

2015

Town of Easton Maine Comprehensive Plan

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Town of Easton

Comprehensive Plan



November 2015

Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Easton

Adopted by the Residents on: _____

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

Board of Selectmen:

Paul Dudley, Chairman

Mike Corey, Vice Chair

Doug Blackstone

Bruce Flewelling

Scott Allen

Planning Board Members:

David Hopkins Jr., Chair

Cynthia Flannigan

Richard Green

Kevin Marquis

Eugene Babineau

Special thanks to James Gardner, Town Manager, and Cheryl Clark, Town Clerk, for their assistance with the development of this plan.

Town of Easton Comprehensive Plan

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Introduction

Planning is an organized method of finding out what a community's needs are, and then setting up goals and policies to address those needs in a manner that will allow for future growth within the community, while making it a better place to live.

The Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act of 1988 established a cooperative program of comprehensive planning and land use management among the municipalities, regional planning councils, and the state. The focal points of the Act are:

1. The establishment of state goals to provide overall direction and consistency to the planning and regulatory actions of the municipalities and the state
2. The establishment of technical and financial assistance programs through the state planning office and regional planning councils to encourage and help communities develop comprehensive plans, and
3. The establishment of a process for the review of the comprehensive plans by the State Planning Office and regional planning councils to ensure that they are consistent with the Comprehensive Planning Act.

Easton's Comprehensive Plan addresses the past and present resources, analyzes recent trends, and identifies potential problem areas. This section provides the overall community profile of such things as transportation, public facilities and services, natural and cultural resources, housing, land use, the local economy, and the town's fiscal capacity.

Easton is unique in many ways; however, the community shares its natural resources and public facilities with surrounding towns and likewise utilizes other communities' services and resources. A portion of the plan identifies those natural resources and public facilities that extend beyond the town's borders and develops implementation actions for the joint management of each.

At the end of each section are specific goals, policies, and strategies. These policies relate the findings of the inventories to the state, regional, and local goals. It is this portion of the Comprehensive Plan that residents can assist in the shaping of Easton. The strategies discuss those programs, activities, and regulations that Easton and its residents will undertake in the future to make sure that the goals and policies are met.

Easton's Vision

Easton will constantly strive to be

- ❖ a dynamic community that is economically, culturally, and socially inviting;
- ❖ a community that promotes and aggressively pursues innovative business and economic development;
- ❖ a community that welcomes, supports, and responds to a diversity of new people and new ideas;
- ❖ a community that recognizes children as our future and shares collective responsibility for the nurturing and education of each generation;
- ❖ a community where family ties are strong, self respect and respect for others is instilled, where trust and courtesy is a way of life, and where the pace of life is consistent with these ideals; and
- ❖ a community that celebrates the values and lessons of a multi-cultural heritage that serves as its strength and as its foundation in a progressive, modern world

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Town of Easton's Comprehensive Plan process, from day one, has had a continued interest from the general public. Each agenda for the Easton Planning Board meetings were posted in two visible locations in our community (Post Office and general grocery store) to insure proper notification to the community citizens.

Citizen participation during the fourteen months of regular meetings brought many ideas including: vision of a library, ensuring public housing availability, preservation of public lands and securing our historical memories. These are just some of the items discussed and one evening was set aside to meet with the Amish community.

A public hearing was held March 3, 2015 to present the final draft. Comments were taken throughout the evening as a power point presentation of the Comprehensive Plan was presented by the Easton Planning Board Chairman. On April 6, 2015, at the annual Town Meeting, Easton resident's voted to authorize the Easton Board Selectmen to sign the updated 2015 version of the Comprehensive Plan once accepted by the State of Maine review process.

POPULATION

Easton's Vision

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Population

Introduction

The Maine Office of Policy and Management (OPM) provides the population and demographic data discussed in this section. Actual population figures are provided by the decennial US Census while projections are based on a methodology that uses Aroostook County level projections derived from more detailed information than is available at the local level. Town projections are calculated using recent growth or decline in the town's share of the County's population and the County level population projections. The local, town level, population projections are based on assumptions and past trends that may or may not hold into the future.

In 2010, Easton's population was 1,287, an increase of 38 (3%) from 2000. Beginning in 2007 the Amish began moving to Easton and it is estimated that over 10 percent of Easton's population is Amish. The population in 2015 is likely closer to 1,350. Maine's population grew during the time period.

Total Population, 1970-2010

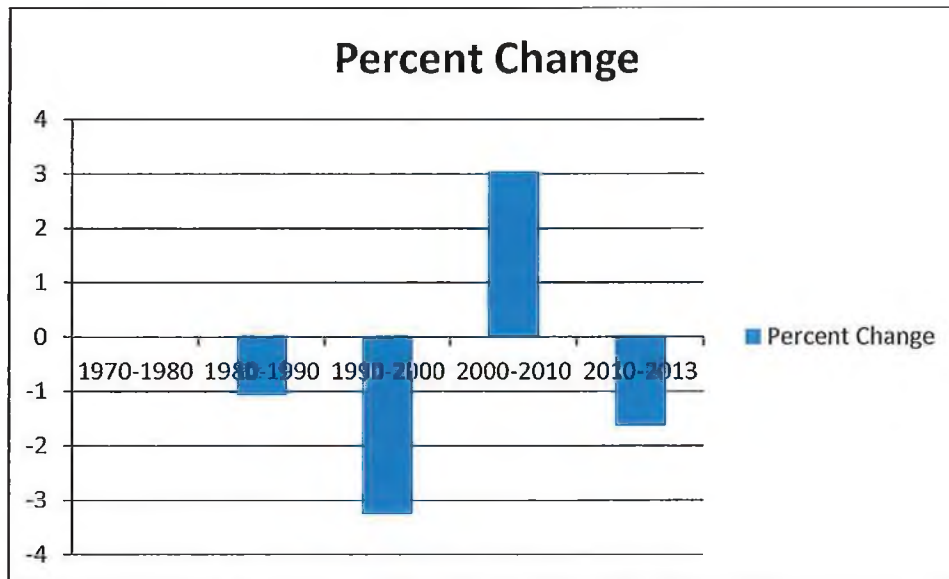
Town	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Easton	1,305	1,305	1,291	1,249	1,287
Aroostook County	92,463	91,331	86,936	73,938	71,870
Maine	993,722	1,125,043	1,227,928	1,274,923	1,328,361

Source: US Census 1970-2010.

The Maine Office of Policy and Management (OPM) acknowledge that they do not know the details of Easton's plans for the future. However, their population estimates provide a starting point for assessing community needs based on projected change in population and demographics. Easton has made strong efforts over the past 10 years in maintaining quality of life for its residents, attracting visitors and in distinguishing itself as a place where the Amish community has wanted to relocate to. It is exactly these types of efforts that often defy projections and that help underpin community sustainability.

Rate of Change

The following graph shows Easton's decennial population change on a percentage basis from 1970 – 2012. Overall, the data suggest a relatively stable population. Over the a 40 year period, or 4 U.S. Census periods, starting in 1970, the town's population remained the same between 1970 and 1980, lost 1.1% between 1980-1990, lost 3% between 1990 and 2000, and gained 3% between 2000 and 2010.



Source: US Census 1970-2010

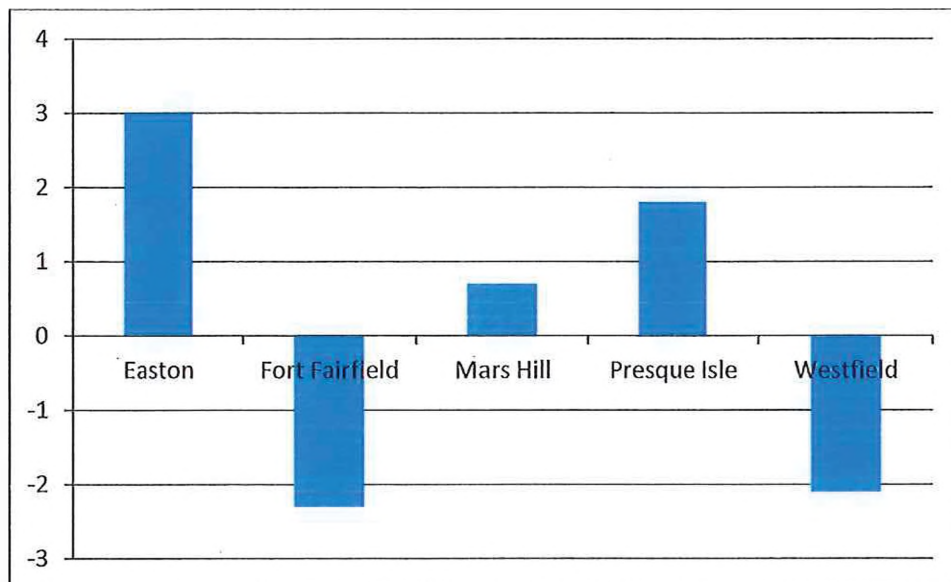
The table and graph below compares population and percent population change for selected central Aroostook communities. The five selected communities show a mixture of growth and decline in the 2000s with Easton having the highest rate increase at 3 percent, followed by Presque Isle, and Mars Hill. Fort Fairfield and Westfield both showed a slightly over 2 percent decline in population during the period.

In the late 2000s, Easton and Fort Fairfield began seeing a large influx of Amish who purchased many of the vacant farms that were for sale within those communities. Antidotally, this population is expected to increase in the next few years and more families are planning to move to the area (if land is available). Easton also has two large employers McCain Foods USA and J.M. Huber Corporation that attract residents and the town is also a bedroom community to Presque Isle as the cost of living is less.

Town	Population			Projected Population			
	1990	2000	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Easton	1,326	1,249	1,287	1,284	1,291	1,295	1,293
Fort Fairfield	4,004	3,572	3,490	3,402	3,340	3,273	3,194
Mars Hill	1,762	1,480	1,490	1,450	1,430	1,408	1,380
Presque Isle	10,781	9,498	9,673	9,596	9,590	9,565	9,497
Westfield	570	556	548	537	529	520	510

Source: Maine Office of Policy and Management, 2013 and US Census 1990-2010

Percent Population Change 2000-2010



Source: US Census 2010

Projections prepared by OPM shown in the table above indicate a population increase in Easton from 2015 to 2025 and then only a slight loss of population between 2025 and 2030. In actual numbers of persons, Easton is projected to gain a total of 9 people for this period. This implies that Easton should continue to provide public services at present levels. Town officials are also looking at developing residential subdivisions to help increase the town's population.

Demographic Shifts

Easton's population distribution is similar to that of Aroostook County as a whole, with a somewhat higher percent of residents at both ends of the spectrum - under the age of 5 and 65 or older.

In 2010, over thirty percent of the population was between 45 and 64, accounting for Easton's median age of 42.2, which was lower than the median age of Aroostook (44) and only slightly higher than the State as a whole (42). Approximately 24 percent of the population is under 18, and 16 percent are over the age of 65. Just under one half of Easton's residents are between the ages of 30 and 65 which is considered the working age population. As stated above, the older portion of the age group (45-64) makes up approximately 30 percent of that amount. These figures should be considered in light of the fact that Maine, as a whole has an older population the oldest in the country.

Easton Age Group Distribution 2000-2010

Age Group	2010	Percent of Total	2000	Percent of Total	Percent Change 2000-2010
Under 5 years	84	6.53%	69	5.52%	21.74
5 to 9 years	75	5.83%	72	5.76%	4.17
10 to 14 years	83	6.45%	88	7.05%	-5.68
15 to 17 years	63	4.90%	59	4.72%	6.78
18 and 19 years	24	1.86%	30	2.40%	-20.00
20 years	6	0.47%	17	1.36%	-64.71
21 years	11	0.85%	20	1.60%	-45.00
22 to 24 years	37	2.87%	33	2.64%	12.12
25 to 29 years	82	6.37%	51	4.08%	60.78
30 to 34 years	63	4.90%	83	6.65%	-24.10
35 to 39 years	72	5.59%	89	7.13%	-19.10
40 to 44 years	84	6.53%	130	10.41%	-35.38
45 to 49 years	114	8.86%	103	8.25%	10.68
50 to 54 years	105	8.16%	90	7.21%	16.67
55 to 59 years	85	6.60%	50	4.00%	70.00
60 and 61 years	34	2.64%	38	3.04%	-10.53
62 to 64 years	61	4.74%	40	3.20%	52.50
65 to 69 years	54	4.20%	58	4.64%	-6.90
70 to 74 years	59	4.58%	51	4.08%	15.69
75 to 79 years	36	2.80%	35	2.80%	2.86
80 to 84 years	34	2.64%	25	2.00%	36.00
85 years and over	21	1.63%	18	1.44%	16.67
Total	1,287		1,249	100.00%	

Source: US Census 2000 and 2010

The following table shows the age group distribution between Easton and its surrounding communities and Maine. According to the 2010 US Census, Easton has a very similar makeup as its surrounding communities. However, this may be skewed slightly due to the Amish population influence who then to have large families. Town officials project that there may be up to 130 additional residents.

Town	Under 5	5-17	18-29	30-44	45-64	65-74	75+
Easton	6.5%	17.2%	12.4%	17.0%	31.0%	8.8%	7.1%
Fort Fairfield	5.3%	17.2%	11.6%	17.9%	30.8%	9.6%	7.6%
Mars Hill	6.8%	14.1%	13.3%	16.6%	26.9%	9.7%	12.5%
Presque Isle	5.0%	14.6%	18.7%	17.7%	27.7%	7.5%	8.7%
Westfield	3.8%	15.1%	9.7%	17.3%	35.0%	9.7%	9.5%
Aroostook County	4.9%	15.1%	12.7%	16.9%	31.4%	10.0%	9.0%
State of Maine	5.2%	15.4%	14.2%	18.3%	30.9%	8.5%	7.4%
United States	6.5%	17.5%	9.9%	30.2%	26.4%	8.9%	15.3%
Source: 2010 US Census							

Gender Distribution

In 2010, Easton's population was made up of 639 males (49.6%) and 648 females (50.4%). While this is not too dissimilar from comparable towns, it is much closer to a 50-50 split than the others. In most cases (Westfield is the exception) females outnumber males.

Gender Distribution, 2010		
	Male	Female
Easton	639	648
Fort Fairfield	1,691	1,805
Mars Hill	701	792
Presque Isle	4,674	5,018
Westfield	279	270
Aroostook County	35,607	36,805
State of Maine	649,666	677,999
United States	151,781,326	156,964,212
Source: 2010 US Census		

Households

There were 512 households in Easton in 2010, with an average household size of 2.40, somewhat larger than both Aroostook County and the State. This may be indicative of a child bearing age populations that still have school aged children at home.

Average Household Size, 2010	
	Size
Easton	2.40
Fort Fairfield	2.34
Mars Hill	2.33
Presque Isle	2.19
Westfield	2.40
Aroostook County	2.26
State of Maine	2.32
United States	2.58
Source: 2010 US Census	

Educational Attainment

Educational attainment in Easton in 2010 was two times higher than that for Aroostook County, and slightly higher than the State. Approximately 8 percent of Easton's population did not have a high school diploma compared to 16.1% in Aroostook County and 10.2% statewide. Approximately 36% of Easton had at least a high school diploma and 20.5% had completed four or more years of college. Comparable figures for Aroostook County were 39.0% and 4.4%. (It should be noted that because educational attainment in the 2010 Census was not an actual count, the margin of error in these statistics can be very high).

Educational Attainment, 2010	Easton	Percent of Total	Aroostook County	Maine
Less than 9th grade	23	3%	4,089	35,336
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	40	5%	4,272	59,859
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	271	36%	20,176	326,777
Some college, no degree	186	25%	10,257	178,022
Associate degree	69	9%	4,619	82,580
Bachelor's degree	113	15%	6,116	159,601
Graduate or professional degree	42	6%	2,259	87,126
% High School Graduate or Higher	91.5		83.9	89.8
% Bachelor's Degree or Higher	20.8		16.2	26.5

Source: US Census 2010

Analysis

Easton serves a dual role as an employment center with McCain Foods USA and J.M. Huber Corporation as well as serving as a bedroom community for Presque Isle. Easton's residents enjoy the conveniences and challenges that exist with living in a small rural community. They have easy access to larger population centers yet retain the quality of life found in a smaller community. They also have access to high paying and stable jobs located right in the town. These attributes could possibly attract additional population in the future depending on possible industries and/or businesses expansions. Town officials need to be watchful of the age group breakdown trends and the impact to municipal services and future programs. A large loss of Pre-school and School age populations can have significant impacts on school funding and prospective economic development in the future. Likewise, the increase of retirement age groups can impact social, health, and recreational programs.

The town should continue to seek strategies to increase its current population and encourage growth. Just as greater economic opportunities outside an area can cause a population decline, a trend of modest growth can occur in a community due to its recreational opportunities, social services, and the quality of life it affords. The potential for Easton, with its unique culture, and quality of life attributes, may substantiate more positive projections. Additional population growth in Easton may be stimulated by encouraging additional small scale commercial and industrial growth that creates a range of income opportunities.

Finally, Easton must monitor the effects of an aging population on the public services offered and monitor the trend towards a smaller youth segment of the population. A smaller youth segment combined with an aging population can have an effect on school, recreational, cultural, and other community programs, as well as the ability to fund them. An aging population will create a need to develop additional programs for the elderly such as walking programs, shopping excursions, recreation, and social activities. Town officials may wish to examine the possibility of increased public transportation and/or additional elderly housing and services, as they continue to balance available services with the needs of the population.

HOUSING

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HOUSING

Introduction

In the area of housing, Easton has focused on the need for new units based on population/demographic shifts, affordability and the provision of safe, decent housing for all of its residents. The data below supports the community's progress in these areas. The fact that population has remained relatively stable has not deterred the development of new, single family homes and other housing.

Changes in Housing Stock

Changes in Total Housing Stock				
	Total Housing Units		% Change	# Change
	1990	2010	1990-2010	1990-2010
Easton	560	596	6.4%	36
Fort Fairfield	1,614	1,602	-0.7%	-12
Mars Hill	691	687	-0.6%	-4
Presque Isle	4,345	4,019	-7.5%	-326
Westfield	229	175	-23.6%	-54
Aroostook County	33,638	30,672	-8.8%	-2,966
State of Maine	550,431	551,125	0.1%	694

Source: US Census 1990 and 2010

According to the 2010 US Census, there were 596 housing units in Easton, approximately 6.4% (36 units) more than in 1990. This gain of housing is significantly higher than all of the surrounding communities, Aroostook County, and Maine. This is due, in part, to new home construction associated with the Amish moving to area as well as several new housing units begin constructed near the Presque Isle townline.

There has been subdivision activity in Easton which has proven to be popular with residents. In the mid-1990's, the Town approved a 14 lot subdivision off of Perry Drive of which there are currently 2 vacant lots. A second 14 lot subdivision was also created on Duncan Drive which has 3 vacant lots. In 2013, the Town approved a 7 lot (Moose Meadow) subdivision which is an extension of the Duncan Drive project created earlier. These subdivisions are town owned and have proven to be popular with those wishing to move to Easton. Easton's selectmen have made the decision to front funds for the purchase of the property and the construction of infrastructure (roads). As lots are sold, those funds are returned to the community with the goal of the taxpayers not paying for subdivision development. The town is actively marketing these subdivisions in local newspapers.

There have also been 2 smaller private subdivisions created in Easton located on the Henderson and Fuller Roads. The town recently acquired the Fuller Road subdivision and may be working on a plan to sell those lots. Plans may include combining the lots into larger, more salable lots.

There are two mobile home parks in Town which are considered to be in very good to excellent condition. The owners of these parks have taken great pride in maintaining their property and these parks have provided an affordable housing option for those looking to locate to Easton.

Selected Characteristics of Housing Units

Selected Housing Characteristics, 2010											
	Total Housing Units	Occupied Housing Units		Vacant Housing Units		Home owner Vacancy Rate	Rental Vacancy Rate	Year-round		Seasonal	
	#	#	%	#	%			#	%	#	%
Easton	596	536	89.9	60	10.1	1.7	3.5	578	97	18	3.0
Fort Fairfield	1,674	1,494	89.2	180	10.8	2.9	6.1	1,634	98	40	2.4
Mars Hill	687	614	89.4	73	10.6	3.5	5.2	461	97	22	3.2
Presque Isle	4,608	4,201	91.2	407	8.8	2	8.5	4,540	99	68	1.8
Westfield	240	216	90	24	10	1.1	0.0	231	96	9	3.8
Aroostook County	39,482	30,672	77.7	8,810	22.3	4	8.1	34,083	86	5,399	13.7
State of Maine	714,270	551,125	77.2	163,145	22.8	2.3	7.5	595,960	83	118,310	16.4

Source: 2010 US Census

Nearly all of Easton's housing stock is year-round (97%), which is essentially unchanged since 1990. This percentage is considerably higher than that of the County (86%). Owner occupied units represent the vast majority of the housing stock (74.8%). In 2010, Easton had a vacancy rate of 1.7% for homeowners and 3.5% for renters.

The following table indicated the type of units located in Easton. Single units make up almost 69 percent of the housing stock in town followed by mobile homes. The make-up is similar to that of Maine.

	United States		Maine		Easton	
UNITS IN STRUCTURE	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total housing units	131,034,946	131,034,946	718,914	718,914	565	565
1-unit, detached	80,819,811	61.70%	500,069	69.60%	389	68.80%
1-unit, attached	7,557,233	5.80%	15,912	2.20%	0	0.00%

2 units	5,023,110	3.80%	37,541	5.20%	10	1.80%
3 or 4 units	5,827,372	4.40%	39,306	5.50%	31	5.50%
5 to 9 units	6,290,644	4.80%	28,512	4.00%	14	2.50%
10 to 19 units	5,900,165	4.50%	12,197	1.70%	0	0.00%
20 or more units	10,869,077	8.30%	21,058	2.90%	3	0.50%
Mobile home	8,638,762	6.60%	64,122	8.90%	118	20.90%

Source: American Fact Finder 2013.

Age and Condition of Housing

Housing Conditions, 2010					
	Total Dwelling Units	Lack Complete Plumbing		Lack Complete Kitchen	
		#	%	#	%
Easton	596	0	0.0%	0	0.00
Fort Fairfield	1,602	15	0.9%	20	0.01
Mars Hill	631	5	0.8%	0	0.00
Presque Isle	4,019	19	0.5%	23	0.01
Westfield	175	0	0.0%	7	0.04
Aroostook County	30,672	243	0.8%	159	0.01
State of Maine	551,125	4,915	0.9%	4,890	0.01
Source: 2010 Census					

The 2010 Census provided limited information about housing condition. All housing in Easton has complete plumbing facilities, which was comparable to the County as a whole in 2010. All housing in Easton had complete kitchen facilities and telephone services in 2010.

In 2013, an Easton resident completed an inventory of housing units and apartments using tax records and personal knowledge of the community. The following table shows a total of 613 housing units, mobile homes, apartments, and camps in Easton as of December 16, 2013.

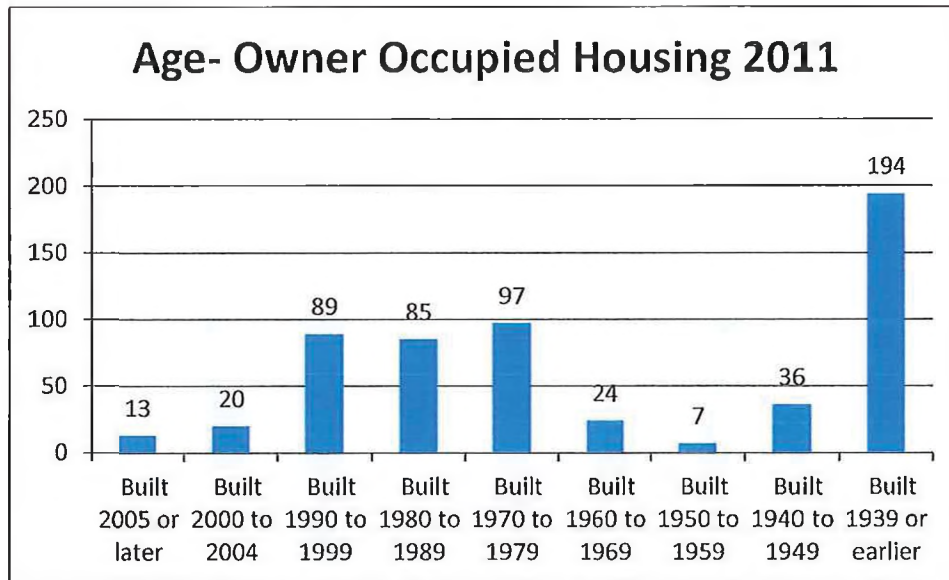
Year Built	Number	Percent of Total
1880 or before	28	4.57
1881-1899	22	3.59
1900-1919	64	10.44
1920-1939	79	12.89
1940-1959	62	10.11
1960-1979	130	21.21
1980-1999	110	17.94
2000-2009	68	11.09
2010-Present	50	8.16
Total	613	

Source: Town of Easton 2013

Other housing information is derived from the US Census. The following table shows age of housing units in Easton in 2011. The US decennial census no longer collects this information so American Fact Finder (US Census Bureau) 5 year estimates 2007-2011 are used. Therefore, the number used in this table is less than the actual count of housing units completed for the 2010 Census.

Housing - Age of Home by Tenure, 2011				
	Easton		Aroostook County	Maine
	#	%	#	#
TOTAL	565	100	30,672	551,125
OWNER OCCUPIED			22,116	402,907
Built 2005 or later	13	2.3	408	13,266
Built 2000 to 2004	20	3.5	867	29,036
Built 1990 to 1999	89	15.8	2,108	57,429
Built 1980 to 1989	85	15.0	2,440	64,584
Built 1970 to 1979	97	17.2	3,957	59,968
Built 1960 to 1969	24	4.2	2,019	29,963
Built 1950 to 1959	7	1.2	2,455	30,388
Built 1940 to 1949	36	6.4	2,005	19,509
Built 1939 or earlier	194	34.3	5,857	98,768

Source: American Fact Finder Survey 5 Year Estimates 2007-2011



Source: American Fact Finder Survey 5 Year Estimates 2007-2011

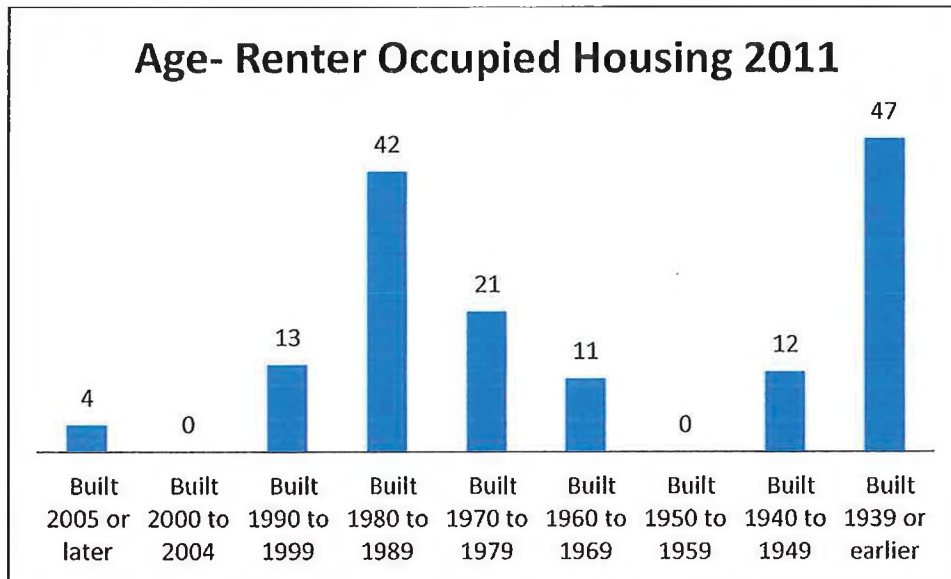
Easton's housing stock is not as old as Aroostook County's with nearly half (48%) being constructed between 1970 and 1999. This may be an indication that the housing stock was constructed under some standard construction guideline and are more energy efficient than older homes. Approximately 46.1 percent of Easton's owner occupied homes were built before 1969. While age is not an indication of housing condition, town officials should be watchful that as the housing stock ages (and the town's population), house maintenance may become an issue. As an older population, on a fixed income, finds it increasingly difficult to maintain their homes, housing conditions could deteriorate.

