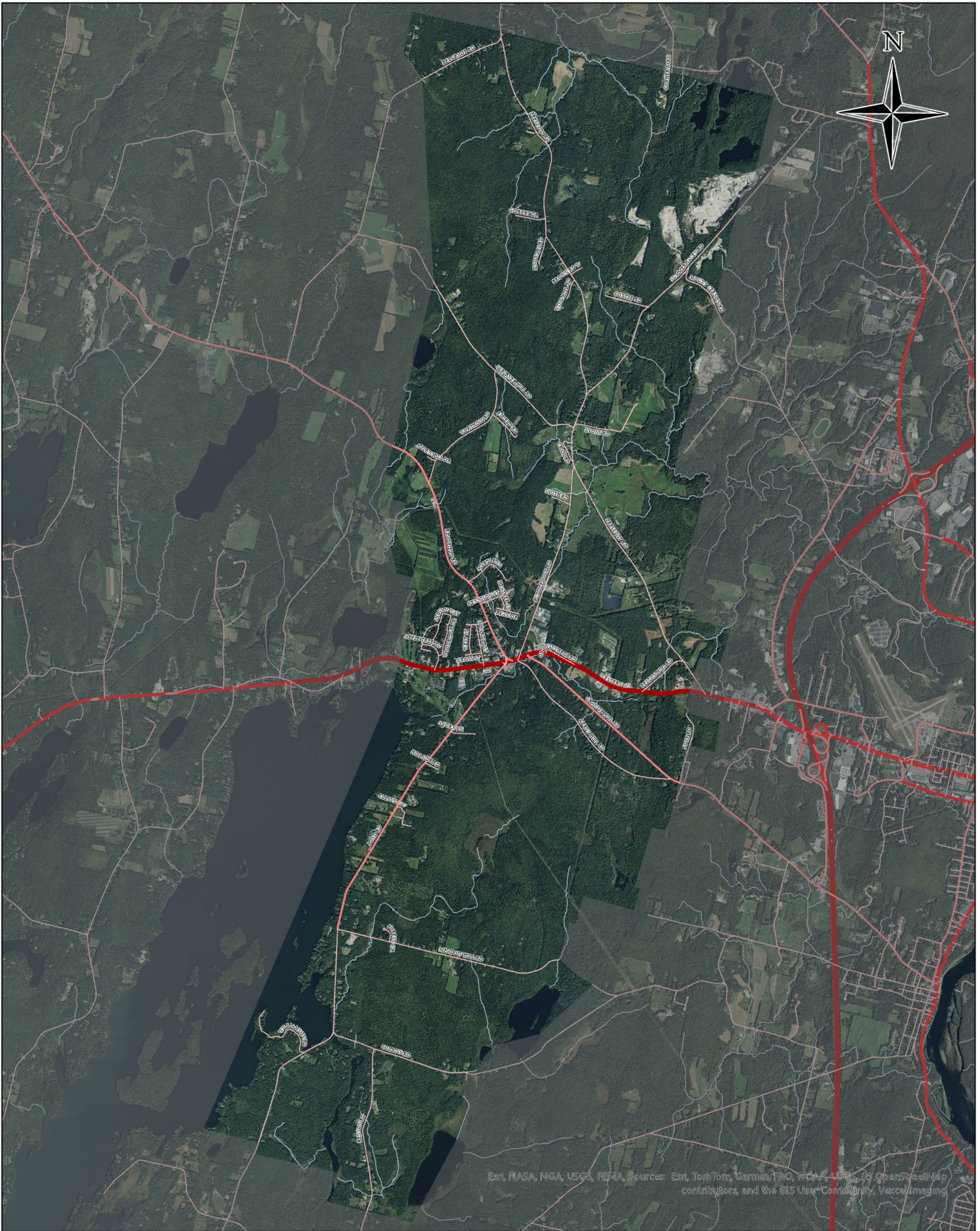
- Streams
- Roads**
- State Highway
- State Aid
- Local
- Private
- Bridges**
- ▲ State

Town of Manchester Kennebec County, Maine

General Transportation Comprehensive Plan 2025






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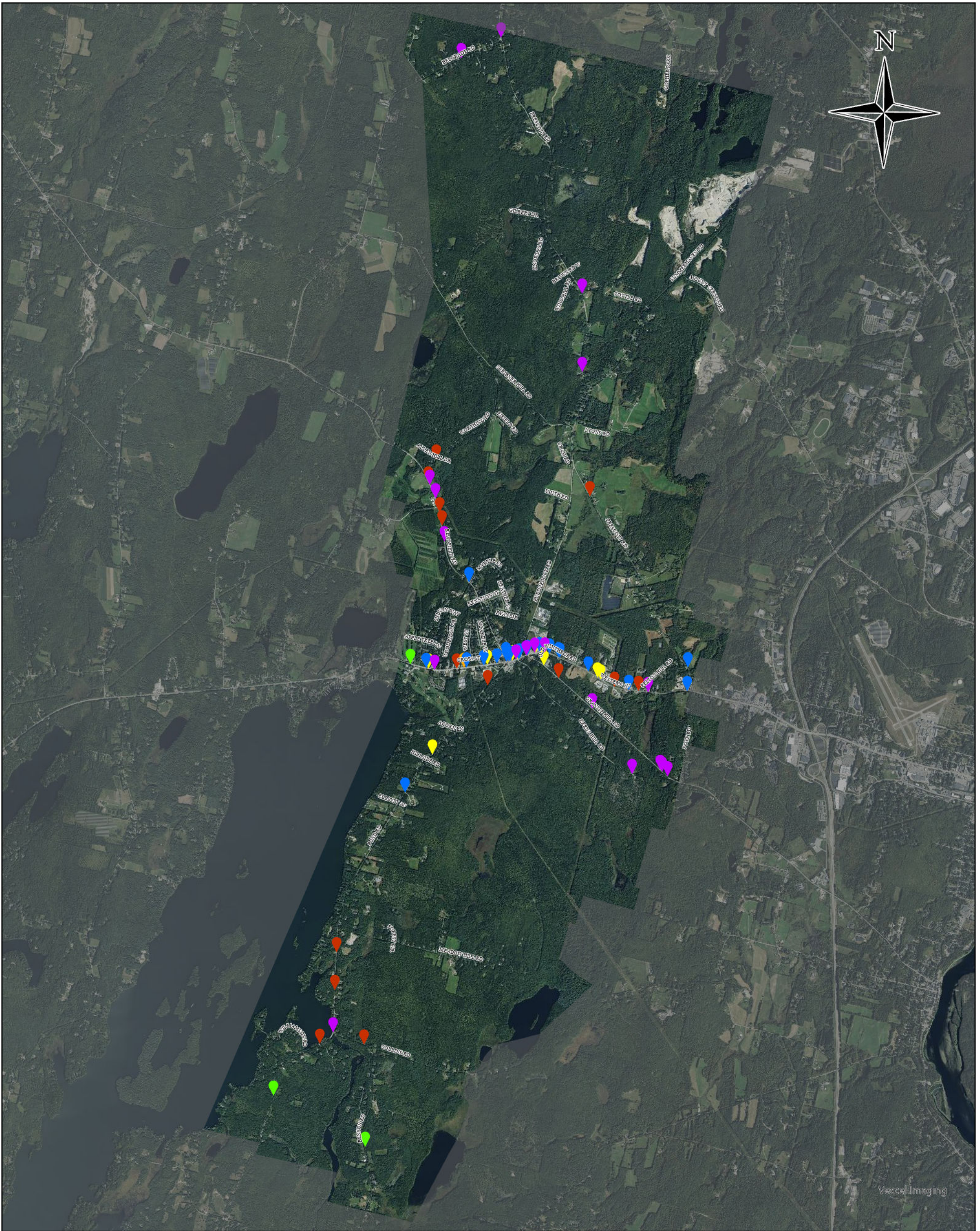
-  Streams
- Public Roads AADT**
-  5 - 2500
-  2500 - 7500
-  7500 - 15000
-  15000 - 25449

Town of Manchester Kennebec County, Maine

Annual Average Daily Traffic Comprehensive Plan 2025

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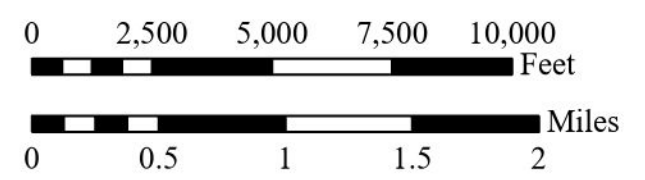
Map Legend

Crash Type

- Deer
- Head-on / Sideswipe
- Intersection Movement
- Other
- Rear End / Sideswipe
- Went Off Road

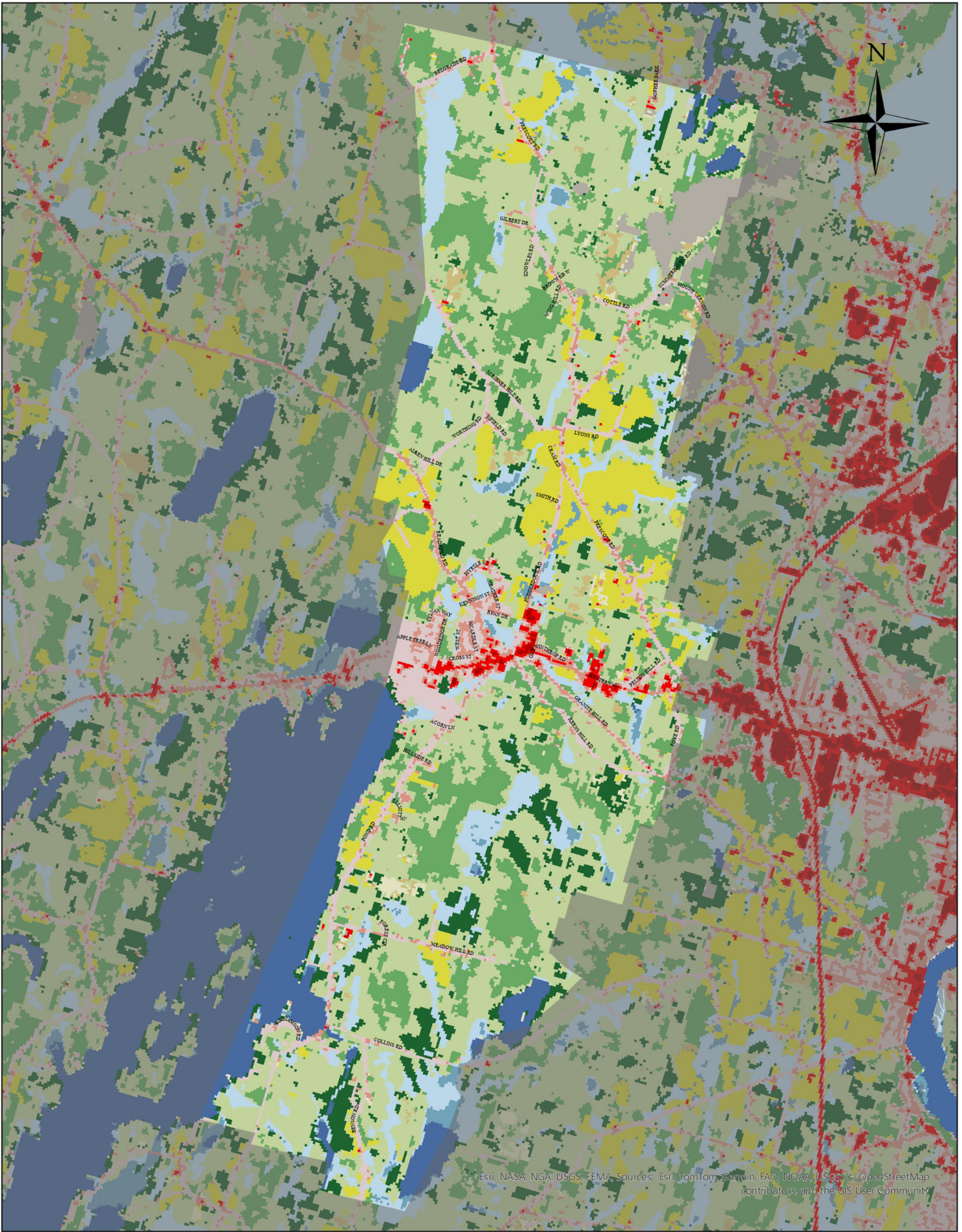
**Town of Manchester
Kennebec County, Maine**

**Crashes Since 2025
Comprehensive Plan 2025**



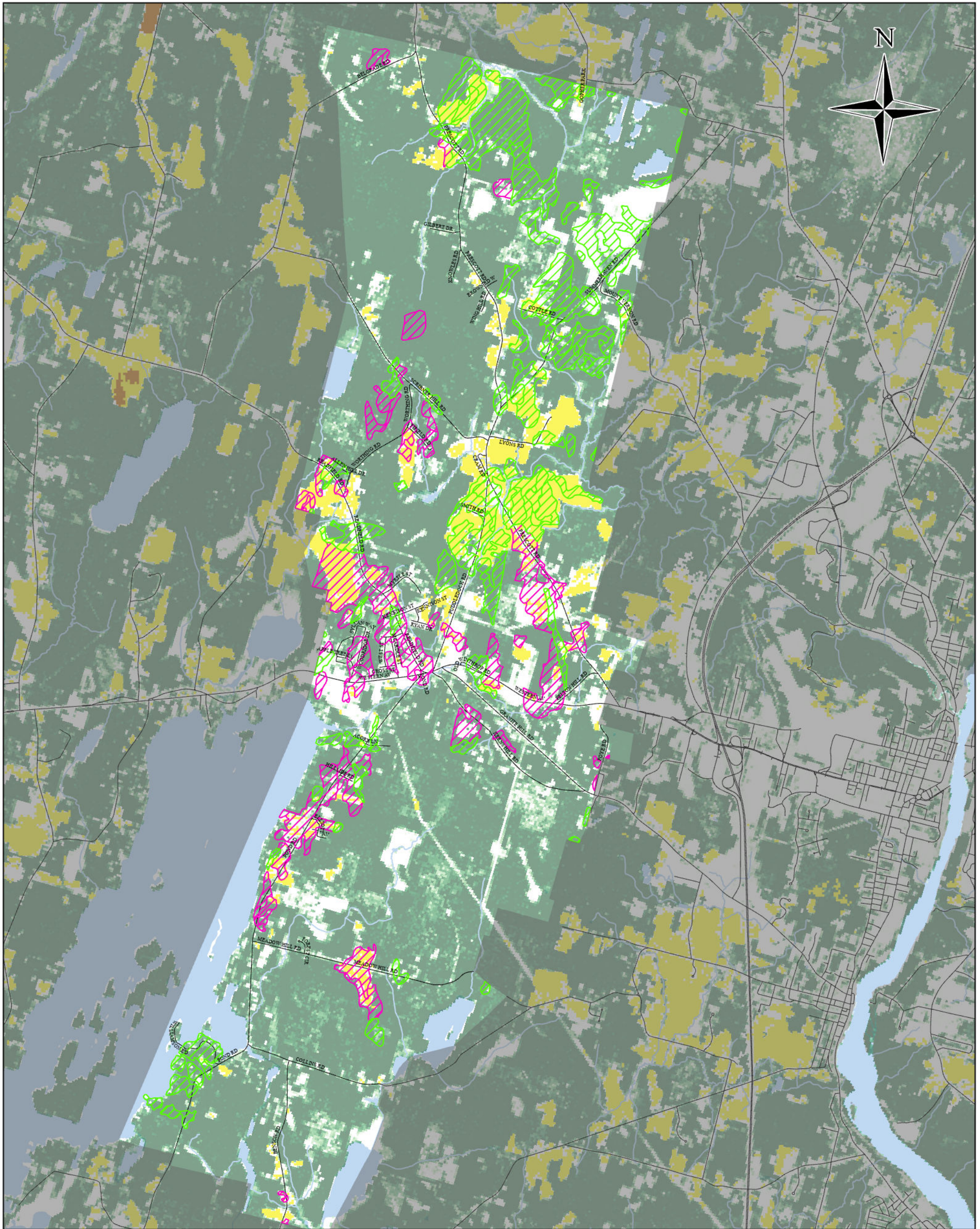
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Map Legend		<p>Town of Manchester Kennebec County, Maine</p> <p>Land Cover Comprehensive Plan 2025</p> <p>Neither KVCOG nor the Town of Manchester assume any liability for the data delineated herein. All information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only and non-regulatory. Boundary data is based on digital sources and may differ from ground-based observations. Data sources: Maine Office of GIS, USGS Created: 11-2025 by TA</p>	<p>0 2,500 5,000 7,500 10,000 Feet</p> <p>0 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unclassified Open Water Perennial Ice/Snow Developed, Open Space Developed, Low Intensity Developed, Medium Intensity Developed, High Intensity Barren Land (Rock/Sand/Clay) Deciduous Forest Evergreen Forest Mixed Forest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dwarf Scrub Shrub/Scrub Grassland/Herbaceous Sedge/Herbaceous Lichens Moss Pasture/Hay Cultivated Crops Woody Wetlands Emergent Herbaceous Wetlands 		



Map Legend

Farmland

Prime Farmland Soil

Farmland Soil of Statewide Importance

Cultivated Crops

Pasture/Hay

Tree Canopy (Percentage)

97

0

Town of Manchester Kennebec County, Maine

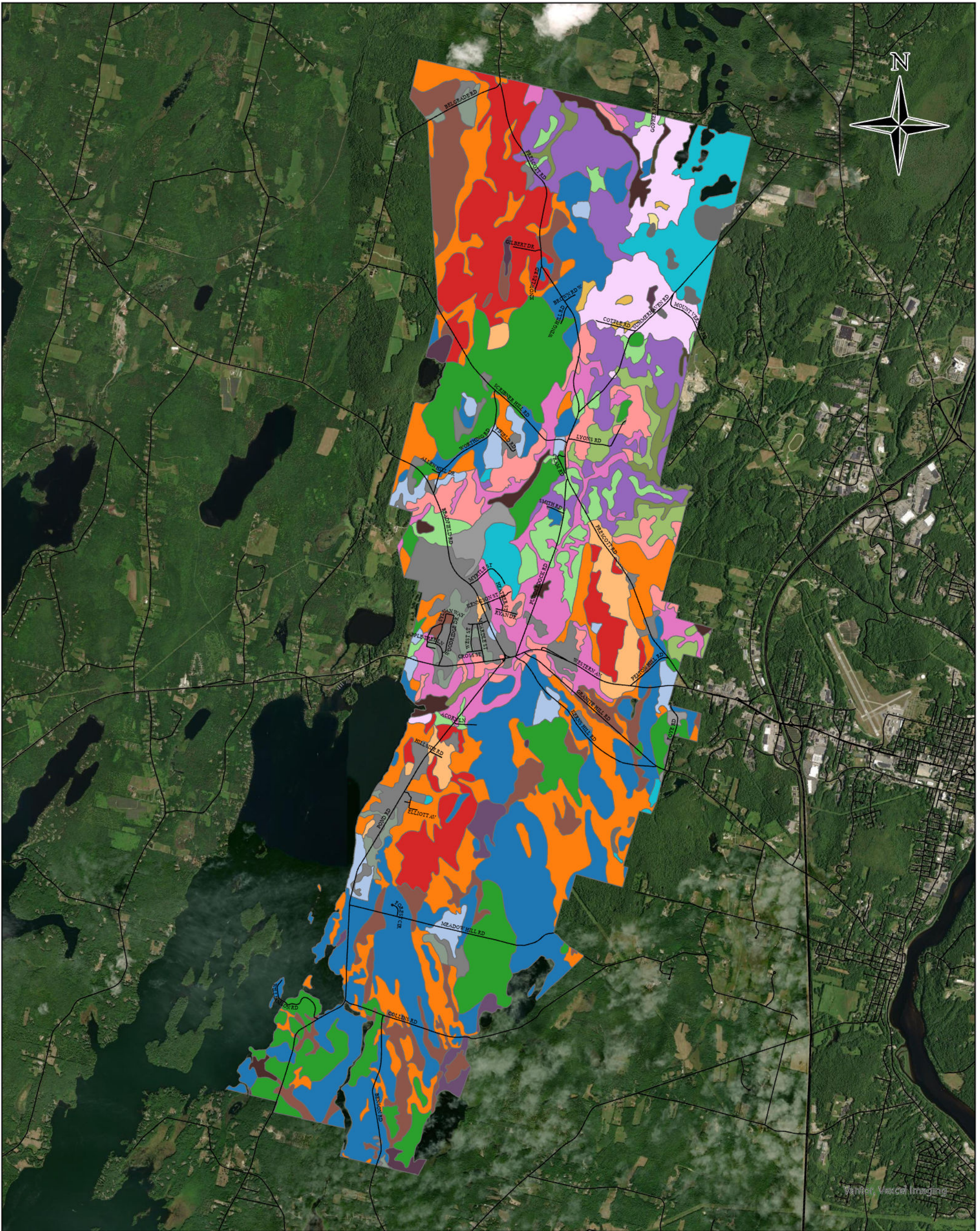
Agriculture and Forestry Resources Comprehensive Plan 2025

