



TOWN OF CUTLER, MAINE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2025-2035

Prepared by the Town of Cutler Comprehensive Plan Committee
with support from Sunrise County Economic Council

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This Comprehensive Plan update was made possible through funding provided by the Governor's Community Resilience Partnership, which enabled the Town of Cutler to hire Patricia Tilton, Community Planner with Sunrise County Economic Council, to support the planning process, prepare GIS mapping, and help ensure alignment with state requirements.

The Town of Cutler thanks the many residents, volunteers, and organizations who contributed their time, ideas, and local knowledge to this Comprehensive Plan update. Special appreciation is extended to the Comprehensive Plan Committee for their dedication in guiding the process, reviewing materials, and helping shape the vision for Cutler's future.

Comprehensive Plan Committee

- Mary Daigle
- Faeterri Silver
- Marilyn Murdock
- Mark Preston

Previous Committee Members

- Mark Smith
- Jillian Taylor
- Renee Patterson
- Robert Wood

Town of Cutler Officials

- Cynthia Rowden, Select Board
- Kim Davis, Select Board
- David Glidden, Select Board
- Meghan Warner, Town Clerk

Special Thanks

- Pauline Cates
- Sterling Fitzhenry
- Patricia Ingalls
- Devendra Thapaliya

Regional Partner

- Sunrise County Economic Council (SCEC)

The Town also thanks all residents, business owners, seasonal residents, and community members who participated in the survey, visioning session, and related planning discussions.

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Public Participation and Community Input	5
Vision Statement	6
Priority Action Items	7
Historic and Archaeological Resources	9
Population and Demographics	17
Economy	24
Housing.....	36
Public Facilities and Services	47
Transportation	57
Water Resources	68
Marine Resources	78
Recreation	90
Agriculture and Forest Resources	101
Natural Resources	112
Fiscal Capacity and Capital Investment Plan	121
Existing Land Use	132
Future Land Use	140
Regional Coordination	150
Evaluation Measures	154
Appendix A. Community Public Survey Results, 2025.....	157
Appendix B. Community Visioning Session Summary and Notes.....	213

INTRODUCTION

The Cutler Comprehensive Plan provides a guide for municipal decisions concerning growth, conservation, public investment, land use, and community development over the next ten years. It updates the Town's 1991 Comprehensive Plan using current information, local knowledge, and public input to identify what Cutler should protect, improve, and prepare for during the planning period.

Cutler is a small coastal community shaped by its working harbor, commercial fishing heritage, conserved lands, scenic beauty, and rural character. The Town also faces challenges related to housing affordability, access to services, an aging population, vulnerable infrastructure, and uncertainty within the marine economy. This plan establishes a practical framework for addressing those challenges while preserving the qualities residents value most.

This Comprehensive Plan is intended to serve as a policy guide for local decisions. It is not itself a zoning ordinance or land use ordinance, but it provides the basis for future decisions about ordinances, capital investments, land use regulation, conservation, and community development. The plan is designed to help the Town direct modest growth to appropriate locations, protect important natural and marine resources, strengthen resilience, and remain a stable year-round community.

The plan is based on state and regional data, local records, existing Town documents, the 2025 community survey, the public visioning session, and ongoing committee discussion. It includes inventories and analyses of existing conditions, policies and implementation strategies, a Future Land Use Plan, a Capital Investment Plan, regional coordination measures, evaluation measures, and supporting appendices. Together, these elements provide a realistic guide for managing change in a manner consistent with Cutler's community scale, values, and long-term interests.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNITY INPUT

Public participation was an important part of preparation of the 2025 Cutler Comprehensive Plan. The process included a community-wide public survey, a public visioning session held on July 10, 2025, and ongoing discussion through committee work and chapter development. Together, these efforts helped identify local priorities, concerns, and the values residents want the plan to protect and support.

The community survey received 89 responses from year-round residents, seasonal residents, non-resident taxpayers, and other members of the Cutler community, with particularly strong participation from older adult residents. Survey results showed broad support for preserving Cutler's rural character as a fishing community, scenic resources, coastline, marine-based economy, public access, and open space. Respondents also expressed support for harbor maintenance, shore access, home-based businesses, town road improvement, and modest local services that would meet everyday needs without changing the town's character. Repeated written comments emphasized the importance of preserving the working harbor, protecting access for fishing and clamming, maintaining Cutler's quiet and scenic character, and avoiding development patterns that would price out local residents or undermine the town's identity.

Survey responses also highlighted several recurring concerns. These included housing affordability for year-round residents and younger households, high property taxes, limited services, lack of a local store or gathering place, short-term rentals, increasing pressure from outside buyers, and the long-term future of the fishing economy. Survey responses showed interest in stronger local land use tools, including site plan review, junk-removal measures, and some form of zoning or updated land use regulation, while also emphasizing that any regulation should be fair, clearly explained, and consistently enforced.

The July 10 visioning session reinforced many of the same themes. Participants described resilience in Cutler as protecting the fishing community from both physical hazards and economic displacement. Key concerns included storm surge, flooding and washout on Cove Road, loss of fishing and clamming access, rising property values, declining school enrollment, limited community gathering spaces, lack of local services, and the need to protect the working waterfront for future generations.

The survey and visioning process pointed to several consistent priorities: protecting Cutler's working waterfront and marine access, preserving rural and scenic character, supporting modest housing opportunities for local residents, strengthening community life, improving resilience to flooding and storm impacts, and allowing only carefully scaled growth that fits the town's values. These priorities helped shape the direction of this Comprehensive Plan, including the Future Land Use chapter and related recommendations for housing, infrastructure, resilience, and community development. Detailed survey results, visioning notes, and related materials are included in the appendices.

VISION STATEMENT

The following vision statement reflects the priorities expressed through the 2025 public survey, visioning session, and planning process.

Cutler's vision is to remain a close-knit, resilient coastal fishing town where the working waterfront, commercial fishing heritage, scenic beauty, and rural character are protected for future generations. Residents want Cutler to remain a year-round community where local families, fishermen, clambers, and younger households can continue to live, work, and participate fully in town life. Growth should be modest, carefully located, and consistent with the town's scale, traditions, and natural setting.

Cutler's future depends on protecting access to the land and water that support both its economy and its way of life. The harbor, wharves, shore access points, clam flats, working waterfront uses, and marine-based economy are central to the town's identity and should remain protected from incompatible development and loss of access. Residents want Cutler to continue to support commercial fishing and other compatible marine-based activity while preserving the natural beauty and quiet character that make the town unique.

The town also envisions a stronger sense of community, with more opportunities for people to gather, connect, and support one another. Residents expressed interest in maintaining and improving places such as the ballfield, the harbor area, the library, and the Maker property as community assets, along with adding modest local services and gathering places that improve daily life without changing the town's character. A small convenience store or similar service, if developed in a way that fits Cutler's values, could help meet local needs while also serving visitors.

Cutler's vision includes housing opportunities that allow local people to remain in town and younger households to stay or return. Residents want future housing to support year-round community life rather than displace traditional residents or overwhelm local roads, shore access, and infrastructure. New development should be modest in scale, located in appropriate areas, and designed to preserve the scenic, working, and residential character of the community.

Resilience in Cutler means preparing for the future while protecting what matters most. This includes addressing flooding, storm surge, vulnerable roads, and other climate-related hazards; maintaining safe and reliable transportation access; and protecting the working waterfront and public facilities that support town life. It also means using local land use tools thoughtfully so the town can guide change, protect important resources, and remain in control of its future.

Above all, Cutler envisions a future grounded in stewardship, self-determination, and continuity. The town seeks to remain a place known for its working harbor, strong community, public access, natural resources, and distinctive Down East character: a place where change is guided carefully, local values remain central, and the community's heritage and livelihood continue to shape its future.

PRIORITY ACTION ITEMS

The following priority action items identify the most important steps for implementing the Cutler Comprehensive Plan during the early years of the planning period. They reflect the strongest themes from the community survey, public visioning session, and chapter recommendations.

1. Protect the working waterfront and shore access

Protecting Cutler Harbor, commercial fishing areas, wharves, and traditional access points to the shore is one of the town's highest priorities. Residents repeatedly identified the working waterfront, fishing access, clamming access, and the marine economy as central to Cutler's identity and long-term survival. The town should continue to protect water-dependent uses through existing shoreland regulations, support continued harbor function, and explore practical ways to maintain or strengthen public and deeded access for fishermen and residents.

2. Support housing opportunities for year-round residents

Housing affordability and the ability of younger households and working families to remain in Cutler emerged as major concerns during the planning process. The town should focus on supporting modest, appropriately located housing opportunities for year-round residents, including implementation of the Growth Areas identified in the Future Land Use chapter. Particular attention should be given to implementing the designated Growth Areas, including evaluating appropriate housing opportunities in the Fitzhenry Lane area if proposals advance.

3. Improve resilience of vulnerable roads and infrastructure

Flooding, storm surge, washouts, and road vulnerability were repeatedly identified as serious concerns, especially in relation to Cove Road, low-lying coastal roads, and access for the fishing community. The town should prioritize planning and coordination for infrastructure resilience, including vulnerable road segments, culverts, drainage, and continued access to key public and commercial areas. This work should be coordinated with state, county, and regional resilience partners wherever possible.

4. Strengthen community life through gathering places and local services

Residents expressed a clear desire for more opportunities to gather, connect, and support one another. This includes interest in improving or activating assets such as the ballfield, library, harbor area, and Maker property, along with interest in a small convenience store or similar year-round service that fits Cutler's scale and character. The town should pursue practical opportunities to strengthen community life through gathering spaces, local events, and modest services that improve daily life for residents while also serving visitors appropriately.

5. Guide growth through clear and fair land use standards

Residents want Cutler to remain a small, scenic, working coastal town rather than become overdeveloped, dominated by incompatible uses, or reshaped by outside pressures. The town should continue to direct limited growth to appropriate inland locations, guide development in the Rural Area and shoreland areas so that it remains appropriately scaled and avoids impacts to important resources and use local land use tools carefully to preserve the qualities that make Cutler distinctive. This includes keeping ordinances up to date and applying them consistently and fairly.

HISTORIC AND ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Introduction

Cutler's history is deeply rooted in its coastal environment, from the earliest Native American use of its shores to the maritime industries that have sustained the community for over two centuries. Archaeological sites, historic structures, and cultural landscapes tell the story of Indigenous peoples who fished and hunted here for millennia, European settlement beginning in the 18th century, and the fishing-based economy that continues today. This chapter documents Cutler's historic and archaeological resources, evaluates their condition and identifies practical strategies for protecting them. It supports the State of Maine goal of preserving significant historic and archaeological resources while recognizing Cutler's size and available resources.

Historic Development and Patterns of Settlement

Long before European arrival, the area now known as Cutler was part of a rich cultural landscape sustained by the Maliseet, Micmac, and Passamaquoddy peoples. Archaeological evidence, including stone tools and fire-cracked rocks discovered during a 1984 excavation, confirms centuries of Indigenous use along the Cutler Coast. Shell middens along the Grand Manan Channel are remnants of a subsistence economy tied to seasonal fishing, hunting, and gathering. Tribal place names, preserved through oral history, speak to this deep relationship with the land and sea:

- Kin-Kamit-MusKiK – “fat moose place” (Cutler)
- Sebohegonet – “carry across place” (Cross Island)
- Sebistose – “tide way” (Eastern Headlands)
- Sebohis – “little river” (Cutler Harbor)

European contact began early. In 1527, Englishman John Rutt reportedly erected a cross on Cross Island. Samuel de Champlain sailed past in 1604, noting the dense fog. The 17th century saw competing French and English claims, with trading rights granted to Richard Vines and Isaac Allerton in 1633, only for the post to be destroyed that same year by French forces under La Tour.

Following the Peace of Paris in 1763, English settlement expanded. By 1785, Revolutionary War veterans such as Robert Cates, John Dairs, John Maker, and Ephraim Andrews established homesteads, joined by others including John Davis and Jonathan Niles. Many settlers received land grants in “Township Number XI” in recognition of their service. By 1790, the population was recorded as 37.

Cutler was incorporated in 1826, marked by the dedication of the Head of the River Baptist Church on July 4th of that year. A tide-powered sawmill built in 1835 spurred economic growth,

and by the 1870s the population peaked at approximately 925. Shipbuilding, fishing, milling, farming, and dairy production formed the backbone of the local economy.

Catastrophic forest fires in 1851 and 1853 dramatically altered the landscape, converting forested land into grass barrens and prompting shifts toward dairy farming. Subsequent population loss followed as residents migrated west or to industrial centers.

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Cutler experienced short-lived growth tied to sardine and smoked herring industries, alongside continued fishing and pulpwood harvesting. The establishment of the U.S. Navy's Very Low Frequency (VLF) communications station in 1961 introduced a federal presence that remains today. Despite economic fluctuations, Cutler has retained a strong maritime identity centered on lobster fishing, scalloping, and clamming.

Identified Historic and Archaeological Resources

Prehistoric Archaeology

Eight known prehistoric sites have been documented along Cutler's intertidal zone, according to the Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) site file data (2024). No systematic archaeological survey has been conducted town-wide outside the former U.S. Navy lands. Future survey efforts would help identify additional sites associated with early Indigenous occupation and maritime subsistence practices.

Historic Archaeology

Fifty-three documented historic archaeological sites include 19th and 20th-century shipwrecks, fishing stations, domestic sites, military observation towers from World War II, mines, and former settlements. Notable examples include the Deering Copper Mine (1879-1881), the Cross Island Village settlement (circa 1850), and the Navy Towers observation and radio complex constructed during the 1940s. Together, these sites illustrate Cutler's long-standing relationship with its working waterfront and coastal landscape.



Little River Light Station

Historic Buildings and Structures

- **Little River Light Station** - Listed on the National Register of Historic Places (1988). Built in 1847, rebuilt in 1876 with a cast-iron, brick-lined tower. Currently owned by the U.S. Coast Guard and maintained under agreement with the American Lighthouse Foundation, which completed restoration work in 2000.
- **Hastings House** - Pre-1790 home of John Davis, adjacent to Head of the River Baptist Church. Privately owned; condition fair.
- **Ephraim Andrew House** - Circa 1785, near Turner's Stream Bridge. Privately owned; exposed to coastal weather; maintenance needs identified.
- **Meeting House** - Built in 1826; now the Head of the Harbor Church. Active congregation provides ongoing maintenance.
- **Norse Pond** - Historic site near the Trescott line.
- **Remains of Tidal-powered Sawmill and Dam** - Head of the Harbor; built circa 1835 according to local historical records.
- **U.S. Life-Saving Station on Cross Island** - Historic maritime facility established in the late 19th century; decommissioned 1950s; structure condition unknown.
- **Cutler Naval Station (VLF)** - Operational since 1961; a significant Cold War-era site.

Historic maritime structures including remnants of 19th-century wharves, fishing stations, and seasonal fish processing facilities represent Cutler's continuous working waterfront heritage. Many have been lost to storms, fire, or replacement with modern facilities. Remaining examples include old pier pilings, stone wharf foundations, and building footprints that warrant documentation and consideration in harbor planning. These resources connect to the broader inventory documented in the Marine Resources chapter and represent tangible evidence of Cutler's economic and cultural maritime traditions.

Conditions and Trends

Historic settlement patterns remain evident in Cutler through the harbor village, longstanding church and house sites, traditional wharf locations, and the continued orientation of development toward the shore and working waterfront. Known prehistoric and historic archaeological resources are concentrated in coastal and intertidal areas, reflecting long-term Indigenous use and later maritime settlement. While a few significant resources continue to receive active stewardship, most historic properties in Cutler remain privately owned and subject gradual deterioration from age, coastal weather, deferred maintenance, and limited preservation resources. No comprehensive town-wide professional survey has been completed since the 1991 plan, so additional historic and archaeological resources may remain undocumented. Threats to these resources include deferred maintenance, coastal weather exposure, erosion, storm damage, sea-level rise, and the absence of local review standards specific to historic and archaeological resources.

Analysis

Taken together, these conditions show that Cutler's historic and archaeological resources remain central to community identity, but that limited local protection and ongoing exposure to weather, erosion, and deferred maintenance leave them vulnerable to gradual loss.

Cutler's historic settlement patterns remain especially legible in the harbor village, traditional shorefront access points, long-standing church sites, and surviving early homes near Head of the Harbor and Little Machias Bay. These patterns reflect the community's long dependence on marine resources, coastal transportation, and clustered settlement near working waterfront areas. Prehistoric and historic archaeological resources are similarly concentrated in shoreline and intertidal areas, where both Indigenous use and later maritime activity were focused.

Protective measures for these resources remain limited. State and federal laws provide protection for certain archaeological resources, and selected landmark properties benefit from stewardship by nonprofit or federal entities, but Cutler has no local historic preservation ordinance, no formal historic review process, and no requirement that local development review incorporate Maine Historic Preservation Commission data. The town also does not currently require applicants in archaeologically sensitive areas to conduct surveys or otherwise document potential impacts. Because the town does not currently require archaeological survey or formal consultation in sensitive areas, the presence of undocumented resources may not be identified prior to site disturbance.

Resource conditions vary considerably. The Little River Light Station continues to benefit from active stewardship and is in good condition following restoration, while the Head of the Harbor Church remains well maintained by its congregation. Other historic properties depend almost entirely on private owners, whose ability to maintain older buildings is often constrained by cost, age, exposure to salt air, and the limited availability of specialized preservation contractors.

In Cutler, the greatest long-term threat to historic resources is not large-scale redevelopment, but gradual deterioration, storm damage, coastal erosion, and lack of formal documentation. Climate change intensifies these risks. Intertidal archaeological sites may be affected by erosion and sea-level rise, while historic buildings and maritime remnants are increasingly exposed to wind-driven rain, salt spray, and stronger coastal storms. For a town with limited municipal staff and financial capacity, the most realistic preservation approach is to improve documentation, use existing state resource information during local review when possible, support owner awareness of preservation incentives, and pursue outside technical or grant assistance when opportunities arise.

These findings suggest that Cutler's approach should focus on practical, low-cost actions that are proportional to local capacity. Priority should be given to coordination with the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, improved use of available mapping and site information, public education, and incorporation of basic protective measures into future ordinance updates when feasible. This approach would improve protection of



significant historic and archaeological resources while recognizing the town's limited administrative capacity.

Climate Change Considerations

Climate change increases the vulnerability of Cutler's historic and archaeological resources, particularly those located along the shore and in intertidal areas. Sea-level rise, coastal erosion, and stronger storm events may damage archaeological sites, historic maritime remnants, and older structures exposed to salt spray and moisture. Storm damage to roads and access points can also make it harder to reach, maintain, or interpret coastal heritage sites. Because Cutler has limited municipal capacity, the most practical near-term response is to improve documentation, raise awareness of these risks, and pursue outside technical or grant assistance when opportunities arise.

Progress Since 1991 Plan

- **Completed:** Restoration of the Little River Light Station (2000) and establishment of an ongoing stewardship partnership with the American Lighthouse Foundation. The Light Station now provides limited seasonal public access and serves as an interpretive resource.
- **Partially Completed:** Recognition of several 18th- and 19th-century homes and church structures in local inventories, though a comprehensive town-wide survey by qualified professionals has not been completed. Funding constraints and competing municipal priorities have limited progress on systematic documentation.
- **Not Completed:** Comprehensive archaeological and historic resource inventory; ordinance-based protections; integration of MHPC mapping into local development review. These actions were identified as important in 1991 but have not been pursued due to limited staff capacity, lack of state grant funding applications, and absence of development pressure on known historic sites during the planning period.

Policies and Strategies

Policy 1: Protect to the greatest extent practicable the significant historic and archaeological resources in the community.

Strategy 1.1: Work with the Maine Historic Preservation Commission and local historical organizations to assess the need for a comprehensive survey of Cutler's historic and archaeological resources and, if grant funding or technical assistance becomes available, carry out that survey.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Near-Term (1-2 years)

Priority: Medium

Strategy 1.2: When the Land Use Ordinance is next updated, amend it, when feasible, to require subdivision and non-residential developers proposing activity in areas known or likely to

contain historic or archaeological resources to take appropriate protective measures, which may include modification of site design, construction timing, or extent of excavation.

Lead Entity: Planning Board

Timeframe: Mid-Term (3-5 years)

Priority: Low

Strategy 1.3: When capacity allows, incorporate maps and information provided by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission into the Planning Board's development review process through amendments to the Land Use Ordinance or related review procedures.

Lead Entity: Planning Board

Timeframe: Mid-Term (3-5 years)

Priority: Medium

Strategy 1.4: Support public awareness of Cutler's historic and archaeological resources through the library, town office, and community organizations by making preservation information, tax credit information, and grant opportunities available to property owners and, as opportunities arise, supporting interpretive signage or heritage education programs.

Lead Entity: Library Board / Town Office

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: Low

Policy 2: Seek external assistance for climate adaptation measures for historic resources.

Strategy 2.1: If funding or technical assistance opportunities arise, work with appropriate state agencies, nonprofit partners, or preservation organizations to assess the climate vulnerability of important coastal historic resources and identify feasible adaptation measures.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Mid-Term (3-5 years)

Priority: Medium

Policy 3: Participate in regional historic preservation efforts when opportunities arise.

Strategy 3.1: Support regional heritage tourism, preservation, or interpretive initiatives that promote Cutler's historic resources when participation does not create significant ongoing municipal obligations.

Lead Entity: Select Board

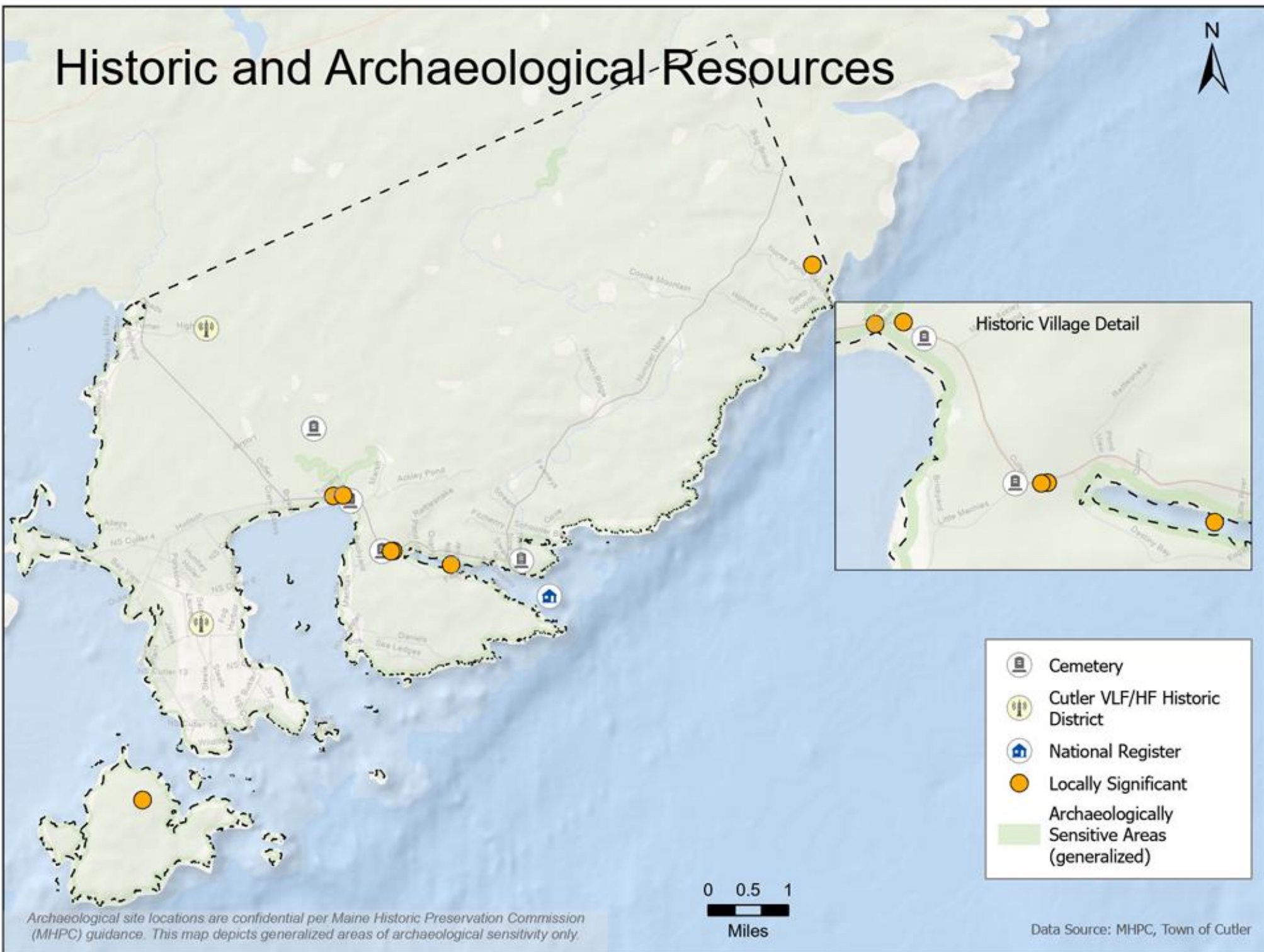
Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: Low

Sources

- Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Municipal Growth Management Historic & Archaeological Data, 2024.
- Cutler Coast Public Land Guide, Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands, 2022.
- Town of Cutler, Comprehensive Plan, 1974.
- Town of Cutler, Comprehensive Plan (1991).
- Town of Cutler Historical Records (unpublished).
- U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census Data.

Historic and Archaeological Resources



POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

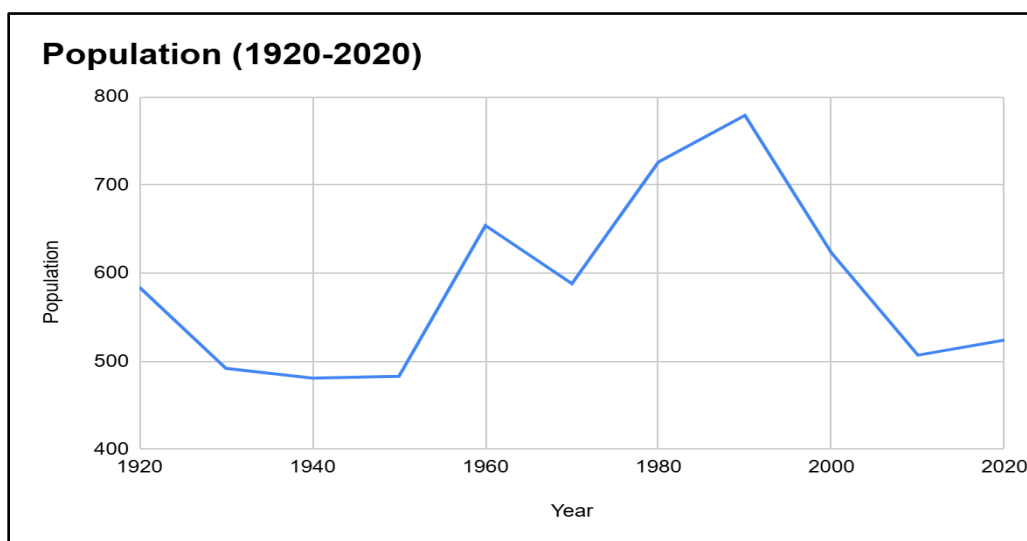
Introduction

Cutler's population has long been shaped by its coastal location and marine-based economy. After decades of fluctuation associated with changes in fishing, shipbuilding, and other resource industries, the population has remained relatively stable in recent years. Understanding these demographic trends helps the Town plan for future housing, public facilities, municipal services, and economic development.

Historical and Recent Trends

Cutler's population history tells a story of endurance rather than dramatic growth. Throughout the early 1900s, the town's population rose and fell in step with fishing, shipbuilding, and logging cycles, reaching roughly 780 residents by 1990 before declining again to just over 500 in 2010. Since that time, the trend has leveled off, marking a period of stability as families have remained rooted and retirees have chosen to return or settle along the coast.

As seen in the accompanying population trend chart, the past century illustrates this cyclical pattern of adjustment to changing economic and social conditions. While the town's size has varied, its sense of place and community identity have remained constant.



Source: US Census Bureau, Decennial Census

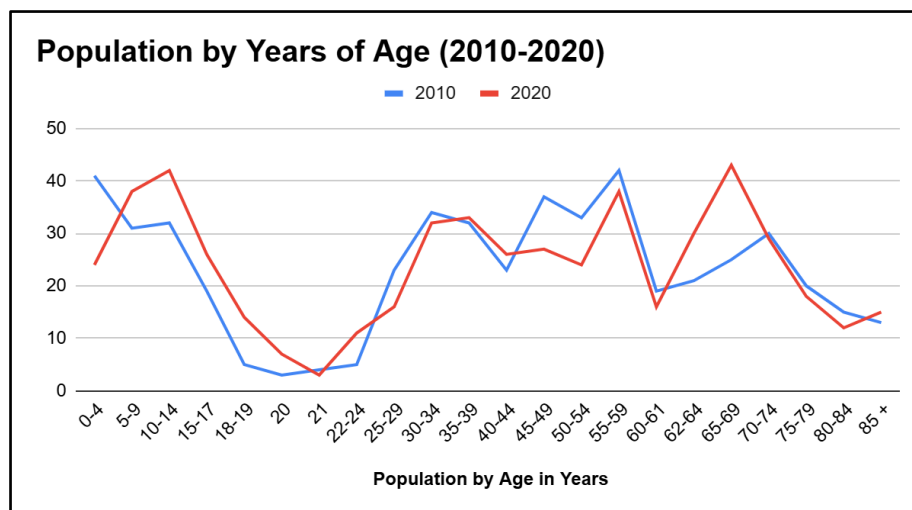
Over time, the pattern of change has mirrored broader rural Maine trends. When compared with Washington County and the state as a whole, Cutler's rate of change has been more variable, typical of small coastal towns where even a few dozen new residents can shift percentages noticeably. Still, the long view reveals continuity and resilience rather than decline, with a steady population core that has weathered the economic tides of the past century.

Current Demographic Profile

Cutler remains a low-density rural community, with about 11.8 persons per square mile spread across roughly 47 square miles of land area. Its settlement pattern continues to cluster around the harbor, with dispersed households along Route 191 and the town's backroads.

Recent data from the American Community Survey (2019-2023 5-Year Estimates) estimate approximately 528 residents, 232 households, and 389 housing units. The average household size of 2.3 persons and median age estimated in the low-to-mid 40s are typical of small Maine coastal towns, older than the national average but slightly younger than Washington County as a whole. Median household income is estimated at \$56,667, with per capita income of \$32,020, and about 11.6 percent of residents living below the poverty level.

As shown in the accompanying chart, Cutler's population by age remains relatively balanced but with a growing share of middle-aged and older adults. The largest cohorts in 2020 were between 45 and 64 years, while younger adults remain underrepresented. This pattern reflects both the outmigration of young people for employment or education. Like many rural coastal Maine communities, Cutler's age structure reflects both the aging of long-term residents and the attraction of retirees seeking a coastal lifestyle.



Source: Population by age, US Census Bureau, Decennial Census

Cutler's population density and age structure have implications for service delivery. The small, dispersed population helps preserve the rural character that residents value but also makes it more challenging and costly to provide healthcare, emergency response, and accessible transportation, especially for seniors and people living alone.

Cutler is not a regional service center and does not have a major employer whose workforce significantly exceeds the town's resident population during the day. No additional analysis of daytime population demand is required.

Population Projections

According to projections from the Maine Office of the State Economist (April 2025 release), Cutler's population is expected to remain stable or grow modestly through 2037. The accompanying population projection chart shows a gradual upward trend, from 524 residents in 2020 to an estimated 609 in 2037. This represents modest growth over the planning period and contrasts with the slower growth or decline projected for some other rural parts of Washington County. Overall, the projection suggests continued stability rather than major expansion.

	Observed Population			Projected Population		
Year	2012	2017	2022	2027	2032	2037
Population	508	504	529	565	591	609

Source: The Office of the State Economist, State/County and Maine City/Town Population Projections, April 2025 release.

This stability suggests that Cutler will continue to maintain a small but sustainable population base, large enough to support essential services and civic functions but not sufficient to drive major infrastructure expansion. The town's long-term challenge will be maintaining service levels and housing affordability as its population gradually ages.

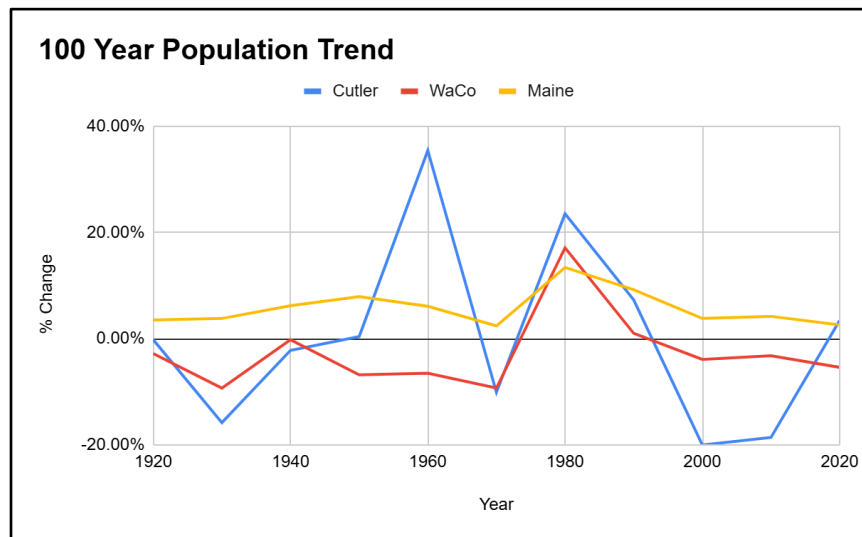
Projected population growth is expected to generate only modest demand for additional housing and municipal services. Future needs are likely to result more from changes in household composition and age than from rapid population growth.

Conditions and Trends

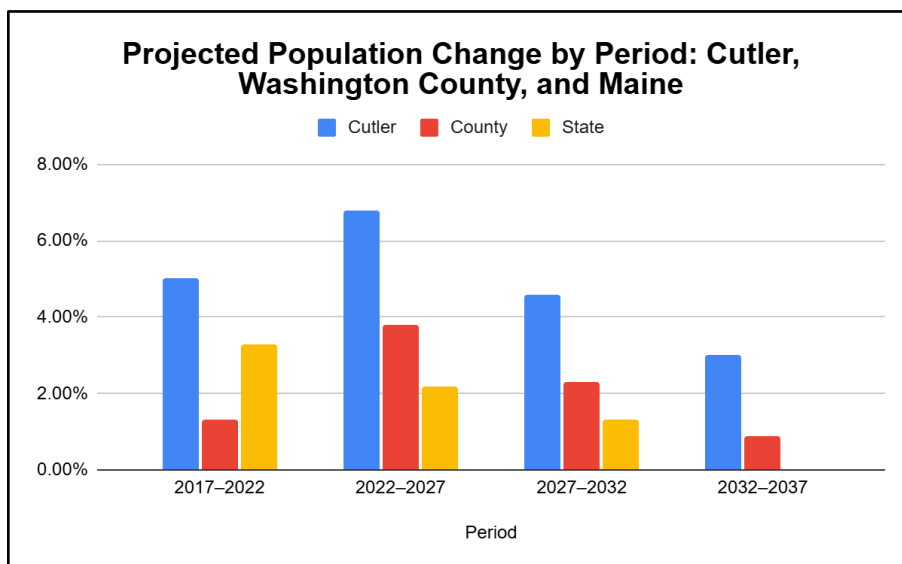
Cutler's population has remained relatively stable following decades of fluctuation associated with changes in the regional resource economy. The Town continues to have a small year-round population, an older age structure, dispersed settlement pattern, and a substantial seasonal population. Future demographic change is expected to be gradual, with aging and household composition continuing to influence housing, municipal services, and emergency planning.

Analysis

Cutler's stable population is one of the community's strengths. Unlike many rural communities experiencing significant decline or rapid growth, Cutler is expected to remain relatively stable throughout the planning period. As a result, the Town's primary challenge is not accommodating major population growth but responding to changing demographics, particularly an aging population, changing household composition, and seasonal residency patterns.



Source: US Census Bureau, Decennial Census



Source: The Office of the State Economist, State/County and Maine City/Town Population Projections, April 2025 release.

An older population will continue to influence demand for housing, transportation, emergency services, healthcare access, and community facilities. At the same time, maintaining opportunities for younger households, working families, and remote workers to live in Cutler will be important to sustaining the year-round community, supporting the local workforce, and preserving the Town's long-term vitality. These needs are addressed through the Housing, Economy, and Public Facilities chapters of this plan.

Seasonal residents remain an important part of Cutler's identity and economy. Their continued investment in the community supports local businesses, contributes to the tax base, and strengthens community life during the summer and fall. At the same time, a high proportion of

seasonal homes can reduce the availability of year-round housing and influence the community's volunteer base and civic participation. Encouraging continued engagement by both year-round and seasonal residents will help strengthen community connections and local stewardship.

Cutler's demographic composition includes long-term year-round residents, newer residents, including retirees attracted by the Town's coastal setting and quality of life and seasonal residents who maintain strong ties to the community. Together, these groups contribute to the Town's social fabric, but changing demographics have also changed the traditional volunteer base that supports local government, emergency response, community organizations, and civic events. Better integration of new year-round residents and continued involvement of seasonal residents can help sustain the volunteerism and civic engagement that have long characterized the community.

Demographic conditions also influence the Town's resilience. An older and geographically dispersed population may be more vulnerable during severe storms, extended power outages, flooding, or transportation disruptions. Emergency communication, preparedness planning, and resilient infrastructure should continue to consider both physical hazards and the needs of residents who may require additional assistance during emergencies.

Overall, projected demographic change is expected to occur gradually. Cutler's planning priorities should therefore focus on maintaining existing infrastructure, supporting year-round housing opportunities, protecting the working waterfront, strengthening community resilience, and preserving the qualities that make Cutler an attractive place to live rather than preparing for large-scale population growth. These priorities are carried forward throughout the remaining chapters of this Comprehensive Plan.

Climate Considerations

Cutler's year-round population is not concentrated in the most flood-vulnerable coastal areas, though seasonal and waterfront residential activity does occur near the harbor and coastline. Population in these areas has remained generally stable rather than increasing, which modestly limits but does not eliminate the town's exposure to coastal climate hazards. The town's older and geographically dispersed population may be more vulnerable during storms, extended power outages, and transportation disruptions, underscoring the importance of emergency communication and resilience planning that account for demographic as well as physical risk.

Policies and Strategies

Policy 1: Strengthen community connections and civic participation among year-round and seasonal residents.

Strategy 1.1: If community volunteers are available, support informal efforts to provide new residents with information about local services, organizations, and opportunities for involvement.

Lead Entity: Select Board / Town Office

Timeframe: Ongoing
Priority: Low

Strategy 1.2: Encourage seasonal residents to participate in community events, volunteer activities, and public meetings to strengthen social connections and shared stewardship.

Lead Entity: Select Board / Community Organizations

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: Low

Strategy 1.3: Continue using the Town website, notices, social media, and other existing communication methods to keep residents informed about municipal services, public meetings, emergency preparedness, and volunteer opportunities.

Lead Entity: Town Office

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: Low

Strategy 1.4: Support informal, community-led activities that bring together residents of different ages and backgrounds, helping to maintain Cutler's tradition of mutual support and civic involvement.

Lead Entity: Community Organizations / Library

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: Low

Sources

- U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census 2010 and 2020
- U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2019-2023 5-Year Estimates.
- Maine Office of the State Economist, State/County and Maine City/Town Population Projections, April 2025 release.
- Maine Department of Education, Census Annual Population Estimates (2023).
- Maine Climate Council and Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Municipal Climate Adaptation Guidance (2017).

ECONOMY

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

Introduction

Cutler's economy is shaped by its coastal location, working waterfront, small population, and relationship to regional service centers. Commercial fishing and other marine-based activity remain the Town's most important local economic assets, while many residents also rely on self-employment, home occupations, remote work, trades, and employment in Machias and neighboring communities.

Cutler is not expected to become a major commercial or industrial center during the planning period. Its economic development priorities are therefore focused on maintaining the working waterfront, supporting appropriate small-scale businesses, preserving reliable transportation and broadband access, and coordinating with regional partners. These priorities reflect the Town's rural character, available resources, and role within the Washington County economy.

This chapter describes Cutler's local and regional economic conditions, identifies the factors affecting employment and household income, and establishes practical policies for supporting economic stability and resilience.

Historic and Regional Context

Cutler's economy has historically depended on its natural resources and coastal location. Fishing, shipbuilding, fish processing, forestry, and small-scale agriculture supported the Town's early development and shaped its settlement pattern around the harbor and shoreline. Over time, changes in regional markets, fishing industries, and natural resource-based employment reduced many of these traditional activities, although commercial fishing has remained central to the community.

The establishment of the Very Low Frequency (VLF) communications station by the U.S. Navy in 1961 introduced a federal presence that has played a stabilizing role in the local economy. Navy personnel departed in 2000, and the station's administrative and housing areas were decommissioned and transferred to local authority around 2003. The U.S. Navy continues to operate the transmitter site under civilian management. While the installation has never functioned as a major employment center for the town, it contributed to population stability, housing demand, and regional infrastructure investment during its period of active military occupation. Its



economic influence has been indirect and consistent rather than expansive, providing a measure of continuity during periods of broader economic change.

Cutler is located within the Machias Labor Market Area, which encompasses much of Washington County. As shown in the accompanying labor market table, regional employment has shifted over the past two decades away from traditional manufacturing toward resource-based industries, services, and self-employment. Between 2004 and 2024, employment in agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting increased significantly, while manufacturing and some institutional sectors declined. These trends reflect broader changes across rural coastal Maine, where small-scale, place-based work and multiple income streams are increasingly common.

Because Cutler does not host major employers or commercial centers, shifts in regional employment, such as hospital staffing changes, school consolidations, fuel price volatility, or fluctuations in the fishing industry, can have an outsized impact on local households. Understanding Cutler's role within this regional labor system is therefore essential for evaluating economic opportunities, constraints, and strategies moving forward.

Machias Labor Market						
Industry Categories	2004	2014	2024	Sector Growth % 2004-2024	% of Total Change	2024 % of Total
	Employees					
Total, All Industries	4,564	4,102	4,432	-2.98%	See * Note	See * Note
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	280	342	440	36.36%	3.79%	9.93%
Utilities	0	0	29	100.00%	0.65%	0.65%
Construction	225	155	232	3.02%	0.30%	5.23%
Manufacturing	620	517	469	-32.20%	-3.00%	10.58%
Wholesale Trade	180	212	196	8.16%	0.48%	4.42%
Retail Trade	792	724	759	-4.35%	-0.23%	17.13%
Transportation and Warehousing	87	99	111	21.62%	0.60%	2.50%
Information	43	51	32	-34.38%	-0.22%	0.72%
Finance and Insurance	209	203	194	-7.73%	-0.20%	4.38%
Real Estate and Rental Leasing	54	33	18	-67%	0.78%	0.41%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	48	73	96	50.00%	1.11%	2.17%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0	76	105	100.00%	2.37%	2.37%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	23	87	157	85.35%	3.04%	3.54%
Educational Services	0	118	137	100.00%	3.09%	3.09%
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,408	942	910	-54.73%	-10.32%	20.53%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	27	18	21	-28.57%	-0.12%	0.47%
Accommodation and Food Services	391	328	355	-10.14%	-0.56%	8.01%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	79	103	157	49.68%	1.81%	3.54%

Source: Maine Department of Labor, Center for Workforce Research and Information (CWRI), Quarterly and Annual Employment and Wages, Labor Market Area data (Machias LMA), 2004, 2014, 2024 Employee and sector data only.

***Note:** % of Total Change reflects each sector's contribution to the net employment change from 2004 to 2024. 2024 % of Total shows each sector's share of total employment in 2024. The Total, All Industries row equals 100 percent by definition.

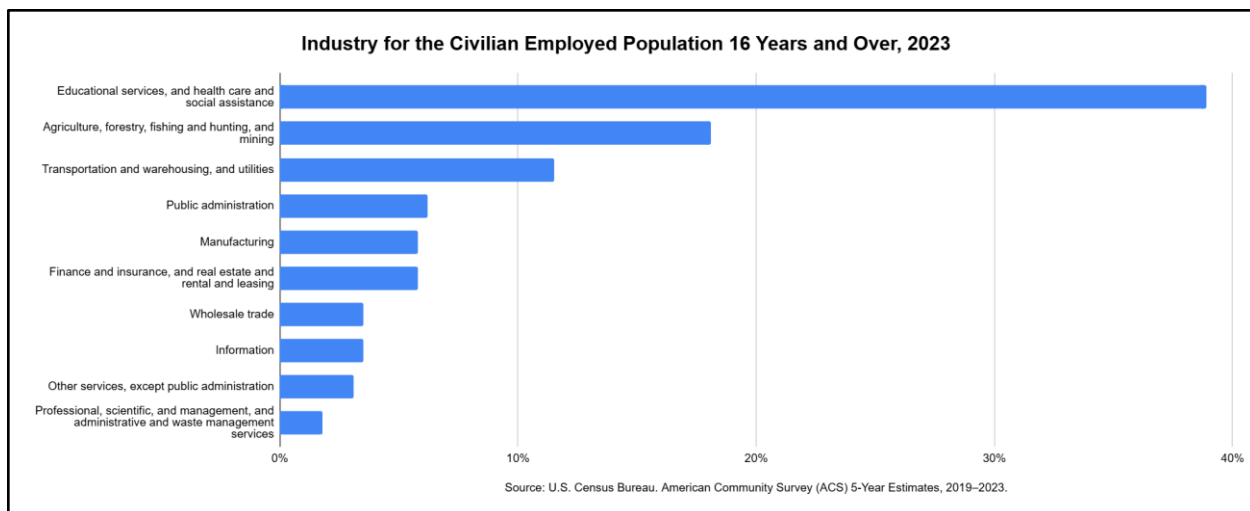
Current Economic Profile

Cutler's population of approximately 528 residents includes an estimated 400 adults over age 16, of whom roughly 57 percent participate in the labor force. Labor force participation has remained comparatively steady over the past decade despite an aging population. This reflects the presence of self-employed fishermen, tradespeople, and remote workers, as well as older residents who remain economically active beyond traditional retirement age.

Labor Force Participation						
	2015		2019		2023	
Population over 16	354		384		402	
Estimated % in Labor Force	54.20%		59.00%		57.20%	
	Est. Population	Participation Rate (Est.)	Est. Population	Participation Rate (Est.)	Est. Population	Participation Rate (Est.)
16 to 19 years	23	39.10%	13	53.80%	23	34.80%
20 to 24 years	10	60%	26	92.30%	16	87.50%
25 to 29 years	4	100%	28	75%	25	100%
30 to 34 years	36	41.70%	22	54.50%	22	68.20%
35 to 44 years	78	80.80%	40	87.50%	72	87.50%
45-54 years	69	84.10%	49	89.80%	56	100%
55 to 59 years	25	68%	51	68.60%	19	47.40%
60 to 64 years	39	41%	51	37.30%	36	38.90%
65 to 74 years	42	9.50%	74	24.30%	96	18.80%
75 years and over	28	0%	30	0%	37	21.60%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), Table S2301 (Employment Status), 2015, 2019, and 2023. Estimates are based on survey data and may vary due to sampling error.

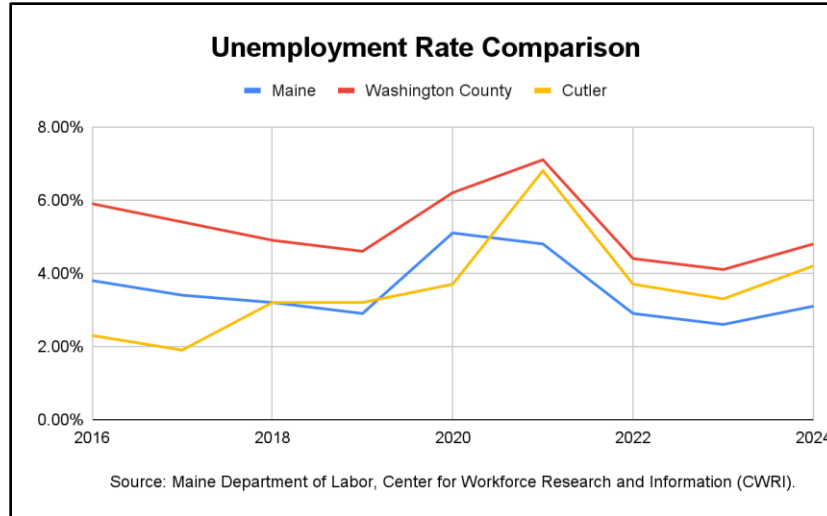
Employment patterns highlight the dominance of education and health services and marine-related industries as shown in the accompanying employment sector table. Educational services and health care represent the largest single share of employment, followed by agriculture, forestry, and fishing, which includes commercial fishing. Transportation, public administration, finance, insurance, real estate, and professional services account for the remaining employment base. This mix of local and regional work opportunities provides stability but remains relatively narrow.



In addition to wage employment, a significant share of Cutler’s local economy is supported by self-employment and sole-proprietor activity. Commercial fishermen, marine service providers, tradespeople, small seasonal operators, and home-based arts and service enterprises often work independently or as family-run businesses rather than through traditional payroll structures. These activities include painting and fiber arts studios, small gallery spaces operated from residences, and limited service businesses such as automotive repair conducted from private properties. This economic structure is typical of rural coastal communities, where households frequently combine self-employment, seasonal work, and supplemental income sources to maintain year-round stability. Because many of these enterprises operate without payroll employees, they are not fully captured in American Community Survey or Quarterly Employment and Wages datasets, and conventional labor statistics likely understate the full extent of economic activity occurring within the town.



According to the American Community Survey (2023), Cutler’s median household income is estimated at approximately \$56,667, with a per capita income of \$32,020 and an estimated poverty rate of 11.6 percent. Median household income in Cutler is generally comparable to Washington County overall but remains below the statewide median. Poverty rates in Cutler are similar to county averages and exceed the state rate, consistent with patterns observed across rural coastal Maine.



Cutler does not host traditional "major employers" within its municipal boundaries. The town's employment base is characterized by self-employment (particularly in commercial fishing), small marine-related businesses, and household-scale enterprises. The U.S. Navy's VLF communications station operated with military personnel from 1961 to 2000 and employed approximately 20 Cutler residents in civilian positions during that period. Following the departure of Navy personnel in 2000 and administrative decommissioning around 2003, the transmitter site continues under civilian-operated federal management but does not constitute a major local employer.

The majority of Cutler residents who work for larger employers commute to Machias, East Machias, or other regional centers, where healthcare facilities, schools, retail establishments, and professional services provide the region's primary employment opportunities. Mean commute time is approximately 36 minutes, reflecting the town's rural location and regional employment patterns.

Regional Economic Conditions

Cutler is closely tied to the Machias-area economy. Because the Town has few larger employers, many residents commute to nearby communities for work in healthcare, education, retail, construction, public administration, and professional services. Regional changes in employment, services, transportation costs, and fuel prices therefore directly affect Cutler households.