Over fifty-three percent of Easton's rentals were built before 1970 while 31 percent were constructed before 1939.

Rental Unit Age by Tenure. 2011

Age	Easton		Aroostook County	
RENTER OCCUPIED	150	100	8,556	148,218
Built 2005 or later	4	2.7	89	3,375
Built 2000 to 2004	0	0.0	154	6,026
Built 1990 to 1999	13	8.7	581	12,633
Built 1980 to 1989	42	28.0	1,560	19,858
Built 1970 to 1979	21	14.0	1,429	22,752
Built 1960 to 1969	11	7.3	685	10,958
Built 1950 to 1959	0	0.0	991	11,226
Built 1940 to 1949	12	8.0	604	8,172
Built 1939 or earlier	47	31.3	2,463	53,218

Source: American Fact Finder Survey 5 Year Estimates 2007-2011



Source: American Fact Finder Survey 5 Year Estimates 2007-2011

Housing Affordability

According to the Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA) data, the current homeowner housing market is marginally affordable for those households that have or exceed Easton's median income. Easton's median household income in 2010 was \$35,750 and the median home sale price of \$95,250.

Easton specific housing affordability information is often not collected at the State or Federal level. The Maine State Housing Authority publishes affordability indexes for communities completing comprehensive plans. The affordability index is the ratio of Home Price Affordable at Median Income to Median Home Price. An index of less than 1 means the area is generally unaffordable – i.e., a household earning area median income could not cover the payment on a median priced home (30 year mortgage, taxes and insurance) using no more than 28% of gross income. According to the MSHA, in 2011 the Affordability Index for Easton was 1.14, Aroostook County was 1.42, and Maine was 0.97. These figures indicate that Easton and Aroostook County are generally affordable while Maine is increasingly not affordable for those earning the median income. However, MSHA notes that the median home selling price has increased over 75% in the last 9 years (2002-2011) in the Presque Isle Labor Market area (Easton is a part of) while median incomes have only increased by 25%.

Housing Affordability				
	Affordable at Median Income	Income Needed for Median Price	Median Sale Price	Average 2Bdr Rent with Utilities
Easton	109,035	29,508	95,250	600
Aroostook County	101,305	27,810	80,000	594
State of Maine	137,198	61,568	185,900	847
Source: Maine State Housing Authority, 2013				

The Maine Real Estate Network indicates, as of November 2013, there were six (6) homes for sale in Easton. Asking prices ranged from \$64,995 to \$350,000 with a median price of \$124,632. All of the homes currently for sale are single family residential. The Maine Real Estate Network lists all housing units listed by realtors but does not list those that are for sale by owner. While there are an adequate number of homes in Easton that have an affordable purchase price, the Town is concerned about the cost of ongoing operation for many residents. Smaller, more tightly constructed homes will reduce the cost of heating during the long winter season and make the household more affordable for their residents.

Rental Affordability

Rental information is also available (at the Labor Market Area level) from the MSHA. The affordability index is the ratio of 2-Bedroom Rent Affordable at Median Renter Income to Average 2-Bedroom Rent. An index of less than 1 means the area is generally unaffordable – i.e., a renter household earning area median renter income could not cover the cost of an average 2-bedroom apartment (including utilities) using no more than 30% of gross income.

According to MSHA, rental affordability in the Presque Isle Labor Market area is another story. In 2009, renter median income in the LMA was \$23,557 and the average rent for a 2 bedroom apartment was \$600. Over half of the LMA's households (55.3%) were unable to afford the average 2-bedroom rent in 2009. While the median income of renters in the LMA increased by 9.6% between 2000 and 2009, the average rent for a 2-bedroom rental increased 38.1%.

Subsidized Housing Units

The Maine State Housing Authority also keeps information on subsidized housing in each community. According to MSHA, there were 2 subsidized housing units in Easton, West Ridge Manor and Windermere Apartments. West Ridge Manor provides housing for the elderly and those with disabilities while Windermere Apartments provided family housing. There is a significant waiting list for the West Ridge Manor and town officials are concerned that the needs are not being met for eligible residents wishing to locate there. There may be the need for the construction of additional units at the Manor. Town officials and others are looking for potential funding sources, such as the USDA to construct new units. Also Manor management is considering the need to develop a capital needs assessment for that facility.

Rent at West Ridge Manor and Windermere Apartments is based on the renter's income.

The following table shows the number and type of subsidized housing units in Easton as of 2011. According to municipal officials, there are units located on the West Ridge Road, Osgood Road, Ladner Road, Houlton Road, and the Fuller Road. In total, there are 40 housing units in Easton that are subsidized in some fashion.

Subsidized Housing Units, 2011			
	Easton	Aroostook County	Maine
Disabled Units	0	56	460
Family Units	20	650	11,517
Housing Choice Vouchers	0	886	11,369
Senior Units	20	1,406	14,073
Special Needs Units		47	1,846
Total	40	3,045	39,265

Source: Maine State Housing Authority, 2013

Housing Quality

In the area of housing quality the goal is to ensure safe and decent housing for all residents of the community. Housing quality factors include, age and quality of existing homes, the number of dangerous/abandoned homes and the need for standards for new units. It has been well over 20 years since Easton has operated a publically funded, single or multi-family residential rehabilitation program. The number of occupied, substandard homes has not been determined. All housing is a community resource and quality housing encourages people to live in Easton. This, in turn, helps establish a local labor force for business and economic growth. However, town officials continually work with the Aroostook County Action Program's weatherization program which purchases and installs all types of energy conservation materials (within guidelines) for income-eligible homeowners and tenants. Town officials are also working with ACAP's central heating improvement program (CHIP) which provides up to \$3000 in heating system improvements (such as cleaning, tuning, evaluation, burner retrofit, repair, replacement and conversion) to program and income-eligible households.

Town officials are also in the beginning stages of looking at the building of affordable energy efficient homes on one or two of the lots in the town owned subdivision. Conceivably these homes may be single floor ranch style homes build on a slab. Heating systems could potentially be a LP gas heating system. The intent would be to provide safe and efficient housing for those that would qualify for these types of programs.

A second potential opportunity is to develop a housing program similar to that of Fort Fairfield. The town could potentially acquire housing units that are in disrepair, fix and modernize, and then sell those on the open market. Funds obtained through the sale of these properties would then be used to purchase additional properties.

Easton has made strides in eliminating vacant, deteriorated housing through the acquisition/demolition of homes and through enforcement of the law pertaining to dangerous buildings. The cost of demolition is more expensive than ever and may range from \$15,000 - \$25,000. This often deters owners from dealing with the problem. A 2013 evaluation of dangerous residential structures identified 8 homes that should be removed. Four of those homes were razed as a training exercise for the Fire Department and the remaining four will be removed in the near future. The Board of Selectmen has the final authority to take action under the dangerous buildings law.

Housing age can be considered an indicator of housing quality but as stated previously, is not always reliable. Many older homes in Easton are better maintained than some newer homes. The American Community Survey 5-year update for 2011 reports owner occupied housing for Easton by housing tenure (age). The town should complete a town-wide housing quality assessment to determine the extent of substandard homes. After this, a housing assistance program could help them address this issue.

Easton is not required to enforce the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code (MUBEC). The State law that created MUBEC became effective December 1, 2010 and consists of residential and commercial building, existing building and energy conservation codes developed by the International Code Council and adapted to Maine. In addition, MUBEC includes standards related to ventilation for indoor air quality, energy efficiency and radon control options. Town officials may wish to consider adopting MUBEC which could help improve housing quality over time though most new construction probably meets these codes and may meet some of the standards.

Summary

Affordable housing is not a significant problem in Easton. It appears that there are an ample number of safe affordable housing units in Town; however the stock is getting old. Over 76 percent of the current housing stock was built before the 1980 and nearly 49 percent was constructed prior to 1959, according to the 2000 US Census. Over the past 5 years mostly single-family detached units have been constructed. There was an expressed need for rental apartments. The Town has been actively involved in efforts to rehabilitate the deteriorating condition of the housing stock over the years. These housing rehabilitation efforts will also enhance Easton's ability to market itself to future potential businesses and industries, which is critical to the Town's economic revitalization and future job creation. The Town should continue to improve housing conditions for its residents wherever possible by actively pursuing federal and state grants for housing rehabilitation.

Municipal officials will also, as part of this comprehensive planning process, review the Town's need for a zoning ordinance and land use regulation to ensure it is compatible with its current economic development goals. The zoning of land use ordinance should be developed that protects existing residential land uses, while discouraging incompatible land use encroachment into established neighborhoods, all-the-while providing safe and sanitary housing for present and future residents.

Town officials should work with the owners of the two mobile home parks to assist with the upgrade of the infrastructure. Town officials may be able to work with the owners in some form of compromise to remove dilapidated mobile homes or units in unsuitable locations in return for assistance in upgrades. This would increase the “value of the existing lots within the park and remove potential environmental impacts to water quality.

The town should monitor the development of housing and its potential impacts on the availability of municipal services. Strip development along Routes 1-A, 10, Conant Road can reduce the perceived rural character of the community, increase the need and cost of transportation improvements, and facilitate the need for unplanned capital expenditures. New development will be coming to Town as will more economic opportunities. Proper use of existing and proposed regulations by the CEO, Planning Board, and Board of Appeals will assure that new development will fit into the community and become a valuable asset, not a liability. Good planning means good development and this will in turn reduce demands upon the community’s limited resources in the future.

There is a general perception that the housing stock in some areas of Easton “looks old” especially along the Station Road. Town officials will begin to seek funding to assist homeowners with the rehabilitation of those homes. Town officials will also work and partner with other agencies with weatherization and heating assistance programs.

There are few homes for sale (6 at the time of the writing of this section) in the range of \$80K to \$140K available and there are few house lots. Should a new or existing business expand and attract new residents to the community, there are some residential lots available. Town officials are also looking expanding residential subdivisions in the area located between Duncan Drive, Station Road, and Perry Drive.

HOUSING

Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Strategies are listed in priority order.

State Goal

Encourage and promote affordable, decent housing opportunities for all Maine citizens

Local Goal

Ensure an adequate supply of affordable, safe and decent housing for all ages and income levels in the community.

POLICY

Monitor new residential development, sale of single family homes and vacancy rates for indications that affordability is at risk.

Strategies

- a. Continue to market, expand, and develop residential subdivisions within the Growth Areas. Purchase or acquire land as it becomes available adjacent to existing town owned subdivisions for future expansion
- b. The Planning Board will develop a free residential building permit system to understand the location and types of housing units constructed in Town.
- c. Develop a house rehabilitation program on tax acquired homes, repairs and rehabilitated the structure, and then places them up for sales. Funds from sales would go towards the rehabilitation of additional homes or the purchase of additional land for subdivisions.
- d. Town officials will apply for Community Development Block Grant Housing Assistance funds for development and expansion of multi-family units.
- e. Encourage developers of multi-family units to dedicate a minimum of one and up to 10% of units as affordable.
- f. Town officials will annually contact Aroostook County Action Program for information on the availability of rental voucher/assistance and monitor trends.
- g. Town officials will notify local Realtors and Banks regarding the availability of lots located in the town owned subdivisions
- h. Construct affordable, energy efficient home(s) in town owned subdivision for sale as desired.

POLICY

Encourage the maintenance, sale and occupancy of vacant housing units.

Strategies

- a. Apply for a CDBG-Planning Grant to complete a local housing assessment that identifies unsafe homes for possible demolition and targets others for rehabilitation investment.
- b. Apply for CDBG-Housing Assistance funds as indicated by the housing assessment.
- c. Seek funds to implement the Capital Needs Assessment of the West Ridge Manor.

- d. Seek funds for the construction of additional units at the West Ridge Manor.
- e. Develop a local housing assistance program to benefit low/moderate income homeowners.
- f. Continue to market the Grange Apartments, Osgood Farm Apartments, West Ridge Manor, and Windermere Apartments as units become available.

POLICY

Eliminate all abandoned/dangerous residential structures from community.

Strategies

- a. Have code enforcement officer and health inspector rate the risk of each structure to public safety.
- b. Use the local housing assessment to create a target list of structures.
- c. Send annual notices to property owners when properties violate Dangerous Building Law. Take legal action when justified by risk level.
- d. Work with the Easton Fire Department, MaineDEP, and others to remove abandoned and dangerous structures

TRANSPORTATION

Easton's Vision

Easton will constantly strive to be

- ❖ a dynamic community that is economically, culturally, and socially inviting;
- ❖ a community that promotes and aggressively pursues innovative business and economic development;
- ❖ a community that welcomes, supports, and responds to a diversity of new people and new ideas;
- ❖ a community that recognizes children as our future and shares collective responsibility for the nurturing and education of each generation;
- ❖ a community where family ties are strong, self respect and respect for others is instilled, where trust and courtesy is a way of life, and where the pace of life is consistent with these ideals; and
- ❖ a community that celebrates the values and lessons of a multi-cultural heritage that serves as its strength and as its foundation in a progressive, modern world

Transportation

Introduction

In the land use planning process, community transportation issues can be complex and challenging. Transportation weighs heavily in planning for local fiscal capacity and future land uses. It's important to stay focused on safety, efficiency of movement, energy efficiency and conservation, cost effectiveness and the local need and interest in different modes of travel. Several transportation related problems and issues have been identified and are explained here. The locally acceptable approaches for avoiding problems and meeting the future transportation demands of Easton are identified in the policies/strategies section.

Most residents probably take for granted that Easton is a regional transportation hub. The Town has several major transportation corridors including Route 1-A, Route 10, and the Conant Road. These highway segments are vital corridors for commerce and for residents traveling to and from work and other daily needs.. More recently, issues relating to different modes of transportation (horse and buggy, bike and pedestrian, and motor vehicles) have arisen. Local roads, collectors, and arterials also serve the needs of residents to access services and employment. The Town is responsible for maintaining 26.95 miles of road of which 1.36 miles is closed to winter maintenance. There is little difference in the miles of road maintained today than 20 years ago. Town roads can be abandoned and the ownership transferred to abutting owners. Town officials are in the process of developing a new subdivision and will be adding local road mileage in the near future. Selectmen have decided that a new road(s) serving this subdivision will be constructed in their entirety before development occurs.

Other, equally important, transportation related topics include alternative modes of transportation and parking. Easton has many alternative transportation assets and over the years, has made a lot of progress in increasing and improving in these areas. Beyond the need to provide safe, convenient access for bicyclists and pedestrians to businesses and schools, there is significant overlap of tourism and recreation when we discuss modes of transportation. Pedestrian, snowmobile and ATV access to businesses and services have significant economic value. Easton offers a system that is generally safe, well maintained, cost effective and diverse.

Roads and Bridges.

Public roads in Maine are classified into three categories based on the needs served by those roads. They are arterial, collector, and local. In total, Easton has 50.99 miles of roadway. Maine DOT has recently graded the road system under their jurisdiction in Maine. In general, State roads in Easton have been graded as being in good to excellent condition. The one notable exception is Route 1-A from Route 10 south to the Mars Hill town line which is considered in fair to good condition. Town officials believe that the entire section of Route 1-A from the Fort Fairfield to the Mars Hill townline needs improvement. This area contains a bulk of the Amish traffic and is a major heavy haul truck route. In some areas of Route 1-A, there is a 3 to 3.5 inch drop between the asphalt and the gravel shoulder which has created a safety issue with horse and buggies as well as bicyclist. However, there are no projects listed in the 2013-2015 Capital Work Plan for MaineDOT on those sections of road.

Local roads are generally in fair to good shape for present levels of traffic. With routine maintenance, the scraping back of the shoulder build-up, and the cleaning of the ditches, the life of the roadway surface can be prolonged and will save money. Should development pressure occur, a more thorough review of the transportation system, road construction standards, and maintenance will be necessary.

Easton has 6.26 miles of arterial roads which is made up entirely of Route 1-A, The town also has three (3) major collectors made up of the Conant Road, Station Road, and Route 10, and two (2) minor collectors (West Ridge Road and the Ladner Road). The remaining road mileage is made up of local roads.

There are 26.95 miles of local roads. Local roads or town roads include all public roads not within the arterial or collector category. These roads are maintained by Easton for local service use and provide service to adjacent land areas and usually carry lower traffic volumes than arterials and collectors.

Easton Road Inventory

Road Name	Arterial	Collector	Local	Town Road (Seasonal)
Fort Fairfield Road (Route 1-A)	6.26			
Easton Center Road (Route 10)		2.61		
Station Road		1.48		
Richardson Road		1.87		
West Ridge Road		3.48		
Bangor Road		0.11		
Ladner Road		6.69		
Conant Road		1.52		
Station Road			1.49	
Johnson Road			0.11	
Viner Road			0.18	
Henderson Road			1.63	
Forest Avenue			1.05	
Gray Road			2.05	
Bowers Road			0.55	
Bridge Road			0.10	
Bangor Road			3.07	
Curtis Road			0.76	
Fuller Road			3.49	
Graham Road			1.29	
Mahaney Road			3.25	
Road Name	Arterial	Collector	Local	Town Road (Seasonal)

Cleaves Road			0.48	
Fry Pan Road			0.05	
Hersom Road			2.62	
Mahaney Road			0.25	
Getchell Road			0.50	
Allen Road			0.10	
Bear Trap Road			0.61	
Lamoreau Road			0.45	
Duncan Drive			0.39	
Perry Road			0.62	
Spruce Road			0.50	
Johnson Road				0.09
Bowers Road				0.55
Curtis Road				0.15
Hersom Road				0.57
Total Mileage	6.26	17.76	25.59	1.36

Source: Town of Easton and MaineDOT, 2013
 Bold font indicated State Aid Roads

High Crash Locations and Safety Issues

According to the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT), there are no high crash locations in Easton (2013). However, in the last five years, there have been 82 accidents along the town's roadways. These accidents have been spread through the Town but the highest numbers have been during the winter months.

An area of concern is moose/vehicle collisions and town officials have identified several places where reflectors should be located. Similar to those on Route 1 in Cyr Plantation, could be installed. These areas include the swampy areas along Route 1-A near the Fort Fairfield line, the Lamoreau Road, and the Henderson Road. Town officials will work with the MaineDOT to determine if installation of these reflectors is feasible.

A relatively new safety issue for Easton and several surrounding communities is the increased population of Amish and their mode of transportation. The Amish use of buggies or walking along state and local roads has created some traffic conflicts in town. Although the use of lights and reflectors is increasing among the Amish community, not all means of transportation contain sufficient safety warnings. Heavy truck traffic, community events, and general pass thru traffic has, at times, created a major transportation safety problem as numerous buggies utilize these roads in town. At the writing of this plan, no deaths have occurred although several accidents have happened.

MaineDOT has worked with Easton to place "Share the Road" signage at strategic locations within the community, oftentimes in the vicinity of Amish farms and communities. The town may wish to consider working with Huber and McCain's to educate their employees and truckers and to help improve the overall awareness of the Amish and their associated means of transportation in the area. The town may also wish to work with elders in the Amish community to develop a system of improving the visibility of Amish vehicles for passing motorists through

the increased use of reflectors, safety (slow moving traffic) triangles, lanterns, and other safety solutions.

In order to help minimize some of the issues associated with the traffic conflicts, paved shoulders should be constructed along Route 1-A for the entire length in Easton. In other areas already owned by the Amish community, Town Officials will consider working to find alternate paths and trails for the Amish to utilize. The Town has considered purchasing the right-of-way on the Bowers Road to help eliminate traffic on the more heavily utilized routes. A second issue, and one difficult to deal with, is the animal waste left along the roads sides. This waste can be dangerous to bicycles and pedestrians along transportation corridors.

To help reduce other traffic issues, town officials may also consider the development of a road design and/or site design ordinance that requires developers to meet certain standards when constructing larger scale development in Easton. These types of development can generate significant traffic and create issues on roads of which were not designed for high traffic counts. Additional roads constructed to a certain standard will eliminate the need to the Town to reconstruct new roads that have been turned over to it. Knowing how a road was built can prevent long term and unexpected reconstruction costs in the future.

Traffic Counts

The Maine DOT's Traffic Engineering Division and Traffic Monitoring Section, is responsible for the collection of all types of traffic data and maintenance of a statewide traffic volume database. The reduction and reporting of traffic volumes and vehicle classification data are accomplished through two types of count programs.

The following tables show traffic counts for Easton. MainedOT had completed counts in 2012 which were published in April, 2013. Route 1-A, Route 10, and the Richardson Road on average had the highest traffic counts. Station Road had the highest Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) count with 2210 located at the railroad crossing with the Route 1-A/ Route 10 intersection has the second highest count at 1990 AADT. Route 1-A, Station Road, and Richardson Roads all average over 1000 vehicles per day and the Richardson Road saw the greatest percent increase in traffic between 2010 and 2012. It is very apparent that Huber and McCain generate significant commuter and freight traffic.

Road	Location	2010	2012	Percent Change 2010-2012
US 1A	At Fort Fairfield Town line	1550	1720	11%
US 1A	S/O Hersom @ Mars Hill Town line	1430	1740	22%
US 1A	N/O SR 10 (CENTER)	1480	1550	5%
US 1A	S/O Center Road	1750	1990	14%

Road	Location	2010	2012	Percent Change 2010-2012
Rt. 10 (Center)	E/O IR 758 @ BR # 2687	1970	N/A	
Rt. 10	W/O PERRY at Town line	1070	960	-10%
Rt. 10	W/O US 1A	1570	1560	-1%
Rt. 10	E/O West Ridge Road	1430	1190	-17%
Rt. 10	W/O Station Road	1330	1070	-20%
Station	Station N/O RR Crossing	1910	2210	16%
Station	S/O Richardson	840	950	13%
Station	N/O Center Road	760	660	-13%
Station	S/O Conant Road	1560	1580	1%
Richardson	E/O Station Road	1530	1900	24%
Richardson	N/O Rt 10	720	840	17%
Richardson	At Bridge 0125	620	870	40%
W Ridge	S/O Center Road	750	570	-24%
Henderson	E/O Lamoreau	130	N/A	
Forest	N/O Fuller at TL	200	N/A	
Bangor Rd.	S/O Center Road.	520	410	-21%
Ladner	at US Customs	40	N/A	
Curtis	N/O Ladner Road	50	N/A	
Conant Rd.	W/O Station Road	1740	1740	0%
Ladner	at US Route 1-A	450	440	-2%

Source: MaineDOT 2013

Local Road Update.

Based on conversations with municipal officials, local roads are in fair to good condition overall. Town officials work under a ten year plan (2013-2023) for road maintenance and reconstruction and utilize a Town Road Improvement fund for these projects. Currently, there is \$150,000 of local funds in this account with the town receiving an annual allotment of \$42,000 through the Urban-Rural Initiative Program (URIP) which are State funds. The goal by 2015 is to have \$225,000 of local funds in this account.

The town's priorities are ditching widening the right-of-way to include shoulders beginning in the northern most road (Fuller Road) and working progressively south. It is projects that the Fuller Road project should take about 2 years to complete and is considered the largest project in Town. Through the completion of ditching and culvert work, town officials believe that outside construction firms will then be able to reconstruct those portions of the road that needs work, finish each road in its entirety, and then move to the next road project. At the end of the 10 year plan, officials plan to begin road maintenance rather than reconstruction on these roads, thereby overall reducing road project costs in the future.

It is projected that projects on the southernmost road (Hersom Road) will be completed in 2023.

Bridges

There are six (6) bridges in Easton as identified by the MaineDOT. Four are owned by the MaineDOT while the other 2 are Easton's responsibility. Maine DOT performs detailed inspections of all public bridges to ensure the public's safety every two years. There is a numerical rating system that is used during these inspections. With these inspections, MaineDOT prepares a list of prioritized bridges projects for the Work Plan. There are no bridge projects Easton listed in the 2013-15 Work Plan.

It should be noted that the two bridges that are the responsibility of Easton are listed as either in "Imminent Failure" or in "Poor" condition. However, in 2013, town officials have replaced the failing bridge (#0127) over the Prestile Brook with a new bridge. Bridge #137 has been discontinued and is currently a "pass at your own risk" bridge. Total cost of the project was approximately \$88,000. In total, Easton has spent over \$100,000 in the past three years of local funds to reconstruct town maintained bridges.

Bridge Inventory, 2013

Name	Number	Owner	Route	Substructure Condition	Superstructure Condition	Deck Cond.	Channel Cond.	Culvert Cond.	Approach Cond.
Prestile Brook	2687	DOT	10	F	F	F	S	N/A	G
Flewelling Brook	3532	DOT	Ladner	N/A	N/A	N/a	F	G	F
Wolverton Brook	0139	DOT	Ladner	N/A	N/A	N/A	G	VG	G
Prestile Brook*	0137	Easton	Bridge Road	IF	IF	IF	IF	N/A	S
Prestile Brook*	0127	Easton	Bridge Road	S	P	P	F	N/A	P
Prestile Brook	0125	DOT	Richardson	N/A	N/A	N/A	VG	E	VG

Source: MaineDOT 2013

Codes: E-Excellent, VG- Very Good, G-Good, F-Fair, P-Poor, S-Serious, IF- Imminent Failure

*= Bridge has been discontinued.

Parking

There are no municipally owned parking lots in Easton. Parking is located at the Town office and is in generally good condition. There are also no formal Park and Ride lots located in town. Town officials may wish to consider creating parking areas for horse and buggies where water troughs and sawdust pads can be added to water the horses and collect animal wastes. Water could potentially be collected from gutters located on building that the Amish frequent, such as the store and bank.

Businesses locating in Easton have ample land available for parking and parking is not considered to be an issue at this time.

One issue has been identified and that is parking at the High School during sporting or other

events. Cars line the Center Road and can create a safety issue as there is insufficient parking on school grounds. Town officials will work with the School Department to look at the potential expansion of parking on school grounds.

Sidewalks and Paths

Unfortunately, Easton does not have a detailed, online inventory of sidewalk issues which are considered to be in poor condition. Areas identified where sidewalks were in disrepair, interrupted, damaged or in other ways unsafe for persons walking, running or bicycling. The sidewalk inventory identifies several kinds of challenges that particularly affect persons using wheel chairs, but many that are impediments to all travelers including:

- Crosswalks that are inaccessible or poorly marked
- Cuts in paving - sudden drop-offs or step-ups
- Damaged paving
- Debris including sand, gravel, sand, snow and water
- Drainage grates
- Gaps where sidewalks end forcing people into the roadway
- Obstructions including utilities, vegetation, fences, walls, signage and parked cars
- Slope of sidewalk side to the other or in the direction of travel
- Substandard width

In many cases these kinds of problems overlap. For example, a poorly designed drainage grate accumulates debris, causes undermining of existing sidewalks and resulting sudden changes in the surface.