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Created: 11-2025 by TA

0 2,500 5,000 7,500 10,000 Feet

0 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles





Soil Type and Presence in Town

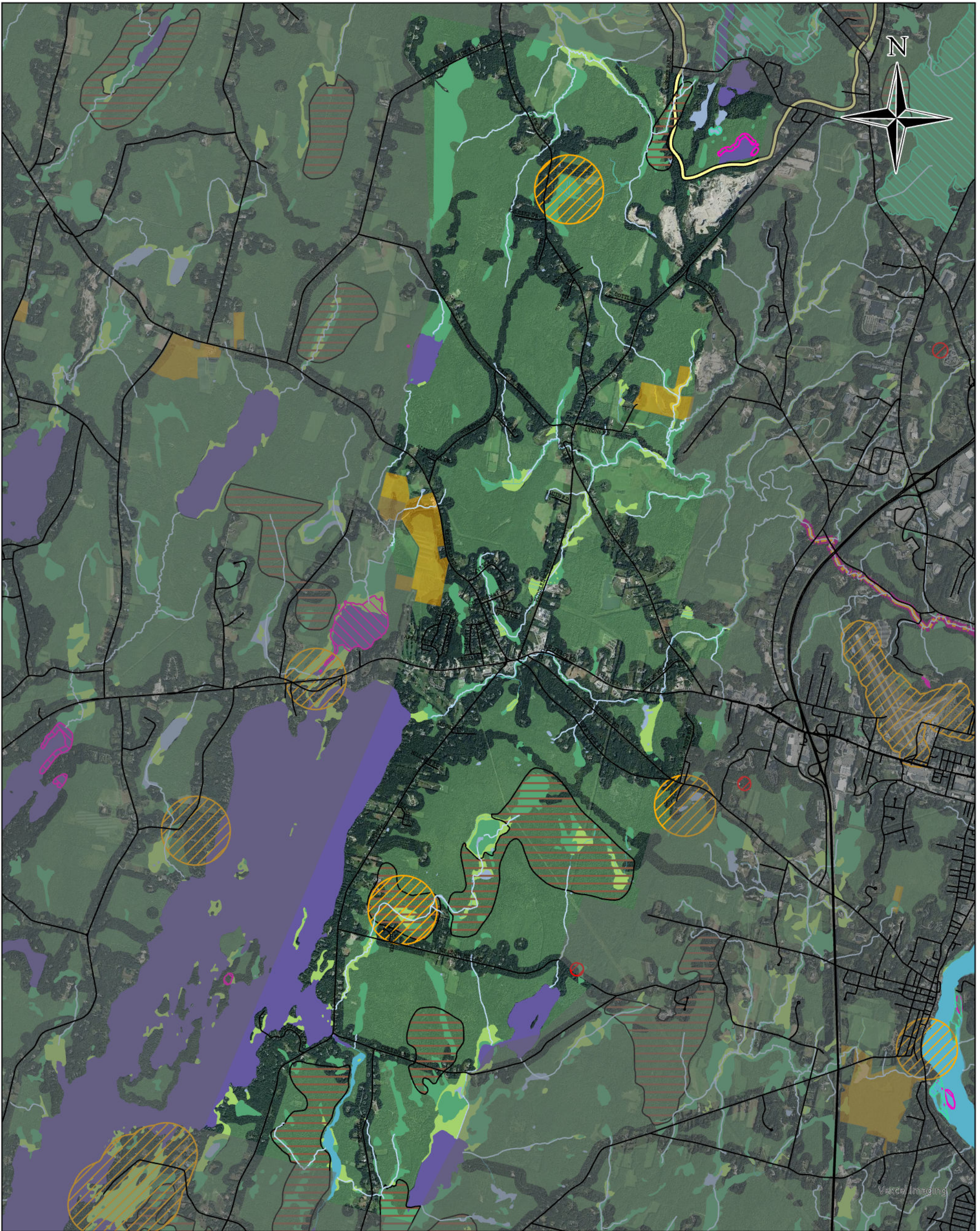
Paxton-Charlton Very Stony Fine Sandy Loam 16%	Woodbridge Fine Sandy Loam 4%	Biddeford Mucky Peat <1%
Woodbridge Very Stony Fine Sandy Loam 13%	Windsor Loamy Sand 4%	Limerick Silt Loam 1%
Hollis Fine Sandy Loam 11%	Hinckley Gravelly Sandy Loam 4%	Togus Fibrous Peat 1%
Paxton Very Stony Fine Sandy Loam 8%	Buxton Silt Loam 3%	Hollis-Rock Outcrop Complex 1%
Hartland Very Fine Sandy Loam 6%	Scio Very Fine Sandy Loam 3%	Gravel Pits 1%
Ridgebury Very Stony Fine Sandy Loam 6%	Paxton-Charlton Fine Sandy Loam 2%	Deerfield Loamy Fine Sand <1%
Scatic Silt Loam 5%	Paxton Fine Sandy Loam 2%	Dune Land <1%
	Suffield Silt Loam 1%	Rifle Mucky Peat <1%
	Ridgebury Fine Sandy Loam 1%	Scarboro Mucky Peat <1%

**Town of Manchester
Kennebec County, Maine**

**Soils Map
Comprehensive Plan 2025**

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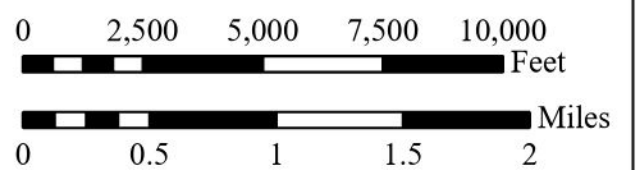
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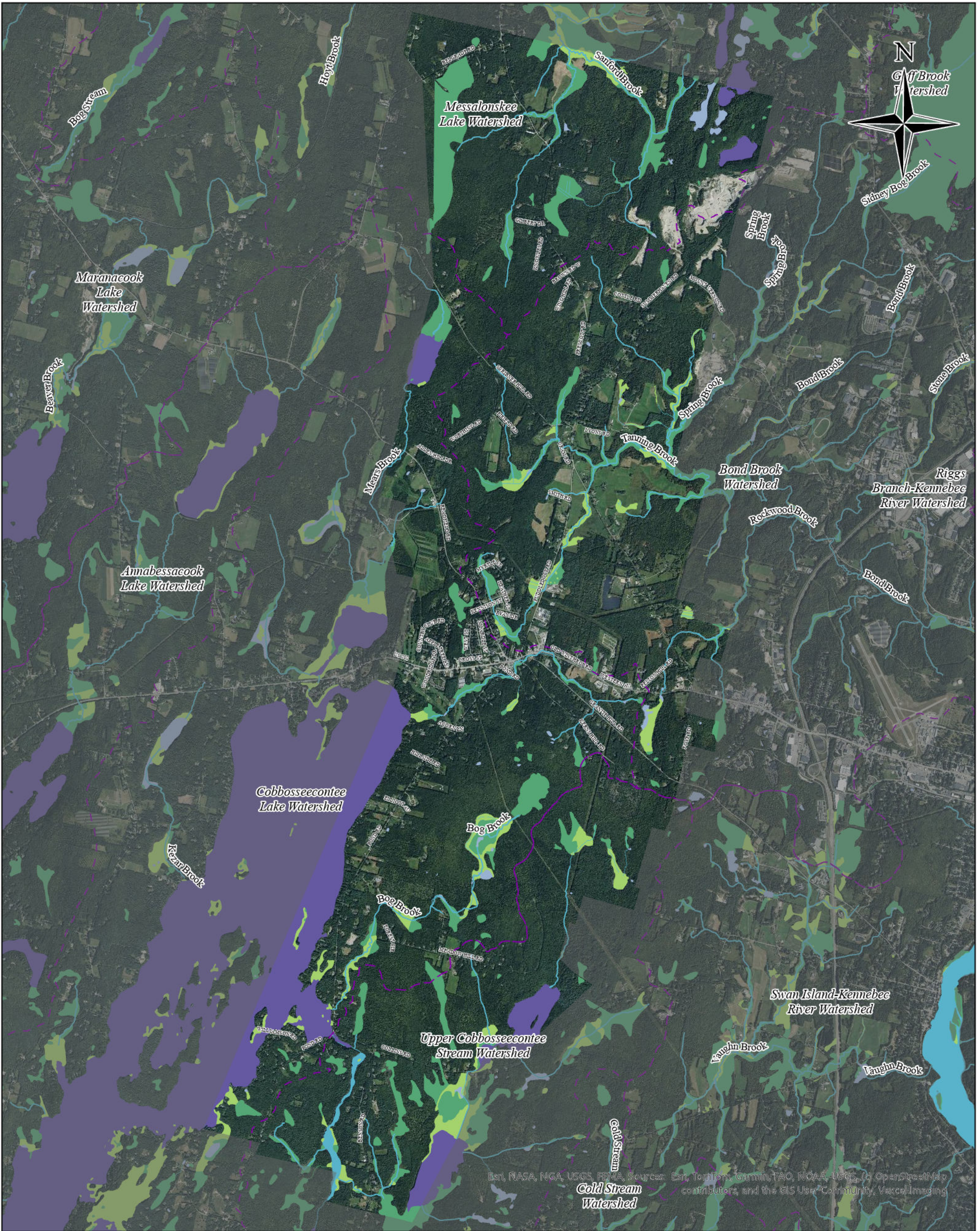
- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Streams | Conserved Land |
| Wild Brook Trout Habitat | Focus Areas |
| Salmon Habitat | Undeveloped |
| Significant Vernal Pools | Freshwater Emergent Wetland |
| Recent Locations of State Listed Animals | Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland |
| Deer Winter Areas | Freshwater Pond |
| Exemplary Natural Community | Lake |
| Rare Plant Species | Riverine |

**Town of Manchester
Kennebec County, Maine**

**Critical Natural Resources
Comprehensive Plan 2025**

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Created: 01-2026 by TA





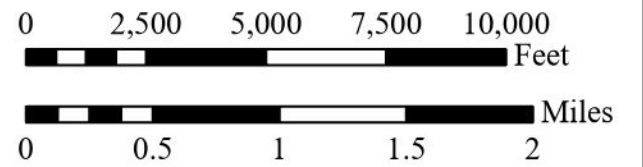
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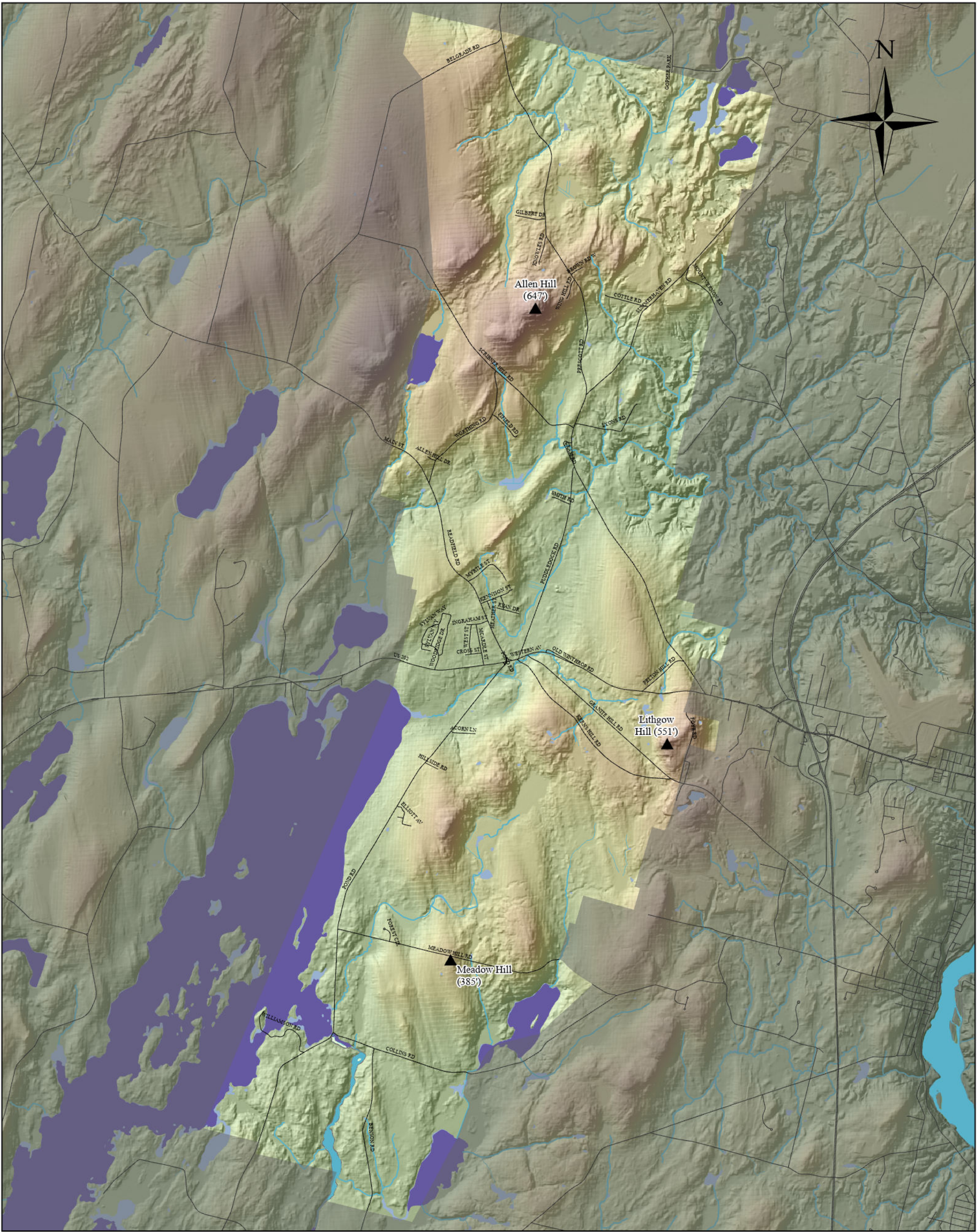
Map Legend	
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	Watersheds
	Freshwater Emergent Wetland
	Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland
	Freshwater Pond
	Lake
	Riverine

Town of Manchester Kennebec County, Maine

Water Resources Comprehensive Plan 2025

Neither KVCOG nor the Town of Manchester assume any liability for the data delineated herein. All information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only and non-regulatory. Boundary data is based on digital sources and may differ from ground-based observations. Data sources: Maine Office of GIS, USGS, Beginning with Habitat. Created: 01-2026 by TA.





Map Legend

- Public Roads
- Streams
- ▲ Peaks
- Freshwater Pond
- Lake
- Riverine

Elevation (ft.)

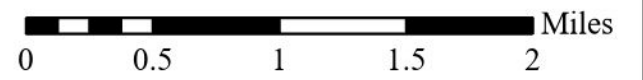
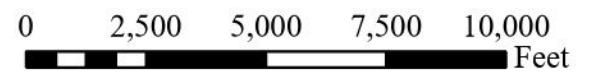
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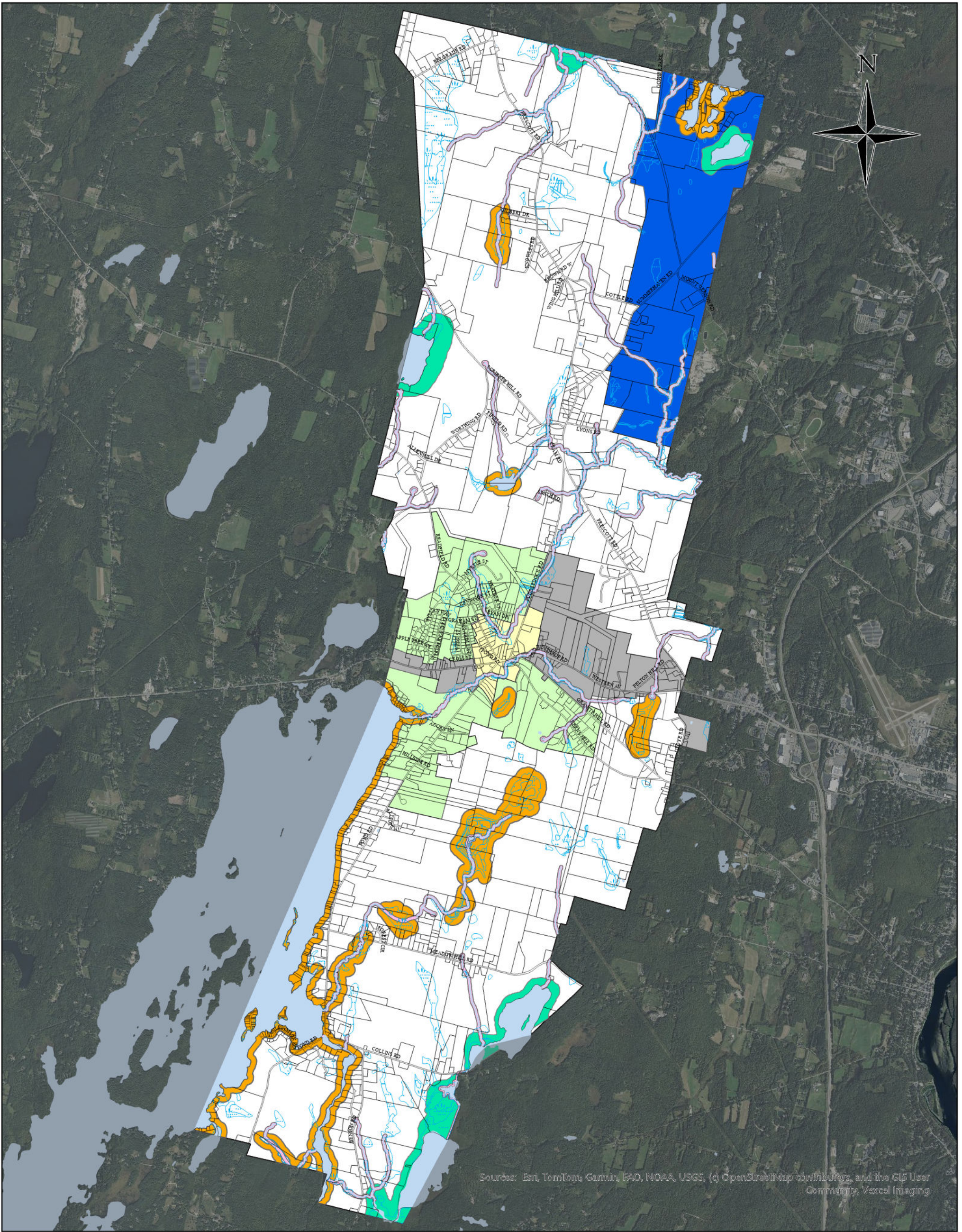
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**Town of Manchester
Kennebec County, Maine**

**Digital Elevation Map
Comprehensive Plan 2025**

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Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Vexcel Imaging

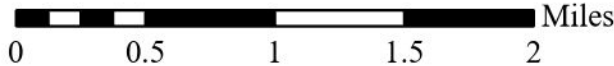
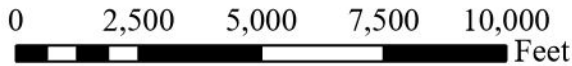
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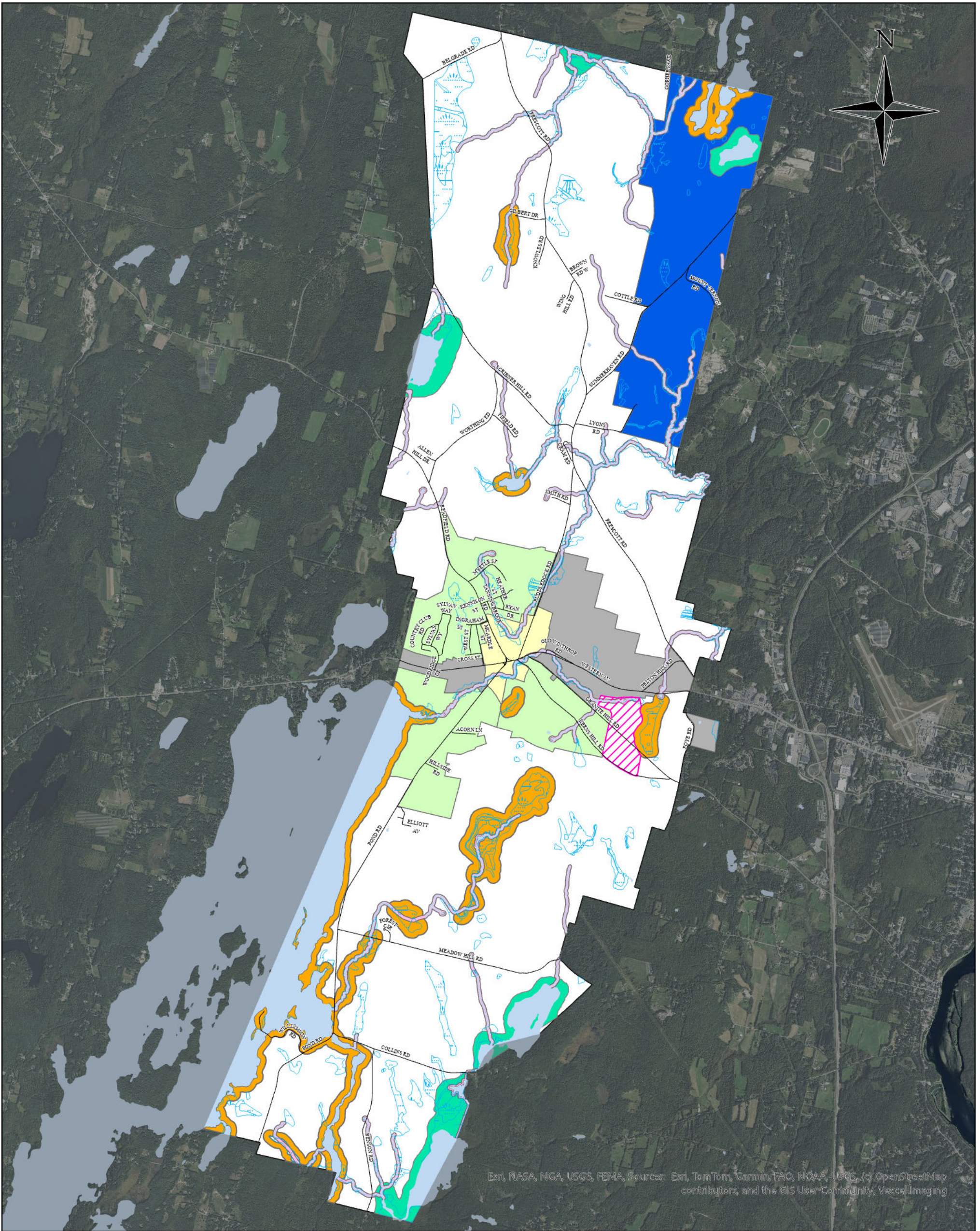
-  Streams
-  Lakes, Ponds, Rivers
-  Wetlands
-  Parcels
- Land Use Districts**
-  Aquifer Overlay
-  Community Residential
-  General Development
-  Village
-  Rural District
-  Stream Protection
-  Shoreland Zone
-  Resource Protection

**Town of Manchester
Kennebec County, Maine**

**Existing Land Use
Comprehensive Plan 2025**

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Data sources: Maine Office of GIS, USGS, Beginning with Habitat, Town of Manchester, KVCOG
Created: 01-2026 by TA





Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Vexcel Imaging

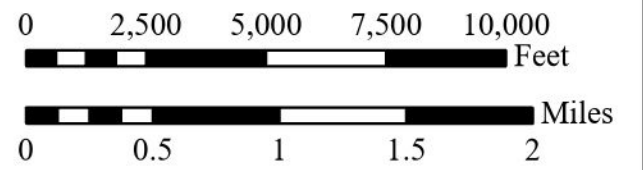
Map Legend

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Public Roads | Community Residential Growth Area |
| Streams | Land Use Districts |
| Lakes, Ponds, Rivers | Aquifer Overlay |
| Wetlands | Community Residential |
| Stream Protection | General Development |
| Shoreland Zone | Village |
| Resource Protection | Rural District |