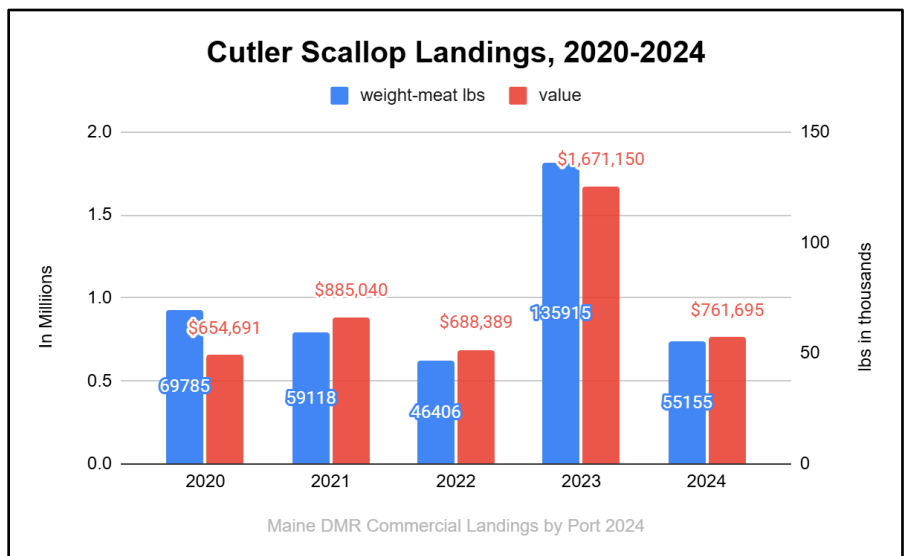
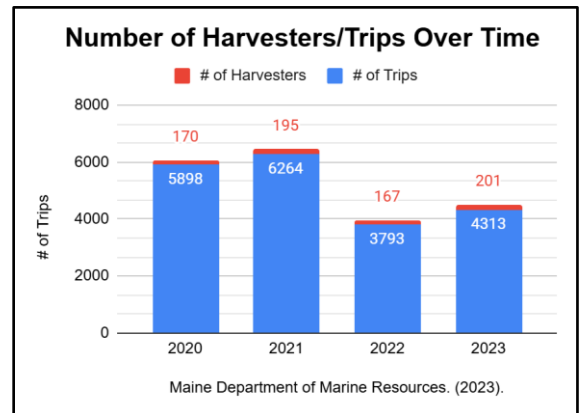
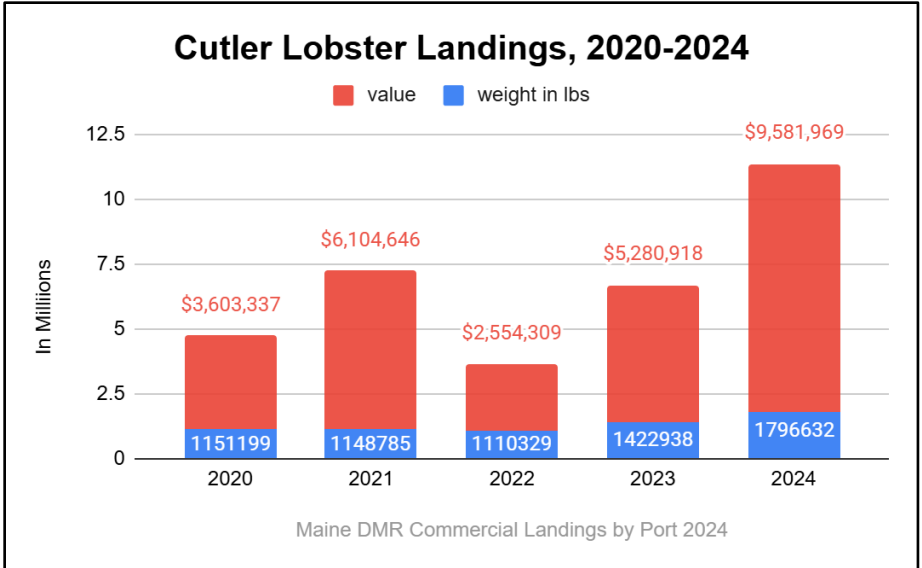
Cutler's economic priorities are consistent with the Washington County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, particularly its emphasis on working waterfronts, natural resource industries, broadband, small businesses, workforce development, and resilience. Continued regional coordination can help the Town pursue funding and technical assistance for needs that extend beyond municipal boundaries.

Marine-Based Economy

Commercial fishing remains the foundation of Cutler's local economy and community identity. Lobstering provides the largest share of marine-related income, while scalloping, clamming, and other seasonal fisheries continue to provide important supplemental earnings for many households. Marine harvesting also supports related businesses, including bait suppliers, seafood transportation, marine services, and other waterfront activities.

The accompanying landings data illustrate the importance of the marine economy as well as its year-to-year variability. Changes in landed value often reflect fluctuations in dockside prices, fishing seasons, weather, operating costs, and regulatory conditions rather than significant changes in participation. As a result, household income within the fishing community can vary considerably from year to year even when fishing effort remains relatively stable.

Beyond commercial harvesting, Cutler's harbor supports limited marine-related services and attracts visitors interested in the Town's working waterfront, lighthouse, coastal scenery, and public lands. Although tourism remains secondary to the fishing economy, these activities provide additional seasonal income while complementing, rather than replacing, the Town's traditional marine industries.



Maintaining reliable harbor access, protecting working waterfront infrastructure, preserving commercial fishing access, and improving resilience to storms and coastal hazards remain essential to Cutler's long-term economic stability. Additional information regarding fisheries, harbor facilities, waterfront access, and marine resources is provided in the Marine Resources chapter.

Conditions and Trends

Cutler's economy remains small, stable, and closely connected to the working waterfront and the broader Machias-area economy. Commercial fishing continues to be the Town's most important local industry, while many residents also rely on self-employment, home-based enterprises, trades, remote work, seasonal employment, and jobs in nearby service centers.

The Town does not have a traditional downtown, major commercial center, or large private employer. Most larger employment opportunities are located in Machias, East Machias, and other regional communities, particularly in healthcare, education, retail, construction, public administration, and professional services.

Commercial fishing income remains variable because of changes in dockside prices, fishing seasons, weather, operating costs, regulations, and resource conditions. Many households respond to this variability by combining fishing income with other employment, contract work, trades, or seasonal activity.

Home occupations and household-scale businesses continue to play an important role in the local economy. Broadband access has also expanded opportunities for remote work and small professional or service businesses that can operate without major commercial development.

Cutler's scenic coastline, public lands, lighthouse, working harbor, and maritime character support a modest amount of nature-based and heritage-related visitation. Tourism remains secondary to the fishing economy but provides limited seasonal income for some residents and businesses.

Large-scale industrial or commercial development is not anticipated during the planning period. Future economic activity is expected to remain primarily marine-related, home-based, small-scale, and connected to regional employment and services.

Analysis

Cutler's economic strengths are rooted in its working waterfront, skilled fishing community, self-employed workforce, scenic coastal setting, and strong regional connections. These assets support a flexible household economy in which residents often combine several sources of income rather than depend on a single employer or industry.

The Town's economic base is nevertheless narrow. Commercial fishing remains particularly important, and changes in market prices, regulations, fuel costs, weather, and resource availability can directly affect household income. Cutler's small population, geographic location,

limited commercial tax base, and distance from larger markets also make it difficult to support conventional commercial or industrial expansion.

Home occupations, remote work, marine services, trades, and other small-scale businesses offer the most realistic opportunities for diversification. These activities can create income without requiring substantial new infrastructure or development that would conflict with the Town's rural and coastal character. Local land use standards should therefore continue to allow appropriate home-based, marine-related, and small service businesses while protecting neighboring properties and important resources.

Cutler does not have a traditional downtown. The harbor and working waterfront serve as the Town's primary economic focal point, while larger commercial and institutional needs are met regionally. Protecting harbor access, waterfront infrastructure, and water-dependent uses is therefore both a marine resource priority and an economic development priority.

Tourism can provide supplemental economic activity, but it should remain compatible with commercial fishing, public access, conservation lands, and community character. Nature-based and heritage-related visitation is more appropriate for Cutler than large-scale tourism development.

No large industrial or commercial growth areas are needed during the planning period. Limited commercial activity associated with the working waterfront, home occupations, remote work, and small-scale services is consistent with Cutler's existing infrastructure and desired future character.

Cutler has no tax increment financing district or other formal economic development incentive district. Given the limited scale of the commercial tax base and the administrative requirements of these tools, there is no immediate need to establish one. If a significant development opportunity arises, the Town could evaluate available incentives with assistance from regional economic development partners.

The Town's most realistic economic development role is to maintain essential infrastructure, protect the working waterfront, provide clear and appropriate land use standards, support modest improvements benefiting existing businesses, and coordinate with regional organizations on broadband, workforce development, resilience, technical assistance, and funding opportunities.

Climate Considerations

Cutler's economy is directly influenced by its coastal setting. Increasing storm intensity threatens piers, bait houses, and access roads, while warming waters and evolving regulations affect lobster migration, fuel costs, and fishing seasons. At the same time, Cutler's small scale offers adaptive opportunities. Investing in resilient waterfront design, diversifying marine-based enterprises, and supporting remote-work infrastructure all reduce vulnerability. Resilience

planning means shorter recovery times after storms, fewer lost fishing days, and greater security for local income.

The Town can also direct affected businesses to regional, state, and federal technical assistance and funding resources when needed.

Progress Since 1991

Since adoption of the 1991 Comprehensive Plan, Cutler's economy has changed in several important ways. Military personnel departed the Naval Communications Station in 2000, and the former administrative and housing areas were later decommissioned. The transmitter facility remains operational under civilian federal management, but it no longer plays the same role in local employment.

Commercial fishing and marine-related activity have continued to serve as the foundation of Cutler's local economy. At the same time, employment has become more regionally oriented, with more residents commuting to Machias and other nearby service centers. Self-employment, home-based businesses, contract work, and the use of multiple household income sources also remain important parts of the Town's economic structure.

Broadband access has expanded opportunities for remote work, online business activity, and home-based professional services. Nature-based and heritage-related visitation has also increased around Cutler's public lands, lighthouse, coastline, and working harbor.

Policies and Strategies

Policy 1: Sustain Cutler's working waterfront and support the marine-based economic activity that remains central to the town's employment and identity.

Strategy 1.1: Continue regular harbor maintenance and coordination on dredging, with targeted structural improvements to wharves and access points as funding allows, consistent with the Marine Resources chapter.

Lead Entity: Select Board / Harbor Committee

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Strategy 1.2: Pursue external funding for resilient waterfront infrastructure through applicable state, federal, and regional grant programs.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Strategy 1.3: Support marine-related diversification that complements commercial fishing, including seafood handling, marine services, and other compatible small-scale activities that rely on the working waterfront.

Lead Entity: Select Board
Timeframe: Near-Term (1-2 years)
Priority: Medium

Policy 2: Strengthen home-based, small-scale, and remote work opportunities that are compatible with Cutler’s rural character.

Strategy 2.1: Review and maintain land use ordinances to ensure they allow home occupations, marine trades, and small professional or service businesses within residential areas where appropriate, and amend as needed to reflect community priorities.

Lead Entity: Planning Board
Timeframe: Ongoing
Priority: Medium

Strategy 2.2: Support county and regional broadband initiatives to ensure reliable, affordable service for residents, fishermen, and remote workers.

Lead Entity: Select Board
Timeframe: Ongoing
Priority: Medium

Strategy 2.3: Make information available about technical assistance, business counseling, and financing resources offered by Sunrise County Economic Council, Maine Small Business Development Centers, and other regional or state partners.

Lead Entity: Select Board / Town Office
Timeframe: Ongoing
Priority: Low

Policy 3: Make targeted public investments, consistent with the Town’s available resources, that support existing businesses and appropriate small-scale economic activity.

Strategy 3.1: Direct municipal investment toward practical projects that improve access, safety, and functionality for the working waterfront and existing businesses, including parking, signage, circulation, and access improvements.

Lead Entity: Select Board
Timeframe: Near-Term (1-2 years)
Priority: Medium

Strategy 3.2: Consider climate exposure, long-term maintenance needs, and consistency with the Comprehensive Plan before committing municipal funds to economic development-related infrastructure.

Lead Entity: Select Board
Timeframe: Ongoing
Priority: Medium

Strategy 3.3: Participate in regional economic development planning, including future updates to the Washington County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, so Cutler's priorities are represented in regional programs and funding decisions.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: Low

Sources

- U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2019-2023 (Cutler Profile).
- U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census 2020; Gazetteer Files (land area and density).
- Maine Department of Labor, Center for Workforce Research and Information. *Quarterly and Annual Employment and Wages Labor Market Area (Machias)*. Available from Maine DOL CWRI dashboards/spreadsheets.
- Maine Department of Marine Resources, Annual Landings and Value (2020-2024).
- Maine Office of the State Economist, Municipal Population and Labor Projections to 2040 (2024).
- Washington County Economic Development CEDS (2024).
- Town of Cutler, Comprehensive Plan (1991).

HOUSING

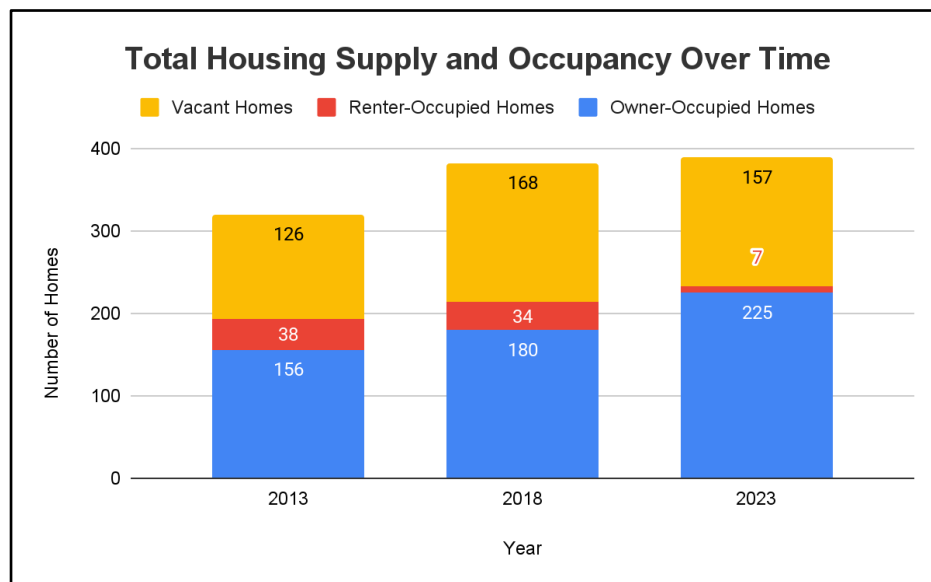
State Goal: To encourage and promote affordable, decent housing opportunities for all Maine citizens.

Introduction

Housing is a cornerstone of Cutler's long-term stability. The town's ability to keep families here, welcome new residents, and support its workforce depends on having enough safe, decent, and affordable homes of the right types. Cutler is a small coastal town with a high share of seasonally occupied and publicly owned or conserved land, making its housing market tight, relatively old, and strongly affected by factors outside the town's control. This chapter reviews current housing conditions, affordability, senior housing needs, how local regulations affect housing supply and affordability, and climate vulnerability, and identifies policies and strategies to ensure that Cutler can continue to offer housing options for residents of all ages and incomes.

Housing Supply and Occupancy

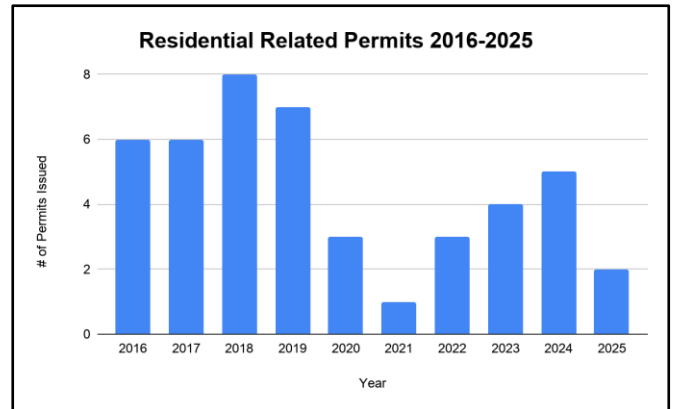
American Community Survey (ACS) data show that between 2013 and 2023 Cutler's year-round owner-occupied housing increased while rental housing declined sharply. Owner-occupied units rose from about 156 to about 225 over the decade, roughly a 44 percent increase, while renter-occupied units fell from 38 to just 7, a drop of more than 80 percent. Vacant units number approximately 150-165, the large majority classified as seasonal, recreational, or occasional use, confirming that a meaningful share of Cutler's physical housing stock is unavailable to year-round working households during the off-season.



Residential Construction, 2016-2025

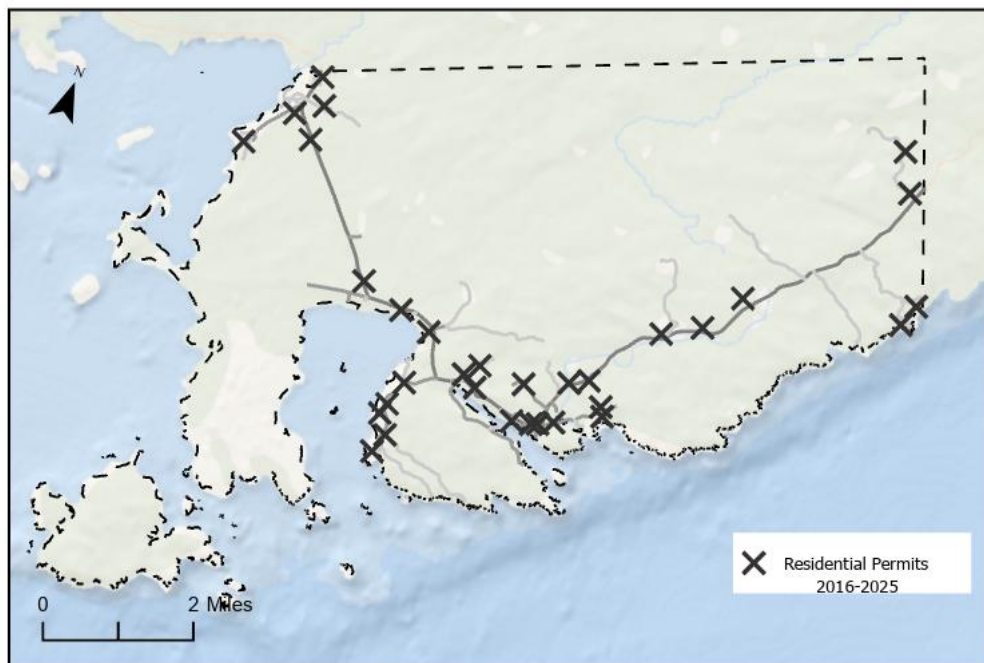
own building permit records provide a more direct measure of recent residential activity than American Community Survey estimates alone. Between 2016 and 2025, Cutler issued 45 permits involving residential construction, placement, conversion, or replacement.

Permit activity was highest between 2016 and 2019, declined in 2020 and 2021, and increased modestly from 2022 through 2024. The total should not be interpreted as 45 net-new year-round homes because the records include single-family houses, manufactured homes, seasonal structures, guest or accessory dwellings, conversions, and replacements of existing homes.



The permit map shows that recent residential development occurred primarily lot by lot along existing roads, rather than through large subdivisions or planned developments. Activity was concentrated around the harbor village, Route 191, and the Little Machias area, with additional scattered development elsewhere in town.

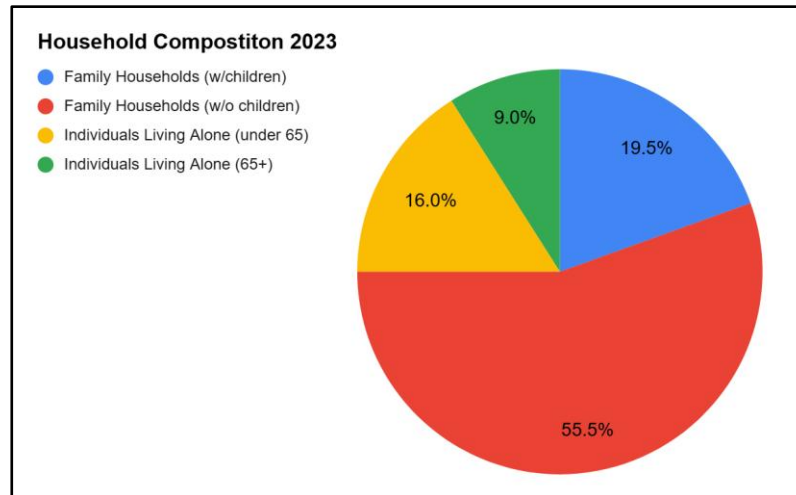
This pattern is consistent with Cutler's historic development pattern. However, recent construction appears to have added few year-round rentals, smaller accessible homes, or other housing options for younger households, seniors, and moderate-income residents.



Source: Town of Cutler building permit records, 2016-2025

Households and Household Size

Cutler has approximately 232 households, averaging 2.3 persons per household. Roughly three-quarters are family households (approximately 174) and about one-quarter are nonfamily (approximately 58). Approximately 9 percent of all households are people aged 65 or older living alone, and another 16 percent are adults living alone under age 65. An aging population and a high share of single-person senior households mean Cutler must plan for both family housing and units suited to residents who want to age in place. An average of 2.3 persons per future unit is used for the housing needs projection in this chapter.



Housing Affordability

Maine law defines affordable housing as housing affordable to households whose income does not exceed 80 percent of the area median income (AMI) as defined by HUD (30-A M.R.S.A. §4301). The applicable area is Washington County. The FY2023 HUD AMI for Washington County is \$64,300 for a four-person household. At 80 percent of AMI, the income threshold for affordable housing is \$51,440, corresponding to a maximum affordable monthly housing cost of approximately \$1,286 (30 percent of monthly income). This is the correct benchmark for state compliance purposes.

The ACS 2019-2023 estimates Cutler's own median household income at approximately \$56,667, with a wide margin of error due to the town's small sample size. That figure is provided below for local context only; Washington County HUD AMI governs the state affordability standard.

Income Level	Annual Income	Max Affordable Monthly Housing	% Owners (w/mortgage) Cost-Burdened	% Renters Cost-Burdened
Washington County HUD AMI (100%)	\$64,300	\$1,608	—	—
80% of County HUD AMI	\$51,440	\$1,286	—	—
Cutler ACS Median HH Income	\$56,667	\$1,417	~23%	~30%

Sources: HUD FY2023 Income Limits, Washington County ME; ACS 2019-2023 5-Year Estimates (Cutler, ME); Maine State Housing Authority Comprehensive Planning Housing Data Set.

American Community Survey estimates indicate that approximately 23 percent of Cutler homeowners with a mortgage and approximately 30 percent of renters are cost-burdened, meaning they spend more than 30 percent of household income on housing. Because Cutler has only approximately seven renter-occupied units, low- and moderate-income renters have very limited ability to find a less expensive local alternative and may need to seek housing in Machias, East Machias, or other nearby communities.

For very low-income households earning no more than 50 percent of the county AMI, or approximately \$32,150, even modest housing costs may be unaffordable without financial assistance. Lower-income households earning between 51 and 80 percent of AMI, or approximately \$32,150 to \$51,440, may be able to afford some older owner-occupied homes, but the local rental market offers very limited options.

Senior and Assisted Living Housing Needs

Consistent with Cutler's aging demographic profile, the proportion of residents aged 65 and older is growing and projected to increase through the planning period (see Chapter 2: Population). Approximately 9 percent of Cutler's households are seniors living alone. There is no assisted living or congregate care facility in Cutler, and none is currently anticipated given the Town's size and population. Seniors who require assisted living or memory care must relocate to facilities in Machias, Calais, or Ellsworth. The primary local housing need for the senior population is enabling existing homeowners to age in place through rehabilitation, weatherization, and expanded ADU options, including the possibility of a smaller attached or detached unit for a caregiver. Washington County Council on Aging (WCCOA) is the regional resource for senior housing referrals and elder services.

Seasonal Conversions and Exempt Land

A large portion of Cutler's land area is not available for private residential development. Federal, state, and nonprofit conservation entities, including the former U.S. Naval Communications Station support parcel, the State of Maine Cutler Coast Public Reserved Land, Maine Coast Heritage Trust holdings, and the Cross Island National Wildlife Refuge, together hold extensive acreage that is exempt from taxation and unavailable for private development. These holdings protect important ecological and scenic resources but reduce the supply of buildable, taxable

land in private ownership. As a result, even if residential demand increases, readily developable land will remain limited. Seasonal-to-year-round conversions are therefore likely to continue as an important source of year-round housing, while the limited supply of developable private land may place upward pressure on land values and constrain new residential development.

These conditions were identified in the 1991 Comprehensive Plan and remain relevant today. Since that time, Maine has adopted new housing legislation requiring municipalities to revise local land use ordinances to allow additional housing opportunities, including accessory dwelling units and other forms of residential development, consistent with state law. Updating the 2019 Land Use Ordinance to reflect these requirements will provide greater housing flexibility while allowing Cutler to accommodate modest growth in a manner consistent with its rural character, natural resources, and available infrastructure.

Housing Opportunity: Cutler Land Inc. and MCHT-Gifted Land

Cutler also has a potential future housing opportunity through land held by Cutler Land Inc., a local entity that has resumed activity to oversee property previously gifted by Maine Coast Heritage Trust for housing purposes and, more recently, affordable housing. The original gifted parcel includes surveyed land divided into approximately ten lots. In addition, Maine Coast Heritage Trust has more recently conveyed an additional approximately 122 acres contiguous to the earlier parcel.

At present, this newer acreage remains undeveloped and in raw condition, and it is unlikely that Cutler Land Inc. will be in a position to undertake major development there during the planning period. However, the previously surveyed parcel may present a more realistic near-term opportunity for small-scale housing activity if legal, organizational, and infrastructure questions can be resolved. Because Cutler Land Inc. is in the early stages of reorganization and continues to consult legal counsel regarding allowable uses and development options, including potential affordable housing models, land trust arrangements, or other housing approaches, the extent and timing of any future housing development on these lands remains uncertain.

Even with that uncertainty, the existence of these lands is important in the context of Cutler's limited developable land base. They represent one of the few identified locations in town with potential to support future housing, including affordable housing, if planning, governance, funding, and site-readiness issues can be addressed over time.

Housing Condition and Age

More than one-quarter of Cutler's homes were built before 1939. Older housing is not inherently problematic but frequently requires weatherization, electrical upgrades, septic replacement, or foundation work. For seniors on fixed incomes or households at or below 80 percent of AMI, these capital needs can create a hidden cost burden beyond what is captured in monthly housing-cost data. Efficiency Maine Trust, MaineHousing's Home Repair and Weatherization programs, and Washington County Community Development Authority (WCCDA) CDBG-funded rehabilitation programs are available resources to help close this gap.

How Local Regulations Affect Affordable Housing

The Town of Cutler Land Use Ordinance (2019) allows single-family homes by right in residential zones. Manufactured housing on individual lots is allowed. Mobile home parks are permitted in a designated district, consistent with 30-A M.R.S.A. §4358. ADUs are not currently explicitly addressed and must be added to comply with LD 2003. Multifamily housing (two or more units) is not permitted in any zone. Minimum lot sizes and setback requirements are relatively modest, and there are no curb, sidewalk, or paved road-width standards that would materially inflate construction costs. The primary regulatory barriers to affordable housing are the absence of ADU provisions and the lack of any density bonus or affordable housing incentive mechanism. A targeted amendment to the 2019 ordinance is the highest-priority regulatory action identified in this plan. Because multifamily housing is not permitted in any zone and rental housing stock is already extremely limited, the current ordinance offers few pathways for creation of new year-round rental units beyond accessory dwelling units or manufactured housing where allowed.

Future Housing Need

Using the population projection from Chapter 2, from approximately 524 residents in 2020 to approximately 609 by 2037, and an average household size of 2.3 persons, Cutler will need approximately 35 to 40 additional year-round housing units during the planning period. This is a modest level of growth that could be accommodated through accessory dwelling units, seasonal-to-year-round conversions, rehabilitation of existing units, and small-scale infill on already-served roads. Because the existing housing stock is small and aging, maintaining and improving existing units will remain as important as permitting new construction.

Conditions and Trends

Cutler's housing market is small and predominantly owner-occupied, with very few rental units and a substantial share of seasonal or occasional-use homes. The housing stock is generally older, and the Town's aging population is increasing the need for homes that are accessible, energy-efficient, and suitable for aging in place.

Recent trends show continued growth in owner-occupied housing and a sharp decline in renter-occupied units. Seasonal housing remains an important part of the local market, while the conversion of year-round homes to seasonal use may further reduce the supply available to permanent residents. At the same time, the amount of land readily available for new residential development is constrained by conservation ownership, environmental conditions, and other site limitations.

Housing demand is expected to remain modest through 2037 and will be influenced more by changes in household size, age, and occupancy than by rapid population growth. Maintaining and rehabilitating existing homes, expanding small-scale housing choices, and preserving opportunities for year-round occupancy will therefore remain important during the planning period.

Analysis

Cutler's housing challenges are driven less by rapid population growth than by the characteristics of its existing housing stock and limited opportunities for new development. An aging population, a predominance of older homes, very few rental units, a large seasonal housing inventory, and constrained developable land all influence the availability and affordability of housing for year-round residents.

The Town's housing supply is expected to change gradually over the planning period. Future housing needs are likely to be met through rehabilitation of existing homes, modest infill development, accessory dwelling units and other housing opportunities permitted under state law, and carefully sited new construction that is consistent with Cutler's rural character, natural resources, and available infrastructure.

Maintaining opportunities for year-round residency is essential to the Town's long-term vitality. Housing availability affects the ability of local families, fishermen, tradespeople, municipal employees, younger households, and older residents to remain in the community. While seasonal residents contribute to the local economy and tax base, continued conversion of year-round homes to seasonal use may further limit housing choices for permanent residents.

Large-scale residential growth is neither anticipated nor desired. Instead, the Town should focus on preserving and improving existing housing, encouraging modest housing opportunities where appropriate, and ensuring that local land use regulations remain consistent with state housing requirements while protecting the community's rural and coastal character.

Although much of Cutler's land is permanently conserved or constrained by environmental conditions, these lands also protect the scenic beauty, natural resources, and quality of life that make the community an attractive place to live. Future housing decisions should balance the need for additional housing opportunities with the long-term stewardship of these important resources.

Climate Considerations

Cutler's housing stock is vulnerable to coastal storms, flooding, erosion, high winds, and extended power outages. Many homes were constructed before modern building standards and may require continued investment to improve energy efficiency, weather resistance, and long-term resilience.

Future residential development should be located and designed to minimize exposure to coastal hazards where practicable, consistent with the Future Land Use Plan, Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, and applicable state and federal regulations. Rehabilitation of existing homes also provides opportunities to improve resilience through energy efficiency upgrades, weatherization, and other practical improvements.

Supporting safe, durable, and resilient housing will help protect residents while reducing long-term maintenance and recovery costs associated with increasingly frequent severe weather events.

Progress since 1991

Since adoption of the 1991 Comprehensive Plan, Cutler's housing stock has remained predominantly owner-occupied, with seasonal housing continuing to represent a significant portion of the local market. Broadband expansion has created new opportunities for remote work and increased the potential for year-round residency.

Housing needs have become more pronounced as housing costs and land values have increased throughout coastal Maine, the supply of year-round housing has remained limited, and the availability of rental housing has declined. An aging population has also increased the need for housing that supports residents who wish to remain in their homes and community as they grow older.

Since 1991, Maine has adopted new housing legislation requiring municipalities to revise local land use regulations to allow additional housing opportunities consistent with state law. These changes reinforce the Town's longstanding goal of supporting modest year-round housing opportunities.

Policies and Strategies

Policy 1: Encourage and promote a range of safe, decent, and affordable year-round housing opportunities that support residents of all ages, household types, and income levels.

Strategy 1.1: Amend the Land Use Ordinance as needed to remain consistent with current state housing law, including provisions for accessory dwelling units and other required housing opportunities, subject to site suitability.

Lead Entity: Planning Board

Timeframe: Near-Term (1-2 years)

Priority: High

Strategy 1.2: Encourage rehabilitation of older and substandard homes by making information available about Community Development Block Grant housing rehabilitation, MaineHousing home repair and weatherization programs, Efficiency Maine resources, and other applicable assistance.

Lead Entity: Select Board, Town Office

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: Medium

Strategy 1.3: Seek to achieve the state target that at least 10% of new residential development built or placed during the next decade be affordable to households at or below 80% of the applicable area median income.

Lead Entity: Planning Board

Timeframe: Mid-Term (3-5 years)

Priority: Medium

Policy 2: Ensure that local land use controls encourage the development of quality affordable housing, including rental housing, at a scale appropriate to Cutler's developable land, infrastructure, and community character.

Strategy 2.1: Review and, where appropriate, amend land use standards in designated residential or growth areas to support affordable and workforce housing through measures such as increased density, reduced lot sizes or setbacks, flexible road standards, or other appropriate incentives, where soils, wells, septic capacity, and surrounding land uses allow.

Lead Entity: Planning Board

Timeframe: Near-Term (1-2 years)

Priority: High

Strategy 2.2: Maintain and clearly identify in the Land Use Ordinance at least one area where mobile home parks are allowed under state law, and continue to allow manufactured housing in compliance with 30-A M.R.S.A. §4358.

Lead Entity: Planning Board

Timeframe: Near-Term (1-2 years)

Priority: High

Strategy 2.3: If housing opportunities on land held by Cutler Land Inc. advance during the planning period, coordinate locally as needed to ensure any proposal is reviewed consistently with town land use standards, infrastructure limits, and housing goals.

Lead Entity: Planning Board / Select Board

Timeframe: Mid-Term (3-5 years)

Priority: Low

Policy 3: Encourage and support regional efforts to address affordable, workforce, rental, senior, and assisted-living housing needs that cannot be fully met within Cutler.

Strategy 3.1: Coordinate with MaineHousing, Washington County Community Development Authority, Washington County Council on Aging, Sunrise County Economic Council, and other regional partners on housing rehabilitation, affordability, senior housing, and funding opportunities.

Lead Entity: Select Board, Town Office

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: Medium

Strategy 3.2: Participate in regional housing planning or coalition efforts when those efforts offer practical benefits to Cutler residents and do not create substantial ongoing municipal obligations.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Mid-Term (3-5 years)

Priority: Medium

Sources

- U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2013-2017 and 2019-2023 (Cutler, ME).
- U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Decennial Census.
- Maine State Housing Authority (MaineHousing), Comprehensive Planning Housing Data Set;
- Home Repair and Weatherization program information (<https://www.mainehousing.org>).
- Town of Cutler, Building Permit Records, 2015-2025.
- Town of Cutler, Land Use Ordinance (2019).
- Maine Legislature, LD 2003, P.L. 2021, c. 671 (effective January 1, 2024).
- FEMA, Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), Washington County ME.
- Maine Floodplain Management Program, Maine DACF.
- Washington County Council on Aging (WCCOA).
- Washington County Community Development Authority (WCCDA).
- Town of Cutler Comprehensive Plan (1991).

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

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

Introduction

Cutler's public facilities and services reflect its small, close-knit scale and the resourcefulness of its residents. The Town relies on a combination of locally managed, volunteer, and regional partnerships to provide essential functions ranging from road maintenance and waste disposal to fire protection and emergency response. Because of its rural setting and low year-round population, the facilities are modest but generally adequate for current needs. Like many Downeast communities, however, limited tax revenue, aging infrastructure, and exposure to severe coastal weather present ongoing challenges.

As the town plans for the next 10 to 15 years, maintaining essential facilities and improving resilience, efficiency, and accessibility where feasible will be critical to sustaining community well-being. This chapter supports the State of Maine goal to plan for, finance, and maintain an efficient system of public facilities and services that can accommodate anticipated growth while protecting public safety and community well-being.

Municipal Administration

The municipal government operates from the Town Office near the village center, which serves as the day-to-day administrative hub for the Select Board, Planning Board, Town Clerk, and Code Enforcement Officer / Local Plumbing Inspector. The office provides in-person services for vehicle excise, property tax payments, and boat, ATV, and snowmobile registrations, while also offering online renewal options through the State of Maine that make it easier for seasonal residents to complete transactions remotely.

The Town's operations are supported by a small group of elected officials, staff, and volunteers who manage administration, elections, and committee work in coordination with county and state agencies. The Town Office is functional but limited in size, with constrained storage for records and meeting materials, a condition noted in earlier plans and annual reports. As the Town continues to adopt digital systems for accounting, licensing, and recordkeeping, maintaining secure data storage, reliable internet access, and updated technology will be increasingly important to efficient and transparent local government.

Public Safety: Fire Protection, EMS, and Law Enforcement

Fire protection is provided by the certified Cutler Volunteer Fire Department (CVFD), an all-volunteer organization operating from a single station on Cutler Road. The department maintains mutual-aid agreements with neighboring communities, including Machiasport, Whiting, Jonesboro, and Trescott, and receives assistance from the U.S. Navy Fire Department at the VLF Station Cutler when needed. CVFD maintains two engines, a tanker, and a smaller

brush/rescue truck. While serviceable, portions of the fleet and turnout gear are aging, and replacement of engine hoses and equipment upgrades have been identified as near-term priorities. Volunteers train regularly and participate in joint exercises coordinated by Washington County Emergency Management Agency (EMA).

Emergency medical services are provided by Downeast EMS, based in Machias with a substation in East Machias. Local first responders and trained volunteers provide immediate assistance until ambulance arrival, typically within twenty minutes under normal conditions. Severe weather, road closures, or storm surge events can extend response times, underscoring the importance of mutual aid and reliable communications.

Primary law enforcement services in Cutler are provided by the Washington County Sheriff's Office, based in Machias. The Sheriff's Office is responsible for patrol, traffic enforcement, and response to criminal and disturbance calls across a very large rural service area that includes multiple municipalities and unorganized territories. Because Washington County encompasses approximately 2,500 square miles, deputy availability and response times can vary depending on call volume, weather conditions, and the location of the nearest unit.

In recent years, the Maine State Police have significantly scaled back routine rural patrols in Washington County as part of broader statewide restructuring and staffing adjustments. Routine patrol presence by state troopers in many rural areas, including Washington County, has been greatly reduced or eliminated, and responsibilities for day-to-day patrol and response work have shifted increasingly to the Sheriff's Office. State Police units may still assist with specialized services, major incidents, and support functions when resources allow.

For Cutler, this county-based law enforcement model is typical of rural Maine communities without a municipal police department. While generally effective, this structure depends on reliable communications through the Washington County Regional Communications Center, accurate addressing and road information, and passable road conditions. Winter weather, coastal storms, or other emergency conditions may extend response times.

The Town designates Bay Ridge Elementary School (2066 Cutler Road) as its emergency muster and shelter location during severe weather events and other emergencies. The school's central location along Route 191, accessibility for emergency responders, and familiarity to residents make it a practical gathering point. The Town coordinates with the Washington County Emergency Management Agency to maintain sheltering plans, communication protocols, and access to regional assistance. During extended outages or severe coastal storms, shelter operations may depend on the duration and severity of the event, available staffing, and regional support resources.

Solid Waste and Recycling

The regional solid waste system through Marion Transfer Station meets current needs. Cutler's waste generation is stable and well within regional capacity. Records readily available for 2021 show the Town disposed of approximately 255,580 pounds of municipal solid waste in 2021 and

286,680 pounds in 2024. The Town will continue to monitor disposal costs and service reliability.

At this time, there is no formal municipal recycling program. Recycling activities occur on an individual basis. Scrap metal is separated locally; however, quantities are not tracked or weighed. The Town and the Marion Transfer Station do not currently operate a structured recycling program.

Public Works and Road Maintenance

The Town is responsible for maintaining its local road network, while MaineDOT maintains State Route 191. Road maintenance, ditching, culvert replacement, and winter plowing are carried out through local contracts, with funding appropriated annually. Drainage and stormwater runoff remain concerns on steep or coastal road segments. Cutler is not an MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) community and has no combined sewer overflows. Stormwater management relies on roadside ditching, culverts, and natural drainage patterns. Regular maintenance of ditches and culverts is conducted by the road contractor as part of routine operations. No major stormwater infrastructure improvements are needed beyond routine culvert replacements and drainage improvements at problem locations. Future planning should identify high-risk locations prone to washouts, icing, or tidal flooding and prioritize resilience upgrades such as improved grading and reinforced culverts.



As winter weather becomes less predictable, maintaining adequate sand and salt supplies and ensuring up-to-date plowing contracts will remain essential. Additional detail on traffic and long-range transportation needs is provided in the Transportation chapter.

The Town does not have a formal street tree program.

Education

Public education is provided locally at Bay Ridge Elementary School (PK–8), part of AOS 96. After grade eight, Cutler students typically attend Machias Memorial High School or Washington Academy in East Machias as a publicly tuitioned option.

Bay Ridge Elementary enrollment declined from approximately 72 students in 2015-2016 to 23 students in 2025-2026, reflecting regional demographic trends and an aging population. Despite lower enrollment, the school maintains small class sizes, individualized instruction, and strong community support. Because enrollment is sensitive to even small changes in household

composition, modest in-migration or new housing could help stabilize student numbers over time.



Health, Communication, and Utilities

Residents receive their medical and emergency care from regional providers in Machias and surrounding towns. The nearest hospital is Down East Community Hospital (DECH), an acute-care facility with a 24-hour emergency department that serves all of Washington County. Outpatient and primary care are available through DECH's affiliated clinics as well as the Eastport Health Care Clinic in Machias and the Lubec Regional Medical Centers in Lubec and East Machias, both federally qualified community health centers that provide family medicine, behavioral health, and dental services. Together, these regional providers ensure access to both routine and emergency care for residents.

Telecommunications and utility services play an increasingly important role in public safety, municipal operations, and daily life. Broadband access has improved substantially since 1991. Spectrum provides cable internet service to much of Cutler, while Fidium Fiber, operated by Consolidated Communications, has expanded fiber-optic service in parts of the region, offering higher-speed internet where available. Fixed-wireless and satellite providers serve more remote areas that are not yet connected by cable or fiber. Reliable internet and cellular connectivity support emergency communications, remote work, distance learning, municipal operations, and access to telehealth services. Electric power is supplied by Versant Power through its Bangor Hydro District. While service is generally reliable, outages can occur during severe storms, reinforcing the importance of coordination with utility providers and emergency management partners to maintain communications and essential services during extended disruptions. Three-phase power is available along the Route 191 corridor from Bay Ridge Elementary to the Navy Fire Department.

Water Supply and Wastewater Disposal

Cutler relies entirely on private wells for drinking water and individual subsurface wastewater disposal systems for sewage treatment. The Town does not operate public water or sewer systems, and none are proposed during the planning period. The Town does not have specific local policies regarding septage collection or disposal beyond state requirements. Residents contract with licensed septage haulers for pump-out services as needed.

Groundwater quality is generally good, though some coastal and low-lying wells may experience saltwater intrusion during droughts or severe storms. All new construction and system replacements are reviewed by the Town's Code Enforcement Officer/Local Plumbing Inspector to ensure compliance with state standards. Because Cutler relies on private systems, even modest residential growth or seasonal conversions can incrementally increase demands on inspections, emergency response, and road maintenance.

PFAS Note (Former Navy Housing / Beachwood Bay Area)

The Town of Cutler continues to coordinate with the Department of the Navy, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, and the Maine CDC regarding PFAS contamination associated with former Navy operations at Naval Support Activity Cutler, including the Beachwood Bay subdivision. The Department of the Navy and Maine DEP have completed the first Five-Year Review of remedies implemented at the site as part of the CERCLA process. Detailed information on sampling results, exposure pathways, and long-term remediation planning is provided in the Water Resources chapter.

Capital Investment and Growth Areas

The Town has limited capital investment anticipated during the planning period. Priority improvements include fire apparatus and equipment replacement, backup power for essential facilities, and ongoing road and drainage maintenance, including fire engine hose replacement and turnout gear upgrades (approximately \$20,000), a generator for Bay Ridge Elementary School (approximately \$60,000 to \$80,000), and continued road and culvert maintenance (approximately \$50,000 annually). Because Cutler has a compact village pattern and most municipal facilities are already located in or near the village center, future facility investments will naturally occur in areas that support the existing community pattern. Formal growth area designations are addressed in the Future Land Use chapter. As those areas are refined, the Town will ensure that at least 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments are directed to designated growth areas consistent with state requirements. A detailed Capital Investment Plan showing phasing and funding sources is included in the Fiscal Capacity chapter.

Conditions and Trends

Cutler's public facilities and services remain modest but generally adequate to meet current needs. The Town continues to rely on a combination of local management, volunteer service,

contracted work, and regional partnerships to provide administration, public safety, education, solid waste disposal, road maintenance, healthcare access, and utility services.

Current trends include continued reliance on regional providers, aging equipment and facilities, increased use of digital services, and ongoing investment in maintaining roads, drainage infrastructure, and emergency response capability. Future needs are expected to focus on maintaining essential services, replacing aging equipment, and making targeted capital improvements rather than constructing major new public facilities.

Analysis

Cutler's public facilities and services are generally adequate for the Town's current population and anticipated modest growth. Continued reliability will depend on regular maintenance, timely equipment replacement, regional cooperation, and realistic capital planning. Mutual aid, school partnerships, contracted services, utility providers, and county and regional systems allow the Town to provide essential services without duplicating facilities that are more efficiently provided on a regional basis.

The Town's principal needs involve maintaining and upgrading existing facilities rather than constructing major new ones. Priorities include fire apparatus and protective equipment, road and drainage infrastructure, backup power, communications systems, and municipal administrative space. Because major capital costs can be difficult for a small community to absorb in a single year, phased improvements, reserve planning, grants, and other outside funding will remain important.

The Town's anticipated modest growth is unlikely to require major new public facilities during the planning period. Future needs are more likely to involve maintenance, replacement, and incremental improvement of existing infrastructure, with the location and scale of any new facilities influenced by the Future Land Use Plan and the Town's financial resources. Detailed project costs, timing, and funding sources are addressed in the Capital Investment Plan.

Climate Considerations

Cutler's public facilities and services may be affected by coastal storms, flooding, erosion, extended power outages, and other severe weather events. Roads, culverts, municipal buildings, emergency communications, and utility infrastructure may require additional maintenance, repair, or replacement as these events become more frequent or severe.

Because the Town relies on a combination of local facilities, regional services, and volunteer organizations, maintaining reliable infrastructure and emergency response capability will remain important to ensuring continuity of municipal services. Continued incorporation of resilience into routine maintenance and capital improvements will help reduce long-term costs and service disruptions.

Progress Since 1991

Since adoption of the 1991 Comprehensive Plan, Cutler has transitioned to a regional solid waste system through the Marion Transfer Station. Bay Ridge Elementary School remains in active use as an important public facility, and the Cutler Volunteer Fire Department has maintained service through mutual aid agreements, ongoing training, and periodic equipment upgrades.

Municipal operations have also become more reliant on regional partnerships and digital services. Residents can complete several registrations online, broadband access has expanded, and contracted services continue to support local road and drainage maintenance.

Several needs identified in 1991 remain unresolved, including limited Town Office space and the need for continued replacement of aging fire and road equipment. PFAS contamination associated with former Navy housing has also emerged as a new public health and intergovernmental coordination issue.

Policies and Strategies

Policy 1: Maintain and modernize essential public facilities and services efficiently and responsibly, and provide growth-related facilities and services in a manner that supports the designated growth areas.

Strategy 1.1: Continue routine maintenance of municipal buildings, fire equipment, and roads to extend service life.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Strategy 1.2: Maintain a rolling 3-5 year capital priorities list, updating annually as part of the budget process.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Strategy 1.3: Pursue state and federal grants, shared-service agreements, and other outside funding for facility improvements, energy efficiency, and accessibility upgrades.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Near-Term (1-2 years)

Priority: High

Strategy 1.4: Direct at least 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments to designated growth areas consistent with the Future Land Use Plan.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Near-Term (1-2 years)

Priority: High

Policy 2: Strengthen community resilience and emergency preparedness.

Strategy 2.1: Continue to designate Bay Ridge Elementary School as the primary emergency shelter; work with AOS 96, Washington County EMA, and state programs to improve shelter readiness and backup power.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Near-Term (1-2 years)

Priority: High

Strategy 2.2: Identify local roads and access routes that are vulnerable to flooding, washouts, or isolation and work with MaineDOT and Washington County EMA to seek funding for priority improvements as opportunities arise. See also Transportation Chapter, Policy 2.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Mid-Term (3-5 years)

Priority: Medium

Policy 3: Collaborate regionally to deliver cost-effective public services and address issues that extend beyond municipal boundaries.

Strategy 3.1: Continue participation in regional service arrangements, including the Marion Transfer Station, Downeast EMS, and mutual-aid agreements with neighboring fire departments.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Strategy 3.2: Engage in regional and county-level discussions related to emergency communications, recycling markets, and infrastructure funding opportunities.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Near-Term (1-2 years)

Priority: Medium

Strategy 3.3: Monitor state transportation and utility initiatives affecting Route 191 to ensure that Cutler's needs are represented in regional planning. See also Transportation Chapter, Policy 3.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: Low

Sources

- Town of Cutler – Official Website:
<https://www.cutlermaine.gov/>
- Town of Cutler – Annual Town Reports:
<https://www.cutlermaine.gov/annual-report>
- Bay Ridge Elementary School – AOS 96:
<https://www.bayridgeschool.org/>
- AOS 96 “Our Schools” page (tells town list including Cutler)
<https://www.aos96.org/our-schools>
- Washington County Emergency Management Agency (EMA):
<https://washingtoncountymaine.com/emergency-management-agency/>
- Maine CDC – Drinking Water Program:
<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/environmental-health/dwp>
- U.S. Navy – PFAS Investigations:
<https://www.navfac.navy.mil/Divisions/Environmental/Products-and-Services/Environmental-Restoration/PFAS-Reading-Room/>
- Maine Department of Education – Data Warehouse (Enrollment Reports):
<https://www.maine.gov/doe/data-warehouse/reporting/enrollment>
- Washington County Sheriff’s Office:
<https://washingtoncountymaine.com/sherifs-office/>
- Downeast EMS:
<https://downeastems.com/>
- Versant Power:
<https://www.versantpower.com/>
- Versant Power – Find Your District / Bangor Hydro District:
<https://www.versantpower.com/find-district>

Public Facilities & Services



-  Town Office
-  Fire Station
-  School
-  Post Office
-  Library
-  Cemetery
-  Salt/Sand Shed

0 0.5 1
Miles

TRANSPORTATION

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

Introduction

Cutler's transportation system consists of a small network of state and local roads connecting homes, the village, working waterfront, public facilities, and natural resource areas to Machias and the surrounding region. Route 191 serves as the Town's primary transportation corridor and is essential for daily travel, freight movement, emergency response, school access, and the fishing industry.

This chapter updates the transportation information contained in the 1991 Comprehensive Plan using Maine Department of Transportation data, local road and culvert records, and available information on traffic, bridges, parking, transit, pedestrian access, and other transportation facilities. It evaluates current conditions and identifies the transportation needs most relevant to Cutler during the planning period.

Road Network and Conditions

Cutler's public road system totals approximately 19 miles and includes one state highway and several short local roads serving residential, marine, agricultural, and public uses.

State Route 191, also known as Cutler Road, extends from Whiting through the village and harbor area to Trescott. MaineDOT classifies Route 191 as a Rural Major Collector and Highway Corridor Priority 3 roadway.

Most other public roads are maintained by the Town, although a short segment of Ridge Road receives state-aid maintenance. Road surfaces include asphalt, chip seal, and gravel, and conditions vary by location and maintenance history.

MaineDOT's 2024 Customer Service Level data generally rate Cutler's public roads as fair to good for condition, safety, and service. Local road needs are addressed through routine grading, ditching, resurfacing, culvert maintenance, and other work identified through the Town's road maintenance planning.

Road Inventory and Needs							
Roads	Length & Surface Type (Paved, Gravel, Partial)	Current Condition (Good, Fair, Poor)	Typical Width/ Shoulders (Narrow, Adequate, Wide)	Drainage Issues (None, Minor, Chronic)	Known Problem Areas (frost heaves, washouts, etc.)	Last Major Work Done (year and type)	Routine Annual Work (grading, patches, plowing issues, etc.)
Route 191 (State Rd)	13.4 mi Paved	Good	20-24ft rd Narrow	None	Significant frostheaves between airport and base, significant cracking everywhere	6/16/2025	Light Capital Paving
Ridge Rd (State Aid Rd)	0.8 mi Paved	Fair	Adequate	None	None	6/16/2025	Light Capital Paving
Little Machias Rd	1.5 mi Paved	Fair	Adequate	None	Cracking, needs ditching	~2018	Normal Maintenance
Fitzhenry Ln	0.17 mi Paved	Fair	Narrow	None	Some cracking	~2018	Normal Maintenance
Cove Rd	0.8 mi Paved	Fair	Adequate	None	Some cracking	~2018	Normal Maintenance
Steamboat Rd	0.8 mi Paved	Fair	Narrow	Minor	Some cracking, raised culvert	~2018	Normal Maintenance
Cat Alley	0.1mi Paved	Fair	Narrow	Minor	Raised culvert	~2018	Normal Maintenance
Wharf Rd	0.3 mi Paved	Fair	Narrow	None	Cracking	~2018	Normal Maintenance
Destiny Bay Rd	1.06 mi Paved	Good	Adequate	None	Washed out section repaired by FEMA 2025, currently some cracking	~2018, 2025	Normal Maintenance, repaired washed out section
Old Mill Rd	0.17 mi Paved	Fair	Narrow	None	Some cracking	2025	Normal Maintenance
Ackley Pond Rd	2.2 mi Gravel	Poor	Narrow	Chronic	Gravel road, standing water.	Unsure	N/A
Marsh Rd (partial)	0.2 mi Paved	Fair	Adequate	None	Some cracking	~2018	Normal Maintenance
Ackley Rd	0.9 mi Paved	Good	Adequate	None	Some cracking	~2018	Normal Maintenance
Clam Access Rd	0.12 Gravel	Poor	Narrow	Chronic	Gravel road, navigable but rough	~2018	N/A

Source: Cutler Road Commissioner, 2026

Traffic, Safety, and Access

Traffic Volumes

MaineDOT's 2024 Average Annual Daily Traffic estimates show approximately 500 to 900 vehicles per day on Route 191 near the village, declining to fewer than 200 vehicles per day toward Trescott. These volumes are generally similar to those reported in the 1991 Comprehensive Plan, indicating that overall traffic levels have remained relatively stable.