Easton's Highway Department works annually to maintain sidewalks. Pedestrians are served by a mile network of sidewalks located in the more densely developed parts of town and 7.6 miles of trails. Recent sidewalk maintenance costs were approximately \$15,000. Continued maintenance is necessary and reconstruction should occur on up to 25 percent of the network. To encourage bicycle use the town and schools provide bike racks at several locations. The trail network available for bike use includes the miles available for pedestrian use. Sidewalks do not extend to Perry and Duncan Drive and should be constructed to serve pedestrians living along those roads. Sidewalks and signage should also be constructed on the West Ridge Road to the Manor, the Bangor Road to the Town line, and from the High School to the Duncan Road.

Capital Work Plan

The Maine Department of Transportation's (MaineDOT) new Calendar Year 2013-2014-2015 Work Plan (Work Plan) supports the department's mission, "To responsibly provide our customers with the safest, most reliable transportation system possible, given available resources." The Work Plan contains projections of transportation resources (federal, state, other) and MaineDOT's strategy to apply them to the planning, engineering, construction, operation and maintenance of transportation infrastructure of all modes throughout Maine. The Work Plan emphasizes focusing scarce transportation resources on existing critical infrastructure needs, primarily roads and bridges, to the greatest extent possible.

Easton regularly provides input to MaineDOT as to projects listed in the Plan. Every two years, municipalities are asked to submit prioritized lists of projects for potential inclusion in the Plan. The following projects are listed in the 2013-2015 Work Plan for Easton. The costs listed are the total cost of these projects, some of which may extend into neighboring towns. When asked, Easton Town Officials should continue to submit projects for inclusion in the Plan.

Planned Capital and Maintenance Work 2013-2015

Work Plan Year	Asset(s)	Description	Communities	Estimated Funding
2013	Route 10	Highway Resurfacing: Beginning 0.15 northerly of Center Road and extending 0.79 of mile.	Easton	\$229,960
2014-15	Route 10	PMRAP: Beginning 0.52 of a mile west of West Ridge Road and extending westerly 5.44 miles.	Easton and Presque Isle	\$1,904,095

Source: Maine Department of Transportation 2013

Public Transportation.

Aroostook Regional Transportation System.

The Aroostook Regional Transportation System provides general public transportation throughout Aroostook County. Services are provided from each town in the County at least once a week to the nearest commercial center. Services are available to all members of the general public from the outlying towns to the commercial center and pick-up services are available in-town to the elderly and handicapped only. Fares are charged to members of the general public and half fare is charged to the elderly and handicapped. No fare is charged to Medicaid clients going to Medicaid covered services or to the elderly and handicapped going to a medical appointment. Services are provided to individuals with special needs who attend daily work or rehabilitation programs. These daily runs are also available to the general public, but no deviation from the special runs can take place due to time limitations. Town officials do not believe that ARTS adequately services the community and would like to see additional bus service.

Cyr Bus Lines.

Cyr Bus Lines provides daily regional bus service from northern Maine to Bangor and points south with connections to the major national bus lines. The northern most pick-up point for the bus line is in Caribou. The closest pickup point for Easton would be either Mars Hill or Presque Isle, depending on where the rider is located. Town officials would like to see a bus stop located in Easton

Airports.

Maine is broken down for aviation planning purposes into eleven (11) regions. Region 11, which covers all of Aroostook County, has four system airports. These include: Northern Maine Regional, Northern Aroostook Regional, Caribou Municipal, and Houlton International.

There are no public airports or private airstrips located in Easton.

Rail

The State of Maine purchased the Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway, LTD (MMA) to avoid its discontinuation and to continue to provide dependable transportation of products into and from the Aroostook region. According to the *Due Diligence Report: Montreal, Maine & Atlantic Railway*, prepared for MaineDOT in 2010, if the State can provide consistent and reliable service, the rail line operations, upon which the forestry industry depends, can be profitable. Based on a conversation with Rob Elder, Director of Freight and Rail for MDOT, the State has arranged for the Northern Maine Railroad (NMR, an Irving company) is operating what is left of the MMA line and is providing considerably improved service. NMR is reliably running 100 car trains 4 times a week. While currently the primary user of rail transport is the forestry industry, the State's goal is to encourage more transport of agricultural products by rail.

There are 5.4 miles of rail line in Easton with a crossing located on the Station Road. The line accesses the Huber and McCain Plants and then continues to Fort Fairfield. Both industries are utilizing rail which has made them more competitive in the global market. McCains is using the rail line to ship oil for cooking but is shipping very little finished product out of the area. Huber is shipping finished product via rail to its markets in southern New England and the Mid-Atlantic States. There are no projects listed in the most recent Capital Work Plan.

MaineDOT also offers an Industrial Rail Access Program (IRAP) to encourage the development of access to rail. The program is a 50:50 match, with the State providing half and either the rail company or a manufacturer providing the other half of the cost of building spurs. Fort Fairfield participated in the program and though its project was not initially successful when the rail was owned by MMA, the State took back the line and it appears to be working well under NMR's management. The State is about to announce another 10 projects and there will be other rounds in competition for State funds for this program. There are no projects listed or planned for Easton within the next three (3) years.

Regional Issues

The coordination of regional transportation issues is directed by the Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC). NMDC sponsors informational meetings, outreach and other valuable support that brings communities together to discuss regional transportation issues and to build understanding. Easton participates in this process and should continue to do so.

The Interstate-95 Extension: The I-95 extension project has made considerable progress over the past ten years in the areas of planning and environmental review. Up to date information is available on the MaineDOT website under the Aroostook County Transportation Study prepared by Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc., (VHB) the project consultants. Details of the projects economic and transportation objectives are available on-line and are integral to many of Easton's

local transportation and other Comprehensive Plan strategies. These include objectives related to population and jobs expansion, improved traffic flow and access management along arterial routes. The extension project could benefit Easton's long-term potential to create jobs and rebuild population.

The construction phase of the project will be progressing over the next ten years and perhaps, beyond as funding becomes available. As is indicated in recent information available from MaineDOT, the study identified four refined north-south corridors but did not identify an overall preferred corridor. The corridors are divided into 11 segments that meet the Federal Highway Administrations (FHWA's) segmentation criteria. The segments can be developed independently over time because each segment has a terminus, independent usefulness and does not restrict consideration of alternatives for other segments. Information on segment location is available in map form in the Final Environmental Impact Statement Corridor Segment. Construction of Segment 4 (Caribou Bypass) began in 2011 and was completed in 2012.

Segment 7 (Presque Isle Bypass) is the second project to be undertaken. MaineDOT will begin acquiring properties in between toe Conant Road and the Fort Fairfield Road in early 2014. Construction is slated to begin in late 2014 or early 2015. Construction of Phase 2 (Conant Road to Route 1 in Westfield) will begin when phase 1 is completed (projected in 2016-2018). Phase 3 (Fort Fairfield Road to Route 1 near the Brewer Road including a new bridge over the Aroostook River) will be completed as funds become available.

Transportation Analysis

Unrestricted access to a roadway, in particular Routes 10 and 1-A, ultimately results in traffic congestion and safety problems. Most growth in Easton occurs with single lot development along the collector/local roads. The cumulative effect of numerous driveways onto Route 1-A and 10 and the collectors causes "side friction" that impedes traffic flow and has proven to be a safety issue. Good access management--the careful planning of land uses, driveways, and intersections, can reduce accidents and prolong the useful life of the roadway. Regulations which control or manage access to a highway or main road are designed to avoid or resolve conflicts arising from the use of those properties abutting the roadway, and the function of the roadway to swiftly and safely move vehicular traffic. How this will be accomplished will depend upon existing land use patterns, policies developed under this growth management program, land use plans, and the priority given to the arterial and collector function over other functions, such as providing access to local businesses, and serving the needs of the Town where the roadway also serves as the main street. Controlling accesses and land uses adjacent to roadways can be addressed through the development of the Town's proposed land use plan.

Except as noted in the above text, the roads in Easton are for the most part in good condition. However, should the Highway Department budget decline, there is the potential for the roads to deteriorate at a faster pace, therefore costing more to improve in the future, if only minimal care was applied at this time. The Town should put into place a 5 year management plan for the maintenance and reconstruction of local roads. The Highway Department updates this plan as projects are completed.

At an increasing rate, there have been conflicts with horse and buggies and vehicles, especially

on Route 1-A and the Conant Road. Thankfully no one has been killed in accidents but with the high speed traffic on this road these types of accidents can be catastrophic. Town officials will work with MaineDOT to develop a signage program that warns motorists of different vehicle types. Town officials also will work with the town's major employers to develop an educational program informing employees of potential conflicts and safety issues. Speed enforcement should also be increased in the village area as motorists do not follow the 30mph speed limit in that area.

Town officials also need to be aware that it is cheaper to encourage development along existing maintained roads within the town or to infill within the growth area. Easton may want to review and consider whether to discontinue any of the backroads. Discontinuance means the Town is no longer responsible for the road's upkeep. The Town may retain easements allowing access over the discontinued way to interior lands and water bodies and for public utilities. Alternatively, all public rights may be discontinued, although the Town would be liable for damages if a parcel became landlocked as a result of such an action. Easton may discontinue a road for winter maintenance; this would allow for regular use of the road in the summer and fall while relieving the Town of plowing responsibility, even if houses were built on the road.

While the rail line is not heavily utilized in Easton, marketing efforts by the rail operator could increase traffic in the years ahead. Town officials should work with the larger employers to ensure that the track remains in excellent condition. Town officials should also be aware of state and federal programs, such as the IRAP, that help pay for the construction of rail sidings. There may be potential markets for smaller farms to utilize rail in the future to ship their products to market.

Canadians have the option of crossing the border in Easton to go to Presque Isle, Fort Fairfield, Mars Hill, and Caribou. However, there is no exit located on the Trans Canada Highway that leads directly to Easton. With the large expansion at the border crossing, there may be increasing traffic on local roads. The Ladner Road is considered to be in poor condition and if heavy truck traffic were to begin using this road at a greater rate, the condition could further deteriorate. This may also be the same for the Mahaney and Hersom Roads.

TRANSPORTATION

Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Strategies are listed in priority order.

State Goal

Plan, finance and develop an efficient transportation system to accommodate growth and economic development.

Local Goal

Maintain and develop a safe and efficient transportation system that meets the broad interests and needs of the community and fosters economic prosperity.

POLICY

Improve the safety and efficiency of traffic flow on all of Easton's roads.

Strategies

- a. Continue to follow the town's Road Surface Management System (RSMS) plan. Update plan as projects are completed.
- b. Seek funding from the MaineDOT to construct paved shoulders on the entire length of Route 1-A.
- c. Work with McCain Foods, and Huber to educate heavy haul truck drivers of increased horse and buggy, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic.
- d. Construct sidewalks from Easton's Village area to the schools and mark crosswalks as appropriate.
- e. Add street lights within the populated residential areas of the designated Growth Area as needed.
- f. Install signage on the Station, Richardson, and Conant Roads to direct heavy truck traffic away from Easton's village area.
- g. Pave the remaining portion of the Ladner Road from the Canadian Border.
- h. Limit to one, the access points for residential subdivision roads fewer than 1500 feet in length and two for over 1500 feet and 15 or more dwelling units.
- i. Work with the Amish community on ways to reduce the amount of animal waste left alongside the roads.
- j. Add additional "Share the Road" signage at strategic locations near Amish farms, community centers, and businesses.
- k. Work with MaineDOT to install anti-animal collision devises (reflector systems) along the swampy areas of Route 1-A near the Fort Fairfield Townline, Lamoreau Road, Center Road, and the Henderson Road.
- l. Plant trees in areas where snowdrifting is a problem.
- m. Require proof of MaineDOT highway entry permit for new developments along state roads. Check with MaineDOT on compliance with required standards.

- n. Monitor the amount and type of traffic on the Mahaney and Hersom Roads and develop as part of the town's RSMS program, a maintenance plan should heavy truck traffic increase.
- o. Install street lights at the intersection of the Hersom Road and Route 1-A and the intersection of the Bangor Road and Center Road.
- p. Continue to submit projects for inclusion in the MaineDOT's Capital Work Plan.
- q. Work with the Aroostook County Sheriff's Department and Maine State Police to enforce speed limits in the village area.

POLICY

Maintain and broaden local options for transportation alternatives and parking.

Strategies

- a. Extend sidewalks and street lights to Perry and Duncan Drives.
- b. Construct sidewalks and install signage and crossings on the West Ridge Road to the West Ridge Manor, from the intersection of Route 10 (Center Road) west to the townline, and from the High School to Duncan Road.
- c. Continue to fund the Aroostook Regional Transportation bus for the elderly and LMI populations.
- d. Develop signage in the village area that directs snowmobilers, ATV's bicycling, and pedestrian to trail systems.
- e. Study the feasibility of constructing a parking area for horse and buggies with water troughs waste collection, and sawdust pads in the village area.
- f. Work with the School Department to construct additional off road parking at the High School.
- g. Seek grant funds and civic involvement for installation of bike stands at locations in the village area, at the school, and at the Recreation Department
- h. Continue to support ATV and Snowmobile Club efforts in trail development and safety education through the Recreational Trail Program and SCORP.
- i. Develop mapping and literature to support rural bike routes and mountain biking.
- j. Complete a walkability/bikeability evaluation of the community and respond to recommendations.

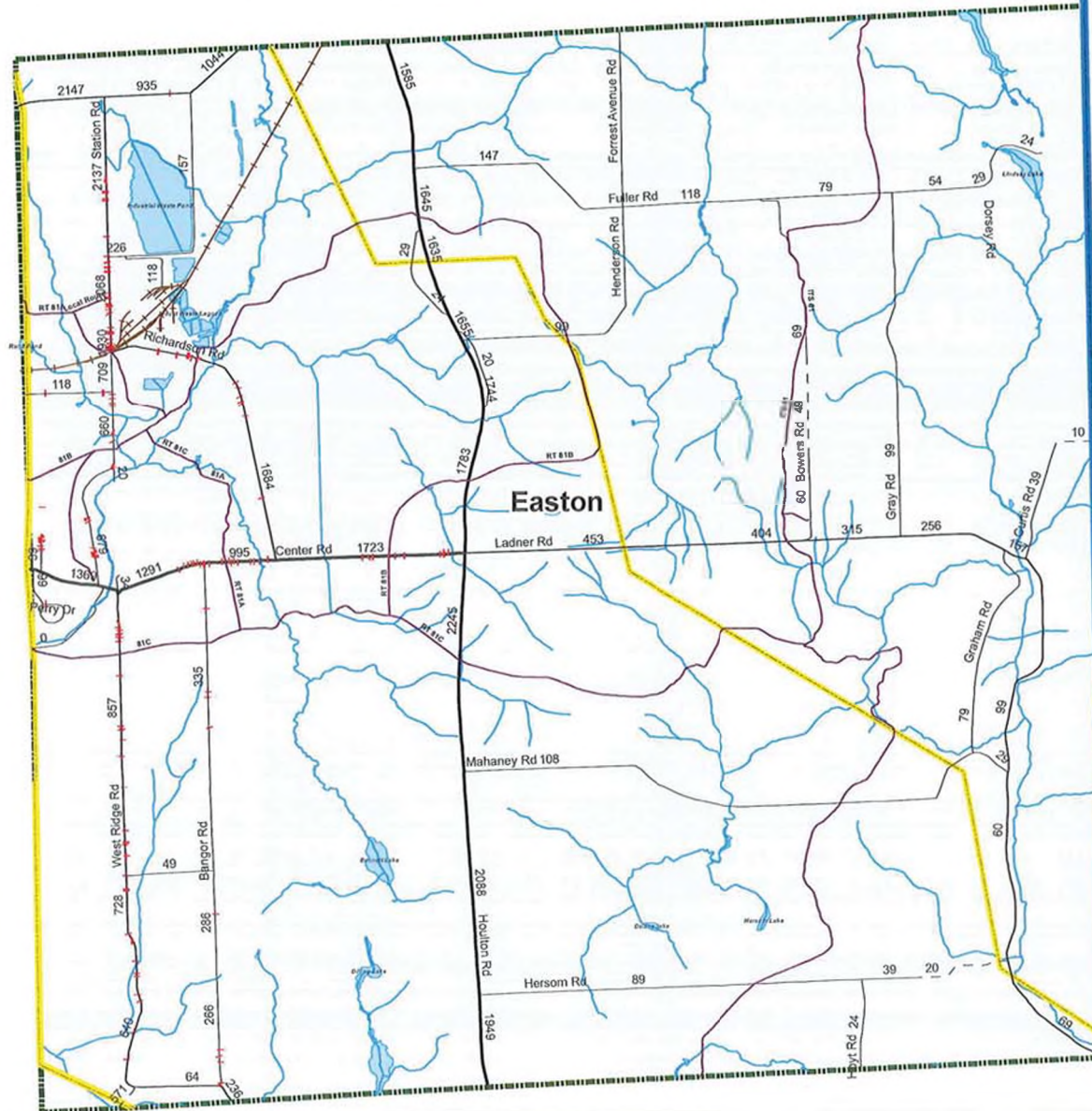
POLICY

Maintain and strengthen regionally essential transportation systems including Maine Northern Railway, Northern Maine Regional Airport, and Interstate-95.

Strategies

- a. Work with the MaineDOT to upgrade the rail line to Easton and work with the rail provider to improve service to Easton's businesses and industry.

- b. Participate in all regional transportation planning initiatives including MaineDOT's Capital Work Plan, Aroostook County Emergency Management Planning efforts, and NMDC's regional transportation efforts.
- c. Work with Cyr Bus lines to develop a stop in Easton.
- d. Devote substantial economic development effort to the agricultural and forest product and other industries that require rail.
- e. Support and encourage the use of rail facilities by local companies. Work with those industries to apply for additional state and federal funding as rail projects, such as additional sidings are identified.
- f. Use Northern Maine Regional Airport as part of on-going economic development/business attraction efforts by making Easton more accessible to prospective companies.
- g. Coordinate and fund, with the Northern Maine Regional Airport major stakeholders, an on-going public relations/awareness initiative on the benefits and importance of the facility.
- h. Continue to monitor and comment on the Aroostook County Transportation Study Segment 7 project which connects the Conant Road to Presque Isle.



Legend

- Township Boundaries
- International Boundaries
- Culverts
- Snowmobile Trails 090413

MEDOT Public Roads

JURISDICTION

- Private
- State aid
- State hwy
- Town summer
- Townway

Easton Other Transportation

- Power Transmission Line
- Railroad
- Brooks and Streams
- Roads
- Rivers
- Lakes and Ponds



1 inch = 3,500 feet

Easton, Maine
Comprehensive Plan
Transportation Map

Date: 02/09/14



LOCAL ECONOMY

Easton's Vision

Easton will constantly strive to be

- ❖ a dynamic community that is economically, culturally, and socially inviting;
- ❖ a community that promotes and aggressively pursues innovative business and economic development;
- ❖ a community that welcomes, supports, and responds to a diversity of new people and new ideas;
- ❖ a community that recognizes children as our future and shares collective responsibility for the nurturing and education of each generation;
- ❖ a community where family ties are strong, self respect and respect for others is instilled, where trust and courtesy is a way of life, and where the pace of life is consistent with these ideals; and
- ❖ a community that celebrates the values and lessons of a multi-cultural heritage that serves as its strength and as its foundation in a progressive, modern world

Local Economy

Overview of Local Economy

While Easton is often known and referred to as an “agricultural community”, it has a diversified local economy which is proving to be sustainable and growing in difficult economic times. In 1993, the sustainability of communities in Aroostook County was studied with support from the Quebec Labrador Foundation’s, Atlantic Center for the Environment and the University of Southern Maine. The study identified four key characteristics of sustainable communities; quality of life, economic security (a diversified economy), empowerment and responsibility (local action and support) and ecological integrity (keeping natural systems healthy and functioning). Easton has all of these characteristics and they remain important to its future. There has been significant public and private investment and Easton has created jobs and works to increase its population.

The reality is that the community is still part of a regional, state and national economy. Easton is part of the Presque Isle Labor Market Area (LMA). A LMA consists of an economic center (in this case Presque Isle) and the associated towns in the area. Labor Market Areas are defined every 10 years based on commuting patterns.

Conditions and Trends

Even under present economic conditions, substantial public and private investment is continuing in Easton in the form of road construction, utility upgrades, border crossing upgrades, new business and industries locating in the community such as new trucking firms in support of McCain Foods USA and Huber), the development of a health care center, Easton has a solid record of economic sustainability because of a diversified economic structure while supporting the mainstay agricultural and forestry industries located within the community. Local policies and strategies focus on an understanding of the structural components of the regional and local economy, long-term trends and how the community can strengthen its existing economic structure and develop or attract new structural components.

The table below lists the currently employers located in Easton as March 2014. A vast majority of Easton’s employers fall into the 1-4 employees and nearly all of the employers fall into the less than 20 employee categories. The table shows a nice mixture and diversity of employers in town. One of Aroostook County’s largest employers (McCain Foods USA) is located in Easton.

Easton Employers, 2014

Number of Employees						
1-4	5-9	10-19	20-49	50-99	100-200	250-999
Aroostook Solid Surface B&C Auto Sales BDI Commercial Repair	Easton Recreation Department Huber Engineered	County Farm Market Easton High	Flewelling Farms	Easton Elementary School Superintendent	J.M. Huber	McCain Foods USA

and Body Concrete Technologies CJ King Maple Moose Cronkite Merlon CTC of Aroostook Dan Ferris Plumbing and Heating Easton Community Center New Psalm Easton Highway Department Easton Fire Department Easton Housing Corp. Easton Pentecostal Church Easton Warehouse Easton Wesleyan Church Estes Park Cemetery Food Depot J&G Plumbing & Heating J&B York Painting John Handy Services Katahdin Trust Co. Keith's Automotive Repair Lane Memory Antiques Michael Collodel Construction Mt. Shilo Cemetery One Stop Pine Tree Church Cemetery PNT Trucking Rolling Acres US Customs	Woods	School Center Farms Inc		of Schools		
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Service US Post Office United Baptist Church Vintage Candle Works Village Health Care Aroostook Auction Barn Child's World Daycare						
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Source: Maine Department of Labor, 2014

Unemployment

The tables below show the annual average unemployment for Easton and the Presque Isle Labor market area (LMA). The trend shows that the LMA had an unemployment rate near or above the State's average while Easton's was below the state average. Most recently, the State's average unemployment rate has been improving while the LMA's has improved slightly or remained stable, potentially a sign of a lag in the regional economy. Economic activity is divided into "export" and "service" activities. Export activities bring dollars into the community through the sale of goods and services to the outside, i.e. the next town or the world. Service activities provide goods and services locally that re-circulate money that is already here. Some services, like retail sales, overlap as export and local activities.

Employment sectors help identify which activities are important exports in the local economy. Economic growth is driven by export activities which are also referred to as economic engines. Their importance cannot be over stated. Easton's unemployment rates increased from 5.3% in 2004 to 7.7% in 2013. According to the Maine Department of Labor, the high was in 2012 when 9.0% of Easton's workforce was unemployed. In 2007, Easton's unemployment rate was 4.1%.

The Presque Isle LMA's unemployment rate also increased from 6.0% in 2004 to 9.0 percent in 2013. At no time has the LMA's rate been below 6.0% and the high was 9.7% in 2010.

Easton Unemployment 2004-2013

Year	Civilian Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate %	State Unemployment Rate
2013	659	608	51	7.7	6.7
2012	675	614	61	9.0	7.2
2011	677	622	55	8.1	7.7
2010	675	622	53	7.9	8.2
2009	629	582	47	7.5	8.1
2008	638	606	32	5.0	5.4
2007	637	611	26	4.1	4.7
2006	657	621	36	5.5	4.7
2005	648	614	34	5.2	4.9
2004	639	605	34	5.3	4.6

Source: Maine Department of Labor, 2014

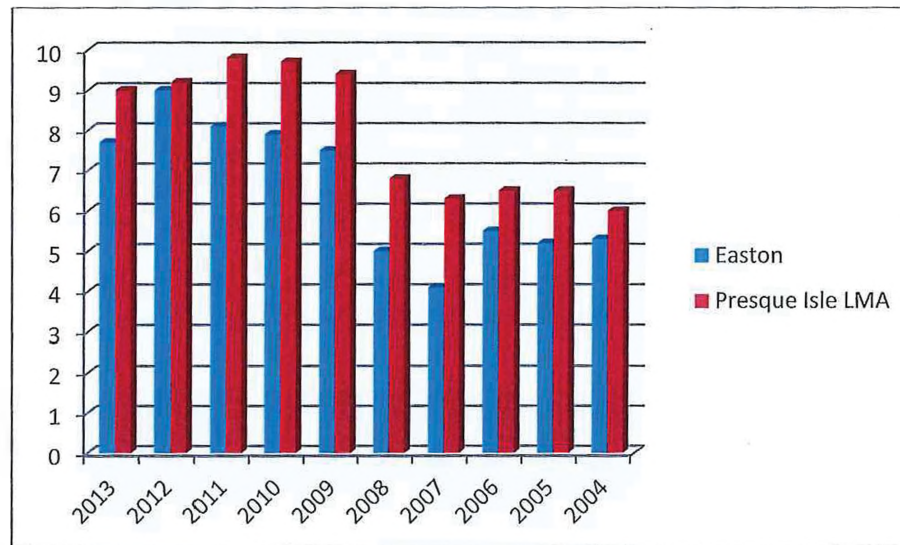
Presque Isle LMA Unemployment Rates

Year	Civilian Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate %
2013	23,512	21,404	2,108	9.0
2012	23,803	21,606	2,197	9.2
2011	24,190	21,815	2,375	9.8
2010	24,184	21,829	2,355	9.7
2009	24,305	22,014	2,291	9.4
2008	24,583	22,914	1,669	6.8
2007	24,569	23,026	1,543	6.3
2006	24,951	23,332	1,619	6.5
2005	24,549	22,965	1,584	6.5
2004	23,961	22,516	1,445	6.0

Source: Maine Department of Labor, 2014

The following chart compares Easton's unemployment with Presque Isle LMA between 2004 and 2013. Easton's rate has consistently been below that of the LMA through the period.

Easton and Presque Isle LMA's Unemployment rate 2004-2013



Source: Maine Department of Labor, 2014

The table below shows the major employment sectors in Easton and their relative importance in the local economy as compared to the State. The location quotients help to show which sectors are most important in the Town's economy. They illustrate the ratio between the percentages employed in a given sector locally and at the State level. Location quotients significantly above 1 indicate that the sector is disproportionately important to the local economy. If the Town is more dependent on one sector as compared to the State then, in theory, it must be exporting some of these goods or services outside the region. Easton's "export" industries create the engines that

power the local economy and its potential for growth. These are the structural components of the local economy.

Easton Employment – Occupation/Location Quotient 2013

	Easton		Maine		Location Quotient
	Number	Percent Employed	Number	Percent Employed	
Civilian employed population > 16 years	596		651,335		
Agriculture, forestry, fishing & hunting, mining	23	3.9	15564	2.4	1.6
Construction	24	4	47092	7.2	0.5
Manufacturing	87	14.6	62054	9.5	1.5
Wholesale trade	32	5.4	15957	2.4	2.3
Retail trade	100	16.8	89517	13.7	1.2
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	29	4.9	26241	4	1.2
Information	20	3.4	12280	1.9	1.8
Finance and insurance, and real estate	46	7.7	40187	6.2	1.2
Prof., scientific, mgmt., admin., & waste mgmt.	31	5.2	56069	8.6	0.6
Education, health care, & social assistance	165	27.7	174744	26.8	1.0
Arts, entertain., rec., accommodation, & food	14	2.3	54953	8.4	0.3
Other services, except public administration	16	2.7	29129	4.5	0.6
Public administration	9	1.5	27548	4.2	0.3

Source: American Community Survey, 2014

The leading areas of employment or occupations fall into four broad categories. The highest number includes Education, Health Care and Social Assistance with 27.7% of the workforce employed in this sector. Next is retail trade which is represented by the retail sector and other businesses. The third highest Manufacturing which is not surprising with the two major employers located in Easton. The final category is finance and insurance and real estate.