Town of Manchester Kennebec County, Maine

Future Land Use Map Comprehensive Plan 2025

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Data sources: Maine Office of GIS, Maine DOT, USGS, Beginning with Habitat, Town of Manchester, KVCOG
Created: 04-2026 by TA

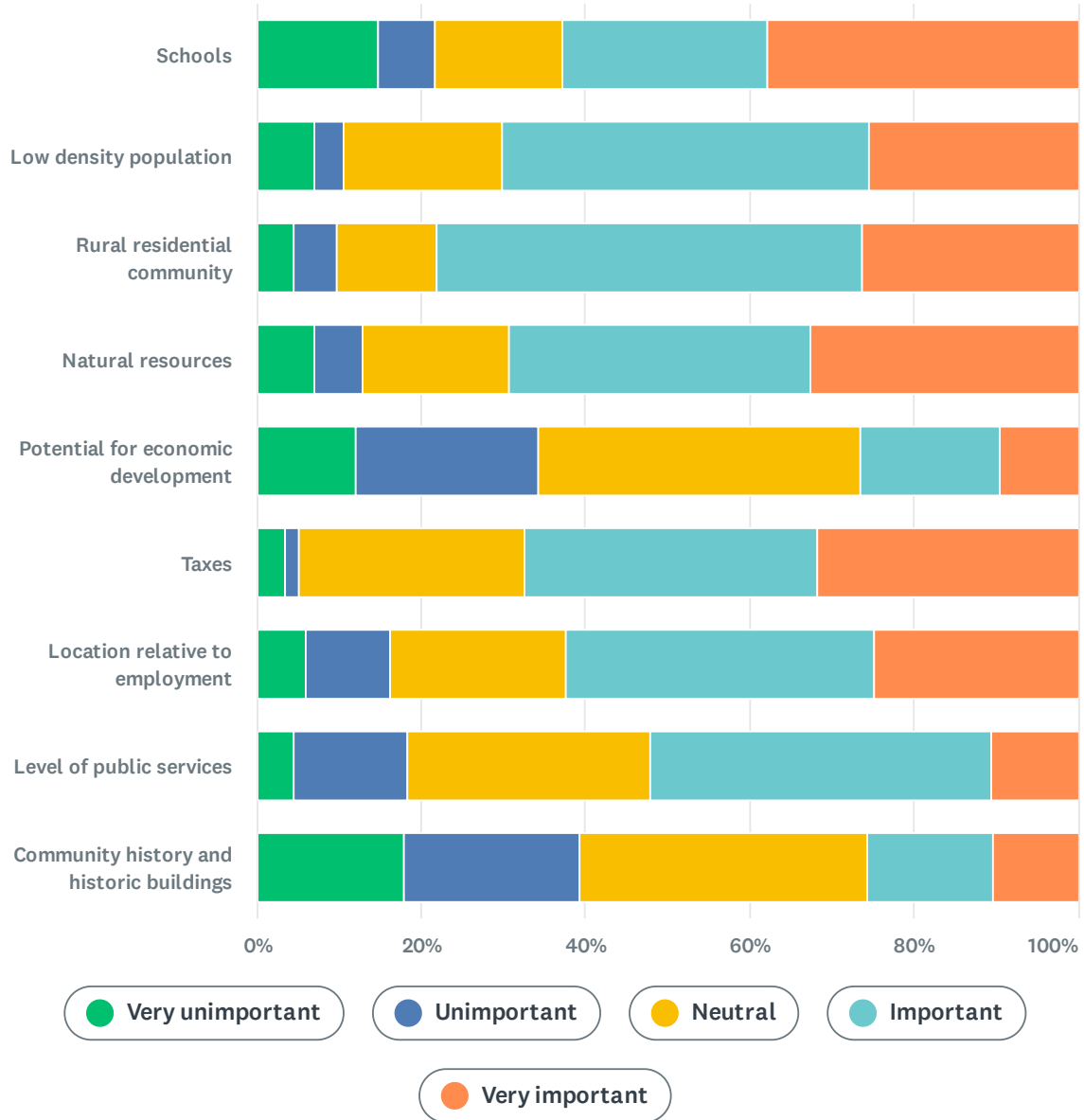


Acronyms

ADA = American with Disabilities Act
ACS = American Community Survey
BTIP = Biennial Transportation Improvement Program
BwH = Beginning with Habitat Program (MDIFW)
CEO = Code Enforcement Officer
CIP = Capital Investment Plan
CRF = Critical Rate Factor
DACF = Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
DWA = Deer Wintering Area
DWP = Drinking Water Program
GPA = Great Pond Standard
HCL = High Crash Location
LID = Low Impact Development
LMA = Labor Market Area
KVCAP = Kennebec Valley Community Action Program
KVCOG = Kennebec Valley Council of Governments
MDEP = Maine Department of Environmental Protection
MDIFW = Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
MDOL = Maine Department of Labor
MDOT = Maine Department of Transportation
MHPC = Maine Historical Preservation Commission
MNAP = Maine Natural Areas Program (MDOC)
MRSA = Maine Revised Statutes Annotated
MSHA = Maine State Housing Authority
MUTCD = Manual Uniform Traffic Control Devices
NRPA = Natural Resources Protection Act
RSU = Regional School Unit
TIF = Tax Increment Financing






Q1 How important were each of the following to you when choosing to live and stay in Manchester?

Answered: 117 Skipped: 0



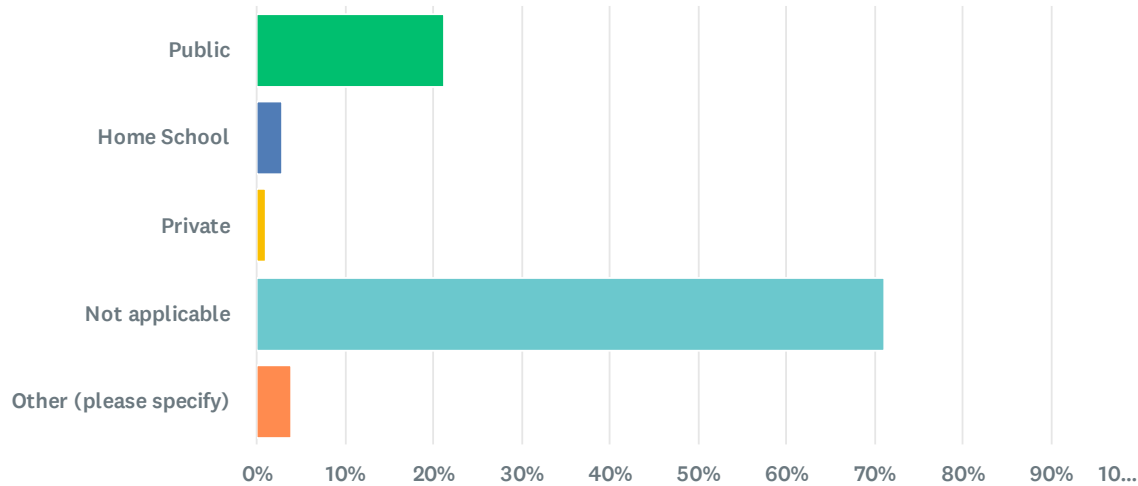
	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Very important	Total
						1044

Manchester Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

	 Very unimportant	 Unimportant	 Neutral	 Important	 Very important	Total
Schools	14.66% 17	6.90% 8	15.52% 18	25.00% 29	37.93% 44	116
Low density population	7.02% 8	3.51% 4	19.30% 22	44.74% 51	25.44% 29	114
Rural residential community	4.39% 5	5.26% 6	12.28% 14	51.75% 59	26.32% 30	114
Natural resources	6.84% 8	5.98% 7	17.95% 21	36.75% 43	32.48% 38	117
Potential for economic development	11.97% 14	22.22% 26	39.32% 46	17.09% 20	9.40% 11	117
Taxes	3.42% 4	1.71% 2	27.35% 32	35.90% 42	31.62% 37	117
Location relative to employment	5.98% 7	10.26% 12	21.37% 25	37.61% 44	24.79% 29	117
Level of public services	4.35% 5	13.91% 16	29.57% 35	41.74% 50	10.43% 12	115

Q2 If you have school-aged children, what type of school program are they enrolled in?

Answered: 104 Skipped: 13



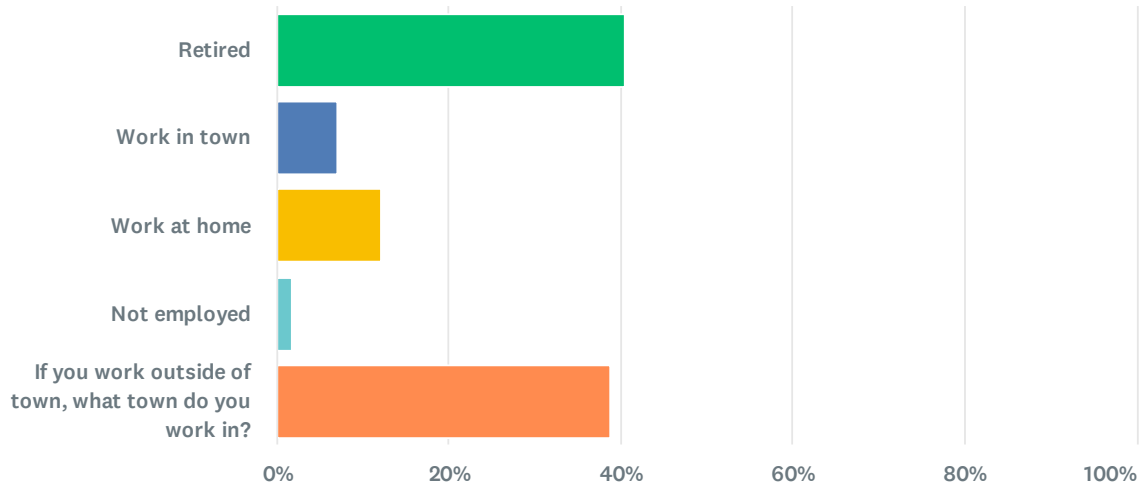
Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Public	21.15%	22
● Home School	2.88%	3
● Private	0.96%	1
● Not applicable	71.15%	74
● Other (please specify) Show responses	3.85%	4
Total		104

Manchester Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	When my family moved here in [REDACTED], the new H.S. that I attended was very important.	12/8/2025 2:09 PM
2	public and private	10/29/2025 9:59 AM
3	Graduated from [REDACTED] 2025	10/24/2025 2:19 PM
4	N/A	8/3/2025 12:49 PM

Q3 Your employment:

Answered: 116 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Retired	40.52%	47
● Work in town	6.90%	8
● Work at home	12.07%	14
● Not employed	1.72%	2
● If you work outside of town, what town do you work in? Show responses	38.79%	45
Total		116

Manchester Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

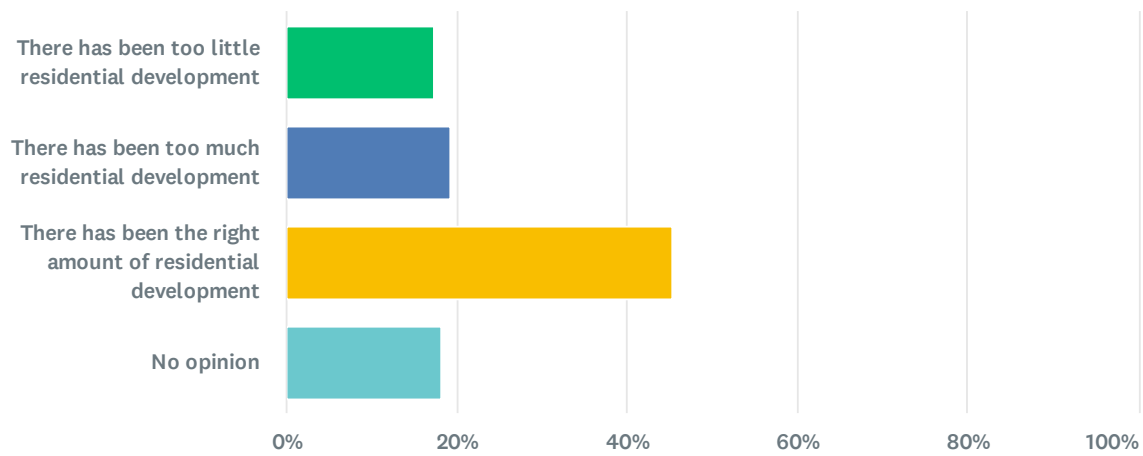
#	IF YOU WORK OUTSIDE OF TOWN, WHAT TOWN DO YOU WORK IN?	DATE
1	Portland	1/12/2026 10:21 PM
2	Augusta	11/21/2025 2:27 PM
3	Belgrade currently	11/2/2025 1:02 PM
4	Hallowell	10/30/2025 12:37 PM
5	Augusta	10/29/2025 9:59 AM
6	Lewiston and Brunswick	10/20/2025 8:28 AM
7	Augusta	10/18/2025 3:22 PM
8	Orono	10/18/2025 12:42 PM
9	Augusta and Fairfield	10/13/2025 6:11 PM
10	Winthrop, Augusta	10/6/2025 7:13 AM
11	Augusta	10/3/2025 8:45 AM
12	Augusta	9/28/2025 11:39 AM
13	Brunswick	9/28/2025 11:13 AM
14	Augusta	9/25/2025 7:49 AM
15	Orono	9/22/2025 3:19 PM
16	Togus	9/19/2025 11:14 AM
17	augusta/work from home	9/16/2025 10:59 AM
18	Augusta and Monmouth	9/14/2025 9:47 AM
19	Bangor & Gray	9/13/2025 4:26 PM
20	Gardiner	9/10/2025 5:30 PM
21	Durham	9/10/2025 12:10 PM
22	Farmingdale	9/10/2025 9:25 AM
23	Augusta	9/9/2025 7:51 PM
24	construction	9/9/2025 6:27 PM
25	Augusta	9/9/2025 5:13 PM
26	Hallowell	9/8/2025 7:30 PM
27	Waterville	9/8/2025 7:08 PM
28	Portland	9/8/2025 7:00 PM
29	Randolph	9/8/2025 6:54 PM
30	Augusta, Readfield	9/8/2025 6:51 PM
31	Augusta	9/8/2025 6:45 PM
32	Gardiner	9/8/2025 6:01 PM
33	Augusta	9/8/2025 5:53 PM
34	Augusta	9/8/2025 5:33 PM
35	Augusta	9/8/2025 4:56 PM
36	Augusta	9/8/2025 3:35 PM

Manchester Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

37	all over kennebec county	9/3/2025 9:59 AM
38	Waterville	9/2/2025 12:24 PM
39	Augusta	8/28/2025 11:43 AM
40	Augusta	8/21/2025 2:38 PM
41	Augusta	8/14/2025 6:41 PM
42	Augusta	8/11/2025 7:24 AM
43	Readfield	8/1/2025 5:05 PM
44	Self Employed HVAC	8/1/2025 3:50 PM
45	Hallowell	8/1/2025 12:19 PM

Q4 What is your opinion on residential development in the past decade?

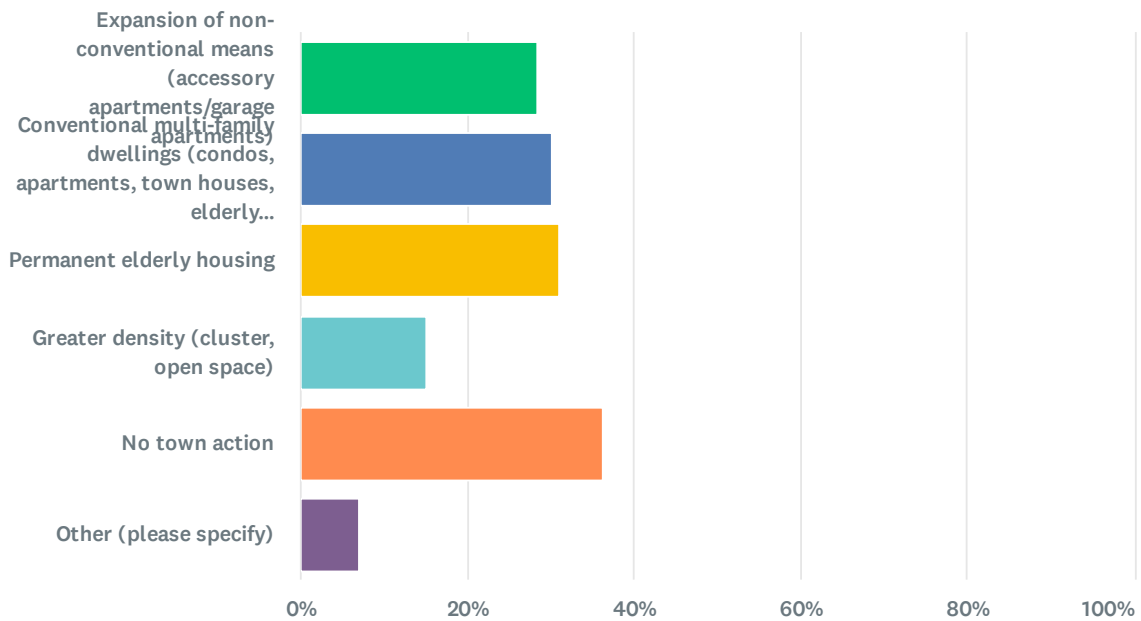
Answered: 115 Skipped: 2



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● There has been too little residential development	17.39%	20
● There has been too much residential development	19.13%	22
● There has been the right amount of residential development	45.22%	52
● No opinion	18.26%	21
Total		115

Q5 What types of housing initiatives should the town consider or pursue?

Answered: 113 Skipped: 4



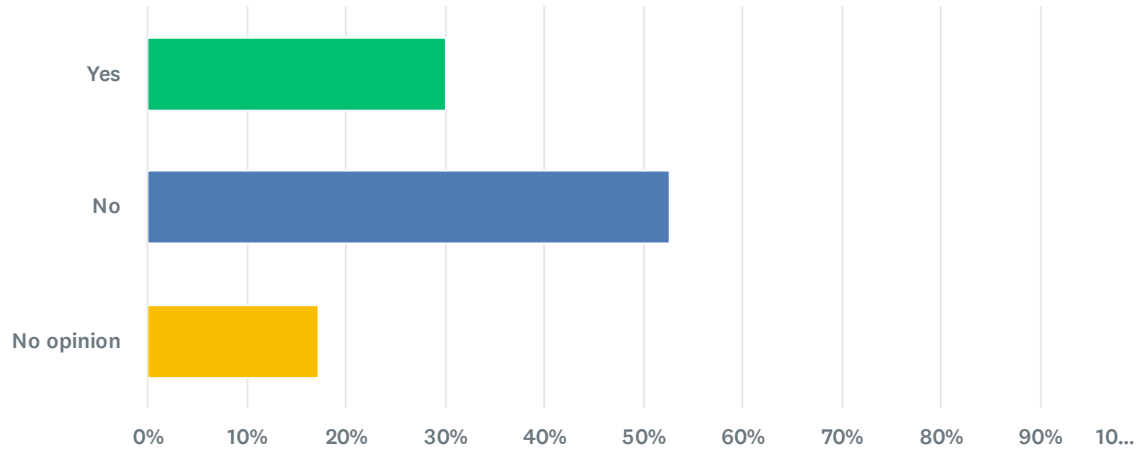
Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Expansion of non-conventional means (accessory apartments/garage apartments)	28.32%	32
● Conventional multi-family dwellings (condos, apartments, town houses, elderly housing)	30.09%	34
● Permanent elderly housing	30.97%	35
● Greater density (cluster, open space)	15.04%	17
● No town action	36.28%	41
● Other (please specify) Show responses	7.08%	8
Total		167

Manchester Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	I think our town is doing a good job on zoning. We don't want to encourage rural/urban sprawl. Permanent elderly housing should not be considered without public transportation.	12/8/2025 2:09 PM
2	Starter homes	11/2/2025 1:02 PM
3	Greater density, multifamily pursued in and limited to growth districts	10/20/2025 7:38 PM
4	Don't block Airbnb	9/9/2025 8:28 PM
5	less pot shops	9/9/2025 7:37 PM
6	Condos that allow dogs	9/8/2025 12:53 PM
7	smaller affordable options for all ages	9/3/2025 9:59 AM
8	I don't know the consequences of these, so no opinion.	7/30/2025 11:24 AM

Q6 Would you be in favor of the expenditure of town funds in support of affordable housing initiatives?

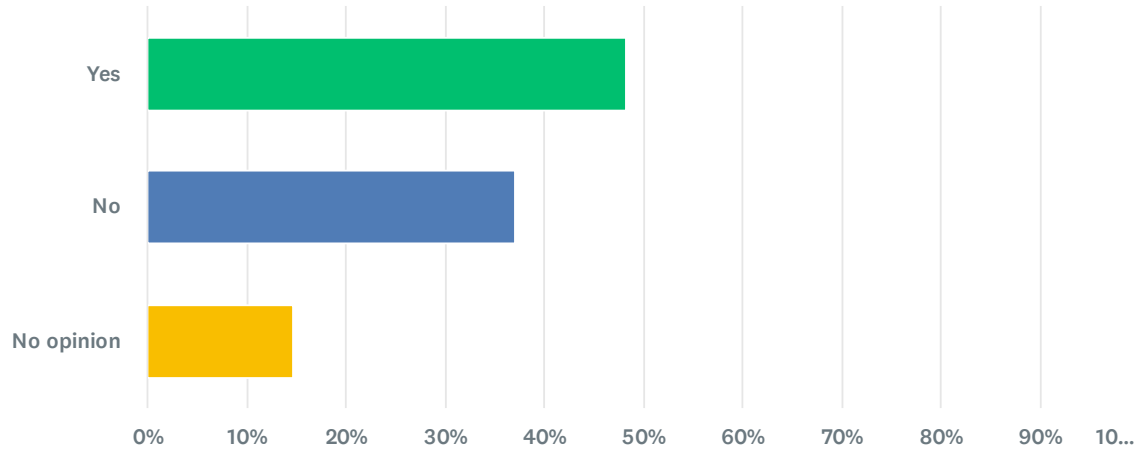
Answered: 116 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Yes	30.17%	35
● No	52.59%	61
● No opinion	17.24%	20
Total		116

Q7 Do you feel there is a need for housing alternatives other than single-family housing in town?