Residents report higher traffic during the summer due to seasonal residents and visitors, creating occasional congestion and parking pressure near the village and harbor. Heavy trucks also use Route 191, and their effect on pavement condition may be greater than overall traffic volumes alone suggest.

Crash History and Safety

MaineDOT data identify 18 crashes in Cutler from 2020 through 2024, with no fatalities. The records include one minor injury, six possible injuries, and 16 property-damage-only classifications. Several crashes involved wildlife, winter conditions, or other hazards common to rural roads.

No high-crash locations have been identified. However, residents have noted localized concerns, including the eastbound curve near Little Machias Road and limited pedestrian warning signage in the village. These concerns may not be fully reflected in townwide crash statistics.

Crash Summary (2020-2024)		Severity Summary	
Year	# of Crashes	Type	Count
2020	6	Fatal (K)	0
2021	5	Suspected Serious (A)	0
2022	2	Minor Injuries (B)	1
2023	4	Possible Injuries (C)	6
2024	1	Property Damage Only (PDO)	16
Total crashes	18	Total Injuries	7 (no fatalities)

Source: Maine Department of Transportation, Maine Crash Public Query Tool, Town of Cutler, 2020-2024.

Bridges and Culverts

Five bridges are inventoried within town limits, ranging from 1950s to 1990s construction. All are state-owned and rated *Fair or Better* for structural condition, with no weight-restricted structures.

Cutler's 2024 culvert inventory identified several dozen drainage crossings; the largest (≥ 36 inches) are concentrated along Route 191 near Turners Stream, the Cross Harbor wetland crossing, and drainage points leading toward Holmes Bay. The red-square sites on the 2024 Culvert Map correspond to MaineDOT asset records (Route 191 segment 0191X) rated "Good" with Priority 4. While no failures are imminent, most are nearing end-of-design life and will require replacement within 10 years.

Large Culvert Priority List (2025)				
Location/Road	Approx. Crossing	Condition	Priority	Recommendation
Rt. 191-Turners Stream	Stream / wetland crossing	Good	4	Upsize to 48-60" HDPE to meet 25-year storm standard
Destiny Bay Road	Tidal outlet / salt marsh	Good	4	Replace with embedded culvert and energy dissipation
Rt. 191 - Holmes Bay outlet	Drainage ditch / coastal low point	Good	4	Inspect annually; add headwalls
Rt 191 - Old Mill Rd junction	Small stream	Good	4	Monitor for frost heave uplift

All culvert projects will be referenced in the Fiscal Capacity & CIP chapter for cost and funding detail.

Marine and Waterfront Access

Cutler's road system supports the working waterfront and marine industries that define its economy. Four access points are listed in the MaineDOT Working Waterfront Access Inventory (2024):

1. Town Landing / RT 191
2. Little River Lobster Company Wharf Rd
3. Cates Wharf
4. Mill Lot (Turners Stream) Access (*pictured right*)

These sites provide loading, parking, and storage for commercial fishermen and small recreational users. Maintaining drainage and pavement near these facilities is essential for continued harbor access and economic stability. Additional information on ownership, condition, marine use, and access needs is provided in the Marine Resources chapter.



Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Parking Facilities

Cutler has no formal sidewalks, bicycle lanes, or multi-use paths. Walking occurs primarily near the village, harbor, Cove Road, Route 191, and community facilities. Narrow shoulders, uneven pavement, truck traffic, and winter conditions limit pedestrian and bicycle comfort and safety.

Bicycling is primarily seasonal and recreational, with cyclists sharing travel lanes and shoulders along Route 191 and local roads. The Bay Ridge School, located approximately two miles west

of the village, is not connected to nearby neighborhoods or the village by sidewalks or designated bicycle routes, and most students and families rely on personal vehicles.

Parking constraints are most noticeable in the village and harbor areas during the fishing season, community events, and other periods of high activity. Congestion near Little River Harbor can result in informal parking arrangements that affect circulation. An overflow parking area is available near the ballfield, although visitors may be unaware of it or reluctant to use it because of its distance from the wharf.

Transit and Regional Coordination

Cutler is not served by fixed-route public transit. The nearest scheduled intercity service is provided by West Bus Service (West Transportation), which operates the Coastal Connection route between Calais, Machias, Ellsworth, and Bangor, including Bangor International Airport. The closest pickup location for most Cutler residents is in Machias, with limited service also available from Whiting Corner depending on the route schedule. This service provides regional connections for medical appointments, shopping, employment, and other travel needs.

Local demand-response transportation, formerly provided by Downeast Community Partners (DCP), ended in 2025 following the organization's closure. Waldo Community Action Partners (WCAP), in coordination with the Maine Department of Transportation, has temporarily expanded service into Washington County to help meet transportation needs while long-term regional service options are evaluated.

Although Cutler does not provide municipal transit service, the Town remains dependent on regional transportation providers and state agencies to help residents access employment, healthcare, education, and other essential services beyond the community.

Aviation / Air Access

Cutler contains a small, privately owned airstrip located approximately two miles west of the village near Route 191. The property covers roughly 50 acres and includes a single gravel runway, identified as Runway 9/27, measuring approximately 2,950 feet in length at an elevation of about 55 feet above mean sea level.

The airstrip receives limited use and is not regularly maintained to the standard of an active public airport. It does not provide scheduled passenger service and is not considered an essential component of Cutler's public transportation or emergency response system. The Town does not own, operate, or maintain the facility.



Local Road Design Standards and Connectivity

Cutler's subdivision regulations establish minimum standards for new public and private roads, including width, surface materials, drainage, and provisions for emergency vehicle access. These standards reflect the town's low-density development pattern and emphasize safe construction and long-term maintainability.

Cutler has experienced limited subdivision activity, and street connectivity is not currently a significant transportation concern. New subdivision roads must meet local standards and provide adequate emergency access. Because future development is expected to remain modest, major expansion of the local road network is not anticipated during the planning period.

Conditions and Trends

Cutler's transportation system continues to function adequately for the Town's current population and anticipated modest growth. Route 191 remains the primary transportation corridor, providing access to homes, the working waterfront, public facilities, and regional service centers. Traffic volumes have remained relatively stable, although seasonal activity increases vehicle, truck, and parking demand in the village and harbor areas.

The Town's transportation needs continue to focus on maintaining existing roads, bridges, culverts, and drainage infrastructure rather than expanding the road network. Aging infrastructure, limited municipal resources, and dependence on regional transportation services will remain important considerations throughout the planning period.

Private vehicles remain the primary means of travel for residents, while public transportation continues to be limited to regional intercity and demand-response services. Walking and bicycling are concentrated in the village and recreational areas but are constrained by narrow shoulders and the absence of dedicated pedestrian or bicycle facilities.

Analysis

Cutler's transportation system is generally adequate for its current population and projected modest growth. The Town's principal transportation challenge is not expanding the road network, but maintaining reliable access along Route 191 and local roads while addressing aging pavement, culverts, drainage systems, and other infrastructure.

Route 191 is especially important because it connects residents to the village, working waterfront, school, regional services, and neighboring communities. Disruptions along this corridor or on local roads serving the harbor could affect emergency response, commercial fishing, school transportation, and access to employment and healthcare.

Seasonal traffic and working waterfront activity create localized parking and circulation concerns in the village and harbor areas, even though townwide traffic volumes remain low. Pedestrian and bicycle use is also limited by narrow shoulders and the absence of dedicated facilities, particularly near the village and community destinations.

Cutler's dispersed settlement pattern and distance from regional services make private vehicles essential for most residents. Limited transit options may create particular challenges for older adults, people with disabilities, and residents without reliable transportation. Because Cutler is unlikely to support municipal transit service, access will continue to depend on regional providers, volunteer transportation, and informal ride-sharing.

Future transportation needs are expected to center on maintenance, safety, drainage, waterfront access, and regional connectivity rather than major new road construction.

Climate Considerations

Cutler's transportation system is vulnerable to coastal storms, flooding, erosion, heavy rainfall, and washouts. Low-lying road segments, culverts, drainage systems, and routes serving the harbor may require more frequent maintenance and repair as severe weather affects access and road conditions.

Transportation resilience depends on maintaining drainage, replacing undersized or deteriorated culverts, and incorporating hazard exposure into road and capital planning. These measures can help reduce service disruptions, protect emergency and waterfront access, and limit long-term repair costs.

Progress Since 1991

Since 1991, Cutler has maintained its transportation infrastructure without significant expansion. Route 191 remains in good condition, and local roads continue to serve residents and industry safely. The town has created a culvert inventory and improved coordination with MaineDOT. Persistent issues include limited parking in the village, frost heaves, and dependence on a single highway.

Policies and Strategies

Policy 1: Prioritize safe, efficient use of the transportation system for residents, emergency response, and regional connectivity.

Strategy 1.1: Maintain a seven-year road maintenance plan covering resurfacing, ditching, and culvert replacement.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Strategy 1.2: Coordinate with MaineDOT regarding Route 191 maintenance, traffic conditions, safety concerns, and future transportation planning.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Strategy 1.3: Continue to apply MaineDOT Access Management Rules (17-229 CMR Ch. 299) for driveways on Route 191.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: Medium

Strategy 1.4: Encourage safe walking and bicycling through shoulder maintenance, appropriate share-the-road signage, and consideration of pedestrian accommodations where practical and consistent with the Town's scale and available funding.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Near-Term (1-2 years)

Priority: High

Policy 2: Increase resilience of transportation infrastructure to flooding, sea-level rise, and extreme precipitation.

Strategy 2.1: Use available sea-level rise, flood, and culvert data to identify vulnerable road segments and prioritize them for upgrade.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: Medium

Strategy 2.2: Track flood-related maintenance costs and prioritize resilience projects in the Capital Improvement Program.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Near-Term (1-2 years)

Priority: High

Strategy 2.3: Incorporate future storm intensity and drainage standards into road and culvert design and replacement projects as opportunities arise.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Mid-Term (3-5 years)

Priority: Medium

Policy 3: Coordinate transportation, land use, and regional services to support fiscal efficiency, emergency preparedness, and coastal access.

Strategy 3.1: Maintain harbor access roads and coordinate with MaineDOT's Working Waterfront Program and related partners to support marine industries.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Strategy 3.2: Ensure parking and drainage improvements in village and harbor areas support safe access and emergency response.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Near-Term (1-2 years)

Priority: Medium

Strategy 3.3: Coordinate with Washington County EMA, MaineDOT, and other appropriate agencies on emergency transportation access and continuity of critical routes during severe weather events.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Near-Term (1-2 years)

Priority: High

Strategy 3.4: Continue participation in regional and state transportation planning initiatives.

Lead Entity: Select Board

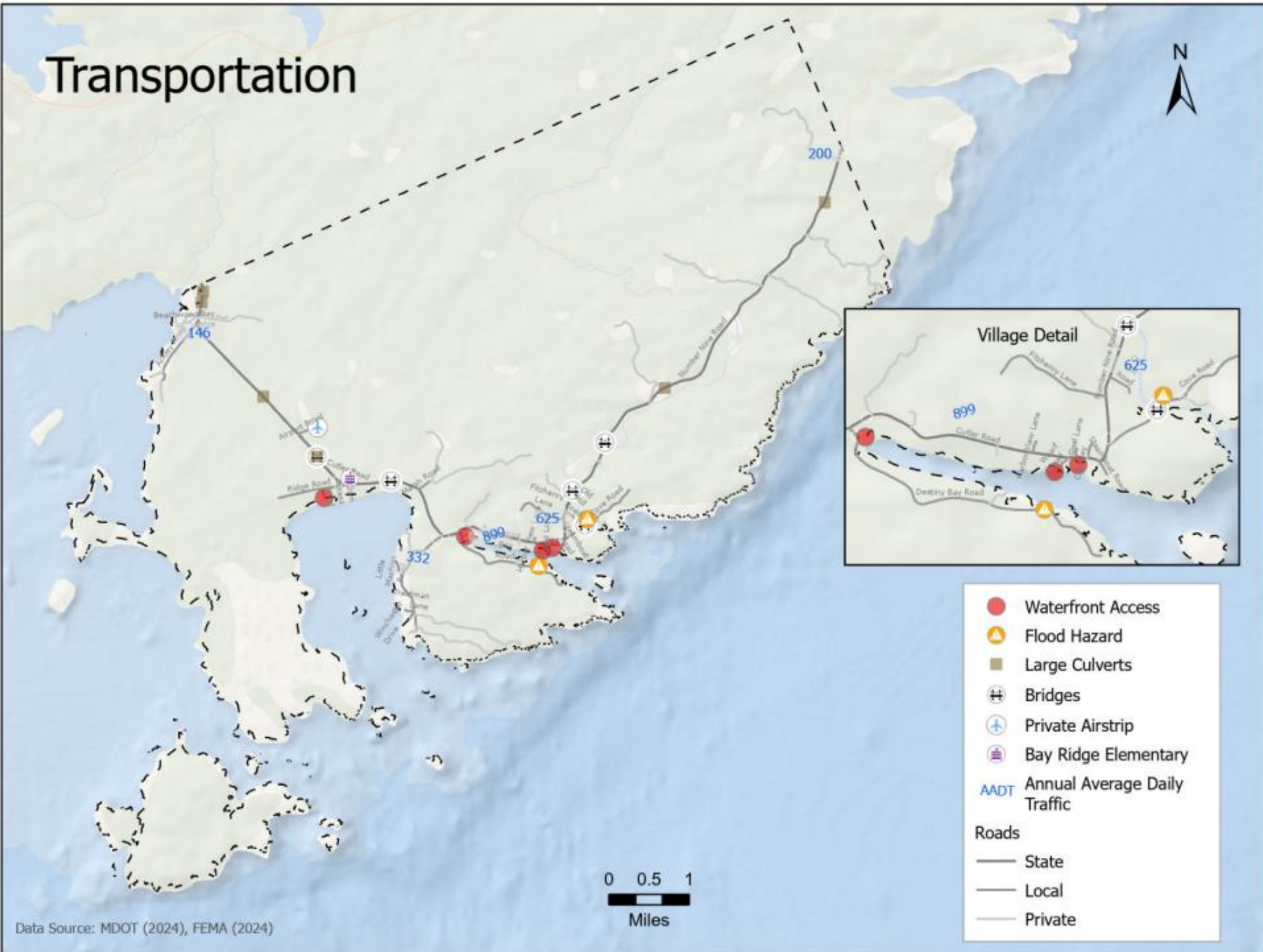
Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: Low

Sources

- Town of Cutler. *Comprehensive Plan* (1991).
- Google Maps:
<https://www.google.com/maps/>
- Maine GeoLibrary:
<https://www.maine.gov/geolib/>
- Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT). *Public Map Viewer* (2025) Road classification, traffic volumes, customer service level data, and transportation infrastructure.
<https://www.maine.gov/mdot/mapviewer/>
- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). *Airport Record: Cutler Regional Airport (ME2)* (2024).
<https://www.airnav.com/airport/ME2>
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). *Sea Level Rise Viewer* (2024).
<https://coast.noaa.gov/slr>
- Maine Flood Resilience Portal (2024).
<https://maine.gov/flood>
- West Transportation. *Coastal Connection* (2025).
<https://westbuservice.com/>

Transportation



WATER RESOURCES

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

Introduction

Cutler's freshwater, groundwater, wetlands, streams, estuaries, and coastal waters are essential to public health, natural systems, recreation, and the marine economy. Residents rely primarily on private wells for drinking water and individual subsurface wastewater systems for sewage disposal, making protection of groundwater and proper septic-system management especially important.

This chapter describes Cutler's significant water resources, existing water-quality conditions, drinking-water supplies, pollution risks, and current protection measures. It also evaluates the principal issues affecting these resources and establishes policies and strategies to maintain water quality and protect drinking-water sources during the planning period.

Surface Waters

Cutler's principal surface waters include Holmes Bay, Cutler Harbor, the Little River Estuary, Ackley Pond, Norse Pond, and the streams and wetlands that drain toward the coast.

Nearshore and estuarine waters, including Cutler Harbor and the Little River, are classified by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection as Class SB. These waters are managed to support fishing, recreation, shellfish harvesting, and marine habitat. Offshore coastal waters are classified as Class SA, the State's highest marine water-quality classification.

Holmes Bay forms part of Cutler's northern boundary and supports commercial and recreational shellfishing. Cutler Harbor provides sheltered mooring and working-waterfront access for the local fishing fleet. Water quality is generally considered good, although nearshore waters remain vulnerable to stormwater runoff, shoreline septic-system failures, erosion, and other nonpoint sources of pollution.

The Little River Estuary contains tidal marshes and flats that provide important habitat for fish, waterfowl, migratory birds, and other wildlife. More detailed information about commercial fishing, shellfish resources, marine habitat, and harbor use is provided in the Marine Resources chapter.

Ackley Pond drains through Eastern Marsh Brook toward Little Machias Bay, while Norse Pond drains toward Bog Brook Cove. Both ponds contribute to local drainage and wildlife habitat. No documented water-quality impairments have been identified for either pond.

Wetlands and Vernal Pools

Cutler contains an extensive network of coastal and freshwater wetlands, particularly around the Little River Estuary, low-lying areas draining to Holmes Bay, and forested uplands west of Route 191. These wetlands provide critical functions by slowing and storing stormwater, filtering sediments and nutrients, and supporting fisheries, waterfowl, and migratory shorebirds.

Vernal pools may occur within Cutler's forested areas and provide important seasonal breeding habitat for amphibians. Available mapping does not identify every vernal pool, and site-specific review may reveal pools that are not included in state datasets. Vernal pools that meet state criteria for significant wildlife habitat are regulated under Maine's Natural Resources Protection Act.

Floodplains and Coastal Stormwater

Cutler's mapped flood-prone areas are concentrated along Holmes Bay, Cutler Harbor, the Little River Estuary, and other low-lying coastal locations. These areas are subject to coastal flooding, storm surge, erosion, and temporary inundation during severe weather.

Stormwater runoff from roads, driveways, developed lots, and disturbed soils can carry sediment, nutrients, bacteria, and other pollutants into nearby streams, wetlands, and coastal waters. The effects are most noticeable where drainage is limited or where development is located close to the shoreline.

Floodplains, tidal marshes, wetlands, and vegetated shoreline buffers help store floodwater, slow runoff, and reduce erosion. Their continued function is important to maintaining water quality and reducing impacts on nearby roads, properties, and marine resources.

Groundwater and Drinking Water

Cutler does not have a municipal public water system. Residents and businesses rely primarily on private wells for drinking water, making groundwater quality an important public health consideration.

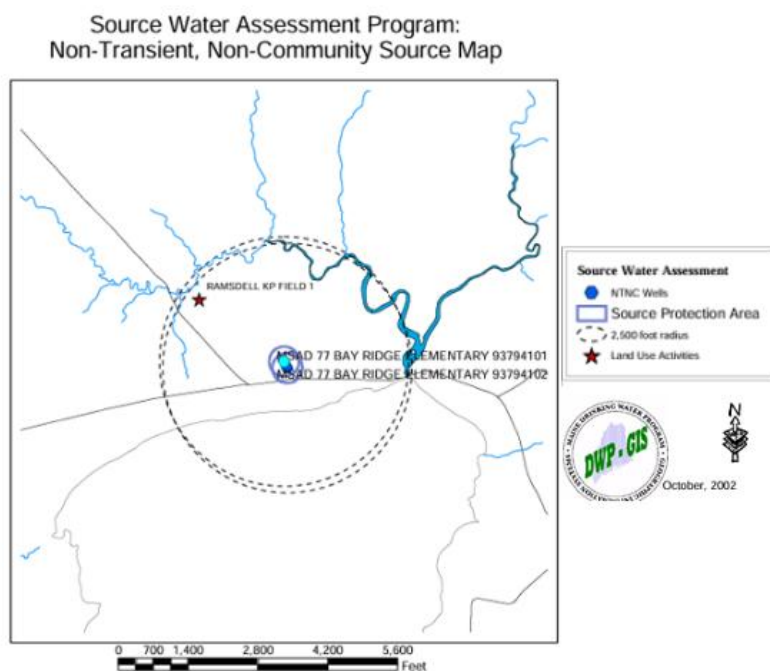
The Maine Geological Survey has identified several sand and gravel aquifers within the community, including mapped significant aquifers capable of supporting public water supplies. Although these aquifers represent important groundwater resources, most residents continue to obtain drinking water from individual private wells.

The Town's only regulated public drinking water system serves Bay Ridge Elementary School. The school's water supply (PWS ID: ME0093794) is regulated by the Maine Drinking Water Program and is routinely monitored to ensure compliance with state and federal drinking water standards.

Groundwater quality may be affected by failing subsurface wastewater systems, improper disposal of hazardous materials, road salt, fuel storage, agricultural activities, and other

nonpoint sources of contamination. Because groundwater and surface water are closely connected, protecting recharge areas, maintaining septic systems, and managing stormwater also help protect drinking water supplies.

Private well owners are responsible for maintaining and periodically testing their wells. Regular testing is encouraged, particularly following flooding, nearby construction, or other activities that could affect water quality.



Bay

Ridge Elementary School Public Water Supply - Source Protection Area (SWAP, 2002). Source: Maine Drinking Water Program, Maine CDC.

Water Quality and Threats

Cutler's surface water and groundwater quality are generally good, but localized risks remain from nonpoint source pollution, shoreline erosion, aging septic systems, road runoff, and historic contamination.

The most significant known groundwater concern is PFAS contamination associated with former U.S. Navy operations, including private wells in and near the Beachwood Bay subdivision. The Department of the Navy continues to coordinate with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection and Maine CDC Drinking Water Program under the federal CERCLA process. This work includes monitoring, evaluation of existing remedies, and communication with affected property owners and residents.

Other potential threats include sediment and pollutants carried by runoff from roads and driveways, malfunctioning subsurface wastewater systems, improper fuel or chemical storage,

and saltwater intrusion into shoreline wells during droughts or coastal flooding. Cutler's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance and state wastewater, stormwater, and natural-resource regulations provide the principal protections against these risks.

No aquatic invasive species infestations have been documented in Cutler's inland ponds as of 2024. Invasive plants and marine species remain potential regional concerns because they can affect water quality, habitat, recreation, and shellfish resources.

Water Resource Protection Programs and Regulations

Cutler protects its water resources through a combination of local ordinances, state and federal regulations, and routine municipal practices. The Town's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance regulates development near streams, wetlands, ponds, and coastal waters, while the Maine Subsurface Wastewater Disposal Rules establish standards for the design and installation of septic systems.

The Town incorporates water resource protection into routine road maintenance by maintaining ditches, replacing culverts, stabilizing road shoulders, and repairing erosion where needed. These activities help reduce sedimentation, improve drainage, and protect nearby streams, wetlands, and coastal waters from nonpoint source pollution.

Cutler also relies on state environmental permitting programs administered by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. Gravel extraction is regulated under Maine law to protect groundwater through standards governing excavation depth, separation from the seasonal high-water table, erosion control, drainage, and material storage. Four privately operated gravel pits within the Town are subject to these requirements.

Additional protections are provided through the Natural Resources Protection Act, the Stormwater Management Law, and other applicable state and federal environmental regulations. Together, these local, state, and federal programs provide the primary framework for protecting Cutler's drinking water supplies, groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, streams, and coastal waters while supporting appropriate land use and infrastructure maintenance.

Conditions and Trends

Cutler's water resources remain in generally good condition and continue to support drinking water, fisheries, recreation, wildlife habitat, and other ecological functions. Most residents rely on private wells and subsurface wastewater systems, making groundwater protection an ongoing priority.

Current trends include continued reliance on local ordinances and state environmental regulations to protect water quality, ongoing maintenance of road drainage infrastructure to reduce erosion and runoff, and continued monitoring of known PFAS contamination associated with former U.S. Navy facilities. At the same time, changing precipitation patterns, coastal flooding, and saltwater intrusion have increased the importance of protecting groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, and natural shoreline buffers.

Future water resource management is expected to focus on protecting existing water quality, maintaining drinking water supplies, reducing nonpoint source pollution, and preserving the natural systems that support Cutler's coastal and freshwater resources.

Analysis

Cutler's water resources are generally in good condition and continue to support drinking water, commercial fishing, recreation, wildlife habitat, and the ecological health of the community. The Town's reliance on private wells and individual subsurface wastewater systems makes groundwater protection especially important, while the close connection between groundwater, streams, wetlands, and coastal waters means that activities affecting one resource can influence others.

Most water quality concerns in Cutler are associated with nonpoint source pollution rather than permitted point-source discharges. Routine road maintenance, erosion control, septic system maintenance, and protection of natural shoreline buffers all contribute to maintaining water quality. Existing local ordinances and state environmental regulations provide an effective framework for protecting these resources when consistently applied.

Known PFAS contamination associated with former U.S. Navy facilities remains an important issue requiring continued coordination with state and federal agencies. Although responsibility for investigation and remediation rests with those agencies, the Town has an interest in ensuring that residents remain informed and that drinking water resources continue to be protected.

Future development is expected to be modest and should not place significant additional demands on Cutler's water resources if growth continues to occur in accordance with local ordinances, state environmental regulations, and the Future Land Use Plan. Continued protection of groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, streams, and coastal waters will help sustain water quality and the natural systems that support the community.

Climate Considerations

Changing precipitation patterns, coastal flooding, storm surge, erosion, and saltwater intrusion have the potential to affect both surface water and groundwater resources in Cutler. More frequent heavy rainfall may increase runoff, erosion, and sedimentation, while prolonged dry periods and coastal flooding may place additional stress on private wells in vulnerable shoreline areas.

Wetlands, floodplains, natural shoreline buffers, and properly functioning drainage systems help reduce these impacts by storing floodwater, filtering runoff, and supporting groundwater recharge. Maintaining these natural and built systems will help improve the long-term resilience of Cutler's drinking water supplies and aquatic resources.

Progress Since 1991

Since adoption of the 1991 Comprehensive Plan, Cutler has continued to rely on private wells and subsurface wastewater systems while maintaining generally good water quality. The Town has updated its Shoreland Zoning Ordinance to remain consistent with state requirements and continues to protect water resources through local land use regulations and routine road and drainage maintenance.

Several issues have become more prominent since 1991. PFAS contamination associated with former U.S. Navy facilities has required ongoing investigation and coordination among federal and state agencies, and greater attention has been given to groundwater protection, nonpoint source pollution, and the effects of coastal flooding and changing precipitation patterns on water resources.

Cutler's approach to water resource management has evolved from protecting individual resources to managing surface water, groundwater, wetlands, and coastal waters as interconnected systems.

Policies and Strategies

Policy 1: Protect current and potential drinking water sources and maintain the quality of surface and groundwater resources.

Strategy 1.1: Maintain and enforce shoreland zoning, floodplain management, and erosion-control standards consistent with applicable state requirements.

Lead Entity: Planning Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Strategy 1.2: Continue to enforce Maine plumbing and subsurface wastewater rules for all septic system installations and upgrades through the Local Plumbing Inspector.

Lead Entity: Select Board, Local Plumbing Inspector

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Strategy 1.3: Make information available to property owners about regular septic-system maintenance, private well testing, and state assistance or guidance related to drinking-water and wastewater protection.

Lead Entity: Town Office, Library Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: Medium

Strategy 1.4: Coordinate with the Maine Drinking Water Program and appropriate school officials regarding protection and monitoring of the Bay Ridge Elementary School water supply.

Lead Entity: Select Board, School Officials

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Strategy 1.5: Continue communication with the Department of the Navy, Maine Department of Environmental Protection, and Maine CDC regarding PFAS investigation, monitoring, mitigation, and public information affecting Cutler drinking-water resources.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Policy 2: Protect water resources in designated growth areas while allowing development that minimizes runoff, erosion, and contamination.

Strategy 2.1: Incorporate available wetland, aquifer, vernal pool, shoreland, and groundwater-recharge information into local development review and future ordinance updates.

Lead Entity: Planning Board

Timeframe: Near-Term (1-2 years)

Priority: Medium

Strategy 2.2: Apply water quality protection standards throughout the Town, including in growth areas identified in the Future Land Use Plan.

Lead Entity: Planning Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Strategy 2.3: Encourage low-impact development practices for new or expanded driveways, waterfront lots, and other development where appropriate to site conditions and project scale.

Lead Entity: Planning Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: Medium

Policy 3: Maintain municipal practices and natural systems that reduce nonpoint source pollution and improve the resilience of water resources.

Strategy 3.1: Continue best management practices for municipal salt and sand storage, ditch and culvert maintenance, road work, and erosion control, and require contractors performing municipal work to follow applicable erosion- and sediment-control standards.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Strategy 3.2: Use available flood, sea-level-rise, wetland, and drainage information when evaluating vulnerable water resources and related municipal improvements.

Lead Entity: Select Board, Planning Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: Medium

Strategy 3.3: Support protection and, where feasible, restoration of wetlands, tidal marshes, floodplains, and shoreline buffers that provide water-quality and flood-storage benefits.

Lead Entity: Select Board, Planning Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: Medium

Strategy 3.4: Coordinate culvert sizing and drainage improvements with transportation and capital planning. See also Transportation Chapter, Policy 2.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: Medium

Policy 4: Cooperate with regional, state, and federal partners to protect and, where warranted, improve Cutler's water resources.

Strategy 4.1: Participate, as opportunities arise, in water-quality monitoring and protection efforts coordinated by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Maine Department of Marine Resources, Washington County Soil and Water Conservation District, and other appropriate partners.

Lead Entity: Select Board, Shellfish Committee

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: Medium

Strategy 4.2: Make educational materials and contact information concerning water-quality best management practices available through the Town Office and library.

Lead Entity: Town Office, Library Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: Low

Strategy 4.3: Make information about aquatic invasive species prevention and reporting available to residents and support appropriate regional early-detection efforts.

Lead Entity: Town Office, Library Board

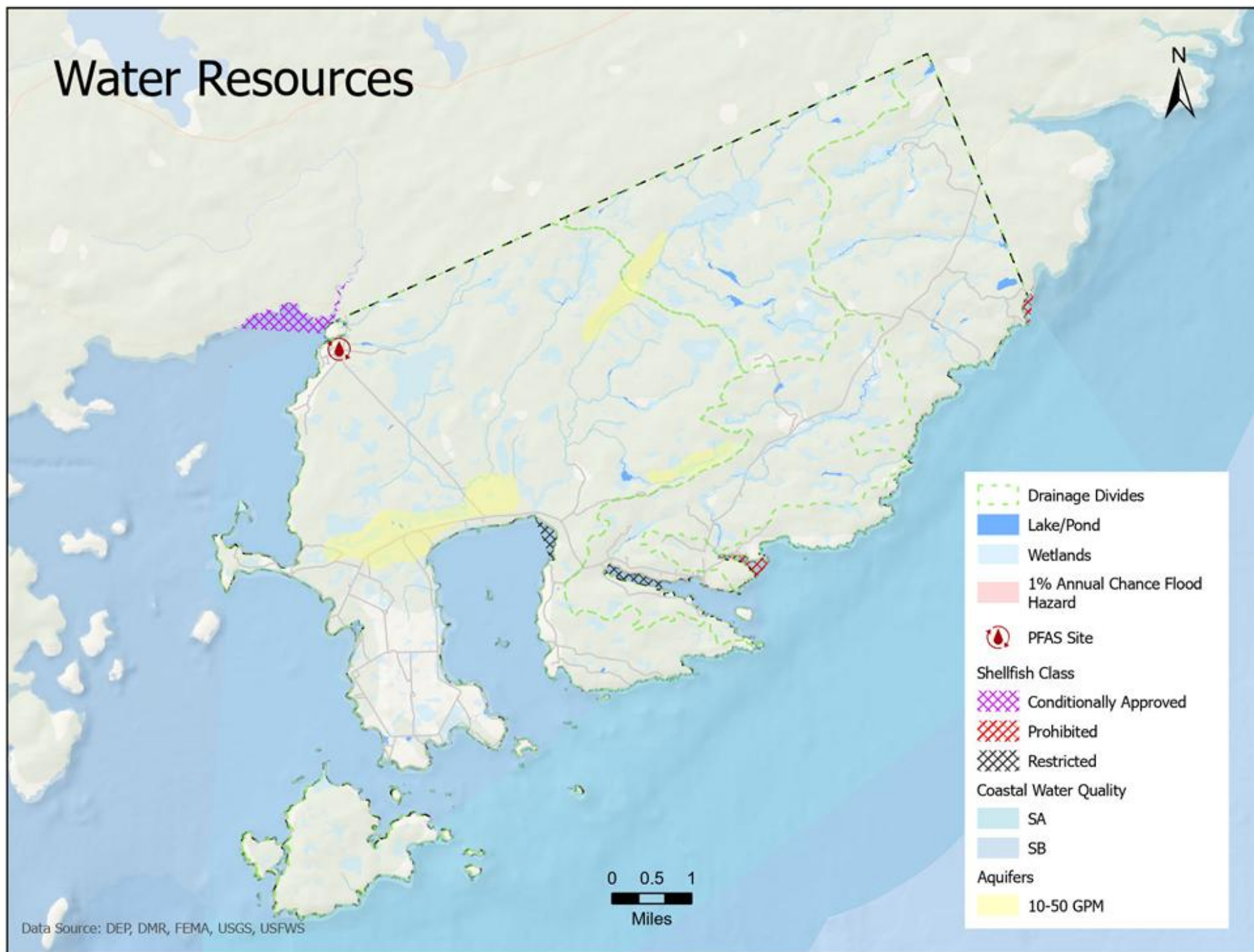
Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: Low

Sources

- Town of Cutler. *Comprehensive Plan* (1991).
- Maine CDC Drinking Water Program. Public Water System Data, Bay Ridge Elementary School (PWS ID ME0093794).
- Maine CDC Drinking Water Program. *Source Water Assessment Reports* (2003).
- Maine Geological Survey. *Sand and Gravel Aquifer Mapping Program*.
- Maine Department of Environmental Protection. *Surface Water Classifications and Monitoring Data* (2024).
- Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR):
Shellfish closures, shellfish growing area classifications, and related coastal water resources information.
<https://www.maine.gov/dmr/>
- Beginning with Habitat (Maine Natural Areas Program / Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife):
Habitat mapping, wetlands, vernal pools, and related natural resource information.
<https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mnap/assistance/bwh.htm>
- U.S. Department of the Navy / Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command.
Environmental Restoration and Five-Year Review Documents, NCTAMS Cutler.
<https://www.navfac.navy.mil/Divisions/Environmental/Products-and-Services/Environmental-Restoration/Mid-Atlantic/Cutler-NCTAMS/Administrative-Record/>
- Maine Department of Environmental Protection. *PFAS in Maine*.
<https://www.maine.gov/dep/spills/topics/pfas/>
- Washington County Soil and Water Conservation District.
Maine Revised Statutes, Title 38, §§490-A–D. *Performance Standards for Excavations*.
<https://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/38/title38sec490-A.html>

Water Resources



Data Source: DEP, DMR, FEMA, USGS, USFWS

MARINE RESOURCES

State Goal: To protect the State's marine resources industry, ports, and harbors from incompatible development and to promote access to the shore for commercial fishermen and the public.

Introduction

Cutler's working waterfront is central to the Town's identity, economy, and way of life. Cutler Harbor and Little River support a commercial fishing community dominated by small, family-run operations, while the wharves, floats, and coves that sustain the fishery also serve as gathering places where work, tradition, and community life intersect.

The Town's marine economy depends on the health and accessibility of Cutler Harbor, Little River, Holmes Bay, and nearby Gulf of Maine waters. These resources support lobstering, shellfishing, limited recreational use, and important marine and coastal habitat. The harbor's narrow entrances, steep banks, and protected anchorage are well suited to small-boat fisheries but limit opportunities for expansion.

Maintaining commercial access, functional marine infrastructure, clean coastal waters, and the traditional character of the working waterfront remains a central priority for Cutler.



Commercial Fisheries and Working Waterfront

Lobstering remains the foundation of Cutler's marine economy, as it was in 1991. Maine Department of Marine Resources data show that most active local commercial licenses are associated with American lobster, with a smaller number of harvesters participating in soft-shell clam, scallop, and other inshore fisheries.

In 2025, the Harbormaster and local industry representatives identified approximately 42 active commercial lobster fishermen operating from Cutler. This figure does not include sternmen, mechanics, bait suppliers, and others whose employment is also connected to the fishing industry.

Active Commercial Wharves, 2025

- **Little River Lobster Co.** – serves approximately 25 fishermen.
- **Fitzhenry Wharf** – serves approximately 7 fishermen.
- **Farris Wharf** – serves approximately 6 fishermen.
- **Cates Wharf** – serves approximately 4 fishermen.

These four private facilities anchor the town's working waterfront. Together they provide hoists, bait storage, and gear-handling space for most of Cutler's fishing fleet. While privately owned, these wharves are essential to the community, reflecting a long-standing pattern in which family-run operations manage shared marine infrastructure. While these facilities support the majority of local operations, some Cutler fishermen also work in Cobscook Bay waters and rely on moorings or facilities outside of town. Each facility contributes to the continuity of local fishing culture, supporting not only economic activity but also intergenerational knowledge and community cohesion.

Moorings and Fleet Activity

Cutler Harbor and Little River contain an estimated 60 to 70 commercial moorings and approximately 10 recreational moorings, for a total capacity of about 80 swing moorings. During the peak fishing season, approximately 42 commercial vessels occupy these areas, with additional recreational and visiting boats present during the summer.

Mooring management is overseen by the Harbormaster in accordance with the Cutler Harbor Ordinance. The system is intended to maintain navigational safety, protect access to commercial wharves, and provide fair use of limited harbor space, with priority given to active commercial fishing operations.

Harbor Governance and Management

Harbor activities are governed by the Cutler Harbor Ordinance, adopted under 38 M.R.S.A. §7 and most recently amended in January 2026. The ordinance establishes a Harbor Committee appointed by the Select Board and an annually appointed Harbormaster responsible for administering moorings, enforcing harbor regulations, and maintaining navigational safety.

The harbor is divided into six designated mooring areas and managed through an annual permitting system. The ordinance gives priority to resident commercial fishermen, protects access to commercial wharves, restricts unauthorized mooring transfers, establishes no-obstruction areas, and regulates use of the Town Boat Ramp.

Together, these provisions provide the local framework for managing limited harbor space and preserving water-dependent commercial use.

Economic and Cultural Role

Commercial fishing continues to support many Cutler households and remains one of the Town's few significant sources of year-round local employment. Lobstering is especially important, while shellfishing, scalloping, marine services, and related work provide additional or seasonal income.

Fishing is also central to Cutler's cultural identity. Generations of local fishermen have worked from the same harbor and waterfront facilities, passing down knowledge, skills, and traditions while adapting to changing environmental, market, and regulatory conditions.

Shellfishing remains a smaller but valued part of the marine economy. Productive flats along Little River and Holmes Bay support soft-shell clam harvesting when classifications and seasonal conditions allow. Temporary closures are generally associated with harmful algal blooms or short-term water-quality concerns rather than persistent impairment.



The working waterfront also supports limited heritage- and nature-based tourism, including wildlife and lighthouse tours, kayaking, and opportunities to observe the harbor's commercial activity. These uses provide modest seasonal economic benefits and complement, rather than replace, the Town's fishing industry.

Public Access and Marine Infrastructure

Cutler's waterfront access points are essential to commercial fishing and public use of the harbor. The Town's steep, rocky shoreline and limited level waterfront land constrain opportunities for boat ramps, parking, storage, and other marine facilities.

Because relatively few access points are available, maintaining them in safe and functional condition is important to the continued operation of the working waterfront. The following sites provide the principal commercial, municipal, and traditional shoreline access in Cutler.

Designated Waterfront Access Sites (Maine Coastal Program, 2024)

Name	Type	Access	Ownership	Use
Head of the Harbor (17 Destiny Bay Road)	Public right-of-way	Public	Municipal	Primary municipal landing used by commercial fishermen and visiting recreational users. 150-foot no-obstruction zone.
Cutler Boat Ramp (6 Wharf Road)	Public boat launch	Public	Municipal	Concrete ramp with float providing small-boat launch access. Bulk bait loading (>3 bushels) and bulk refueling (>10 gallons) prohibited.
Little River Lobster Company (18 Wharf Road)	Private commercial wharf	Private	Private	Working wharf serving multiple commercial fishermen; hoist and trap storage area.
Walter Bryant Road Access (Clam Access Road)	Shoreline access	Public	Private	Traditional clam-harvesting access point and right-of-way historically used by local diggers.

Wharf and Float Conditions

Cutler's municipal marine facilities are generally in good condition and continue to provide reliable access for both commercial and recreational users. The public float, commonly known as the Downtown Float, is an important component of the Town's working waterfront and is maintained through a combination of municipal funding and the longstanding contributions of local fishermen.

Routine maintenance is also carried out at the Town's private commercial wharves. Periodic replacement of decking, pilings, hardware, and float components is necessary to address normal wear associated with heavy use and the marine environment. Maintaining these facilities is essential to preserving safe harbor access and supporting the long-term viability of Cutler's commercial fishing industry.



Parking and Access Constraints

Parking near the Downtown Float and adjacent waterfront facilities is limited. During the lobster season, community events, and periods of increased recreational use, vehicles may line portions of Wharf Road and Cutler Road, creating localized congestion and reducing maneuvering space for trucks, trailers, and emergency vehicles.

Although these periods of high demand are generally seasonal and temporary, they highlight the importance of maintaining safe circulation, preserving commercial access, and managing the shared use of limited waterfront parking areas.

Recreational and Heritage Use

Cutler Harbor also supports modest recreational and heritage-related use. Visitors come to kayak, observe the working waterfront, access nearby coastal preserves, and visit Little River Light and other maritime destinations.



These activities provide additional public access to Cutler's coastal resources and complement the fishing economy when they remain compatible with commercial operations, available parking, and the limited capacity of waterfront facilities.

Marine Habitat and Water Quality

Cutler's nearshore and estuarine waters, including Cutler Harbor, Holmes Bay, and the Little River Estuary, are generally in good condition and continue to support fishing, shellfish harvesting, recreation, and marine habitat. Maine DEP classifies these waters as Class SB, while offshore waters are classified as Class SA. Tributary streams and wetlands draining to the coast are classified as Class B.

No major impairments have been documented for Cutler Harbor or adjacent coastal waters. Temporary bacterial closures may occur following heavy rainfall, reinforcing the importance of stormwater management, septic-system maintenance, and protection of shoreline buffers.

Additional information on water-quality classifications and regulatory standards is provided in the Water Resources chapter.

Shellfish Resources

Shellfishing remains a modest but valued part of Cutler's marine economy. Productive tidal flats

are located primarily at the head of Little River and in sheltered coves of Holmes Bay, where soft-shell clams are the principal harvested species and limited mussel harvesting also occurs.

Harvesting is managed through local licensing and the Cutler Shellfish Conservation Committee in coordination with the Maine Department of Marine Resources. Access and productivity vary with seasonal conditions, resource availability, and temporary closures related to water quality or harmful algal blooms.

Habitat and Ecosystem Health

Cutler's nearshore marine habitats include eelgrass beds, tidal marshes, intertidal flats, and rocky subtidal areas that support a diverse range of fish, shellfish, birds, and other marine wildlife. These habitats contribute to the productivity of local fisheries and the overall ecological health of the coastal environment.

Eelgrass (*Zostera marina*) provides important nursery habitat for juvenile fish and invertebrates. Although localized declines have been documented elsewhere in Washington County, Maine DEP coastal mapping indicates that small eelgrass beds remain near the mouth of Cutler Harbor and around Deer Island.



Water Quality Threats

Water-quality risks affecting Cutler's marine resources are primarily associated with stormwater runoff, shoreline septic systems, erosion, and sedimentation. Heavy rainfall can carry sediment, nutrients, bacteria, and other pollutants from roads, driveways, and developed shoreline areas into Cutler Harbor and Little River, contributing to temporary shellfish closures and reduced water clarity.

Because shoreline development relies on private septic systems, aging or poorly maintained systems can also threaten shellfish-growing areas and nearshore water quality. Vegetation clearing, unstable road ditches, and unmanaged runoff may accelerate erosion and deposit sediment in intertidal flats, eelgrass beds, and other productive marine habitats.

Water quality remains good, but the continued productivity of shellfish flats and nearshore habitat depends on limiting these localized sources of pollution.

Restoration and Monitoring

Cutler benefits from regional marine-resource monitoring and technical assistance provided by

organizations such as the Washington County Soil and Water Conservation District, Downeast Institute, Maine Department of Marine Resources, and other coastal partners. These efforts can provide information on shellfish recruitment, benthic conditions, water temperature, habitat quality, and changes in nearshore resources.

Local and regional monitoring data help identify emerging concerns, support shellfish management, and improve understanding of long-term changes in marine habitat and productivity. Continued coordination with these organizations provides Cutler with access to technical information that would be difficult for the Town to collect independently.

Conditions and Trends

Cutler's marine resources continue to support a stable, lobster-based commercial fishery centered on a limited number of privately owned wharves and municipal access facilities. Commercial fishing remains the primary use of the harbor, while recreational boating, kayaking, wildlife viewing, and heritage tourism continue to grow as complementary seasonal activities.

Current trends include continued reliance on private working-waterfront infrastructure, increasing seasonal demand for parking and public access, and the ongoing need to maintain harbor facilities, floats, and shoreline infrastructure. Protection of water quality, shellfish habitat, and nearshore marine ecosystems remains important to sustaining the long-term productivity of the harbor.

Future management is expected to focus on preserving commercial fishing access, maintaining marine infrastructure, protecting coastal habitat and water quality, and adapting harbor facilities to changing coastal conditions while retaining Cutler's traditional working-waterfront character.

Analysis

Cutler's marine resources remain fundamental to the Town's economy, identity, and long-term sustainability. Unlike many coastal communities, the primary challenge is not accommodating significant waterfront growth but maintaining the working waterfront infrastructure, commercial access, and environmental quality that support existing fishing operations.

Because the harbor depends on a limited number of privately owned commercial wharves and a small network of municipal access facilities, the continued availability and maintenance of these sites are critical to the viability of the local fishing industry. Preserving commercial access while accommodating compatible recreational use will remain an important management consideration as seasonal visitation continues to increase.

The long-term health of Cutler's marine economy is also closely tied to water quality and habitat protection. Shellfish resources, eelgrass beds, tidal marshes, and other nearshore habitats depend on effective management of stormwater, erosion, and shoreline development. Continued coordination among the Town, private waterfront owners, fishermen, and state resource agencies will help protect these resources while preserving the traditional character of Cutler's working waterfront.

Climate Considerations and Coastal Resilience

Cutler's marine infrastructure is vulnerable to storm surge, coastal flooding, wave action, and gradual sea-level rise. Public floats, private wharves, mooring systems, parking areas, and harbor access routes may require more frequent maintenance and repair as coastal conditions change.

Changing ocean temperatures and other regional environmental shifts may also affect lobster distribution, shellfish productivity, and eelgrass health. At the local level, maintaining clean nearshore waters, functional habitat, and reliable working-waterfront access remains the most practical approach to marine resilience.



Progress Since 1991

Since adoption of the 1991 Comprehensive Plan, Cutler has maintained an active working waterfront centered on a stable lobster fishery and four privately owned commercial wharves. Municipal access facilities, including the Cutler Boat Ramp and Head of the Harbor, continue to support commercial and public use.

Harbor management has become more formalized through adoption and periodic amendment of the Cutler Harbor Ordinance, establishment of the Harbor Committee, and an annual mooring system that prioritizes commercial fishing access and navigational safety.

The Town and private wharf owners have continued routine maintenance and incremental improvements to floats, wharves, and related infrastructure. Ongoing challenges include limited parking, aging marine facilities, and increased exposure to coastal flooding.

Policies and Strategies

Policy 1: Protect and sustain Cutler's working waterfront and commercial fishing economy.

Strategy 1.1: Continue to maintain municipal marine access facilities and, where appropriate, support private commercial wharf owners through coordinated permitting, information sharing,

and assistance in identifying grant opportunities related to working waterfront preservation.

Lead Entity: Select Board, Harbormaster

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Strategy 1.2: Preserve public access at the Cutler Boat Ramp and Head of the Harbor through continued maintenance of floats, signage, parking areas, and safe circulation for commercial and public users.

Lead Entity: Select Board, Harbormaster

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Strategy 1.3: Collaborate with local fishermen, the Harbormaster, Harbor Committee, and the Maine Department of Marine Resources to ensure that mooring assignments, harbor use rules, and float space continue to prioritize active commercial fishing operations.

Lead Entity: Harbormaster, Harbor Committee

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Strategy 1.4: Monitor opportunities to participate in the Working Waterfront Access Protection Program (WWAPP) and similar programs that help preserve long-term commercial access to Cutler's working waterfront.

Lead Entity: Select Board, Harbor Committee

Timeframe: Near-Term (1-2 years)

Priority: Medium

Policy 2: Protect marine water quality and coastal habitats that support Cutler's fisheries and working waterfront.

Strategy 2.1: Coordinate with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Maine Department of Marine Resources, the Washington County Soil and Water Conservation District, and other appropriate partners on water-quality monitoring and efforts to reduce bacterial contamination risks to shellfish areas following storm events.

Lead Entity: Select Board, Shellfish Committee

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Strategy 2.2: Protect wetlands, tidal flats, eelgrass habitat, and other nearshore marine resources by applying erosion and sediment control practices through local shoreland permitting and related review.

Lead Entity: Planning Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Strategy 2.3: Continue to enforce and periodically review the Cutler Shoreland Zoning Ordinance to maintain consistency with state standards for marine habitat and water-quality protection. See also Water Resources Chapter, Policy 1.

Lead Entity: Planning Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: Medium

Policy 3: Strengthen the resilience of Cutler's harbor infrastructure and coordinate with state, regional, and federal partners on marine resource management.

Strategy 3.1: Assess vulnerabilities of public floats, harbor access roads, parking areas, and other marine infrastructure to tidal flooding and storm surge, and incorporate resilient design and durable materials into future repairs and replacement projects where practical.

Lead Entity: Select Board, Harbormaster

Timeframe: Near-Term (1-2 years)

Priority: High

Strategy 3.2: Coordinate with the Maine Department of Transportation, Washington County Emergency Management Agency, and other appropriate partners to support storm preparedness and maintain reliable access to harbor facilities.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Near-Term (1-2 years)

Priority: High

Strategy 3.3: Maintain regular communication with the Maine Department of Marine Resources and participate in regional discussions regarding fisheries management, shellfish classifications, coastal permitting, and marine resource protection.

Lead Entity: Harbormaster, Select Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Strategy 3.4: Maintain regular communication with DMR and participate in regional marine resource discussions on regulatory changes, shellfish classifications, and coastal permitting.

Lead Entity: Harbormaster, Select Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Strategy 3.5: Seek technical and financial assistance for harbor improvements, working waterfront preservation, habitat restoration, and coastal resilience through applicable state, federal, and regional programs as opportunities arise.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Mid-Term (3-5 years)

Priority: Medium

Sources

- Town of Cutler. *Comprehensive Plan* (1991).
- Town of Cutler. Harbor Master correspondence and field notes (2025).
- Town of Cutler. *Cutler Harbor Ordinance* (adopted 2004, amended through 2026).
<https://www.cutlermaine.org>
- Murdock, M. Email communication regarding Cutler harbor facilities and fishermen (2025).
- Maine Department of Environmental Protection. Coastal water classifications and related water quality information.
<https://www.maine.gov/dep/>
- Maine Department of Marine Resources. Shellfish closures, shellfish growing area classifications, and related coastal water resources information.
<https://www.maine.gov/dmr/>
- Maine Department of Marine Resources. Commercial Fishing License and Landings Data, Washington County.
<https://www.maine.gov/dmr/commercial-fishing/licenses/index.html>
- Maine Coastal Program. Working Waterfront Access Protection Program (WWAPP).
<https://www.maine.gov/dacf/lmf/funds/wwapp.shtml>
- Maine Climate Council. *Maine Won't Wait: 2024 Update and Sea Level Rise Projections*.
<https://www.maine.gov/future/initiatives/climate/>
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. *Sea Level Rise Viewer* (2024).
<https://coast.noaa.gov/slr/>

Marine Resources



- Marine Infrastructure
 - Marine Infrastructure
- Waterfront Access
 - Waterfront Access
- Shellfish Closures
 - Conditionally Approved
 - Prohibited
 - Restricted
- Aquaculture Leases
 - Active
 - Expired
- Shellfish Beds
 - Blue Mussel
 - Hard Clam
 - Sea Scallop
 - Softshell Clam

0 0.5 1
Miles

Data Sources: Maine DMR, MEGIS, Town of Cutler

RECREATION

State Goal: To promote and protect the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities for all Maine citizens, including access to surface waters.

Introduction

Cutler's natural landscape, where forest, field, and sea meet along Maine's Bold Coast, defines the community's sense of place and provides the foundation for its recreation system.