Based on location quotient analyses agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting and mining is more important in the local economy than in the state economy. In 2010, Aroostook County employment in the forest sectors of logging, manufactured products and paper totaled 3,500 jobs and \$714 million in sales. Huber Engineered Woods is located in Easton the parent company generates over \$1 billion in revenues each year.

Agricultural products in Aroostook had a market value of \$170 million in 2013. Based on cropland acres in Easton, the market value of the town's agricultural products is estimated to be \$15.7 million. This does not take into account the value of product brought into Easton to be processed at McCain Foods. According to McCain's Foods USA, one of every three french fries sold worldwide are produced at one of their factories. McCain's has annual sales of over \$6

billion (Canadian) annually. The local economic impact of the potato industry is extensive and far reaching and agriculture and forestry is almost entirely a product and raw material export industry.

The potato is the primary agricultural product and in the 1940s Maine's potato production was top in the nation. Maine had fallen to the eighth ranked potato producer and the seventh in the number of acres devoted to potato cultivation in the United States.

The number of acres of farm land devoted to potatoes has decreased in recent years because of rotational crops, conservation and fewer farmers. Over time the potatoes grown have also shifted away from table stock and into specialty markets. Nearly 25 percent of Maine's potato production is for seed to supply the east coast. Another 45 percent is used for french fry processing, 20 percent for potato chips and 10 percent for the fresh market for home, restaurant and institutional raw potato use. Recent economic impact studies of the potato industry on Maine's economy finds total sales in excess of \$540,000,000 with total employment of 6,150 jobs and a total income greater than \$233,500,000 annually.

Town specific agricultural information is difficult to obtain but Aroostook County information was obtained through the Census of Agriculture and American Community Survey. In 2011, Aroostook County had the highest farm related employment in the state at 4.3%. In the same time frame, Maine had the lowest farm related unemployment at 1.5% of the working populations.

Aroostook County Potato Production

Potato acreage has dropped in Aroostook County since 1990 and while yields (CWT) have fluctuated, they have remained steady. Markets for crops grown in Easton are available through McCains Foods and other processors located either in town or in the region. Easton is home to the last French fry processor located on the east coast of the United States. Changes in the market conditions need to be watched carefully and agricultural producers in Easton are well aware that they are part of a national and global market and subject to changes in dietary thoughts of the general public. This does not take away from the fact that Easton's farms and farmland is an important part of the Town's complex identity and economic sustainability.

Aroostook County's potato industry was recently hit with a reduction in price and acreages from its largest processor. There have been cuts in the price paid to growers and a 20 percent reduction in the volume of orders. In 2013, the price paid to growers per hundredweight of potatoes was \$10.35 which is projected to drop 48 cents to \$9.87, roughly a 5 percent reduction.

McCain Foods USA also wants fewer potatoes from growers and it is believed that Frito-Lay, will be negotiating similar cuts with their growers. While there are smaller processors in the region, including Naturally Potatoes in Mars Hill, it is believed that orders are being reduced in contracts across North America.

According to the Maine Potato Board, potato farmers generally earn profit margins of between 3 percent and 4 percent and \$3,000 is the average cost to plant an acre of potatoes, and each acre

can yield up to about 32,000 pounds. At the negotiated price, that would mean the farmer is paid about \$3,158 per acre. The growers could absorb a decrease in the price per hundredweight, but they'll still have the same amount of land and fixed costs associated with owning it, including harvesting equipment. Most growers likely will have to plant fewer acres or face losses with potatoes they can't sell.

Aroostook County Potato Production 1999-2012

	Acres Planted	Acres Harvested	Yield/Acre	Production (000)
1999	65,000	62,500	285	17813
2000	64,000	64,000	280	17920
2001	62,000	62,000	260	16120
2002	64,000	64,000	265	16960
2003	66,000	65,500	260	17030
2004	63,500	62,000	310	19220
2005	57,500	56,200	280	15736
2006	58,500	58,000	315	18270
2007	57,100	57,000	290	16530
2008	56,000	54,700	270	14769
2009	56,500	55,500	275	15263
2010	55,000	54,800	290	15892
2011	57,000	54,000	265	14210
2012	58,000	57,300	270	15471
Average	60,007	59,107	280	16515

Source: Maine Potato Board, 2014

Fiber Optics-Three Ring Binder

To improve Maine's connectivity, the 3-Ring Binder project was designed and proposed by a group including the University of Maine and GWI, a telephone and internet provider. The federal government, as part of the economic stimulus programs in 2008-2009, awarded \$25.4 million for this project, supplemented by a private investment of \$7.5 million from Maine Fiber Company (MFC), which owns and operates the fiber facilities. MFC completed construction of this new 1100 route-mile fiber-optic network in August of 2012. Fiber is now available for lease in some of Maine's most rural areas. MFC is actively seeking customers to lease fiber-optic facilities, and has several carriers, retail ISPs, and public sector customers currently utilizing fiber on the network.

- The 3- Ring Binder is a 1,100 mile, open access, middle-mile fiber optic network that was completed in August of 2012. The project will make broadband Internet access more readily available to approximately 110,000 households in Maine.
- As of November 2012, (12) carriers have signed up to use the network. In addition, there are (2) higher education organizations, and (2) municipalities taking advantage of the

middle-mile fiber. The University System of Maine uses the fiber to connect 22 of their campus and satellite locations.

- The network passes through approximately 172 towns in the state, including many in very rural areas of Maine.
- The project connects 100 community anchor institutions (CAI) to the network. Community anchor institutions include hospitals, rural healthcare clinics, community colleges, University of Maine campuses, libraries, government facilities, and public safety departments.

Economic Climate

One of Easton's greatest economic strengths is its geography along with a well defined village area. The village area is the retail center for goods and services that serves the residents of town as well as those working at the largest employers. As such, it is an important and viable economic sector that depends on the jobs and wages generated by the town's economic engines as well as what happens in the neighboring service center of Presque Isle.

Even in the present economy, substantial investments are being made in Easton. Activities and events are being centered in the village area and new businesses are locating within the community. The Amish Community has opened several small businesses ranging from metal roofing, to carpentry, to a small convenience store. Town officials are working with other small business owners on finding locations to develop as well as developing residential subdivisions so that people can locate to town. These are great examples of local empowerment and responsibility that supports this important sector and community sustainability. Local civic organizations and clubs also make vital contributions to this element of sustainability.

Commute to Work 2012

The table below suggests employment location based on travel time to work. According to the American Community Survey, the largest percentage of Easton's workforce over the age of 16 travels to work in a personal vehicle. It is assumed that those traveling under 15 minutes to work reside in Easton. Based on this, 29% of residents that are employed work in Easton. Approximately 48% commute between 15 and 25 minutes which suggest that Presque Isle may be the largest employee destination of Easton residents. According to the American Community Survey 11 residents are employed outside of Aroostook County.

High rates of out-commuting are more common in rural areas of Maine. Economic development is sometimes affected by commuting in unanticipated ways: strategies aimed at increasing jobs in a community will not necessarily mean jobs for residents. Conversely, creating job opportunities for residents does not always require bringing jobs into that community.

High out-commuting rates can also separate tax revenues from demands for services, complicating fiscal planning for local governments. "Bedroom communities," those with high levels of out-commuting, may struggle to provide social services, housing, and other required services and faculties without an adequate source of revenue. Higher levels and longer distance

of commuting likely indicate a housing-job imbalance. This can result from unaffordable housing prices or other residential constraints.

Travel Time to Work, 2012	Easton	Aroostook County	Maine
Workers over 16 who did not work at home	548	29,525	603,825
Less than 5 minutes	38	4,071	34,968
5 to 9 minutes	42	6,226	82,483
10 to 14 minutes	77	5,107	94,091
15 to 19 minutes	143	4,573	89,091
20 to 24 minutes	122	3,198	84,226
25 to 29 minutes	37	1,196	35,260
30 to 34 minutes	59	2,387	68,637
35 to 39 minutes	3	448	15,591
40 to 44 minutes	4	403	20,702
45 to 59 minutes	12	824	39,560
60 to 89 minutes	0	704	26,012
90 or more minutes	11	388	13,204

Source: American Community Survey, 2013

Taxable Retail Sales

Due to the small number of businesses in Easton and confidentiality issues, taxable retail sales are not reported by Maine Revenue Services.

Median Household Income

The US Department of Commerce derives household income by taking the income of all persons living in a household aged fifteen (15) and over and dividing by the total number of households within the town. In 2013, the median household income for Easton was \$36,938. This is slightly lower than the Aroostook County median household income of \$37,434 (\$496 per household). As compared to the State's median household income, Easton is lower by \$11,281 per household, with the Maine's median household income equaling \$48,219.

Per Capita Income

Per capita income is derived by adding the incomes of all residents of Easton and dividing by the total population of the town (even those with no income). According to the 2013 American Community Survey, the per capita income for Easton equals \$20,436. This is slightly lower than

the per capita income for Aroostook County, which equals \$21,034, and significantly less than Maine's per capita income of \$26,464.

Poverty Status

According to the 2013 American Community Survey, the poverty status of residents living in Easton shows 19.3 percent of all persons have incomes below the poverty level. This is higher than the Aroostook County statistic of 15.9 percent and significantly higher than the State of Maine's 13.3 percent of all persons having incomes below the poverty level. The highest percentage for all categories surveyed belongs to families with female householder, no husband present with 75.9 percent having incomes below the poverty level.

Regional Plans

Northern Maine Tourism Plan

With funding from the USDA Department of Agriculture-Rural Development, NMDC and Aroostook County Tourism (ACT) began planning for a five-year tourism plan in January, 2011. The result of their efforts is the *Northern Maine Tourism Action Plan 2011-2016*. This tourism action plan has been shaped through extensive community engagement with sector businesses and nonprofits, committee participation, and general research. It includes all of the towns, townships and communities within Aroostook County and builds upon, and is a continuation of, the previous tourism business plan completed in 2005.

There are five goals listed in priority, for building a stronger tourism sector:

1. Improve organizational structure and capacity
2. Enhance tourism sector through education and training
3. Build and maintain collaborative partnerships and networks
4. Clarify the message and sharpen communications
5. Strengthen the product and expand the market.

Mobilize Northern Maine

Since 2009, Aroostook Partnership for Progress and NMDC have been working with consultants from ViTAL Economy as well as community and industry leaders, to implement the statewide Mobilize Maine process in northern Maine. Mobilize Maine is a partnership between FairPoint Communications and the six economic districts in Maine, each of which are participating in development strategies based on their region's indigenous assets and opportunities.

In northern Maine, the planning process involved establishing five-year goals, mapping the region's indigenous assets, and conducting an in-depth analysis for two industry clusters: Renewable Energy and Information Technology/Operations Centers. Next steps include exploring additional industry action teams focused on air space, secondary wood products, and tourism development.

Great Region Designation

Aroostook, Washington and Piscataquis counties share many of the same strengths and challenges. It is the common assets, which has lead to the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development to name the counties Maine's first Great Region. USDA defines a Great Region as a multi-county region with a regional economic development plan developed by a local/regional team with broad participation, where the plan is built upon careful analysis of the region's assets, including its key current and emerging economic clusters.

Those clusters for Maine's Great Region are agriculture and forestry, specifically supporting local and regional food systems and promoting the bio-based economy.

Analyses

Easton is not experiencing any significant fundamental changes in its economic structure. The Town has gained a few economic engines mainly in the form of small businesses and the existing major employers have restructured in ways that have helped them adjust to the present economic conditions. Easton's economy remains diversified and relatively stable.

Priorities for economic development in Easton identify natural resource based businesses as vital economic engines with the greatest potential to create jobs and enhance the local economy. One area of focus is on agricultural and forest resources and supports for businesses that produce, harvest and add value to these resources. Another priority is ensuring that the community can help provide the infrastructure, facilities, services and capital needed by natural resource based businesses of all scales. The final priority is to support and maintain existing economic diversification to ensure long-term economic sustainability. Higher education, health care and tourism are vital components. The town's economic development priorities are detailed in the policies and strategies section that follows. These priorities are also reflected and detailed in the regional economic clusters report and tourism action plan.

The town capitalizes on its many natural resource based tourism assets as well as its cultural distinction. These are discussed in more detail in the sections on Recreation and History and Culture. The most notable efforts to capitalize on the town's unique assets involve local clubs and several other local organizations that sponsor major events and generate extensive media attention. These include the Easton Days and the World Cup Biathlon Races in nearby Presque Isle. The economic impact of these events requires further study to understand their significance to the local economy. Snowmobiling has been a major calling card in the region for 25 years and trails are highly rated thanks to club efforts. ATV riding and trail network development is expected to grow significantly during the planning period and may surpass snowmobiling in economic impact.

Home occupations contribute to the local economy and provide many needed services and advantages to residents and business owners. Residents have convenient access to products and services and owners are allowed affordable space to try new enterprises. While home occupations most often involve services, the sale and display of products is also allowed. Regulations designed to protect neighborhood character and address traffic should be considered.

Given the region's long-term trend of population decline it seems practical that local economic development efforts focus on creating modest job and population growth by balancing attention and support in all economic export sectors. This should be done in a manner that protects and enhances community sustainability and the quality of life component of community sustainability. It is important to remember that economic growth can influence change in the community that is not always popular or favorable. Local economic development policy should be based on an understanding of local issues. The persons that are directly involved in the types of business that drive Easton's economy should be engaged in implementing policy. The State goal for Comprehensive Planning, as it pertains to local economy, is to promote an economic climate that increases job opportunity and overall economic well-being while keeping public facilities/services and housing affordable and while maintaining environmental quality. A balanced approach should work well in Easton.

LOCAL ECONOMY

Goals, Policies, and Strategies

All strategies are in priority order.

State Goal

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

Local Goal

To foster economic growth and increase population through the creation of natural resource, alternative energy, technology, and service based jobs.

POLICY

Encourage, create and attract companies that produce, harvest, utilize and add value to agricultural and forest related resources to remain or locate in Easton.

Strategies

- a. Identify businesses that supply materials and products to large manufacturers and processors and focus effort to attract local expansion of these companies.
- b. Analyze the economic advantages for Canadian natural resource based (and other) companies to expand in Maine and locate in Easton.
- c. Seek State/Federal grant and loan funding and identify job creation and capital equipment related tax incentives that may benefit existing businesses and communicate with business owners Determine the regulatory, licensure and other requirements for local companies and prospective companies to access port facilities in Canada.
- d. Continue to explore and support opportunities for biomass utilization and other alternatives for heating and electrical generation.
- e. Identify medium sized, natural resource based, Maine companies and implement an ongoing business outreach/attraction program that targets their expansion.
- f. Evaluate the interest of local farmers in the establishment of a packing/shipping and grain milling facility.
- g. Identify areas within Easton that would be suitable for alternative energy sites, such as windmill and solar.
- h. Expand the TIF and Pine Tree Zones in Easton.

POLICY

Focus local economic development efforts on securing funding for the infrastructure, facilities, services and capital needed to support natural resource based, alternative energy, technology, and service based businesses of all scales.

Strategies

- a. Work with local, regional, State and Federal organizations to develop and maintain incentive packages for business expansions and start-ups.

- b. Study the feasibility of a new industrial park development at locations identified in the future land-use plan.
- c. Study the feasibility of extending infrastructure to prospective industrial sites and seek funding for the development of infrastructure improvements.
- d. Participate and support regional business development/attraction initiatives.
- e. Research, support and initiate with industry participation, a private or public vocational/technical program in forestry and forestry equipment operation.
- f. Contact existing natural resource based businesses to determine their interest in expansion or diversification and provide assistance.
- g. Research and identify available central Aroostook labor force skills and expatriated labor force skills and use in business attraction.
- h. On an on-going basis, advocate for changes in State and Federal policy that are favorable to business.

POLICY

Support continued economic diversification to ensure the long term sustainability of the local economy. Seek funding to initiate new programs.

Strategies

- a. Support the needs of existing businesses by applying for business assistance, energy efficiency and other grants that address specific needs.
- b. Continue to utilize the ICS and UDAG reserve accounts to provide capital for business startup and purchases.
- c. Work with all potential sources including local banks, private interests, local government, the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development and other State and Federal institutions to assist with business startups and expansions.
- d. Seek grants to assist small, home-based businesses with needs for capital improvements, market access and other challenges.
- e. Support on-going efforts and investment in telecommunication system redundancy to facilitate internet based businesses.
- f. Continue to work with the Central Aroostook Chamber of Commerce on their efforts to promote tourism, organize festivals and events and support the needs and interests of retail businesses.
- g. Maintain a dialog with the University of Maine at Presque Isle, The Aroostook Medical Center, Northern Maine Community College, and other major employers to understand their need for local support. Encourage education and job creation in health care areas that serve an aging population.
- h. Continue to partner with Easton's civic organizations and clubs on projects that provide a broad benefit to community members and visitors.
- i. Participate in and support regional efforts to improve telecommunications infrastructure needed to support hi-tech, information based companies.

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Easton's Vision

Easton will constantly strive to be

- ❖ a dynamic community that is economically, culturally, and socially inviting;
- ❖ a community that promotes and aggressively pursues innovative business and economic development;
- ❖ a community that welcomes, supports, and responds to a diversity of new people and new ideas;
- ❖ a community that recognizes children as our future and shares collective responsibility for the nurturing and education of each generation;
- ❖ a community where family ties are strong, self respect and respect for others is instilled, where trust and courtesy is a way of life, and where the pace of life is consistent with these ideals; and
- ❖ a community that celebrates the values and lessons of a multi-cultural heritage that serves as its strength and as its foundation in a progressive, modern world

PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

Inventory & Analysis

The Board of Selectman-Town Manager form of local government combines the political leadership of elected officials in the form of a Board of Selectmen with the managerial experience of an appointed local government manager. The Town Manager is appointed by the Board of Selectmen, who in turn appoints and manages all other town department directors.

Easton is governed by an elected five (5) member Board of Selectmen that have the authority to approve local laws, or town ordinances and set official rules, codes, and policies for the Town. The Board is the official governing body of the town and selectmen are elected to three (3) year terms. Elections are on a three year cycle with two selectmen elected in the first and second years and one in the third year. The Selectmen elect the Chairman from among its members following each election. The Chairman presides over all Selectmen meetings and acts as the Town Officer designated to represent the town in agreements with other governmental entities, but has no administrative duties except as required to carry out the responsibilities outlined in the Town Charter.

The Town Manager is the chief administrative officer of the Town of Easton, and is responsible for the management of all town affairs as provided for in the Town Charter. The Town Manager oversees each of the town departments, and is responsible for their performance.

The Town Manager assumes responsibility for:

- Overseeing day-to-day operations
- Hiring, supervising, and evaluating town personnel
- Developing and administering town policies and procedures
- Recommending policies or programs to the Board of Selectmen
- Overseeing the preparation of the annual municipal budget
- Attending and participating in Board of Selectmen meetings and various committee meetings
- Ensuring citizen recommendations and/or complaints are handled in a timely and professional manner
- Representing the Town at inter-governmental meetings, and serving on a variety of boards, committees, and commissions

Also located in the Town Office is the Town Clerk. The Clerk's mission is to accurately maintain all town records including vital statistics, conduct elections with professionalism in accordance with State Law, issue State and Town licenses and permits, and provide information to both Town Officials and the general public in a friendly, efficient, and confidential manner.

The Town Clerk conducts the following activities:

- Coordinates & supervises elections for the Town including absentee voting
- Serves as Voter Registrar
- Serves as Deputy Tax Collector & Deputy Treasurer
- Serves as custodian for all official Town records & ordinances

- Prepares Annual Town Reports
- Issues Licenses and Permits
- Serves as Payroll & Accounts Payable Clerk
- Prepares reports to IRS & Maine Revenue Services
- Prepares reports to state agencies
- Records & maintains Vital Statistics Records (Births, Deaths & Marriages)
- Issues Marriage Licenses
- Serves as Notary Public for residents of Easton free of charge
- Coordinates rental of the Odd Fellows' Hall

Overall, Easton's public facilities and services are very good, well maintained and meet the present needs of the community. They should continue to do so for the next ten years. Only one public service has been suggested as lacking in the community, a public library. This facility could be privately developed and would help secure tax base and employment. The challenges faced by the community in maintaining and improving its services relate substantially to declining State revenue sharing and the rising costs of operation and maintenance.

Easton's Public Facilities

Facility	Location	Physical Condition	Ownership-Management
Municipal Building	Station Road	Good	Town/Fire Dept.
Odd Fellows Hall	Station Road	Good	Town/Recreation/Historical Society
Union Church	Ladner Road	Fair	Town
Highway Garage	Fry Pan Road	Excellent	Town/Highway Dept.
Baseball fields/tennis courts	Center Road	Poor	Town
Town owned Warehouse	Center Road	Good	Town (leased to Mechanical Services)
Village Health Services	Center Road	Excellent	Town (lease/sale to Valley Health Services)
Grange Apartments	Station Road	Good	Town

Source: Town of Easton, 2014

Highway Department

Easton's Highway Department is responsible for summer and winter road maintenance of the 26.9 miles of road located in Easton. The Department employs 2 full time employees and is overseen by the Town Manager who also serves as the Road Commissioner.

The Highway Department maintains a pickup truck, plow truck, backhoe, and loader. The town's priorities are ditching widening the right-of-way to include shoulders beginning in the northern most road (Fuller Road) and working progressively south. It is projected that the Fuller Road project should take about 2 years to complete and is considered the largest project in Town. Through the completion of ditching and culvert work, town officials believe that outside construction firms will then be able to reconstruct those portions of the road that needs work, finish each road in its entirety, and then move to the next road project. At the end of the 10 year plan, officials plan to begin road maintenance rather than reconstruction on these roads, thereby overall reducing road project costs in the future.

It is projected that projects on the southernmost road (Hersom Road) will be completed in 2023.

Fire Department

The Easton Fire Department consists of 25 to 30 volunteer on-call firefighters who provide fire suppression, Rescue, HAZMAT, Inspection, and Fire-Life Safety Education to the Town, as well as mutual aid to all surrounding communities.

The Easton Fire Department was incorporated in 1955. Operating out of the Easton Fire Station, the department has the ability to supply 9000 gallons of water to the scene of an emergency at one time. Although there is not a hydrant system in town, techniques have been developed to "shuttle" water to the scene of a fire quickly and effectively. The Easton Fire Department also operates their own set of hydraulic rescue tools or "Jaws of Life" which are supplied by the Amkus Corporation, and are tested routinely by both the Fire Dept. and by the corporation themselves. The Department generates a very good response of firefighters in the community through the help of McCain Foods USA, Huber Engineered Woods, and the Easton School Dept. along with other employers or educators in the community who understand the need for the release of firefighters from their everyday lives during an emergency.

The Department maintains the following apparatus:

- 2010 E-One Fire Raider 2, 1800 gallon Pumper/Tanker, 1500 GPM, 30 gallon class A foam. This unit responds second out for all working fires.
- 1994 Central State 1500 gallon pumper, 1000 GPM, 20 gallon class A foam. This unit responds first out for all working fires, and second out for all rescue calls.
- 1984 Middlesex 1000 gallon pumper, 1000 GPM 2 stage pump. This pumper responds first out for all grass/forest fire calls.
- 1985 Freightliner 5000 gallon tanker.
- 2007 Chevrolet, 4x4, carries hydraulic rescue tools, 5000 watt generator and medical equipment. Responds first out for all rescue calls, responds to all calls as manpower is available.

Ambulance Service

Ambulance service is provided by Crown Ambulance, a department of The Aroostook Medical Center (TAMC), which has bases of operation in Fort Fairfield, Limestone, Mars Hill, and Presque Isle and provides emergency medical services in 16 Aroostook County cities and towns. Crown operates a critical care transport service which transfers patients from TAMC to hospitals in Bangor, Augusta, Portland, and Boston when needed. It is the largest emergency medical service in Aroostook County.

Calls are dispatched through the 911 system in Houlton. According to Crown Ambulance, the average response time to Easton (after being notified by the 911 system) is 8 minutes depending on location and road conditions. In 2013, Crown responded to 86 calls in Easton, 97 times in 2012, and 103 in 2011.

FairPoint Communications has been awarded a contract to build its Emergency Services IP network (ESInet) 911 service for the state of Maine, one that will serve over 1.3 million people. When the network build is complete, Maine will become one of the first states to deploy a next-generation 911 (NG-911) system that's aligned with the National Emergency Number Association standards known as i3. Under the terms of the contract, the telephone company will provide system and support to serve the state's 26 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs), which answer all 911 calls in their local coverage areas.

Unlike traditional 911 systems, an NG-911 platform can be used to deliver a mix of voice, text, video, and enhanced data to each PSAPs. Other benefits include improved call setup time and the speed where voice and data arrive at the PSAP. Emergency response teams will also have access to more detailed information before coming to an emergency site.

Police Protection

Easton's police protection is provided by the Aroostook County Sheriff's Department and the Maine State Police. Protection is adequate and the town is not considering the creation of a local police department for the 10 year planning period.

Water and Sewer

There are no public water or sewer systems in Easton. None are projected for the 10 year planning period.

Solid Waste Management

Easton has a signed contract to dispose of solid waste with Tri-Community Recycling and Sanitary Landfill located in Fort Fairfield. Current contracts are on a ten year basis and will be renegotiated in 2018. The Town has also contracted with Pine Tree Waste for roadside household garbage removal. Easton's residential garbage is picked up every Thursday; commercial pickup is Wednesday. Residents are allowed to drop off waste at the landfill but the

town will not pay for tipping fees. The landfill has adequate space in its cells for solid waste disposal to at least 2030.

The annual volume of solid waste sent to Tri-Community Recycling and Sanitary Landfill has remained relatively stable over the last 5 years. According to Tri-Community, the following tonnages have been received from Easton:

2013	1,225
2012	1,148
2011	1,197
2010	1,181
2009	1,242

Igloo Recycling Centers are located in fifteen (15) communities throughout central and northern Aroostook County. In Easton, igloos are located near the town office. Recycling rates specifically for the Town of Easton are not available as all of the towns that Tri-Community provides recycling services for (including Easton) are lumped together. Individual towns used to receive a report from the State (State Planning Office) that provided recycling rates. Generally speaking, rates used to run in the 30-35% range but there was a change in the way it is calculated for the 2013 report, and that change resulted in a lower rate for TCL; which was 21% for 2013.

Power and Communications

Emera Maine provides electrical service to Easton. The company is wholly owned by Emera Inc., a full-service energy company based in Nova Scotia. Emera Maine is the new name for Bangor Hydro and Maine Public Service, who for nearly a century have been bringing power to the people of Maine. Bangor Hydro and Maine Public Service effectively had been operating as one company for some time, and became one utility, Emera Maine, on January 1, 2014. Residential rates are \$7.59 for the first 100 KWH and 0.075852 per KWH over 100KWH. Commercial rates vary depending on the size and make-up of the business and if it is located in a special zone (Pine Tree Zone, Economic Development zone, etc). Three-phase power is available on all arterial routes that lead to and enter the town center. Many local businesses utilize 3-phase and availability can serve new development in existing commercial zones and future industrial sites.

Time Warner Cable Television is available throughout much of Easton's village area and along arterial routes and major collector routes. Several local roads are not served with cable.

Telephone service is provided through Fairpoint Communications. Cell phone providers include Unicell and Verizon and broadband internet access service is available to most geographic areas of Easton through Verizon and Pioneer Wireless Network. Broadband is not accessible though all areas of the community with the area around the Rivere du Chute being the largest area without access. The cost to extend broadband to rural areas is very expensive and it is doubtful that services will be expanded much beyond what is available today.