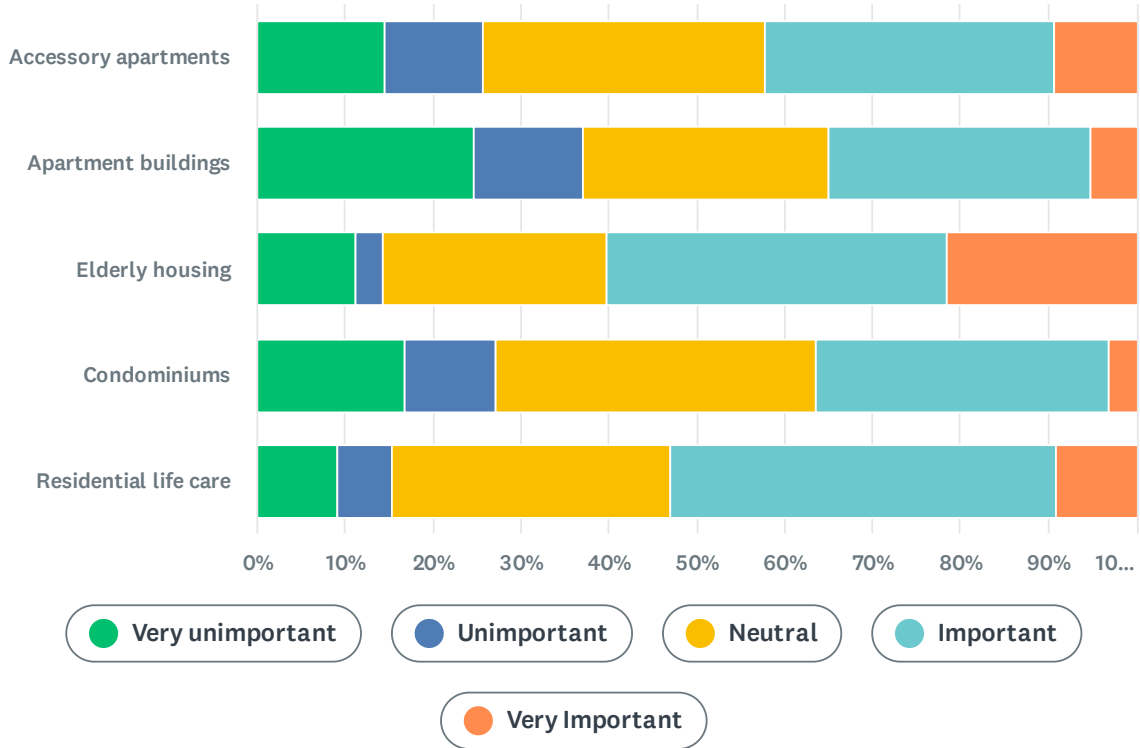
Answered: 116 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Yes	48.28%	56
● No	37.07%	43
● No opinion	14.66%	17
Total		116

Q8 If you feel there is a need for optional housing types, please rate the following in terms of importance:






Answered: 99 Skipped: 18



	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Very Important	Total
Accessory apartments	14.43%	11.34%	31.96%	32.99%	9.28%	97
	14	11	31	32	9	
Apartment buildings	24.74%	12.37%	27.84%	29.90%	5.15%	97
	24	12	27	29	5	

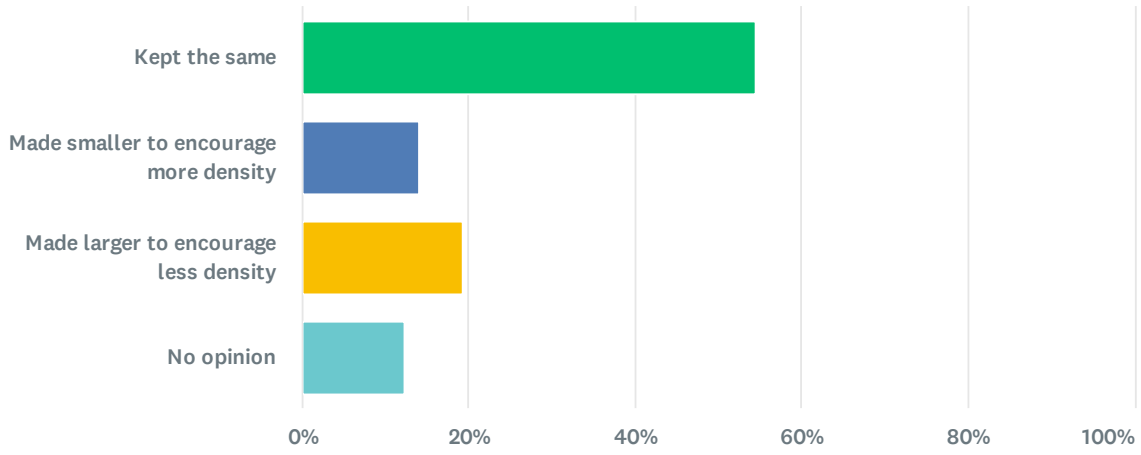
486

Manchester Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

	 Very unimportant	 Unimportant	 Neutral	 Important	 Very Important	Total
Elderly housing	11.22% 11	3.06% 3	25.51% 25	38.78% 38	21.43% 21	98
Condominiums	16.67% 16	10.42% 10	36.46% 35	33.33% 32	3.13% 3	96
Residential life care	9.18% 9	6.12% 6	31.63% 31	43.88% 43	9.18% 9	98

Q9 Do you think the minimum lot size in Manchester should be:

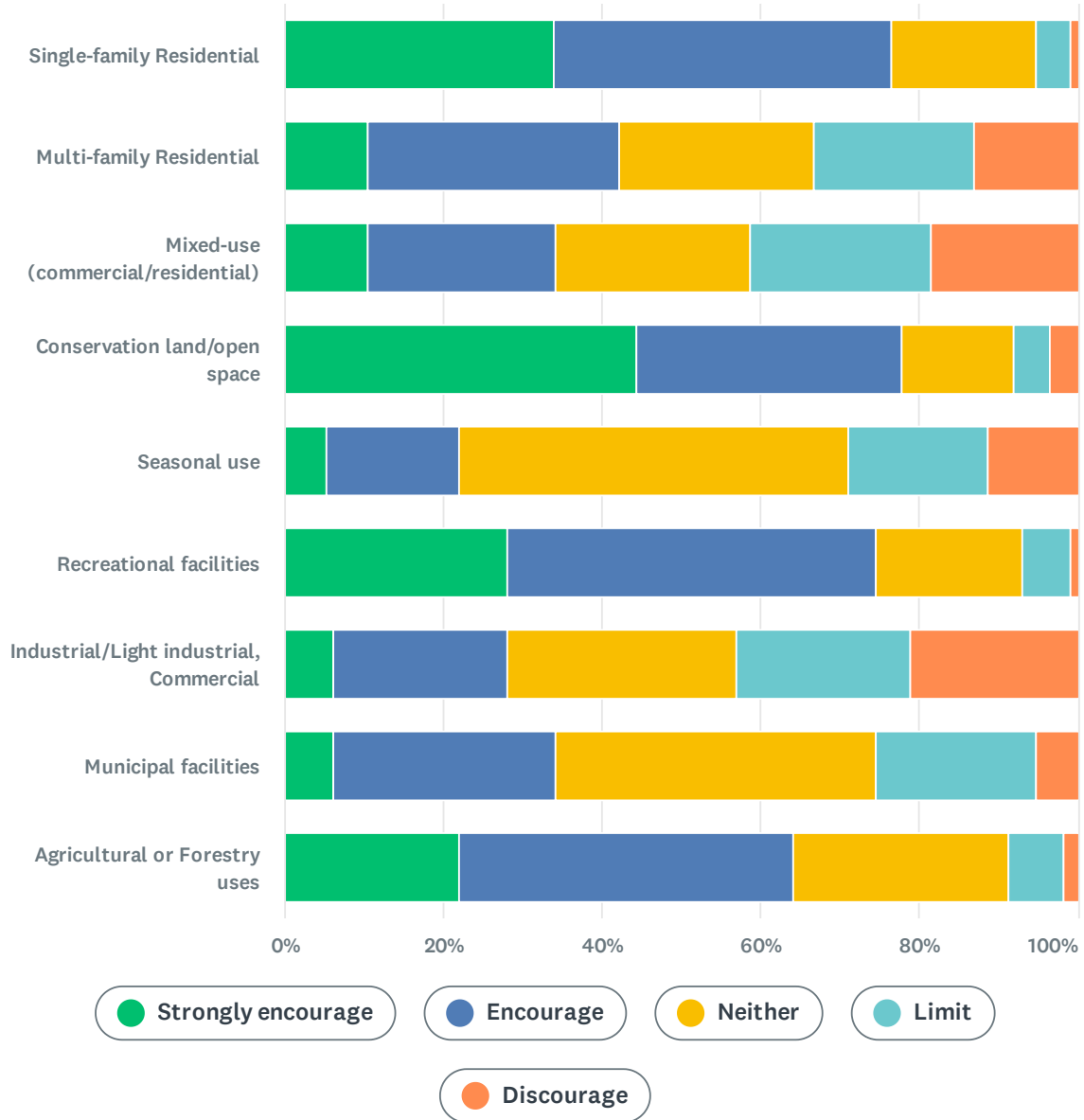
Answered: 114 Skipped: 3



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Kept the same	54.39%	62
● Made smaller to encourage more density	14.04%	16
● Made larger to encourage less density	19.30%	22
● No opinion	12.28%	14
Total		114






Q10 Should the following land use types be encouraged, limited, or discouraged?

Answered: 117 Skipped: 0








	Strongly encourage	Encourage	Neither	Limit	Discourage	Total
						1026

Manchester Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

	 Strongly encourage	 Encourage	 Neither	 Limit	 Discourage	Total
Single-family Residential	33.91% 39	42.61% 49	18.26% 21	4.35% 5	0.87% 1	115
Multi-family Residential	10.53% 12	31.58% 36	24.56% 28	20.18% 23	13.16% 15	114
Mixed-use (commercial/residential)	10.53% 12	23.68% 27	24.56% 28	22.81% 26	18.42% 21	114
Conservation land/open space	44.25% 50	33.63% 38	14.16% 16	4.42% 5	3.54% 4	113
Seasonal use	5.26% 6	16.67% 19	49.12% 56	17.54% 20	11.40% 13	114
Recreational facilities	28.07% 32	46.49% 53	18.42% 21	6.14% 7	0.88% 1	114
Industrial/Light industrial, Commercial	6.14% 7	21.93% 25	28.95% 33	21.93% 25	21.05% 24	114
Municipal facilities	6.14% 7	28.07% 32	40.35% 46	20.18% 23	5.26% 6	114

1026

Manchester Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

	 Strongly encourage	 Encourage	 Neither	 Limit	 Discourage	Total
Agricultural or Forestry uses	21.93%	42.11%	27.19%	7.02%	1.75%	
	25	48	31	8	2	114
						1026

Q11 What types of businesses would you like to see in town?

Answered: 67 Skipped: 50

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	I favor the mix now. If what we need isn't here, Augusta is close by. I'm sad the new Dr. office is closing. Wellness/general practitioner would be good.	12/8/2025 2:09 PM
2	Groceries	11/13/2025 3:23 PM
3	Service , Manufacturing and Construction	11/2/2025 1:02 PM
4	A sit-down cafe A grocery	10/29/2025 10:06 AM
5	restaurants, bakery, coffee shop, but NO CHAINS! no more dollar stores!! NO more car dealerships!!	10/29/2025 9:59 AM
6	Supermarket, restaurant, gym/fitness center, auto parts	10/24/2025 2:19 PM
7	Clothing store, mardens,	10/23/2025 4:13 PM
8	Bakery cafe	10/20/2025 7:38 PM
9	Family style breakfast restaurant.	10/15/2025 11:08 AM
10	None. No more canabis	10/13/2025 6:11 PM
11	None- what we have is sufficient	10/9/2025 11:37 AM
12	Cafe/Bakery, Farmers Market	10/6/2025 7:13 AM
13	No more discount stores. No more weed shops. The town lacks a focus or common, it is drive through. The biggest single gathering space is Fielders. That overflows into public space. The trash cans are full of thier debris. While it's nice to see people gathering it was happenstance. The town could consider some seed projects that could try to build on community gathering. Be willing to let unsuccessful projects end but see what works. I realize this response does not really fit the question asked, but unsure where to put thoughts in this forum. I'm not a drinker, but it seems that the brewery's and eateries draw a lot of attraction. Perhaps a bakery or farmer's market? It seems like we have plenty of storage units.	10/3/2025 8:45 AM
14	Service oriented business, low impact manufacturing, locally owned retail in commercial district	9/30/2025 8:30 AM
15	Na	9/28/2025 11:39 AM
16	Quality retail, commercial, and professional.	9/25/2025 3:40 PM
17	Restaurant, cafe and bakery	9/21/2025 5:20 PM
18	Good place to eat sit down comfort food	9/19/2025 11:14 AM
19	Restaurants or fast food, stores like dollar general	9/18/2025 7:47 PM
20	Community Meeting Center. Dine in restaurant.	9/17/2025 11:22 AM
21	more use of the lake - watersports - Maine guides for fishing - more use of the new trails - mountain biking, hiking, snow shoeing, outdoors shops.	9/16/2025 10:59 AM
22	Grocery store	9/14/2025 9:47 AM
23	N/a	9/13/2025 4:26 PM
24	Hardware store, cafes, maybe a restaurant/pub	9/12/2025 9:44 AM
25	Cafe, community spaces, places to work	9/11/2025 7:35 PM
26	Any retail	9/11/2025 3:39 PM

Manchester Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

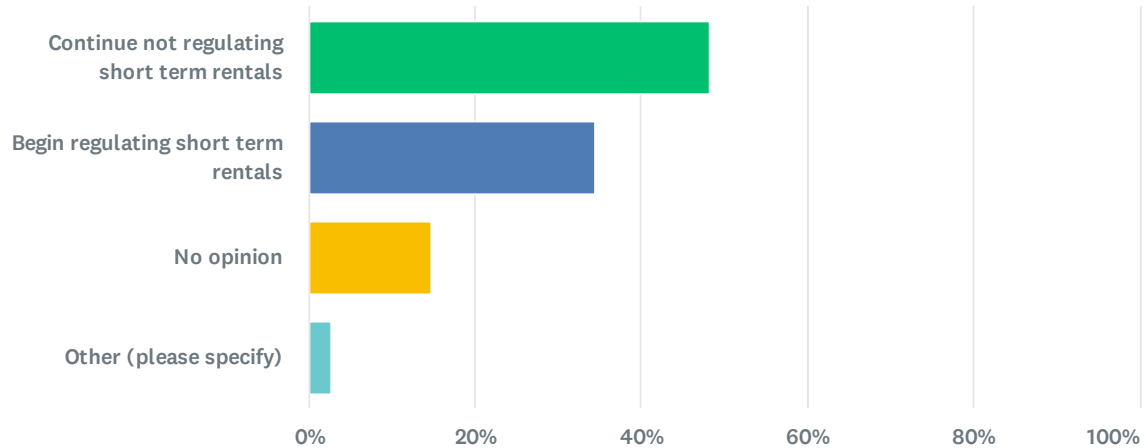
27	LIBRARY	9/10/2025 5:30 PM
28	Not sure	9/10/2025 8:20 AM
29	Laundry facilities, real grocery store	9/9/2025 7:37 PM
30	Any that don't sell Cannabis	9/9/2025 10:51 AM
31	Businesses that encourage community ie sports facilities, locally owned shops	9/8/2025 7:08 PM
32	Day care, restaurant	9/8/2025 6:45 PM
33	Augusta already has everything. Do we need anything closer?	9/8/2025 6:02 PM
34	Something own by someone other than Nouria.	9/8/2025 6:01 PM
35	More Restaurants	9/8/2025 5:53 PM
36	Library Grocery Store	9/8/2025 5:33 PM
37	Restaurants, small markets	9/8/2025 4:56 PM
38	Retail, food	9/8/2025 4:29 PM
39	We have a good selection as is	9/8/2025 3:47 PM
40	A community space and cafe.	9/8/2025 3:35 PM
41	A good restaurant.	9/8/2025 3:33 PM
42	Small businesses	9/8/2025 3:01 PM
43	Decent place to sit down and have breakfast. Professional offices.	9/3/2025 4:35 PM
44	mom and pop	9/3/2025 9:59 AM
45	Small restaurants/coffee shops - not chains - that serve breakfast. Bakery. Gift shops.	8/29/2025 5:06 PM
46	Restaurant, gym.	8/29/2025 7:25 AM
47	Recreation/stuff to do other than Castle Town. Gas stations not owned by the same people as the other gas stations. Restaurants/brew pubs.	8/22/2025 6:04 PM
48	Commercial	8/21/2025 2:38 PM
49	Businesses that enhance the local aesthetic... And there should be a code to restrict signage... Dollar General, fireworks are really an eyesore. As are all the marijuana shops with the exception of highbrow. I love the vegetable vendor on route 202 and it would be nice at the town could start a farmers market in their own parking lot.	8/19/2025 10:55 AM
50	Light industrial and medical. Do not need more gas stations or marijuana stores or grow facilities.	8/18/2025 10:55 AM
51	Cafe, not alcohol related. Bakery. Breakfast restaurant.	8/14/2025 6:41 PM
52	Restaurants	8/14/2025 12:31 PM
53	a Library!	8/8/2025 11:02 AM
54	small, medium charming independent shops, like Portland and Hallowell.	8/6/2025 11:52 AM
55	Fewer Cannabis stores. Fewer (and smaller) gas stations, fewer stop malls. I'd like to see a nice bakery/coffee shop, a few new restaurants/country stores. The tremendous amount of impermeable blacktop in town is a water quality concern for the cobbossee watershed.	8/6/2025 10:52 AM
56	Small family run businesses that are not smoke shops, Marijuana dispensaries.	8/4/2025 11:02 AM
57	More for families and to encourage more young families in the area.	8/3/2025 8:49 PM
58	Cafe or Restaurant	8/3/2025 12:49 PM
59	Cafe	8/3/2025 12:45 PM
60	Restaurants, bakery, businesses, commercial (Whole Foods - grocery store)	8/2/2025 9:24 PM

Manchester Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

61	None we	8/1/2025 8:31 PM
62	Restaurants	8/1/2025 5:05 PM
63	Gym, Restaurants, Hardware Store, Small Grocery Store.	8/1/2025 3:50 PM
64	Gym	8/1/2025 1:05 PM
65	Local business that benefit the community. We have enough weed shops in and near Manchester	8/1/2025 12:19 PM
66	Eco friendly. Small family owned.	7/30/2025 11:24 AM
67	Bike shop, hardware store, coffee shop, bakery	7/25/2025 11:11 AM

Q12 Currently, Manchester does not regulate short term rentals (Airbnbs). Should Manchester:

Answered: 116 Skipped: 1



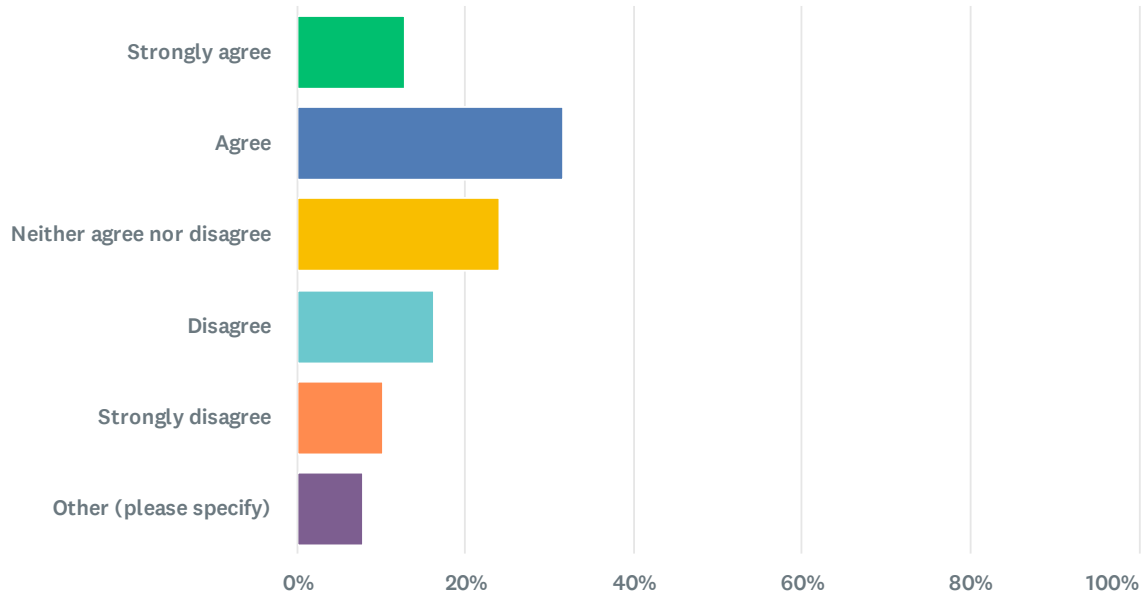
Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Continue not regulating short term rentals	48.28%	56
● Begin regulating short term rentals	34.48%	40
● No opinion	14.66%	17
● Other (please specify) Show responses	2.59%	3
Total		116

Manchester Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	I have not been hearing anything negative about them in town.	12/8/2025 2:09 PM
2	Strongly believe the town must regulate short term rentals	10/29/2025 10:06 AM
3	I dont know the scope of the issue. How many are in town now? What is the demand? What is the trend? There should be some oversight with Airbnbs and communication with those neighborhoods/abutters to gauge how their experience. Does that money flow into the community? Do visitors provide a net economic benefit to the town?	10/3/2025 8:45 AM

Q13 Should the town encourage new businesses and/or industrial development?

Answered: 117 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Strongly agree	12.82%	15
● Agree	31.62%	37
● Neither agree nor disagree	23.93%	28
● Disagree	16.24%	19
● Strongly disagree	10.26%	12
● Other (please specify) Show responses	7.69%	9
Total		120

Manchester Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	I'm glad we voted down the lithium battery storage facility planned for Puddledock Rd. We should welcome good businesses. I think that cannabis stores #s will naturally diminish on their own due to free enterprise.	12/8/2025 2:09 PM
2	yes to new businesses, NO to industrial development	10/29/2025 9:59 AM
3	New businesses yes industrial depends of what they mfg	9/18/2025 7:47 PM
4	Depends on business	9/16/2025 2:27 PM
5	This is a badly worded question. Encourage small business. Discourage industrial development.	8/29/2025 5:06 PM
6	Only if they add two and not detract from the community.	8/19/2025 10:55 AM
7	depends on the specifics. Find the pot stores and fireworks and RV sales depressing. Need more charm and a sense of place.	8/6/2025 11:52 AM
8	Must be of the right kind.	8/4/2025 11:02 AM
9	More business, not so much industrial	8/1/2025 3:50 PM

Q14 What types of commercial/industrial development would you like to see in town?