Recreation opportunities are primarily nature-based and centered on the coast, forests, public lands, and shoreline areas surrounding the village.

Although the Town maintains only a small number of developed recreation facilities, residents and visitors have access to an extensive network of trails, conservation lands, and coastal areas that support traditional uses and year-round outdoor recreation.

This chapter inventories Cutler's recreation resources, evaluates whether they are adequate for current and future needs, and identifies practical policies and strategies to maintain and improve public access in a manner appropriate to the Town's size, character, and available resources.

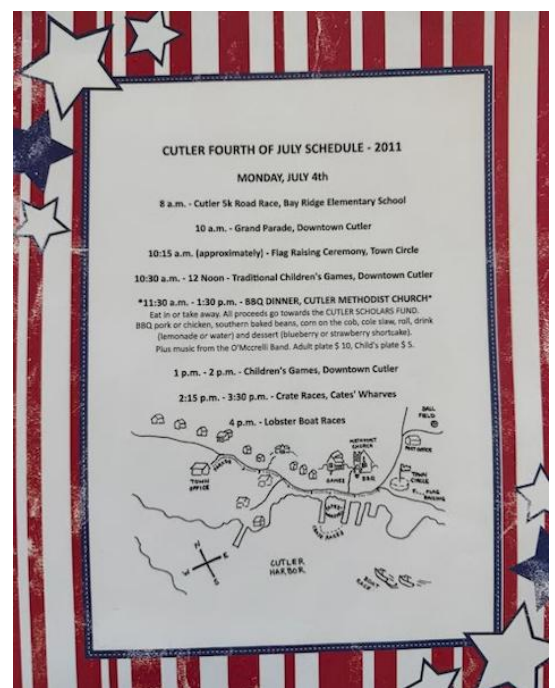
Recreation Resources and Facilities

Cutler's town-owned recreation facilities are modest but important. The Town maintains a ballfield in the village and a playground behind Bay Ridge School that support school activities, youth sports, informal recreation, and community gatherings. A nearby parking area also serves recreation users and provides overflow parking for the harbor, although it is underutilized because of limited signage and its distance from the waterfront.

The Town Landing at Little River (Cutler Harbor) provides public access for small boats, kayaks, and fishing while continuing to serve the working waterfront. Although space is limited, the landing remains an important recreational asset, and the Town continues to maintain the facility in coordination with local fishermen and other partners.

Cutler does not operate a recreation department or maintain a standing recreation committee. Recreation programs and community events are organized primarily by volunteers, reflecting the Town's tradition of local involvement.

The annual Fourth of July celebration remains Cutler's signature community event, bringing together residents,



seasonal homeowners, and visitors through activities that have included a road race, parade, flag raising, children's games, community meals, lobster crate races, and lobster boat races. The celebration reinforces community connections while highlighting the Town's maritime heritage and working waterfront.

Additional recreation opportunities are provided through Bay Ridge School and community volunteers, including outdoor learning activities, seasonal events, clean-up projects, and other community-based programs.

Public Lands and Regional Assets

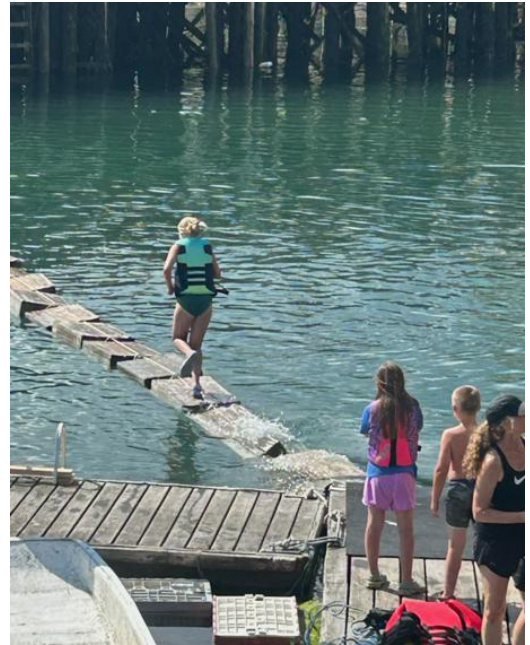
Cutler residents have access to an exceptional network of state and nonprofit conservation lands that provide hiking, camping, hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, and shoreline access.

The Cutler Coast Public Reserved Land, managed by the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands, encompasses approximately 12,234 acres. It includes about 10 miles of hiking trails, three remote tent sites, and more than four miles of rugged Atlantic headlands. Commonly known as the Bold Coast, it is one of the region's best-known destinations for hiking, camping, and coastal wildlife viewing.

The Bold Coast Wilderness Preserve, conserved by the Northeast Wilderness Trust in partnership with Maine Coast Heritage Trust, includes approximately 2,037 acres in Cutler, Whiting, and Trescott. The preserve protects a large forest block, wetlands, stream habitat, and mature forest communities. Public access is allowed for quiet, non-motorized activities such as hiking, hunting, fishing, snowshoeing, and wildlife observation.

The Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT) also maintains several preserves that extend public shoreline access and recreational opportunities:

- Eastern Knubble Preserve, a short trail leading to a rocky headland with shore access and scenic views;
- Western Head Preserve, a loop trail offering panoramic ocean vistas and opportunities for birdwatching; and
- Bog Brook Cove Preserve, jointly managed by MCHT and BPL, spanning Cutler and Trescott with several miles of trails, a sand beach, and two trailhead parking areas.





Maine Coast Heritage Trust has also donated the Maker Property, located on Destiny Bay Road, to the Town of Cutler. The property represents a significant new community asset with potential for low-impact public recreation. Existing structures have sustained coastal storm damage, and site conditions, safety, access, maintenance needs, and appropriate future uses will require evaluation before the property is opened for public use.

Together, these state, municipal, and nonprofit lands provide more than 15 miles of maintained trails, extensive conserved forest, and multiple shoreline access points within or near Cutler. They support year-round recreation while protecting wildlife habitat and the coastal landscape.



Cutler is also part of the Bold Coast National Scenic Byway, a 147-mile regional driving route, and the Bold Coast Scenic Bikeway, a 211-mile on-road cycling route linking coastal communities and connecting with the East Coast Greenway and U.S. Bicycle Route 1. These regional routes increase awareness of Cutler's recreation assets and connect the Town to broader tourism and trail networks.

Access to Surface Waters

Public access to coastal waters is a central element of recreation in Cutler. The Town Landing on Little River serves as the primary access point for small-boat launching, fishing, and kayaking. Although parking and maneuvering space are limited, the landing provides a vital link between residents and the working harbor.

Additional informal access exists at Cates Wharf and the Mill Lot (Turners Stream), which provide scenic views and limited shore access. On the town's periphery, MCHT and BPL properties offer numerous opportunities for hiking to coastal overlooks, tidal coves, and beaches. There are no formal saltwater or freshwater swimming areas within town; residents commonly travel to Roque Bluffs State Park for swimming and picnicking.

Fishing is a common and traditional recreational activity in Cutler, occurring from shore, small boats, and inland waters. Shore-based and freshwater fishing takes place on public and conserved lands throughout town. These activities require minimal infrastructure and reflect Cutler's long-standing connection to its coastal and inland waters.

ATV Recreation and Trails

Cutler is home to the East Stream ATV Riders Club, an affiliate of ATV Maine. The club maintains an approximately 33-mile trail system in and around Cutler for members and visiting riders.

Club activities support trail maintenance, safe and responsible use, rider education, and local events. Portions of the regional trail network may also support snowmobile use outside the village center, depending on landowner permission and seasonal conditions.



Hunting and Wildlife-Based Recreation

Hunting is a longstanding recreational activity in Cutler, supported by the Town's extensive forestlands and large areas of public and conserved land. Hunting is permitted on the Cutler Coast Public Reserved Land and other eligible properties in accordance with Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife regulations and applicable landowner rules.

Commonly pursued species include white-tailed deer, black bear, and upland game birds. These activities occur alongside hiking, camping, fishing, and wildlife observation and remain an important traditional use of Cutler's natural landscape.

Adequacy of Facilities

Cutler's recreation resources are strong overall, but most are provided through state, nonprofit, school, and volunteer-managed facilities rather than through a municipal recreation system. The Town's developed recreation sites are limited to the ballfield, school playground, Town Landing, and other small community spaces.

These facilities generally meet current needs, especially when combined with the extensive trails, conserved lands, shoreline access, and regional recreation opportunities available in and around Cutler. However, daily family-oriented recreation depends heavily on the Town's few local facilities.

Projected population growth is modest, so major new recreation facilities are not anticipated during the planning period. Future needs are more likely to involve routine maintenance and small improvements such as seating, signage, accessible paths, and other features that make existing sites easier to use for residents of different ages and abilities.

Accessibility for All Ages and Abilities

Many of Cutler's recreation opportunities are located on natural lands and along rugged coastline, which limits accessibility for some users. While this setting is central to the Town's recreational character, it presents challenges for children, older adults, and individuals with mobility impairments.

The ballfield and Bay Ridge School playground provide the Town's most accessible recreation facilities, although they offer limited accessibility amenities. Most trail systems on the Cutler Coast and Maine Coast Heritage Trust preserves are not ADA accessible because of steep terrain, natural surfaces, and remote locations.

As opportunities arise, future improvements to Town-owned recreation facilities should consider accessibility and universal design principles where practical and appropriate to the site.

Conditions and Trends

Cutler's recreation system continues to be defined by its exceptional natural and coastal resources rather than by municipally developed facilities. Residents and visitors rely heavily on public lands, conservation properties, trails, shoreline access, and the working waterfront for year-round recreation.

Current trends include increasing visitor use of trails and harbor access areas, continued reliance on volunteers and partner organizations for recreation stewardship, and growing interest in maintaining safe, accessible public recreation opportunities. The recent acquisition of the Maker Property also presents a future opportunity to expand public recreation, subject to site evaluation and available resources.

Future recreation needs are expected to focus on maintaining existing facilities, improving access and accessibility where practical, preserving public shoreline access, and strengthening partnerships rather than developing major new recreation infrastructure.

Analysis

Cutler's recreation system is one of the Town's greatest assets, providing exceptional access to coastal landscapes, conserved lands, trails, and outdoor recreation opportunities. Because most of these resources are owned and managed by state agencies, nonprofit organizations, or local volunteers, the Town's role is less about developing new facilities and more about maintaining local access, supporting partnerships, and preserving opportunities for public use.

The Town's limited municipal recreation facilities are generally adequate for current and projected needs. Future recreation priorities are expected to focus on maintaining existing sites, improving accessibility where practical, protecting public shoreline access, and evaluating opportunities such as the Maker Property without creating significant long-term maintenance obligations.

Continued collaboration with schools, volunteers, land trusts, state agencies, and regional organizations will remain essential to sustaining Cutler's recreation system while preserving the community's natural setting and traditional outdoor recreation opportunities.

Climate Considerations

Climate change may affect Cutler's recreation resources through increased coastal erosion, storm damage, flooding, and more frequent trail washouts. Coastal trails, shoreline access points, and recreation sites such as the Maker Property may require periodic maintenance, repairs, or temporary closures following severe weather events.

Because much of Cutler's recreation system is nature-based, maintaining safe public access while protecting natural features will remain an important consideration. Coordinating with land managers and incorporating practical resilience measures into the maintenance of trails, access points, and Town-owned recreation facilities will help sustain outdoor recreation opportunities over the planning period.

Progress Since 1991

Since adoption of the 1991 Comprehensive Plan, Cutler has continued to build upon its exceptional natural recreation resources through partnerships, conservation, and stewardship rather than major municipal recreation development. Public access to trails, conserved lands, and the working waterfront has expanded through continued collaboration with the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, and other organizations, while the Town has maintained its ballfield, playground, and Town Landing through local support and volunteer efforts.

One of the most significant developments since 1991 has been the continued growth and recognition of the Bold Coast as a regional recreation destination. Expansion of conserved lands, including the Cutler Coast Public Reserved Land, additional Maine Coast Heritage Trust preserves, and the recent donation of the Maker Property to the Town, has strengthened public access to outdoor recreation while protecting the natural landscape that defines Cutler's character.

Although opportunities remain to improve accessibility, signage, parking, and other small-scale amenities, the Town has successfully preserved its recreation resources while maintaining a recreation system that reflects its size, available resources, and community priorities.

Policies and Strategies

Policy 1: Maintain and modestly improve Cutler’s local recreation facilities and access points to serve residents of all ages.

Strategy 1.1: Continue routine maintenance of the Bay Ridge School playground, town ballfield, and Town Landing in coordination with the school, local volunteers, and other relevant partners.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Strategy 1.2: Improve wayfinding and informational signage to direct visitors to existing public parking areas and reduce congestion near the harbor.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Near-Term (1-2 years)

Priority: Medium

Strategy 1.3: As funding, site conditions, and volunteer capacity allow, incorporate basic accessibility features, such as level surfaces, benches, or defined walking paths, into at least one existing recreation area.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Mid-Term (3-5 years)

Priority: Medium

Strategy 1.4: Evaluate the Maker Property for safe, low-impact public use, including site conditions, storm damage, access, maintenance needs, and any deed or conservation restrictions, before formalizing recreation use.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Near-Term (1-2 years)

Priority: High

Strategy 1.5: Avoid major new active recreation investments in areas vulnerable to flooding, erosion, or sea-level rise unless the project is designed for resilience and does not create significant long-term maintenance obligations.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Policy 2: Preserve open space for recreational use and protect public access to Cutler's coastal waters, trails, and conserved lands while respecting traditional uses.

Strategy 2.1: Maintain the Town Landing as a shared-use facility supporting both commercial fishing and recreational access.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Strategy 2.2: Coordinate with the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, ATV and trail organizations, and other land managers to support continued access to and maintenance of local and regional trails and shorelines.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: Medium

Strategy 2.3: Compile and periodically update a basic inventory of known public and traditional shoreline and trail access locations to inform future planning, signage, and voluntary access discussions.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Near-Term (1-2 years)

Priority: Medium

Strategy 2.4: Encourage low-impact recreation practices that minimize erosion, habitat disturbance, and long-term maintenance demands.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: Low

Strategy 2.5: Provide information to landowners regarding Maine's landowner liability law (Title 14 M.R.S.A. §159-A) and the protections it offers for allowing public recreational access on private property.

Lead Entity: Town Office, Library Board

Timeframe: Near-Term (1-2 years)

Priority: Medium

Policy 3: Support recreation through partnerships, volunteers, and realistic municipal capacity.

Strategy 3.1: Support the continued role of the Fourth of July Committee in coordinating community events and consider additional recreation coordination only if volunteer capacity and community interest allow.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: Low

Strategy 3.2: Participate in regional partnerships with organizations such as the Sunrise County Economic Council, trail groups, neighboring communities, and other recreation partners to share information and coordinate where appropriate.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Mid-Term (3-5 years)

Priority: Low

Strategy 3.3: Pursue grant funding selectively for signage, accessibility improvements, maintenance, and small-scale recreation enhancements that are consistent with the Town's capacity and priorities.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Mid-Term (3-5 years)

Priority: Medium

Strategy 3.4: Encourage volunteer-led clean-up, stewardship, and maintenance efforts in coordination with land managers and community organizations, and local volunteers.

Lead Entity: Select Board

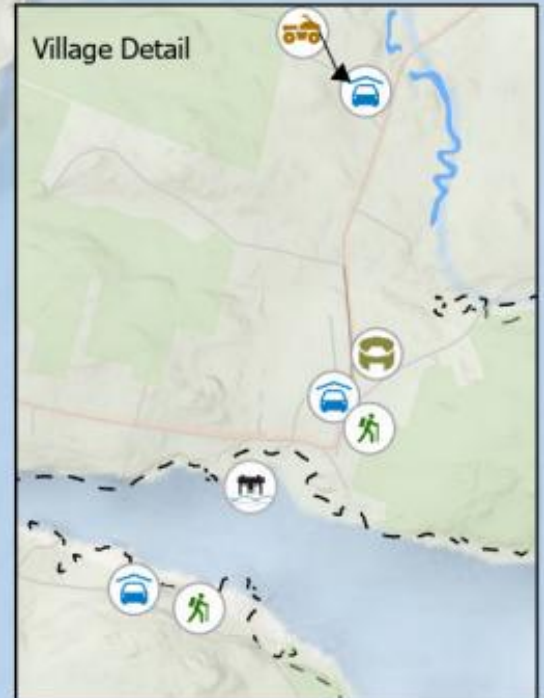
Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: Low

Sources

- Town of Cutler Comprehensive Plan (1991)
- Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands - *Cutler Coast Public Reserved Land*: <https://www.maine.gov/dacf/parksearch>
- Maine Coast Heritage Trust – *Eastern Knubble, Western Head, Bog Brook Cove Preserves*: <https://www.mcht.org>
- Cobscook Trails Network (2024): <https://www.mainetrailfinder.com/trails/trail/bog-brook-cove-preserve>
- Sunrise County Economic Council / Downeast Acadia Regional Tourism - *Bold Coast National Scenic Byway (147 mi)* and *Bold Coast Scenic Bikeway (211 mi)*: <https://downeastacadia.com>
- ATV Maine – East Stream ATV Riders Club: <https://www.atvmaine.org/all-clubs/east-stream-atv-riders>

Recreation



- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Town Pier | Bay Ridge Elementary |
| Trailhead | Parking |
| ATV Trailhead | Outhouse |
| Campites with Pit Toilets | Beach |
| Ballfield | Conserved Lands |
| | Lake/Pond |

0 0.5 1
Miles

AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES

State Goal: To safeguard lands identified as prime farmland or capable of supporting commercial forestry and to support farming and forestry and encourage their economic viability.

Introduction

Cutler's agricultural and forest resources are an important part of the community's working landscape and contribute to its economy, natural character, and quality of life. Although Cutler is not a traditional farming community, it lies within the heart of Maine's wild blueberry region and contains extensive working forestland that supports timber harvesting, forestry-related businesses, and seasonal agricultural activity.

A defining feature of Cutler's landscape is the large extent of conserved land and intact natural communities. The Cutler Coast Public Reserved Land encompasses approximately 12,234 acres of blueberry barrens, forest, peatlands, and rugged coastline. Together, these working and conserved lands support forestry, agriculture, recreation, wildlife habitat, and the scenic landscape that defines the community.

This chapter inventories Cutler's agricultural and forest resources, evaluates current conditions and trends, and establishes policies and strategies to support the long-term viability of working lands while balancing conservation, recreation, and compatible development.

Regional agricultural context

Although agriculture plays a limited role within Cutler itself, the Town is located in Washington County, the center of Maine's wild blueberry industry. According to the 2022 USDA Census of Agriculture, Washington County contained 341 farms encompassing approximately 121,714 acres of farmland.

Statewide, Maine harvested approximately 23,800 acres of wild blueberry fields in 2023, producing 87.6 million pounds with an estimated utilized value of \$45.4 million.

While these statistics are regional rather than specific to Cutler, they provide important context for the wild blueberry fields that contribute to the Town's working landscape and the broader Downeast economy.

Local agricultural patterns

Agriculture in Cutler is centered primarily on wild blueberry fields and small-scale household gardening rather than row-crop production or livestock farming. Committee input and local conditions indicate that commercial agricultural activity is limited, reflecting the Town's thin soils, extensive wetlands, peatlands, and exposed coastal environment.

These conditions favor a working landscape dominated by forestland, wild blueberry fields, wetlands, and other low-intensity land uses rather than intensive agricultural production.

Agricultural and Forest Soils

Mapped soils in Cutler include scattered areas classified as prime farmland and farmland of statewide importance. These areas are limited and fragmented rather than forming large, continuous blocks suitable for intensive agricultural production.

Much of the Town is characterized by shallow, poorly drained, or very poorly drained soils, particularly in wetland, peatland, and coastal areas. These conditions limit conventional farming but are generally more compatible with forestry, wild blueberry fields, and other low-intensity working-land uses.

The distribution of these soils helps explain why agriculture remains modest in Cutler while forestland and wild blueberry fields continue to dominate the Town's productive landscape.

Current Use Farmland enrollment

Maine's Farmland Current Use Program provides an indication of land being maintained in agricultural use. In 2024, Cutler had 9 parcels enrolled in the Farmland Program totaling 302 acres.

Although agricultural activity remains limited, this enrollment indicates that a portion of Cutler's land continues to be managed and valued for agricultural use.

Forest Resources

Forestland is the dominant land cover in Cutler and remains one of the Town's most important natural and economic resources. Extensive privately owned forestlands support timber harvesting, wildlife habitat, recreation, carbon storage, and the scenic character that defines much of the community.

Commercial forestry continues to be an important working-land use in the region. While timber harvesting occurs at varying intensities depending on ownership and market conditions, the Town's forest resources continue to provide economic value while supporting outdoor recreation, ecological functions, and traditional uses such as hunting, fishing, and firewood collection.

The long-term health and productivity of Cutler's forests depend on sustainable management practices that balance economic use with the protection of soils, water quality, wildlife habitat, and resilience to changing climate conditions.

Timber harvesting activity

State forestry records compiled for the Town show that timber harvesting has been an ongoing land use in Cutler for decades. From 1991-2021, Cutler recorded 103 harvest-related reports covering approximately 8,237 acres of total harvest (committee/state dataset). Reported harvesting is dominated by selection harvesting, with additional shelterwood and comparatively limited clearcut acreage. This pattern is consistent with a working-forest landscape where partial harvesting is used to maintain forest cover and support regeneration while still providing economic return.

Year	Selection harvest, acres	Shelterwood harvest, acres	Change of land use, acres	Clearcut harvest, acres	Total Harvest, acres	# of Reports
1991-1996	1,904	35	-	441	2,380	19
1997-2001	814	791	-	-	1,605	21
2002-2006	256	3	20	-	279	12
2007-2011	470	120	4	-	594	15
2012-2016	1,701	239	3	75	2,018	25
2017-2021	820	538	3	-	1,361	11
Total	5,965	1,726	30	516	8,237	103

*Data compiled from Confidential Year End Landowner Reports to Maine Forest Service.
Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry - Maine Forest Service*

Current Use Tree Growth Enrollment

Tree Growth enrollment reflects the importance of privately owned forestland to Cutler's tax base and long-term land-use pattern. In 2024, Cutler had 34 parcels enrolled in the Tree Growth Tax Law program, totaling 4,934 acres.

Development pressure on agricultural and forest lands has historically been limited but remains a long-term consideration. Large blocks of land continue to be maintained through conservation ownership and Current Use enrollment, while the gradual subdivision of privately owned forest and rural parcels for residential development represents the primary source of land-use change. Maintaining the continuity of working lands will require balancing conservation, traditional resource use, and residential development over time.

Current Use Programs (brief explanation for readers)

Maine's Current Use programs allow qualifying land to be assessed according to its use for farming, forestry, open space, or commercial waterfront activity rather than its potential development value. Maine Revenue Services administers four programs: Farmland, Open Space, Tree Growth, and Working Waterfront. Each program has specific eligibility requirements, and withdrawal may result in a financial penalty.

In Cutler, these programs help retain working lands and open space, support long-term forest and agricultural uses, and reduce pressure to divide or convert large rural parcels.

Current Use Tax Program							
Year	Tree Growth Parcels	Tree Growth Acres	Farmland Parcels	Farmland Acres	Open Space Parcels	Open Space Acres	Working Waterfront Parcels
2015	40	4,911	3	74	3	108	0
2016	32	4,100	3	74	3	108	0
2017	34	4,638	3	74	3	108	0
2018	36	4,545	3	74	2	87	0
2019	0*	4,578	12	74	0*	87	0
2020	36	4,579	4	78	2	87	0
2021	36	4,980	11	33	2	87	0
2022	36	4,978	3	33	2	87	0
2023	37	4,795	7	228	3	817	0
2024	34	4,934	9	302	3	119	0

Source: 2015-2024 Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary * Denotes likely clerical error in data

Current Use enrollment has varied from year to year, partly because of changes in ownership, eligibility, classification, and municipal reporting. Tree Growth consistently accounts for the largest share of enrolled land. Farmland enrollment increased substantially between 2022 and 2024, while Open Space acreage has fluctuated considerably. No parcels were reported in the Working Waterfront program during this period.

Conservation Lands and Special Natural Resources

Large conserved areas are a defining feature of Cutler's land base and protect extensive habitat blocks, natural communities, and ecological functions. The Cutler Coast Public Land includes a 5,216-acre Ecological Reserve.

The Maine Natural Areas Program identifies several exemplary natural communities within the reserve, including coastal plateau bog ecosystems, open headlands, and bluejoint meadows. The bluejoint meadow along East Stream covers more than 1,000 acres and is among the largest known examples of this natural community in Maine.

These conserved lands influence how habitat protection, recreation, forest management, and long-term stewardship are balanced.

Conditions and Trends

Forestry remains the dominant land-based resource use in Cutler, while active commercial agriculture is limited. Current conditions include substantial Tree Growth enrollment, modest but

increasing Farmland enrollment, continued timber harvesting, extensive conserved land, and wild blueberry fields that contribute to the broader regional agricultural economy.

Development pressure on working lands remains relatively limited. However, the gradual subdivision of rural and forested parcels for residential use represents the primary long-term source of fragmentation. Heavier rainfall, drought, shifting growing seasons, insects, and disease are also expected to create increasing management challenges for forests and wild blueberry fields.

Analysis

Cutler's agricultural and forest resources are best understood as part of a broader rural working landscape rather than as the basis of a large local agricultural economy. Forestland is the Town's dominant productive land resource, while wild blueberry fields, household gardens, and other small-scale agricultural uses contribute to local identity, regional economic activity, and landscape character.

The greatest long-term concerns are the gradual fragmentation of large parcels, loss of working-land continuity, and changing climate and market conditions that may make forestry and agriculture more difficult to sustain. Because much of Cutler's land is conserved and soils suitable for intensive agriculture are limited, the Town's most practical role is to support compatible development patterns, avoid unnecessary fragmentation, encourage continued productive use where feasible, and connect landowners with existing state and regional programs.

Climate Considerations

Agriculture and forestry in coastal Washington County are increasingly shaped by climate stressors, including heavier rain events, drought periods, pest pressures, and shifting seasons. Maine Forest Service's 2025 Forest Health Highlights describe the progression of 2025 drought conditions, including the development of flash drought conditions and continued drought impacts into fall, with expectations that drought trends may persist into the following season.

For Cutler, these trends matter because drought stress and warming conditions can increase tree susceptibility to insects and disease, raise wildfire risk during dry periods, and affect the productivity and management needs of blueberry barrens and forest stands.

Progress Since 1991

Since adoption of the 1991 Comprehensive Plan, Cutler's general pattern of agricultural and forest use has remained relatively consistent. Forests continue to serve as the Town's principal working-land resource, while wild blueberry fields and household gardens remain the most visible forms of agricultural use.

The planning context has changed, however. Current planning places greater emphasis on maintaining working-land continuity, limiting parcel fragmentation, balancing conservation with traditional resource uses, and preparing agricultural and forest lands for changing climate conditions.

Policies and Strategies

Policy 1: Safeguard lands identified as prime farmland or capable of supporting commercial forestry.

Strategy 1.1: When developing or revising land use regulations pertaining to forest management practices, consult with the Maine Forest Service district forester as required by 12 M.R.S.A. §8869.

Lead Entity: Planning Board

Timeframe: As Needed

Priority: Medium

Strategy 1.2: When developing or revising land use regulations pertaining to agricultural management practices, consult with the Washington County Soil and Water Conservation District or other appropriate agricultural resource professionals.

Lead Entity: Planning Board

Timeframe: As Needed

Priority: Medium

Strategy 1.3: Use future land use guidance and subdivision and road-access review to reduce fragmentation of large forest tracts and wild blueberry fields, particularly where new roads could create long-term municipal maintenance obligations.

Lead Entity: Planning Board

Timeframe: Near-Term (1-2 years)

Priority: Medium

Strategy 1.4: If critical rural areas are designated in the Future Land Use Plan, amend or apply land use standards to require commercial and subdivision development within those areas to maintain prime farmland soils as open space to the greatest extent practicable.

Lead Entity: Planning Board

Timeframe: Mid-Term (3-5 years)

Priority: Low

Strategy 1.5: If critical rural areas are designated, limit incompatible nonresidential development within those areas while allowing appropriate natural resource-based businesses and services, outdoor recreation and nature-tourism businesses, farmers' markets, and home occupations.

Lead Entity: Planning Board

Timeframe: Mid-Term (3-5 years)

Priority: Low

Policy 2: Support farming, forestry, and related working-land uses and encourage their long-term economic viability.

Strategy 2.1: Encourage owners of productive farm and forest land to enroll in Maine's Current Use programs, including Farmland, Tree Growth, and Open Space, as appropriate.

Lead Entity: Select Board, Town Office

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: Medium

Strategy 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 similar low-intensity working-land uses where appropriate.

Lead Entity: Planning Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: Medium

Strategy 2.3: Support small-scale agriculture, household gardens, hobby farming, and other forms of local food production, including consideration of shared garden space where community interest and volunteer capacity exist.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Mid-Term (3-5 years)

Priority: Low

Strategy 2.4: Include agriculture, commercial forestry, and land conservation that supports these activities in local or regional economic development discussions and planning, where appropriate.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: Low

Policy 3: Strengthen the resilience of Cutler's agricultural and forest resources to climate impacts.

Strategy 3.1: Share information about climate-ready forestry and agricultural practices through coordination with the Maine Forest Service, agricultural resource professionals, the Washington County Soil and Water Conservation District, and University of Maine Cooperative Extension.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: Low

Strategy 3.2: Prioritize maintenance of existing municipal roads, ditches, and culverts that provide access to forest and agricultural lands, with particular attention to locations vulnerable to flooding, erosion, or storm damage. See also Transportation Chapter, Policy 1.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Ongoing
Priority: Medium

Strategy 3.3: Share state and regional notices about forest pests, diseases, drought, wildfire risk, and available technical or financial assistance with affected landowners when practical.

Lead Entity: Select Board
Timeframe: Ongoing
Priority: Low

Sources

- Town of Cutler Comprehensive Plan (1991).
- Maine Revenue Services – Current Land Use Programs .
<https://www.maine.gov/revenue/taxes/property-tax/municipal-services/valuation-return-statistical-summary>
- Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands. *Cutler Coast Public Land Guide & Map*.
https://www.maine.gov/dacf/parksearch/PropertyGuides/PDF_GUIDE/cutlercoastguide.pdf
- Maine Natural Areas Program. *Cutler Preserve Ecological Reserve fact sheet*.
<https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mnap/reservesys/cutler.htm>
- Maine Forest Service. *Forest Health Conditions Highlights in 2025* (report to USDA Forest Service). https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/forest_health/documents/2025-maine-federal-highlights-finalcorrectedacres-12102025.pdf
- United States Department of Agriculture, Census of Agriculture. *2022 Census of Agriculture County Profile: Washington County, Maine*.
https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2022/Online_Resources/County_Profile/Maine/cp23029.pdf

Forestry Soils



Drainage Class

- Well drained
- Moderately well drained
- Somewhat poorly drained
- Poorly drained
- Very poorly drained

0 0.5 1
Miles

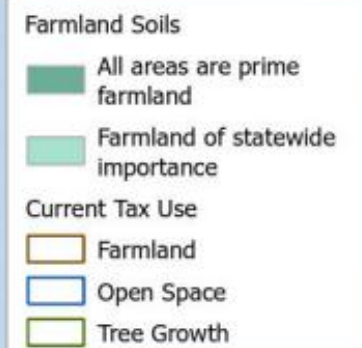
Data Sources: MEGIS, USDA NRCS SSURGO

Agriculture Resources



0 0.5 1
Miles

Data Sources: MEGIS, USDA NRCS SSURGO, Town of Cutler



NATURAL RESOURCES

State Goal: To protect the State's critical natural resources, including wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, shorelands, scenic areas, and unique natural areas.

Introduction

Cutler contains extensive forests, wetlands, peatlands, coastal headlands, streams, and undeveloped habitat blocks. These resources protect water quality, store floodwaters, support wildlife, provide recreation opportunities, and reduce exposure to erosion and storm damage.

A substantial portion of the Town is conserved through state ownership, nonprofit conservation holdings, easements, and other long-term stewardship arrangements. Planning for future development should recognize both these protected areas and the connected natural systems that extend across property and municipal boundaries.

Critical Natural Resources and State Mapping

Cutler's critical natural resources are identified primarily through the State of Maine's Beginning with Habitat program, Maine Natural Areas Program data, wetlands mapping, and other state-provided natural resource datasets. These resources include wetlands, riparian areas, significant wildlife and fisheries habitat, rare plants and natural communities, shorelands, and large undeveloped habitat blocks and connectors.

Beginning with Habitat information is intended to guide municipal planning and development review. Mapped resources indicate where ecological values are known or likely to occur but do not replace field investigation or establish parcel-level regulatory boundaries.

Wetlands, Peatlands, and Riparian Areas

Wetlands and riparian areas are widely distributed throughout Cutler, particularly in low-lying inland areas, peatlands, coastal inlets, and stream corridors. Many form connected systems rather than isolated features.

These areas store and convey floodwaters, filter runoff, reduce erosion, and provide habitat for plants, fish, and wildlife. Development, road construction, drainage changes, and soil disturbance near connected wetlands or streams can affect resources beyond the immediate project site.

Additional information about surface waters, floodplains, water quality, and local protection measures is provided in the Water Resources chapter.

Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat

Beginning with Habitat mapping identifies important wildlife and fisheries resources within Cutler, including aquatic and riparian habitat, coastal habitat, wetlands, and large forested habitat blocks. Species associated with these systems include brook trout, bald eagle, moose, waterfowl, shorebirds, and forest-dependent birds.

The exact locations of some rare species and sensitive habitats are withheld from public mapping. Development review should therefore use the most current state data and, when necessary, consultation with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

Rare Plants and Natural Communities

The Maine Natural Areas Program identifies exemplary natural communities in Cutler, including coastal plateau bogs, open headlands, peatlands, and bluejoint meadows. The bluejoint meadow along East Stream extends over approximately 1,000 acres and is among the largest known examples of this community in Maine.

Cutler's acidic bogs and peatlands also support uncommon plant communities, including cloudberry and other plants associated with cool, nutrient-poor environments. These systems depend on stable hydrology and are particularly sensitive to drainage alterations, compaction, and other disturbance.

Undeveloped Habitat Blocks and Connectors

Beginning with Habitat mapping identifies large undeveloped habitat blocks and connections among forests, wetlands, streams, and conserved lands. These areas allow wildlife movement and help ecological systems continue functioning across individual property boundaries.

Roads, dispersed development, and subdivision of large parcels can gradually narrow or interrupt these connections. The greatest concern is therefore not a single development project, but the cumulative effect of repeated fragmentation over time.

Conserved Lands and Ecological Reserves

Large conserved areas are a defining feature of Cutler's land base. The Cutler Coast Public Land contains coastal headlands, forests, peatlands, wetlands, and wild blueberry fields. Within the property, 5,216 acres are designated as an Ecological Reserve to protect exemplary natural communities and allow natural ecological processes to continue with limited disturbance.

Additional land and conservation interests are held by the State and nonprofit organizations, including Maine Coast Heritage Trust. These lands protect habitat, support recreation, and connect with other undeveloped areas in and around Cutler.

Public access and stewardship should be coordinated so that trails, parking areas, and other facilities do not damage sensitive resources.

Scenic Resources

Cutler's scenic resources include coastal headlands, undeveloped shoreline, open-water views, wetlands, forested areas, and elevated views across the Town's coastal and inland landscapes. Many of these features are associated with conserved lands or public roads and contribute to recreation and tourism.

Scenic resources of local importance should be considered during future land use planning and review of development that could substantially alter prominent coastal or roadside views.

Conditions and Trends

Cutler continues to contain extensive conserved land, connected wetlands, and large undeveloped habitat blocks. These resources have limited widespread habitat loss and provide a strong foundation for continued protection.

The primary development-related concern is gradual fragmentation caused by new homes, driveways, roads, and subdivision of larger parcels. Development pressure remains limited, but poorly sited projects can affect wetlands, stream corridors, habitat connections, coastal areas, and peatlands.

Roads, culverts, drainage systems, trails, and public access facilities also cross or adjoin sensitive natural resources. Inadequate or undersized infrastructure can increase erosion, alter drainage, restrict aquatic passage, and create recurring maintenance needs. Properly designed improvements can reduce these impacts while improving public safety.

Cutler's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance provides the Town's principal local natural-resource protections through Resource Protection and Stream Protection districts and standards addressing wetlands, floodplains, wildlife habitat, unstable coastal bluffs, vegetation clearing, erosion, drainage, timber harvesting, and water quality.

Regional and state partners, including the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Maine Natural Areas Program, Maine Forest Service, conservation organizations, and regional planning entities, provide mapping, technical assistance, and opportunities for coordination.

Analysis

Cutler's most significant natural resources function as connected systems. Wetlands, streams, peatlands, forests, coastal areas, and undeveloped habitat blocks often overlap and extend across property boundaries. Maintaining those connections is therefore important to water quality, wildlife movement, flood storage, and long-term ecological function.

The principal long-term risks are gradual fragmentation, changes to wetland and peatland hydrology, poorly sited development near sensitive resources, and infrastructure that does not adequately account for drainage or habitat passage. Recreational use may also affect sensitive sites where trails, parking, or access points are not appropriately located or maintained.

The Shoreland Zoning Ordinance provides the Town's primary regulatory protection. Outside the shoreland zone, Cutler should consider using current Beginning with Habitat information during subdivision and larger nonresidential development review, identifying Critical Resource Areas in the Future Land Use Plan, and requiring reasonable measures to avoid or minimize impacts to mapped resources.

Because many natural systems extend beyond municipal boundaries, Cutler should continue coordinating with state agencies, neighboring communities, land trusts, and willing landowners. The Town's most practical role is to use reliable data, administer existing ordinances, guide development away from sensitive areas where feasible, and support regional or voluntary conservation efforts.

Climate Considerations

More intense rainfall, coastal flooding, erosion, drought, warming temperatures, and changing habitat conditions may affect Cutler's wetlands, peatlands, stream corridors, coastal systems, and wildlife populations.

Wetlands, floodplains, forests, and undeveloped coastal uplands can reduce these impacts by storing floodwater, stabilizing soils, buffering wave energy, and providing space for plants and wildlife to shift as conditions change. Maintaining habitat connections will become increasingly important as species respond to changing temperature, moisture, and seasonal patterns.

Low-lying undeveloped land adjacent to tidal wetlands may also provide space for coastal marshes and other intertidal habitats to migrate inland as sea levels rise. Conservation and development decisions should avoid unnecessarily blocking these areas where practical.

Progress Since 1991

Since adoption of the 1991 Comprehensive Plan, Cutler has experienced expanded conservation ownership and improved access to statewide natural resource information. Beginning with Habitat mapping, updated wetlands and floodplain data, and Maine Natural Areas Program information now provide more detailed guidance for land use planning and development review.

The role of wetlands, floodplains, forests, and connected habitats in reducing flooding, erosion, and other climate impacts is also better understood. These changes allow the Town to protect natural resources through more targeted planning, ordinance administration, partnerships, and infrastructure decisions.

Policies and Strategies

Policy 1: Conserve Cutler’s critical natural resources and reduce incompatible development and unnecessary fragmentation.

Strategy 1.1: Designate mapped critical natural resources as Critical Resource Areas in the Future Land Use Plan and guide most new development away from these areas where feasible.

Lead Entity: Planning Board

Timeframe: Near-Term (1-2 years)

Priority: High

Strategy 1.2: Continue to administer the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance and periodically review applicable land use and subdivision standards for consistency with state law concerning wetlands, shorelands, significant wildlife habitat, flood-prone areas, and other critical natural resources.

Lead Entity: Planning Board, Code Enforcement Officer

Timeframe: Ongoing, Review As Needed

Priority: High

Strategy 1.3: When updating subdivision or nonresidential development review standards, require applicants to identify critical natural resources on or near the site and require the Planning Board to consider current Beginning with Habitat maps and other pertinent state information. Projects should avoid or minimize impacts through appropriate siting, design, buffers, construction timing, or limits on disturbance.

Lead Entity: Planning Board

Timeframe: Mid-Term (3-5 years)

Priority: High

Strategy 1.4: Use future land use, subdivision, and development review to reduce fragmentation of large undeveloped habitat blocks and maintain connections among forests, wetlands, streams, coastal areas, and conserved lands.

Lead Entity: Planning Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: Medium

Policy 2: Coordinate with neighboring communities, agencies, conservation organizations, and willing landowners to protect shared natural resources.

Strategy 2.1: Participate, as opportunities arise, in regional or interlocal efforts involving shared watersheds, coastal resources, wildlife habitat, conserved lands, and habitat connections, and consult appropriate state agencies when development or municipal projects may affect critical natural resources.

Lead Entity: Select Board, Planning Board

Timeframe: Ongoing, As Needed

Priority: Medium

Strategy 2.2: Work with land trusts, conservation organizations, and willing landowners to support voluntary stewardship or conservation of critical and important natural resources, and make information available about applicable regulations, conservation options, and Maine's Current Use taxation programs.

Lead Entity: Select Board, Town Office

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: Low

Policy 3: Strengthen the resilience of Cutler's natural resources to flooding, erosion, habitat shifts, and other climate impacts.

Strategy 3.1: Protect wetlands, floodplains, riparian areas, coastal buffers, and connections among large habitat blocks that reduce flooding and erosion and allow wildlife and natural communities to adapt to changing conditions.

Lead Entity: Planning Board, Select Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Strategy 3.2: Consider voluntary conservation or appropriate development standards for low-lying undeveloped uplands adjacent to tidal wetlands where marshes and other intertidal habitats may migrate inland as sea levels rise.

Lead Entity: Planning Board, Select Board

Timeframe: Mid-Term (3-5 years)

Priority: Medium

Sources

- Town of Cutler. Shoreland Zoning Ordinance.
<https://www.cutlermaine.gov/ordinances>
- Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. *Beginning with Habitat Program*.
<https://www.maine.gov/ifw/fish-wildlife/wildlife/beginning-with-habitat/maps/index.html>
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). *Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM)*.
<https://msc.fema.gov/portal/home>
- Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands. *Cutler Coast Public Land Guide & Map*.
https://www.maine.gov/dacf/parksearch/PropertyGuides/PDF_GUIDE/cutlercoastguide.pdf
- Maine Coast Heritage Trust. *Land Conservation and Stewardship*.
<https://www.mcht.org/>
- Cobscook Trails Association. *Regional Trail Network*.
<https://cobscooktrails.org/>
- Maine Natural Areas Program. *Ecological Reserves and Rare Natural Communities*.
<https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mnap/index.html>

Natural Resources: Habitat Systems

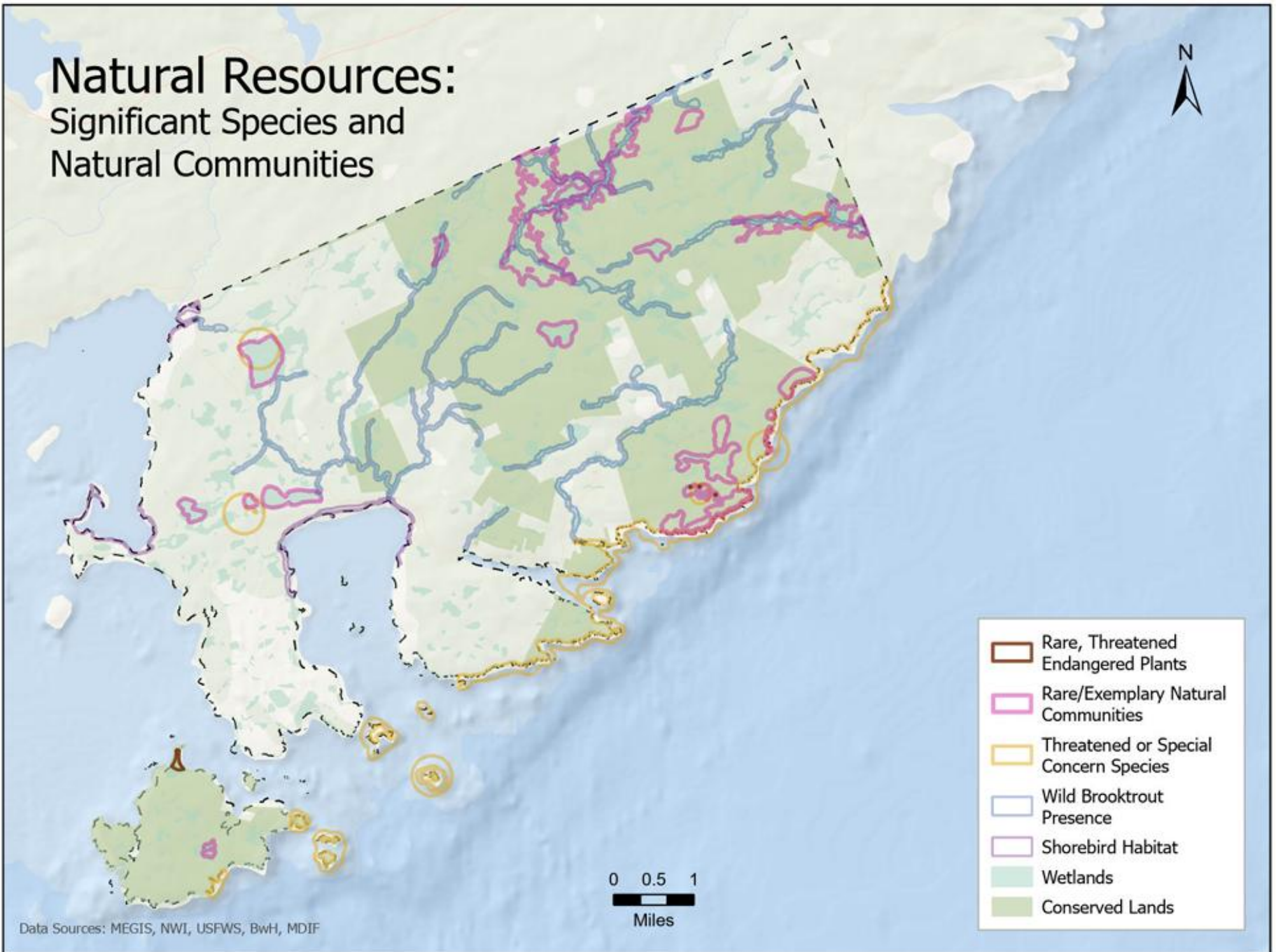


-  Inland Waterfowl/
Wading Bird
-  Tidal Waterfowl/
Wading Bird
-  Road Block Connectors
-  Riparian Block
Connectors
-  Undeveloped
-  Focus Area 2023
-  Wetlands
-  Conserved Lands

0 0.5 1
Miles

Data Sources: MEGIS, NWI, USFWS, BwH, MDIF

Natural Resources: Significant Species and Natural Communities



Data Sources: MEGIS, NWI, USFWS, BwH, MDIF

FISCAL CAPACITY AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN

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

Introduction

This chapter reviews Cutler's fiscal capacity, including municipal revenues and expenditures, property valuation, debt, reserve funds, and anticipated capital needs. It also considers how the Town can plan for and finance major projects while avoiding abrupt impacts on taxpayers.

Most projects identified in Cutler's Capital Investment Plan involve maintaining, replacing, or improving existing facilities and infrastructure rather than accommodating new development. Any future project intended primarily to support growth should be identified as growth-related and evaluated for consistency with the Future Land Use Plan.

Municipal Budget

Each year, the Select Board prepares a municipal budget for consideration and approval at Town Meeting. The budget supports essential services and obligations, including road maintenance and winter operations, solid waste disposal, fire and emergency services, harbor activities, municipal administration, education, and the Washington County tax assessment.

Cutler administers municipal government through part-time personnel, elected and appointed officials, volunteer boards, and contracted professional services. Municipal spending is therefore concentrated on legally required obligations, public safety, essential infrastructure, and basic administration.

Education is the Town's largest annual expenditure. County taxes, road maintenance, winter operations, and municipal administration make up much of the remaining budget. Because Cutler's property-tax base has limited commercial valuation, changes in education assessments, county obligations, state aid, or major infrastructure costs can have a noticeable effect on the amount raised through taxation.

Fiscal Data Limitations

Financial records for portions of the period covered by this chapter are incomplete or not directly comparable because of administrative disruption, changes in financial recordkeeping, and unresolved account reconciliation. The Town relied on the best available information from audited financial statements, annual reports, warrant materials, commitment records, and Town Office records.

The figures presented in this chapter describe general fiscal conditions and trends rather than provide a complete audited accounting of each fiscal year. Where reported totals could not be reconciled with available category-level records, the discrepancy is noted rather than estimated.

The Town should continue reconciling its financial records and update this chapter and the Capital Investment Plan as more reliable information becomes available. Additional forensic accounting may be necessary, but the cost of a comprehensive review is not currently practical within the municipal operating budget. The Town should pursue outside assistance or funding where available.

Property Valuation and Tax Rate

Cutler’s local taxable valuation remained relatively stable from 2020 through 2022, ranging from approximately \$65.9 million to \$66.4 million. It increased to approximately \$76.3 million in 2023 and \$78.2 million in 2024. During the same period, the Town’s state valuation increased from \$64.1 million to \$106.9 million.

The local mil rate ranged from 13.5 to 18.0 mills during the five-year period. Changes in the mil rate reflect both the amount the Town must raise through property taxation and changes in local taxable valuation.

The certified assessment ratio declined from 110 percent in 2020 to 81 percent in 2024, indicating that local assessed values were not keeping pace with estimated market values. The Town should continue reviewing assessment data and updating local valuations as necessary to maintain equitable and current property assessments.

Year	Taxable Valuation	State Valuation	Certified Ratio	Mil Rate
2020	\$65,945,446	\$64,100,000	110%	17.0
2021	\$65,879,500	\$68,950,000	105%	17.0
2022	\$66,357,861	\$78,650,000	101%	18.0
2023	\$76,308,184	\$88,450,000	99%	13.5
2024	\$78,175,546	\$106,900,000	81%	16.0

Source: Maine Revenue Services, Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summaries and State Valuation History, 2020-2024.

Municipal Expenditure and Revenue Summaries

Cutler Municipal Expenditure Summary (in \$1,000s)					
Category	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025

Administration	\$350	\$405	\$404	\$408	\$108
Insurance	\$26	\$25	\$27	\$15	\$39
Shellfish	\$8	\$8	\$13	\$13	\$7
Town Road Maintenance	\$364 (inc.gen road maint.)	\$440	\$25	\$25	\$5
Winter Road Maintenance	\$0*	\$0*	\$104	\$104	\$103
Harbor	\$13	\$15	\$3	\$6	\$4
Town Property/ Utilities	\$23	\$44	\$61	\$66	\$47
Stipends & Boards	\$13	\$13	\$64	\$63	\$58
Allocations (Fire, EMS/etc.)	\$90	\$90	\$33	\$33	\$34
AOS (Edu.)	\$1,690	\$1,823	\$1,903*	\$1,774*	\$1,673
County Tax	\$311	\$332	\$339	\$352	\$142

Cutler Municipal Revenue Summary (in \$1,000s)					
	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Total Expenditures	\$3,488	\$3,836	\$3,978*	\$3,726*	\$2,438
State Revenue Sharing	\$82	\$177	\$205*	\$305*	\$113
Excise Tax (BMV)	\$115	\$123	\$136	\$148	\$148
Homestead Reimbursement	\$132	\$121	\$123*	\$124*	\$31
Other Revenue (Fees, Grants, etc.)	\$72	\$107	\$79*	\$39*	\$109*
Net Tax Commitment	\$1,121	\$1,120	\$1,194	\$1,030	\$1,250

Note for Both Tables: FY 2020-2021 and FY 2021-2022 figures are based primarily on audited financial information. FY 2022-2023 through FY 2024–2025 figures are based on Town Reports, annual warrant materials, and other available municipal records. Reporting categories changed during the period, and some accounts remain unreconciled. The tables present selected major revenue and expenditure categories and are intended to show general fiscal patterns rather than provide a complete audited year-to-year comparison.

Property Tax and Revenue Trends

Available records show that Cutler’s net tax commitment, taxable valuation, and mil rate varied during the five-year period. Because the figures were compiled from different sources and some accounts remain unreconciled, they should be interpreted as general trends rather than exact year-to-year comparisons.

Education remains the Town's largest annual obligation. County assessments, road costs, and changes in state aid also affect the amount that must be raised locally. Increased taxable valuation during the period helped distribute municipal costs across a broader tax base.

Cutler also receives revenue from state revenue sharing, motor vehicle excise taxes, homestead reimbursement, licenses, permits, harbor and shellfish fees, grants, and other reimbursements. Excise taxes and local fees provide recurring revenue, while grants, state aid, and reimbursements may vary from year to year. One-time grants and reimbursements should not be treated as dependable operating revenue.

The mil rate should not be viewed by itself as a complete measure of the local tax burden. Changes in valuation, expenditures, exemptions, and outside revenue all affect the amount paid by individual property owners.