The Three Ring Binder project proposes to create an open access fiber-optic network extending to the most rural and disadvantaged areas of Maine. The project proposes a 1,100-mile network that will pass through more than 100 communities make broadband more readily available to 110,000 households, 600 community anchor institutions, and a number of last mile service providers. The public-private partnership expects to provide 100 Mbps broadband capabilities for University of Maine campuses, community colleges, government facilities, public safety departments, the MaineREN research and education network, and rural healthcare clinics and hospitals. The project plans to benefit clinics and hospitals by allowing for more immediate contact with clinical healthcare specialists and by increasing the collaboration of local community-based healthcare providers with specialists in major metropolitan areas.

This project proposes to:

- Provide middle mile fiber for broadband service providers to bring cost-effective, high-speed broadband services to areas without access.
- Connect 51 anchor institutions – 10 campuses and outreach centers of the University of Maine System, three community colleges, and 38 government facilities.
- Attract businesses by establishing geographically diverse, fiber-optic routes through Western Maine to Northern New Hampshire and Vermont, and through Eastern and Northern Maine to New Brunswick.
- Create the infrastructure necessary to support existing and diversified industries.
- Enable and promote interconnection of local fire, police, safety, and emergency management agencies.

Easton School Department

The school system in Easton is managed by the Easton School Department. There are two schools in the Department, both located in Easton. The Elementary School is located on the Bangor Road and houses grades Pre-K through 6. The Junior and Senior High School is located on Center Road and houses grades 7 through 12.

According to School Department staff, enrollment for the 2013/2014 school year was 206, up slightly from 2012-13. Projected enrollment for the next school year is presented below.

	Grade														
School year	Pre-K	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Grand Total

2014/2015 (projected)	15	14	12	13	14	15	12	13	13	12	23	15	12	27	210
2013/2014	14	12	13	14	15	12	13	13	12	22	15	12	26	13	206
2012/2013	13	17	17	17	14	12	11	12	20	12	10	23	13	14	205
2011/2012	15	20	16	16	13	10	12	23	15	9	24	12	15	22	222
2010/2011	15	14	13	11	12	14	21	14	10	26	13	16	21	17	217
2009/2010	13	12	13	13	17	21	14	9	25	12	19	17	15	15	215
2008/2009	14	12	16	19	21	13	8	27	12	13	23	13	16	14	221

Source: Easton School Department, 2014

Social Services Supported by Easton

Aroostook County Action Program, Inc (ACAP):

ACAP is a private, non-profit corporation that provides extensive services and resources that help individuals and families achieve greater economic independence. Program areas include Child & Family Services including Head Start, child care and other programs; Employment and Training providing assistance to job seekers and employers seeking trained workers; Health Services including family planning, community health, nutrition and others; Energy & Housing including rental assistance, energy audits and residential rehabilitation programs; and Community Services including case management and other support to access services of other agencies.

Aroostook Area Agency on Aging:

The Agency on Aging provides services on a county-wide basis in program areas which include Elder Care that provides personal, housekeeping and companionship support; Nutrition that provides meals at dining centers or delivered to homebound seniors; Outreach that provides access help to other programs and assistance with Medicare Part D, heating and rental tax-refund programs; Options Counseling that offers guidance on long term care; RSVP, Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, that helps identify and place persons in volunteer service opportunities; and Caregiver that provides support and training for older adults with caregiver responsibilities and caregivers of alzheimer's and dementia patients. The mission of the Aroostook Agency on Aging is improving the quality of life, maximizing the independence and promoting the well-being of older people in northern Maine.

American Red Cross

Named the Pine Tree Chapter in Northern Maine, American Red Cross maintains offices in Bangor, and Caribou, with a staff and volunteers that serve 296 communities. The Pine Tree Chapter fulfills the Red Cross mission of helping people prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies. They operate with a network of volunteers throughout their chapter communities to spread messages of preparedness and ensure that Red Cross services are available. Their work includes training in lifesaving skills such as first aid, CPR, and defibrillator use; training in how to protect families from fires, winter storms, and other disasters; and training in lifeguarding and

swimming instruction, and babysitting skills. Emergency Disaster Services and Armed Forces Emergency Services are also provided.

Clubs, Organizations, and Religious Institutions

The following clubs, organizations and religious institutions are located in Easton:

Organizations

Future Farmers of America

Meets at Easton High School

Works with students to prepare them for careers in agricultural and agricultural related fields.

Kiwanis Club

Meets 1st & 3rd Tuesday at the Odd Fellows Hall

The Kiwanis Club completes community based projects relating to children. Projects are chosen based on community need.

Easton Trailbreakers

Meets 3rd Saturday September to March at the Odd Fellows Hall

Easton Trailbreakers maintain the snowmobile trails located in town. They also provide safety training programs.

Easton ATV Club

Meets the 2nd Tuesday at the Odd Fellows Hall

Easton ATV Club maintains the ATV trails located in town. They also provide safety training programs.

Easton Happy Days Club (Senior Citizens)

Meets the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month at the Manor Recreation Room

Easton Happy Days Club provides senior citizens with recreational and other programs.

Historical Society

Located on the 2nd floor of the Odd Fellows Hall

Works on historic preservation projects in Easton.

Parent Community Organization (EPCO)

Located at the Easton Elementary School

Works to encourage volunteerism of parents, encouragement of teachers and students, community involvement, and welfare of students and families

Little School Restoration Committee

Works on the Little School restoration project and includes the development of fundraisers.

Religious Institutions

Easton Pentecostal Church

Easton Wesleyan Church
Pine Tree Baptist Church
United Baptist Church
New Song Church

Health Care Services in Easton

Village Health Care

Village Health Care, located on Center Road, opened in May 2014 and provides Easton's residents with primary care options. The facility employs 5 persons.

The Aroostook Medical Center

The Aroostook Medical Center (TAMC), a not-for-profit organization, is the leading provider of healthcare services in Northern Maine. Their mission is to restore, maintain and improve the health of Aroostook County's residents in a compassionate and professional environment. TAMC is governed by a local volunteer board of trustees TAMC is a member of Eastern Maine Health Services which allows them to offer a wide range of healthcare services not typically available in rural communities. TAMC employs over 60 physicians and a team of over 1000 employees, and offers advanced cancer care, cardiology, dialysis, sleep medicine, imaging, emergency response, and orthopedics services.

Aroostook Mental Health Center: AMHC is a private, non-profit mental health care organization based in northern Maine. Incorporated in 1964, AMHC has evolved into a community health organization offering a wide variety of outpatient and residential services including: Community Support, Mental Health, Substance Abuse, Emergency Services, Employee and Student Assistance, Psychological Testing, and Assessment and Consultation and Education.

Cemeteries

There are three cemeteries located in Easton, Mt. Shilo, Estes Park, and Pine Tree. Mt. Shilo is located on Rt. 1-A south of Easton Center and is at capacity. Estes Park is Easton's largest cemetery and is located on the Easton Center Road. This cemetery contains the gravesites of Civil War Veterans along with many of Easton's earliest settlers. There are new sections that have been added to this cemetery and it contains adequate burial space for the projected planning period. The third cemetery is the Pine Tree Cemetery located on the Easton/Fort Fairfield town line. There are approximately 80 sites located at this cemetery.

Residents were concerned with the condition of the cemeteries, especially those of the older sites where gravestones have fallen over. As a result, town officials are working with the University of Maine at Presque Isle and Aroostook Aspirations to complete cemetery projects. These includes mapping and cataloging all burial sites, cleaning brush and general landscaping, and maintaining and fixing headstones that have fallen over. Maps and catalogs of names of each cemetery will be kept at the Town Office. This project is expected to be completed in 2015. Town officials are also in the process of seeking grants for the perpetual care of the cemetery.

Analysis/Key Issues

The process of identifying the issues facing the town's facilities/services over the next ten years involved participation from all department heads, except for recreation, which is addressed separately in the recreation section. Department heads have direct knowledge of the day to day workings and challenges of managing their facilities. This allowed many significant issues related to capacity, maintenance, energy use, staffing and training to be identified. They agreed that the burden of cost needs to be distributed fairly among the beneficiaries including residents, developers, tax-exempt organizations and neighboring communities.

The location and type of development occurring in Easton impacts most departments in some way. However, the development of land use regulation or ordinances must be done in a way that does not deter growth. Determining public facility and service investment priority is always difficult and is even more so in a down economy and with steady population. Every facility/service requires investment but some may be prioritized based on cost benefit. Investments should help improve efficiency, control long term operation and maintenance costs particularly related to energy use, attract new residential, commercial or industrial development and create tax or customer base. These considerations help establish priority.

The Town may wish to consider the development of a Community Energy Plan (CEP) that takes a comprehensive look at energy use at all facilities and charts a path for investments that reduce energy use and costs. Other types of investments are obligatory to comply with laws and regulations and the service life of the facility, component or equipment. In these cases, investment can only be delayed so long before disruption of service or operating cost creates bigger problems. Roads, public safety and recreation were all identified as priority areas for investment.

Easton partners with neighboring communities in several ways that help reduce costs and improve services for all parties. The primary areas of cooperation include solid waste disposal/recycling, ambulance service, septic waste disposal, recreation and public works related joint purchasing. Neighboring communities are also discussing cooperation in tax assessment and revaluation services.

There are no major school construction or expansion projects anticipated during the planning period. The population and demographics section explains the impact of declining enrollments at the 2 schools that comprise Easton School Department.

Easton provides experienced, responsible and well equipped emergency response system that includes fire and public works. The system is well coordinated with the Aroostook Emergency Management Agency and the town participates in the county hazard mitigation planning process.

The solid waste management system is operated by Tri-Community Recycling and Sanitary Landfill and private haulers and is meeting the needs of the residents. The facility still accepts mixed household waste, but provides for voluntary separation of cardboard/paper, plastics, metal, electronics and batteries. Recycling igloos are available in Easton for some of the

recyclables and all are accepted at the landfill in Fort Fairfield. The recycling rate is presently under the State's goal of 50 percent.

Improvements in telecommunications and energy infrastructure are ongoing in the region and in Easton. The primary systems are owned and managed by Fair Point Communications, US Cellular, Pioneer Wireless Network, Time Warner Cable, and WAGM-TV, for telecommunications and Emera for electrical energy. Emera is a regulated electric transmission and distribution utility serving approximately 36,000 electricity customers in northern Maine. Corporate headquarters are located in Presque Isle. MPS is a wholly owned subsidiary of Emera, Inc.

PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Strategies are listed in priority order.

State Goal

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

Local Goal

Maintain and improve Easton's facilities and services in a manner that is cost effective and efficient and that helps support job creation and population growth.

POLICY

Maintain and, when justified, improve department capacity in the areas of communication, equipment, staffing and training.

Strategies

- a. Continue to budget for annual expenses related to all town owned building maintenance.
- b. Replace fire vehicles and equipment outlined in the Town's capital improvement plan. Continue to raise funds through the use of incremental contributions to reserve accounts and application to Homeland Security and other Federal and State grant programs.
- c. Have highway department equipment evaluated for refurbishing or replacement to help decide either to upgrade or extend the life of the equipment.
- d. Participate in a regional firefighter training and recruitment program with automatic/mutual aid departments and seek funding under FEMA-Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) and other sources.
- e. Focus fire fighter recruitment efforts on trained and experience personnel and develop an incentives package based on a percentage of the cost of training.
- f. When developing a building permit application process, include identification of the use of manufactured laminate, trusses, beams and joist and create a Fire Department response code for these structures.
- g. Gradually increase/expend funds for stipends, wages and training in fire department budgets.
- h. Continue to control costs by utilizing access to State/Federal grant programs and surplus sites for some purchases.
- i. Designate and train a staff member as a certified facility manager to conduct annual facility inspections and develop the maintenance budget.
- j. Seek State/Federal grant funding for energy efficiency upgrades and use maintenance budgets as leverage.
- k. Install dry hydrants at strategic location in town as back-up water volume demand during firefighting.
- l. Evaluate through a professional energy audit the opportunities to lower building operating costs related to energy efficiency for heating and lighting.
- m. Include recommended energy efficiency upgrades, including overhead doors, in Easton's updated Capital Improvement Plan.

- n. Complete a feasibility study of an alternative energy boiler to heat public works, Odd Fellows Hall, grange hall, and town office.
- o. Continue to participate in existing cooperative purchasing with the MaineDOT and NMDC on culverts and road salt.
- p. Create new regional opportunities for joint purchasing with other departments, municipalities and private companies in such areas as fuel, lubricants, tires, parts and other.
- q. Evaluate the necessity of the construction of a small public water and sewer facility in the village area should project growth occur.

POLICY

Improve efficiency, cost for services and revenue generated by all Departments to minimize property tax burden and promote community growth.

Strategies

- a. Continue to update computer systems and software every 3-5 years to improve speed and reliability.
- b. Develop the Town's information database and technology to include the following online services; vehicle registrations, hunting/fishing licensing, electronic funds transfer for property tax, water, sewer and other fee payments, submission of building permit applications, real estate assessment data and expand over the next 10 years.

POLICY

Encourage non-profits and entrepreneurs to provide new community services, when appropriate, as a means of creating jobs and serving local needs.

Strategies

- a. Publicize the need for new local services through the Town's website and contact with non-profits and entrepreneurs..
- b. Continue to seek grants and provide local funds for non-profits and new service businesses.
- c. Work with the Central Aroostook Chamber of Commerce to promote the need for new services.

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

Easton's Vision

Easton will constantly strive to be

- ❖ a dynamic community that is economically, culturally, and socially inviting;
- ❖ a community that promotes and aggressively pursues innovative business and economic development;
- ❖ a community that welcomes, supports, and responds to a diversity of new people and new ideas;
- ❖ a community that recognizes children as our future and shares collective responsibility for the nurturing and education of each generation;
- ❖ a community where family ties are strong, self respect and respect for others is instilled, where trust and courtesy is a way of life, and where the pace of life is consistent with these ideals; and
- ❖ a community that celebrates the values and lessons of a multi-cultural heritage that serves as its strength and as its foundation in a progressive, modern world

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

Introduction

When planning for municipal recreation facilities and programs the key is to understand and balance the needs of the community with availability of recreation opportunities, programs and funds. The Easton Recreation Department provides a very popular recreation program for all ages. The Department strives to compliment and not compete with other public and private programs and facilities. Local recreation partnerships include Easton Recreation Department, Easton School Department, and several private interests including Maine Winter Sports- Nordic Heritage Center, local ATV and snowmobile clubs, Easton Happy Days Club, Power of Prevention, and many others. These diverse recreation interests collectively support recreational facility and program needs of the community.

The 2010 Census indicates that Easton has a slowly increasing population, an increasing demographic in the 45-64 year old age group and a declining trend in the child bearing age group of 25-44. Given the age of the town's facilities and the diversity of the recreational programs, one area of focus is on the 10 year needs for facility modernization and programs that meet changing demographics and recreation preferences. For example, the "newly retired" tend to be more health conscience and desire year round activity. However, efforts to create jobs and attract population are also part of this 10 year picture so interim review of recreation needs is critical. As growth occurs at a greater rate priorities may need to shift.

Municipal recreation facilities are public facilities and as such, the Town needs to plan for needed investments and upgrades over time. Some of these upgrades are mandated by State and Federal laws like the Americans with Disabilities Act. These facilities are public assets that should be maintained for the long-term benefit of Easton's residents. Capital recreation projects are included in the 10-year capital investment plan found in the section on Fiscal Capacity.

Conditions and Trends

Recreation Department

Easton has a well supported recreation program conducted by the Easton Recreation Department. The Department offers a variety of recreational programs year-round for community members of all ages. Popular youth programs include Summer Day Camp, swim lessons, Zumbatomic, youth sports including soccer, basketball, baseball, T-ball, gymnastics, cheerleading, track and field and cross-country skiing. Other programs include Sneakin' in Science Classes, outdoor adventure activities, holiday crafts, cooking classes and a garden program. Children from Easton, Fort Fairfield, and Mars Hill participate in these popular recreation programs.

Seniors activities are gaining in popularity and include weekly nutrition and exercises classes, holiday gatherings and monthly field trips in and around Aroostook County. The adults in the community stay active with our co-ed softball leagues and Zumba. Special events and school vacation field trips are also well attended and popular. Programs include an Easter Community

Breakfast and Egg Hunt, Christmas Gift Making, Winter Carnival, and Easton Field Days, which is held annually during the summer.

The Department relies on volunteers to maintain and support the wide variety of programs it offers and continually seeks volunteers from the community to help. It is this community support of the recreational programs that make them successful. The Recreation Department is overseen by a thirteen member Recreation Committee. Recreation Committee meetings are called for by the Recreation Director as the need arises.

Private “active” recreation programs are generally associated with clubs or businesses that offer activities that are beyond those covered by public programs. There are two private recreation facilities located in Easton, the Francis Malcolm Science Center with its 3.2 miles of trail system and over 5 miles of cross country ski trails located on private land.. Private activities available to Easton residents in nearby communities also include cross-country and downhill skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, biathlon, mountain biking, golf, canoeing, kayaking, camping, hiking, fishing, hunting, weight training, karate, spinning, yoga and dance. These are the activities for which a fee or membership is required in most cases. An example of this is the Nordic Heritage Sports Club located at the Nordic Heritage Center in Presque Isle which offers outdoor programs for everyone in the greater Presque Isle area, regardless of age or level or proficiency. Programs include one-day learn-to ski and bike clinics, citizens’ races and events, youth ski and bike programs, geocaching clinics, full-moon ski tours, biathlon clinics, and social gatherings.

All programs, whether public or private, are important to maintaining health and fitness in the community. A Physical Activity Resource Guide supported by Healthy Maine Partnership’s coalition with the Power of Prevention and Healthy Aroostook is available at powerofprevention.org. This is an extensive guide to physical activity sites available in the region.

The Easton School Department school year programming is comprised primarily of team sports for girls and boys. The sports included are cheerleading, soccer, volleyball, and basketball. School Department facilities are utilized by the Recreation Department for program activities.

Easton residents also are able to utilize the University of Maine at Presque Isle’s Gentile Hall facilities. Facilities include a rock wall, walking track, swimming pool, and multipurpose courts, and a fitness center.

Local Facilities and Areas

Easton has four (4) publically owned and 2 privately owned recreation facilities/areas that support a broad range of activities for all seasons. Snowmobile and ATV trails are also discussed separately. Recreation activities and programming that has been described are supported by public and private areas and facilities summarized in the tables that follow.

Easton's Public Recreation Facilities/Areas

Name	Parking	Restroom	Activity
Oddfellows Hall	X	X	Serves as the community center. Many of the recreational programs are housed in this location.
Prestile Stream Recreation Area	X	X	Picnicking, fishing, kayaking, canoeing. Rails and stairs are in need of maintenance.
Tennis Court, Basketball Court, and Baseball Field	X		Located next to the School. Tennis court needs major renovations. Basketball courts and baseball fields are also in need of major renovations
Easton School Department	X	X	Playground, basketball court, soccer fields. Gymnasium also is utilized by the Recreation Department for programs such as Zumba. Boys soccer field should be brought up to regulation size. Lighting of soccer fields is also recommended.

Source: Town of Easton, 2014

Easton Private Recreation Facilities/ Areas

Name	Parking	Restroom	Activity
Francis Malcolm Science Center	X	X	3.2 miles of walking and snowshoeing trails. Pets and vehicles are not allowed.
Cross Country Ski Trails	X		Privately owned 5 mile trail system. User Fee basis

Source: Town of Easton 2014

Prestile Stream and Rivere du Chute are well known trout fisheries. However, access is mostly through private land. If fishing is to be promoted, access must be developed and promoted. There is no formal public access to the stream and most access crosses private property. The Maine Departments of Conservation, Transportation, and Inland Fisheries and Wildlife provide programs to help municipalities secure and develop public access opportunities.

Revitalizing the Prestile Stream Recreational area, located behind the Town Office, is a priority for the town. The access point is currently chained off due to past vandalism at the site. However, this recreation facility is located in the center of the community and there is the potential for hosting events during Easton Days and at other times. Town officials will seek grants to update the pavilion, add barbeque grills and picnic tables, upgrade the railings and

stairs, add lighting, and develop a system for limiting vehicle access. There is also the possibility of constructing a hand carry boat launch.

Regional Opportunities

Easton and the central Aroostook region have an extensive network of mapped trails and access points for land and water based recreation during all seasons. Snowmobile and ATV trail information and maps are readily available from the Association of Aroostook Chambers of Commerce, visitaroostook.com and at most Chamber of Commerce offices. The 2,200 mile snowmobile trail system is maintained by about 40 local clubs and the 1,200 mile ATV trail system is maintained by about 28 local clubs. Hiking, mountain biking and canoe/kayak trails are available throughout the region and include Aroostook State Park, the Allagash Wilderness Waterway, North Maine Woods, Maine Public Reserve Lands and others. There are 31 mapped water trails in the region that comprise about 250 miles for paddling. Trails and trail information is supported by many public and private entities. Detailed information is available on-line at several locations including GoAroostookOutdoors.com and the North Maine Woods and Maine Department of Conservation websites.

Easton maintains an impressive and extensive ATV and snowmobile trail systems. According to the Maine Department of Conservation, there are 25 miles of snowmobile trail and 27 miles of ATV trail located in town (some of the segments are colocated). The Easton TrailBreakers maintains the snowmobile trail system. Interconnected trail systems (ITS) 83 extends northerly through Easton from Mars Hill. There are also local trails (81A, 81B, and 81C) and several small connectors maintained by the club. All of the trail system is located on private land in Easton. The Club maintains a groomer that was purchased by the town and relies heavily on volunteers to maintain equipment and the trail systems.

A majority of Easton's ATV trail system is located to the east of Route 1-A and maintained by the Easton ATV Club. The club maintains approximately 27 miles of local trails, mostly on local roads and private land as well as a small club house/building on the Rivere du Chute area where equipment is stored. There are connections to the Presque Isle system located just to the south of Perry Drive. They receive funding through membership dues and the Department of Conservation (DOC) for trail maintenance. The club applies to DOC every year for expense reimbursement for trail projects.

Key Regional Facilities and Areas

Big Rock Ski Area: Established in 1960, Bigrock Ski Area was purchased in 2000 by the Maine Winter Sports Center (MWSC) through grants available from the Portland, Maine - based Libra Foundation. Extensive brush clearing, trail reconditioning and cutting, improved snowmaking capabilities, reconditioned and new lifts, as well as new grooming equipment have made the slopes more enjoyable for all skill levels. Cross-country skiing and snowshoe trails, as well as a snow-tube park, add variety to the region's winter sports experience. Bigrock's lodge has been expanded to include a new cafe with hot food off the grill along with homemade soups, sandwiches, and snacks.

Aroostook State Park: Aroostook State Park, encompassing Quaggy Jo Mountain and Echo Lake, has the honor of being Maine's first state park. In 1938, citizens of Presque Isle donated 100 acres of land to the State of Maine, and in 1939 the park became reality. In 2014, the park totals nearly 800 acres thanks to subsequent donations and purchases.

Amenities in the park include 30 campsites that can accommodate tents and trailers, hot showers, a kitchen shelter with lights and running water, and over 7 miles of hiking, cross country, and snow shoeing trails located in the park. The park also contains a handicap accessible lakeside picnic area with picnic tables, charcoal grills, a swimming area and changing facilities. The boating area offers ample space for parking, launching and docking. Canoes and kayaks can be rented at the control station. Activities at Aroostook State Park include birdwatching, boating (motorized), camping, canoeing, cross-country skiing, fishing, hiking (trails), snowmobiling, snowshoeing, swimming, walking (roads and paths), and watchable wildlife. The park is maintained by the State Of Maine.

The Nordic Heritage Center: The Nordic Heritage Center (NHC) is a four-season outdoor recreation facility in Presque Isle which is managed and operated by the Nordic Heritage Sport Club. The facility includes a world class cross country ski and biathlon venue with a stadium and lodge, a team wax building, and 20 kilometers of cross country ski trails and over 20 miles of mountain bike trails. The lodge is open to the public from 6 am to 10 pm and includes kitchen facilities, restrooms, shower rooms, and a sauna. The trails are free to the public.

The mountain bike trails at the NHC include over 20 miles of hand made and machine made single track that crosses most of the Maine Winter Sports property and some adjacent properties. Rich Edwards of IMBA's Trail Solutions designed the majority of the trail system. The trails wind through different forest types and vary from smooth and fluid to narrow and technical. Moderate to expert line options such as log skinnies, exposed bedrock outcrops, and natural drops can be found on some of the trails. A skills/terrain park is available for practicing dirt jumps and other technical features such as skinnies, log obstructions, stairs, teeter totters, etc.

Scopan Public Reserved Lands: Located between Presque Isle and Ashland, the 16,700-acre Scopan Management Unit contains some of the most rugged terrain in this part of the state. In addition to 1400-foot-high Scopan Mountain and 9.5 miles of shoreline on Scopan Lake, it also has low hills, wetlands, brooks, and a small pond. This forested area, bordering a scenic lake, attracts visitors who enjoy hunting, fishing, and camping in a semi-remote setting. Water access campsites on the lake shore and snowmobile trails through the woods are the most popular destinations for visitors. There is a public boat launch facility located on the western end of the lake in Masardis.

Allagash Wilderness Waterway: The Allagash Wilderness Waterway (AWW) was established by the Maine Legislature in 1966 to preserve, protect, and enhance the natural beauty, character, and habitat of this unique area. It is a magnificent, 92-mile-long ribbon of lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams winding through the heart of northern Maine's vast commercial forests. In 1970 the Waterway was named the first state-administered component of the National Wild and Scenic River System. The AWW is most accessible to Easton residents via the North Maine Woods

checkpoint in Ashland or Portage Lake. Most outdoor recreation opportunities are available. Entry fees are required.

The North Maine Woods (NMW): The NMW is a Multiple Ownership - Multiple Use Management Area. The NMW organization is a non-profit corporation contracted to manage the public recreational use of 3.5 million acres of mostly private and some public commercial forest. NMW provides visitors with valuable information on forest resource management and recreational use that is designed to help them have a safe and pleasant trip in the working forest. Fees are charged for day use and overnight camping and seasons passes are available. Access is available at four checkpoint gates approximately one hour from Easton off State Route 11 in Oxbow, Ashland, Portage Lake, and Winterville. Gates are both staffed and automated 24/7 for most of the year.

Recreational Needs in Easton

Addressing unmet needs in recreation programming and facilities requires a financial commitment, a sense of community priorities, and an understanding of the benefit-cost relationship. The latter is strongly influenced by the longevity of the program or facility. Easton's focus on traditional and family oriented recreation activities has resulted in many longstanding programs and facilities that have served the Town well for decades. Recreation programming and facility needs identified during the planning process are listed below and detailed in the analyses section.

Public Recreation Programming Needs

1. Special programs for "at risk" teens that do not participate in sports or existing extracurricular programs.
2. Enhanced safety training for young ATV and snowmobile riders.
3. Establish on-going walk and bike to school program following a Safe Routes to School evaluation.
4. Expand athletic and sports programs for grades 7-12 to improve access and participation beyond what is offered by junior high and high school teams.
5. Host Hunter's Safety courses.
6. Survey high school as to their needs for recreational programs.

Public Recreation Facility Needs (See Capital Investment Plan)

1. Reconstruction of tennis courts as grants become available.
2. Construction of a hand carry boat ramp on Prestile Pond behind the town offices.
3. Improved access to the Odd Fellows Hall to meet American with Disabilities requirements. Includes the construction of ramps and widening of any doorways.
4. Identify through signage a dedicated pedestrian/bike trail along Station, Center, Conant Roads and other suitable locations. This may also include the development of mapping to show users amenities and trail locations.
5. Explore the development of a new trailhead access points for snowmobilers and ATV riders in the downtown area.
6. Install lights at the soccer field.
7. Construct a regulation boys soccer field as grants become available.