Answered: 49 Skipped: 68

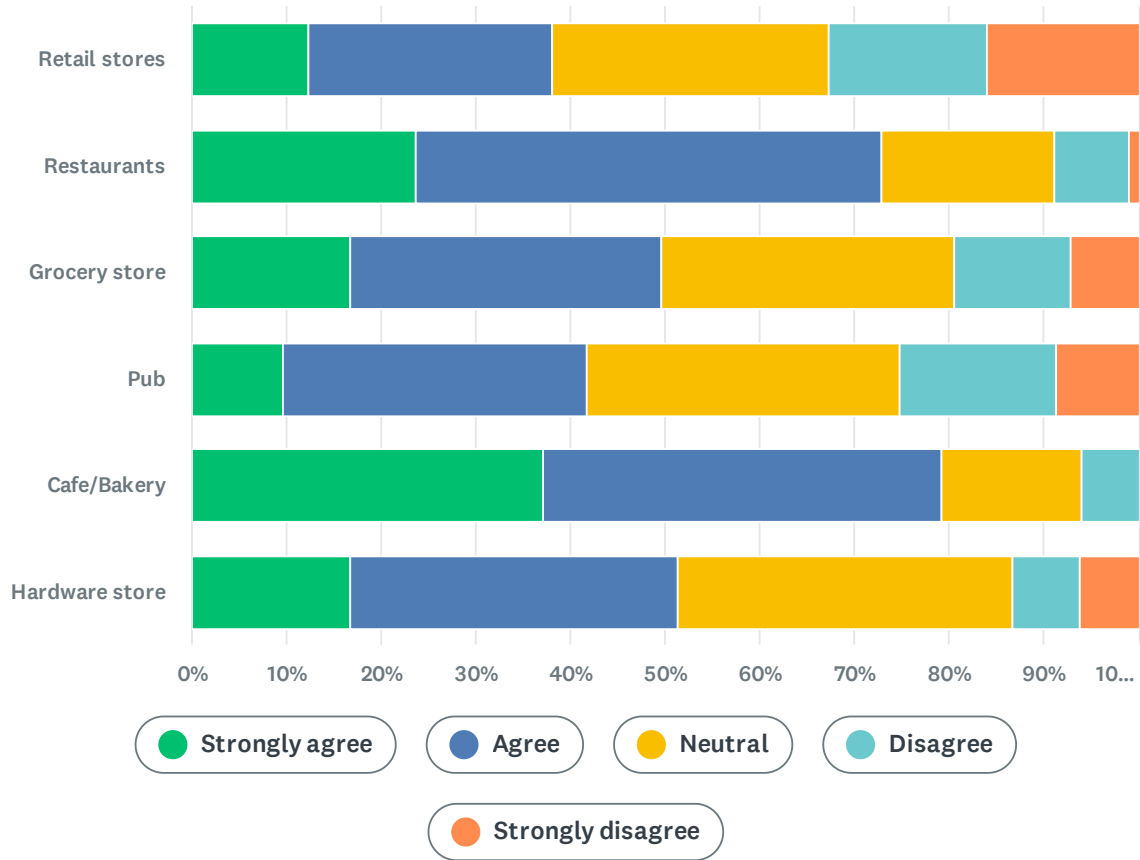
#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	None	11/13/2025 3:23 PM
2	Low pollution good wages for employees	11/2/2025 1:02 PM
3	Environmentally friendly	10/30/2025 12:37 PM
4	none	10/29/2025 10:06 AM
5	shops, restuarants, NO CHAINS	10/29/2025 9:59 AM
6	As noted above - supermarket, restaurant, gym/fitness center. Appropriate/limited commercial/industrial that doesn't impact residential areas or pollute to increases tax base.	10/24/2025 2:19 PM
7	Gym facility with outdoor quarter mile track.	10/15/2025 11:08 AM
8	None especially no more TIFs.	10/13/2025 6:11 PM
9	None- keep the town beautiful and residential	10/9/2025 11:37 AM
10	Industrial development sounds like a lot of potential for negative environmental impact. Does the town even have the footprint for that type of activity? Can a ratio of space taken up to long-term good paying jobs be considered?	10/3/2025 8:45 AM
11	See 11. Concentrate in general dev district	9/30/2025 8:30 AM
12	Na	9/28/2025 11:39 AM
13	Must be clean and consistent with character of town.	9/25/2025 3:40 PM
14	None need bike paths pond rd is death trap on bike or walking	9/19/2025 11:14 AM
15	Not sure, nothing noisy or smelly	9/18/2025 7:47 PM
16	Environmentally safe and clean	9/18/2025 5:21 PM
17	Small dine in restaurant.	9/17/2025 11:22 AM
18	oudoors adventure/sales including boating + watersports lessons, hiking/mt biking, canoe/kayak rentals	9/16/2025 10:59 AM
19	N/a	9/13/2025 4:26 PM
20	None	9/12/2025 9:44 AM
21	Cafes and community spaces	9/11/2025 7:35 PM
22	Grocery store	9/10/2025 8:20 AM
23	Let the market dictate.	9/9/2025 8:28 PM
24	Not industrial	9/9/2025 7:51 PM
25	Any that would bring in more revenue.	9/9/2025 5:13 PM
26	Any that are not to do with Cannabis	9/9/2025 10:51 AM
27	Small locally owned shopping	9/8/2025 7:08 PM
28	Only along western ave	9/8/2025 6:45 PM
29	There are countless commercial opportunities minutes away in Augusta. Keep Manchester rural and beautiful. More small community businesses like "Manchester Meats" and less dollar	9/8/2025 4:56 PM

Manchester Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

	stores and self-storage.	
30	Any	9/8/2025 4:29 PM
31	None	9/8/2025 3:47 PM
32	Less storage places more investment in community and sustainable energy for our communities	9/8/2025 3:35 PM
33	Small businesses	9/8/2025 3:01 PM
34	Sewer and water line along East shore of Cobbossee Lake.	9/3/2025 4:35 PM
35	none	9/3/2025 9:59 AM
36	Retail shops, but not marijuana! Small grocery store.	8/29/2025 5:06 PM
37	Service industries e.g. healthcare, legal, accounting ...	8/29/2025 7:25 AM
38	Build up, not out. There needs to be a better traffic system for Scott's, like a turn lane.	8/22/2025 6:04 PM
39	None	8/14/2025 12:29 PM
40	charm is definitely needed. Figure out a way to make Manchester more of a destination. Country store, more locally owned restaurants etc.....	8/6/2025 11:52 AM
41	A nice country store with quality and healthy food.	8/6/2025 10:52 AM
42	Small businesses, family owned, service oriented. Reataurants and food choices!	8/4/2025 11:02 AM
43	Affordable restaurant	8/3/2025 8:49 PM
44	None	8/3/2025 12:49 PM
45	None	8/3/2025 12:45 PM
46	See #11	8/2/2025 9:24 PM
47	None	8/1/2025 5:05 PM
48	None, dont turn the town into Augusta	8/1/2025 3:50 PM
49	Eco friendly and preferably small family owned businesses.	7/30/2025 11:24 AM

Q15 What is your opinion regarding the need for the following in town:






Answered: 116 Skipped: 1



	● Strongly agree	● Agree	● Neutral	● Disagree	● Strongly disagree	Total
Retail stores	12.39% 14	25.66% 29	29.20% 33	16.81% 19	15.93% 18	113
Restaurants	23.68% 27	49.12% 56	18.42% 21	7.89% 9	0.88% 1	114
Grocery store	16.81% 19	32.74% 37	30.97% 35	12.39% 14	7.08% 8	113

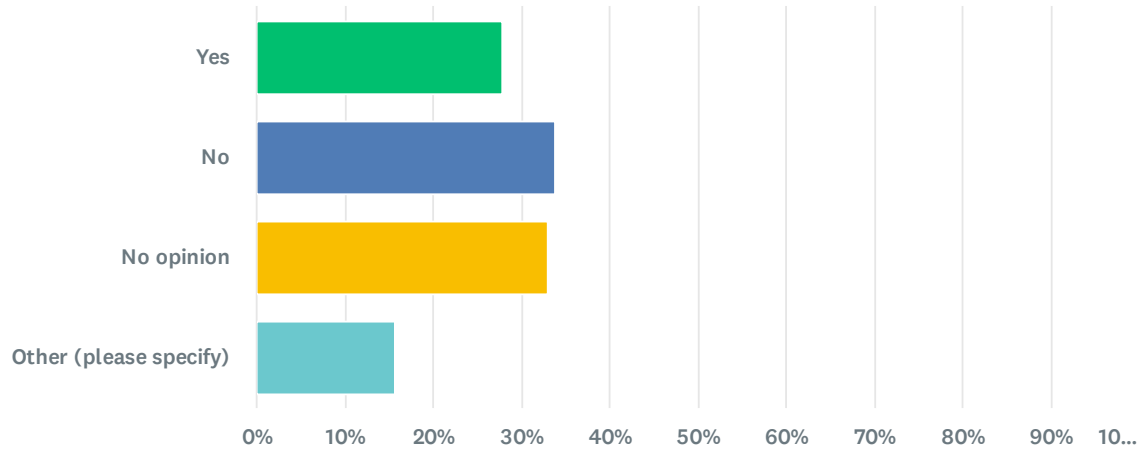
684

Manchester Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

	 Strongly agree	 Agree	 Neutral	 Disagree	 Strongly disagree	Total
Pub	9.57% 11	32.17% 37	33.04% 38	16.52% 19	8.70% 10	115
Cafe/Bakery	37.07% 43	42.24% 49	14.66% 17	6.03% 7	0% 0	116
Hardware store	16.81% 19	34.51% 39	35.40% 40	7.08% 8	6.19% 7	113
						684

Q16 Do you feel that recent development aligns with the character of town?

Answered: 115 Skipped: 2



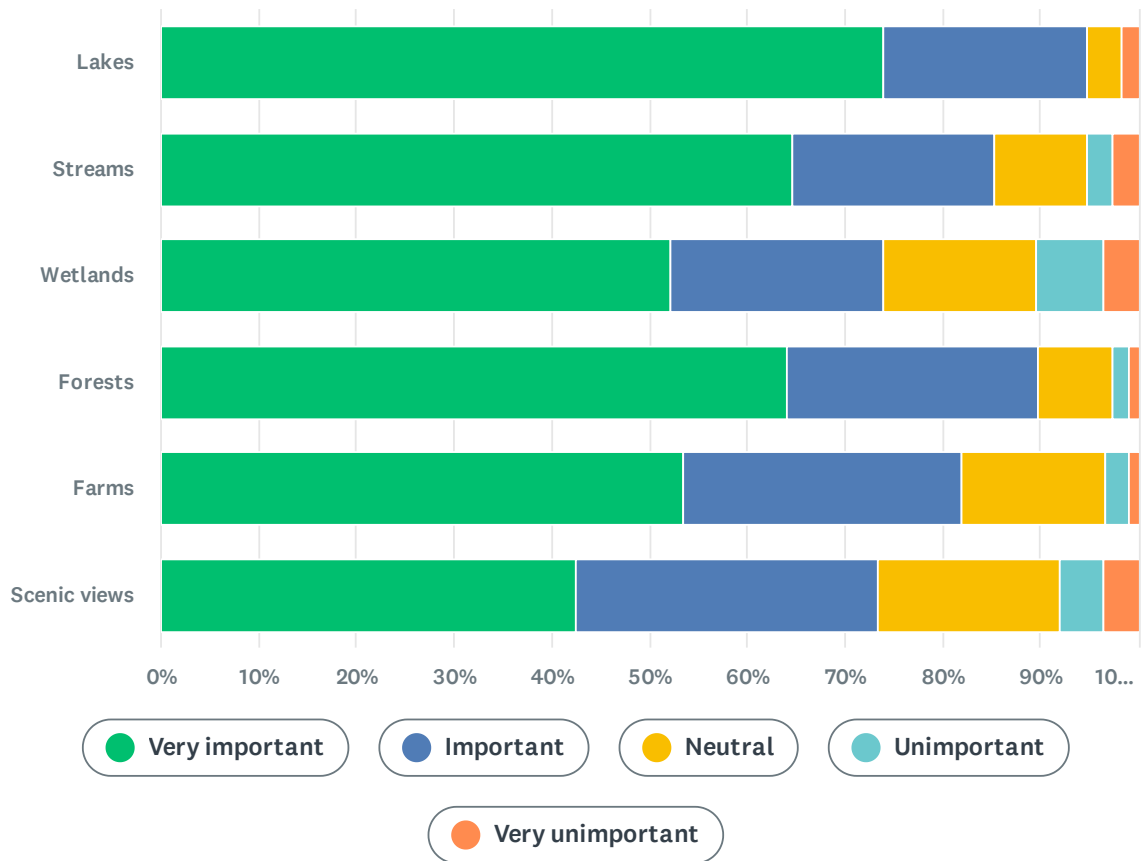
Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Yes	27.83%	32
● No	33.91%	39
● No opinion	33.04%	38
● Other (please specify) Show responses	15.65%	18
Total		127

Manchester Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Too many marijuana	10/30/2025 12:37 PM
2	no more marijuana shops	10/29/2025 10:06 AM
3	I'd love to see a cute little downtown area with shops and restaurants, mixed in with some residential rentals	10/29/2025 9:59 AM
4	Some does, some doesn't	10/20/2025 7:38 PM
5	Dislike large storage units and dollar store.	10/6/2025 7:13 AM
6	The town character (along 17/202) seems to have shifted over the last couple decades. We went from little activity to whatever type of business that wanted to throw up a shingle. I'm not sure Manchester knows what it's character is to align to a theme.	10/3/2025 8:45 AM
7	Too many marijuana outlets	9/25/2025 3:40 PM
8	The State Farm building does not align with the town. We expected a bakery or local store.	9/13/2025 5:45 PM
9	Way too restrictive	9/9/2025 10:51 AM
10	Too many Marijuana stores	9/9/2025 9:26 AM
11	Solar fields should not be here	9/8/2025 7:08 PM
12	Taxes have risen very quickly. Stop whatever youre encouraging that is causing my taxes to rise so rapidly.	9/8/2025 7:00 PM
13	What character? The town is just a road.	9/8/2025 4:29 PM
14	It's pretty good	8/19/2025 10:55 AM
15	Mostly, pedestrian accessibility needs to increase as well	8/11/2025 7:24 AM
16	what character are convenience/gas stations?	8/8/2025 11:02 AM
17	please be more thoughtful in town planing. Shopping center at beginning of Pond Road at 202 could be so much more beautiful. Be careful about chains. We crave charm and cafes and country stores and a small grocery store. More trees and shady spots to hang out as far off the noise of 202 as possible.	8/6/2025 11:52 AM
18	Development is of exactly the wrong kind.	8/4/2025 11:02 AM

Q17 How important are each of these natural resources to you?






Answered: 117 Skipped: 0



	● Very important	● Important	● Neutral	● Unimportant	● Very unimportant	Total
Lakes	73.91% 85	20.87% 24	3.48% 4	0% 0	1.74% 2	115
Streams	64.66% 75	20.69% 24	9.48% 11	2.59% 3	2.59% 3	116
Wetlands	52.17% 60	21.74% 25	15.65% 18	6.96% 8	3.48% 4	115

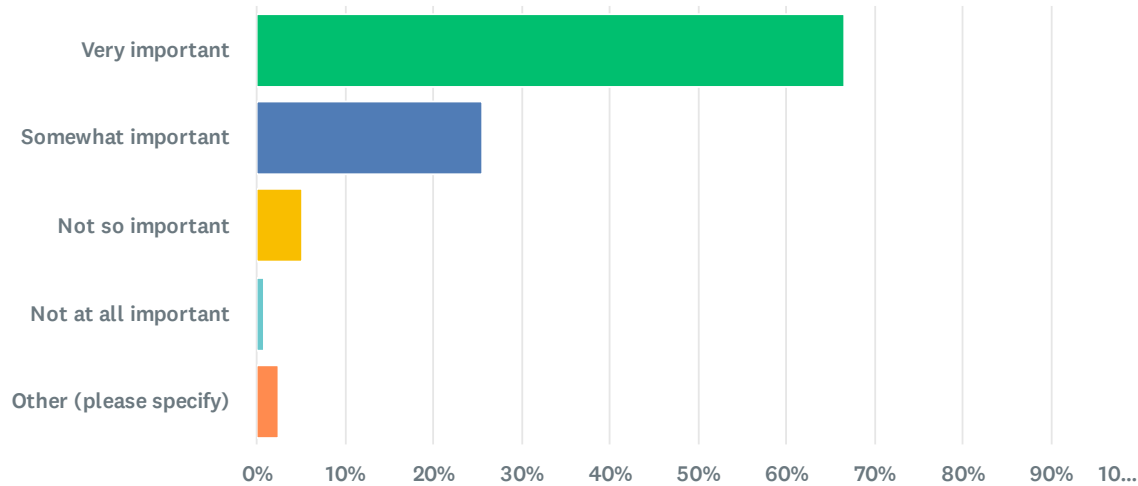
692

Manchester Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

	 Very important	 Important	 Neutral	 Unimportant	 Very unimportant	Total
Forests	64.10% 75	25.64% 30	7.69% 9	1.71% 2	0.85% 1	117
Farms	53.45% 62	28.45% 33	14.66% 17	2.59% 3	0.86% 1	116
Scenic views	42.48% 48	30.97% 35	18.58% 21	4.42% 5	3.54% 4	113
						692

Q18 How important do you feel it is to protect and promote farms and farmland?

Answered: 117 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Very important	66.67%	78
● Somewhat important	25.64%	30
● Not so important	5.13%	6
● Not at all important	0.85%	1
● Other (please specify) Show responses	2.56%	3
Total		118

Manchester Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	We own [REDACTED] acres in Manchester. It's been a continuous struggle for my wife and I to determine what the "highest and best use" of this land is. We are ardent supporters of those natural resources on question 17, but realize it affects the tax rate of other types of landowners in town. What does "protect and promote" in the question mean? Does that mean development is throttled by regulation and the landowners then have to fend for themselves to have the land be productive? If that is the answer, then I dont see long-term overall success for that ideal.	10/3/2025 8:45 AM
2	neutral for manchester, I think it is important in some places but perhaps we lean more into the natural resources like bodies of water that we have.	9/16/2025 10:59 AM
3	Do nothing so my taxes dont go off a cliff.	9/8/2025 7:00 PM

Q19 How important are each of these open space categories to you?





Answered: 117 Skipped: 0



	Very important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Very unimportant	Total
Active recreation (ball fields, sports programs, tennis)	45.30%	29.91%	18.80%	3.42%	2.56%	117
	53	35	22	4	3	

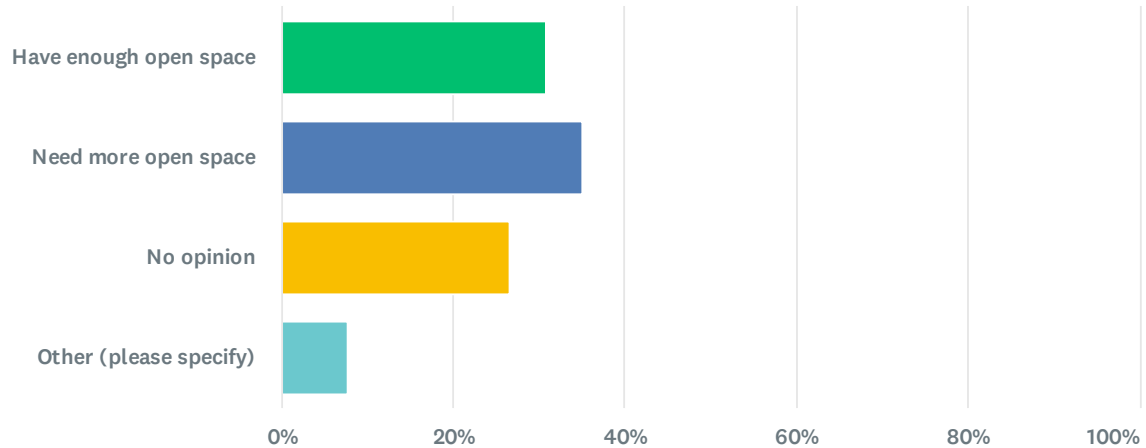
924

Manchester Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

	 Very important	 Important	 Neutral	 Unimportant	 Very unimportant	Total
Passive recreation (walking, hiking, biking, nature preserves)	67.24% 78	24.14% 28	6.90% 8	0% 0	1.72% 2	116
Wildlife habitat protection	54.31% 63	26.72% 31	15.52% 18	0.86% 1	2.59% 3	116
Stream/wetlands/waterbody protection	63.79% 74	24.14% 28	6.90% 8	1.72% 2	3.45% 4	116
Protection of town appearance and character	43.59% 51	39.32% 46	9.40% 11	3.42% 4	4.27% 5	117
Protection of large parcels of land	33.62% 39	37.07% 43	23.28% 27	3.45% 4	2.59% 3	116

Q20 Considering the open space categories above in the previous question, does Manchester:

Answered: 117 Skipped: 0



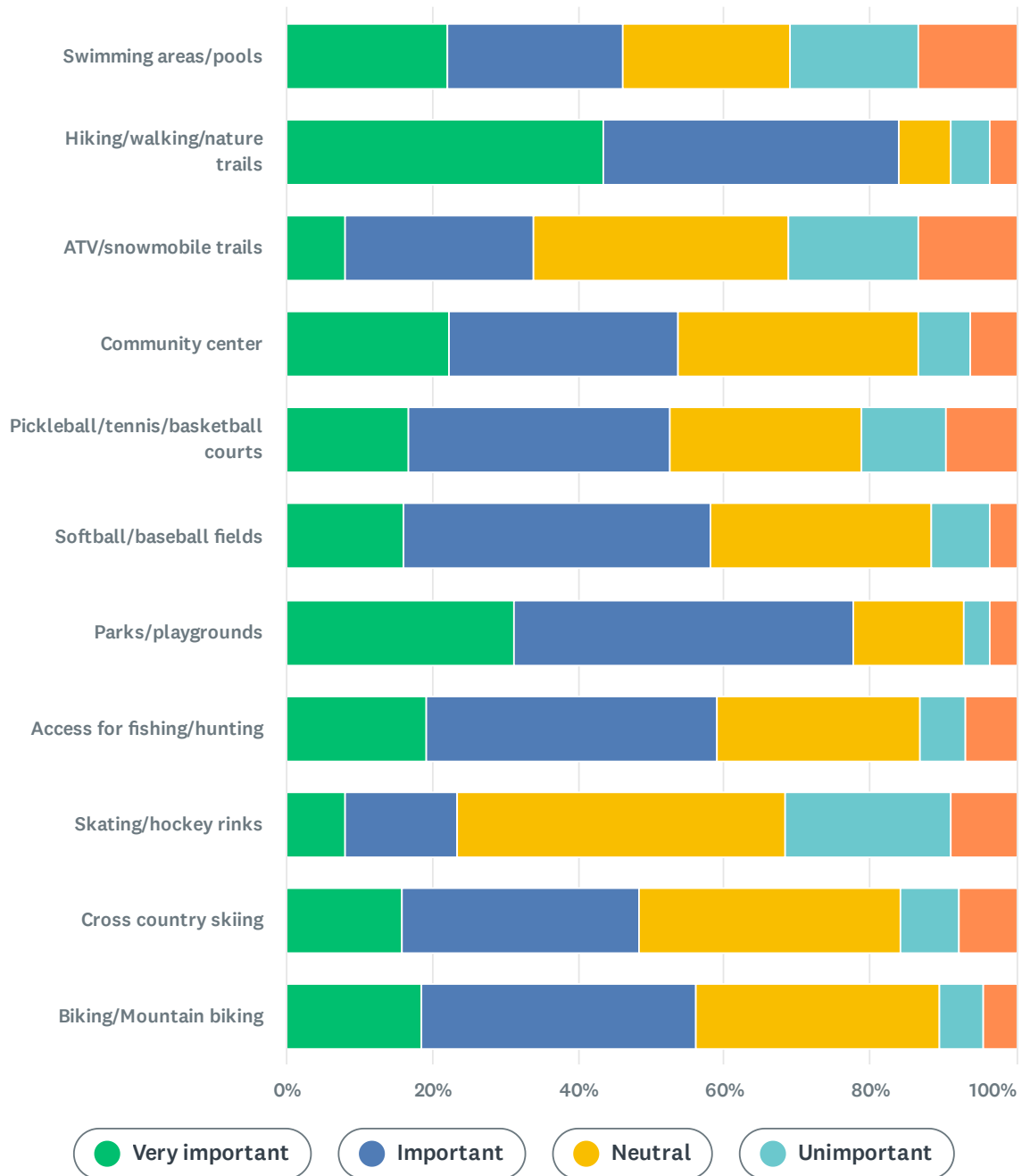
Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Have enough open space	30.77%	36
● Need more open space	35.04%	41
● No opinion	26.50%	31
● Other (please specify) Show responses	7.69%	9
Total		117

Manchester Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	What is in place to keep current open space open and influence large property owners to keep them open?	11/2/2025 1:02 PM
2	Not enough public lake access and sidewalks along 17	10/24/2025 2:19 PM
3	It would be nice to have a public beach.	10/23/2025 4:13 PM
4	The open spaces seem underutilized and access not reconciled. The quarry trails system is so much fun and I see a fair amount of people using them. However, they are not maintained on the Manchester end and are for "all use" so the 4-wheelers rut them up, the topiary crowds in and Access from Patch road is frustrating. I live on [REDACTED] road. Maintenance of the road is on us, but expected to keep open for others to use. There is no parking. What's the town's plan? You certainly haven't let us know what your intent is, but seem to be promoting it and want it to be more popular.	10/3/2025 8:45 AM
5	More specific protection of high value natural areas	9/30/2025 8:30 AM
6	Don't know how much we do have	9/16/2025 2:27 PM
7	Need more public access to open space	9/11/2025 7:35 PM
8	no more solar farms taking up land that could be developed	9/3/2025 9:59 AM
9	The kayak access for Collins Road has been fenced off. We are [REDACTED] from that area and would like to see local people be able to use it. But not from other towns. I have no answer on how to do that.	8/19/2025 10:55 AM






Q21 Public facilities include schools, roads, parks, municipal buildings, and other municipally owned or maintained structures. These facilities and the services they provide are paid for, in part, through taxes that citizens pay. The following questions are designed to allow the town to determine what level of facility improvements or future acquisitions would be supported. Please indicate how important each of the following recreation categories are to you.

Answered: 115 Skipped: 2








Manchester Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

 Very unimportant

	 Very important	 Important	 Neutral	 Unimportant	 Very unimportant	Total
Swimming areas/pools	22.12% 25	23.89% 27	23.01% 26	17.70% 20	13.27% 15	113
Hiking/walking/nature trails	43.36% 49	40.71% 46	7.08% 8	5.31% 6	3.54% 4	113
ATV/snowmobile trails	8.04% 9	25.89% 29	34.82% 39	17.86% 20	13.39% 15	112
Community center	22.32% 25	31.25% 35	33.04% 37	7.14% 8	6.25% 7	112
Pickleball/tennis/basketball courts	16.67% 19	35.96% 41	26.32% 30	11.40% 13	9.65% 11	114
Softball/baseball fields	16.07% 18	41.96% 47	30.36% 34	8.04% 9	3.57% 4	112
Parks/playgrounds	31.25% 35	46.43% 52	15.18% 17	3.57% 4	3.57% 4	112

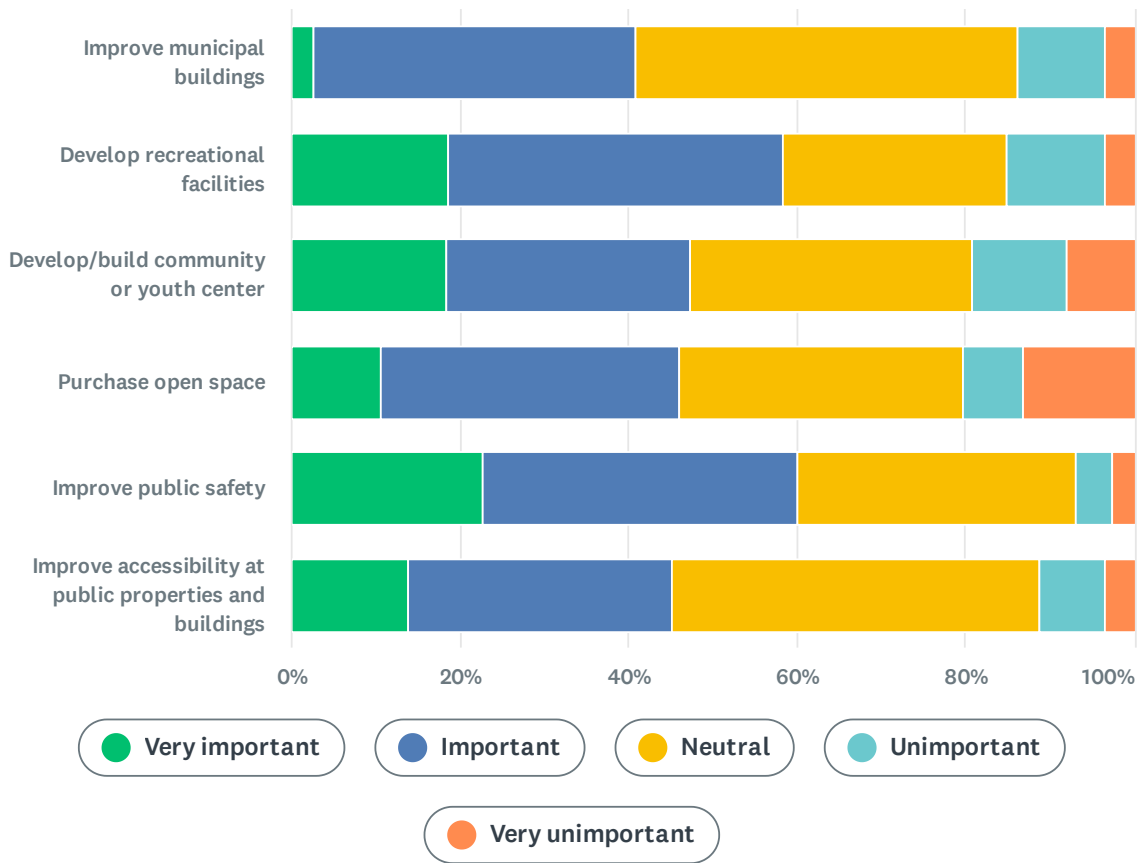
1242

Manchester Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

	 Very important	 Important	 Neutral	 Unimportant	 Very unimportant	Total
Access for fishing/hunting	19.13% 22	40.00% 46	27.83% 32	6.09% 7	6.96% 8	115
Skating/hockey rinks	8.11% 9	15.32% 17	45.05% 50	22.52% 25	9.01% 10	111
Cross country skiing	15.79% 18	32.46% 37	35.96% 41	7.89% 9	7.89% 9	114
Biking/Mountain biking	18.42% 21	37.72% 43	33.33% 38	6.14% 7	4.39% 5	114
						1242






Q22 How important are each of the following categories to you?

Answered: 115 Skipped: 2



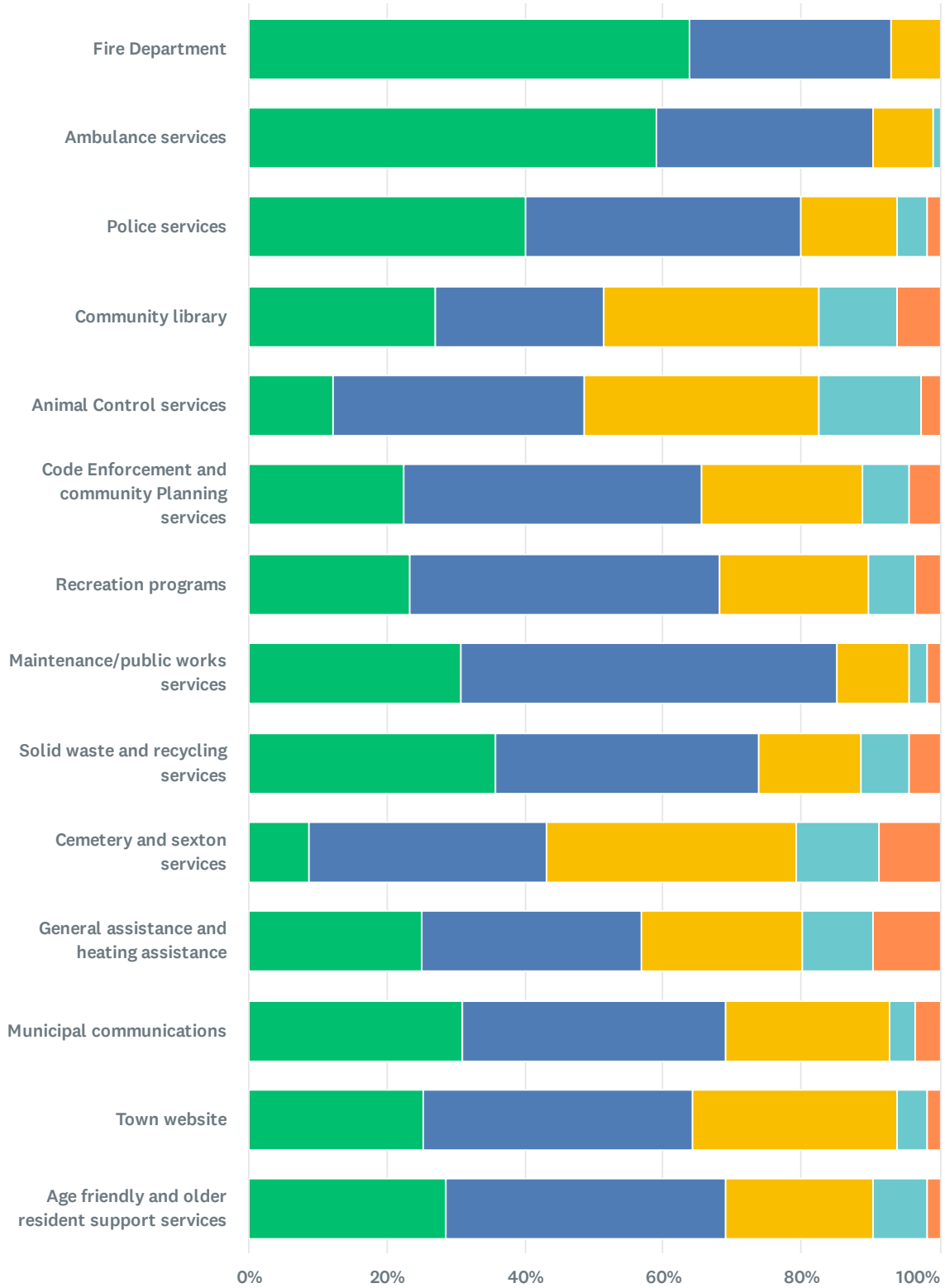
	Very important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Very unimportant	Total
Improve municipal buildings	2.61% 3	38.26% 44	45.22% 52	10.43% 12	3.48% 4	115

Manchester Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

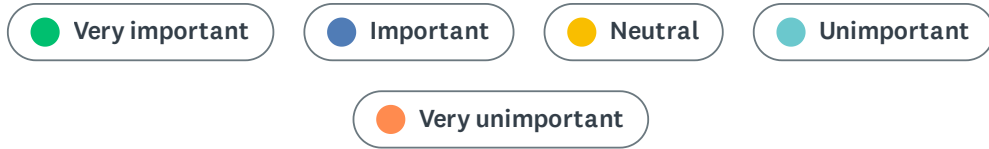
	 Very important	 Important	 Neutral	 Unimportant	 Very unimportant	Total
Develop recreational facilities	18.58% 21	39.82% 45	26.55% 30	11.50% 13	3.54% 4	113
Develop/build community or youth center	18.42% 21	28.95% 33	33.33% 38	11.40% 13	7.89% 9	114
Purchase open space	10.62% 12	35.40% 40	33.63% 38	7.08% 8	13.27% 15	113
Improve public safety	22.61% 26	37.39% 43	33.04% 38	4.35% 5	2.61% 3	115

Q23 How important are each of the following public service categories to you?

Answered: 116 Skipped: 1



Manchester Comprehensive Plan Community Survey



	● Very important	● Important	● Neutral	● Unimportant	● Very unimportant	Total
Fire Department	63.79%	29.31%	6.90%	0%	0%	116
	74	34	8	0	0	
Ambulance services	59.13%	31.30%	8.70%	0.87%	0%	115
	68	36	10	1	0	
Police services	40.00%	40.00%	13.91%	4.35%	1.74%	115
	46	46	16	5	2	
Community library	26.96%	24.35%	31.30%	11.30%	6.09%	115
	31	28	36	13	7	
Animal Control services	12.17%	36.52%	33.91%	14.78%	2.61%	115
	14	42	39	17	3	
Code Enforcement and community Planning services	22.41%	43.10%	23.28%	6.90%	4.31%	116
	26	50	27	8	5	
Recreation programs	23.28%	44.83%	21.55%	6.90%	3.45%	116
	27	52	25	8	4	

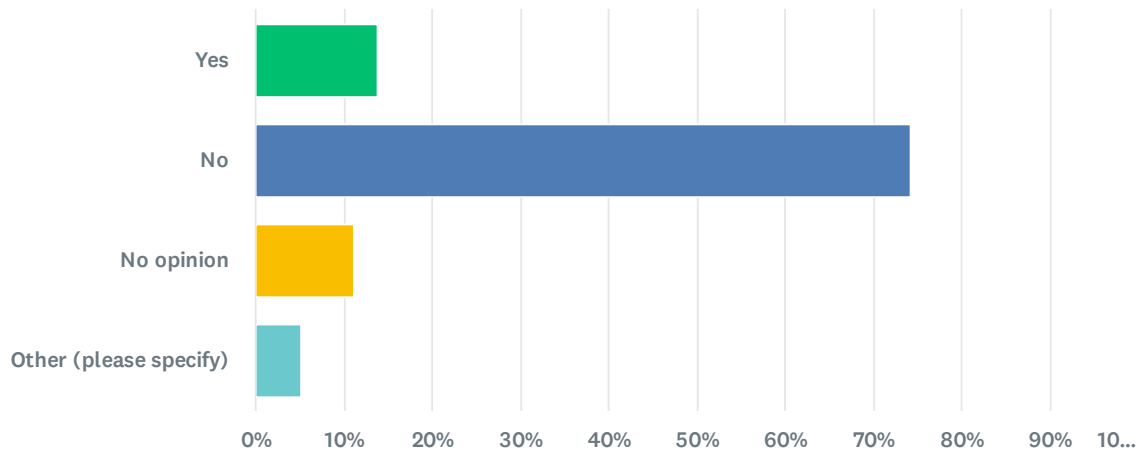
1613

Manchester Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

	 Very important	 Important	 Neutral	 Unimportant	 Very unimportant	Total
Maintenance/public works services	30.70% 35	54.39% 62	10.53% 12	2.63% 3	1.75% 2	114
Solid waste and recycling services	35.65% 41	38.26% 44	14.78% 17	6.96% 8	4.35% 5	115
Cemetery and sexton services	8.62% 10	34.48% 40	36.21% 42	12.07% 14	8.62% 10	116
General assistance and heating assistance	25.00% 29	31.90% 37	23.28% 27	10.34% 12	9.48% 11	116
Municipal communications	30.97% 35	38.05% 43	23.89% 27	3.54% 4	3.54% 4	113
Town website	25.22% 29	39.13% 45	29.57% 34	4.35% 5	1.74% 2	115
Age friendly and older resident support services	28.45% 33	40.52% 47	21.55% 25	7.76% 9	1.72% 2	116
						1613

Q24 Currently, the town’s police services are provided by the County Sheriff Department and the State Police. Do you think there is a need for additional police services in town (while bearing in mind this would increase taxes)?

Answered: 116 Skipped: 1



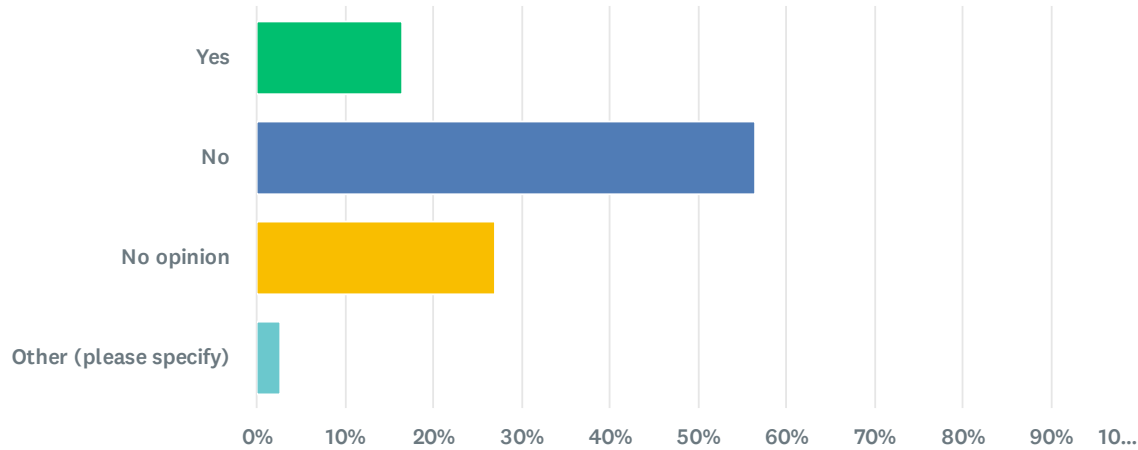
Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Yes	13.79%	16
● No	74.14%	86
● No opinion	11.21%	13
● Other (please specify) Show responses	5.17%	6
Total		121

Manchester Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Seldom see our current police service	12/8/2025 1:54 PM
2	Seldom see our current police service	9/24/2025 1:17 PM
3	I think there needs to be more monitoring of speed.	9/17/2025 11:22 AM
4	Not at this time	9/8/2025 6:02 PM
5	Need to slow down traffic coming into town from all directions. Can to with electronic devices. We already pay for police services. They need to be more visible when we have them. Give out a few speeding tickets and traffic will slow down.	8/29/2025 5:06 PM
6	I've not been unhappy with the services. So for me, it doesn't need to happen, other people may have had experiences that form a different opinion.	8/19/2025 10:55 AM

Q25 Do you think there is a need for additional Emergency Medical Services (EMS)?

Answered: 115 Skipped: 2



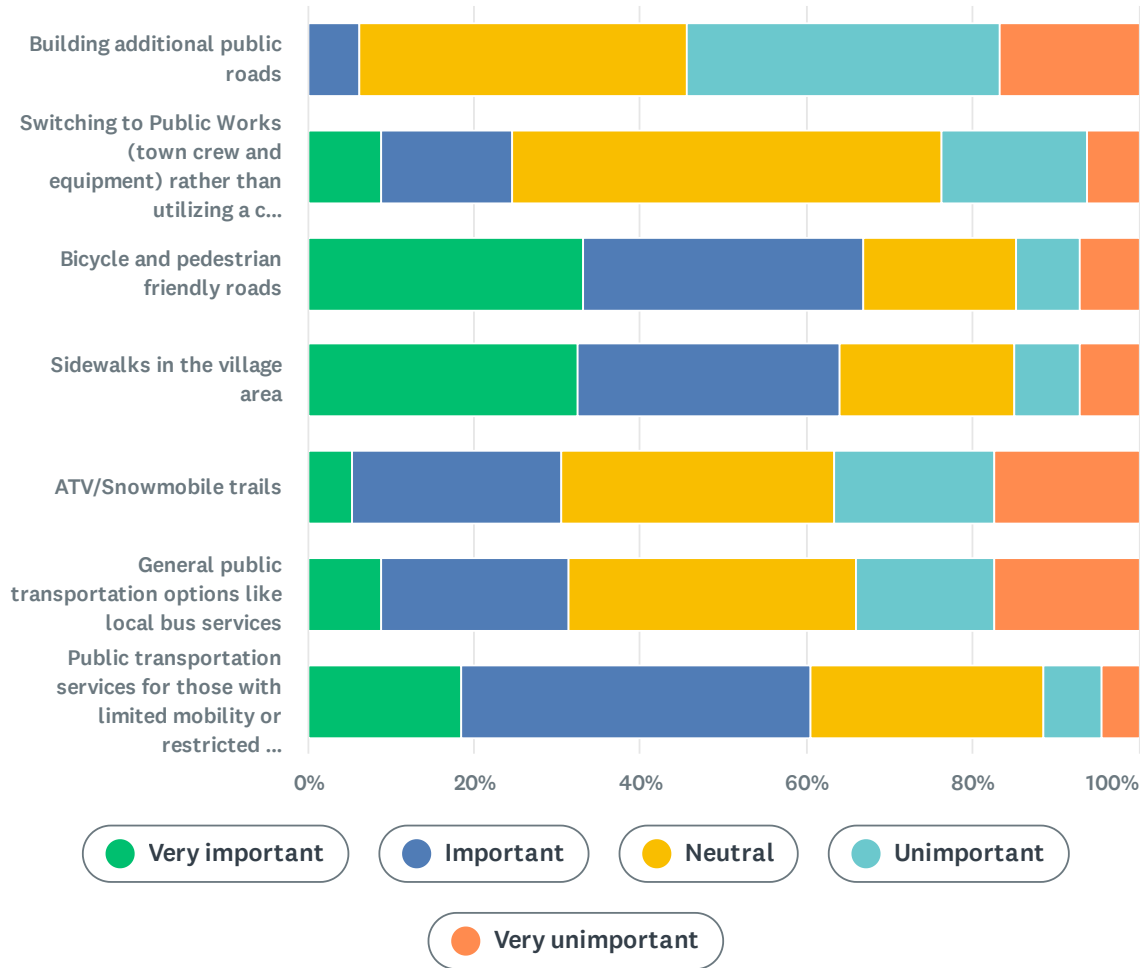
Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Yes	16.52%	19
● No	56.52%	65
● No opinion	26.96%	31
● Other (please specify) Show responses	2.61%	3
Total		118

Manchester Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	This is a big concern	10/29/2025 10:06 AM
2	Not aware of what the current EMS services	8/3/2025 12:49 PM
3	Not aware of current services	8/3/2025 12:45 PM

Q26 How important are each of the following areas to the future of transportation in town?