Fiscal Stability Considerations

Cutler's property-tax base includes relatively little commercial valuation, making the Town sensitive to changes in education costs, county assessments, state aid, and major infrastructure expenses.

Maintaining fiscal stability will require conservative revenue estimates, careful control of recurring expenditures, protection of reserve funds, and advance planning for major repairs and equipment purchases. Grants and outside funding can reduce local costs, but the Town should also consider required matches, future maintenance, and other long-term obligations.

The Town should continue improving financial recordkeeping and reconciling outstanding accounts as resources allow. Consistent annual reporting will support budgeting, capital planning, grant applications, and public understanding of municipal finances.

Tax Base and Exempt Property

Cutler's tax base is affected by exempt and reduced-assessment property, including Homestead and Veteran exemptions, qualifying business equipment, municipal and government property, religious and charitable property, conservation holdings, and land enrolled in Maine's Current Use taxation programs.

The 2025 tax commitment book reports approximately \$99.7 million in total exemptions and a net taxable assessment of approximately \$81.2 million. The exemption total includes both individual taxpayer exemptions and fully exempt property and does not represent an equivalent loss of municipal revenue because reimbursement and assessment provisions vary by category.

In 2024, Current Use enrollment included 34 Tree Growth parcels totaling 4,934 acres, 9 Farmland parcels totaling 302 acres, and 3 Open Space parcels totaling 119 acres. No Working Waterfront parcels were enrolled. Additional information is provided in the Agriculture and Forest Resources chapter.

The Town should continue tracking changes in exempt valuation, Current Use enrollment, state reimbursement, and taxable valuation as part of annual fiscal planning.

Debt Position

Available records indicate that Cutler had outstanding bonded debt as of July 1, 2024. The November 2024 Town Warrant reported approximately \$150,673 in outstanding principal and \$32,606 in remaining interest. The warrant also sought authorization for up to \$450,000 in additional borrowing for road paving, although authorization does not necessarily mean that the full amount was issued.

The Town should confirm the current principal balance, repayment schedule, and status of any subsequently issued debt when updating this chapter. Based on the information available, Cutler's municipal debt appears modest relative to its state valuation and statutory borrowing capacity. Future borrowing should be evaluated based on annual debt service, reserve levels, grant opportunities, project life, and effects on the local tax commitment.

Cutler does not operate a municipal water or sewer utility and therefore has no municipal utility debt. The Town also bears its proportional share of AOS 96 and Washington County obligations through annual assessments, although separate school and county debt amounts attributable specifically to Cutler were not available for this chapter. Before undertaking additional borrowing, the Town should confirm its municipal and overlapping debt and compare projected debt service with applicable statutory limits and current Maine Municipal Bond Bank guidance.

The Town should continue using grants, reserves, and phased capital investment where practical, while retaining borrowing as an option for major essential projects that cannot reasonably be funded through annual appropriations alone.

Capital Reserve Accounts

Cutler maintains reserve accounts for roads, harbor activities, cemetery needs, and fire protection. According to Town Office records, the Road Reserve is the largest reported reserve and supports paving, reconstruction, drainage, and other road needs. The Harbor Account supports harbor operations and marine access improvements, while the Cemetery Account supports cemetery maintenance. The Fire Department reserve is maintained separately and was not included in the balances available for this chapter.

The reserve balances reflect Town-reported figures available in April 2026. Because some prior financial records and account classifications remain under reconciliation, the balances should be treated as the best available information at the time of preparation and may be revised as additional records are confirmed.

Reserve Account	Current Balance	FY 2024-25 Year End Balance
Road Reserve	\$97,556.80	\$61,624.80

Harbor Account	\$16,270.31	\$11,050.00
Cemetery Account	\$820.68	\$270.68
Fire Department Reserve	Not Reported	Not Reported

Source: Town of Cutler Town Office records April 2026).

Note: The Fire Department reserve is maintained separately and was not included in the balances provided by the Town Office. The Road Reserve balance may include anticipated Local Road Assistance Program revenue and planned road-related expenditures..

Because reserve balances are modest relative to the cost of major infrastructure projects, the Town will need to combine reserves with annual appropriations, grants, state assistance, phased construction, or borrowing where appropriate. Reserve balances and anticipated uses should be reviewed annually as part of the municipal budget and Capital Investment Plan process.

Fund Balance

A reliable unassigned fund balance could not be determined from the records available during preparation of this plan because prior-year accounts remain under reconciliation.

Confirming and documenting the unassigned fund balance should be a near-term financial management priority. Once confirmed, the Select Board should evaluate whether the balance is sufficient to support cash flow, respond to emergencies, and reduce reliance on short-term borrowing or abrupt tax increases.

The Town should establish a practical fund-balance target or policy suited to Cutler's revenue variability and capital needs and review it periodically as part of the annual budget process.

Conditions and Trends

Cutler's fiscal capacity is shaped by a predominantly residential property-tax base and continued sensitivity to changes in education costs, county assessments, state aid, and major infrastructure expenses.

The Town's recent fiscal position includes modest reserve balances, limited borrowing, and increased property valuation. These factors provide some flexibility, but major one-time costs and fluctuations in outside revenue could still affect the annual tax commitment.

Administrative and recordkeeping disruptions have made year-to-year financial comparisons more difficult. Continued account reconciliation, consistent annual reporting, and regular review of reserves and capital needs will support stronger fiscal planning.

Cutler's long-term fiscal stability will depend on conservative budgeting, phased capital investment, protection of reserve funds, and continued use of grants and other outside funding where practical.

Analysis

Cutler's fiscal position provides some flexibility through increased property valuation, reserve accounts, and limited outstanding debt. However, the Town remains sensitive to changes in education costs, county assessments, road work, emergency expenses, and outside revenue.

Existing reserve balances are not sufficient to fund all anticipated infrastructure and facility needs. Major projects will therefore require a combination of reserves, annual appropriations, grants, state assistance, phased implementation, and borrowing when appropriate.

Incomplete financial records and unresolved account reconciliation limit the Town's ability to compare prior-year performance, confirm available balances, and plan confidently for future expenditures. Completing reconciliation and establishing consistent annual reporting practices are important to stronger budgeting and capital planning.

The Town's most practical approach is to maintain essential services, protect and gradually build reserves, identify capital needs before they become emergencies, and match project timing to realistic funding opportunities. The Capital Investment Plan should be reviewed annually and used to guide reserve contributions, grant applications, and borrowing decisions.

Capital Investment Plan

A Capital Investment Plan identifies significant, non-recurring expenditures needed to maintain or improve municipal infrastructure, equipment, and facilities during the planning period. It establishes general priorities, anticipated timing, estimated costs, and potential funding sources so that major expenditures can be considered in advance through the annual budget process.

The projects listed below were identified by the Select Board during preparation of the Comprehensive Plan. Cost estimates are preliminary and do not represent funding commitments. Projects may be revised, deferred, or removed as needs, costs, and funding opportunities change.

Project	Time Frame	Priority	Potential Funding Source	Estimated Cost	Related Chapter	Growth Related
Municipal boat ramp repairs	2026	High	Grants; Harbor Account; local match	\$80,000	Marine Resources; Transportation; Public Facilities; Recreation	No
Fire Department turnout gear and hoses	2026	High	Fire reserve; taxation; grants	\$20,000	Public Facilities	No
Bay Ridge School emergency generator	1-3 yrs	High	Grants; reserve funds; local match	\$80,000	Public Facilities and Services; Hazard / Climate Resilience;	No

Maker property planning/improvements	1-5 yrs	Medium	Grants; taxation; other sources to be determined	TBD	Recreation; Public Facilities	No
Town Office wheelchair ramp replacement	1-3 yrs	Medium	Grants; reserve funds; taxation	\$18,000	Public Facilities and Services	No
Town Office roof replacement	1-5 yrs	High	Reserve funds; grants; taxation	\$40,000	Public Facilities and Services	No
Road ditching, drainage, and paving improvements	Ongoing	High	LRAP; Road Reserve; taxation; grants; borrowing	Approximately \$1,000,000 over the planning period	Transportation; Public Facilities and Services; Climate Resilience	No

Source: Town of Cutler CIP Worksheet, April 2026. **Priority:** High projects address essential services, safety, accessibility, structural needs, or time-sensitive infrastructure. Medium projects are important but may be deferred as funding and capacity allow.

Growth-Related Capital Investment

Cutler does not anticipate major municipal infrastructure expansion to accommodate growth during the planning period. Most projects in the Capital Investment Plan involve maintenance, replacement, accessibility, emergency preparedness, or improvements to existing facilities.

Consistent with the Future Land Use Plan, the Town will direct at least 75 percent of any new municipal growth-related capital investment to designated Growth Areas. Routine maintenance and replacement of existing roads, facilities, and equipment are not considered growth-related investments. Any future project that increases municipal service capacity to support new development should be identified and tracked through annual Capital Investment Plan updates.

Funding and Regional Coordination

Cutler expects to finance capital projects through a combination of reserve accounts, annual appropriations, state assistance, grants, local matching funds, phased implementation, and borrowing when necessary. The appropriate funding method will depend on the project's urgency, cost, useful life, grant eligibility, required local match, and effect on the annual tax commitment.

Before undertaking a major facility or equipment purchase, the Town should consider whether the need can be met more efficiently through shared purchasing, mutual aid, coordinated grant applications, contracted services, or joint investment with neighboring municipalities, AOS 96, Washington County, or regional service providers.

Capital Plan Administration

The Select Board should review and update the Capital Investment Plan annually as part of the municipal budget process. The review should identify changes in project scope, priority, estimated cost, timing, and funding sources and should distinguish routine maintenance from municipal growth-related capital investments.

The Capital Investment Plan is a planning tool and does not authorize expenditures. All projects remain subject to applicable budgeting, Town Meeting approval, procurement, and funding requirements.

Policies and Strategies

Policy 1: Finance existing and future municipal facilities and services in a cost-effective manner.

Strategy 1.1: Continue to prepare conservative annual budgets that consider recurring expenditures, reserve needs, debt obligations, anticipated revenues, and major capital costs.

Lead Entity: Select Board, Town Office

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Strategy 1.2: Maintain reserve accounts for anticipated road, harbor, public facility, emergency equipment, and other major capital needs, and review reserve balances and anticipated uses annually.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Strategy 1.3: Confirm the Town's unassigned fund balance after account reconciliation is complete and establish a practical fund-balance target or policy appropriate to Cutler's fiscal needs.

Lead Entity: Select Board, Town Office

Timeframe: Near-Term, 1-2 years

Priority: High

Strategy 1.4: Continue efforts to reconcile municipal accounts and pursue affordable outside assistance or funding for any additional forensic accounting needed to establish reliable balances and strengthen future financial reporting.

Lead Entity: Select Board, Town Office

Timeframe: Near-Term, 1-2 years

Priority: High

Policy 2: Pursue grants and other outside funding to reduce the local cost of capital investments.

Strategy 2.1: Seek federal, state, regional, and private funding for eligible infrastructure, public safety, accessibility, recreation, marine access, energy resilience, and municipal facility projects.

Lead Entity: Select Board, applicable municipal boards and departments

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Strategy 2.2: Evaluate grant requirements before accepting funding, including local match, reporting requirements, future maintenance, and long-term operating costs.

Lead Entity: Select Board, Town Office

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Strategy 2.3: Explore opportunities to coordinate or share major purchases, facilities, services, grant applications, and infrastructure investments with neighboring municipalities, AOS 96, Washington County, and regional service providers where doing so would improve service or reduce costs.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: Medium

Policy 3: Limit growth in municipal spending and remain within applicable LD 1 spending limitations.

Strategy 3.1: Review the municipal property-tax levy limit and other applicable LD 1 requirements during preparation of each annual budget and document any voter-approved action required to exceed those limitations.

Lead Entity: Select Board, Town Office

Timeframe: Annually

Priority: High

Strategy 3.2: Review and update the Capital Investment Plan annually, including project priorities, estimated costs, funding sources, timeframes, and identification of municipal growth-related capital investments.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Annually

Priority: Medium

Strategy 3.3: Use reserve funds, phased implementation, annual appropriations, and outside funding for capital needs when practical, while evaluating borrowing for major projects based on debt capacity, annual debt service, project life, and effects on taxpayers.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Sources

- Town of Cutler annual reports
- Town of Cutler commitment book and valuation return statistical summary
- Town of Cutler Town Office records and reserve account balances (April 2026).
- Maine Revenue Services. Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary.
<https://www.maine.gov/revenue/taxes/property-tax/municipal-services/valuation-return-statistical-summary>
- Town of Cutler CIP Worksheet / Select Board notes (April 2026).
- GFOA fund balance best-practice guidance

EXISTING LAND USE

State Goal: None required.

Community Overview

Cutler's existing land use pattern consists of a small harbor-centered village, dispersed residential development along Route 191 and other existing roads, working waterfront uses, wild blueberry fields, forestland, public lands, and extensive conservation holdings. Development has remained limited and has generally occurred one lot at a time without new subdivisions or major extensions of municipal infrastructure.

The amount and location of future development are influenced by conservation ownership, wetlands, shoreland areas, flood exposure, soil and bedrock conditions, road access, and reliance on private wells and subsurface wastewater disposal systems. These conditions concentrate most practical development opportunities on privately owned land along existing road corridors.

Major Land Use Categories

Residential Uses

Residential development consists primarily of single-family homes located along Route 191, town roads, and portions of the coastline. Development is somewhat more concentrated in and near the village and Cutler Harbor but remains dispersed overall. Housing includes year-round and seasonal residences, mobile homes on individual lots, and limited multifamily housing.

Commercial and Working Waterfront Uses

Commercial activity is limited and includes small businesses, home occupations, marine services, and water-dependent uses. Working waterfront activity is concentrated around Cutler Harbor and includes commercial fishing facilities, wharves, moorings, seafood-related activity, and access to marine waters.

Agriculture, Forestland, and Undeveloped Land

Large portions of Cutler remain forested or undeveloped. Privately owned land includes managed forestland, wild blueberry fields, and land enrolled in Maine's Current Use taxation programs. Current Use enrollment affects property assessment but does not permanently protect land from development.

Conserved and Public Lands

A substantial portion of Cutler is owned or protected by federal and state agencies, land trusts, and conservation organizations. These lands include coastal islands, forestland, wildlife habitat, and recreation areas. They reduce the amount of privately owned land available for development while protecting natural resources and public access opportunities.

Existing Land Use Map

The Existing Land Use Map shows the general distribution of residential, commercial, institutional, working waterfront, agricultural, forest or undeveloped, conservation, and federal military property in Cutler.

The map illustrates the Town's dispersed settlement pattern, with most residential development located along Route 191 and other existing roads, a small concentration of uses around Cutler Harbor and the village, and extensive forested, undeveloped, conserved, and publicly owned land elsewhere in the community.

The map is intended to show broad land use patterns rather than parcel-level regulatory boundaries. Shoreland zoning districts, flood hazard areas, wetlands, and other development constraints are shown or discussed elsewhere in the plan.

Current Lot Dimensional Standards

Cutler regulates development through two local ordinances. The Land Use Ordinance applies outside the shoreland zone, while the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance applies within areas regulated under Maine's shoreland zoning law. Together, the ordinances establish minimum lot sizes, frontage, setbacks, building height, lot coverage, permit procedures, and standards for nonconforming uses and structures.

Current Dimensional Standards		
Standard	Land-Use Ordinance	Shoreland Zoning Ordinance
Minimum Lot Area	30,000 square feet	Residential: 33,000 square feet adjacent to tidal areas; 40,000 square feet adjacent to non-tidal areas
Minimum Frontage	150 feet of road frontage	Residential: 200 feet of shore frontage
Front or Water Setback	25 feet from the edge of	Generally 75 feet from the normal high-water

	the traveled way	line or upland edge of a wetland; 250 feet in the Resource Protection District; no minimum water setback in the Commercial Fisheries/Maritime Activities District
Side and Rear Setback	10 feet from property lines	Not established as general property-line setbacks in the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance
Maximum Building Height	35 feet	35 feet in the Resource Protection, Limited Residential, and Stream Protection districts
Maximum Lot Coverage	30 percent of total lot area	20 percent of the portion of the lot within the shoreland zone; 70 percent in the Commercial Fisheries/Maritime Activities District

The Shoreland Zoning Ordinance establishes five districts: Resource Protection, Limited Residential, Commercial Fisheries/Maritime Activities, Stream Protection, and Navy Towers. The Resource Protection District includes certain floodplains, steep slopes, wetlands, wildlife habitat, and erosion-prone coastal areas. The Commercial Fisheries/Maritime Activities District accommodates functionally water-dependent uses.

Recent Development Activity

Town building permit records document 45 residential-related permits between 2016 and 2025, averaging approximately 4.5 permits per year. The permits included new single-family and manufactured homes, seasonal structures, guest or accessory dwellings, residential conversions, and replacement units. Permit activity was highest from 2016 through 2019, declined in 2020 and 2021, and increased modestly from 2022 through 2024.

Recent development occurred primarily lot by lot along existing roads rather than through subdivisions or planned residential developments. The permit map shows concentrations around the harbor village, Route 191, and the Little Machias area, with additional scattered development elsewhere in town. No new residential subdivisions or major planned developments were identified during the period.

Land Use Regulations

Land use in Cutler is regulated primarily through the Town's Land Use Ordinance and Shoreland Zoning Ordinance. The Land Use Ordinance applies outside the shoreland zone and establishes dimensional standards, permit requirements, nonconformance provisions, and appeal procedures. The Shoreland Zoning Ordinance applies within the statutory shoreland zone and regulates development near coastal and freshwater wetlands and streams.

The Planning Board and Code Enforcement Officer administer the permitting process, with the Local Plumbing Inspector involved where subsurface wastewater disposal is required. Cutler does not have separate subdivision or site plan review ordinances beyond the applicable requirements of state law and the two local ordinances.

The Shoreland Zoning Ordinance includes Resource Protection, Limited Residential, Commercial Fisheries/Maritime Activities, Stream Protection, and Navy Towers districts. These districts regulate the location and intensity of shoreland development and protect sensitive natural resources and functionally water-dependent uses.

Cutler does not participate in the National Flood Insurance Program. As a result, federally backed flood insurance is not available to local property owners, and eligibility for certain forms of federal assistance in mapped flood hazard areas may be limited. Flood-prone areas are identified through FEMA mapping and are also addressed in part through the Resource Protection District and other shoreland standards.

Projected Land Needs

Recent records average approximately 4.5 residential-related permits per year, although not every permit creates an additional year-round dwelling. Assuming that future residential activity continues at a similar modest pace, and that a portion of permits involve replacements, seasonal structures, or accessory dwellings, Cutler is likely to add fewer than 45 net-new primary residences during the ten-year planning period.

At an average developed lot size of approximately one to two acres, roughly 30 to 80 acres of suitable land may be needed to accommodate anticipated residential development. This amount is within the existing supply of privately owned, physically suitable land along established road corridors. No substantial additional land is anticipated for commercial, industrial, or institutional development.

Conditions and Trends

Cutler's land use pattern has changed gradually. Residential development remains dispersed along Route 191 and other existing roads, with a somewhat greater concentration of homes, businesses, public facilities, and marine uses in and near the village and Cutler Harbor.

Recent development has occurred primarily through construction on individual lots rather than subdivisions, planned developments, or new road networks. Commercial development has also remained limited, with most business activity consisting of small businesses, home occupations, and marine-related uses.

Large portions of the Town remain forested, undeveloped, publicly owned, or conserved. Wetlands, shoreland areas, flood exposure, soil and bedrock conditions, and reliance on private wells and septic systems further affect where development can occur. These conditions are expected to continue directing most new development toward suitable privately owned land along existing roads.

Analysis

Development Pattern

Cutler's recent residential development pattern is consistent with its existing settlement pattern. New construction has occurred incrementally along established roads and has not required major extensions of roads or municipal services.

Continued lot-by-lot development can generally be accommodated within the Town's existing infrastructure. However, repeated driveway entrances and closely spaced development along Route 191 could gradually affect traffic safety, road function, and access if development activity increases.

Regulatory and Administrative Capacity

The Land Use Ordinance and Shoreland Zoning Ordinance provide the Town's primary tools for reviewing development. The ordinances establish dimensional standards, regulate development near water and wetlands, and provide protections for sensitive shoreland areas and functionally water-dependent uses.

The Town's current land use administration is generally suited to its limited permit volume. The Planning Board, Code Enforcement Officer, and Local Plumbing Inspector should continue to maintain complete permit records and periodically review the ordinances for consistency with state law, the Future Land Use Plan, and changing local needs.

In addition to ordinance administration, consistent permit mapping, annual review of development activity, coordination with landowners, and use of municipal investments and grant funding can help direct development toward suitable locations identified in the Future Land Use Plan.

Development Constraints

The amount of land that is practical for development is more limited than Cutler's total undeveloped acreage suggests. Conservation ownership, wetlands, shoreland regulations, flood exposure, steep slopes, shallow soils, bedrock, road access, and septic suitability all affect development potential.

Cutler has no public water or sewer system. New development must therefore be supported by individual wells and subsurface wastewater disposal systems, which limits development density and makes site conditions an important part of permit review.

Flood and Climate Exposure

Low-lying coastal areas, roads, and waterfront properties are exposed to coastal flooding, erosion, storm surge, and future sea-level rise. More intense precipitation may also increase drainage problems, roadside erosion, and culvert failures.

The Town's shoreland zoning standards provide some protection in sensitive coastal and flood-prone areas. Future ordinance and map updates should use the best available flood, coastal hazard, and climate information and should discourage new development in locations where safe access, wastewater disposal, and long-term use may be difficult to maintain.

FEMA mapping identifies current flood hazard areas but does not fully represent future sea-level rise or all locally observed flooding. The Town should periodically review updated flood and coastal hazard information and evaluate the benefits, costs, and administrative requirements of participating in the National Flood Insurance Program.

Implications for Future Land Use

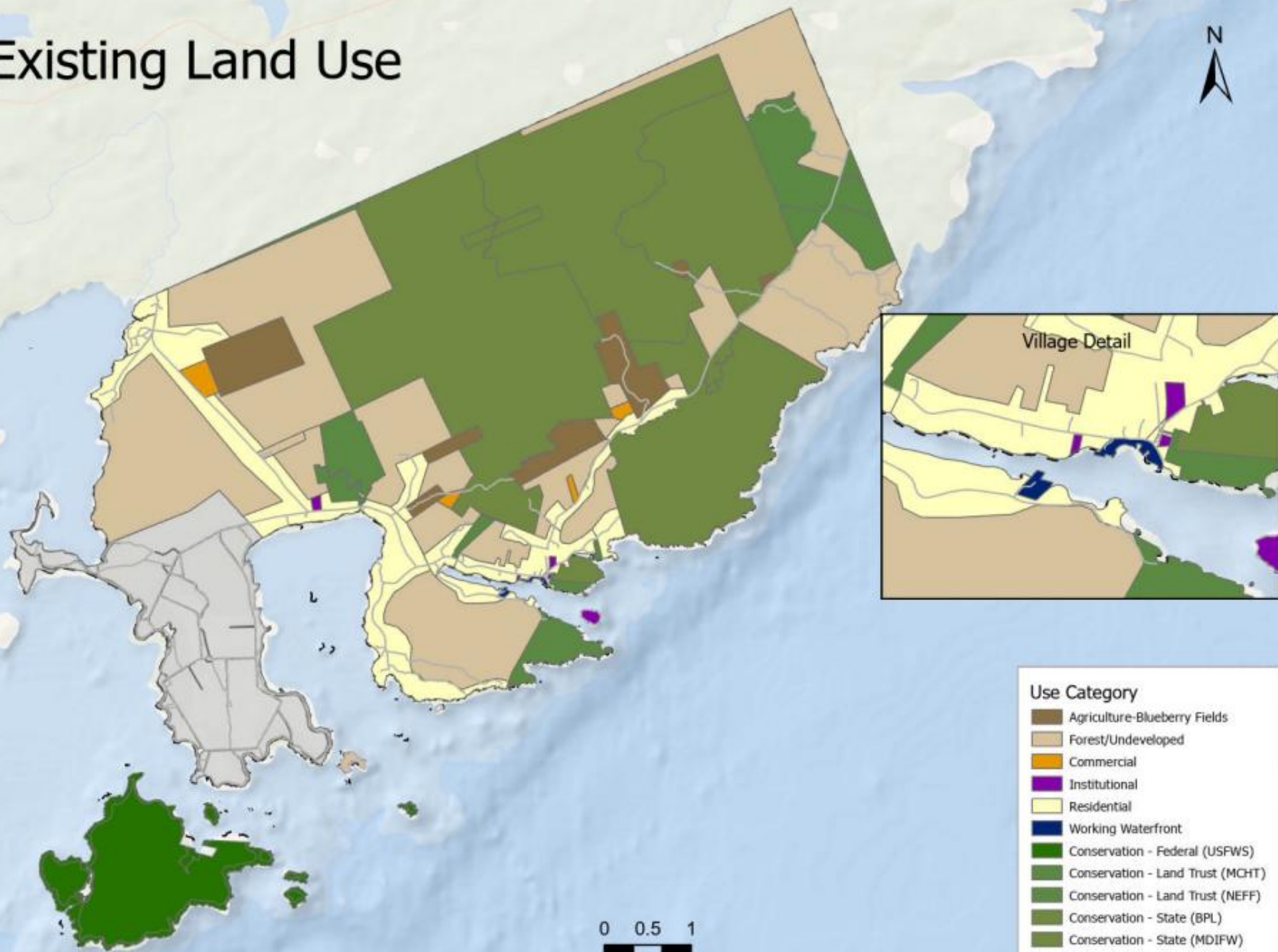
Cutler has sufficient land to accommodate the modest amount of development anticipated during the planning period, but development opportunities are not evenly distributed. The most suitable areas are generally privately owned parcels along existing roads that have safe access and fewer environmental or physical constraints.

The Future Land Use Plan should build on the existing settlement pattern, support continued use of the village and established road corridors, protect working waterfront areas, and avoid directing development toward conserved land or locations with significant flood, wetland, soil, or access limitations.

Sources

- Town of Cutler, Land Use Ordinance (adopted August 27, 2019).
- Town of Cutler, Shoreland Zoning Ordinance (adopted December 30, 1991; amended 1993, 1994, 2006, 2010).
- Town of Cutler, Building Permit Records (2015-2025).
- Town of Cutler, Comprehensive Plan (1991).
- Maine Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act, 30-A M.R.S.A. §4326 et seq.
- Federal Emergency Management Agency, Flood Insurance Rate Maps, Washington County, Maine (Community ID: 230310), Panels 23029C1115E, 23029C1120E, 23029C1335E, 23029C1355E; effective July 18, 2017.
- Town of Cutler tax maps and valuation records (Maine Revenue Services).

Existing Land Use



Use Category

- Agriculture-Blueberry Fields
- Forest/Undeveloped
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Residential
- Working Waterfront
- Conservation - Federal (USFWS)
- Conservation - Land Trust (MCHT)
- Conservation - Land Trust (NEFF)
- Conservation - State (BPL)
- Conservation - State (MDIFW)
- US Naval VLF

FUTURE LAND USE

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.

Planning Approach

Cutler's Future Land Use Plan directs anticipated growth to two small inland Growth Areas at Fitzhenry Lane and Bay Ridge School while designating the remainder of the Town as Rural Area. The plan is intended to accommodate modest residential growth, make use of existing roads and public facilities, protect working waterfront and natural resource areas, and avoid directing new development toward conserved land or locations with significant flood, shoreland, or other development constraints.

Recent residential development has occurred primarily through construction on individual lots along existing roads, with no major subdivisions or extensions of public water or sewer systems. Town building permit records document 45 residential-related permits between 2016 and 2025, although not all created net-new year-round housing units. Based on recent development trends and the population and housing projections presented elsewhere in the plan, Cutler anticipates approximately 20 to 40 additional residential units during the ten-year planning period.

The Growth Areas are intended primarily for residential development but may also accommodate compatible small-scale community, institutional, home-based, or service uses where allowed by local ordinance and supported by site conditions. No Transitional Area is designated because Cutler does not have an area where higher-intensity development is expected to transition gradually into rural land uses.

The mapped designations are intended to guide municipal investment, ordinance review, development decisions, and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

Fitzhenry Lane Growth Area

The Fitzhenry Lane Growth Area is an inland, road-served area identified for modest residential growth. It is outside the principal mapped coastal flood and shoreland constraint areas and includes existing lots, municipally owned land, and land previously planned for subdivision.

Development in this area is expected to remain low density and to rely on private wells and subsurface wastewater disposal systems. Single-family homes will likely remain the predominant use, although accessory dwelling units and other compatible housing types allowed under state law and local ordinance may also be appropriate where site conditions permit. Small-scale community, institutional, home-based, or service uses may also be considered where compatible with surrounding development.

The Growth Area designation does not guarantee that every parcel is suitable for development. Road access, soils, septic suitability, wetlands, deed restrictions, and other site-specific conditions must be evaluated before development occurs. No extension of public water or sewer service is anticipated.

Before municipally owned land is sold, leased, or developed, the Select Board and Cutler Land Inc. Committee should confirm applicable deed conditions, transfer restrictions, community priorities, and funding requirements.

Bay Ridge School Growth Area

The Bay Ridge School Growth Area is centered on an existing public facility and established road access. It has already experienced some residential development and is identified as an appropriate location for continued incremental growth.

Development in this area is expected to remain low density and primarily residential, with accessory dwelling units and other compatible housing types allowed where site conditions and local standards permit. Small-scale community, institutional, home-based, or service uses may also be appropriate because of the area's existing public facility and road access.

The Growth Area boundary is intended to avoid the most significant mapped coastal flood and critical natural resource constraints. Development near the edges of the area should still be reviewed using current flood, storm-surge, wetland, soil, and septic information.

Municipal investment is expected to be limited mainly to maintenance or improvement of existing roads and facilities.

Growth Area Capital Investment

Cutler will direct at least 75 percent of municipal growth-related capital investment to the two designated Growth Areas during the planning period. Growth-related investments are projects that increase the capacity of an area to accommodate new development. Routine maintenance and replacement of existing roads and facilities are not considered growth-related.

Rural Area

The Rural Area includes all land outside the two designated Growth Areas. It contains conserved and publicly owned land, forestland, wild blueberry fields, the U.S. Naval VLF property, shoreland and resource protection areas, working waterfront areas, and scattered privately owned parcels.

The Rural Area designation does not prohibit development. Low-density residential, resource-based, home-based, and other uses may continue where allowed by local ordinance and supported by site conditions. However, the Town does not intend to direct major new residential, commercial, institutional, or infrastructure investment into these areas.

The Rural Area is supported by the Land Use Ordinance, Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, conservation ownership and easements, and Maine's Current Use taxation programs. Current Use enrollment can help keep forest and agricultural land in productive use but does not permanently prevent future development.

Critical Natural Resources and Working Waterfront

Cutler's Future Land Use Plan directs anticipated growth away from mapped critical natural resources, conserved lands, sensitive shoreland areas, and the working waterfront.

Critical natural resources identified through state mapping include wetlands, wildlife habitat, rare or exemplary natural features, coastal resources, and large unfragmented habitat areas, as applicable in Cutler. Most of these resources are located within the Rural Area, where development is expected to remain limited and low density.

Cutler Harbor's Commercial Fisheries/Maritime Activities District protects functionally water-dependent uses, including commercial fishing, wharves, aquaculture, and related marine activity. The Future Land Use Plan supports continued application of this district and does not direct new non-water-dependent growth to the harbor.

Resource Protection and other shoreland zoning districts also help limit inappropriate development in flood-prone, erosion-prone, wetland, and other sensitive coastal areas. Conservation ownership and easements provide additional protection but should be distinguished from Current Use taxation, which supports continued farm and forest use without permanently preventing development.

Analysis

Cutler's two Growth Areas are compact, inland, and served by existing roads. They are intended to accommodate the modest amount of residential and compatible small-scale development anticipated during the planning period without requiring new public water, sewer, or major road extensions.

The Growth Areas reinforce existing development patterns while avoiding most conserved lands, shoreland areas, working waterfront uses, and significant mapped natural and coastal hazard constraints. Site-specific review will still be necessary because soils, septic suitability, wetlands, drainage, road access, deed restrictions, and hazard exposure may vary within the mapped boundaries.

The Rural Area contains most of the Town's forestland, wild blueberry fields, conserved land, public land, shoreland resources, working waterfront, and scattered low-density development. Existing ordinances allow continued development on suitable lots, but the plan does not direct major growth or growth-related municipal investment to these areas.

The Future Land Use Plan provides sufficient opportunity for anticipated development while protecting areas where additional growth could conflict with natural resources, marine uses, public ownership, infrastructure limitations, or coastal hazards. The Town should review permit locations and capital investments periodically to determine whether development is occurring consistently with the plan.

Climate and Coastal Hazard Considerations

The Future Land Use Plan avoids directing growth toward the Town's most vulnerable coastal areas. Mapped storm-surge exposure is concentrated along the immediate shoreline, tidal inlets, and low-lying coastal road corridors, including Destiny Bay Road.

Because available FEMA mapping provides limited local detail, the Future Land Use maps also use NOAA storm-surge information to supplement the Town's understanding of coastal exposure. These datasets serve different purposes and should be considered together with updated state and federal flood and sea-level-rise information.

Neither designated Growth Area is intended to include land with the most significant mapped coastal hazard exposure. Development near Growth Area boundaries should still be reviewed using current flood, storm-surge, wetland, drainage, soil, and access information.

The Town should avoid new public investments that would encourage additional development in areas where flooding, erosion, emergency access, or long-term maintenance may become increasingly difficult.

Policies and Strategies

Policy 1: Direct anticipated growth to the Fitzhenry Lane and Bay Ridge School Growth Areas at a scale that can be supported by existing roads and local services.

Strategy 1.1: Use the Future Land Use Map and the descriptions of the Growth and Rural Areas to guide municipal decisions concerning development review, ordinance amendments, capital investment, and use of municipally owned land.

Lead Entity: Planning Board, Select Board, Code Enforcement Officer

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Strategy 1.2: Maintain land use standards that support low-density residential development and compatible small-scale community, institutional, home-based, and service uses in the designated Growth Areas, subject to road access, soils, wastewater disposal, and other site conditions.

Lead Entity: Planning Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Strategy 1.3: Confirm deed conditions, transfer restrictions, and other legal requirements affecting municipally owned Fitzhenry Lane property before any sale, lease, or development is pursued.

Lead Entity: Select Board, Cutler Land Inc. Committee

Timeframe: Near-Term (1-2 years)

Priority: High

Strategy 1.4: Consider state, federal, and regional funding programs for housing or related site improvements on municipally owned land if the Town decides to pursue development in the Fitzhenry Lane Growth Area.

Lead Entity: Select Board, Cutler Land Inc. Committee

Timeframe: Mid-Term (3-5 years)

Priority: Medium

Policy 2: Maintain low-density development in the Rural Area and protect forests, wild blueberry fields, shoreland resources, critical natural resources, and working waterfront uses.

Strategy 2.1: Avoid municipal infrastructure extensions, ordinance changes, or other actions that would encourage concentrated or scattered development in Rural Areas where access, services, natural resources, or physical conditions are limited.

Lead Entity: Planning Board, Select Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Strategy 2.2: Maintain and enforce the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, including the Resource Protection and Commercial Fisheries/Maritime Activities districts, to protect wetlands, flood-prone shoreland, sensitive coastal areas, and functionally water-dependent uses at Cutler Harbor.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: Medium

Strategy 2.3: Support voluntary conservation and continued farm and forest use through coordination with willing landowners, conservation organizations, public agencies, and Maine's Current Use taxation programs.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: Medium

Strategy 2.4: Use current flood, storm-surge, sea-level-rise, wetland, and natural resource information when reviewing development near vulnerable or environmentally sensitive areas, and update local maps and review practices as improved information becomes available.

Lead Entity: Planning Board, Code Enforcement Officer

Timeframe: Ongoing
Priority: Medium

Policy 3: Maintain land use ordinances, permitting practices, and municipal capacity needed to implement the Future Land Use Plan.

Strategy 3.1: Review the Land Use Ordinance within two years of plan adoption and amend it as needed to remain consistent with the Future Land Use Plan, current state housing requirements, and the intended scale and location of future development.

Lead Entity: Planning Board
Timeframe: Near term (1-2 years)
Priority: High

Strategy 3.2: Maintain fair and efficient permitting procedures and provide the Code Enforcement Officer with the training, certification, tools, records, and municipal support necessary to administer local land use ordinances.

Lead Entity: Select Board, Planning Board, Code Enforcement Officer
Timeframe: Ongoing
Priority: Medium

Strategy 3.3: Track the type and location of new residential, commercial, institutional, and industrial development and periodically compare permit activity with the designated Growth and Rural Areas.

Lead Entity: Planning Board, Code Enforcement Officer
Timeframe: Ongoing
Priority: Medium

Strategy 3.4: Assign overall coordination of Future Land Use Plan implementation to the Select Board, with assistance from the Planning Board, Code Enforcement Officer, Cutler Land Inc. Committee, and other municipal boards or officials as applicable.

Lead Entity: Select Board
Timeframe: Ongoing
Priority: Medium

Policy 4: Coordinate municipal investment and regional planning with the Future Land Use Plan.

Strategy 4.1: Direct at least 75 percent of municipal growth-related capital investment to the Fitzhenry Lane and Bay Ridge School Growth Areas and track compliance through the annual budget and Capital Investment Plan.

Lead Entity: Select Board
Timeframe: Ongoing
Priority: Medium

Strategy 4.2: Include anticipated road, facility, or other municipal capital investments needed to support the intended uses of the Growth Areas in the Capital Investment Plan as needs are identified.

Lead Entity: Select Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Strategy 4.3: Coordinate with neighboring communities, Washington County, regional organizations, and state agencies on land use designations, shared natural resources, transportation, housing, public services, and coastal hazards when issues extend beyond Cutler's boundaries.

Lead Entity: Select Board, Planning Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

Priority: High

Strategy 4.2: Review implementation of the Future Land Use Plan at least once every five years, including development locations, ordinance consistency, capital investment, resource protection, and changes in climate or infrastructure conditions.

Lead Entity: Select Board, Planning Board

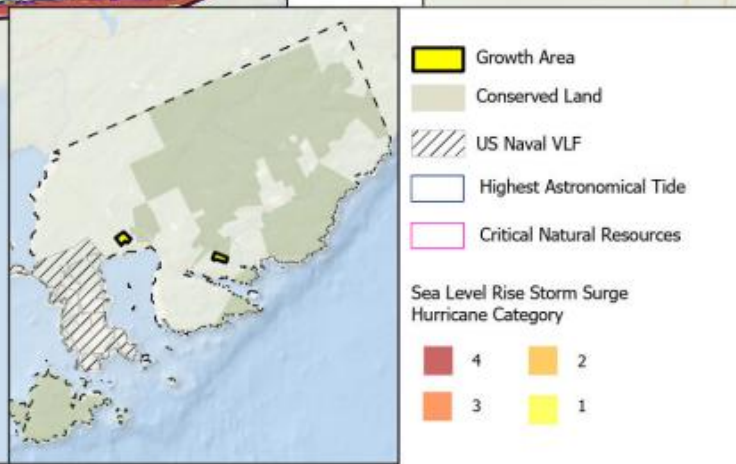
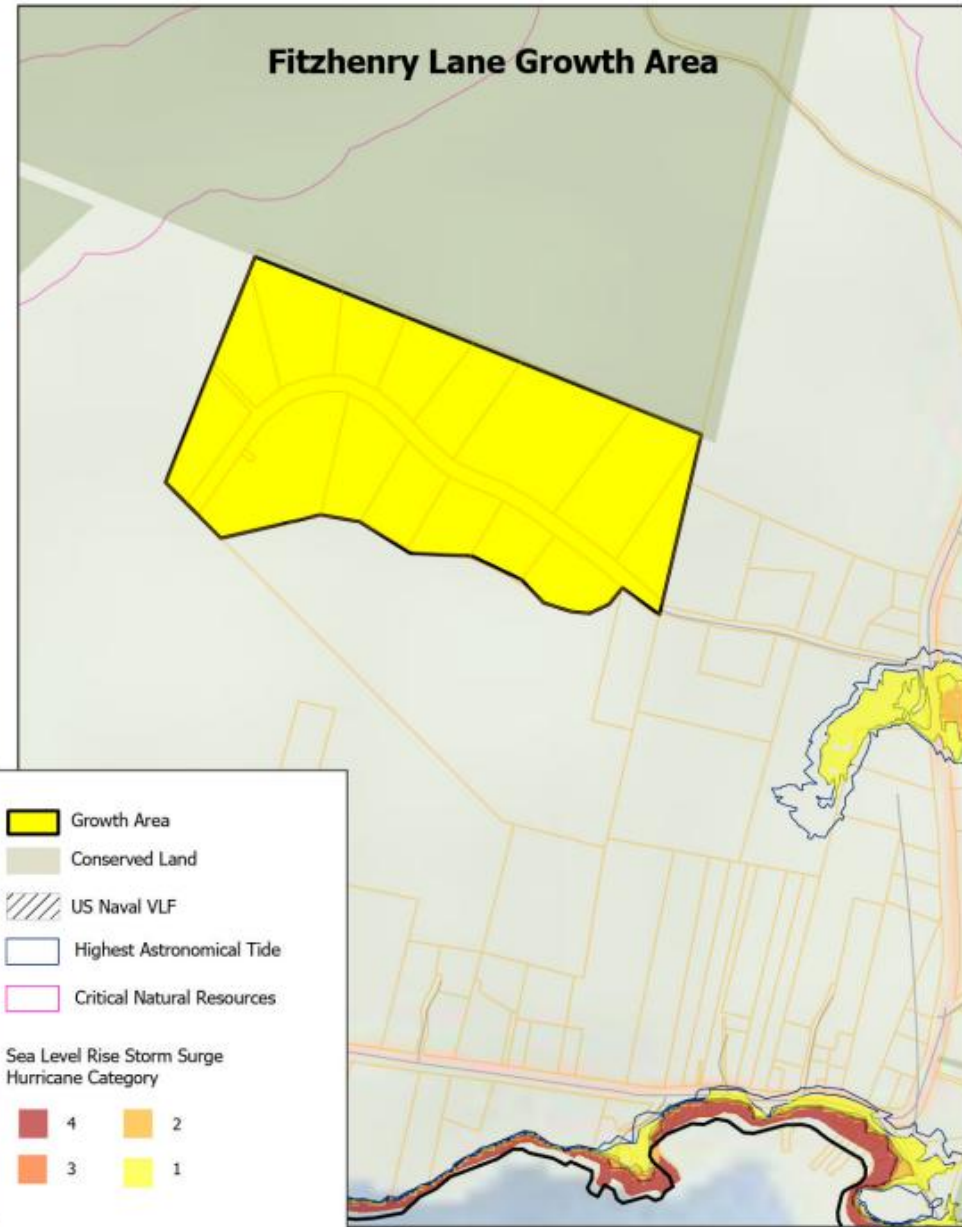
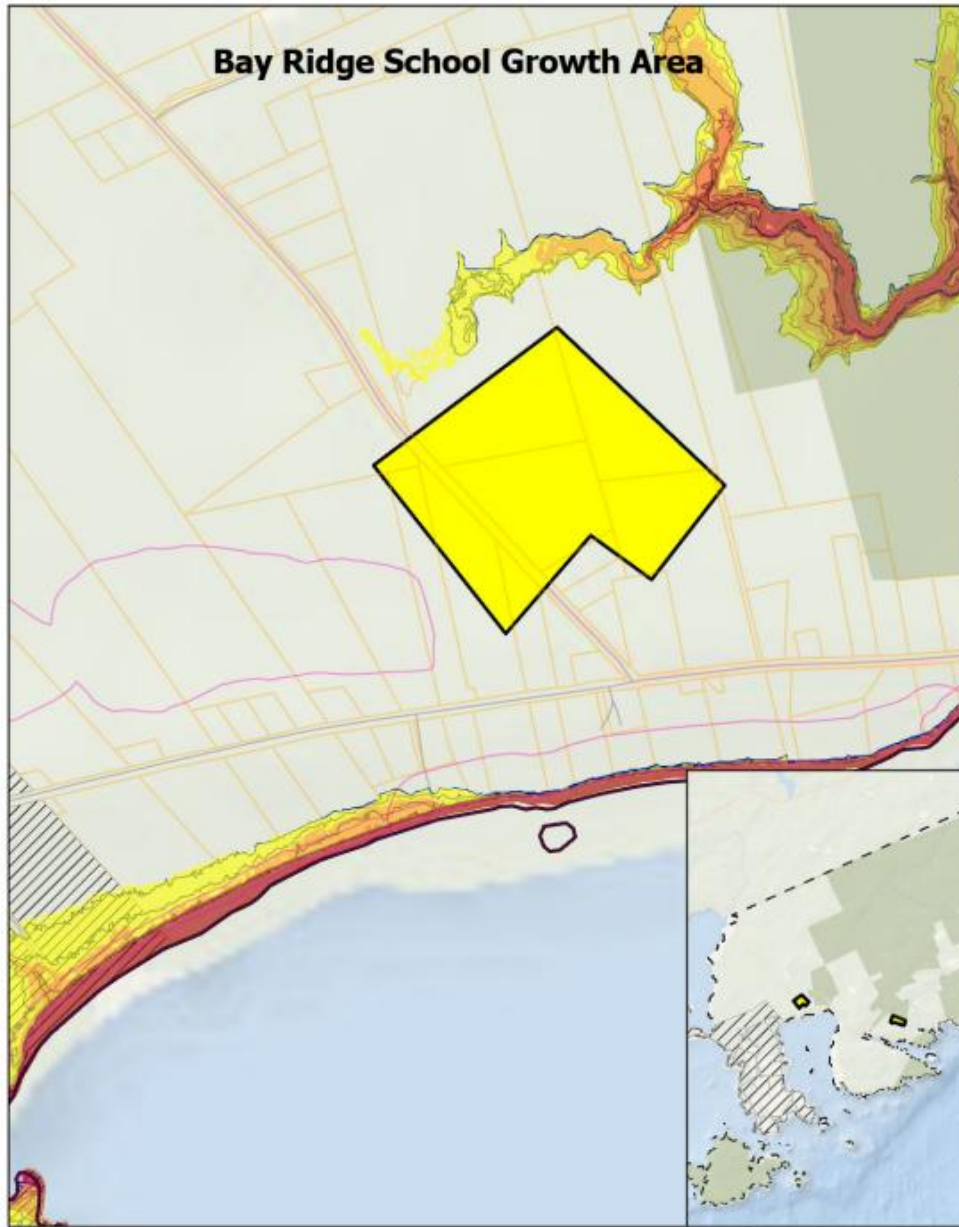
Timeframe: Every five years

Priority: High

Sources

- Maine Legislature. 30-A M.R.S.A. §4312(3)(I) and §4326.
- Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Municipal Planning Assistance Program. Chapter 208: Comprehensive Planning.
- Maine Coastal Program / National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Climate Change Considerations for Comprehensive Plans in Maine.
- Town of Cutler. Land Use Ordinance (adopted August 27, 2019).
- Town of Cutler. Shoreland Zoning Ordinance (adopted December 30, 1991; amended).
- Town of Cutler. Building permit records (2015-2025).
- Town of Cutler. Comprehensive Plan (1991).
- U.S. Census Bureau. Decennial Census, 2010 and 2020.
- Maine Coast Heritage Trust. Fitzhenry Lane / Cutler Land Inc. land transfer documentation.
- Federal Emergency Management Agency. Flood Insurance Rate Maps, Washington County, Maine.
- Maine Office of Geographic Information Systems. Beginning with Habitat, shoreland zoning, and sea level rise / storm surge data.
- Sunrise County Economic Council. Community Resilience Partnership reporting.
- Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. Beginning with Habitat data.
- Maine Natural Areas Program. Rare plant species and natural community data.

Future Land Use - Growth Area Detail



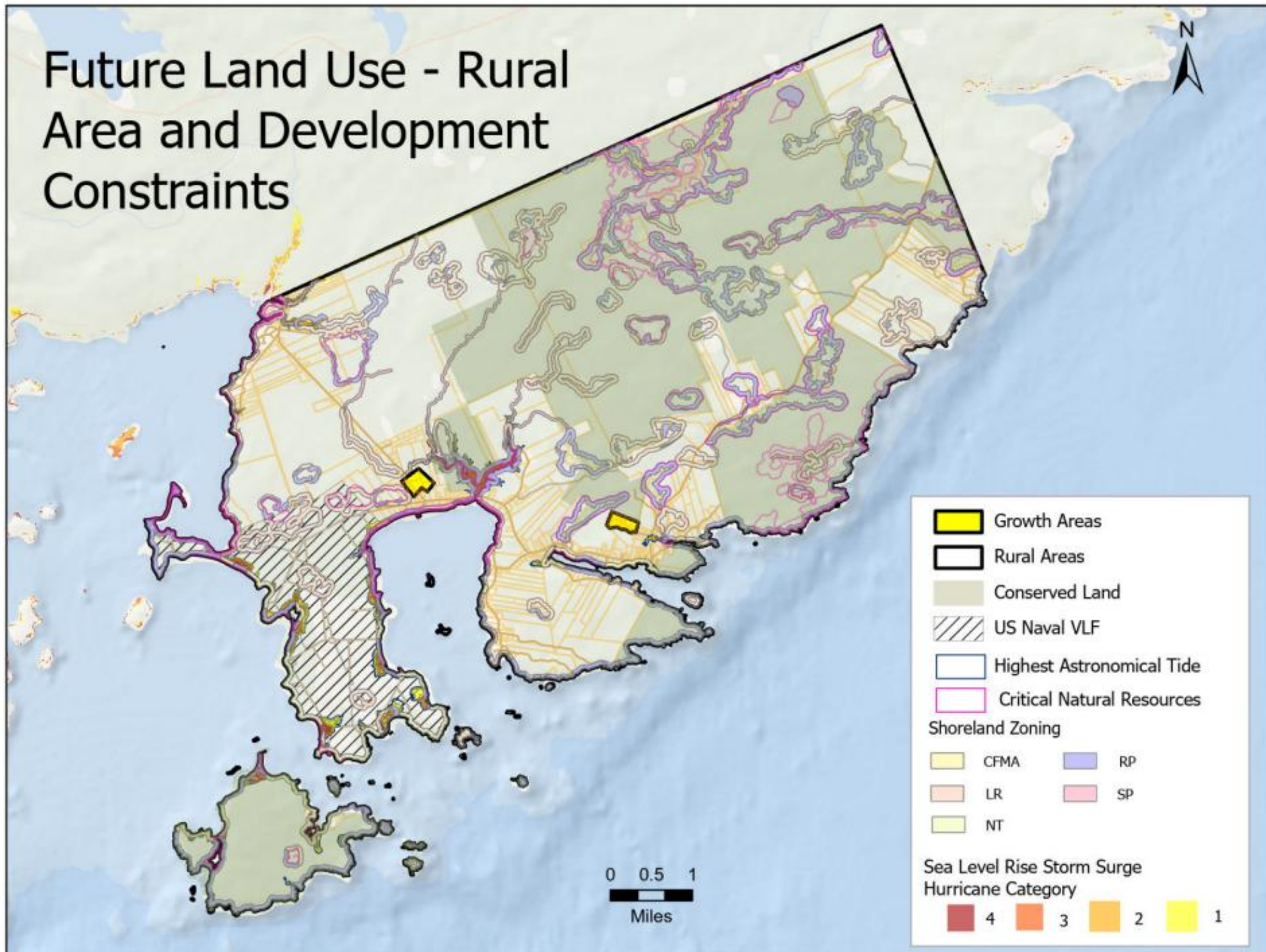
Data Sources: MEGIS, Town of Cutler

0 0.05 0.1
Miles

Note: FEMA FIRM panels (Community ID 230310) do not delineate detailed flood zones within Cutler; coastal flood hazard shown via NOAA SLOSH storm surge data.

0 0.05 0.1
Miles

Future Land Use - Rural Area and Development Constraints



Data Sources: MEGIS, Town of Cutler

Note: FEMA FIRM panels (Community ID 230310) do not delineate detailed flood zones within Cutler; coastal flood hazard shown via NOAA SLOSH storm surge data.

REGIONAL COORDINATION

Cutler's community scale, coastal location, working waterfront economy, extensive conservation ownership, and locally administered form of government make regional coordination an important part of effective municipal planning. Many of the issues addressed in this Comprehensive Plan extend beyond town boundaries, including transportation, emergency response, education, solid waste, healthcare, economic development, housing, marine resource management, natural resource conservation, and climate resilience.

Cutler will continue to work with neighboring communities, Washington County agencies, regional organizations, state and federal agencies, nonprofit partners, and service providers where coordination can improve services, reduce costs, protect shared resources, or help implement the policies and strategies of this plan.