8. Construct softball fields behind Junior and Senior High School.
9. Designate crosswalks along Center Road where sidewalks change sides. This would be primarily near the school

Analyses

Easton has a slowly increasing population and a demographic shift toward an increasing number of persons in the 45-64 year old age group. Based on these facts, recreation facilities and programs available locally and in the region would meet community needs. Overall participation remains strong in the youth programs that are offered and adult programming is steadily increasing. The Recreation Department's budget has remained relatively stable but Town officials should be watchful for stagnation which could limit its capacity to raise matching funds for capital projects that could be partially or substantially funded by grants. The town is applying for grants to reconstruct the tennis courts and may need matching funds in order to obtain those grants.

Recreation services could be expanded to focus on areas that increase overall participation by all age groups and that foster a healthier community. For example, to better accommodate the "newly retired", ages 58 – 70, new programs that encourage physical and social activity during all seasons would be most beneficial. Examples include everything from chess, travel and dinner clubs to field trips. Fortunately the Town has strong partnerships with surrounding communities and is able to use regional indoor facilities.

To address pedestrian and bike safety issues on multi-use trails and along roads, expanded safety training for young ATV riders, should be developed and required. The Town may also wish to conduct community-wide bikeability and walkability evaluation through the use of UMPI students or volunteers from the community. The town may also wish to consider the development of a "safe routes to school" program. There may need to be some community education regarding these programs in order to establish public support for implementation. Additionally the Town will work with the MaineDOT to designate cross walks in appropriate locations.

Easton has three facilities, the Odd Fellows Hall, tennis courts, and Prestile Stream Recreational area that are in need of updates and upgrades. The Town may be faced with making significant investments in old facilities in the near future. ADA laws may eventually force the issue of accessibility compliance at the Odd Fellows Hall. Similarly the existing tennis court requires complete reconstruction and the town is in the process of obtaining grant funding to do so. It is the Town's intent to bring those courts back to a usable condition.

As stated above the Prestile Stream facility may be required in the near future to improve safety and increase usage. Projects may include, as grants become available, upgrade of the pavilion, add barbeque grills and picnic tables, upgrade the railings and stairs, add lighting, and develop a system for limiting vehicle access.

Easton's open space, including the snowmobile and ATV trail systems, directly support tourism which represents a well established economic engine for the town and traditional access to

private lands for recreation is still extensive in Easton. Most land is not posted and some landowners support access by permission only. As a result, there is little pressure to use public funds to acquire land for public use. Some land has been closed off as a result of ownership changes, residential development in rural areas and abuses by users. There has not been a great threat of development that may eliminate the landowners permitted use by the public. However, there is no assurance of long term public use of these popular areas.

Recreational trails in the community are well maintained because of a distinct combination of public and private efforts. Financial support including staff time comes from the Town and the Maine Department of Conservation at the State level. Cooperating landowners and volunteerism ensures that maintenance work on the trail systems is completed. The snowmobile club may find it necessary to consider looking at alternate funding sources in the future if State funding for trail maintenance tightens any further. This would be a sensible move and may even help improve maintenance of the local club trails. The ATV club has relied on the extensive use of public roads to access trails on private land and in neighboring communities. This helps alleviate the trail maintenance responsibility.

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE Policies & Strategies

State Goal

Promote and protect the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities including access to surface waters.

Local Goal

Improve existing recreation facilities and expand opportunities for all forms of recreation to benefit residents and as a tool to attract visitors, new residents and to enhance the local economy.

POLICY

Maintain and upgrade existing recreational facilities and Parks as necessary to meet present and future needs.

Strategies

- a. Support and seek grant funding for the reconstruction of the tennis courts, basketball courts lights for the soccer field, a regulation sized softball field and to address ADA compliance issues at the Odd Fellows Hall.
- b. Continue to budget for building repairs and maintenance and transfer budgetary surplus to recreation reserve for capital improvements.
- c. Continue to request capital improvement funds in the annual recreation budget to be used as matching funds for capital improvement grants.
- d. Consider the development of public recreational facility "adoption" programs to the local scouting organizations, clubs, groups and civic organizations to support maintenance and beautification of these assets.
- e. Playground located in the village area or around the subdivisions.

POLICY

Implement recreation programming that fills service gaps and that is complimentary and collaborative with the Easton School Department.

Strategies

- a. Continue to support athletic and sports programs that create greater opportunity for participation at all grade levels.
- b. Continue to seek public/private grant funds for programs that support the needs and interests of all youth.
- c. Maintain recreational programming to meet present interests and needs of all students.
- d. Continue to develop programming to meet the older age groups through the adult education program.

- e. Form partnerships that help develop programs for teens that do not presently participate and that help deter risky, inappropriate or unproductive behavior.

POLICY

Maintain, expand and improve walking and recreational trail systems and open space as an asset to the community and in support of economic development, private businesses and recreation organizations.

Strategies

- a. Continue to contact landowners at least once annually for appreciation and recognition.
- b. Study feasibility of the development of ATV and snowmobile trailer parking and trail access at appropriate locations.
- c. Continue to seek grant funding and to raise private matching funds for parking including trailers and service facilities at trailheads.
- d. Raise funds through grants, club fundraisers and private donations for the development of shelters that serve all trail systems.
- e. Continue to participate in the new Maine ATV interconnecting trail system (MATS) and support its growth.
- f. Continue to be responsive to trail neighbor and owner concerns regarding noise, dust and other issues.
- g. Through the local clubs, implement an annual landowner awareness program to educate existing and perspective trail landowners on tax incentives and insurance benefits available to them.
- h. Seek funding for the purchase of a new snowmobile trail groomer.
- i. Seek the input and support of the MaineDOT and the Nordic Heritage Center to construct paved shoulders along roads that have high bike and pedestrian usage

POLICY

Maintain, expand and improve recreational access to waters as an asset to the community and in support of economic development.

Strategies

- a. Continue to budget for maintenance and apply for grants for capital improvements at the Prestile Stream Recreational area.
- b. Work with interested groups, landowners and the Central Aroostook Soil and Water Conservation District to map all known access points to the Prestile Stream, Rivere du Chute, and other water bodies. These should include both public (secure) and private (unsecure) locations.
- c. Develop a plan to secure access to these water bodies when the opportunity arises.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Easton's Vision

Easton will constantly strive to be

- ❖ a dynamic community that is economically, culturally, and socially inviting;
- ❖ a community that promotes and aggressively pursues innovative business and economic development;
- ❖ a community that welcomes, supports, and responds to a diversity of new people and new ideas;
- ❖ a community that recognizes children as our future and shares collective responsibility for the nurturing and education of each generation;
- ❖ a community where family ties are strong, self respect and respect for others is instilled, where trust and courtesy is a way of life, and where the pace of life is consistent with these ideals; and
- ❖ a community that celebrates the values and lessons of a multi-cultural heritage that serves as its strength and as its foundation in a progressive, modern world

NATURAL RESOURCES

Water Resources Conditions and Trends

Rivers, streams, great ponds, aquifers and wetlands are all considered water resources. Public and private wells that serve as public drinking water supplies are also the focus of the Town's water resources inventory. Individual water resources were examined for ecological value, threats to quality or quantity and any documented issues related to water quality or invasive species. The Water Resources Map at the end of this section identifies the location of these resources in Easton.

Great Ponds

One of Easton's three great ponds is completely undeveloped and remains in its natural state. The only development is on Easton Pond. These great ponds do not appear on the Maine Department of Environmental Protection's list of watersheds most at risk from development. Developments occurring in watersheds that are on the list require additional standards for storm water runoff and site development. Keeping phosphorus laden sediments out of the ponds is the major objective of additional standards. The present level of development activity in the respective watersheds has not reached the point of damaging water quality in these ponds. Each pond is described below based on a survey conducted by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

Bennett Lake

Bennett Lake is a small, shallow, spring fed lake with abundant aquatic vegetation. Summer water temperatures remain sufficiently cool to support brook trout. The lake was reclaimed in 1956 to allow intensive trout management. The barrier dam on the outlet, built to prevent undesirable species of fish from re-entering the lake, has washed out twice. Construction of a satisfactory barrier dam is infeasible due to lack of good sites available. Suckers and minnows have become reestablished in Bennett Lake and are competing heavily with brook trout. No known public access is available to Bennett Lake. Bennett Lake has been partially zoned Resource Protection and partially Limited Residential under the Town's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance.

Easton Pond

Easton Pond is formed by a dam on Prestile Stream built in conjunction with the highway bridge at Easton. Although the pond is shallow, bottom water temperatures remain cool during most summers because of the inflow of cool water from Prestile Stream. Unfortunately, the pond contains large populations of non-sport fishes that are serious competitors with trout. Chemical reclamation would not be feasible because of the difficulty of treating the many miles of tributaries. Inlet spawning and nursery areas for trout are adequate to maintain the fishery by natural reproduction. The section of Prestile Stream above the dam also supports good resident trout populations. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife recommends the construction of a fishway in the dam to permit free movement of trout upstream into the pond

and into stream areas above. Easton Pond has been zoned as a Stream Protection District as it is essentially a wide spot on the Prestile Stream. The park located next to the municipal building is an important asset to Easton and Town officials are working to renovate and revitalize this area. This will be discussed in the Recreation and Open Space section.

Josephine Lake

Josephine Lake serves McCain Foods and is a privately maintained waterbody with limited public access. This area is a significant wading bird and waterfowl habitat and has been a popular (access by permission) hunting location. It is a shallow waterbody and has been zoned Limited residential under Easton Shoreland Zoning Ordinance. Josephine Lake is a very popular bird watching spot in Easton while nearby Christina Reservoir in Fort Fairfield is popular with waterfowl hunters.

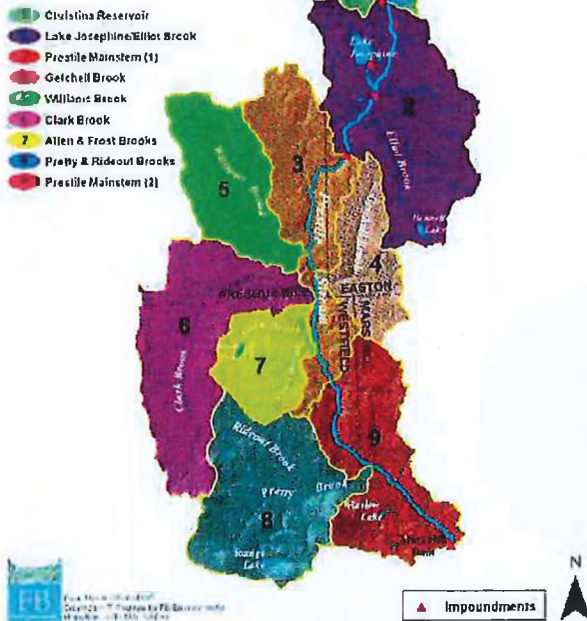
Lindsay Lake

Lindsay Lake is not a Great Pond but has been zoned Resource Protection due to its wading bird and waterfowl habitat potential. Lindsey Lake has also been surveyed by IF&W. The waterbody is shallow with equal water temperatures at all depths during the summer. Trout maintain themselves during warm periods by seeking spring areas. Trout are very abundant in the outlet, Riviere des Chutes, but upstream migration into the pond is hindered by many beaver dams. Trout production is further limited by the presence of competing minnows and eels and marginal water quality. Any additional kinds of fish would provide more competition for trout.

Prestile Stream Watershed

Christina Reservoir and 15.8 miles of Prestile Stream, which originates at the outlet of the Reservoir and terminates at the Mars Hill Dam, have both been listed as “impaired” by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) because of nonpoint source (NPS) pollution carried in stormwater runoff as a result of historic and present day pollution. These water bodies have been placed on DEP’s 2008 303(d) list of impaired waterbodies because of failure to meet their statutory Class A water quality designations. Prestile Stream violates Maine’s standards for aquatic life and dissolved oxygen. Causes of impairment are a direct result of industrial waste discharge and water withdrawals in the 1950’s and 1960’s and inputs of the insecticide DDT through 1972. Several impoundments, including Christina Reservoir and Lake Josephine, provide water for processing plants. The Prestile Stream watershed is also identified as one of the 27 highest priority watersheds among the 55 streams listed on DEP’s Nonpoint Source (NPS) Priority River & Stream Watersheds.

Upper Prestile Stream Subwatersheds



Map 1

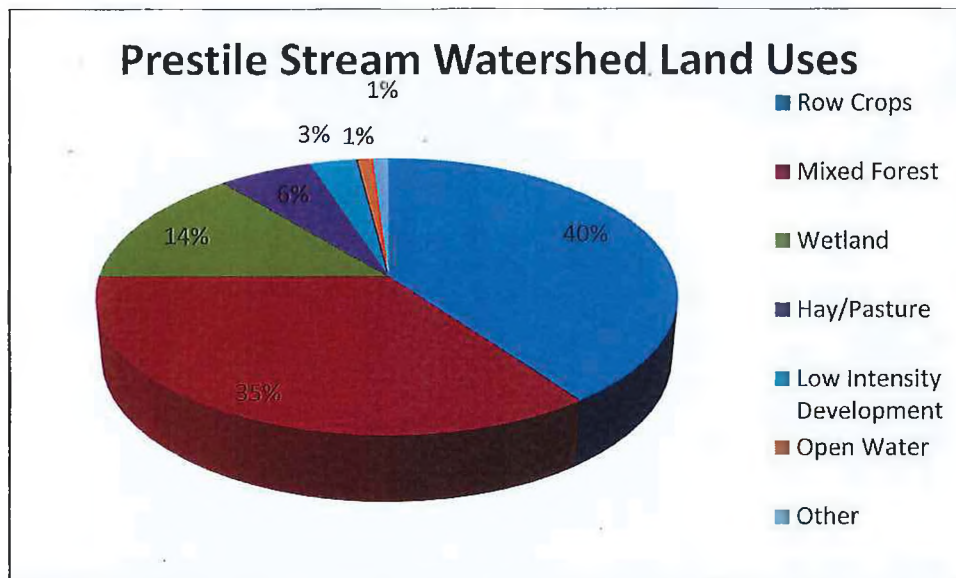
July 2009

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In 2002, the Central Aroostook Soil and Water Conservation District (CASWCD) brought together a 40-member Steering Committee to write a watershed management plan. This plan was completed in 2005. Its primary recommendations were funding and outreach, assessment and monitoring, and nonpoint source action.

In 2008, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) contracted with FB Environmental Associates of Portland to conduct a *Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Report of Prestile Stream (& Christina Reservoir)*. The Prestile Stream TMDL study was based on sampling data collected between 1999 and 2006. The Report found that elevated nutrient loading and sediment accumulation contributes to the excess algae growth in the stream, which consumes oxygen during respiration and depresses DO levels. Excess soil runoff provides sediment that contains a mixture of nutrients, inorganic and organic material that stimulates algal growth and contributes to the hyper-abundant populations of macroinvertebrates. Dissolved oxygen (DO) increase and temperature measurements decrease from north to south. Phosphorus, nitrogen, and sediment levels were elevated and macroinvertebrate populations do not meet state requirements for a Class A stream, indicating nutrient enrichment, sedimentation, and algal growth.

Agricultural land encompasses the largest land area in the watershed, making it potentially the greatest contributor of silt and nutrient enrichment to the Stream. Nutrients have also accumulated over time in bottom sediments of the slow flowing and ponded steam segments and may be periodically released into the water column. Other sources of NPS include bare agricultural land; removal of riparian vegetation; poorly designed and/or maintained roads and culverts including gravel/farm roads, paved roads, and logging roads; logging debris left in streams; use of fertilizers; and animal/pet waste.

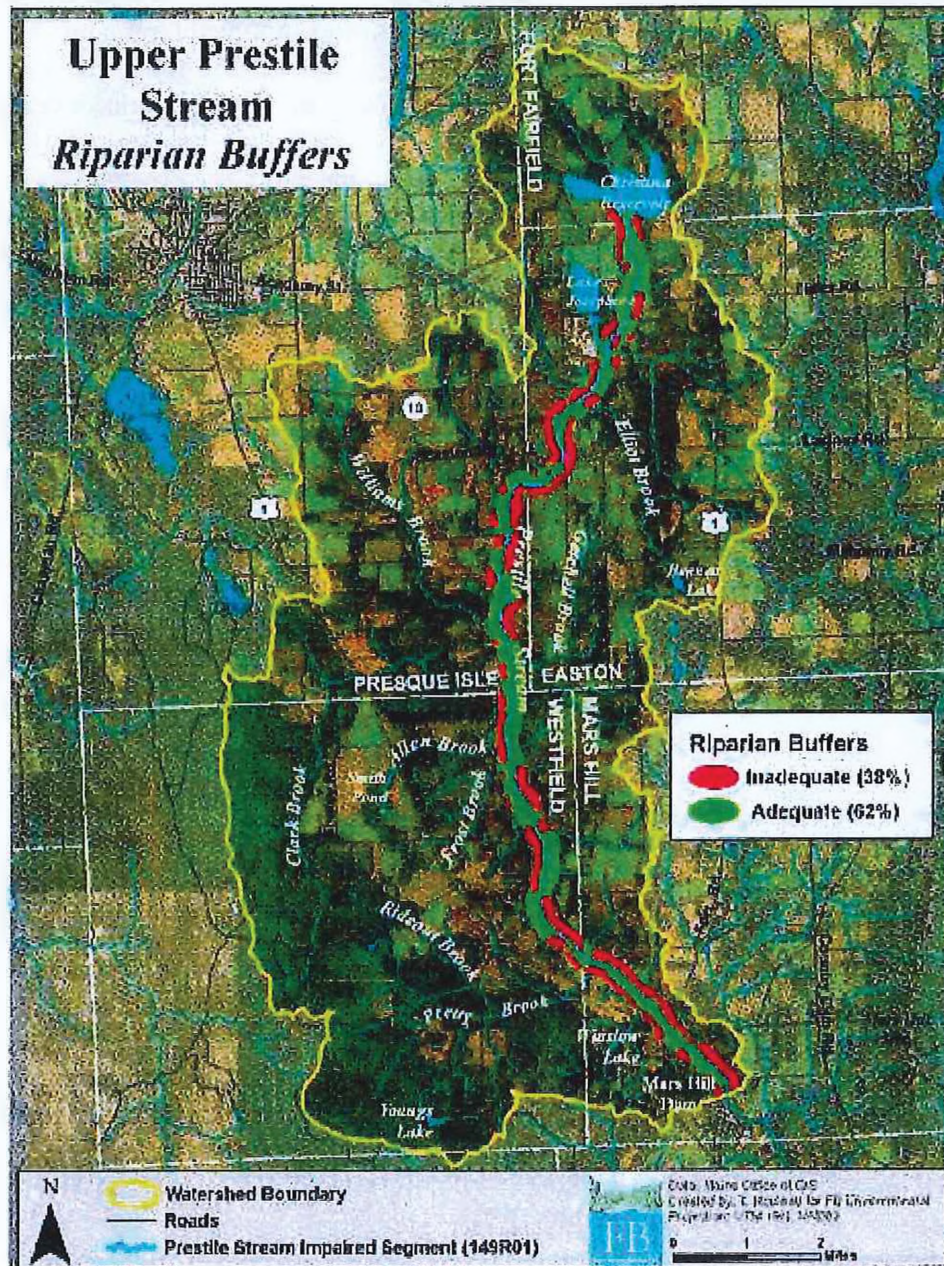


Source: F.B. Environmental Associates. Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Report: Prestile Stream (& Christina Reservoir), Aroostook County, ME. 2008.

According to the Report, “Cropland [which covers 6% or 20,028 acres of the watershed] is by far the largest estimated source of sediment and nutrients to Prestile Stream and its tributaries, accounting for a predicted 96% of the total sediment load within the Prestile Stream watershed...Cropland is also estimated to be the dominant source of phosphorus...while nitrogen loading is attributed to both groundwater and cropland.” The Report recommends a comprehensive subwatershed approach to manage “all potential nutrient and sediment sources with a major emphasis on implementing Best Management Practices [BMPs] on agricultural land.” Of particular concern is harvesting crops such as potatoes in the late fall, with no winter crop covering the bare ground until spring planting, leaving fields vulnerable to soil erosion from thunderstorms and heavy rain which carries nutrients and sediment to the Stream.

Other potential inputs stem from recreational activities such as ATV trails, poorly maintained septic systems, waterfowl, and the highly eutrophic Christina Reservoir “which has acted as a nutrient sink for decades.” In addition, there is concern that the former spraying of nutrient rich irrigation water from the Reservoir has saturated watershed soils, which eventually make their way into Prestile Stream. Approximately 6,088 acres (14%) and 610 acres (1%) of the watershed is wetlands and open water, respectively. These wetlands provide habitat for a number of unique plants and animals, and are considered one of the most productive waterfowl areas in the State –

macroinvertebrates providing an important protein source for thousands of ducks and geese.



Map 4

July 2009

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Unfortunately the majority of Easton stream corridor is described as having inadequate riparian buffers. The report recommends placing a strong emphasis on improving shoreland vegetated buffers to meet or exceed existing state guidelines “requiring that development is limited to the removal of no more than 40% of existing woody vegetation in the 250 foot wide shoreland zone of great ponds, rivers, and non-forested wetlands greater than 10 acres, and development, and within 75 feet of freshwater streams.

The formal designations of impairment and completion of the TMDL make the Upper Prestile Stream eligible for federal 319 funding. Other potential sources of funding include the DEP, Maine Department of Transportation, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service – Farm Bill, Maine Department of Conservation, US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and New England Grassroots Environmental Fund.

Aquifers

According to the Maine Geologic Survey, there is one sand and gravel aquifer of 286.5 acres located in the northeast corner of Easton. In the 1993 comprehensive plan, two aquifers were identified. According to the Maine Geologic Survey, the aquifer located on the Center Road was misidentified and current maps have been corrected. Presently there have been no known impacts to groundwater in the aquifer however, there is an active gravel extraction operation taking place. Town officials and the landowner should ensure that adequate protection measures are in place to protect this groundwater resource.

As of 2013, there are ten (10) public wells registered with the Maine Source Water Assessment Program as public water systems. A public water system is any water supply that serves 25 or more people a day or has 15 or more service connections, for 60 or more days out of the year. There are different types of public water systems based on the type of population served, i.e. residential versus commercial. A Final Source Assessment Report was prepared for each of these sites in Easton. This information is summarized in the table below. The evaluation criteria is based on well type and site geology, existing and future risk of acute contamination and existing and future risk of chronic contamination. Acute contamination means risk of contamination from pathogens and nitrate/nitrites, the distance the source is from risks, like septic systems and the ownership or control of the land where risks are located. Chronic contamination means risk of contamination from any four of 89 chemicals like gasoline additives or pesticides, the presence of contamination sources within the wellhead area and the ownership, control or regulation of land in the wellhead area.

Name	Type	Source
Easton Elementary School	200 foot drilled	Groundwater
Easton High School	200 foot drilled	Groundwater
Huber Engineered Woods	483 foot bedrock well (120 G/m)	Groundwater
McCain Foods	76 foot gravel well (1000 GPM)	Groundwater
McCain Foods USA	78 foot gravel well (700 GPM)	Groundwater
McCain Foods USA	79 foot gravel well (700 GPM)	Groundwater
McCain Foods USA	105 foot gravel well (700GPM)	Groundwater
Osgood Farms Homes	400 foot drilled well	Groundwater
West Ridge Manor	375 foot drilled well	Groundwater
Windermere Apartment	65 foot drilled well	Groundwater

Source: Maine Source Water Assessment Program, 2013

Potential Water Quality Threats

As of January 2, 2014, there are five (5) active underground storage tanks and 103 tanks have been removed in Easton. There have been ten petroleum spills in Town, most in the vicinity of the village and Prestile Stream. Town officials are also concerned that the increasing use of Road salt during the winter months may be impacting groundwater. Town officials are particularly concerned with Richardson Road, West Ridge Road, Station Road, Route 10, and the Allen Road due to the close proximity of homes with drilled or dug wells.

There are two junkyards located in Easton, one of the Station Road and the other on Cleaves Road. The site of the current licensed junkyard located behind Josephine Lake is growing in size and beginning to concern Town Officials. There is also a closed junkyard located in close proximity to the Prestile Stream. Town officials will seek potential brownfield funds for the assessment and potential cleanup of these sites.

Town officials have also worked with the MaineDEP, under the Small Community Grant Program to identify and replace septic systems that are impacting water quality. Town officials continue to inventory failing systems and are in the process of surveying residents located near the Rivere du Chute and Prestile Stream. As a better understanding of the number of faulty systems is know, the Town will re-apply for funding.

Wetlands

The Beginning with Habitat (BWH) database based on the National Wetlands Inventory identifies 606 mapped wetlands in Easton totaling 4,075 acres. These extensive wetland resources represent five classes and four functions. Wetland classes present include Floating or

Submerged Vegetation, Emergent or Emergent/Forested Mix, Forested or Forested/Shrub-scrub, Shrubscrub and Rocky-unconsolidated. Wetland functions include Runoff/Floodflow Control and/or Erosion Control/Sediment Retention, Finfish Habitat, Plant/Animal Habitat and Cultural/Educational which may include wetlands with other values and functions. These wetlands are distributed throughout the Town and provide multiple benefits to the community.

The ecological value of some of the Towns wetlands is documented in the BWH database as high value plant and animal habitats. Many of the Towns wetlands are considered Significant Wildlife Habitat for waterfowl and wading birds. These freshwater habitats provide breeding and migration/staging areas for waterfowl and breeding, feeding, loafing, migration, or roosting habitat for inland wading birds. These special ecological values are one of the cornerstones of Easton's sustainability.

Easton has made progress in several areas of water quality protection over the years and continues to engage in practices that help mitigate sources of pollution. The town is working to repair and stabilize road ditching and working to address stormwater issues. Easton has participated in the DEP small community grant program for replacement of septic systems for many years. As a result, many sewer discharges to waters and road ditches have been eliminated and the town intends to continue to pursue this funding when they are available.

Efforts at monitoring water quality in Easton were detailed in the Prestile Stream section but have been sporadic in other waterbodies and no data could be accessed.

Water protection efforts are included in Easton's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance. This ordinance speaks directly to water quality and applies to all activities within designated areas. The ordinance specifically prohibits the deposition on the ground or discharges to waters any pollutant that will impair the use of water or the water classification of any waters. The ordinance also includes provisions regarding erosion/sedimentation control and clearing and removal of vegetation and storm water runoff. Should the town consider the creation of other ordinances standards should be included that detailed erosion/sedimentation control, storm water management requirements and provisions for sewage disposal.

Town Officials have identified the need for timber harvesting, wetland identification, and stream crossing/cattle crossing education for the residents. According to the code enforcement officer, educating landowners who plan to conduct these activities will help eliminate many of the enforcement issues seen in Easton.

Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat

The abundance of Easton's prime agricultural and forest land soils is a good indicator of the town's potential to support wildlife. These areas, in addition to Easton's extensive wetlands and riparian zones, create the diversity of habitat types necessary for most of Maine's major wildlife species, i.e. moose, deer, snowshoe hare, ruffed grouse, waterfowl, and fur bearers. Populations of these important species are, in turn, influenced by the land use practices on both agricultural and forest lands.