Answered: 115 Skipped: 2



	Very important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Very unimportant	Total
Building additional public roads	0%	6.14%	39.47%	37.72%	16.67%	114
	0	7	45	43	19	

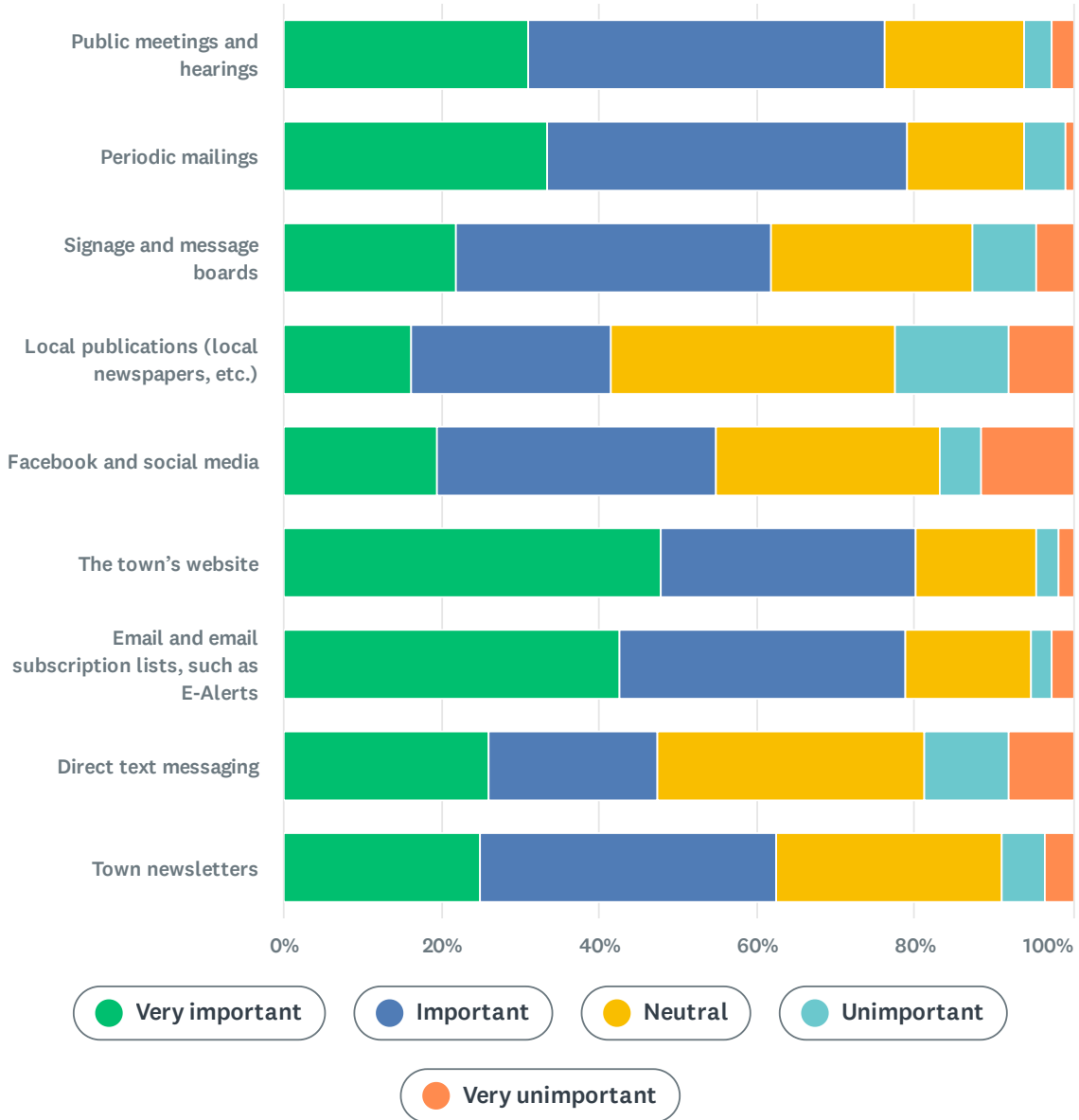
801

Manchester Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

	 Very important	 Important	 Neutral	 Unimportant	 Very unimportant	Total
Switching to Public Works (town crew and equipment) rather than utilizing a contractor	8.77% 10	15.79% 18	51.75% 59	17.54% 20	6.14% 7	114
Bicycle and pedestrian friendly roads	33.04% 38	33.91% 39	18.26% 21	7.83% 9	6.96% 8	115
Sidewalks in the village area	32.46% 37	31.58% 36	21.05% 24	7.89% 9	7.02% 8	114
ATV/Snowmobile trails	5.22% 6	25.22% 29	33.04% 38	19.13% 22	17.39% 20	115






Q27 Rate how would you like to be kept informed about happenings in the town?

Answered: 114 Skipped: 3



	Very important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Very unimportant	Total
						1009

Manchester Comprehensive Plan Community Survey

	 Very important	 Important	 Neutral	 Unimportant	 Very unimportant	Total
Public meetings and hearings	30.97% 35	45.13% 51	17.70% 20	3.54% 4	2.65% 3	113
Periodic mailings	33.33% 38	45.61% 52	14.91% 17	5.26% 6	0.88% 1	114
Signage and message boards	21.82% 24	40.00% 44	25.45% 28	8.18% 9	4.55% 5	110
Local publications (local newspapers, etc.)	16.22% 18	25.23% 28	36.04% 40	14.41% 16	8.11% 9	111
Facebook and social media	19.47% 22	35.40% 40	28.32% 32	5.31% 6	11.50% 13	113
The town's website	47.75% 53	32.43% 36	15.32% 17	2.70% 3	1.80% 2	111
Email and email subscription lists, such as E-Alerts	42.48% 48	36.28% 41	15.93% 18	2.65% 3	2.65% 3	113
Direct text messaging	25.89% 29	21.43% 24	33.93% 38	10.71% 12	8.04% 9	112
Town newsletters	25.00% 28	37.50% 42	28.57% 32	5.36% 6	3.57% 4	112
						1009

Q28 What do you like best about the town?

Answered: 81 Skipped: 36

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Community, forest, scenery, low density compared to Augusta.	1/12/2026 10:21 PM
2	Small community with large services right next door. Natural beauty. The lakes and orchard.	12/8/2025 2:09 PM
3	Rural character	11/21/2025 2:27 PM
4	Rural, small town character	11/13/2025 3:23 PM
5	It's home and has been since 1986!	11/2/2025 1:02 PM
6	Friendly and safe!	10/30/2025 12:37 PM
7	It's small	10/29/2025 10:06 AM
8	rural feel with proximity to services in Augusta, Hallowell	10/29/2025 9:59 AM
9	Rural but relatively easy access to highway, stores, restaurants.	10/24/2025 2:19 PM
10	It's close to Augusta shopping	10/23/2025 4:13 PM
11	Scenic rural areas	10/20/2025 7:38 PM
12	CEO and town office employees	10/18/2025 3:22 PM
13	Rural nature, lake and golf course.	10/15/2025 11:08 AM
14	Limited retail, open spaces and good school	10/13/2025 6:11 PM
15	Small town community feel, scenic views and farms, tennis courts and parks	10/9/2025 11:37 AM
16	People, small town feel, family oriented, nice properties / green space and lake.	10/6/2025 7:13 AM
17	The people are wonderful. I like that we seem to preserve the ability to recognize and appreciate each other in a world that seems more divided. I like that we look out for each other. The schools system is why we bought the home we have now. We have long roots in the town and area.	10/3/2025 8:45 AM
18	Easy to get involved, outdoor recreation, quiet	9/30/2025 8:30 AM
19	Peace	9/28/2025 11:39 AM
20	The people, the setting (mix of lake, forest, ag, and residential), and central location.	9/25/2025 3:40 PM
21	I love the small community.	9/21/2025 5:20 PM
22	Manchester is still a small friendly town, keeping it that way is important, we do not need to become a big city	9/18/2025 7:47 PM
23	Community living. Lots of families have lived here their whole lives and continue to have their younger generations to continue residing in Manchester.	9/17/2025 11:22 AM
24	My neighbors. My children enjoyed getting a good education in the school system. The lakes and hiking nearby.	9/16/2025 2:27 PM
25	safe	9/16/2025 10:59 AM
26	It is small, with a lot of space, natural lakes, streams, trails, local businesses, playground and fields.	9/13/2025 5:45 PM
27	The quiet rural environment, yet close to town and amenities	9/12/2025 9:44 AM
28	Elementary school, playground, trails	9/11/2025 7:35 PM

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29	We have a nice array of businesses on 202	9/11/2025 3:39 PM
30	School	9/10/2025 5:30 PM
31	The simplicity of it	9/10/2025 8:20 AM
32	small community. tree lined streets	9/9/2025 7:37 PM
33	beautiful landscape	9/9/2025 6:27 PM
34	The lake.	9/9/2025 5:13 PM
35	Location	9/9/2025 10:51 AM
36	The people, school system, lake,	9/9/2025 9:26 AM
37	The small community, not a city feel	9/8/2025 7:08 PM
38	Friendliness. Beauty. Community. Safe town. I moved into this community and I enjoy it very much.	9/8/2025 7:00 PM
39	Small town but still close to ementies	9/8/2025 6:54 PM
40	Residential neighborhoods	9/8/2025 6:45 PM
41	Close to eveything	9/8/2025 6:02 PM
42	Rural feeling next to city	9/8/2025 6:01 PM
43	Small town government	9/8/2025 5:53 PM
44	Quaint and safe place to live. With proximity to work.	9/8/2025 5:33 PM
45	Quiet lifestyle, beautiful farmland and conservation spaces.	9/8/2025 4:56 PM
46	I love the community. Also, MES.	9/8/2025 4:29 PM
47	All around nice a place to live	9/8/2025 3:47 PM
48	We have met so many wonderful friends here since our children have started school. It feels like a safe community where families look out for one another.	9/8/2025 3:35 PM
49	The setting that we live in.	9/8/2025 3:33 PM
50	The small town feel and abundant nature areas	9/8/2025 3:01 PM
51	Community feel The golf course Elementary school Fire Department in town	9/8/2025 12:53 PM
52	Open space. Farm and forest. They know who I am	9/8/2025 12:22 PM
53	Rural character. Lake and golf course.	9/3/2025 4:35 PM
54	That it continues to have a small town vibe. Must keep crime at a minimum.	9/3/2025 9:59 AM
55	Having close proximity to resources while being able to live in a beautiful rural setting	9/2/2025 12:24 PM
56	Small town feel-slower pace, safe, peaceful.	8/29/2025 5:06 PM
57	Friendly people, great history	8/29/2025 7:25 AM
58	Easy to get to other places. Quiet (mostly).	8/22/2025 6:04 PM
59	Close to Augusta and highway	8/21/2025 2:38 PM
60	Friendly; nice neighbors; townhouse staff is always helpful and positive;	8/19/2025 10:55 AM
61	Small-town atmosphere, acceptable services and close proximity to Augusta and recreation.	8/18/2025 10:55 AM
62	I like how close it is to Augusta. I love my neighborhood.	8/14/2025 6:41 PM
63	Small community	8/14/2025 12:29 PM
64	Small	8/11/2025 8:25 AM
65	The community	8/11/2025 7:24 AM

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66	neighbors	8/8/2025 11:02 AM
67	The lake, the independent shops (ex. Lighthouse, white duck, Manchester Meats) and kindness of souls at Town Hall.	8/6/2025 11:52 AM
68	The lake!	8/6/2025 10:52 AM
69	Small community; proximity to Augusta	8/5/2025 9:25 PM
70	Cobbosssee lake	8/4/2025 11:02 AM
71	The community	8/3/2025 8:49 PM
72	Small town with nice people, adequate services, and proximity to the State Capitol, and retail and healthcare services.	8/3/2025 12:49 PM
73	Small town. Nice people. Not too overgrown.	8/3/2025 12:45 PM
74	Community	8/2/2025 9:24 PM
75	Small and quiet	8/1/2025 8:31 PM
76	Small Community	8/1/2025 3:50 PM
77	Its quiet and safe	8/1/2025 1:05 PM
78	Small town community	8/1/2025 12:19 PM
79	Amazing place to call home!	8/1/2025 9:50 AM
80	Small rural like setting, efficient and congenial town officials, people's government.	7/30/2025 11:24 AM
81	Great place to live. Convenient to services. We'll run.	7/25/2025 11:11 AM

Q29 What do you like least about the town?

Answered: 80 Skipped: 37

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	201 runs right through it. Many don't know their neighbors. Lack of physicians and public transportation.	12/8/2025 2:09 PM
2	Failure of the town to communicate effectively	11/21/2025 2:27 PM
3	Water quality, Need more community connections/outreach	11/13/2025 3:23 PM
4	I would not say anything in specific.. The town crap that goes on in the background..	11/2/2025 1:02 PM
5	Rough conditions of roads at times	10/30/2025 12:37 PM
6	The traffic signal and intersection at Mulligans is a hot mess	10/29/2025 10:06 AM
7	no cute down towny area to stroll about and run into friends, grab a coffee, catch a yoga class. Cars drive too fast, its a throughway for commuters	10/29/2025 9:59 AM
8	Roads need to have maintained sidewalks for residents to get out and walk, bike, exercise (especially from Town Hall up 17 to about Lakeside Orchard).	10/24/2025 2:19 PM
9	With all the lakes around us and no public swimming areas or picnic areas.	10/23/2025 4:13 PM
10	Route 202 traffic	10/20/2025 7:38 PM
11	Difficulty getting on Western Ave with traffic	10/18/2025 3:22 PM
12	Unaffordable Real Estste taxes. Roads that are unsafe to walk or bike on.	10/15/2025 11:08 AM
13	Hotels, retail, storage facilities	10/13/2025 6:11 PM
14	Too much recent development- too soon	10/9/2025 11:37 AM
15	Cannabis shops, no bike lanes/limited sidewalks.	10/6/2025 7:13 AM
16	Development seems to swing from extremes, from being very restrictive to whatever comes along and seems like a good idea at the time. It seems to lack a long-term vision. The roads seem to have more than doubled in traffic pre-covid versus post. Traffic speed seems unregulated on secondary roads. I used to walk my kids on [REDACTED] (in a stoller), now I'm afraid to take my bike on them. We've gone through so many CEOs in the last 10 years, and they seem to just defer any opinion up the chain.	10/3/2025 8:45 AM
17	People entrenched in their ways and fearful of losing out on chance to profit or keep what they have.	9/30/2025 8:30 AM
18	Busy bodies	9/28/2025 11:39 AM
19	Declining appearance. Too many marijuana shops. Not enough quality businesses (retail and commercial) in the business district. Gas, pot, and pizza does not make for a quality business community, nor does it instill a sense of community.	9/25/2025 3:40 PM
20	We need a local beach for residents. The fee at the Country Club is way too much. The town should pay a fee so residents can use the beach.	9/21/2025 5:20 PM
21	Poor safety to ride bikes or walk on pond rd. No info about local activities Huge tax bill climbing no benefits for taxpayers	9/19/2025 11:14 AM
22	Lack of realizing that some people like to walk, walking around town is limited due to no sidewalks and lack of clearing them off in the winter, even the cross walks	9/18/2025 7:47 PM
23	Traveling to Augusta and living on [REDACTED] (or [REDACTED] rd) not a safe way to exit the above roads due to traffic and speed of vehicles on Rt 202. There is a high volume of traffic and speeds are scary.	9/17/2025 11:22 AM

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24	There is no really noticeable center of town...No library and not many community activities such as pickleball, xc ski trails, outdoor ice skating rink, information about hikes, coffee Cafe meet ups, holiday pot luck dinners.	9/16/2025 2:27 PM
25	distance to 202	9/16/2025 10:59 AM
26	No trash pickup	9/12/2025 9:44 AM
27	Lack of public access beach, no library, no dump/transfer station	9/11/2025 7:35 PM
28	I think it's a shame to live in a town that has lake Cobbossee and no where for the kids to swim.	9/11/2025 3:39 PM
29	No library	9/10/2025 5:30 PM
30	:) no negatives come to mind	9/10/2025 9:25 AM
31	People trying to make it a bigger town!	9/10/2025 8:20 AM
32	no real library, no early morning breakfast sit down restaurants	9/9/2025 7:37 PM
33	taxes too high	9/9/2025 6:27 PM
34	Lack of public area on lake and culture of unwillingness to change...lack of flexibility.	9/9/2025 5:13 PM
35	Restrictive commercial development	9/9/2025 10:51 AM
36	Cost to live here and the unfair burden put on lake front owners	9/9/2025 9:26 AM
37	Need more sidewalks...speeding issue on western ave	9/8/2025 7:08 PM
38	The rate of tax increases. Lower the school budget.	9/8/2025 7:00 PM
39	No residential beach access	9/8/2025 6:54 PM
40	No public lake access. Lack of response to street light requests	9/8/2025 6:45 PM
41	Too much vehicle traffic on 202.	9/8/2025 6:02 PM
42	Traffic on 202	9/8/2025 6:01 PM
43	Few restaurants	9/8/2025 5:53 PM
44	No Library	9/8/2025 5:33 PM
45	Characterless sprawl on 202. Too many self-storage and marijuana businesses.	9/8/2025 4:56 PM
46	It is too dangerous to walk pretty much anywhere.	9/8/2025 4:29 PM
47	Sky high school budget and accompanying property taxes	9/8/2025 3:47 PM
48	Not enough going on in town to build community through local businesses	9/8/2025 3:35 PM
49	High property taxes for almost no services. We live on a private street, no sewer, no water and have never used the schools but pay more than \$8,000 per year.	9/8/2025 3:33 PM
50	Lack of sidewalks or walking buffers on roads	9/8/2025 3:01 PM
51	TAXES	9/8/2025 1:10 PM
52	Arsenic in most private wells. Roads that are unsafe to walk, run, or ride bikes. No quarter mile track to run walk on. Real Estate taxes are too high.	9/3/2025 4:35 PM
53	lack of law enforcement	9/3/2025 9:59 AM
54	Traffic and high number of accidents in town center. Better patrolling of streets during late hours.	9/2/2025 12:24 PM
55	Very poor communication!!! If you want input and attendance at selectmen's meetings, town events, fundraisers, etc. people need to know what the issues are. If you're not going to have a town newsletter, which we have asked for for years, or an email list that works, then you're not going to get valuable feedback or volunteers.	8/29/2025 5:06 PM
56	Solar panels and limited use of what was supposed to be a community room at the fire station.	8/29/2025 7:25 AM

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57	Beginning to feel like a "drive-through" town: Most attractions are in Winthrop or Augusta. Difficult to safely access a "nightlife" so to speak—you can't get out without driving yourself home	8/22/2025 6:04 PM
58	No public access to lake	8/21/2025 2:38 PM
59	I live on [REDACTED] Road and recently when the road was paved, our driveway entrance never got finished. Also, when I've reported trees, I did not get an adequate reply. Yet when a man down the street reported the same tree it was taken down right away. I feel like the ditch in front of our house did not receive adequate attention and I would like to see that addressed.	8/19/2025 10:55 AM
60	Drive thru town. No progress in improving the village feel through reasonable development requirements/ordinances - have not followed previous town comprehensive plans with respect to lighting, signage. Most NH towns do a good job of requiring [new] businesses to maintain a village look - municipal buildings included.	8/18/2025 10:55 AM
61	Route 202 is too busy	8/14/2025 6:41 PM
62	Does not do enough community activities at Xmas, July 4, Halloween, ect & does not allow fireworks when we have our own store in town.	8/14/2025 12:29 PM
63	Questionable past decisions that were illegal or visually corrupt	8/11/2025 8:25 AM
64	Commercial development in the village area without adequate pedestrian access. The inconsistencies and unprofessionalism of the fire department	8/11/2025 7:24 AM
65	lack of library and other community services	8/8/2025 11:02 AM
66	All the pot stores, the lack of a "heart" down town area feel. Can it be created????? Would LOVE!!!! A great quality general store would really help!!!!	8/6/2025 11:52 AM
67	Huge gaudy gas stations and omnipresent Cannabis shops.	8/6/2025 10:52 AM
68	Pot stores, limited food choices. 202 is unsightly and has poor shopping.	8/4/2025 11:02 AM
69	The lack of various things/business, etc around.	8/3/2025 8:49 PM
70	The number of gas stations, commercial operations, and marijuana businesses, and no community center in the village.	8/3/2025 12:49 PM
71	Two huge gas stations, lots of storage, a mini mall and no small town center.	8/3/2025 12:45 PM
72	Lack of economic development	8/2/2025 9:24 PM
73	Snowplowing contractor's	8/1/2025 8:31 PM
74	Taxes!!	8/1/2025 8:04 PM
75	I wish our business development were more strategic and keeping with our character. Wish the village are had sidewalks and a community feel instead of stores that just make it feel like a highway of strip malls.	8/1/2025 5:05 PM
76	Lack of Transparency from the select board, bad selection of select board members. Ie [REDACTED]. Wasteful spending/hiring process of the fire chief - dont need a full time chief. Wasted tax spending spend it on something useful like EMS rather than chief's salary and fuel consumption driving to and from richmond	8/1/2025 3:50 PM
77	Lack of town transparency	8/1/2025 1:05 PM
78	Lack of enforcement for town policies and ordinances	8/1/2025 12:19 PM
79	No central community.	7/30/2025 11:24 AM
80	Lack of community involvement.	7/25/2025 11:11 AM

Q30 What problems would you most like to see local government address?