Existing Regional Relationships

Cutler already participates in several regional service arrangements and partnerships, including:

- **Education:** Bay Ridge Elementary School and AOS 96, with secondary education provided through regional schools;
- **Emergency medical services:** Downeast EMS;
- **Fire protection:** mutual aid with neighboring fire departments and assistance from the U.S. Navy Fire Department when available;
- **Law enforcement and emergency communications:** Washington County Sheriff's Office and the Washington County Regional Communications Center;
- **Emergency management:** Washington County Emergency Management Agency;
- **Solid waste disposal:** Marion Transfer Station;
- **Economic and community development:** Sunrise County Economic Council and other Washington County partners;
- **Marine resource management:** Maine Department of Marine Resources and regional waterfront stakeholders;
- **Natural resource conservation:** Maine Coast Heritage Trust, New England Forestry Foundation, Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and other conservation partners;
- **Housing and community services:** MaineHousing, Washington County Council on Aging, Washington County Community Development Authority, USDA Rural Development, and other regional providers; and
- **Transportation:** Maine Department of Transportation and regional transportation providers.

These existing relationships provide a strong foundation for implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

Regional Issues Relevant to Cutler

Transportation

Route 191 is Cutler's primary connection to neighboring communities and regional services. Disruptions to this corridor can affect emergency response, school transportation, employment, freight movement, healthcare access, and the working waterfront.

The Town should continue coordinating with MaineDOT, Washington County, and neighboring communities regarding road conditions, traffic safety, drainage, culverts, bridge needs, emergency access, and infrastructure vulnerability. Transportation planning should also consider regional transit needs, particularly for older residents, people with disabilities, and residents without reliable personal transportation.

Emergency Management and Climate Resilience

Coastal storms, flooding, road washouts, power outages, and other emergencies frequently affect several communities at the same time. Cutler's emergency preparedness and resilience efforts should therefore remain coordinated with Washington County Emergency Management Agency, neighboring municipalities, utility providers, AOS 96, and other appropriate partners.

Cutler's participation in the Community Resilience Partnership demonstrates the value of coordinated hazard assessment, grant support, infrastructure planning, and technical assistance. Future work involving vulnerable roads, shelter readiness, backup power, emergency communications, and coastal hazards should continue to use regional and state resources where practical.

Marine Resources and Working Waterfront

Cutler's marine economy is part of a broader coastal network of fishermen, shellfish harvesters, buyers, service businesses, transportation providers, and state-managed fisheries. Fishing grounds, shellfish resources, coastal water quality, and access to the shore extend beyond municipal boundaries.

The Town should continue coordinating with the Maine Department of Marine Resources, nearby coastal communities, harbor users, property owners, and regional organizations on matters involving water quality, shellfish management, working waterfront protection, harbor facilities, shore access, and resilience of marine infrastructure.

Natural Resource Conservation

Cutler's forests, wetlands, coastal waters, wildlife habitats, and conserved lands are connected to larger ecological systems extending into Whiting, Machiasport, Trescott Township, and surrounding waters.

Protection of these resources is most effective when the Town coordinates with neighboring communities, state and federal resource agencies, land trusts, and conservation organizations. Areas of cooperation may include habitat connectivity, wetlands, coastal resilience, forest resources, public access, invasive species, water quality, and land-use activity near municipal boundaries.

Housing and Community Stability

Housing affordability, seasonal ownership, aging demographics, and the availability of year-round rental and workforce housing are regional issues throughout eastern Washington County. Some housing needs, particularly assisted living, supportive housing, and larger multifamily housing, may be more effectively addressed through regional services and partnerships.

The Town should coordinate with MaineHousing, regional housing organizations, neighboring municipalities, senior-service providers, and economic development partners to improve access to housing rehabilitation, weatherization, home repair, aging-in-place assistance, and appropriate affordable or workforce housing opportunities.

Economic Development and Public Services

Cutler residents rely on employment, healthcare, retail, education, transportation, and professional services located throughout the Machias area and Washington County. Changes in regional employment, healthcare availability, school services, broadband, transportation costs, and the marine economy can directly affect Cutler households.

The Town should continue to participate in regional economic and community development initiatives that support the working waterfront, small businesses, home occupations, broadband, workforce development, healthcare access, transportation, and infrastructure funding. Regional cooperation can help Cutler pursue appropriate opportunities while retaining local control over municipal decisions.

Coordination with Neighboring Communities

Cutler should maintain communication with neighboring municipalities, including Whiting and Machiasport, and with the Maine Land Use Planning Commission regarding adjoining areas of Trescott Township, when issues arise that involve:

- Route 191 and other transportation connections;
- mutual aid and emergency access;
- shared watersheds, wetlands, wildlife habitat, and shoreland resources;
- marine resources and coastal water quality;
- housing and economic trends;
- development near municipal boundaries; and
- coastal hazards and infrastructure resilience.

The Rural Area identified in the Future Land Use Plan is generally compatible with the rural, forested, conserved, and resource-based land uses found in adjoining communities and unorganized territory. Continued communication will help avoid conflicting land-use patterns and support coordinated protection of shared resources.

Coordination with Regional, State, and Federal Partners

Cutler should continue working with neighboring municipalities and adjoining jurisdictions, Washington County agencies, Sunrise County Economic Council, AOS 96, MaineDOT, the Maine Department of Marine Resources, MaineHousing, conservation organizations, emergency-service providers, and other appropriate state, federal, nonprofit, and private partners.

Coordination may include mutual aid, technical assistance, data sharing, grant applications, shared purchasing, infrastructure planning, housing assistance, natural resource protection, and working waterfront projects.

Implementation

Implementation of this section will occur through ongoing communication, project-specific coordination, participation in regional planning efforts, and periodic review of whether additional partnerships or formal agreements are needed. The Select Board should take the lead in coordinating with neighboring communities and regional entities, with support from the Planning Board, Code Enforcement Officer, and other municipal officials or committees as appropriate to the issue at hand.

As part of the Town's periodic review of the Comprehensive Plan, Cutler should evaluate whether regional coordination has been adequate to address transportation, emergency response, conservation, housing, waterfront protection, and resilience issues, and whether new coordination mechanisms should be pursued.

Strategy: Maintain ongoing communication and project-specific coordination with neighboring communities and appropriate regional, county, state, federal, and nonprofit partners regarding shared transportation, emergency response, marine resources, natural resources, housing, public services, and infrastructure needs.

Responsibility: Select Board

Timeframe: Ongoing

EVALUATION MEASURES

The success of this Comprehensive Plan will be measured by how well it is implemented over time. Cutler should periodically evaluate whether the plan's policies and strategies are being carried out, whether growth is occurring in the locations intended by the Future Land Use Plan, whether municipal capital investments are supporting those intended locations, and whether critical natural resources and other protected lands remain protected.

The Select Board should coordinate a formal review of the Comprehensive Plan at least every five years, or sooner if major changes occur in development trends, infrastructure needs, climate hazard exposure, regulatory requirements, or community conditions. Because implementation involves several municipal boards, committees, officials, and outside partners, this review should include the Planning Board, Code Enforcement Officer, Town Assessor, Road Commissioner or other appropriate municipal staff, and representatives of any relevant committees or partner organizations.

The review should focus first on the strategies in the Future Land Use Plan, the Capital Investment Plan, and any short-term priority strategies identified elsewhere in the Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of the review is not only to document progress, but also to identify barriers to implementation and determine whether any adjustments are needed to keep the plan effective.

1. Implementation of the Future Land Use Plan

The Town should periodically review the extent to which the strategies in the Future Land Use chapter have been implemented. This includes, at minimum:

- whether the Future Land Use Map is being used to guide local review of development proposals;
- whether the Land Use Ordinance remains consistent with the Future Land Use Plan and current state law;
- whether development in the Fitzhenry Lane and Bay Ridge School Growth Areas is occurring in the low-density pattern intended by the plan;
- whether the Town has pursued any of the identified housing, conservation, or coordination strategies tied to the Growth Areas and Rural Area; and
- whether local review practices continue to direct growth away from critical natural resources, shoreland areas, and high coastal hazard areas.

To support this review, the Planning Board and Code Enforcement Officer should periodically update a simple implementation checklist for the Future Land Use strategies and review it at least once every five years.

2. Municipal Growth-Related Capital Investment

The Future Land Use chapter commits the Town to directing a minimum of 75 percent of municipal growth-related capital investments to the designated Growth Areas during the planning period. To evaluate whether that objective is being met, the Select Board should identify in the annual budget process and in each five-year review:

- each municipal capital project undertaken during the review period;
- whether the project was growth-related or routine maintenance;
- whether the project occurred within or directly served a designated Growth Area; and
- the percentage of total growth-related capital investment directed to Growth Areas.

Routine maintenance of existing roads and facilities serving current development should not be counted as growth-related capital investment unless the work also increases capacity or directly supports planned growth.

3. Location and Amount of New Development

The Town should monitor the type, number, and location of new development in relation to the Future Land Use Plan. At minimum, the Code Enforcement Officer or other appropriate local official should maintain annual records of:

- the number of new residential building permits issued;
- the location of each permit by Growth Area or Rural Area;
- the number of permits for accessory dwelling units or other housing types authorized under current law;
- any new commercial, marine, or institutional development; and
- any development proposed near mapped hazard areas or critical natural resources.

During each five-year review, this information should be used to answer the following questions:

1. Has most new residential development occurred in the designated Growth Areas?
2. Is new development continuing to follow the low-density, lot-by-lot pattern anticipated by the plan?
3. Is scattered development in the Rural Area increasing in a way that suggests additional policy or ordinance changes may be needed?
4. Are development proposals being successfully steered away from critical natural resources, sensitive shoreland areas, and higher coastal flood risk areas?

If the answer to these questions is no, the Town should re-examine the Future Land Use implementation strategies and consider whether ordinance amendments, map revisions, or additional non-regulatory actions are needed.

4. Protection of Critical Natural Resources and Conserved Lands

The Town should also monitor the extent to which critical natural resources and other protected lands remain protected through conservation ownership, easements, current-use taxation, and

local regulation. To support this review, the Town Assessor and Planning Board should maintain records, to the extent feasible, of:

- parcels enrolled in Tree Growth, Farm and Open Space programs;
- parcels protected through conservation easement;
- parcels acquired or managed for conservation by the Town, land trusts, or state or federal agencies; and
- any known changes affecting mapped critical natural resources, including new information from Beginning with Habitat, the Maine Natural Areas Program, or updated state and federal data.

During each five-year review, the Town should consider whether important natural resources remain protected to the degree anticipated by the plan and whether additional voluntary conservation or regulatory measures should be pursued.

5. Working Waterfront and Coastal Resilience

As part of each five-year review, the Town should consider whether the Commercial Fisheries/Maritime Activities district continues to protect functionally water-dependent uses, whether development pressures are affecting shoreland and waterfront access, and whether updated coastal hazard information warrants changes to local maps, review practices, or investment priorities. This review should be coordinated with the Town's hazard mitigation and resilience work when practical.

6. Review Process and Reporting

The Select Board should coordinate a review of the Comprehensive Plan at least once every five years, with participation from the Planning Board, Code Enforcement Officer, Town Assessor, Road Commissioner, and other officials or partners as appropriate. The review should document completed and outstanding strategies, summarize development and capital investment patterns, identify barriers to implementation, and determine whether any policies, maps, ordinances, or implementation measures should be updated.

During the annual budget process, the Town should note any major development activity, growth-related capital investment, conservation action, ordinance amendment, or new information that may affect implementation of the plan. A full plan review may occur sooner when significant changes in development, infrastructure, regulations, or coastal hazards warrant reconsideration.

APPENDIX A

COMMUNITY PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS, 2025

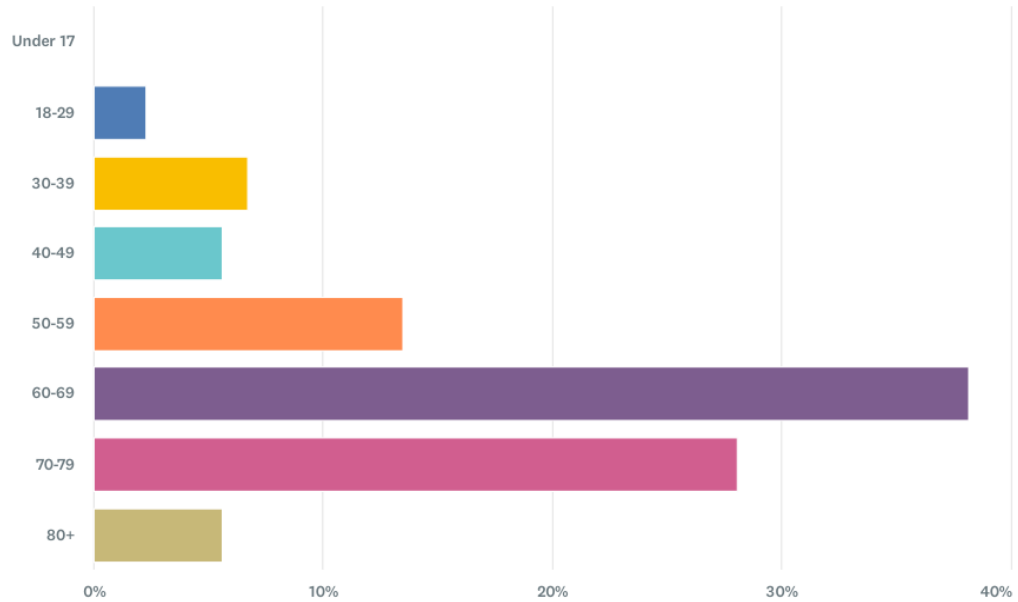
The Town of Cutler conducted a community-wide public survey in 2025 as part of the comprehensive planning process. The survey received 89 responses from year-round residents, seasonal residents, non-resident taxpayers, and other members of the Cutler community. The following pages reproduce the complete survey results, including response charts, tables, and written comments as exported from the survey platform. Results reflect the views of respondents and should not be interpreted as a scientific sample of the entire population.

Source: Town of Cutler Community Public Survey, 2025.

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

Q1 89 responses

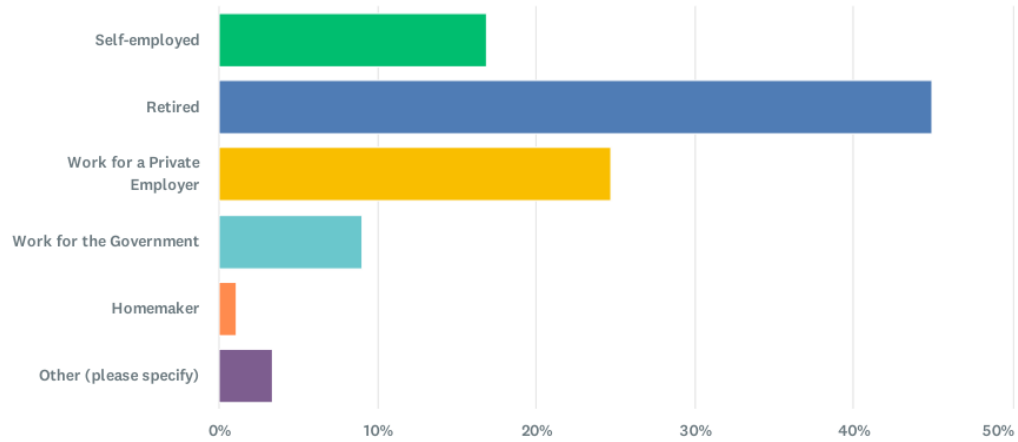
1. My age is



Q2 89 responses

2. I am

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025



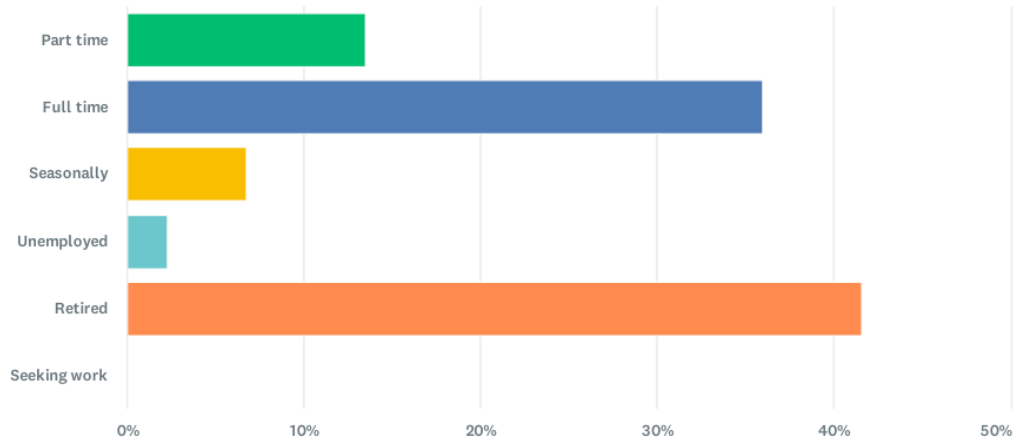
Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
Self-employed	16.85%	15
Retired	44.94%	40
Work for a Private Employer	24.72%	22
Work for the Government	8.99%	8
Homemaker	1.12%	1
Other (please specify)	3.37%	3
Total		89

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Presently unemployed	3/4/2025 10:26 AM
2	full time caregiver for elderly parent at home	3/4/2025 9:49 AM
3	ed tech 111	2/15/2025 9:14 AM

Q3 89 responses

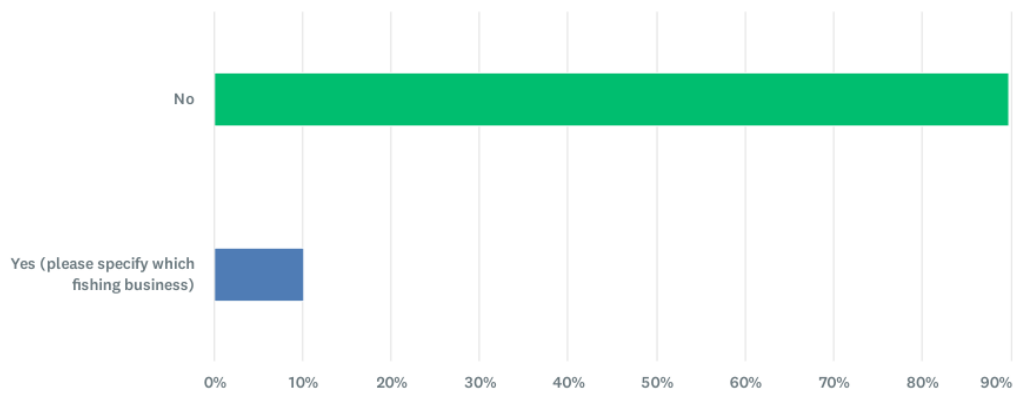
3. I work

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025



Q4 89 responses

4. Do you work primarily in the fishing industry?



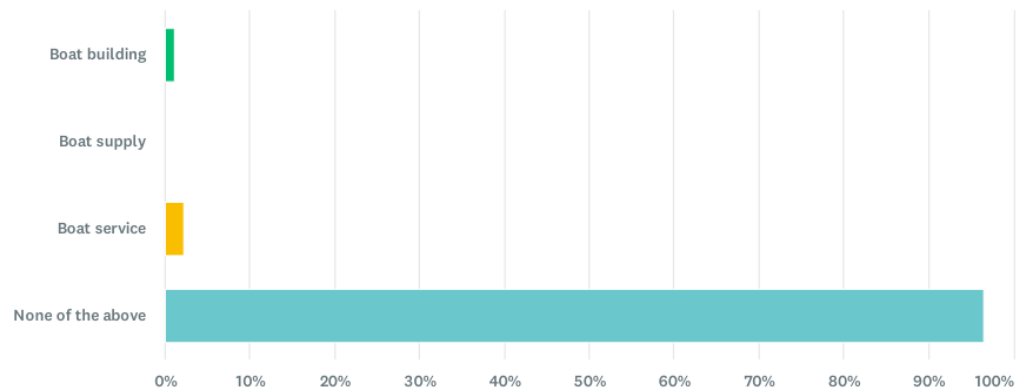
Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● No	89.89%	80
● Yes (please specify which fishing business)	10.11%	9
Total		89

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

#	YES (PLEASE SPECIFY WHICH FISHING BUSINESS)	DATE
1	none specified	3/20/2025 11:52 AM
2	Lobster Fisherman	3/20/2025 11:43 AM
3	Occasionally write about Cutler in Quoddy Tides newspaper	3/19/2025 9:48 AM
4	Lobster	3/6/2025 7:19 PM
5	Lobstering	3/6/2025 10:53 AM
6	Lobster	3/6/2025 9:52 AM
7	Lobster/clams	3/5/2025 2:45 PM
8	Lobsters, Scallops and Clams	3/4/2025 11:57 AM
9	Lobster	2/15/2025 6:24 PM

Q5 88 responses

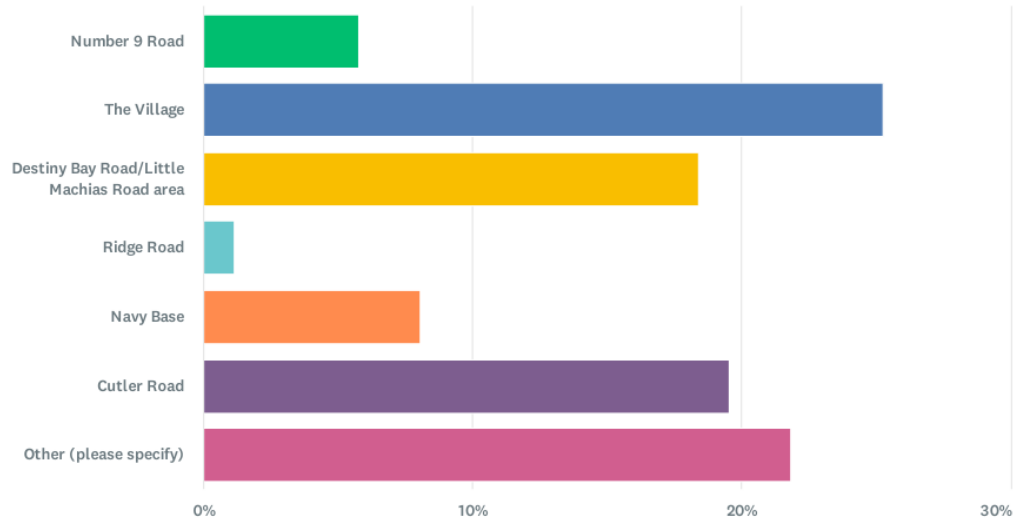
5. I work in



Q6 87 responses

6. What area of Cutler do you live in?

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Number 9 Road	5.75%	5
● The Village	25.29%	22
● Destiny Bay Road/Little Machias Road area	18.39%	16
● Ridge Road	1.15%	1
● Navy Base	8.05%	7
● Cutler Road	19.54%	17
● Other (please specify)	21.84%	19
Total		87

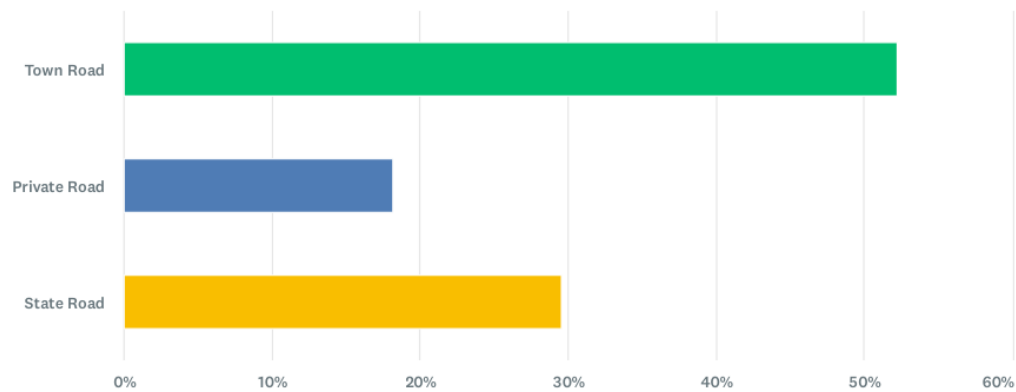
#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Cove Rd	3/20/2025 12:05 PM
2	below Seavey Hill	3/19/2025 10:01 AM
3	Steamboat Wharf Rd	3/19/2025 9:48 AM
4	Ackley Rd	3/11/2025 7:57 PM
5	Cove Road	3/7/2025 6:06 PM
6	Cove Road	3/6/2025 9:49 AM

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

7	Ackley Road	3/5/2025 8:56 PM
8	Cove Road	3/4/2025 10:26 AM
9	East machais	3/3/2025 11:56 AM
10	Sea Ledges	2/26/2025 1:12 AM
11	Cove Road	2/24/2025 6:00 PM
12	Little Machias road	2/23/2025 7:27 PM
13	Cove Road	2/23/2025 12:08 PM
14	Cove Rd	2/23/2025 8:54 AM
15	I don't live in Cutler. I have land on the Cocoa Mt rd	2/21/2025 7:27 AM
16	Ackley Rd	2/19/2025 5:33 PM
17	COVE ROAD	2/14/2025 8:46 PM
18	Little Machias Rd.	2/14/2025 2:57 PM
19	Ackley Road, North Cutler	2/14/2025 1:52 PM

Q7 88 responses

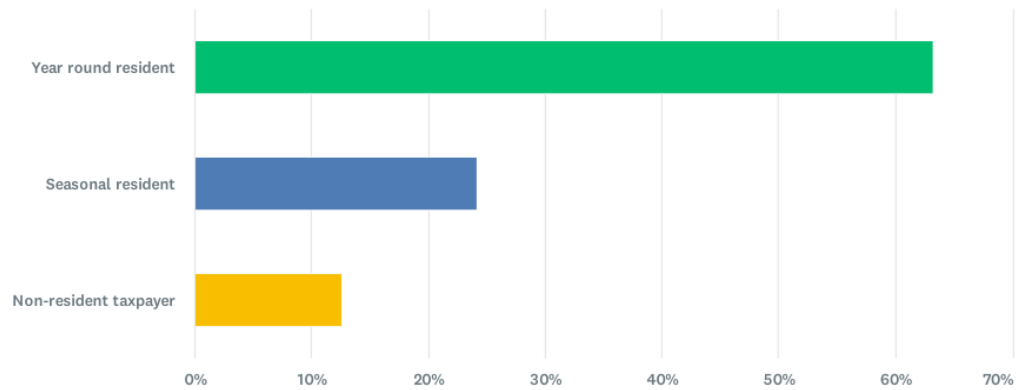
7. I live on a



Q8 87 responses

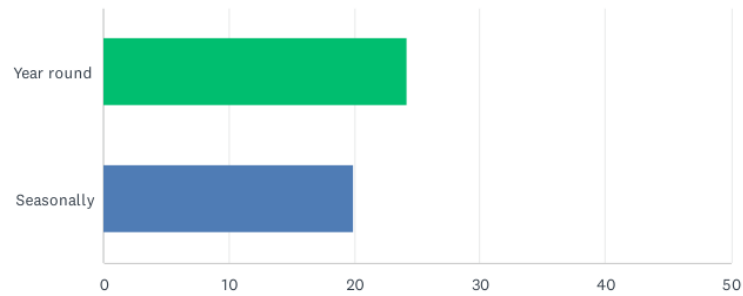
8. I am a

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025



Q9 9. How many years have you lived in Cutler?

Answered: 86 Skipped: 8



ANSWER CHOICES	AVERAGE NUMBER	TOTAL NUMBER	RESPONSES
Year round	24	1,474	61
Seasonally	20	856	43
Total Respondents: 86			

#	YEAR ROUND	DATE
1	50	3/20/2025 12:05 PM
2	73	3/20/2025 11:52 AM
3	75	3/20/2025 11:43 AM
4	54	3/20/2025 11:34 AM
5	26	3/19/2025 10:01 AM

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

6	78	3/19/2025 9:48 AM
7	0	3/11/2025 7:57 PM
8	5	3/11/2025 3:28 PM
9	10	3/11/2025 10:51 AM
10	15	3/10/2025 6:30 AM
11	1	3/8/2025 3:21 PM
12	36	3/7/2025 6:06 PM
13	0	3/7/2025 11:00 AM
14	6	3/7/2025 6:17 AM
15	7	3/7/2025 4:50 AM
16	6	3/6/2025 11:00 PM
17	50	3/6/2025 7:19 PM
18	27	3/6/2025 7:13 PM
19	40	3/6/2025 5:40 PM
20	4	3/6/2025 5:21 PM
21	4	3/6/2025 5:18 PM
22	60	3/6/2025 10:53 AM
23	10	3/6/2025 10:39 AM
24	68	3/6/2025 10:29 AM
25	46	3/6/2025 9:52 AM
26	70	3/5/2025 2:45 PM
27	15	3/5/2025 2:32 PM
28	2	3/4/2025 11:57 AM
29	14	3/4/2025 11:57 AM
30	48	3/4/2025 11:12 AM
31	0	3/4/2025 10:26 AM
32	8	3/4/2025 9:49 AM
33	1	3/3/2025 4:29 PM
34	33	3/1/2025 3:40 PM
35	16	2/28/2025 5:53 PM
36	70	2/27/2025 12:54 PM
37	0	2/26/2025 1:12 AM
38	51	2/25/2025 11:47 AM
39	12	2/25/2025 10:45 AM
40	9	2/24/2025 10:39 PM
41	12	2/24/2025 6:00 PM
42	31	2/24/2025 11:49 AM
43	4	2/22/2025 5:56 PM

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

44	0	2/22/2025 3:48 PM
45	30	2/21/2025 8:49 PM
46	11	2/19/2025 5:33 PM
47	1	2/19/2025 10:13 AM
48	1	2/19/2025 9:09 AM
49	10	2/18/2025 9:34 AM
50	3	2/17/2025 12:15 PM
51	3	2/17/2025 11:35 AM
52	9	2/16/2025 3:18 PM
53	45	2/16/2025 8:21 AM
54	29	2/15/2025 6:24 PM
55	4	2/15/2025 9:18 AM
56	12	2/15/2025 9:14 AM
57	20	2/15/2025 8:48 AM
58	25	2/15/2025 8:01 AM
59	26	2/14/2025 8:46 PM
60	53	2/14/2025 2:57 PM
61	45	2/14/2025 1:52 PM
#	SEASONALLY	DATE
1	2	3/19/2025 9:48 AM
2	58	3/17/2025 2:54 PM
3	12	3/12/2025 7:41 PM
4	4	3/11/2025 7:57 PM
5	15	3/11/2025 10:51 AM
6	58	3/7/2025 12:40 PM
7	31	3/7/2025 11:00 AM
8	47	3/6/2025 11:00 PM
9	56	3/6/2025 1:16 PM
10	5	3/6/2025 12:43 PM
11	45	3/6/2025 9:49 AM
12	25	3/5/2025 11:35 PM
13	30	3/5/2025 8:56 PM
14	35	3/4/2025 2:45 PM
15	0	3/4/2025 10:26 AM
16	4	3/3/2025 12:58 PM
17	6	3/3/2025 11:56 AM
18	17	3/2/2025 11:43 AM
19	3	2/28/2025 7:31 PM

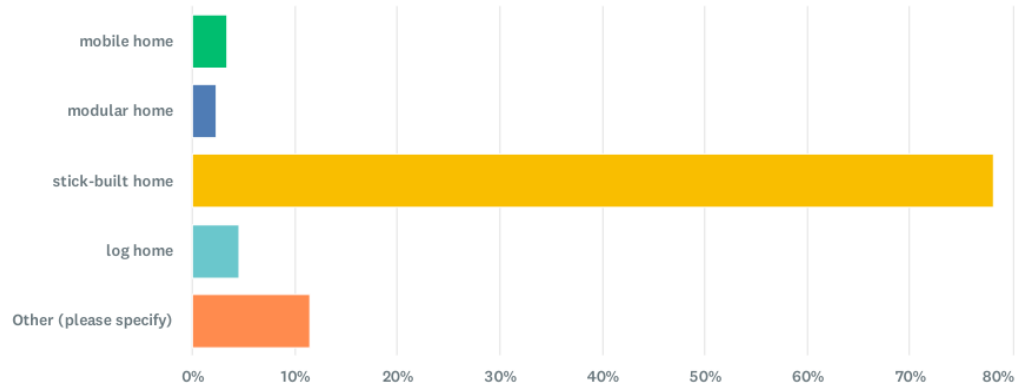
Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

20	4	2/26/2025 5:26 PM
21	13	2/26/2025 2:54 PM
22	1	2/26/2025 1:12 AM
23	40	2/25/2025 10:45 AM
24	0	2/24/2025 10:39 PM
25	7	2/24/2025 9:02 PM
26	40	2/24/2025 6:00 PM
27	31	2/23/2025 7:27 PM
28	7	2/23/2025 12:08 PM
29	20	2/23/2025 11:09 AM
30	50	2/23/2025 8:54 AM
31	0	2/22/2025 3:48 PM
32	18	2/22/2025 2:20 PM
33	6	2/21/2025 7:27 AM
34	35	2/20/2025 4:52 PM
35	68	2/20/2025 2:26 PM
36	15	2/20/2025 1:43 PM
37	8	2/19/2025 10:13 AM
38	0	2/19/2025 9:09 AM
39	15	2/18/2025 9:34 AM
40	0	2/15/2025 6:24 PM
41	0	2/15/2025 9:18 AM
42	0	2/14/2025 8:46 PM
43	25	2/14/2025 1:52 PM

Q10 87 responses

10. I live in a

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025



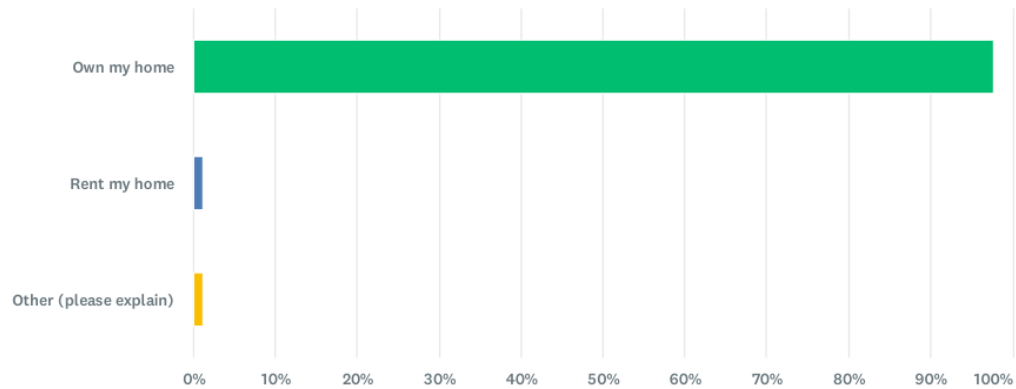
Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● mobile home	3.45%	3
● modular home	2.30%	2
● stick-built home	78.16%	68
● log home	4.60%	4
● Other (please specify)	11.49%	10
Total		87

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Older stick built	3/19/2025 9:48 AM
2	Condo/townhouse	3/11/2025 3:28 PM
3	Condo	3/8/2025 3:21 PM
4	Camp	3/6/2025 12:43 PM
5	Custom home	3/5/2025 11:35 PM
6	Home	3/3/2025 11:56 AM
7	camp house	2/26/2025 5:26 PM
8	Land	2/26/2025 1:12 AM
9	Land owner currently building	2/24/2025 9:02 PM
10	Frame built home	2/19/2025 5:33 PM

Q11 87 responses

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

11. I



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Own my home	97.70%	85
● Rent my home	1.15%	1
● Other (please explain)	1.15%	1
Total		87

#	OTHER (PLEASE EXPLAIN)	DATE
1	live with my daughter	3/4/2025 11:57 AM

Q12 12. Approximate age of home (in years)

Answered: 82 Skipped: 12

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	40	3/20/2025 12:05 PM
2	30	3/20/2025 11:52 AM
3	50	3/20/2025 11:43 AM
4	50	3/20/2025 11:34 AM
5	70+	3/19/2025 10:01 AM
6	100	3/19/2025 9:48 AM
7	30	3/17/2025 2:54 PM
8	1960's	3/12/2025 7:41 PM

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

9	24	3/11/2025 7:57 PM
10	???	3/11/2025 3:28 PM
11	20	3/11/2025 10:51 AM
12	30	3/10/2025 6:30 AM
13	65	3/8/2025 3:21 PM
14	26	3/7/2025 6:06 PM
15	30	3/7/2025 12:40 PM
16	31	3/7/2025 11:00 AM
17	35	3/7/2025 6:17 AM
18	70	3/7/2025 4:50 AM
19	140	3/6/2025 11:00 PM
20	75	3/6/2025 7:19 PM
21	45	3/6/2025 7:13 PM
22	75+	3/6/2025 5:40 PM
23	85	3/6/2025 5:18 PM
24	30	3/6/2025 1:16 PM
25	9 years	3/6/2025 12:43 PM
26	26	3/6/2025 10:39 AM
27	39	3/6/2025 10:29 AM
28	35	3/6/2025 9:52 AM
29	40	3/6/2025 9:49 AM
30	36	3/5/2025 11:35 PM
31	30	3/5/2025 8:56 PM
32	50	3/5/2025 2:45 PM
33	15 years	3/5/2025 2:32 PM
34	30	3/4/2025 2:45 PM
35	8	3/4/2025 11:57 AM
36	30	3/4/2025 11:57 AM
37	46 years	3/4/2025 11:12 AM
38	90	3/4/2025 10:26 AM
39	8	3/4/2025 9:49 AM
40	185	3/4/2025 9:04 AM
41	40	3/3/2025 4:29 PM
42	120	3/3/2025 11:56 AM
43	55	3/2/2025 11:43 AM
44	55	3/1/2025 3:40 PM
45	32	2/28/2025 5:53 PM
46	7511	2/27/2025 12:54 PM

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

47	3	2/26/2025 5:26 PM
48	113	2/26/2025 2:54 PM
49	0	2/26/2025 1:12 AM
50	50	2/25/2025 11:47 AM
51	35	2/25/2025 10:45 AM
52	180	2/24/2025 10:39 PM
53	0	2/24/2025 9:02 PM
54	25	2/24/2025 6:00 PM
55	20	2/24/2025 11:49 AM
56	25	2/23/2025 7:27 PM
57	20	2/23/2025 12:08 PM
58	40	2/23/2025 11:09 AM
59	over 100	2/23/2025 8:54 AM
60	32	2/22/2025 5:56 PM
61	2	2/22/2025 3:48 PM
62	75	2/22/2025 2:20 PM
63	45	2/21/2025 8:49 PM
64	40	2/21/2025 7:27 AM
65	90	2/20/2025 4:52 PM
66	85	2/20/2025 2:26 PM
67	40	2/20/2025 1:43 PM
68	21	2/19/2025 5:33 PM
69	20	2/19/2025 10:13 AM
70	50	2/19/2025 9:09 AM
71	19	2/18/2025 9:34 AM
72	65	2/17/2025 12:15 PM
73	65	2/17/2025 11:35 AM
74	20	2/16/2025 3:18 PM
75	34	2/16/2025 8:21 AM
76	19	2/15/2025 6:24 PM
77	4	2/15/2025 9:18 AM
78	11	2/15/2025 9:14 AM
79	150+/-	2/15/2025 8:48 AM
80	14	2/15/2025 8:01 AM
81	48	2/14/2025 8:46 PM
82	27	2/14/2025 2:57 PM

Q13 13. Number of residences served by your water supply

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

Answered: 83 Skipped: 11

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	1	3/20/2025 12:05 PM
2	1	3/20/2025 11:52 AM
3	1	3/20/2025 11:43 AM
4	1	3/20/2025 11:34 AM
5	1	3/19/2025 10:01 AM
6	1	3/19/2025 9:48 AM
7	6	3/17/2025 2:54 PM
8	62 residences and the "commercial" buildings	3/12/2025 7:41 PM
9	1	3/11/2025 7:57 PM
10	2	3/11/2025 3:28 PM
11	2	3/11/2025 10:51 AM
12	200	3/10/2025 6:30 AM
13	62	3/8/2025 3:21 PM
14	1	3/7/2025 6:06 PM
15	6	3/7/2025 12:40 PM
16	1	3/7/2025 11:00 AM
17	1	3/7/2025 6:17 AM
18	3	3/7/2025 4:50 AM
19	1	3/6/2025 11:00 PM
20	1	3/6/2025 7:19 PM
21	1	3/6/2025 7:13 PM
22	2	3/6/2025 5:40 PM
23	1	3/6/2025 5:18 PM
24	2-8 depending on family visitors	3/6/2025 1:16 PM
25	?	3/6/2025 12:43 PM
26	3	3/6/2025 10:53 AM
27	1	3/6/2025 10:39 AM
28	1	3/6/2025 10:29 AM
29	1	3/6/2025 9:52 AM
30	1	3/6/2025 9:49 AM
31	1	3/5/2025 11:35 PM
32	2	3/5/2025 8:56 PM
33	1	3/5/2025 2:45 PM
34	1 resident	3/5/2025 2:32 PM
35	1	3/4/2025 2:45 PM

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

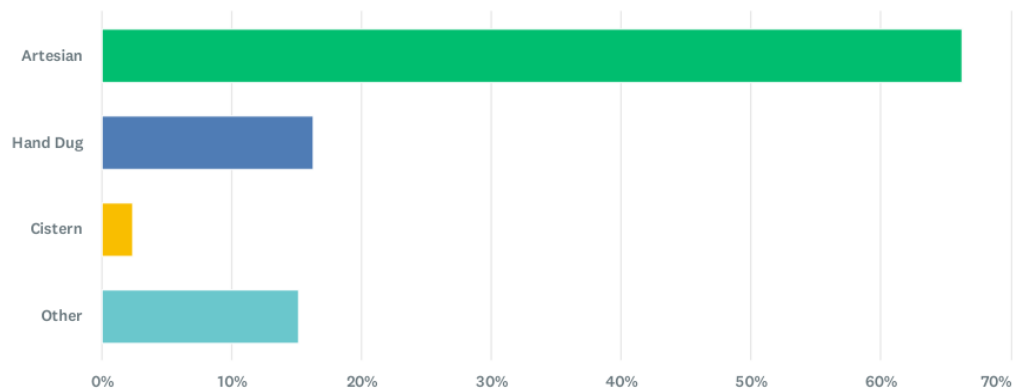
36	2	3/4/2025 11:57 AM
37	1	3/4/2025 11:57 AM
38	2	3/4/2025 11:12 AM
39	1	3/4/2025 10:26 AM
40	2	3/4/2025 9:49 AM
41	2	3/3/2025 4:29 PM
42	1	3/3/2025 11:56 AM
43	2	3/2/2025 11:43 AM
44	1	3/1/2025 3:40 PM
45	0	2/28/2025 7:31 PM
46	2	2/28/2025 5:53 PM
47	One	2/27/2025 12:54 PM
48	2	2/26/2025 5:26 PM
49	1	2/26/2025 2:54 PM
50	2	2/26/2025 1:12 AM
51	1	2/25/2025 11:47 AM
52	1	2/25/2025 10:45 AM
53	1	2/24/2025 10:39 PM
54	2	2/24/2025 9:02 PM
55	1	2/24/2025 6:00 PM
56	1	2/24/2025 11:49 AM
57	One	2/23/2025 7:27 PM
58	1	2/23/2025 12:08 PM
59	2	2/23/2025 11:09 AM
60	1, well water	2/23/2025 8:54 AM
61	1	2/22/2025 5:56 PM
62	1	2/22/2025 3:48 PM
63	2	2/22/2025 2:20 PM
64	1	2/21/2025 8:49 PM
65	3	2/21/2025 7:27 AM
66	1	2/20/2025 4:52 PM
67	1	2/20/2025 2:26 PM
68	4	2/20/2025 1:43 PM
69	1	2/19/2025 5:33 PM
70	2	2/19/2025 10:13 AM
71	1	2/19/2025 9:09 AM
72	2	2/18/2025 9:34 AM
73	2	2/17/2025 12:15 PM

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

74	2	2/17/2025 11:35 AM
75	3	2/16/2025 3:18 PM
76	2	2/16/2025 8:21 AM
77	1	2/15/2025 6:24 PM
78	1	2/15/2025 9:18 AM
79	2	2/15/2025 9:14 AM
80	3	2/15/2025 8:48 AM
81	1	2/15/2025 8:01 AM
82	1	2/14/2025 8:46 PM
83	1	2/14/2025 2:57 PM

Q14 86 responses

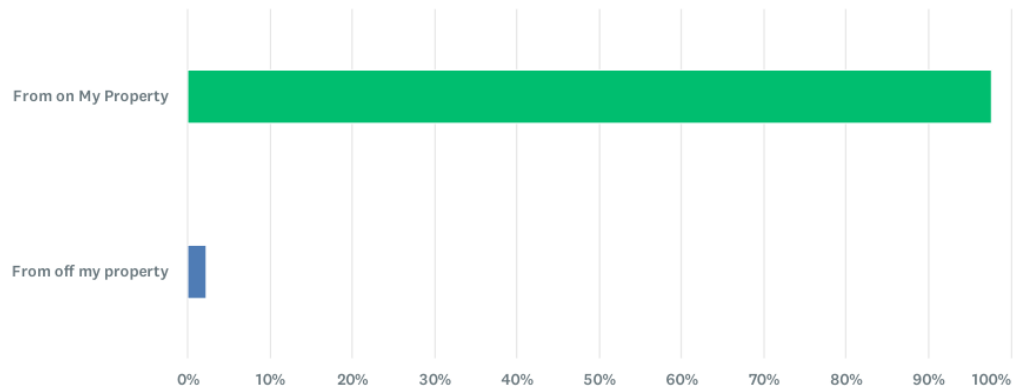
14. Type of well that supplies your water



Q15 86 responses

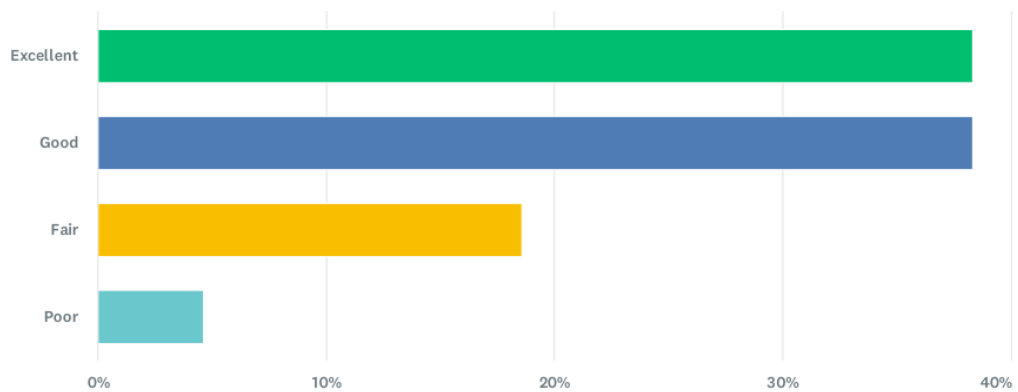
15. Source of your water supply

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025



Q16 86 responses

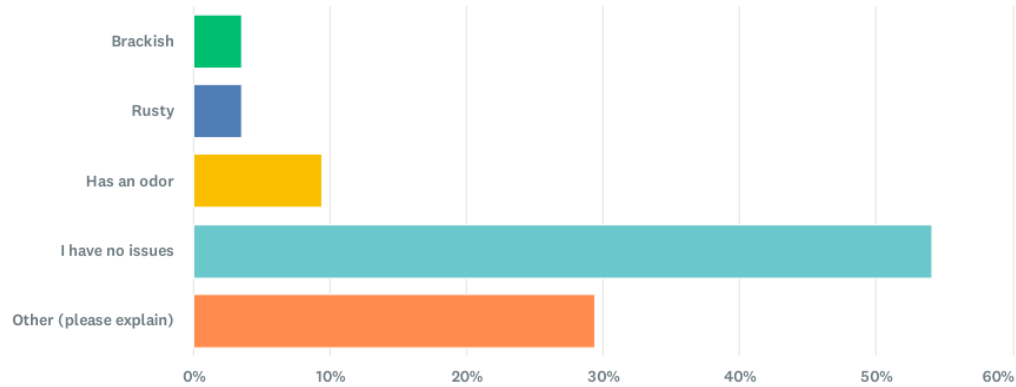
16. How do you rate your well water



Q17 85 responses

17. My water is (select all that apply)

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Brackish	3.53%	3
● Rusty	3.53%	3
● Has an odor	9.41%	8
● I have no issues	54.12%	46
● Other (please explain)	29.41%	25
Total		85

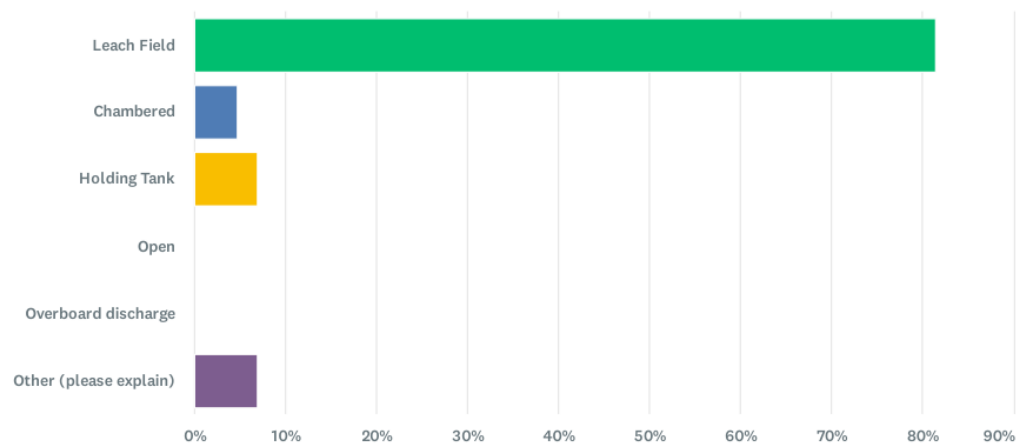
#	OTHER (PLEASE EXPLAIN)	DATE
1	Rusty with iron, but filter makes it manageable	3/19/2025 9:48 AM
2	PFAS, arsenic periodically, bacteria	3/12/2025 7:41 PM
3	Initially when we arrive slightly odor but does dissipate quickly.	3/11/2025 7:57 PM
4	Filtered for PFAS contamination	3/11/2025 3:28 PM
5	hard	3/7/2025 6:06 PM
6	Our water has a slight - odor, rust and brackish.	3/7/2025 12:40 PM
7	Rust appeared last year, which we hadn't noticed before	3/6/2025 11:00 PM
8	"Hard" (high in calcium)	3/6/2025 5:21 PM
9	"Hard" (high in calcium)	3/6/2025 5:18 PM
10	Brackish, Rusty, has odor - survey won't let me Select all That Apply	3/6/2025 1:16 PM
11	treatment system working-otherwise water would be rusty	3/6/2025 9:49 AM
12	minerally, fishy	3/4/2025 9:49 AM

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

13	Possible bacterial contamination	3/3/2025 4:29 PM
14	Bacterial contamination	3/3/2025 12:58 PM
15	Filtered PFAS and minerals	3/2/2025 11:43 AM
16	Lots of minerals	2/28/2025 5:53 PM
17	Haven't tried it	2/26/2025 1:12 AM
18	Unknown	2/24/2025 9:02 PM
19	We are by blueberry fields that get sprayed-don't drink it	2/23/2025 11:09 AM
20	unpotable	2/23/2025 8:54 AM
21	Hard water and gas PFAs	2/22/2025 5:56 PM
22	Gritty	2/19/2025 10:13 AM
23	Pretty good except slightly hard and slightly high in Sodium	2/18/2025 9:34 AM
24	Don't drink our water. PFAS is in the water	2/17/2025 12:15 PM
25	Salty taste	2/16/2025 3:18 PM

Q18 86 responses

18. What type of sewer system do you have?



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Leach Field	81.40%	70
● Chambered	4.65%	4
● Holding Tank	6.98%	6
Total		86

20 / 55

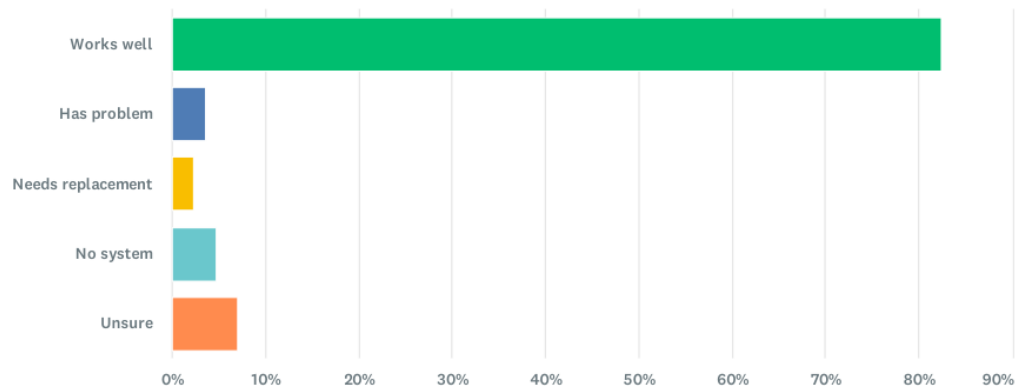
Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Open	0%	0
● Overboard discharge	0%	0
● Other (please explain)	6.98%	6
Total		86