According to the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, much of Easton's agricultural land that is no longer in crop production provides excellent feeding areas for wildlife year-round. Cut-over woodlands also provide feeding areas and when they are adjacent to uncut wooded swamps and riparian zones may provide important wintering areas. Bogs and wooded swamps have been recognized by the Maine Natural Areas Program as wildlife habitats that are not in great abundance statewide. Easton contains a substantial asset in this diversity of wildlife habitats and several areas have been identified as significant wildlife habitat.

Rare Plant Habitats and Occurrences

Rare plant habitats and the occurrence of individual rare plants have been identified at specific locations in Easton. There are four identified rare plant species that occur in many locations throughout the community, including Marsh Valerian, Swamp Fly Honeysuckle, Fries Pondweed, and Prairie Sedge. The Critical Resources Map, located at the end of this section identifies locations where these plant species have occurred.

Significant Wildlife Habitats

There is one Bald Eagle nesting area in Easton and is located north of the Cleaves Road on the Easton/Presque Isle townline. There is a 1,320 foot diameter Resource Protection district around this site.

The Upland Sandpiper is also located in Easton and is considered Threatened in Maine based on an estimated population of fewer than 200 breeding pairs. Upland Sandpipers are vulnerable to disturbance and habitat alterations affecting nesting success. Breeding habitat for the Upland Sandpiper has been declining in Maine for several decades and is now limited to intensively managed locations (such as blueberry fields) where the land management practices also favor Upland Sandpipers. The continued existence of this species depends on maintaining these types of areas.

Historically, Upland Sandpipers were considered a common summer resident in 13 counties in Maine associated with large agricultural fields and pastures. After 1950, widespread habitat change resulting from declining agriculture and increasing reforestation limited nesting habitat, and populations declined. In 1997, approximately 148 pairs of Upland Sandpipers occupied 57 grassland/barren sites in 8 counties. The Upland Sandpiper is listed as Endangered in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, and Ohio; as Threatened in Vermont and Rhode Island; and as Special Concern in New York. The species is also listed as a Migratory Bird Species of Management Concern in the northeastern U.S. by the USFWS.

The Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*) is found primarily in the northern and eastern portions of the state, preferring extensive open marshes or grasslands. They are active day and night, hunting rodents by flying low over open ground. Upland Sandpiper and the Short-eared owl habitat has been identified just north of Josephine Lake.

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IF&W) has not documented any high or moderate value deer wintering areas. These areas are rated according to their size, cover, food,

and numbers of deer. Travel corridors typically follow major rivers or streams with adequate cover that allow deer to move safely to their required habitats. Easton's deer wintering and travel areas may be identified with the future attention of the regional wildlife biologist.

Scenic Resources

Easton's scenic resources are identified on the Critical Resources map. Areas identified include" top of Hersom Hill looking west, Center Hill, Keeny Hill, Graham Road, and most of the higher elevations located throughout the community.

Fisheries

Prestile Stream and its tributaries have long been recognized as a high quality brook trout fishery. Stocking of hatchery trout was conducted through the 1950's, but deemed unnecessary in the 1960's since natural reproduction of the wild brook trout population was enough to support the sport fishery. Each of the impoundments on Prestile Stream downstream of Christina Reservoir act as a trap for nutrients and sediments, adding to the diminished water quality above Mars Hill. The Maine DIFW have documented both positive and negative effects of impoundments on the brook trout fishery in Prestile Stream. Electrofishing and gill net techniques were used to capture and count fish above and below the community impoundment in Easton between 1987 and 1990. Results showed higher numbers of trout and fewer suckers where the stream flowed naturally compared to low numbers of trout and high numbers of suckers caught in the impoundment. On the positive side, the dam at Mars Hill is now an important barrier in restricting the movement of small mouth bass (not native to the drainage) further upstream, which could negatively affect the native trout population.

When discussing the local fisheries resource it is essential to clarify the critical role that all of the town's streams, however minor, play in the health of the resource. Though all of them may not actually support brook trout populations, they serve to maintain the cold water temperatures necessary for healthy, viable populations. Brook trout become stressed in water temperatures above 68 degrees Fahrenheit for extended periods. Maintaining shade cover along all of Easton 183 plus miles of streams will help keep water temperatures suitable for brook trout.

Stream Crossings and Culverts

In 2010, the University of Maine at Presque Isle (UMPI) completed a culvert inventory for the community. UMPI's GIS program mapped all of the culverts located in town and provided data on each . Concurrently, the StreamSmart program at Maine Audubon and MIF&W surveyed culverts and identified those which were blocking fish passage. Town officials are utilizing this data to upgrade and increase the size of culverts to improve stream flow and fish passage as part of their normal culvert replacement program.

Analyses

Easton's water resources are being well protected from point sources of pollution. Many years of participating in the DEP small community program has reduced point source impacts of sewage and the town maintains a waiting list to assist eligible property owners when funds are available.

There are several non-point sources of water pollution that have been identified in Easton including lot development by homeowners, agricultural uses including tillage and livestock and some logging operations by land owners or small independent contractors. The extent of the issue is not documented; however, the character of these issues is pertinent to how the Town responds. Whether or not a permit is required, many homeowners do not use erosion/sedimentation control for their projects. Education will help.

Issues with agriculture erosion and runoff are largely related to topography and major rain events that overwhelm conservation practices. Most often, conservation practices are in place on farms. There are a few instances of unrestricted crossing of streams by livestock. USDA programs exist to help with these issues. Non-point sources from small logging operations often relate to major rain events. The use of best management practices is sporadic and presently not required in the Shoreland Zoning ordinance. Easton is fortunate to have a USDA-NRCS office and a Soil and Water Conservation District office in close proximity. Their resources are available to property owners that request help. Requests must be direct from a land owner and not the Town.

Easton's non-municipally owned public drinking water supplies are not well protected from contamination risks. This is partially due to the owners do not control the land use activities within their respective well head protection areas of 300 feet. These sources are inspected by the Maine Drinking Water Program periodically and owners are required to test annually.

Partnering with regional advocacy groups in the area of water quality protection is possible. The Central Aroostook Soil and Water Conservation District (CASWCD) office is located in Presque Isle. The District Coordinator can certify that local contractors have complied with BMP's for sedimentation and erosion control. The office also sponsors educational workshops that may include helping homeowners understand and implement BMP's. The CASWCD can also seek grants for special water quality improvement projects and water quality monitoring.

While development pressure on Easton's critical natural resources may be minimal, the lack of awareness of these resources keeps them under constant threat. Wetland areas classified as waterfowl and wading bird habitat have been subject to local shoreland zoning for decades. As such, they are probably the least threatened of the critical resources. The land use permitting process creates the mechanism for monitoring activities that may harm these resources. The placement of fill along the edge of wetlands is not uncommon in association with agricultural activity and road building and these activities are not closely monitored.

Other critical natural resources including the area north of Christina Reservoir are at greater risk because awareness has been lacking among the general public and local regulators including the planning board and code enforcement. Now that the BwH database is in place and the locations and importance of these areas has been identified it will be possible to include their consideration in conversations as development occurs. The Town should takes steps to more closely monitor land use activity that may affect its critical natural resources.

Easton's shoreland zoning standards are consistent with the revised minimum state guidelines. The ordinance was updated and approved by the Town on June 22, 2009. The Town may wish to review the existing zoning districts in light of the critical natural resource data. This could help extend greater protection to these resources and 100 year floodplains. Town officials may want to review local shoreland zoning standards with those of the neighboring communities in the context of the designated districts. A joint review between planning boards of shoreland zoning districts near municipal boundaries might help identify the basis and agreement for more consistent zoning.

Easton has a few, very meaningful, opportunities to cooperate in the conservation of shared critical natural resources. The most important of these resources includes Prestile Stream. The Town should collaborate with neighboring communities along the Prestile to ensure consistency with shoreland conservation.

Agriculture and Forestry

Introduction

Agriculture and forestry help maintain the town's character and provide a steady and stable tax base. Agriculture has a stronger position economically in the community and there is minimal forestland owned by large companies with most of land associated with smaller landowners. As a result, issues regarding timber harvesting tend to be more regional or focused on a specific act of an individual landowner or independent logger. Both agriculture and forestry are a part of Easton's heritage. This legacy is still apparent in the landscape of town. Aroostook County's largest processor (McCain Foods USA) is located in the community, believed to be the only french fry processor on the East Coast, and the movement of potatoes to that plant is readily apparent throughout the community. Often travelers using the road system pass heavily loaded potato trucks that are bringing raw potatoes to the processing plant. And as such, french fries and other goods are trucked out of the community to markets throughout the northeast on a daily basis. There are still potato houses and a rail siding located along the major transportation corridors in town.

Easton has a clear image as a logging community with J.M Huber located in Easton's industrial area. The economic activity generated by the forest industry is very significant in Easton and includes excise taxes, personal property taxes, fuel, and multiple trucking and harvesting companies. Interestingly, most of Easton's woodlands are in small private ownerships of less than 1000 acres and many of the surrounding communities have similar characteristics. There are approximately 12 active timber harvest notifications submitted to the State annually that account for 150-475 acres harvested. The Town's forest land has great potential to be managed for many values to the community including water quality, wildlife and recreation. Many trees are also present in Easton's "urban" landscape and enhance quality of life and the beauty of the village area.

Tourism and recreation rely significantly on the access to these land resources and the wildlife and scenic qualities they create. While the number of farm families has declined, many familiar names are still actively engaged in farming and provide employment and economic activity.

Easton has several soil types considered prime farmland/forestland soils that are of statewide importance. Farming's economic and cultural value to the community is widely known and appreciated by many residents. The protection of valuable farmland and active farms can help control rising property taxes and the cost of municipal services.

Overview of Topography and Soils

Topography: The Town of Easton consists of approximately 24,915 acres or 38.93 square miles. The town is relatively flat and could be considered gently rolling terrain but there are areas that have steep slopes. These are identified on the development constraints map located at the end of the Natural Resources section.

There are steep slopes throughout the Town with flatter areas located in the central area and the northwest. The River de Chute runs along the eastern border of the community while Prestile Stream runs through the center of Easton. Elevations range from a low of 425 feet near the shore of River du Chute in the southeast corner of town to a high of 885 feet atop Kinney Hill. Slopes range from 0 to 45% with most slopes in the less than 8 percent range.

Topography has influenced the Town's settlement patterns and agricultural uses. Most development has taken place along the major road corridors and has been in the flatter areas of Town extending from the along Center Road to the Presque Isle town line. About two thirds of the Town is covered by forest. Hardwood trees predominate on the ridges while spruce and fir are found in lower areas and in slight depressions on the sides of ridges. Many old fields and pastures have grown to early succession mixed wood stands. About 20% of the land area is presently used for agriculture. In 2012, the major crops are potatoes, small grain (oats, barley, buckwheat), and dairy/beef cattle. Other crops include maple sugaring.

Soils

Knowledge of the types of soils which exist in a community helps in planning land use activities. The various characteristics of soil types present different limitations for development, some of which can be overcome through special planning, design and/or construction. Soil types also affect agricultural practices and influence timber rates of growth. A composite soils map has been prepared for the Town based on information from Soil Survey Aroostook County, Maine, Northeast Part published by the United States Department of Agriculture's Soil Conservation Service.

According to the USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service there are six broad soil types found in northeastern Aroostook County with three occurring in Easton. These include:

- **The Caribou-Conant Association** made up of broad gently rolling upland ridges of till soils derived chiefly from shale and limestone.
- **The Mapleton-Conant Association** consisting of irregularly sloping shallow to moderately deep soils on till derived from calcareous rocks. Irregular relief is the outstanding characteristic of this soil association.

- **The Stetson-Allagash, Hadley-Winooski Association** consisting of soils formed in water deposited silt, sand, and gravel on nearly level to sloping floodplains.

There are eleven (11) distinct soil types in Easton. Of the 11 types, Caribou gravelly loam, Easton and Washburn silt loam, and Mapleton shaly silt loam make up the greatest proportion of soils with Caribou gravelly loam being one of the dominate soils types found in the region. Each soil type found in Easton has characteristics that determine its potentials and limitations. These include prime farmland and woodland productivity.

There are eight (8) soil types that may be classified as prime farmland soils under certain conditions. Prime farmland soils produce the highest yields under generally accepted farming practices and require the minimal amount of energy and economic resources. Crop production also results in the least amount of environmental damage. Prime forestland is land that is capable of growing wood at an economically productive rate. A list of prime agricultural and forestland soils appears below. Many soil types are considered prime for both agricultural and forest production uses.

Farmland/Woodland Productivity Rating for Easton

Map Unit Symbol	Map Unit Name	Acres in Easton	Percent of Total	Farmland Classification	Forest Production Rating
BeB	Benson silt loam, 0 to 8 percent slopes	194.2	0.9	Farmland of statewide importance	Low
BeC	Benson silt loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes	268.5	1.2		Low
BeD	Benson silt loam, 15 to 25 percent slopes	162.8	0.7		Low
CgA	Caribou gravelly loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	18	0.1	Prime Farmland	Very High
CgB	Caribou gravelly loam, 2 to 8 percent slopes	5,424.6	24.7	Prime Farmland	Very High
CgC	Caribou gravelly loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes	1,924.1	8.8	Farmland of statewide importance	Very High
CgC2	Caribou gravelly loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes, eroded	430.8	2.0		Very High
CgD	Caribou gravelly loam, 15 to 25 percent slopes	279.0	1.3		Very High
CgD2	Caribou gravelly loam, 15 to 25 percent slopes,	222.3	1.0		Very High

	eroded				
CgE	Caribou gravelly loam, 25 to 45 percent slopes	153.6	0.7		Very High
CoA	Conant Silt Loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	216.6	1.0	Farmland of statewide importance	Very High
CoB	Conant Silt Loam, 2 to 8 percent slopes	3,006.4	13.7	Farmland of statewide importance	Very High
CoC	Conant Silt Loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes	67.9	0.3	Farmland of statewide importance	Very High
EaA	Easton and Washburn Silt Loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	3,457.3	15.8		Medium
EaB	Easton and Washburn silt loams, 2 to 8 percent slopes	625.0	2.8		Medium
EsB	Easton and Washburn Stoney Silt Loam, 0 to 8 percent slopes	33.2	0.2		Medium
MaB	Machias Gravelly loam, 2 to 8 percent slopes	4.4	0.0	Prime Farmland	High
Md	Made Land	15.5	0.1		
MhB	Mapleton Shaly silt loam, 0 to 8 percent slopes	1,396.4	6.4	Prime Farmland	Medium
MhC	Mapleton Shaly silt loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes	1,187.8	5.4	Farmland of statewide importance	Medium
MhC2	Mapleton Shaly silt loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes, eroded	133.6	0.6		Medium
MhD	Mapleton Shaly silt loam, 15 to 35 percent slopes, eroded	199.9	0.9		Medium
MmC	Mapleton Very Rocky Silt Loam, 0 to 15 percent slopes	122.6	0.6		Medium
MmD	Mapleton Very Rocky Silt Loam, 0 to 15 percent slopes	290.8	1.3		Medium
Mn	Mixed Alluvial Land	272.9	1.2		
Pa	Peat and Muck	1,149.6	5.2		
SgA	Stetson gravelly loam, 0 to 2 percent slope	8.0	0	All areas are prime farmland	High
SgB	Stetson gravelly loam, 2 to 8 percent slope	158.7	0.7	All areas are prime farmland	High

SgC	Stetson gravelly loam, 8 to 15 percent slope	76	0.3	Farmland of statewide importance	High
SgD	Stetson gravelly loam, 15 to 25 percent slope	23.2	0.1		High
SgE	Stetson gravelly loam, 25 to 45 percent slope	66.4	0.3		High
W	Water Bodies	234.5	1.1		
Wn	Winooski silt loam	34.8	0.2	All areas are prime farmland	Very high

Source: USDA, Northeast Aroostook County, Maine, Version 15, November 25, 2013

Trees grow faster on the soils of this association than on soils that have shallow depth to granitic bedrock. Tree roots enter cracks in the shale bedrock, become more firmly anchored and gain access to a larger supply of water. Much of Easton's land area is considered to be productive forestland.

Conditions and Trends

Agriculture dates back to the 1850's when the first land was cleared for farming in the area around Easton Center. The land area around Easton Center is classified as prime farmland and these soil resources are distributed town wide. Agriculture in Easton remains a healthy and viable enterprise. Farmers practice a wide variety of accepted conservation practices and are served by the Central Aroostook Soil and Water Conservation District, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Cooperative Extension, and Agricultural Experimental Station. The Amish have been purchasing many of the smaller and oftentimes underutilized farms in Easton and have revitalized the small farming economy.

Markets for crops grown in Easton are available through McCains Foods and other processors located either in town or in the region. Changes in the market conditions need to be watched carefully and agricultural producers in Easton are well aware that they are part of a national and global market and subject to changes in dietary thoughts of the general public. This does not take away from the fact that Easton's farms and farmland is an important part of the Town's complex identity and economic sustainability. According to a land use map developed by the University of Maine at Presque Isle, there are approximately 5,000 acres of active farmland in Easton. The working landscape is imbedded in Easton's character and embodied by the active farms that are present along nearly every road. The one or two roads that no longer have active farming still show the sign of the Town's agricultural past. Active farms and farmland are located throughout the community with no one area showing a higher amount than the other.

Residential development in rural farming areas has been part of the local trend, especially near the Presque Isle town line and the village area. The table below shows the 2002, 2007, and 2012 Census of Agriculture summary for Aroostook County. Potatoes, small grain (primarily oats) and dairy and beef cattle are the major products on local farms. The production export from these commercial farms identifies agriculture as a local and regional economic engine.

Aroostook County Agricultural Data 2002-2012

	2002	2007	2012	Percent Change
Number of Farms	1,084	1,246	895	-17.4
Land in Farms (acres)	391,675	375,568	350,911	-10.4
Average Size (acres)	361	301	392	8.6
Market Value of Products Sold	\$121,158,000	\$146,516,000	\$210,517,000	73.7
Average Farm Reporting Sales	\$111,770	\$117,589	\$235,215	110.4
Government Payments	\$2,333,000	\$2,779,000	\$2,942,000	2.6
Average/Farm Receiving Payment	\$4,312	\$3,941	\$6,472	50.0

Source: USDA 2002, 2007, 2012 Census of Agriculture Summary Report

The United States Department of Agriculture-Farm Services Agency (USDA-FSA, 2005) places the number of active “farms” in Easton at 186. In this case a farm is any land and owner that is eligible for and actively participating in USDA programs. Many of these “farms” may actually be woodlots and part-time farms that produce for local markets. The number of farms in Easton that actually produce for and sell into the commodity market is approximately 68. According to the Planning Committee there are four (4) potato farmers operating in town and two are actually landowners, other two are leasing land. Several of these farms may be considered a “Century Farm”, having been in the same family for more than 100 years. All of Easton’s farming operations, irrespective of acreage and production levels contribute to the local economy, tax base and help support conservation and recreation in the community.

McCain Foods has completed significant plant upgrades in recent years including a \$6 million digester, \$2.8 million CNG conversion, \$80 million freezer upgrade, and dedicated truck service. These improvements have made the plant far more efficient. However, their market is greatly dependant on the nutritional market, which in recent years has been less “potato friendly.” As a result, there have been reductions in the acreage being grown (20%) by contracted farmers and a corresponding decrease in the price per hundred weight offered (\$0.48 per cwt).

As stated previously, the Amish have purchased many of the fallow and vacant farms in Easton and are bringing them back into production. They are also producing dairy products who have also constructed a milking house located on the Grey Road for the storage of product. There has also been an increase in the number of small “home” farms that are producing beef, chicken, and poultry, mainly for their own use but also on a limited sale basis. There is currently a very strong market for grass fed beef.

Another growing opportunity in town has been the increase of berry farms, maple sugaring operations, and grass/hay farming. There are five (5) berry farms and 2 maple sugaring operation located in town which have been very popular with the general public. Lucerne Farms has also been producing high quality bagged forage for the equine diet.

Easton's Forestland

According to the University of Maine at Presque Isle, approximately 12,344 acres of Easton's land area is forested. This comprises about 50 percent of the town's total acreage including softwood, hardwood and mix wood. Private forestland ownerships range from 10 acres to over 1000 acres. Many forested parcels are part of existing farms. There are no large "corporate" ownerships of forestland in Easton. Based on the number of parcels enrolled in the Tree Growth Tax Program which requires forest management plans about 1900 forestland acres are being managed. Both the State of Maine and the USDA-NRCS have offered cost incentive programs for private landowners to have forest management plans developed for their property. More acreage is likely being managed than is presently enrolled in Tree Growth. Private forestland is used extensively in Easton for snowmobile and ATV trails as well as hunting and fishing. Relatively few acres are posted. As such, Easton's forested acres provide a broad public benefit. The trend in residential growth in rural areas has created a substantial forestland/residential interface. The Easton Fire Department is trained and equipped to fight wildfire and are available to assist the State of Maine with protection of the forest resource.

There are hundreds of forested parcels in town that comprise the roughly 12,344 acres of forest land. The Maine Tree Growth Tax Program requires that enrolled land be managed. Timber harvesting is occurring each year and includes both tree growth and non-tree growth classified woodlands. Tax records in 2012 indicate that 21 parcels totaling 1,881 acres are enrolled in the Maine Tree Growth Taxation Program. This number has increased slightly since the 2005 when there were 20 parcels totaling 1,496 acres. The table below identifies timber harvesting activity in Easton since 1991. On average 12 timber harvest notifications are filed each year in town and comprise about 300 acres. The acres harvested vary substantially from year to year. According to Maine Department of Conservation records, 124 acres of forestland in Easton has been converted to other uses since 1991.

For the most part, timber operations have been conducted within the current regulations and the Town's shoreland zoning ordinance. Several issues have arisen which included road posting violations, speed on the Ladner Road, and the perceived amount of dirt left on roads from trucks hauling wood. These issues have been minor and taken care of when discussed with the landowner and/or timber harvester.

There have been two recent improvements made in Easton that significantly assists the region's forest industry. J.M. Huber has recently completed mill upgrades that include a \$10 million upgrade and expansion of blades. This has greatly increased Huber's efficiency and competitiveness in the global markets.

A second system upgrade is the increase in weight limits from the Canadian border to Huber. MaineDOT has allowed heavier Canadian weights on state roads which allows product from Canada easier access to Easton. Town officials are watchful of potential road deterioration issues.

Summary of Timber Harvesting for the Town of Easton

YEAR	Selection harvest, acres	Shelterwood harvest, acres	Clearcut harvest, acres	Total Harvest, acres	Change of land use, acres	Number of active Notifications
1991	260	0	0	260	0	6
1992	264	15	20	299	0	7
1993	183	0	0	183	0	6
1994	200	0	0	200	0	7
1995	415	0	0	415	0	11
1996	474	0	0	474	0	19
1997	275	0	0	275	0	13
1998	313	0	0	313	2	13
1999	375	0	0	375	0	16
2000	155	0	0	155	0	17
2001	369	0	0	369	0	14
2002	170	0	0	170	0	9
2003	149	68	0	217	0	7
2004	131	43	0	174	0	13
2005	691	122	0	813	0	17
2006	401	4	5	410	0	15
2007	371	12	0	383	11	15
2008	364	0	0	364	22	20
2009	162	2	0	164	30	16
2010	248	2	0	250	55	14
2011	10	0	0	10	4	8

Source: Maine Forest Service, 2013

Community Farming and Forestry Activities

The Town of Easton and the Central Aroostook Soil and Water Conservation District are supporting community farming projects. The District is presently engaged in a project to develop a local producer cooperative and to create better access to locally grown foods in the community. Local farmers' markets have waned in recent years for lack of leadership and management. Interest among residents, in the market and local foods, has been present for decades. The project has potential to re-energize community agriculture by securing commitments from several producers and establishing the Farmers Market at the Aroostook Centre Mall in Presque Isle. The reinvigoration of this market may allow local producers year round access to the local market and resident's year round access to local foods and other products.

There are also several beef producers in the region that are interested in developing a USDA certified slaughter facility. If developed, this slaughter facility could open up markets for the

region's beef producers and provide them is a closer option for slaughter. Presently, producers wishing to utilize a USDA certified facility must ship their product to central Maine. Beef producers in the region have identified the following issues:

- There are very limited USDA Inspected facilities in the region. Producers have to travel to Charleston, North Anson, or other locations to have their beef slaughters and cut. This is time consuming, expensive, and may contribute to a lower grade of beef.
- There is limited cooler space available in the region. An older study identified space to hang approximately 40 head for 14 days. Producers prefer a 21 day hang time.
- Need a USDA Inspected Facility with quick freeze and cryovac. This facility also needs to have the capacity to hang a sufficient number of animals for 21 days or more.
- Facility needs to be centrally located.
- Pork/poultry needs to be considered.
- Scheduling for organic, all natural, and conventional farms needs to be considered.
- Need to ensure that there is some product available throughout the year. Downtime for slaughter operations is expensive.
- Need to look at the options of purchasing and expanding an existing business or constructing new. Facility needs 3 Phase power, water and sewer. Also needs to be located in an area that is receptive to the use.

The Amish community has purchased many of the underutilized or abandoned farms in Easton in the past several years. The Amish are utilizing many of the farms for livestock and vegetable production both for their own consumption and for sale. This reuse has had the effect of increasing the value of vacant farmland as well as providing residents and visitors an opportunity to purchase locally grown products.

Easton has also seen an increase in the number of smaller livestock and dairy producers. In some cases, these farmers are producing for themselves while others are selling to the general public. There is also a milk house located in town; a second is located in Fort Fairfield, with the wholesale producers selling to AgriMart.

Maple sugaring is also gaining popularity on Maine and in Easton. While no Easton specific data is available, Maine is now one of the largest producers of maple syrup in the United States, lagging behind Vermont and New York. According to the USDA (June 2013) Maine produced 450,000 gallons of syrup in 2013 with an estimated value of \$11,880,000 for an average of \$26.40 per gallon down slightly from the \$33 per gallon average in 2012. Maine has seen a relatively steady number of producers but the yield per tap has increased annually because of the vacuum system in place.

Analyses

Agriculture/Forestry Importance: Agricultural and forest resources have substantial economic and cultural importance in Easton. These resources provide economic activity, employment and recreational space for use by residents and support for tourism. The Local Economy section discusses this in detail in terms of location quotient analysis. It is clear that farming and forestry employment are more important in the local economy than in the state economy.

Overall, the agricultural and forest resource base is stable in Easton meaning that there is relatively little acreage that is being converted to other uses. Based on conversations with local officials, the amount of active farmland is growing, thanks to the influx of the Amish population into the area. This group has converted inactive farmland back into product uses.

Protection of Resources: The Town is not presently engaged in any regulatory or nonregulatory actions specifically designed to protect active farmland and productive forestland. Easton does not have an extensive regulatory framework that creates a basis for protecting agricultural and forest resources, and should consider creating some regulations as deemed necessary. Many feel the existing State and local regulations are sufficient for protecting these resources and threat to these resources is limited. There is concern among some in the community regarding the impact of agriculture and logging on water quality in the Prestile Stream watershed.

Participation by Easton's farm and forest land owners in any of Maine's current use tax programs is minimal. The Tree Growth Program is the most widely used accounting for about 15% of the Town's forested acres. The use of the Farm or Open Space Taxation Programs is nearly non-existent. Many agricultural and forestland owners have pointed out how damaging the State's Homestead Exemption Tax Program has been to owners of agricultural and forest resources by shifting that tax burden to these resource based properties. Unfortunately, this burden can only be offset by the property owner's participation in one of the current use programs. More education and awareness of these programs may help stimulate broader participation and long-term protection of these resources.