Answered: 70 Skipped: 47

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	I think we're doing all we can at this point.	12/8/2025 2:09 PM
2	Not sure	11/21/2025 2:27 PM
3	Community outreach, connections and involvement	11/13/2025 3:23 PM
4	Cleaning up various properties that the owners neglect and reduce property values for their neighborhoods	11/2/2025 1:02 PM
5	Wish we had local recycling locations	10/30/2025 12:37 PM
6	My biggest concern is short term rentals. We live on [REDACTED]. We have 7 neighbors, one of which has become a short term rental. The new owners don't live in Manchester. They don't care about lake quality or party noise. They charge \$500/night in season. They don't contribute to road maintenance. Basically they flip us off. Now we lock our doors. The character of our road is completely changed. Short of a code violation there is nothing we can do.	10/29/2025 10:06 AM
7	no sidewalks, fast drivers	10/29/2025 9:59 AM
8	Sidewalks	10/24/2025 2:19 PM
9	Keeping taxes low	10/18/2025 3:22 PM
10	Policy change that would fund the schools without the use of property taxes.	10/15/2025 11:08 AM
11	Taxes, no transient hotels	10/13/2025 6:11 PM
12	Better maintenance of facilities Better communication with residents about potential development	10/9/2025 11:37 AM
13	Safer roads/shoulders to walk or bike on.	10/6/2025 7:13 AM
14	I think Manchester has so much potential. It seems to lack gathering space for young families. At the same time, how many young families are still around? As our population ages the three biggest concerns are: transportation, safe housing and isolation. Can moving towards a solution to these two issues support each other? People across generations supporting each other? The existential situation that faces Maine today.	10/3/2025 8:45 AM
15	Housing, enforcement of codes, zoning, traffic laws	9/30/2025 8:30 AM
16	Na	9/28/2025 11:39 AM
17	Local beach	9/21/2025 5:20 PM
18	Bike path Lower taxes	9/19/2025 11:14 AM
19	A library in town would be wonderful. Keeping all citizens informed when changes take place or if a potential apartment building may be built	9/18/2025 7:47 PM
20	No Community meeting center.	9/17/2025 11:22 AM
21	Making more of a center of town plus Public transportation hub for seniors and kids. More social gatherings and more activities for seniors and all as described above.	9/16/2025 2:27 PM
22	stagnation of population and affordable housing	9/16/2025 10:59 AM
23	Inform residents about methods and importance of removing invasive plants on their properties.	9/14/2025 10:53 AM
24	Decrease minimum lot size on the aquifer	9/12/2025 9:44 AM
25	Invest in community space, library and public beach	9/11/2025 7:35 PM

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26	Let's keep the taxes down	9/11/2025 3:39 PM
27	Vehicular speeding. Many at 20+ speeds.	9/10/2025 9:25 AM
28	no kings!!	9/9/2025 6:27 PM
29	A public beach.	9/9/2025 5:13 PM
30	Bring unreasonable about commercial development	9/9/2025 10:51 AM
31	Taxes	9/9/2025 9:26 AM
32	Keep recreation areas kept up	9/8/2025 7:08 PM
33	Lowering the taxes.	9/8/2025 7:00 PM
34	Speeding and traffic, 202 and puddledock intersection,	9/8/2025 6:54 PM
35	Don't promote transient community.	9/8/2025 6:45 PM
36	Reduce property tax increase	9/8/2025 5:53 PM
37	Have own library. Lower taxes by reducing spending I most areas.	9/8/2025 5:33 PM
38	Property taxes especially for seniors	9/8/2025 3:47 PM
39	Streetlight at puddledock road and 202. More crosswalks and sidewalks in town	9/8/2025 3:35 PM
40	TAXES	9/8/2025 1:10 PM
41	1. Continue paving roads. 2. Support development of retirement community - assisted living to skilled.	9/8/2025 12:53 PM
42	Lower Real Estate taxes for senior citizens who are over 65. Ie. Eliminate school portion of RE taxes for those over 65, or make RE taxes based on gross income of all residents who live or own property in Manchester.	9/3/2025 4:35 PM
43	the need for a full time fire chief. Multiple contractors contracts for the same duty, ie mowing. Put road work/plowing out to bid.	9/3/2025 9:59 AM
44	The traffic issues in front of Cabin Masters.	9/2/2025 12:24 PM
45	Lack of a sense of community. Look at what worked ten or twenty years ago and figure out what has changed. Need more town committees - recreation, beautification, etc.	8/29/2025 5:06 PM
46	Road maintenance.	8/29/2025 7:25 AM
47	Western Ave. is getting harder and harder to cross/turn onto. Development is too concentrated on Western Ave.	8/22/2025 6:04 PM
48	Affordable housing	8/21/2025 2:38 PM
49	I think it's great that you're doing the survey and if you apply the results for the majority, I don't know what else you could do.	8/19/2025 10:55 AM
50	School quality is essential to attracting and retaining families. Support of town recreation (rec/swimming) also needed to keep families that do not live on the lake.	8/18/2025 10:55 AM
51	The culvert and drainage issues in Gardencrest. The intersection by Puddledoc Road and 202 is getting untenable and is entirely too congested. I don't want to see urban crawl expand anymore on 202.	8/14/2025 6:41 PM
52	Less government employees	8/11/2025 8:25 AM
53	Adding EMS service, improving pedestrian safety in the village/downtown area, improve the intersection at puddlduck and western ave to decrease accidents. Improve the crosswalk on Rt. 17. Create a public works department and make more sidewalks. Create bike/hiking trails to connect the existing and new commercial uses. A public place to swim for the local community.	8/11/2025 7:24 AM
54	improve communication	8/8/2025 11:02 AM
55	lake of charm and sense of place. Too many box stores. Looking at you Dollar General. Need	8/6/2025 11:52 AM

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a plan for charming Manchester up. invest in a rethink of shopping center at end of pond road. Make planted medians in parking and create shaded seating areas. Bakery/ coffee/sandwich shop and small farmers market/ grocery needed. QUality important.

56	Invasive species, protecting land from development. Education about the importance of native species. Making Manchester walkable and bike friendly.	8/6/2025 10:52 AM
57	Safer access to Rt 202 from Prescott Rd and Puddledock Rd	8/5/2025 9:25 PM
58	Town has no personality or quaintness.	8/4/2025 11:02 AM
59	School playground, community center, town library.	8/3/2025 8:49 PM
60	Continue to financially support the protection and preservation of Lake Cobbossee (from invasive plants and other species) thereby preventing the loss of shoreline municipal property tax revenue.	8/3/2025 12:49 PM
61	Continue to support the health of Cobbossee supporting the efforts to fight aquatic invasives that if left unchecked could reduce lakefront property values by 18- 20 %. This would have a town wide effect.	8/3/2025 12:45 PM
62	Speeding	8/2/2025 9:24 PM
63	Snowplowing contractor	8/1/2025 8:31 PM
64	Like to see the town move towards its own public work and crew.Big savings.	8/1/2025 8:04 PM
65	Zoning and character. Our schools and facilities also need updating. We don't have any public lake/beach access	8/1/2025 5:05 PM
66	MORE TRANSPARENCY FROM THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT, MORE INVOLVEMENT OF CITIZENS	8/1/2025 3:50 PM
67	Make things that happen more public and officials more welcoming	8/1/2025 1:05 PM
68	Enforcement of town ordinances. No point in having them if Sherrifs office can't enforce and Manchester has no one who can as well	8/1/2025 12:19 PM
69	I dislike the traffic noice on 202 especially Jake braking and loud motorcycles. Biking on many roads is hazardous with limited road space for bikes. I'd like to see a better means of communicating info from the town office.	7/30/2025 11:24 AM
70	Environmental protection, climate change, more community spirit.	7/25/2025 11:11 AM

Q31 What might we choose to do today that will be appreciated by people who will live here 10 or more years from now?

Answered: 79 Skipped: 38

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Maintain school quality. Communicate better. I was sad that more did not attend the 250th. Seems few were paying attention. They didn't know about it. It was a busy day for many.	12/8/2025 2:09 PM
2	Start a library	11/21/2025 2:27 PM
3	Newsletter	11/13/2025 3:23 PM
4	Hmmm not sure	11/2/2025 1:02 PM
5	Recycling	10/30/2025 12:37 PM
6	Protect lake water quality. That's absolutely #1.	10/29/2025 10:06 AM
7	create more recreation space, walking paths, bike paths that connect to the KRRT, youth center.	10/29/2025 9:59 AM
8	Good sidewalks, access to town center by foot/bike	10/24/2025 2:19 PM
9	Keep the Taxes low.	10/23/2025 4:13 PM
10	Protecting rural character and important open space in rural district while encouraging affordable housing in growth districts.	10/20/2025 7:38 PM
11	Keep living affordable. Don't structure town for out of state/ retired people who have more time to fill out these surveys and go to town meetings.	10/18/2025 3:22 PM
12	Eliminate Real Estate taxes and fund schools and municipal and county services through income taxes or some other type of tax.	10/15/2025 11:08 AM
13	Preserve good relationships with land owners who allow access for all recreational purposes. What happened to finding access to the lake for Manchester residents?	10/13/2025 6:11 PM
14	Conserve our beautiful natural resources, scenic views, and parks. Limit multi unit housing and new commercial development.	10/9/2025 11:37 AM
15	Bike lanes, pedestrian paths.	10/6/2025 7:13 AM
16	Great question. I'm very interested in what you get for responses. With the rise of internet shopping it's hard to see retail being a focus. Folks are looking for experiences. Maine has a history and perception of "the way life should be". How can we develop a town that encourages folks to thrive together as a community and bring in visitors eager to experience a life close to nature and leave with great memories while supporting local businesses?	10/3/2025 8:45 AM
17	Increase housing while protecting high value natural areas	9/30/2025 8:30 AM
18	Plan for elderly housing	9/28/2025 11:39 AM
19	Buy land on Cobbossee for a town beach	9/26/2025 7:12 PM
20	Smartly develop business corridor (202 and village) and secure public access to diminishing open lands (forest, lake access, other recreational resources)	9/25/2025 3:40 PM
21	Bike safe path community activities Lower taxes for people whom live here year round	9/19/2025 11:14 AM
22	More walk ability, acting like you care about the elderly and families that reside in Manchester	9/18/2025 7:47 PM
23	Communication to all ages to include elderly who don't use electronic devices (EX: computers, cell phones)	9/17/2025 11:22 AM
24	Create more noticeable center of town or town park with walking paths. Right now its a	9/16/2025 2:27 PM

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commercialized drive through, take out food, gas station store center of town--nothing beautiful or peaceful. Preserve public open space so when housing units increase, keep preserving open space as important consideration.

25	lean into the strengths we have. add classes or try to pull in businesses that utilize the new nature trails & lake	9/16/2025 10:59 AM
26	See previous answer	9/14/2025 10:53 AM
27	Update the town website or send a town newsletter? I feel like I'm not "in the loop".	9/13/2025 5:45 PM
28	Transportation/resources for the elderly/non-driving communities	9/12/2025 9:44 AM
29	Add public/community space. Make Manchester more walkable	9/11/2025 7:35 PM
30	Develop the village zone carefully and thoughtfully. Done right, this could add a very cool vibe to a special community.	9/10/2025 9:25 AM
31	Keep taxes low	9/10/2025 8:20 AM
32	town fair	9/9/2025 7:37 PM
33	keep taxes low	9/9/2025 6:27 PM
34	A public beach.	9/9/2025 5:13 PM
35	Allow more commercial development	9/9/2025 10:51 AM
36	Level the burden out on taxes	9/9/2025 9:26 AM
37	Keep the town small, no multi family housing units	9/8/2025 7:08 PM
38	Steady incline of taxes vs massive increases.	9/8/2025 7:00 PM
39	Plant trees	9/8/2025 6:54 PM
40	Don't build low income housing or promote the unhoused to come here.	9/8/2025 6:45 PM
41	Keep property taxes affordable	9/8/2025 5:53 PM
42	Add Library Lower Taxes	9/8/2025 5:33 PM
43	Protect our open spaces and small town character!	9/8/2025 4:56 PM
44	Build for a future where the town is more than just a road to Winthrop.	9/8/2025 4:29 PM
45	To not change much	9/8/2025 3:47 PM
46	Invest in local businesses, outdoor recreational spaces and make this more of a destination downtown that draws people together.	9/8/2025 3:35 PM
47	Acquire some town land on Cobbosseecontee.	9/8/2025 3:33 PM
48	Taxes	9/8/2025 1:10 PM
49	Create a recreational park	9/8/2025 12:53 PM
50	Take care of our lakes	9/8/2025 12:22 PM
51	Make all roads safe to walk, run and bike on. Fitness trails with exercise stations. Huge speed bumps along 202, Pond Road, Rt 17, and Granite Hill Rd.	9/3/2025 4:35 PM
52	be more transparent. Make Manchester as affordable place to live as possible. Listen to the people. Collaborate with residents. Keep the schools safe.	9/3/2025 9:59 AM
53	Keep open spaces; limit how parcels of land can be used and purchased, to prevent out-of-state companies from building	9/2/2025 12:24 PM
54	More community spirit. More people running for office.	8/29/2025 5:06 PM
55	Sidewalks.	8/29/2025 7:25 AM
56	A second park/rec area.	8/22/2025 6:04 PM
57	Attract low impact business and affordable housing	8/21/2025 2:38 PM

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58	Protect the town aesthetic, and the wonderful vibe that we have going here.	8/19/2025 10:55 AM
59	Improve community feel and actively work with the State (DOT etc) to make the town less of a Rt 202 drive through.	8/18/2025 10:55 AM
60	Control development on route 202 Improve our schools Sidewalks Access to local lakes with walking trails	8/14/2025 6:41 PM
61	Slow down traffic on 202	8/11/2025 8:25 AM
62	Improve access to pedestrians	8/11/2025 7:24 AM
63	grow a real downtown/town	8/8/2025 11:02 AM
64	preserve old trees, town history invest in parks and planting and disinvest in chains.	8/6/2025 11:52 AM
65	A new public library and a new high quality country store would be nice.	8/6/2025 10:52 AM
66	Consideration of services for elderly residents; improvements to school; protection of our community services	8/5/2025 9:25 PM
67	More food choices and a nicer village feel.	8/4/2025 11:02 AM
68	I believe trying to gear more towards young families would be wonderful. My kids are getting older now- but town access to the "country club beach" or a town library, community events, recreation, etc. I see many families use these various services in readfield and other neighboring towns. Our taxes are HIGH, what do we have to show for it?! A broken down, trash covered playground behind the school.	8/3/2025 8:49 PM
69	Providing a community center for meetings, gatherings, and public events.	8/3/2025 12:49 PM
70	Maintain a small town feel. Continue to assist in the preservation Cobbossee lake.	8/3/2025 12:45 PM
71	Keep the character of the town while encouraging economic development helping to keep living in Manchester affordable	8/2/2025 9:24 PM
72	Keep small and quiet	8/1/2025 8:31 PM
73	Lower Taxes.	8/1/2025 8:04 PM
74	Sidewalks and more thoughtful zoning and business development decisions	8/1/2025 5:05 PM
75	Lower taxes, stop wasteful spending, improve the community.	8/1/2025 3:50 PM
76	Keep the town small we dont need to become augusta. Augusta is close enough.	8/1/2025 1:05 PM
77	Restrict over development and loss of small town appeal	8/1/2025 12:19 PM
78	Keep school quality high. Keep green spaces.	7/30/2025 11:24 AM
79	Protect open spaces. Prepare for climate change.	7/25/2025 11:11 AM

Q32 Please include any other thoughts and comments.

Answered: 38 Skipped: 79

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	At this point we need more housing- big time, so the initiatives in this survey may be needed. As a tax payer, I hoped that free market entrepreneurs would do it on their own. Maybe we do need to hire a PT champion to display what Manchester has to offer to contractors. Thank you for this opportunity. Good survey.	12/8/2025 2:09 PM
2	This is a great undertaking that impacts all present and future residents. I was involved with the first comprehensive plan (a thankless job) but the impact is still felt and this current process continues the value !! THANK YOU ALL!	11/2/2025 1:02 PM
3	I've noticed that interactions with staff at the Town Office,often feel strained—staff seem inconvenienced when residents come in for assistance, and there isn't much sense of customer service or approachability. I realize the team is likely very busy, but as a resident it can be discouraging to feel unwelcome when trying to handle routine business. I'd love to see a friendlier, more service-oriented atmosphere in the future.	10/29/2025 9:59 AM
4	Great town. Feel we have relatively high taxes for services received. Things like sidewalks would be helpful in connecting the community and allowing residents to get out and safely walk/exercise.	10/24/2025 2:19 PM
5	Thank you all!	10/18/2025 3:22 PM
6	Real Estate taxes are making Maine unaffordable for Maine natives and are adversely changing the culture of the state.	10/15/2025 11:08 AM
7	I would love for the town to bring back the Apple Festival with the parade, the Christmas tree lighting and the Rec Department. Thank you for having this survey!	10/9/2025 11:37 AM
8	I feel I've probably brain-dumped enough above. Please feel free to contact me if you'd care to discuss the above further. [REDACTED NAME AND NUMBER]	10/3/2025 8:45 AM
9	Increase use and control of elementary school as community center. Increase community citizen involvement.	9/30/2025 8:30 AM
10	Zone designated areas to encourage higher density residential development coupled with preserved open space. Better environmentally and increased community feel.	9/25/2025 3:40 PM
11	We had a great summer rec program with swim lessons. That has all gone away. We need a way for kids to swim and use the lake. We also need a fall family day like we had before at Lakeside. This could even be done on the school playground fields. We miss the parade and all of the activities that were centered around that. We also had wonderful activities around Christmas and those have seemed to gone away as well.	9/21/2025 5:20 PM
12	We are 250 years old as a town, the more people that build here the more it seems to change to become the place they moved from. Would like to see ordinary citizens be involved when high ranking places are being filled...town office, town manager, fire Chief keeping these positions filled with Manchester residences whenever possible will keep Manchester the friendly town not Manchester the next big city	9/18/2025 7:47 PM
13	Keep aging residents in mind. Deliver sand/salt to seniors during winter months. Survey aging residents to get some of their needs taken care of. Try to get more town residents involved in town activities. Communication is key to account for all levels, like non-electronic savvy.	9/17/2025 11:22 AM
14	Will you publish results of survey and resulting plan?What volunteer opportunities are there in town?	9/16/2025 2:27 PM
15	Thank you for all you do	9/14/2025 10:53 AM
16	Town trash pickup would be really really great to have	9/12/2025 9:44 AM
17	Would like opportunities to foster community for folks that don't live in the neighborhood	9/11/2025 7:35 PM

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	sections	
18	I don't know how many towns with a huge lake and no place for the kids and adults to swim and recreate when my kids were young. I used to drive way out of town just to take them swimming sometimes as far as New Hampshire for vacations just so they could swim	9/11/2025 3:39 PM
19	thank you !	9/9/2025 6:27 PM
20	I definitely feel the burden the lake owners take on taxes is unfair and unconstitutional	9/9/2025 9:26 AM
21	Please keep our town small, quaint and welcoming to visitors and small local businesses. Please do flood our town with multi family housing complexes.	9/8/2025 7:08 PM
22	If there is a way to make it known when certain town meetings happen about rising taxes take place or when property values are adjusted. I work long hours and unfortunately (not your fault) I have limited time to attend meetings or stay in the "know."	9/8/2025 7:00 PM
23	Not enough services for the taxes charged.	9/8/2025 6:45 PM
24	We've neglected the growth of our town for far too long. Manchester looks exactly like it did twenty years ago.	9/8/2025 4:29 PM
25	I have been considering purchasing [REDACTE] property with friends to begin a community center and cafe. Would be interested in how to pursue this. Meeting soon with [REDACTED] to learn more. Our community needs one another as our country and politics divides us.	9/8/2025 3:35 PM
26	Fiscal policy at the sate and municipal levels are making Maine unaffordable to Maine natives (those who were born here). More people, especially parasites, only make everything cost more not less.	9/3/2025 4:35 PM
27	Need law enforcement and less restrictions on properties. Thank you for your work.	9/3/2025 9:59 AM
28	I hope you get a lot of responses to this survey. If you don't, ask ten people you know why they didn't respond. You'll probably learn a lot from that!	8/29/2025 5:06 PM
29	Thank you!	8/22/2025 6:04 PM
30	Thank you. [REDACTED NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE]	8/19/2025 10:55 AM
31	Get EMS on staff, work with the state to change the 202 corridor from Augusta through to East Winthrop. It cannot accommodate the increase in traffic, and there are too many accidents at the intersection of Puddleduck Rd. and Rt, 202. Between the light at the bottom of Granite Hill and the light a the intersection of Rt 17 there are too many accidents.	8/11/2025 7:24 AM
32	Please act and tell us!	8/8/2025 11:02 AM
33	The hyper consumerist downtown area is too much and has a feel of a fast food drag strip. We don't need any more national chain establishments that sell gas, lottery tickets and junk food. The town really should build a sense of character based on health and the things that promote health such as quality food, and environmental preservation.	8/6/2025 10:52 AM
34	This survey should provide valuable data for the comprehensive plan, and the results should be made public through the town website or other publication.	8/3/2025 12:49 PM
35	No more self storage I would appreciate more communication from the town. Thank you for this survey and for all you do.	8/3/2025 12:45 PM
36	Great little town, grateful to live here.	8/2/2025 9:24 PM
37	Want to live in a small town with no low income housing that'll increase crime. Keep it to single family homes.	8/1/2025 3:50 PM
38	I want to live and raise kids in a good school district with low crime rates and good people. Bringing in more low income and subsidized housing isn't going to make the town a better more desirable place to live.	8/1/2025 1:05 PM