#	OTHER (PLEASE EXPLAIN)	DATE
1	believe holding tank and leach field are used	3/19/2025 9:48 AM
2	Unsure	3/12/2025 7:41 PM
3	Outhouse. Septic approved.	2/23/2025 7:27 PM
4	outhouse	2/23/2025 8:54 AM
5	Community System	2/17/2025 12:15 PM
6	Community system	2/17/2025 11:35 AM

Q19 85 responses

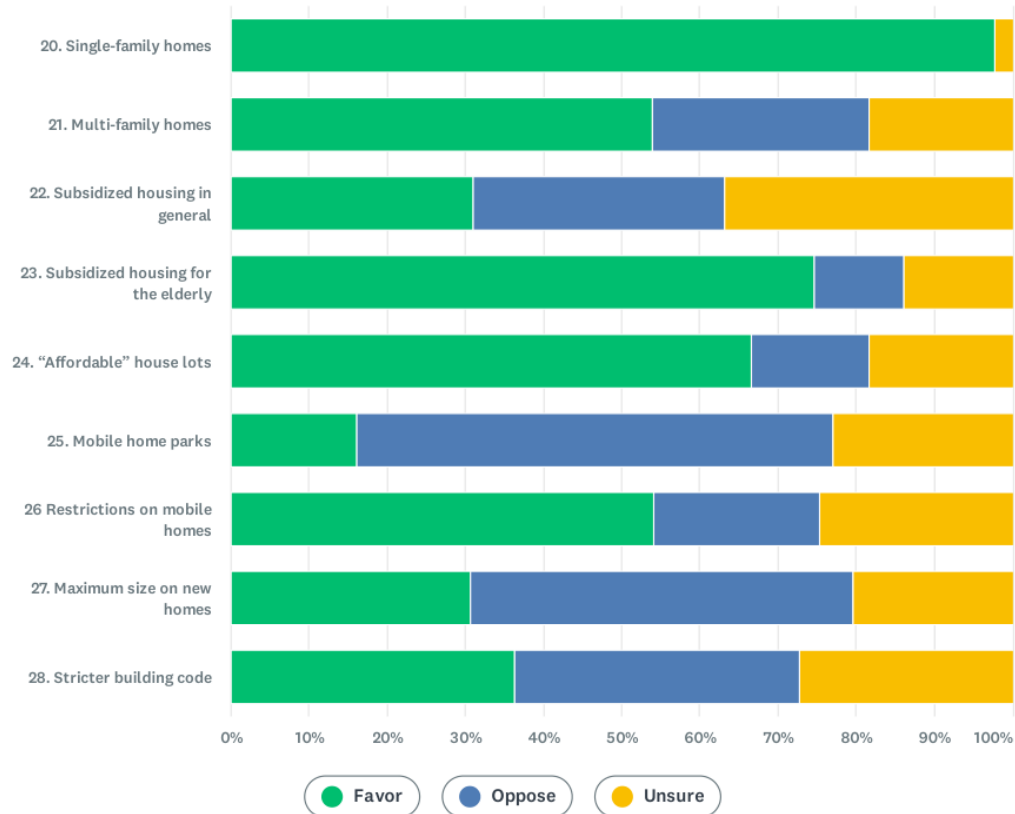
19. How do you rate your sewer system



Q20 88 responses

B. Housing Development: How do you feel about...

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025



Q21 29. Please comment on any questions 20-28 or type "none"

Answered: 73 Skipped: 21

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	21-23. All depends on who does the management 24. What happened to Cutler Land, Inc? It is/was affordable lots. 25. Management?	3/20/2025 12:05 PM
2	none	3/19/2025 10:01 AM
3	none	3/19/2025 9:48 AM
4	Building codes should be clear, transparent, and equally enforced – not necessarily stricter. Create housing options for younger individuals and families starting out, i.e. high quality, well maintained apartments, condos or townhouses or even lots. Similar to the base housing Govern new home sizes by building codes, land use ordinances, zoning, occupancy etc. not necessarily one maximum size restriction	3/17/2025 2:54 PM
5	I am aware of the serious need for good, affordable housing. I hope it is carefully planned	3/12/2025 7:41 PM

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

6	None	3/11/2025 7:57 PM
7	None	3/11/2025 3:28 PM
8	Town needs a zoning ordinance.	3/11/2025 10:34 AM
9	None	3/10/2025 6:30 AM
10	Affordable housing options (tasteful and well maintained apartments or condos), not subsidies, that attract and encourage young adults and families as they build their nest eggs to buy in the future - also to stay or move to Cutler. These housing options would however maintain the the towns values and preserve the rural, village like nature.	3/7/2025 12:40 PM
11	0	3/7/2025 11:00 AM
12	None	3/7/2025 6:17 AM
13	None	3/7/2025 4:50 AM
14	#21. OK with current dwellings made into multiple short term rentals, or with a main house with a smaller apartment attached. #23 Would want more details about parameters for such possible dwellings. #28 Not sure what all the current building code entails.	3/6/2025 11:00 PM
15	None	3/6/2025 7:19 PM
16	None	3/6/2025 5:40 PM
17	I am favor of housing development for year-round residents, not vacation homes or Air B 'n' Bs	3/6/2025 5:21 PM
18	I am favor of housing development for year-round residents, not vacation homes or Air B 'n' Bs	3/6/2025 5:18 PM
19	none	3/6/2025 12:43 PM
20	None	3/6/2025 10:53 AM
21	None	3/6/2025 10:39 AM
22	None	3/6/2025 10:29 AM
23	Honestly, I feel that if the homeowner "owns" their property, they should be able to do what they wish on it....meaning "build". I do not wish for anyone to pollute the ground around them. My only concern with that statement would be for farm animals...like horses and cows....as they do emit a strong odor....meaning their sh't stinks!	3/6/2025 9:52 AM
24	mobile home parks are more affordable so might work in a discreet location with landscaping	3/6/2025 9:49 AM
25	None	3/5/2025 11:35 PM
26	None	3/5/2025 8:56 PM
27	None	3/5/2025 2:45 PM
28	none	3/5/2025 2:32 PM
29	Mobile homes would detract from the quaintness of the town center.	3/4/2025 2:45 PM
30	none	3/4/2025 11:57 AM
31	none	3/4/2025 11:57 AM
32	none	3/4/2025 11:12 AM
33	None	3/4/2025 10:26 AM
34	none	3/4/2025 9:49 AM
35	Thank you for allowing for comments on housing. Checking boxes doesn't allow for addressing the nuisances of housing policy. A potential policy change, like subsidized housing, low income housing and mobile homes, is likely to be a hard sell to the voters. NIMBYism seems often to rear its head. When one speaks of subsidized housing, which government is supplying the subsidy? How is maintenance accomplished? What does the town give up to the builder as concession for the project? In considering subsidized housing, poorly built and maintained structures inhabited by residents who struggle to properly care for themselves is the image	3/3/2025 4:29 PM

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

that comes to mind. These comments only scratch the surface of a complicated issue. Similarly for mobile home parks, venture capital swooping in, not supplying services and jacking rental rates cannot be allowed. Can this be legislated? As "mobile" homes do not age well, how will they be managed at the end of their life cycle? How will infrastructure be maintained? Downeast Maine has already recently experienced drought, as has much of the Northeast. We can expect that to worsen. How can water and septic be supplied for residents of a park? These are concerns that are reflected in #26 "Restrictions on mobile homes". Shoreland Zoning restrictions help maintain the ecology and natural beauty of our area. Similarly, limiting the size of structures is a reasonable way to help maintain landscapes. The town already restricts height to 35'. Please consider a footprint restriction as well. The theory of trickle-down economics is a loser. The uber-wealthy do not necessarily contribute the prosperity of a small community. It's been a long time since Downeast Maine has suffered a major wildfire, but it is only a matter of time before we experience one. While stricter building codes increase the cost of housing, the long term benefits for energy, health and safety and insurance will help Cutler in the long term. It's difficult and much more expensive to correct issues in existing housing. At least future housing can be required to be more resilient.

36	None	3/3/2025 12:58 PM
37	None	3/3/2025 11:56 AM
38	Need more information to answer oppose or favor on some questions instead of unsure.	3/2/2025 11:43 AM
39	As far a building codes, I would not want buildings constructed in the Harbor area if they were to block the views to the harbor and beyond to the lighthouse.	3/1/2025 3:40 PM
40	I feel that small, single family homes are the greatest option for balancing affordability and happiness. Small homes in a town like Cutler can only become so expensive, which is a good thing. I have observed in other towns in similarly beautiful locations that generally developers favor building large homes for larger profit. However, once these have been built, the next generation of community members quickly gets priced out of owning a home in the community. Modestly sized single family homes provide a family with the well-being and peace of having their own private place, while staying affordable in the long run.	2/28/2025 7:31 PM
41	None	2/28/2025 5:53 PM
42	None	2/27/2025 12:54 PM
43	Provided we meet state regulations i do not think imposing any additional rules will help the town grow/prosper.	2/26/2025 5:26 PM
44	We just want to keep Cutler's old world charm in tact with its beautiful antique homes and not degrade it with cheap construction.	2/26/2025 2:54 PM
45	None	2/26/2025 1:12 AM
46	None	2/25/2025 11:47 AM
47	None	2/25/2025 10:45 AM
48	Have no objections to mobile homes or any type of home as long as it is well kept	2/24/2025 10:39 PM
49	Now is the time to preserve the quality of life and the land before it becomes "popular" and threatened by overdevelopment	2/24/2025 9:02 PM
50	None	2/24/2025 6:00 PM
51	none	2/24/2025 11:49 AM
52	None	2/23/2025 7:27 PM
53	None	2/23/2025 12:08 PM
54	Single family homes will help the value of all homes while mobile homes will not help value, or getting people from away wanting to to come on a regular basis seasonally.	2/23/2025 11:09 AM
55	multi family housing or mobile home parks are certainly a low-cost solution to affordable housing. However, employing carefully planned units or "deveopments" that are attractive, sustainable, safe such as the tiny house complex in Bangor, is important rather than constructing cheap mega complexes similar to Orono's student housing.	2/23/2025 8:54 AM

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

56	Tough for people to afford in new England in general am very in favor of subsidized multi family housing there is almost none currently	2/22/2025 3:48 PM
57	I do not want low income/subsidized housing near us.	2/22/2025 2:20 PM
58	I like limited restrictions on structures. Setbacks are the best way to retain freedom and flexibility while helping keep aesthetics good	2/21/2025 7:27 AM
59	None	2/20/2025 4:52 PM
60	none	2/20/2025 2:26 PM
61	none	2/20/2025 1:43 PM
62	None	2/19/2025 5:33 PM
63	Not opposed to mobile homes, per say, but they are not a permanent solution to housing needs. Would like to see more small/modest sized housing of higher quality. This would be more costly in the short run, but ultimately, better for all.	2/19/2025 10:13 AM
64	None	2/17/2025 11:35 AM
65	None	2/16/2025 3:18 PM
66	None	2/16/2025 8:21 AM
67	22- any subsidized housing should have strict requirements for occupants 24- affordable house lots should come with requirements for what is put on the lot. Example-no campers/RVs. Also, not able to be bought up by outside interest for commercial housing. 26- restrictions to mobile homes should be in regards to safety & efficiency.	2/15/2025 6:24 PM
68	Mobile homes are fine, just not "parks"	2/15/2025 9:18 AM
69	none	2/15/2025 9:14 AM
70	Trailer Parks need to have restrictions. Only registered vehicles, proper disposal of all materials, and single family	2/15/2025 8:01 AM
71	None	2/14/2025 8:46 PM
72	none	2/14/2025 2:57 PM
73	none	2/14/2025 1:52 PM

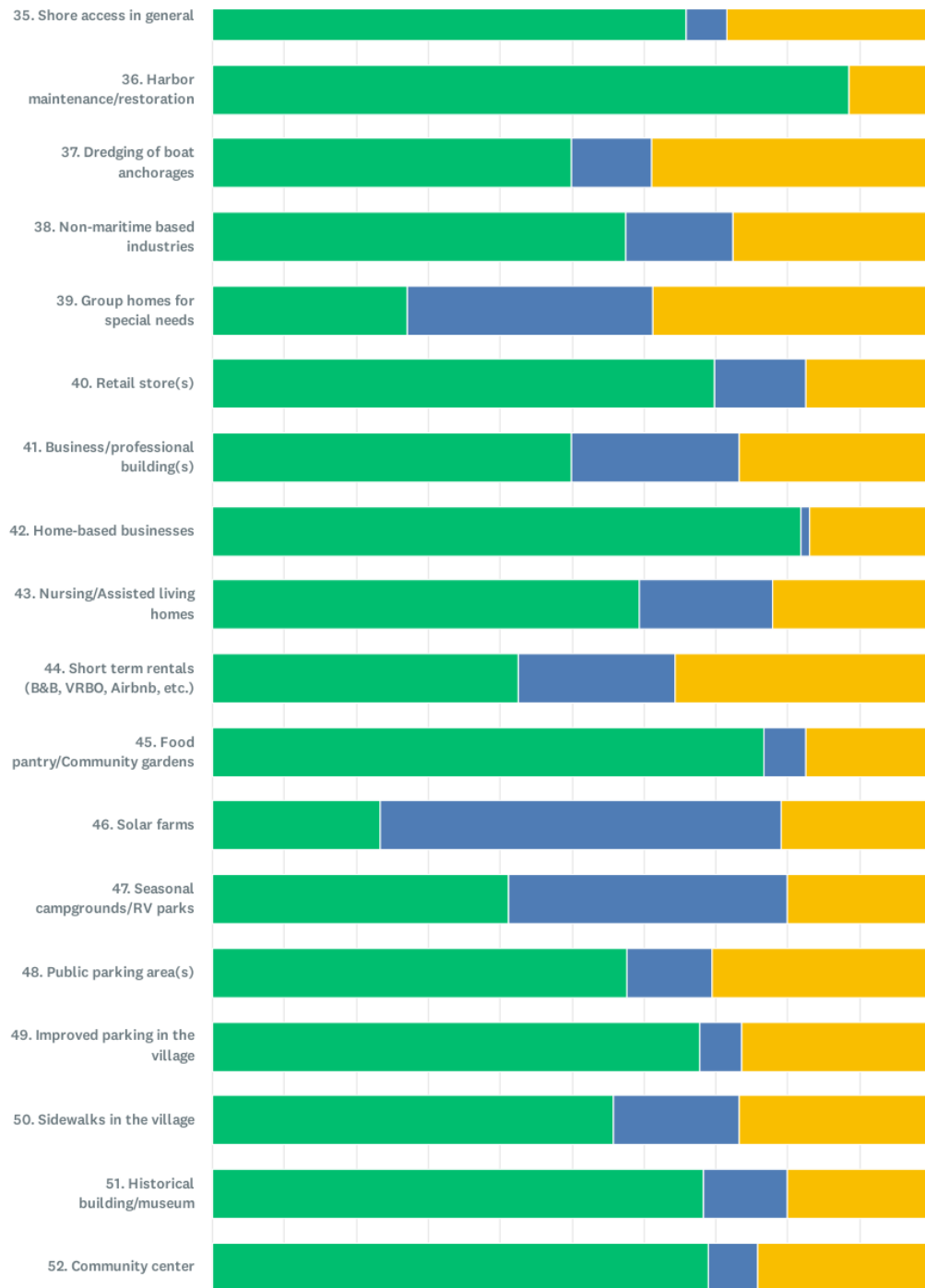
Q22 90 responses

C. General Development: Should the town...



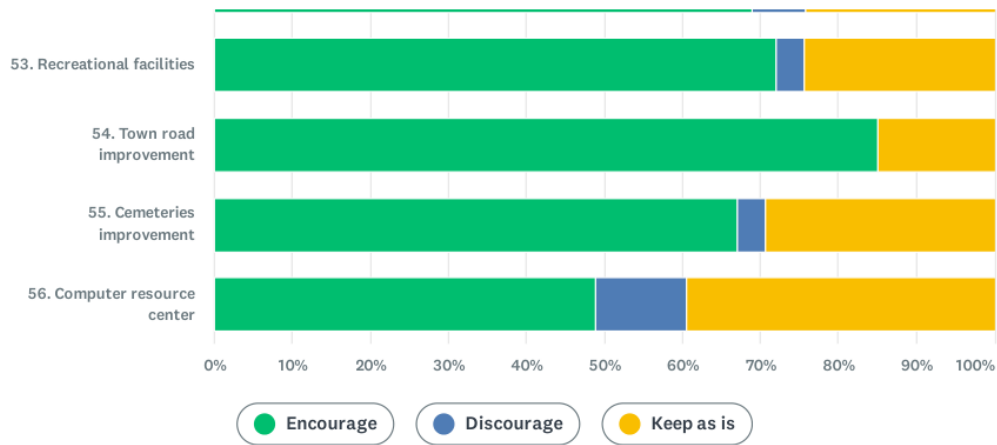
25 / 55

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025



26 / 55

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025



Q23 57. Please comment on any questions 30-56 or type "none"

Answered: 72 Skipped: 22

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	43. Management? 51-52. Too late?	3/20/2025 12:05 PM
2	none	3/19/2025 10:01 AM
3	Convenience store badly needed. Millbridge, Machias and Lubec already have nursing and assisted living facilities.	3/19/2025 9:48 AM
4	Break "General Development" into two categories: Economic Development and Community Development Cutler economic development drivers – for example - sustainability growth and town and resident prosperity, business diversity, workforce availability and skills, town and resident needs, etc. Distinguish between Marine-based vs. fishing-based economy. Cutler is very dependent on fishing like lobster, scallop, clam, etc. Fishing-based economy i.e., lobstering, scalloping, clamming - Keep as is – or let it expand naturally within Cutler residents Marine-based economy – Encourage. I.e. aquaculture, fabrication, boatbuilding, research, tourism, etc. Encourage other economic/business development that meet a set of agreed upon goals. Don't overlook the trades and technical industry like plumbing, building, internet, technical, education etc. Monetize or tax things like: Tourism i.e. lodging including rentals, food, hiking, tours, etc. Business – aquaculture, alternative energy, telecommunications, commercial land leases, etc. Attract more skilled young people and families want to live but go to work in surrounding towns and businesses. Diversify occupations beyond fishing putting emphasis on trades and skilled labor - even younger people to fill lower wage positions	3/17/2025 2:54 PM
5	As a seasonal resident I defer some questions to the year round residents. I would love to see services (healthcare, veterinary) to support residents	3/12/2025 7:41 PM
6	None	3/11/2025 7:57 PM
7	None	3/11/2025 3:28 PM
8	Again, town needs zoning ordinance to protect what is there now and control where new development is located	3/11/2025 10:34 AM
9	None	3/10/2025 6:30 AM
10	0	3/7/2025 11:00 AM

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

11	None	3/7/2025 6:17 AM
12	None	3/7/2025 4:50 AM
13	#40. A store with essential groceries (like the old Geel store), and possibly a gift shop. #46. With location restrictions to minimize unwanted changes to good views of harbor, etc. #50. A nice sidewalk along one side of Hwy 191 through the village, on the side away from the harbor. #51. A place to see early artifacts and pictures of Cutler, similar to what Machias port has, would be nice. #53. Perhaps something like kayak rental.	3/6/2025 11:00 PM
14	None	3/6/2025 7:19 PM
15	None	3/6/2025 5:40 PM
16	I am definitely opposed to retail. Lack of retail business traffic is one factor that drew me to the area.	3/6/2025 5:21 PM
17	I am definitely opposed to retail. Lack of retail business traffic is one factor that drew me to the area.	3/6/2025 5:18 PM
18	I bought property in Cutler because it is a small village along the coast. If I wanted property to be in a bustling town I would have purchased somewhere else. Low taxes and less input from the town are what is important to me.	3/6/2025 12:43 PM
19	None	3/6/2025 10:53 AM
20	None	3/6/2025 10:39 AM
21	Most old buildings in Cutler have already been torn down	3/6/2025 10:29 AM
22	none	3/6/2025 9:52 AM
23	none	3/6/2025 9:49 AM
24	None	3/5/2025 11:35 PM
25	None	3/5/2025 8:56 PM
26	None	3/5/2025 2:45 PM
27	none	3/5/2025 2:32 PM
28	The town beach needs to be cleaned up from the debris that litters it. A trash can would be nice for people who use the beach to dispose of waste. A public toilet in the town hall would be useful for the events that take place in town.	3/4/2025 2:45 PM
29	none	3/4/2025 11:57 AM
30	none	3/4/2025 11:57 AM
31	one small convenience store would be nice.	3/4/2025 11:12 AM
32	None	3/4/2025 10:26 AM
33	none	3/4/2025 9:49 AM
34	None	3/4/2025 9:04 AM
35	All of these General Development opportunities have potential for helping our community. However, the devil is in the details. It seems wise that Cutler leadership should consider the economic future. There is currently tremendous value in the lobster fishery. If this industry fails, what happens to our town? Many of these industries have potential negative impacts to our natural resources. It's reasonable to imagine that town leadership is aware of and will address and balance the benefit to our community against the damage to the environment. There is no opportunity in our town to casually meet our neighbors. Without a gas station, coffee shop, diner or convenience store, where do we go to see and greet our neighbors? The library seems little used. Church attendance is not robust. There are a few walkers in town, but there doesn't seem to be a congregating place. Sidewalks might encourage more walking and visiting, but then there's the right of way fight and the seasonal maintenance that will be problematic. Public parking in town is so limited as to be non-existent. These are things that town leadership must be aware. It is hoped that positive community response from this survey will help put through meaningful change.	3/3/2025 4:29 PM

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

36	Encourage a congregation place for residents and visitors. A general store with small concessions that can be seasonal.	3/3/2025 12:58 PM
37	None	3/3/2025 11:56 AM
38	None	3/2/2025 11:43 AM
39	None	3/1/2025 3:40 PM
40	Aquaculture can be an amazing opportunity for the town, though it needs to be thoughtfully done. For example, salmon farms have been shown to be damaging to natural communities in the ocean, and are harmful to fisheries. They can also spread disease to wild salmon populations, such as the populations currently being restored by the nearby down east salmon federation. Oyster farming on the other hand has been shown to INCREASE local ocean health, providing cleaner water and also helping local oyster populations. Large corporate retail stores are generally harmful to a small town atmosphere. However, many of the most community focused and happy small towns I have seen have a small general store. Somewhere where you can buy essentials, grab a cup of coffee, and maybe have a chat with other people from town. These are great for fostering a pleasant town atmosphere. Such a shop may even attract the many hikers of the coastal trails around cutler that come in the summer time. Wilderness style campgrounds could be an option. I used to work in Baxter State Park and people there loved the quiet. RV campgrounds and corporate campgrounds(like koa) on the other hand have surprisingly high rates of crime and domestic abuse. Friends of mine who have worked in Acadia have many horror stories. More campgrounds could be good if done properly. Because of my experience in campground management I'd be happy to weigh in with more specifics (email: jameslarkinoshea@gmail.com)	2/28/2025 7:31 PM
41	Solar farms contribute nothing to our power supply and are costing us \$\$ to subsidize them. They are a money making scheme for solar companies	2/28/2025 5:53 PM
42	Seasonal pay taxes????	2/27/2025 12:54 PM
43	based on location, I am not sure any investment from the town into infrastructure or business appeal will return enough to consider it worthy. If the seafood industry contiues to collapse, I do not see a long term future for the town.	2/26/2025 5:26 PM
44	We would like to see Cutler maintain its old world charm without a lot of commercial buildings being built and without unsightly fish farms or aquaculture industry which would ruin Cutler's picturesque beauty and boating access.	2/26/2025 2:54 PM
45	None	2/26/2025 1:12 AM
46	None	2/25/2025 11:47 AM
47	Nursing/Assited living homes are needed, especially assisted living, but the expense may not make it realistic, which is true of many of the things I marked "encourage"	2/24/2025 10:39 PM
48	None	2/24/2025 9:02 PM
49	None	2/24/2025 6:00 PM
50	none	2/24/2025 11:49 AM
51	None	2/23/2025 7:27 PM
52	None	2/23/2025 12:08 PM
53	none	2/23/2025 11:09 AM
54	Cutler village and waterfront is undoubtably adorable. However, providing amenities like a cafe, restaurant, community center, etc will serve the public, increase revenue, and build a tourist stream. Improving infrastructure like reliable internet will allow remote workers to work from home, increasing job opportunities and better financial stability. The working harbor in Cutler is fantastic. Improving those resources enhances opportunities. Cutler is well poised to accomodate climate change migration, tourism, and commerce. Planning for that in a mindful way that maintains the charm of Cutler is essential.	2/23/2025 8:54 AM
55	Wind and solar are development and do provide jobs. Just bc they're 'woke' doesn't mean they don't provide jobs or bring money into the area. And they are cost effective means of power generation. If we're pro local jobs we should be pro wind and solar	2/22/2025 3:48 PM

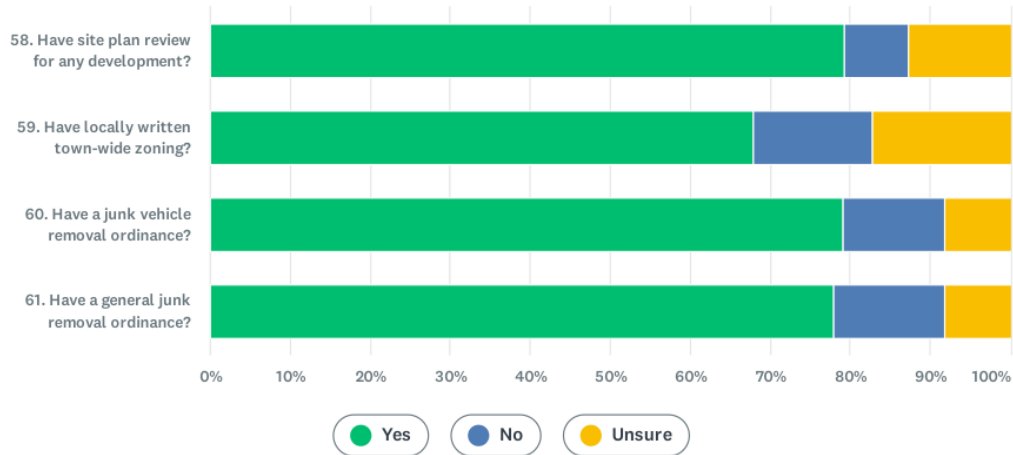
Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

56	Would like to see more retail like A to Z store.	2/22/2025 2:20 PM
57	Cutler should keep in mind a flexible path forward. Locking into one path that may fail isn't wise.	2/21/2025 7:27 AM
58	None	2/20/2025 4:52 PM
59	None	2/20/2025 2:26 PM
60	none	2/20/2025 1:43 PM
61	54). Ackley Rd in its entirety should be turned into town road and remove the private road distinction from the dirt portion of the road. There are too many houses and people living on dirt portion of road to be continued as a private road. Town of Cutler should take control of it and maintain it so services can be provided.	2/19/2025 5:33 PM
62	Fortunately, Rt 191 through the village sees light traffic, but with little to no parking for fishermen, travel through the village can be dicey at times. There is of course, limited land for the development of additional parking. Recreational, business, etc. would have dovetailed nicely with the transition of the Cutler Navy Housing Base, but the degradation of the facility over the decades would be a huge challenge. I suspect that availability of Federal funds will be severely curtailed for the foreseeable future.	2/19/2025 10:13 AM
63	None	2/17/2025 11:35 AM
64	None	2/16/2025 3:18 PM
65	None	2/16/2025 8:21 AM
66	Cutler is iconic as a fishing village and for our harbor. Anything related to fishing and marine actives, aquaculture, value added processes, all should be encouraged to help Cutler thrive. The tourism side of things, air BNB, short term rentals, should be allowed but managed to keep interests local. Tourism should be encouraged in the town but there should also be a balance on how much development occurs to support tourism. Services are needed for tourists but we should not let the face of Cutler change to serve guests that only pass through.	2/15/2025 6:24 PM
67	A few key businesses who be ideal (small store, market, summer take out, more boat tours for puffin/whales, etc) A mix of fisheries and tourism would be great. Be wary of the exploding Air BnB market. Needs some sort of regulation. We need places for people to stay but not every house in town.	2/15/2025 9:18 AM
68	winter road maintenance has got to be improved before we invite anyone in	2/15/2025 9:14 AM
69	none	2/15/2025 8:01 AM
70	None	2/14/2025 8:46 PM
71	none	2/14/2025 2:57 PM
72	44. Current short term rentals should be taxed at a higher rate than year round homes. Solar Farms destroy habitat and are not pleasing to the eye.	2/14/2025 1:52 PM

Q24 88 responses

D. Preservation, Planning and Land Use: Should the town...

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025



Q25 62. Please comment on any questions 58-61 or type "none"

Answered: 66 Skipped: 28

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	none	3/19/2025 10:01 AM
2	Consider a "junk boat removal" ordinance Include abandoned fishing gear, traps, moorings, draggers, concrete, etc. Keep the village beach cleaner and safer Create noise, parking, and purpose ordinances for businesses – commercial vs retail Establish and enforce handicap access, parking, etc Create public and commercial parking areas vs. first come Consider parking permits for residents and mooring owners Parking alternatives for non-mooring/boat owners and non-residents specifically business employees Make all land use ordinances fair and equal not favoring – especially if you want to attract other marine based businesses or attractions Pet waste ordinance Create village building codes for residences and businesses including wharfs, that to building codes to village wharf out buildings and structures.	3/17/2025 2:54 PM
3	None	3/11/2025 7:57 PM
4	None	3/11/2025 3:28 PM
5	Yes, the town needs a zoning ordinance.	3/11/2025 10:34 AM
6	None	3/10/2025 6:30 AM
7	59. I am unclear as to what a town-wide zoning might be. Not all the neighborhoods here have the same zoning features. Some are on the water, others are inland. Some places are grandfathered but lose that option once they are demolished..??	3/7/2025 6:06 PM
8	0	3/7/2025 11:00 AM
9	None	3/7/2025 6:17 AM
10	None	3/7/2025 4:50 AM
11	#59-61. Favorable if not extremely strict -- should be worked out with residents' input.	3/6/2025 11:00 PM
12	None	3/6/2025 7:19 PM

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

13	None	3/6/2025 5:40 PM
14	none	3/6/2025 5:21 PM
15	none	3/6/2025 5:18 PM
16	I aint here for the pretty yards and big houses.	3/6/2025 12:43 PM
17	None	3/6/2025 10:53 AM
18	Less government involvement please...more freedom	3/6/2025 10:39 AM
19	None	3/6/2025 10:29 AM
20	none	3/6/2025 9:52 AM
21	none	3/6/2025 9:49 AM
22	None	3/5/2025 8:56 PM
23	None	3/5/2025 2:45 PM
24	none	3/5/2025 2:32 PM
25	trash needs to be removed	3/4/2025 2:45 PM
26	none	3/4/2025 11:57 AM
27	none	3/4/2025 11:57 AM
28	none	3/4/2025 11:12 AM
29	None	3/4/2025 10:26 AM
30	none	3/4/2025 9:49 AM
31	Once upon a time, one could say, "It's my land; I'll do what I want". Now we know that the way a neighbor's land is used can negatively affect a wide area, as with PFAS contamination of ground water, apparently originating from the naval base. Perhaps on a smaller scale, but abandoned vehicles and some other "junk", besides detracting from our scenic enjoyment, have the potential for contaminating water in unexpected ways. Some people respond responsibly to the potential problem. Others refuse. By limiting the accumulation of "junk" (that must be fun to try to define in legislation), we reduce the risks of contamination and the associated cleanup costs, if cleanup is even possible.	3/3/2025 4:29 PM
32	None	3/3/2025 12:58 PM
33	None	3/3/2025 11:56 AM
34	None	3/2/2025 11:43 AM
35	None	3/1/2025 3:40 PM
36	None	2/28/2025 7:31 PM
37	None	2/28/2025 5:53 PM
38	None	2/27/2025 12:54 PM
39	more regulation will not help.	2/26/2025 5:26 PM
40	The emphasis should be on maintaining Cutler's old-world fishing village charm and refraining from unnecessary commercial building.	2/26/2025 2:54 PM
41	No one wants to look at people's junk. It lowers everyone's property value	2/26/2025 1:12 AM
42	None	2/25/2025 11:47 AM
43	Am strongly for all of these and then have them enforced!!	2/24/2025 10:39 PM
44	None	2/24/2025 9:02 PM
45	None	2/24/2025 6:00 PM
46	Removal of abandoned mobile homes and other abandoned buildings	2/23/2025 12:08 PM

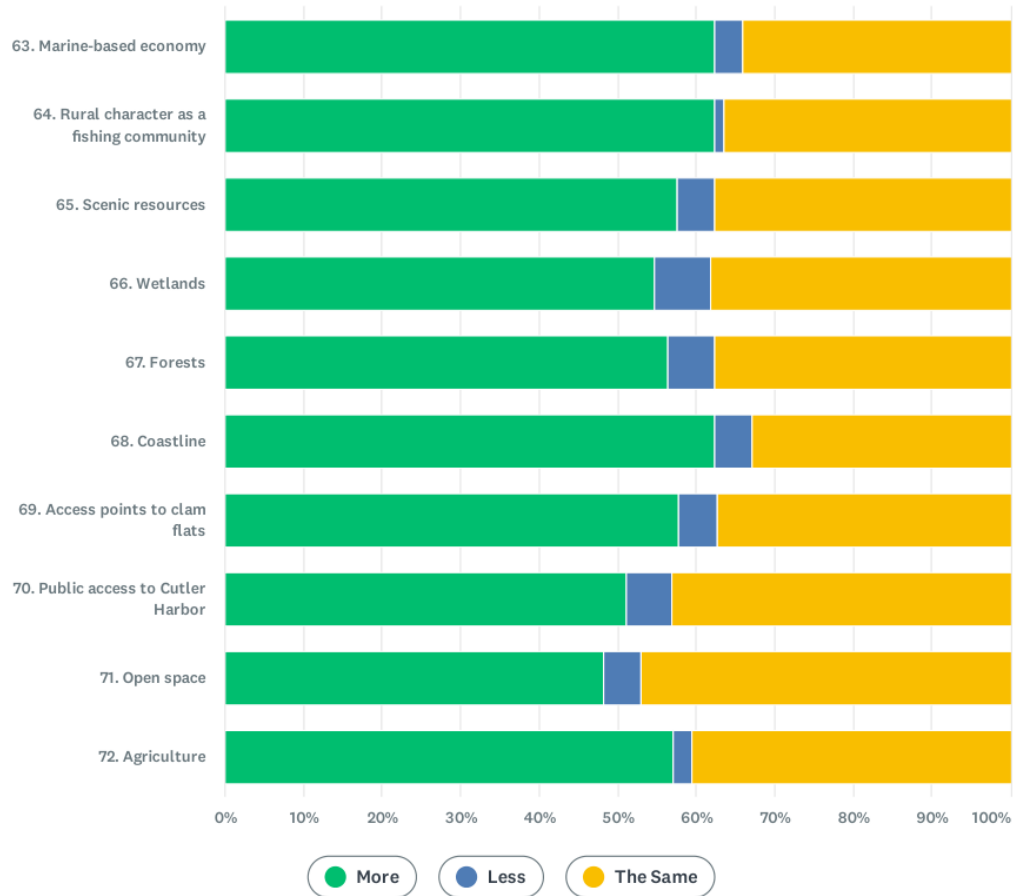
Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

47	none	2/23/2025 11:09 AM
48	YES!!!	2/23/2025 8:54 AM
49	None	2/22/2025 3:48 PM
50	We have too much junk in yards and front yards.	2/22/2025 2:20 PM
51	Personal freedom is important to me. I think most things should be allowed if out of site of a public road and not legitimately causing environmental harm.	2/21/2025 7:27 AM
52	None	2/20/2025 4:52 PM
53	none	2/20/2025 2:26 PM
54	none	2/20/2025 1:43 PM
55	None	2/19/2025 5:33 PM
56	Love the independent nature of the Cutler folks (we grew up in tiny Maine towns), but municipal challenges are many. Land is limited and property taxes are tough for many residents. Careful planning to include reasonable growth and tax stabilization while maintaining our wonderful small town fishing heritage are difficult, but critical. On the subject of junk cars and general junk, folks have a responsibility to keep their property junk-free. Modest housing is fine - We all understand that it is difficult for many folks to maintain their housing, but a yard full of junk is both dangerous and an eyesore and greatly devalues adjoining properties. Understanding the independent nature of we rural folks, there is still no excuse for this.	2/19/2025 10:13 AM
57	None	2/17/2025 11:35 AM
58	None	2/16/2025 3:18 PM
59	None	2/16/2025 8:21 AM
60	True "junk" and junk vehicles should be removed to keep properties clean. However we must also be cautious on what "junk" is considered, seeing as we have lots of residents with "beach trucks" that may look unsightly but provide access to clam flats. Or, traps and other fishing gear on properties that might not be in use but isn't necessarily "junk".	2/15/2025 6:24 PM
61	If we want to preserve the character of this town we need to be proactive. Drive down some back roads in Harrington and look around.	2/15/2025 9:18 AM
62	none	2/15/2025 9:14 AM
63	No unregistered vehicles, proper removal of all waste materials, year round public pier	2/15/2025 8:01 AM
64	None	2/14/2025 8:46 PM
65	none	2/14/2025 2:57 PM
66	none	2/14/2025 1:52 PM

Q26 86 responses

Should the town do more, less, or the same to preserve...

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025



Q27 73. Please comment on any questions 63-72 or type "none"

Answered: 66 Skipped: 28

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	none	3/19/2025 10:01 AM
2	We should preserve our Bold Coast land.	3/19/2025 9:48 AM
3	Question 63 is really the same as 30. Make a distinction between Marine-based vs. fishing-based economy. Reduce dependance on the fishing-based economy but do more to build more of an overall marine-based economy.	3/17/2025 2:54 PM
4	None	3/11/2025 7:57 PM
5	None	3/11/2025 3:28 PM

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

6	Again, zoning. Zoning will protect wetlands which are vital to filtering water that feeds wells and clam flats.	3/11/2025 10:34 AM
7	None	3/10/2025 6:30 AM
8	0	3/7/2025 11:00 AM
9	None	3/7/2025 6:17 AM
10	None	3/7/2025 4:50 AM
11	None	3/6/2025 11:00 PM
12	None	3/6/2025 7:19 PM
13	None	3/6/2025 5:40 PM
14	none	3/6/2025 5:21 PM
15	none	3/6/2025 5:18 PM
16	Let the economy figure it out. Do not tell people what to do with their properties and homes.	3/6/2025 12:43 PM
17	None	3/6/2025 10:53 AM
18	None	3/6/2025 10:39 AM
19	None	3/6/2025 10:29 AM
20	none	3/6/2025 9:52 AM
21	I'm not sure what is being done now but favor what will help preserve all of the above going forward.	3/6/2025 9:49 AM
22	Not ne	3/5/2025 8:56 PM
23	None	3/5/2025 2:45 PM
24	none	3/5/2025 2:32 PM
25	if the public is given more access to the harbor then you will need to have a destinated parking lot for vehicles and no along route 191.	3/4/2025 2:45 PM
26	none	3/4/2025 11:57 AM
27	none	3/4/2025 11:57 AM
28	none	3/4/2025 11:12 AM
29	None	3/4/2025 10:26 AM
30	none	3/4/2025 9:49 AM
31	The ocean and Cutler's natural beauty are the things that attracted this family to live here. These appear to be the town's biggest assets. Preserving, developing and promoting these attributes would seem to be essential for improving our town's future.	3/3/2025 4:29 PM
32	None	3/3/2025 12:58 PM
33	None	3/3/2025 11:56 AM
34	None	3/2/2025 11:43 AM
35	None	3/1/2025 3:40 PM
36	Agriculture would be a great opportunity. The soil around town is obviously not great, but I believe cows were previously grazed out on western head, so animal husbandry is possible. Producing local grass fed beef, sheep, and poultry could provide healthy food for locals and sold at a premium to markets around Maine (people in Portland, Brunswick, etc would certainly pay top dollar for grass-fed Bold Coast™ beef!)	2/28/2025 7:31 PM
37	None	2/28/2025 5:53 PM
38	None	2/27/2025 12:54 PM

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

39	Only investment by private industry should be considered. The town cannot expect growth without more business investment. Raising taxes due to increased spending will only force the current residents to move elsewhere.	2/26/2025 5:26 PM
40	Preserving Cutler's old world charm as a fishing village and ensuring that the harbor and forests are not encroached on. Also, it would be nice if the historic homes could be preserved rather than have them become dilapidated after abandonment by the owners.	2/26/2025 2:54 PM
41	None	2/26/2025 1:12 AM
42	None	2/25/2025 11:47 AM
43	none	2/24/2025 10:39 PM
44	None	2/24/2025 9:02 PM
45	None	2/24/2025 6:00 PM
46	None	2/23/2025 12:08 PM
47	none	2/23/2025 11:09 AM
48	nonr	2/23/2025 8:54 AM
49	None	2/22/2025 3:48 PM
50	The city should help with coastline loss at Beachwood Bay Estates.	2/22/2025 2:20 PM
51	Keep in mind current use value, as it changes via the industry... blueberries and forestry are not doing well. If taxes on those things don't go down with the market, they won't likely stay supportive of forestry and ag.	2/21/2025 7:27 AM
52	None	2/20/2025 4:52 PM
53	none	2/20/2025 2:26 PM
54	none	2/20/2025 1:43 PM
55	None	2/19/2025 5:33 PM
56	Access to clam flats could be spruced up a bit. More public parking would help with access to Cutler Harbor. Kudos to Town Planners for working on the Maker property. Understanding that funding this project is limited, this property is certainly a gem for the town and fits nicely with Maine Coast Heritage (?) trails in and around Cutler.	2/19/2025 10:13 AM
57	None	2/17/2025 11:35 AM
58	None	2/16/2025 3:18 PM
59	None	2/16/2025 8:21 AM
60	None	2/15/2025 6:24 PM
61	We are a community who relies on our natural resources..we need to protect and promote all of them, not just a select few.	2/15/2025 9:18 AM
62	none	2/15/2025 9:14 AM
63	none	2/15/2025 8:01 AM
64	None	2/14/2025 8:46 PM
65	need more farming	2/14/2025 2:57 PM
66	none	2/14/2025 1:52 PM

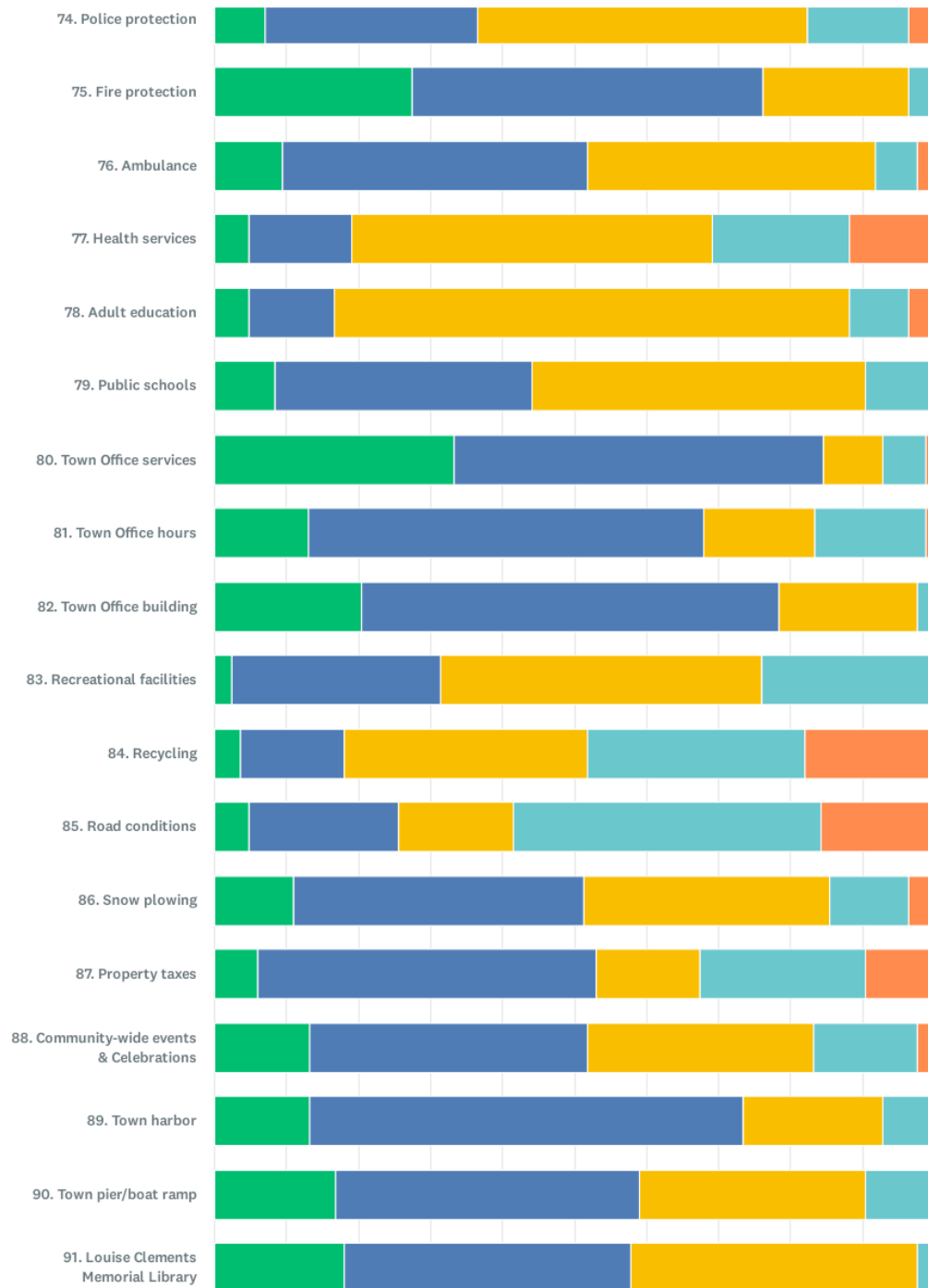
Q28 85 responses

Level of Satisfaction with facilities and services



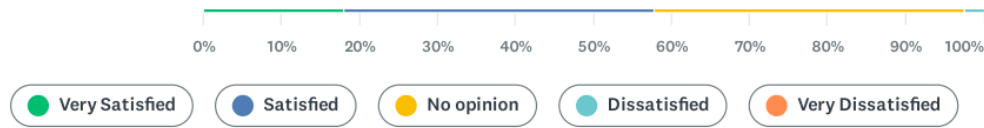
36 / 55

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025



37 / 55

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025



Q29 92. Please comment on any questions 74-91 or type "none"

Answered: 57 Skipped: 37

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	none	3/19/2025 10:01 AM
2	More special lectures and events needed at Town Office building. Praying that the state resurfaces the road between Cutler and Machias.	3/19/2025 9:48 AM
3	Keep improving, overhauling and modernizing town facilities, services, and personnel. Create some more services for tourist and visitors like public bathrooms, public parking, etc. Also focus on government transparency, equal enforcement, and current UpToDate information related to town activities. Don't assume or rely on the word of mouth. Help keep non/seasonal residents informed. THANK YOU FOR INCLUDING NON/SEASONAL RESIDENTS IN THE SURVEY	3/17/2025 2:54 PM
4	None	3/11/2025 7:57 PM
5	None	3/11/2025 3:28 PM
6	0	3/7/2025 11:00 AM
7	None	3/7/2025 4:50 AM
8	#91. Library is nice, if open (it was closed in summer of 2024 while we were there).	3/6/2025 11:00 PM
9	None	3/6/2025 5:40 PM
10	none	3/6/2025 5:21 PM
11	none	3/6/2025 5:18 PM
12	None	3/6/2025 10:53 AM
13	none	3/6/2025 9:52 AM
14	None	3/5/2025 8:56 PM
15	None	3/5/2025 2:45 PM
16	none	3/5/2025 2:32 PM
17	no comment	3/4/2025 2:45 PM
18	none	3/4/2025 11:57 AM
19	none	3/4/2025 11:57 AM
20	none	3/4/2025 11:12 AM
21	None	3/4/2025 10:26 AM
22	We need more organic food farms More art related activities: plays, shows, music, etc	3/4/2025 9:49 AM
23	The reception and the help provided from town office professionals is exemplary. Well done. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. On the one hand, winter roads are maintained better than expected. On the other, even several days after a snow event, it is a challenge using our streets. Is Route 191/Cutler Road a state road and not maintained by the town? The	3/3/2025 4:29 PM

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

state might do a better job of scraping road edges and sanding frozen snow melt that has become treacherous after a sunny day. The wash board effect on 191 is tremendous. The town does an adequate job keeping local streets passable and the daily sanding is positively noted. It is unnerving, though, to be driving on sanded ice and not on pavement. In other season's, it can be seen that road shoulders are crumbling. Left to decay, this is going to become a larger problem. It seems recycling options are very limited. If Marion Transfer doesn't offer recycling, then items that could be recycled are adding to the cost of waste for our town.

24	There few to no health sources in Cutler. I appreciate the investment on the Cutler town site.	3/3/2025 12:58 PM
25	None	3/3/2025 11:56 AM
26	None	3/2/2025 11:43 AM
27	Re: snowplowing I am happy with the town road Plowing. I am not happy with the state road plowing.	3/1/2025 3:40 PM
28	None	2/28/2025 7:31 PM
29	Property taxes are high, but this is a state issue	2/28/2025 5:53 PM
30	Would be nice to have closer available police, fire and medical services.	2/26/2025 2:54 PM
31	None	2/26/2025 1:12 AM
32	None	2/25/2025 11:47 AM
33	Dissatisfied with hours that both the Town Office & Library are open.	2/25/2025 10:45 AM
34	none	2/24/2025 10:39 PM
35	None	2/24/2025 9:02 PM
36	None	2/24/2025 6:00 PM
37	90 did not know of town pier or boat ramp	2/23/2025 7:27 PM
38	None	2/23/2025 12:08 PM
39	none	2/23/2025 11:09 AM
40	None	2/22/2025 3:48 PM
41	The city should plow Beachwood Bay Estates, we pay taxes for that.	2/22/2025 2:20 PM
42	None	2/21/2025 7:27 AM
43	None	2/20/2025 4:52 PM
44	none	2/20/2025 2:26 PM
45	none	2/20/2025 1:43 PM
46	None	2/19/2025 5:33 PM
47	We really don't expect a lot of services in a tiny rural community and realize the entire county faces a constant funding challenge. Fortunately crime seems to be low in this area, and people have each others backs and help others out. Snow plowing of 191 should improve greatly once the road is resurfaced (this summer?) The Town Office staff is friendly and helpful - wonderful folks! What a lovely little library the town has. Not sure if Cutler could partner with surrounding towns for more community center/recreational-type activities as we are challenged by population and distance.	2/19/2025 10:13 AM
48	None	2/17/2025 11:35 AM
49	None	2/16/2025 3:18 PM
50	None	2/16/2025 8:21 AM
51	None	2/15/2025 6:24 PM
52	For a small town, we do a pretty good job of providing all the necessary services while controlling costs.	2/15/2025 9:18 AM

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

53	none	2/15/2025 9:14 AM
54	none	2/15/2025 8:01 AM
55	None	2/14/2025 8:46 PM
56	none	2/14/2025 2:57 PM
57	none	2/14/2025 1:52 PM

Q30 93. What are things about the Town of Cutler that you like and would preserve?

Answered: 59 Skipped: 35

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Small rural town	3/20/2025 12:05 PM
2	It's natural beauty	3/20/2025 11:43 AM
3	July 4 traditions	3/20/2025 11:34 AM
4	everything	3/19/2025 10:01 AM
5	All that we have preserved! Only Rangeley Maine has set aside more public conserved land than Cutler!!!	3/19/2025 9:48 AM
6	The quiet, peaceful, picturesque nature. Sense of community. Hiking and other nature activities	3/17/2025 2:54 PM
7	I love Cutler. Preserve its charm, its small town feel but careful attention to what folks need for quality of life needs. No assisted living, no healthcare is a huge worry to many.	3/12/2025 7:41 PM
8	The quiet simple beauty of the town. Most beautiful Harbor in Maine.	3/11/2025 7:57 PM
9	It's existing character.	3/11/2025 10:51 AM
10	Coastal beauty	3/7/2025 11:00 AM
11	Cameraderie, friendliness and "bend-over-backward" helpfulness of neighbors and residents in general.	3/6/2025 11:00 PM
12	I like the small population, quiet, friendly people, open space	3/6/2025 5:21 PM
13	I like the small population, quiet, friendly people, open space	3/6/2025 5:18 PM
14	The small independent village that it is. I do not want vacation rentals. Encourage families to live there. Low taxes.	3/6/2025 12:43 PM
15	Rural, caters to fisheries and families over tourism	3/6/2025 10:39 AM
16	Marine based/fishing community....without fishing in Cutler, there would be no Cutler...the selectmen for Cutler need to advocate for the fishing fleet at the state level, and support those that already do...ie: the fishing associations	3/6/2025 9:52 AM
17	It's small town character and natural beauty.	3/6/2025 9:49 AM
18	Small town feel	3/5/2025 11:35 PM
19	The history	3/5/2025 8:56 PM
20	The small town feel, and the fact that people are willing to help others out when needed. The ability and freedom to work and work hard. If you wish that's made possible by the natural resources we have.	3/5/2025 2:45 PM
21	the beauty of the town and it culture	3/4/2025 2:45 PM

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

22	July 4th celebration	3/4/2025 11:57 AM
23	I love living in a small town!	3/4/2025 11:57 AM
24	The beaches.	3/4/2025 11:12 AM
25	The "character" of the Town is very special. I love that the economic basis is lobster fishing -- that it is a "working harbor" manned and staffed by long-time Maine and Cutler residents and families. The industry and the workforce make Cutler "a real place with real people."	3/4/2025 10:26 AM
26	Family oriented community	3/4/2025 9:49 AM
27	Preserve the small town, rural and natural nature of our town. The balance that must be achieved is doing this while improving services and amenities, keeping tax rates reasonable and keeping home ownership affordable. That would be a recipe for successful, long term viability of Cutler.	3/3/2025 4:29 PM
28	The rural nature. People don't come to cutler for hustle and bustle. With western head, the preserve lands and the puffin cruise, Cutler has a lot to do.	3/3/2025 12:58 PM
29	Harbor	3/3/2025 11:56 AM
30	The Maine quaintness, fishing harbor, lobster pier, the views, and friendly residents.	3/2/2025 11:43 AM
31	Its beauty, the harbor, shorelines, trails, public access to the shore, the working waterfront. Clamming, worming wrinkling etc	3/1/2025 3:40 PM
32	Cutler is one of the last true small towns on the entire east coast of the country! Cutler can certainly be a healthy community without getting much bigger, and without being over developed.	2/28/2025 7:31 PM
33	The village and harbor are gorgeous!	2/28/2025 5:53 PM
34	I only spend summers there and enjoy being away from the business of larger towns/cities. This isn't helping growth but people know each other and that's hard to get elsewhere.	2/26/2025 5:26 PM
35	Preserve Everything!! Apart from a few more Emergency services, like police and fire, it would be best to leave Cutler the way it is. The fishing harbor is also wonderful the way it is now, and we hope that the aquaculture (fish farms) industry will never come to our quaint harbor. Keep to fishing boats only, please.	2/26/2025 2:54 PM
36	Holiday celebrations	2/26/2025 1:12 AM
37	Natural beauty, cleanness,	2/25/2025 11:47 AM
38	Natural beauty	2/25/2025 10:45 AM
39	Small town feel, the beauty, peacefulness	2/24/2025 10:39 PM
40	Its natural beauty	2/24/2025 9:02 PM
41	The "village" atmosphere.	2/24/2025 6:00 PM
42	The fact that most of the residents are year round. It makes more of a community.	2/24/2025 11:49 AM
43	Little town environment	2/23/2025 7:27 PM
44	The harbor, the coastal character, and fishing industries	2/23/2025 12:08 PM
45	The character of the town	2/23/2025 11:09 AM
46	Public land	2/22/2025 3:48 PM
47	A small town feeling	2/22/2025 2:20 PM
48	Quite natural resource based industry	2/21/2025 7:27 AM
49	Access to hiking trails. Community focus and focus on fishing and marine.	2/20/2025 2:26 PM
50	love the scenic beauty, the friendly people and the feel of going back in time each time I visit	2/20/2025 1:43 PM
51	Harbor and coastal hiking trails	2/19/2025 5:33 PM
52	Commercial fishing/marine-based character. Public access to hiking and water. Rural	2/19/2025 10:13 AM

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

	character. Cutler village is one of the most scenic and iconic villages in Maine.	
53	Quite, low population	2/17/2025 11:35 AM
54	Small town feel and natural beauty of the environment.	2/16/2025 3:18 PM
55	I would like to preserve the way of life the residents have cultivated. It is quiet here and, I would like to see it stay that way.	2/16/2025 8:21 AM
56	The beautiful working harbor is its biggest asset. Maintaining access to the shore is key for all. Protecting its Maine vibe while promoting economic prosperity while managing growth that's too much and too fast will be very important.	2/15/2025 9:18 AM
57	Fishing history and current working waterfront	2/15/2025 8:48 AM
58	Rural atmosphere.	2/14/2025 2:57 PM
59	Small town and town history.	2/14/2025 1:52 PM

Q31 94. What are the things about the Town of Cutler that you would like to see changed?

Answered: 58 Skipped: 36

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Pushed growth form elsewhere.	3/20/2025 12:05 PM
2	Get the house lots at the end of Fitzhenry Lane sold to locals at a reasonable price.	3/20/2025 11:52 AM
3	I would like to see a beautiful park across the harbor.	3/20/2025 11:43 AM
4	Convenience store, gas pumps	3/20/2025 11:34 AM
5	nothing	3/19/2025 10:01 AM
6	Fresh faces and thoughtful ideas from every committee.	3/19/2025 9:48 AM
7	A clear set of values, a vision, and mission. A return to a sense of community and tradition - not so much preservation of tradition that you stagnate community and economic growth Continued upgrading and making improvements to the town processes and procedures. Improve town government transparency i.e. Regular and more current website updating, email updates for those who want it – including non/seasonal residents Keep non/seasonal residents more informed - Rene Paterson's articles are great but time sensitive information is outdated by time we get local papers Find ways to better engage, involve and utilize non/seasonal residents. This survey is the first time, I'm aware of, in 50+ years we've been asked for our input. THANK YOU SO MUCH.	3/17/2025 2:54 PM
8	The taxes are high would not The taxes are high and seem to go up quite a bit each year.	3/11/2025 7:57 PM
9	More parking	3/11/2025 10:51 AM
10	Town needs 3 thing: a zoning ordinance, a park that has plenty of parking with a boat ramp, and a community center that supports town meetings, events, and a place for residents to participate in social, recreational, educational activities.	3/11/2025 10:34 AM
11	More stores	3/7/2025 11:00 AM
12	I would like to see protections against land clearing for solar farms and other destructive/extractive uses.	3/6/2025 5:21 PM
13	I would like to see protections against land clearing for solar farms and other destructive/extractive uses.	3/6/2025 5:18 PM
14	Nothing. There is no problem, you are trying to gentrify this small town and it will cost everyone in the end.	3/6/2025 12:43 PM

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

15	Nothing	3/6/2025 10:39 AM
16	roads are horrible. we/the state can keep adding a layer of pavement every 10 years or so, but that will never fix the problem...the base under the pavement is no good. work with the state and fix the roads properly	3/6/2025 9:52 AM
17	A convenience store	3/5/2025 11:35 PM
18	Taxes are very high.	3/5/2025 8:56 PM
19	I would like to see the town and its government attempt to make it easier for people to start a new business. Especially businesses that would provide employment for town residents such as food stands, Clam shocking and lobster processing and possibly I can't round or even a small motel or two	3/5/2025 2:45 PM
20	Better roads, upkeep of some houses, upkeep of some yards, a grocery-deli store, community center for adults and children among other things.	3/5/2025 2:32 PM
21	People to be more friendly. Parking for the people who visit the town. More like Bar Harbor.	3/4/2025 2:45 PM
22	more available bachelors	3/4/2025 11:57 AM
23	Everything has ties to the ocean in town, please keep the opportunities the same for my kids!	3/4/2025 11:57 AM
24	Preservation of older buildings.	3/4/2025 10:26 AM
25	Need more community activities, dances, games, more community meals. Need a dog park, poop is everywhere in the village!	3/4/2025 9:49 AM
26	Create a town center that is a stopping point and destination and not only an occasional out-of-the way drive through.	3/3/2025 4:29 PM
27	A general store akin to a trading post that services day to day needs of the community while offering tourists and guests some local flavor. A regular shuttle to/from Machias or Calais.	3/3/2025 12:58 PM
28	Better snow plowing and sanding	3/3/2025 11:56 AM
29	Affordable housing Park and recreation area Senior housing	3/1/2025 3:40 PM
30	Maybe better parking for the fishermen	2/28/2025 5:53 PM
31	Being a seasonal resident, I'm not the best person to say if something should change.	2/26/2025 5:26 PM
32	Nothing!	2/26/2025 2:54 PM
33	Better access to water & more shops/restaurants	2/26/2025 1:12 AM
34	Store, recreational place for kids	2/25/2025 11:47 AM
35	Would like to see a store & gas station.	2/25/2025 10:45 AM
36	Deeper respect, friendliness for all who are here whether full time or seasonal. Have select board take more interest and check on ALL parts of Cutler, not just the village.	2/24/2025 10:39 PM
37	More small, locally owned businesses	2/24/2025 9:02 PM
38	Better road maintenance.	2/24/2025 6:00 PM
39	Less short term rental and empty houses 50 weeks of the year.	2/24/2025 11:49 AM
40	Small pavilion at head of harbor for small gatherings.	2/23/2025 7:27 PM
41	Keep the driving lanes on 191 open through the town center.	2/23/2025 12:08 PM
42	Would like to see a general store in town...a cute general store that would appeal to visitors	2/23/2025 11:09 AM
43	Jobs	2/22/2025 3:48 PM
44	We get charged a lot in taxes with very little to show for it.	2/22/2025 2:20 PM
45	Opportunities to take advantage of the bold coast unit in a way that financially benefits the town. People come from all over to hike, but stay and eat everywhere but cutler	2/21/2025 7:27 AM
46	Enforcement of building codes.	2/20/2025 2:26 PM

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

47	a store closer than Machias or Lubec. Otherwise town is perfect	2/20/2025 1:43 PM
48	Improved roads, improved access to services for all residents	2/19/2025 5:33 PM
49	More public parking in the village area - I know, this is a tough suggestion to fulfill.	2/19/2025 10:13 AM
50	Safer areas to walk through town	2/19/2025 9:09 AM
51	Would like a pizza shop and convenience store	2/17/2025 11:35 AM
52	Offer conveniences such as a general store and more of a sense of community.	2/16/2025 3:18 PM
53	Not much, if anything. I think the residents of the village could benefit from a sidewalk if they choose to have one built.	2/16/2025 8:21 AM
54	Greater sense of community. A small store or gathering spot would be most helpful. More community events (4th of July is really great but pretty much all we have).	2/15/2025 9:18 AM
55	we could use a store for essentials in the winter	2/15/2025 9:14 AM
56	Need a recycling program.	2/15/2025 8:48 AM
57	With the loss of Andy Patterson the town has lost a major Summer time tourist attraction	2/15/2025 8:01 AM
58	Ban Solar farms and Commercial Wind Mills	2/14/2025 1:52 PM

Q32 95. Describe how you see the Town of Cutler of the future.

Answered: 51 Skipped: 43

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	More houses.	3/20/2025 12:05 PM
2	In big trouble if the Feds and State keep trying to shut down the lobster industry.	3/20/2025 11:52 AM
3	Not sure	3/20/2025 11:34 AM
4	as it is now	3/19/2025 10:01 AM
5	Maintaining what we have while adding a convenience store with lunch counter.	3/19/2025 9:48 AM
6	A town: People want to come, live, work, play, relax and/or unwind. That is community based, vibrant, with a clear vision, a bright outlook for the future and a strong sense of tradition. Whose citizens are energetic, enthusiastic, courteous and respectful and good stewards of the land and sea. That welcome's young individuals and families, visitors, tourists and non/seasonal residents. A town where the younger generation has taken serious and active ownership in its future i.e. preserving the past yet growing.	3/17/2025 2:54 PM
7	I hope that Cutler can retain it quiet quaint beauty with growing a bit to keep it going and thriving.	3/11/2025 7:57 PM
8	Essentially not changing much but the future development takes the surrounding neighborhood into consideration.	3/11/2025 10:51 AM
9	Need to diversify employment base, especially facing climate change in the Gulf of Maine and possible deterioration of the lobster and scalloping fisheries.	3/7/2025 11:00 AM
10	Preserve current character, with perhaps modest, controlled growth.	3/6/2025 11:00 PM
11	I see the Town of Cutler preserving what makes it special, while adapting planfully for the housing needs of the next generation.	3/6/2025 5:21 PM
12	I see the Town of Cutler preserving what makes it special, while adapting planfully for the housing needs of the next generation.	3/6/2025 5:18 PM
13	I am worried that the current boards are going to try and gentrify Cutler, price locals out of houses. Not be a place for the common man but rich people.	3/6/2025 12:43 PM

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

14	To remain as it is and not be overdeveloped. Stay family/fisheries focused	3/6/2025 10:39 AM
15	slowly losing the population due to the fact that state and federal fishing regulations will reduce the fishing fleet. Less people will come here...roads and infrastructure are terrible....properties may sell, but if you look at the fact thatwhen someone from "away" buys property, they sell it again within 3-5 years...most people from away do not like it here..to far from "civilization" and roads to rough to get back there!	3/6/2025 9:52 AM
16	Unfortunately bigger	3/5/2025 11:35 PM
17	A small fishing village with history and culture intact. A healthy economy.	3/5/2025 8:56 PM
18	I see the town trying to increase the productivity of the fishing community so that more people are working in that field. It could be hard to do anything else with the town if it keeps growing. More 18 wheeler driving on the town roads that were not meant for this type of use.	3/4/2025 2:45 PM
19	activities for older residents	3/4/2025 11:57 AM
20	Hopefully not a retirement village!	3/4/2025 11:57 AM
21	Best case scenario: the community is largely controlled by the full-time and local residents with an eye toward keeping the Town a) beautiful, b) architecturally preserved and maintained, c) celebrating its proud maritime heritage and maintaining the lobster fishing prosperity.	3/4/2025 10:26 AM
22	A community that takes care of itself without State involvement.	3/4/2025 9:49 AM
23	The vista of our Cutler shore, Must be preserved forevermore, 'Midst varied seasons in each time, There's seaside majesty sublime. From Cobscook Bay to Manan Sound, A visitor can all year round, Find beauty, peace and fresh'ning breeze, To heal soul from daily squeeze. So balance Cutler, make our home, A Downeast refuge all may roam, Abundant nature makes the call Let's keep our peace and grant for all.	3/3/2025 4:29 PM
24	I see a vibrant community that invests in infrastructure and modernization while maintaining its rural essence.	3/3/2025 12:58 PM
25	Need stores	3/3/2025 11:56 AM
26	Maintain the quality of life and work. Do not let the town become obsolete or abandoned.	3/2/2025 11:43 AM
27	Hopefully still our special town, unique and quaint, but with some considerations to my notes.	3/1/2025 3:40 PM
28	The stretch of land between Cutler and Lubec is quickly becoming much more popular with hikers. So is the nearby cobscook Bay Area. This is of course a seasonal thing, but it would be foolish not to capitalize on that. Luckily the folks who make it this far down east to hike are generally respectful and kind to the locals and land. The Cutler of the future should do everything it can to keep this place as beautiful and peaceful as it is, while supporting industries that keep the money in the community. Fishing, boatbuilding, aquaculture and healthy agriculture are all great options for utilizing the amazing natural resources and building a strong local economy, an economy that prioritizes small businesses that create good food and excellent craftsmanship. Industries the town can really be proud of.	2/28/2025 7:31 PM
29	Hopefully the fishing industry will still be here, and it would great to see no more solar "farms"	2/28/2025 5:53 PM
30	Out of staters.	2/27/2025 12:54 PM
31	Honestly, in 20-40 years, unless the marine industry returns in force, the town will have lost at least another 100-200 residents and de-corporate into a township or basic unincorporated land.	2/26/2025 5:26 PM
32	Just how it is now. Beautiful, maintained, historic and friendly!	2/26/2025 2:54 PM
33	A place where kids can stay and earn a living	2/25/2025 11:47 AM
34	Increased ability for families to afford housing. Increased summer tourism with the ability to offer a store, restaurant & gas.	2/25/2025 10:45 AM
35	more preservation of the older buildings, more family feel to town, see people/children playing outside more, more town wide events, we know who everyone is and support each other no matter where we live in Cutler	2/24/2025 10:39 PM
36	Friendly. A place for local merchants, dining, community events	2/24/2025 9:02 PM

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

37	Difficult to project as there have been many changes both in the physical appearance (many historical buildings torn down) and the sense of lack of support on the part of local residents toward improvements.	2/24/2025 6:00 PM
38	I hope it stays much the same. The Real Maine starts, East of Ellsworth!	2/23/2025 7:27 PM
39	A place where we feel comfortable spending our summers.	2/23/2025 12:08 PM
40	Hopefully much the same with a few stores.	2/23/2025 11:09 AM
41	Hopefully with more local opportunities	2/22/2025 3:48 PM
42	I have lived here for 18 years and see little change. I do not think they are able to change.	2/22/2025 2:20 PM
43	One retail/coffee shop in the village. Access to the harbor and trails are maintained.	2/20/2025 2:26 PM
44	Hopefully not much different than it is presently	2/20/2025 1:43 PM
45	Relying solely on fishing industry	2/19/2025 5:33 PM
46	There are so many challenges for small communities in a rapidly changing world. Even as a PFA (person from away) I resist change and would love to see everything stay the same. I do think it is important to keep major commercial growth to a minimum to maintain the character of the town. This includes keeping power generation (wind, solar, etc..) away from residential areas. The solar development on 191 seems appropriate, as the land it sits on is remote and not of great agricultural significance, but I am nervous about wind development on some of the higher ground around the village. Admittedly, that is a NIMABY attitude, but I would hate to see the beauty of the area degraded.	2/19/2025 10:13 AM
47	Library improvements Easier accessible ways to get to the water front	2/17/2025 12:15 PM
48	A more developed area that is still nature based that offers services and conveniences that entices and allows people of all ages to thrive and prosper in terms of finances, safety and well-being.	2/16/2025 3:18 PM
49	I see it the way it is now. A quiet town with a close knit community.	2/16/2025 8:21 AM
50	Cutler hasn't changed much over the years and doesn't really need to....just needs a little more growth and do everything it can to protect its maritime heritage. Affordable homes, a good school, community involvement.. will lead to continued prosperity.	2/15/2025 9:18 AM
51	Stagnant	2/15/2025 8:01 AM

Q33 96. Do you have suggestions for improving the land use ordinances?

Answered: 42 Skipped: 52

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	None of my business as someone "from away".	3/20/2025 12:05 PM
2	Less restrictions	3/20/2025 11:52 AM
3	No	3/20/2025 11:34 AM
4	don't even know what that is	3/19/2025 10:01 AM
5	Apply and enforce ordinances equally and equitably	3/17/2025 2:54 PM
6	None	3/11/2025 7:57 PM
7	Yes, it needs to be rewritten as part of a larger zoning ordinance that conforms to a comprehensive plan.	3/11/2025 10:51 AM
8	Reduce taxes on undeveloped land?	3/7/2025 11:00 AM
9	We would like to have general knowledge of these ordinances.	3/6/2025 11:00 PM

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

10	I would suggest preventing industrial development and solar farms	3/6/2025 5:21 PM
11	Less laws the better. This aint Portland. Even if you squint both eyes, it aint Portland. You want more laws, pretty yards, big houses, move away.	3/6/2025 12:43 PM
12	No	3/6/2025 10:39 AM
13	No opinion	3/5/2025 8:56 PM
14	Land use ordinances for building houses-height, outside materials building houses or business buildings, no big signs, no solar panels farms or wind turbine farms except on individual houses. No more large Inn's.	3/5/2025 2:32 PM
15	You need to have set bylaws that state how the land can be used and people not abuse other people property.	3/4/2025 2:45 PM
16	I do not know what current land use ordinances are but my fear is that an influx of out-of-state or downstate money could rush in and radically alter the character of the Town, the rural aspect, and community spirit. If ordinances to protect Cutler from degradations that can accompany big inflows of absentee-ownership, such degradation will occur. Loopholes will be exploited.	3/4/2025 10:26 AM
17	Mentioned above.	3/3/2025 4:29 PM
18	Instate protections from parties (eg Hedge Funds) that would seek to take opportunities from locals. Allow mobile home parks, but require they be owned by local individuals or companies.	3/3/2025 12:58 PM
19	No	3/3/2025 11:56 AM
20	More information to the residents about our current and proposed changes to land use. Open discussions perhaps to educate and inform those who don't know how all that works and how they would affect the residents.	3/1/2025 3:40 PM
21	Keep out solar farms, and big sprawling developments. Solar farm land can be much better used for lumber, farming, or hunting/recreation areas	2/28/2025 7:31 PM
22	Forbid wind and solar farms. It's fine if people want them on their homes, but the land and wildlife should not be harmed by these faux energy industries	2/28/2025 5:53 PM
23	No, any ordinance beyond the state requirements are just going to continue to prevent private investment.	2/26/2025 5:26 PM
24	No.	2/26/2025 2:54 PM
25	No	2/25/2025 11:47 AM
26	need a better system so people in Cutler know what is happening or intended to happen with the land before it is too late, like the solar farms.	2/24/2025 10:39 PM
27	The subject of "zoning" would be an issue that should be addressed. Also there should be minimum standards for abandoned structures.	2/24/2025 6:00 PM
28	Be sure to preserve ocean water quality.	2/23/2025 7:27 PM
29	Enforcement of all approved ordinances.	2/23/2025 12:08 PM
30	Leave the land alone	2/23/2025 11:09 AM
31	Wind is not at all aesthetically offensive and will provide a half dozen permanent local maintenance jobs if installed	2/22/2025 3:48 PM
32	Put some zoning laws in and then enforce them.	2/22/2025 2:20 PM
33	Leverage state resources on environmental restrictions. State shoreland standard for timber, maine natural areas program, beginning with habitat, etc. Use setbacks more than lot size or land use	2/21/2025 7:27 AM
34	no	2/20/2025 2:26 PM
35	No, but a road that serves many homes should be town serviced and the driveways off of that road could be deemed private.	2/19/2025 5:33 PM

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

36	Awkwardly described in question 95.	2/19/2025 10:13 AM
37	Being mindful to create land use ordinances that benefits the community in terms of development, housing and safety along with preserving the environment. .	2/16/2025 3:18 PM
38	Maybe, I think residents should do with their land as they see fit but, businesses such as solar or wind farms should not be allowed. Outside interest should be kept outside.	2/16/2025 8:21 AM
39	Didn't even know we had one.	2/15/2025 9:18 AM
40	??	2/15/2025 8:01 AM
41	No solar farms or salmon farms	2/14/2025 8:46 PM
42	It should be tougher to get a commercial building permit than a year round home.	2/14/2025 1:52 PM

Q34 97. If you favor new business, what kind of new businesses would you like to see?

Answered: 59 Skipped: 35

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	"Corner store (bread and milk) Gas station	3/20/2025 12:05 PM
2	A lobster processing plant.	3/20/2025 11:43 AM
3	Convenience store, gas pumps	3/20/2025 11:34 AM
4	none	3/19/2025 10:01 AM
5	Convenience store (gas pump etc). Small restaurant with take out.	3/19/2025 9:48 AM
6	New businesses should fit with the town's economic development vision and drivers Create an economic development person/committee Capitalize on seasonal tourism like those who come to hike, birdwatch, etc. Encourage expansion, outside Cutler, of existing non fishing businesses like home building, fabrication, arts, boatbuilding, etc. Make Cutler a sailing destination (again) - mooring rentals, access to facilities like a shows and transportation to local towns for shopping, dining, etc. Attract or develop larger scale aquiculture businesses Utilize the Old Base as a new business incubator.	3/17/2025 2:54 PM
7	Veterinary, small breakfast spot to partner with puffin tours.	3/12/2025 7:41 PM
8	Businesses that promote preserving the land and taking care of what we have in Cutler. If there were more businesses like a grocery store or restaurant or two it might draw more people to the area but we also want to keep the charm of the Harbor.	3/11/2025 7:57 PM
9	A convenience store with basic items so we don't have to go to Machias for everything.	3/11/2025 10:51 AM
10	Retail. Restaurants?	3/7/2025 11:00 AM
11	I would favor marine related business, small home-based business but NOT retail.	3/6/2025 5:21 PM
12	Retail would be a great start.	3/6/2025 12:43 PM
13	Fisheries, farms	3/6/2025 10:39 AM
14	A variety store such as A to Z or a coffee shop in that location though it's not likely we have enough population to support either one.	3/6/2025 9:49 AM
15	Store	3/5/2025 11:35 PM
16	A restaurant and a general store	3/5/2025 8:56 PM
17	Marine businesses, one deli-grocery store	3/5/2025 2:32 PM
18	I could see a Bed and Breakfast for tourist and guest of locals. We could use a food service and/or small store for basic needs.	3/4/2025 2:45 PM

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

19	Small retail store/coffee shop	3/4/2025 11:57 AM
20	One small convenience store.	3/4/2025 11:12 AM
21	A small general store would be welcome. These have existed before and I believe must be challenging to keep in business, but such trade is useful and makes Cutler more like a real village. A small town without a church, for instance, seems to be lacking something vital -- same with a small general store.	3/4/2025 10:26 AM
22	More organic food farms, transportation (private) to town	3/4/2025 9:49 AM
23	It would be great to have a local cafe, convenience store or other small business to greet neighbors informally and give visitors a place to stop.	3/3/2025 4:29 PM
24	Small business. See earlier comment.	3/3/2025 12:58 PM
25	Stores places to eat	3/3/2025 11:56 AM
26	Home based, small grocery store with a food counter.	3/2/2025 11:43 AM
27	A general store, like we used to have where folks gathered for coffee and could buy some groceries. Back in the day, when the grange hall was a store and it had a food counter and a pool table.. it was more than just a store, much more to the folks. It also drew more recreational vessels to the harbor.	3/1/2025 3:40 PM
28	Big corporations are best kept out. Though they can provide jobs, often they end up taking money out of the community. A locally-owned general store would be helpful and nice. Aquaculture and agriculture (if done with appropriate care) would also be good	2/28/2025 7:31 PM
29	Variety stores, gas station, restaurant, bakery....	2/28/2025 5:53 PM
30	not sure if Cutler could compete but having a focus on Marine food industry and recreational expansion. Finding the land close enough to the water and people willing to invest in campgrounds and restaurants. It's a big "IF" and you have a lot of competition already ahead in this race.	2/26/2025 5:26 PM
31	Preferably no new business. Maybe just a small general store.	2/26/2025 2:54 PM
32	Store	2/25/2025 11:47 AM
33	A store where you could at least buy bread, milk, water etc. Gas station & restaurant. Possibly a bakery, coffee shop, small gift shop that sold Maine made products.	2/25/2025 10:45 AM
34	It would be nice to have a cafe and/or store with basics, but it is hard to make a business like that be a success with the low population. A good chef will attract people from around the area ie: Machias, Lubec, etc	2/24/2025 10:39 PM
35	Small. Artisanal. Dining.	2/24/2025 9:02 PM
36	A store in the harbor area.	2/24/2025 6:00 PM
37	a convenience/gas station	2/24/2025 11:49 AM
38	A small mom and pop country store	2/23/2025 7:27 PM
39	A restaurant, a variety store, a morning coffee shop on the pier.	2/23/2025 12:08 PM
40	general store	2/23/2025 11:09 AM
41	food related businesses, improved cultural/historical offerings, local artists/crafts gallery, grocery store, food coop, gym	2/23/2025 8:54 AM
42	General store, diner	2/22/2025 3:48 PM
43	Retail, as the old A to Z Store.	2/22/2025 2:20 PM
44	Forest products.	2/21/2025 7:27 AM
45	small retail coffee shop type business with breakfast/lunch.	2/20/2025 2:26 PM
46	Small grocery, gas.	2/19/2025 5:33 PM

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

47	Yes. Small retail business would be awesome, but challenging. A small bakery/deli/café would be a wonderful gathering place for the community, but the economic challenges for such a business are overwhelming. Aquaculture-based development is certainly controversial, but is there room for small development of such?	2/19/2025 10:13 AM
48	Bakery	2/19/2025 9:09 AM
49	Convenience Store A place where folks could get together. Have a bite to eat. Have a beer. Not just for locals.	2/17/2025 12:15 PM
50	Pizza shop, convenience store	2/17/2025 11:35 AM
51	General store that offers "staples" along with ready made food and public use areas such as parks, beaches and community centers.	2/16/2025 3:18 PM
52	Sea food processing, boat building etc.	2/16/2025 8:21 AM
53	Nature and marine based. Capitalize on our assets. The Bold Coast, whales, puffins, hiking, etc. Along with that you need basic services to accommodate those visitors...parking, rest rooms, store, food, gas, basic supplies, lodging.	2/15/2025 9:18 AM
54	a store for essentials in the winter	2/15/2025 9:14 AM
55	Coffee shop/bakery	2/15/2025 8:48 AM
56	Anything that attracts tourism	2/15/2025 8:01 AM
57	Store	2/14/2025 8:46 PM
58	Gas convenience store. Food processing. Restaurant Inn.	2/14/2025 2:57 PM
59	One that compliments our small town values and our natural resources.	2/14/2025 1:52 PM

Q35 98. What concerns, if any, do you have regarding the town of Cutler?
Please use the space below to share your thoughts.

Answered: 50 Skipped: 44

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Continuing battles with the state who wants towns like Cutler work like Rockland, etc. Leave us alone!!	3/20/2025 12:05 PM
2	Cutler harbor is the most beautiful harbor in Maine. We need to do everything possible to make it attractive to our residents and tourists.	3/20/2025 11:43 AM
3	Cutler has lost organizations that drew the town together-grange, masons, eastern star, and church activities and groups. The result is a less cohesive community, no doubt a sign of the times, but sad to see.	3/20/2025 11:34 AM
4	Following are our thoughts regarding the Cutler Town Plan: 1. Addition of a convenience store 2. Summer recreation program for town youth 3. Program for dealing with climate changes effecting water levels and general environment conditions 4. County security services 5. Town compost program 6. Better use of Corbett Field	3/19/2025 10:06 AM
5	That it stays the way it is.	3/19/2025 10:01 AM
6	The Maker Property...Jasper Cates Jr. and Delia Farris were dedicated to saving to saving for public use the beaches and forests from it to Western Head. Before the Historic building deteriorate any further, one last effort to save them must be mounted.	3/19/2025 9:48 AM
7	I hope I don't get in trouble for giving my honest thoughts. Cutler seems to have lost its way and lost many of the qualities and characteristics that made it such a desirable and attractive community to live and work. The "Village Center", as it was once called, is gone!!! Cars and trucks make a lot of noise and speed through it with no reason to stop and gather. The gathering spots like the town hall, wharfs, post office, school, etc., are "transactional"	3/17/2025 2:54 PM

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

destinations, not necessarily "community building" destinations. Cutler is no longer a destination for hikers, birdwatchers, sailors, etc. but a place people drive through or sail by, take a picture or two, maybe a tour and move on to neighboring towns where they can bed down, eat, relax and unwind – and spend their money. The community seems more dependent than ever on fishing and a few related yet, owner concentrated, businesses. The town also seems to have fewer and fewer trade and skill labors, relying more and more on neighboring communities to fill those needs - and subsequently taking their tax revenues and business spending with them. Like many towns in Washington County, Cutler seems to be at a crossroads and needs to avoid stagnation and focus on economic, community and social growth

8	I worry that not enough young families will choose the area due to lack of services etc. and that the town will dwindle.	3/11/2025 7:57 PM
9	Noise. I like Cutler the way it is, quiet. But municipal leaders have been reluctant to control noise because they want to keep taxes low and promote jobs. But industrial noise lowers property values and creates mental stress. That's why we need zoning.	3/11/2025 10:51 AM
10	Got to make it attractive for young people to stay here.	3/7/2025 11:00 AM
11	My concerns are long-term related to climate change - accessibility when sea levels rise, and stability of the electrical grid.	3/6/2025 5:21 PM
12	Expressed them above.	3/6/2025 12:43 PM
13	That it will become too built up and landowners will kick fishermen and year round residents off shore access	3/6/2025 10:39 AM
14	Being a coastal town I'm concerned that taxes may increase with rising property values so hope the town will continue to manage essential services and adjust the mil rate accordingly as it has done so far so residents aren't priced out.	3/6/2025 9:49 AM
15	We feel the taxes are extremely high and unaffordable.	3/5/2025 8:56 PM
16	I fear that some people have favoritism in town and sway the people in government to change things that may not really be good for everyone in the town.	3/4/2025 2:45 PM
17	drugs	3/4/2025 11:57 AM
18	I'm concerned that Cutler has been more recently "discovered" by an affluent portion of American society looking for seasonal property, and that this could radically alter residential development and local politics in a manner injurious to genuine local interest. There's an immensely wealthy section of American society looking for trophy properties and Cutler is ripe. I don't think it's bad to have that demographic within a community like Cutler, but if long-time Cutler families and residents can no longer afford to live in the Town -- it would no longer be the Cutler we love. If the harbor eventually prioritized yachtsmen and day-tourists over our professional lobster fishermen -- it would no longer be the Cutler we love. If there are no carefully considered zoning and building parameters, for example, the architectural character of Cutler could become crowded with monstrous residential displays; disputes over ruined vistas will erupt if anyone can build willy-nilly whatever they want wherever they want to. I'm not opposed to prosperity and I don't by any means resent all change -- I'm saying only that I hope Cutler has fair and sensible guardrails in place before it's too late.	3/4/2025 10:26 AM
19	Cutler becoming an exclusive bedroom, retirement community	3/4/2025 9:49 AM
20	The future of the fishery is uncertain. No doubt it one could always say that, but conditions are deteriorating at an accelerated pace. Where will Cutler be without the lobster revenue? Can we plan for that future?	3/3/2025 4:29 PM
21	None	3/3/2025 12:58 PM
22	None	3/3/2025 11:56 AM
23	I am concerned about property values going up and taxes adjusted by those will make for a hardship for local residents financially. And this would make it even harder for our younger generation to remain in our town.	3/1/2025 3:40 PM
24	The fraud perpetrated by the former clerk is costing the town thousands in withheld State funds, as well as legal fees	2/28/2025 5:53 PM

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

25	Will not be able to afford to live here	2/27/2025 12:54 PM
26	there is no local market or gas station. the roads are in rough shape and repairs only last so long. It is becoming a "bedroom town" with little employment opportunities so once people start working elsewhere they start to think about living elsewhere.	2/26/2025 5:26 PM
27	Our concerns are that the fishing harbor should be kept the way it is now, and NOT changed to accommodate the aquaculture industry with its fish farms and nets.	2/26/2025 2:54 PM
28	Major concern regarding the dangerous erosion issues under the Cove rd bridge.	2/25/2025 10:45 AM
29	The increase in traffic of large trucks that the roads aren't designed to take, so what the state puts down to resurface them every 5 or so years starts to break down the with first winter! Increasing speed people drive thru town, limits where it is safe to walk.	2/24/2025 10:39 PM
30	Future Overdevelopment	2/24/2025 9:02 PM
31	There is a wealth of information regarding the history of Cutler itself but there is no depository of same. There should be a central location for that collective history-perhaps in the library	2/24/2025 6:00 PM
32	Many properties going into short term rentals, lack of affordable housing for year round residents	2/24/2025 11:49 AM
33	Big fishing crowding in	2/23/2025 7:27 PM
34	Would like to see more communication that includes seasonal property owners.	2/23/2025 12:08 PM
35	none so far	2/23/2025 11:09 AM
36	Poverty and drugs. Developers, rising property values (comes with development - but ensuring a planned effort rather than major increases)	2/23/2025 8:54 AM
37	Thank you town staff and volunteers	2/22/2025 3:48 PM
38	I have sent letters to the town of Cutler, with NO reply. For a town of 500, and the taxes we pay, there is NO reason someone could respond.	2/22/2025 2:20 PM
39	Becoming unaffordable to live.	2/21/2025 7:27 AM
40	I feel like there's a lot of taxes being raised and not being used to help the many people of the town like road improvements.	2/19/2025 5:33 PM
41	Challenges for the fishing industry (reduced stocks, regulation, etc.) will continue to grow. The survival of Cutler and other small coastal towns depends on forward thinking - aquaculture? tourism? Municipal and educational fund sharing from the state is likely to shrink, perhaps dramatically in the coming years. Resulting property tax burdens will probably put an increased burden on those living on fixed incomes. I don't know how you plan for all this, but a coalition of our elected officials, both town and legislative, representing small communities may wield some ideas and power for solutions.	2/19/2025 10:13 AM
42	Lack of services impacts all residents, but more so to the elderly in terms of transportation, medical care and affordability of food and other necessities.	2/16/2025 3:18 PM
43	I'm concerned that outside interest will destroy the community so many generations have cultivated here.	2/16/2025 8:21 AM
44	We have seen an influx of people from out of state moving to Cutler in the last 5 or so years. While I personally welcome anyone from all different places and backgrounds, other towns, especially coastal towns, have suffered from outside people moving in, and completely changing the face of towns to suit their wants and visions, at the expense of the current longtime residents, and more specifically the people who use the shore and water to make a living. I think it should be a priority to grow the town of Cutler while keeping the values we have thrived on. We have also seen much of the houses and land in town bought up at high prices, pricing out most of the locals. There are many children and young adults growing up in town currently that will need housing in the next few years and there are currently very little options for housing and/or land, at an affordable cost. We WILL lose our next generation to other areas if this is not addressed.	2/15/2025 6:24 PM
45	That wealthy land owners will continue to gobble up our beautiful peninsulas and post no trespassing signs. There are so many places we used to go play as kids on the shore that are no longer available to us. We need a good mix of public and private. Controlling set backs, lot	2/15/2025 9:18 AM

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

size, building size would be all great ideas. The idea of having the entire ridge lined with tiny homes for summer rentals is not a pleasant thought.

46	the roads in the winter are too dangerous	2/15/2025 9:14 AM
47	No concerns	2/15/2025 8:48 AM
48	Town office hours, lack of clam flat availability, better access to walking trails	2/15/2025 8:01 AM
49	I wish there were more convenient town office hours. But I can handle the status quo.	2/14/2025 8:46 PM
50	over regulation.	2/14/2025 2:57 PM

Q36 99. Please share your thoughts. Cutler is...

Answered: 50 Skipped: 44

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	A beautiful place to live and to raise children. We all need to keep it that way! Cutler needs to have a store with gas.	3/20/2025 11:43 AM
2	a town where citizens care for and help each other; a place of spectacular natural beauty; a network of extended large families, and a good place to raise children.	3/20/2025 11:34 AM
3	Where I want to be AS IS.	3/19/2025 10:01 AM
4	- One of the most wisely protected along Maine coast. - The most beautifully formed by nature and protected years ago by our citizens acting together with the Nature Conservancy and the protection of lighthouse and islands.	3/19/2025 9:48 AM
5	We love Cutler!!! It is a quiet, picturesque, rural suburban fishing community, with dedicated, hardworking people.	3/17/2025 2:54 PM
6	One of the most beautiful harbors ❤️	3/12/2025 7:41 PM
7	Cutler is beautiful and I wish it could thrive and grow without losing what makes it special. I'm choosing to retire in Cutler. I think it is a special place.	3/11/2025 7:57 PM
8	Great	3/11/2025 3:28 PM
9	My home.	3/11/2025 10:51 AM
10	Cutler seems like our first home, especially when we are there, even though has been our second home for nearly 48 years.	3/6/2025 11:00 PM
11	A very special, friendly, quiet and beautiful place	3/6/2025 5:21 PM
12	a beautiful place that is a dying breed. Old Maine, where fisherman can still afford to live and raise a family.	3/6/2025 12:43 PM
13	Home	3/6/2025 10:39 AM
14	a very special place with a rich history and future. I appreciate the work of the Town Comprehensive Plan Committee going forward.	3/6/2025 9:49 AM
15	Love Cutler but feel it will be swallowed	3/5/2025 11:35 PM
16	Americana	3/5/2025 8:56 PM
17	beautiful, lovely coastline, friendly community, great views of ledges, great place to sit & watch eagles, hawks, seagulls, walking trails.	3/5/2025 2:32 PM
18	A great place with rich in history. I think it needs to have people who love it working to improve the direction in which the focus for growth will be a benefit to all.	3/4/2025 2:45 PM
19	a sweet place to live	3/4/2025 11:57 AM
20	Cutler is a uniquely special place. I am not a full-time resident but have come to Cutler every	3/4/2025 10:26 AM

Cutler Comprehensive Plan - Community Public Survey 2025

year of my life and it is always the high point of any year for me. I have made friends with native residents and I greatly admire the independent spirit so in evidence there. It's the kind of place America likes to be proud of, and Cutler's inhabitants are right to be proud of it. I have been lucky to see many beautiful places in the world, and Cutler is right up there at the top of the list.

21	Beautiful, quiet	3/4/2025 9:49 AM
22	Thank you for the opportunity to share my opinions about our town. My family is very pleased to be a part of Cutler.	3/3/2025 4:29 PM
23	A wonderful place, and a community I intend to be a deep part of for the long run.	3/3/2025 12:58 PM
24	Nice	3/3/2025 11:56 AM
25	A beautiful, quiet town where relaxation and exploration of the area is available	3/2/2025 11:43 AM
26	A fabulous place to live. And raise a family. And retire.	3/1/2025 3:40 PM
27	A beautiful, serene, peaceful sanctuary	2/28/2025 5:53 PM
28	great for getting away, I can see in the people that stay there year-round that it is becoming harder to stay.	2/26/2025 5:26 PM
29	Cutler is simply wonderful the way it is now! Please don't change it! When you have Heaven on Earth, there is no need to change anything!	2/26/2025 2:54 PM
30	Special	2/26/2025 1:12 AM
31	A place of beauty that needs to be preserved coupled with the inclusion of the ability to provide some basic conveniences for its residents as well as making it more attractive to visitors.	2/25/2025 10:45 AM
32	a beautiful town, with a very special feel to it "Where people take care of each other" but somehow I feel in the last few years, maybe due to Covid, maybe not, that we are isolating from each other more. I would like to see it return to how it was when we first came here when people did care about each other and the town more than we seem to now.	2/24/2025 10:39 PM
33	Beautiful	2/24/2025 9:02 PM
34	A great place to live, visit and work.	2/24/2025 6:00 PM
35	Heaven and Cape Wash Island is heavenly pure!	2/23/2025 7:27 PM
36	Cutler is my summer happy place	2/23/2025 11:09 AM
37	Grateful	2/22/2025 3:48 PM
38	a great small town, I hope it stays that way with a few changes.	2/22/2025 2:20 PM
39	Maine	2/21/2025 7:27 AM
40	Beautiful and peaceful. A great home to many people and welcoming to seasonal people.	2/20/2025 2:26 PM
41	wonderfull	2/20/2025 1:43 PM
42	Serene	2/19/2025 5:33 PM
43	One of the most special and desirable small communities in Maine. This is a beautiful little town filled with wonderful folks.	2/19/2025 10:13 AM
44	my home sweet home and feel thankful to live here.	2/16/2025 3:18 PM
45	My home.	2/16/2025 8:21 AM
46	Quiet, beautiful harbor, great small Maine village vibe and great place to live.	2/15/2025 9:18 AM
47	a beautiful place to live	2/15/2025 9:14 AM
48	My home. I am supportive of all lobster fishing interests and preservation of the way of life. I don't want solar, wind, or salmon farms.	2/14/2025 8:46 PM
49	A great place to live my home	2/14/2025 2:57 PM
50	Historically significant and our small town charm should be inshrined.	2/14/2025 1:52 PM

APPENDIX B

COMMUNITY VISIONING SESSION SUMMARY AND NOTES

Appendix B contains the summary and notes from the July 10, 2025 Community Visioning Session, including discussion topics, participant priorities, and additional written responses gathered as part of the Comprehensive Plan process.

Cutler Community Visioning Session- Meeting notes, 7/10

1. What does resiliency mean to you? (Participant count=24)
 - Stormsurges affect fishing livelihoods
 - Cutler needs to build a breakwater and a pullup place for fisherman to pullup their boats
 - Cove Road flooding and washout of the bridge
 - “Nothing has been done”
 - Need a plan to raise the level of the road
 - Protect the wharf and commercial fishing areas for use by fishermen and from being sold to incoming people with money
 - Access to spaces for fishing/clamming for future generations is declining
 - Dealing with private property restrictions by people buying ideal fishing locations
 - “Deeded right of way access for fishing community in Cutler”
 - Need actual beach access that you can drive out to
 - Loss of public access points due to public land becoming private
 - Fishermen need protection (resilience)
 - Ordinances/laws to protect commercial fishing in Cutler
 - Powerful actors: Federal government regulating fishing/ people from away with money buying property in critical fishing areas→fishermen losing access
 - Potential solutions-Mark
 - Conforming Use: legal clause that requires land to be used in accordance with a set precedent, ex. Working waterfront stays working waterfront
 - Adverse possession
 - No zoning in Cutler- Complex
 - Commercial fishing and natural beauty
 - Two areas to protect for the future of Cutler
 - “I moved to Cutler for what it doesn’t have”

- No housing for young people in Cutler who want to stay
 - Local kids won't be able to afford housing

2. What are your concerns for Cutler and how might we address them?
(Participant count=24)

- Need for Cutler to be more community oriented and autonomous
 - Ex. local farmer's market
 - Stronger local economy
- Need for a stronger sense of community
 - No community spaces- no place to gather
 - Lack of recreational spaces
- Need for more community events and energy/engagement
- The ballfield has strong potential for community gathering
- Store
 - What kind of store would fit Cutler's needs and values?
 - How to sustain a store year-round?
 - A small convenience store would also be beneficial for Airbnbs, hikers, and other tourists
 - Potential for an automart with vending machines
- Losing kids- 25 kids enrolled in the local school with concerns about keeping the school running in the future with declining enrollment
- Need for more parking
 - The ballpark is an option if it was expanded and repaved
- Issues with audits on bank accounts freezing town money

3. What should be done with the Maker property? (Participant count=19)

- A young committee is currently thinking of possibilities for the property
- Potential of a permanent caretaker for the house/property
- Campsites for hikers?
 - Waste concerns, especially if there isn't a designated employee in charge of the property and its maintenance. Deed reflects this is not an option
- Function as a community center? (Strong interest)
 - Can be rented→town revenue

4. What are your thoughts on Zoning in Cutler?

- (Participant count=19) • Currently there is no zoning in Cutler

- State-only: shoreline/fishing
- Concerns about zoning restrictions
- Navigating grandfather clause
- How can we use zoning to support our needs and concerns?
 - Use zoning to create a vision of the town's future and its different sections
- Lack of zoning creates a free for all
- Allows for opportunists (ex. New solar field is town's responsibility)

Cutler Community Visioning Session-7/10

Resilience in Cutler

Resilience in Cutler means protecting the fishing community—not only from storm surges and infrastructure damage, but also from rising property values, private land acquisition, and policies that overlook local realities. Key infrastructure improvements like breakwaters and boat pull-up areas are essential for maintaining working access to the water.

Resilience also includes proactive planning: raising vulnerable roads, safeguarding wharves, and establishing deeded access and ordinances that protect fishing livelihoods. It's about preserving Cutler's working waterfront for the people who depend on it—not just those who can afford scenic property.

Sustaining Cutler's future means protecting public access, maintaining traditional practices like clamming and fishing, and ensuring local families—especially young people—can afford to stay. Without action on housing, access, and fisheries protection, the community risks losing its identity and economic base.

Concerns and Priorities for Cutler

One of the key concerns for Cutler is the loss of community—both in terms of people and places. The town is experiencing declining school enrollment, limited community spaces, and fewer opportunities for residents to gather, connect, and support one another. Without intentional action, there is a real risk of losing not only young people but also the social fabric that has long defined the town.

There is a need to prioritize spaces and initiatives that bring the community together. The ballfield, for example, has strong potential to serve as a central gathering place. With improvements such as repaving and expansion, it could host events, farmers' markets, and recreational activities that promote engagement and support the local economy.

Another major gap is the lack of a local store. A small, year-round convenience store could serve residents, tourists, hikers, and those staying in local Airbnbs—helping to meet daily needs and contribute to local economic sustainability. There is also potential for more flexible models, such as an automart with vending machines, particularly in the

off-season. Whatever form it takes, any store should reflect Cutler's values and be designed to function sustainably throughout the year. In addition to these priorities, the town must address practical challenges such as limited parking and infrastructure issues—including problems like audits freezing town funds—that hinder forward momentum.

The Future of the Maker Property

There is strong community interest in thoughtfully repurposing the Maker property to serve both residents and visitors. A young committee is currently exploring a range of possibilities for its use. One idea gaining traction is establishing the property as a community center—a space for gathering, events, and local engagement, which Cutler currently lacks.

Other proposals include creating campsites for hikers, which could boost tourism and provide modest revenue for the town. However, concerns about waste management and ongoing maintenance highlight the importance of assigning a permanent caretaker or designated town employee to oversee the property. Additionally, according to the deed, this would not be part of the legal use of the property.

The house and land also hold potential for daytime venue rentals, offering an additional source of income for the town. Ultimately, whatever use is chosen should align with community values, ensure proper stewardship of the site, and contribute to the town's long-term resilience and vibrancy.

Zoning in Cutler

Currently, Cutler has no local zoning regulations—only limited state-level oversight related to shoreline and fishing areas. While this lack of zoning offers flexibility, it has also created challenges. Without clear guidelines, land use can become a "free-for-all," leaving the town vulnerable to opportunistic development that may not align with community values or long-term interests. A recent example is the new solar field, which has become the town's responsibility to manage.

There are concerns about zoning becoming too restrictive or difficult to navigate, especially regarding grandfather clauses and impacts on traditional fishing practices. However, zoning doesn't have to be a barrier—it can be a tool. If thoughtfully implemented, zoning could help Cutler define a shared vision for its future, identify areas for housing, commercial fishing, conservation, and community spaces, and protect what matters most to residents. The conversation around zoning should focus not just on regulation, but on how to use it to address local needs and strengthen the town's resilience and autonomy.

How can Cutler increase community participation in town planning and activities? 12

Responses

-By actuating plans

-More openness, less same old ways

- Publicity for activities
- Be honest with us
- Throw money at them
- Small meetings
- Articles in MVNO, highlights emphasized. Invite neighbors and take them if needed -Food! Free food bring in everyone, evening events
- Advertising daily on line, community bulletin board
- Meetings after 5pm
- By demonstrating follow through of suggestions made
- Advertising-People need to know about the need, Have events with food, music, to discuss. At the event, match skills with needs of the town

How Cutler Can Increase Community Participation

To increase community involvement, Cutler should focus on better communication, accessibility, and follow-through. Hosting evening meetings, offering food, and creating welcoming, informal events can help bring more people in—especially if gatherings are well-publicized through online platforms, bulletin boards, and the *MVNO*.

Residents want transparency and action. Participation grows when people see their ideas taken seriously and put into practice. Matching community skills with town needs during events can also foster long-term engagement. Ultimately, creating a more open, inclusive, and responsive process—combined with a little food and fun—can help strengthen community participation in Cutler.

What are your thoughts on residential solar energy in Cutler?

14 Responses

For it = 11

Against it = 2

1 Response- Only if the town gets paid to help reduce taxes on residents. Also only if it helps the school fund their library, hire a librarian.

What are your thoughts on Short-Term Rentals (like Airbnb and VRBO) in Cutler? 14 Responses

-Fee for out of towners

-Cutler is beautiful, Showing this is great for this town

-limits are necessary so that residential housing is not used only

for short term rentals -Don't want another Lubec. No more

-Soon the town will want to have them registered for first responders

-Approve but should limit the number available

-We can have them in a moderation and not all in cluster

-mixed feelings

-Ok but consider limiting number of permits

-They should not price out/prevent residents

-Is there a way to limit outside investors while supporting local residents

reley out extra space? -We have plenty

-Only if owners of the residences make sure that tenants

follow the laws and rules -I'm fine with them but we need

some conveniences for them

If Cutler were to have a small convenience store, where of you think would be the best location for it?

17 Responses

-Close to the center of town

-A place that would allow 1-2 gas pumps

-Near the post office. Must follow state laws to a T. No underage vape sales, cig sales, alcohol sales. No weed!!!

-A convenience store with a view of the harbor would be a destination. Might

encourage visitors. -Near village center or between center and East Machias-

A-Z location?

-Center of town/near the water

-Middle of town

-Base

-Close to town

-In town anywhere!!

-Close to the village

-Heart of the town. Concerns are for a

long term commitment -Not in the middle

of the village, Out by the Navy Base -

Center of town

-Village

-Close to the wharves

-Close to the center of town

Do you feel confident in the decisions made by Cutler's Town Officials?

Yes=12 No=7