The trend toward increased residential uses in the rural farm areas is identified in the Land Use section. This trend, however, does not appear to have affected the conduct of agricultural or logging operations in the community. There are relatively minor issues between residential users and resource based users. There are two major reasons for this, many residential users still have connection to someone that works in logging or farming and many also use these resource lands for their recreation. Examples of issues on both sides include mud on public roads from trucks entering, damage to farmland and private roads from 4x4's, and isolated cases of runoff onto abutting property. Odor could likely become an issue if the practice of animal agriculture became larger and more widespread. Otherwise, the practice of farming and logging is widely accepted in the community and there have been few complaints.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Goals, Policies, Strategies

POLICY

Identify, monitor and conserve Easton's significant natural resources including rare plant populations, moderate to high value nesting habitat for water fowl and wading birds, and bird species.

Strategies

- a. Work with the Fort Fairfield and Mars Hill Planning Boards to ensure consistent standards for the protection of the Prestile Stream watershed.
- b. Cooperate with other local, regional and State entities in the conservation of natural resources of shared interest such as the Prestile Stream.
- c. Continue to maintain land use standards that are consistent with the State minimums for local shoreland zoning.
- d. Work with landowners that have Upland Sandpiper and Short-eared owl habitat and IF&W to maintain suitable habitat for these species.
- e. Seek assessment and clean-up funds for the cleanup of the towns closed junkyards..
- f. Work with homeowners on the Richardson, West Ridge, and Station Roads and Route 1-A for potential well contamination from road salt.

Focus Habitats Conservation Policies & Strategies

Focus habitats, identified through the Beginning with Habitats Program, include riparian areas, high value plant and animal habitats, large habitat blocks and riparian and undeveloped habitat connections.

POLICY

Maintain and improve water quality, brook trout fisheries, wildlife habitat and habitat connectivity through the conservation of all riparian habitats.

Strategies

- a. Work with the Central Aroostook Soil and Water Conservation District to conduct educational meetings on the resource value of riparian habitats.
- b. Identify through the building permit review process when any development occurs within a habitat connector.
- c. Cooperate with IF&W and other State agencies to provide property owners with guidelines to voluntarily minimize impacts on habitat connectors.
- d. Consider the need for amending Shoreland zoning to extend applicability and land use standards to specific activities within all riparian habitats.
- e. Support local research and encourage landowner cooperation with research on priority trust species.

WATER RESOURCES

Goals, Policies, and Strategies

State Goal for Water Resources

Protect the quantity and manage the quality of the States water resources and to protect the State's other critical natural resources including wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitats, shorelands, scenic vistas and unique natural areas. (Local policies and ordinances must be consistent with and may be more stringent than applicable state laws.)

Local Goal for Water/Critical Natural Resources

To protect water and critical natural resources in manner consistent with the minimum requirements of state law while continuing to evaluate and understand unique local conditions that may require higher standards for protection.

POLICY

Help residents protect their private wells from contamination from faulty septic systems and fuel tanks.

Strategies

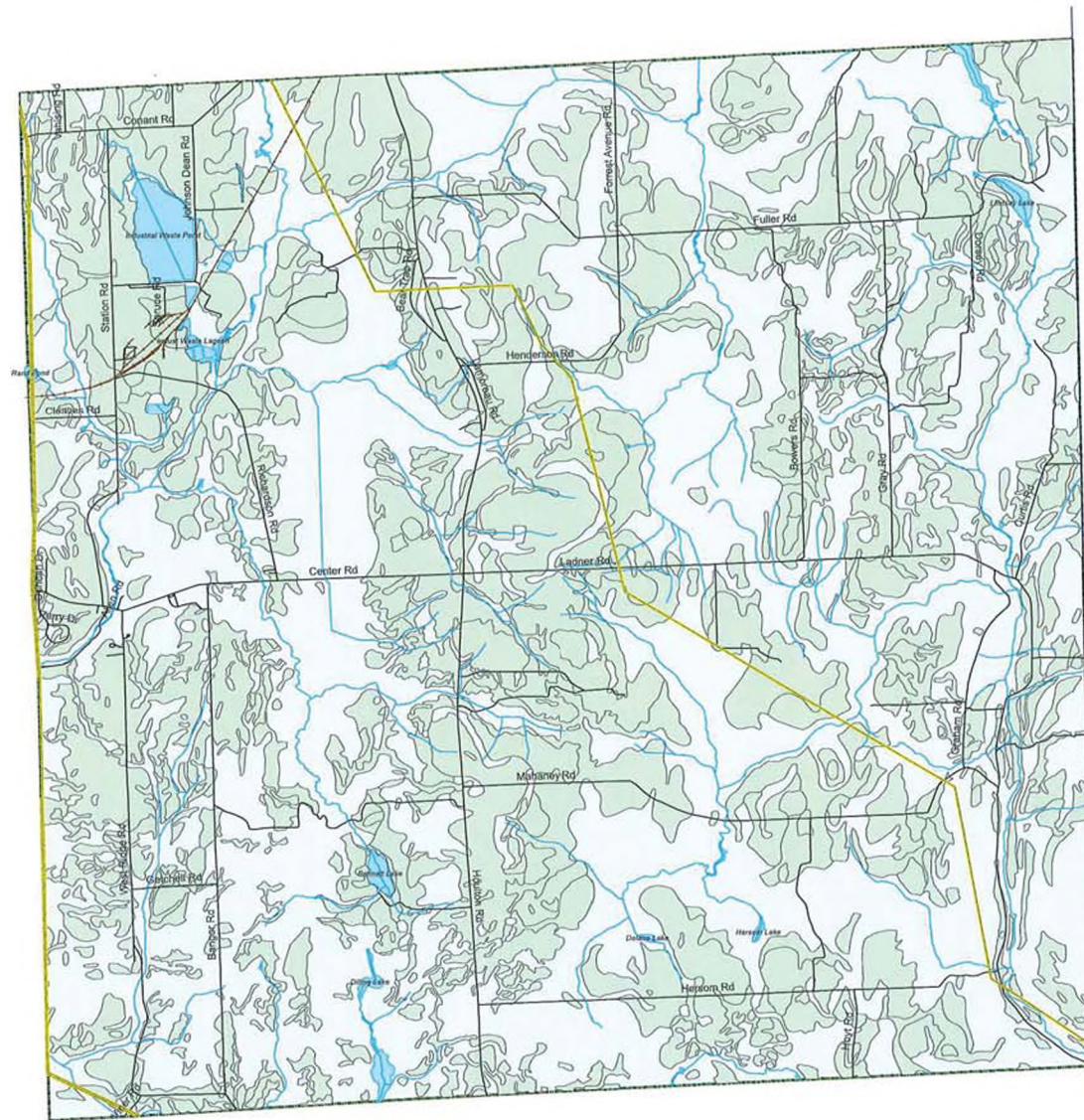
- a. Continue to apply for Small Community Grant funds that replace faulty septic systems that are impacting water quality.
- b. Include a reminder about septic tank pumping at 3-year intervals with tax bills.
- c. Modify the building permit application process to include information on the age and condition of fuel tanks.
- d. Explore a property tax incentive for persons who demonstrate septic system maintenance. (Small reduction for a receipt from pumper)

POLICY

Protect the water quality of Easton's three Great Ponds (GP) [Bennett Lake, Easton Pond, and Josephine Lake] from non-point source pollution from all land uses that generate erosion, sedimentation and/or phosphorus transport.

Strategies

- a. Continue to update the local shoreland zoning ordinance to keep it current with the State minimum guidelines.
- b. Enforce the land use standards for all activities within the shoreland zone.
- c. Provide educational seminars and literature for property owners who do their own site development work.
- d. Monitor and annually report land use permit activities within the three GP water sheds and assess the need to apply sedimentation and erosion control and storm water runoff standards.
- e. Work with IF&W to explore the construction of a fishway at the dam on Easton Pond.
- f. Continue to work with landowners to allow access to Josephine Lake for bird watching and waterfowl hunting.



Legend

- International Boundaries
- Township Boundaries
- Roads

Easton Other Transportation

- Power Transmission Line
- Railroad

Soils

- Prime Farm Soils

Water

- Rivers
- Lakes and Ponds
- Brooks and Streams

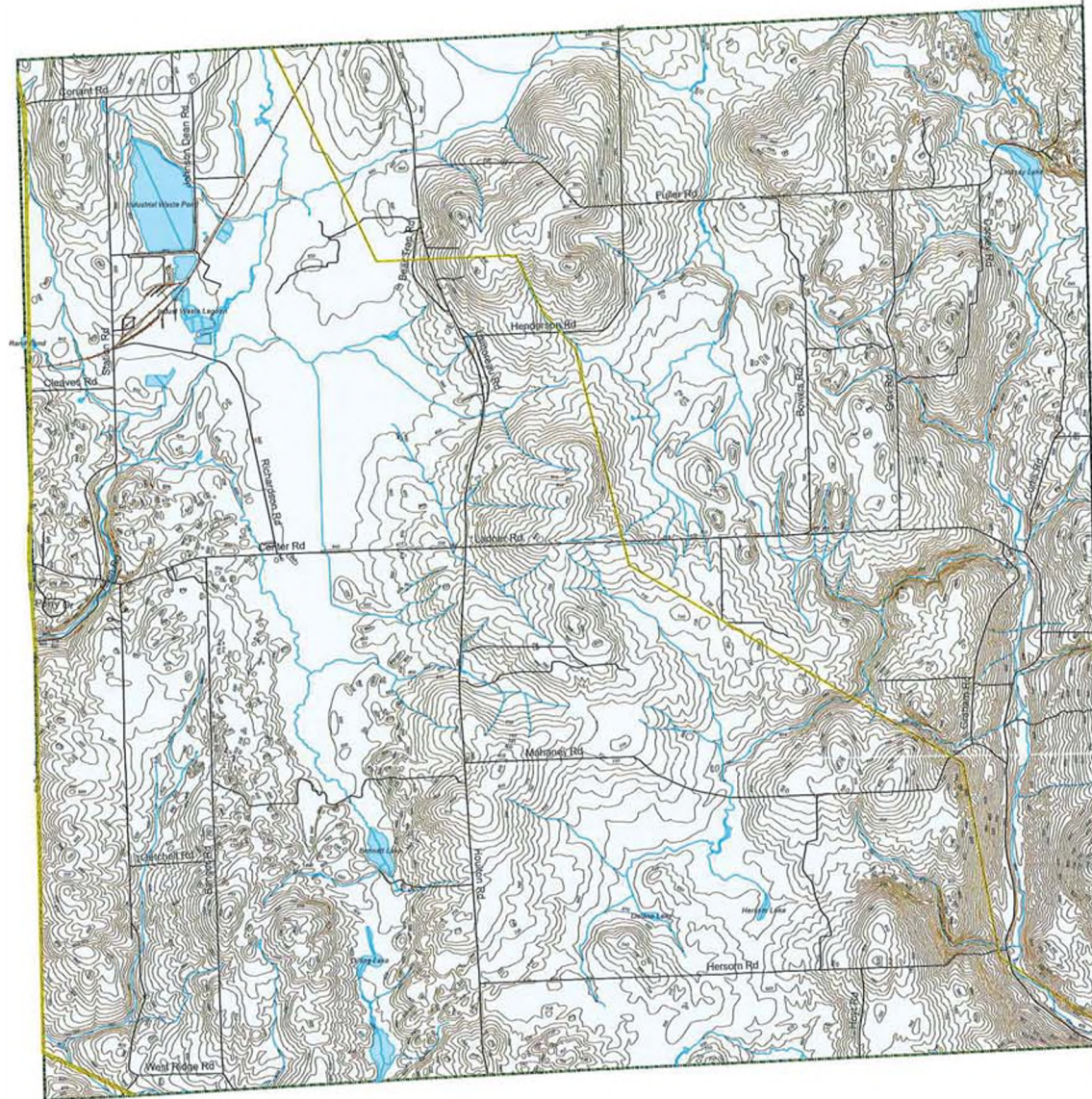


1 inch = 1,743 feet

Easton, Maine
Comprehensive Plan
Prime Farm Soils Map

Date: 01/17/14





0 850 1,700 3,400 5,100 6,800 Feet

Legend

- International Boundaries
- Township Boundaries
- Roads
- Contours

Easton Other Transportation

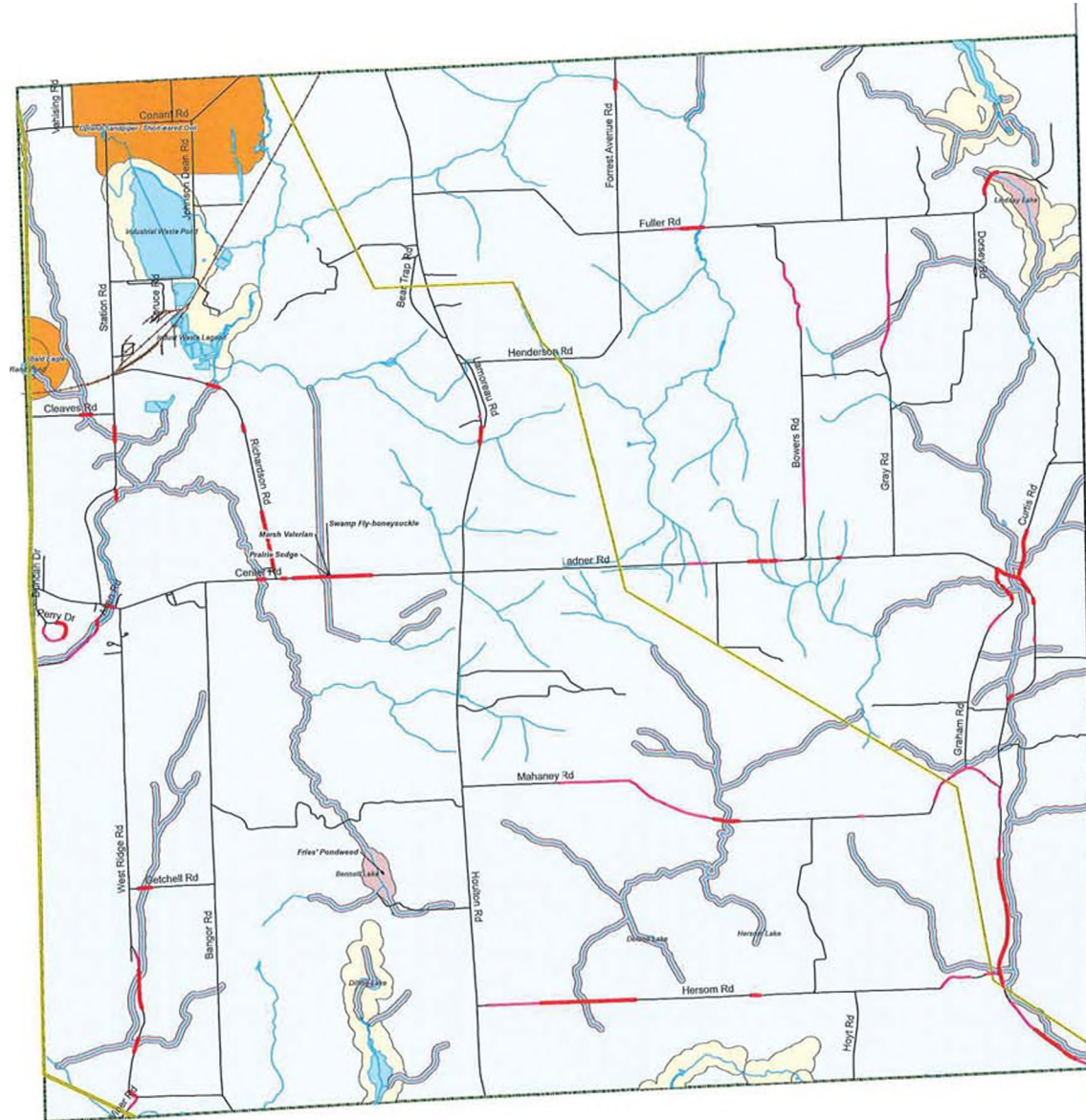
- Power Transmission Line
- Railroad
- Rivers
- Lakes and Ponds
- Brooks and Streams

1 inch = 1,667 feet

Easton, Maine
Comprehensive Plan
Topographic Map

Date: 01/17/14





- Legend**
- Township Boundaries
 - International Boundaries
 - Riparian Road Connectors
 - Block Road Connectors
 - Easton Other Transportation**
 - Power Transmission Line
 - Railroad
 - Brooks and Streams
 - Roads
 - Rare and Endangered Plants
 - Rivers
 - Brook Trout Habitat
 - Lakes and Ponds
 - Inland Wading Waterfowl Habitat
 - Rare and Endangered Bird Species

0 850 1,700 3,400 5,100 6,800 Feet

1 inch = 1,667 feet

Easton, Maine
Comprehensive Plan
Critical Natural Resources Map

Issue: 01/23/14





- Legend**
- Township Boundaries
 - International Boundaries
 - Snowmobile Trails 090413
 - Block Road Connectors
 - Riparian Road Connectors
- Easton Other Transportation**
- Power Transmission Line
 - Railroad
 - Brooks and Streams
 - Roads
 - Rivers
 - Lakes and Ponds
 - Easton or rest blocks
 - Easton Developed Area
 - Easton Undeveloped Blocks

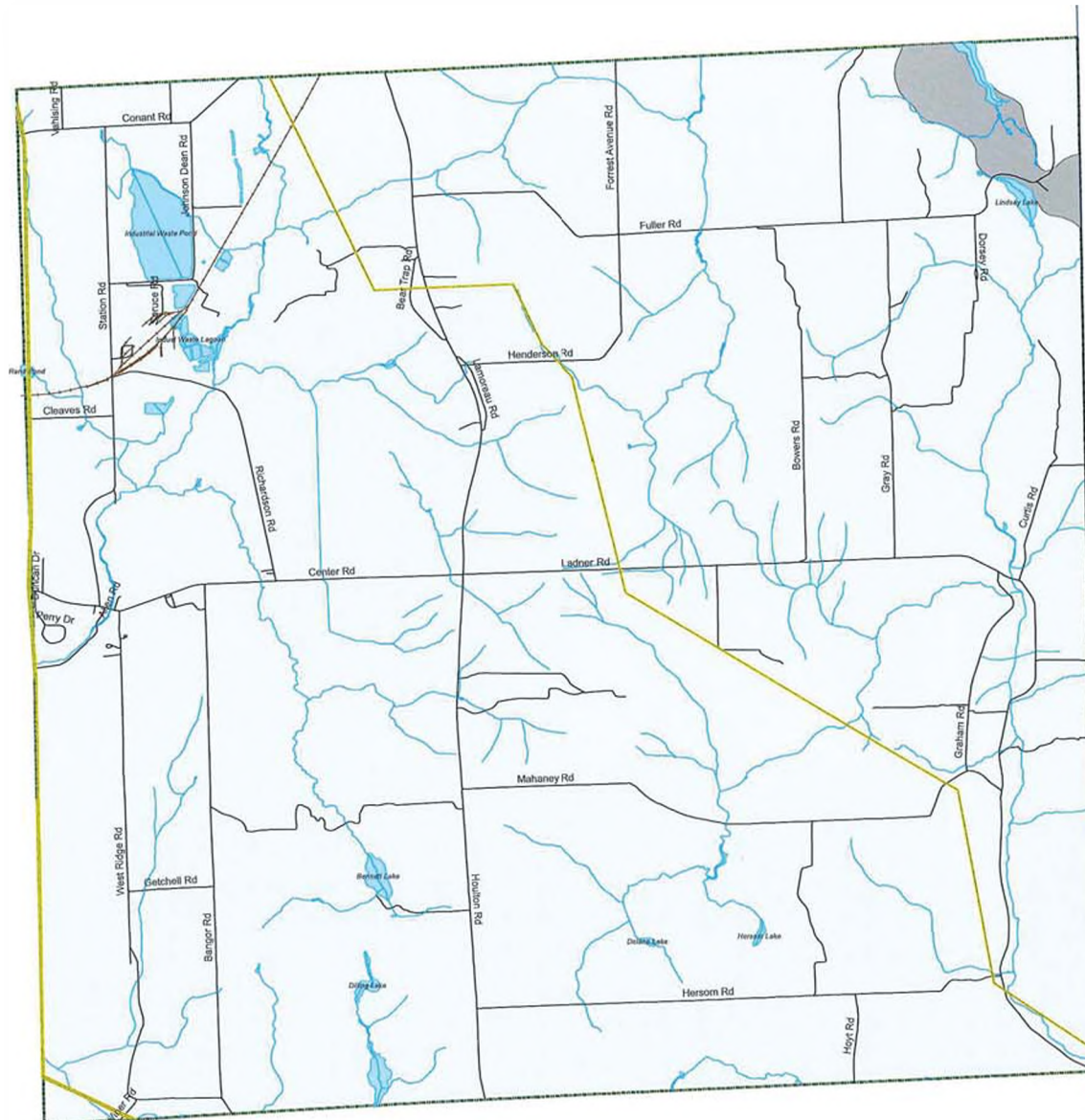
0 875 1,750 3,500 5,250 7,000 Feet

1 inch = 3,500 feet

Easton, Maine
Comprehensive Plan
Undeveloped Blocks Map

Date: 02/05/14





0 850 1,700 3,400 5,100 6,800 Feet

Legend

- International Boundaries
- ▭ Township Boundaries
- Roads
- Easton Other Transportation**
 - Power Transmission Line
 - Railroad
- Rivers
- Lakes and Ponds
- Sand and Gravel Aquifers**
 - Brooks and Streams

1 inch = 1,667 feet

Easton, Maine
Comprehensive Plan
Water Resources Map

Date: 01/17/14



Hazard Mitigation

Easton's Vision

Easton will constantly strive to be

- ❖ a dynamic community that is economically, culturally, and socially inviting;
- ❖ a community that promotes and aggressively pursues innovative business and economic development;
- ❖ a community that welcomes, supports, and responds to a diversity of new people and new ideas;
- ❖ a community that recognizes children as our future and shares collective responsibility for the nurturing and education of each generation;
- ❖ a community where family ties are strong, self respect and respect for others is instilled, where trust and courtesy is a way of life, and where the pace of life is consistent with these ideals; and
- ❖ a community that celebrates the values and lessons of a multi-cultural heritage that serves as its strength and as its foundation in a progressive, modern world

Hazard Mitigation

Flooding

Floodplains serve to accommodate high levels and large volumes of water and to dissipate the force of flow. A floodplain absorbs and stores a large amount of water, later becoming a source of aquifer recharge. Floodplains also serve as wildlife habitats, open space, and outdoor recreation without interfering with their emergency overflow capacity. As with any community flooding can cause serious destruction of property and activities that increase paved or impervious surfaces and/or that change the watercourse on floodplains increase the quantity and rate of runoff that can intensify flooding impacts downstream.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) administers the Federal Flood Insurance Program and has identified the 100-year floodplains located in Easton. A 100-year flood is a flood that has 1 chance in 100 of being equaled or exceeded in any 1-year period. Local flood plain areas fall into two major categories: areas prone to flooding and velocity zones or areas susceptible to damage from wind-driven rain.

The most recent floodplain map was developed in 1985 and identifies unnumbered A zones. According to FEMA, there are 3,336 floodplain acres located in Easton. Floodplains are scattered throughout town and are generally associated with smaller streams and rivers. The largest blocks of floodplains are associated with Prestile Stream and Eliot Brook located in the center of the community. Other smaller zones are located around Hersom Pond, Fling Brook, and Howard Brook.

As stated in the Land Use section, Easton does not have an adopted a Floodplain Management Ordinance. Town officials should consider contacting the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry's (MDACF) Floodplain Management Program for technical assistance relating to floodplain management. MDACF provides assistance to municipalities which includes the development of ordinances and permit applications. These ordinances are designed to ensure that floodplain management measures are appropriately applied in flood hazard areas and in many cases, ordinances follow state minimum guidelines.

Other Hazards

Hazard mitigation planning is developed and coordinated at the County level by the Aroostook Emergency Management Agency (AKEMA). The Aroostook County Hazard Mitigation Plan update received final FEMA approval in 2011. Plans are currently underway to begin the revision of the plan with a completion date of 2016. All municipalities are asked to participate in this planning process and to provide a list of potential projects should emergency funding become available. Easton has participated and provided the required information.

While flooding always seems to be the risk that requires the greatest attention, Easton faces several other risks that must be understood and addressed. AKEMA lists four priorities when discussing hazard mitigation, flooding, severe winter storms, severe summer storms, and wildfires. Aroostook County is known for its long and, often thought of, severe winters. Winter

storms are ranked as the second highest hazard in Maine behind flooding. These include heavy snow, ice storms, blizzards, freezing rain and winter storms. Nor'easters, the most severe winter storm, can produce precipitation amounts exceeding several inches of water equivalent to 20-30 inches of snow or more, and produce wind speeds equal to or greater than those of hurricanes. It should be noted that over 50% of winter storm related deaths are attributed to exposure to the cold. The most vulnerable are those over the age of 60 and male. Approximately 20% of the cold related deaths occur in the home.

Because winter storms have the potential of impacting large areas of the community, AKEMA has estimated that, in the worst case scenario, a severe winter storm could impact 53 miles of electrical transmission lines, 43 miles of paved roads, and 10 miles of gravel roads and cause well over \$1 million of damage to the public infrastructure in Easton. Easton has planted windbreaks along identified problem locations and identified the following for additional windbreaks:

Severe summer storms typically have the greatest impact on road infrastructure although high winds associated with thunderstorms or tornados can down trees causing disruptions to electrical and telephone service. Summer storms tend to be more localized (exception could be a hurricane) and AKEMA has estimated that severe summer storms could potentially impact \$40-50,000 of public infrastructure at any one time. This number could be significantly higher depending on the extent and duration of the storm. Town officials have identified two locations where summer storms have impacted road infrastructure. These include the Graham Road where the town has replaced two culverts with 8'x40' culverts and riprap (\$68,000) and the Ladner Road culvert replacement with 8'x45' culverts and riprap (\$78,000). Additionally town officials should work with Emera on tree trimming in areas that could potentially impact transmission lines.

Easton contains a mixture of forests and farms and development is occurring in these areas. The town is also vulnerable to forest fire, especially during periods of drought, given the extent of its urban/wild land interface and increased residential construction in forested areas. Burning permits are required for outdoor burning of brush piles or wood debris anytime throughout the year. Depending on the current fire danger, other restrictions may be in place.

Town Officials are also aware that hazardous industrial and commercial chemicals, compressed natural gas (CNG) and fuel oil are transported to and through Easton via heavy truck and rail. According to the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP), there have been a number of petroleum and hazardous substance (ammonia, etc) spills in Easton. Town officials need to be watchful of hazardous material transportation through the community and maintain a trained emergency response preparedness program should spills occur. McCains has contingency plans in place and keep the Town's Fire Department informed of any changes.

The Maine Environmental and Geographic Analysis Database (EGAD) (formerly known as the Environmental and Groundwater Analysis Database) was originally designed to store site and water quality information and currently includes spatially located data for 39 different types of potential and actual sources of contamination to groundwater in Maine. Access to comprehensive up-to-date analytical data allows DEP to assess trends in regional ground water quality and

quantity. It also improves automated analysis and map-making capability including rapid access to information for emergency response to hazardous materials spills. Detailed well and analytical information in the database is used by staff to design remedial action at hazardous spill sites. It is also used by staff to evaluate potential for cumulative impacts of real estate development on ground water quality.

Recent efforts to expand and improve EGAD have involved the inclusion of data from the Bureau of Land & Water Quality including the addition of 10 Biological and Surface Water Sampling site types. This is in addition to the data that continues to be included from the Bureau of Remediation & Waste Management. To encapsulate the new addition of data from Land & Water Quality and to acknowledge the spatial (GIS) component of the data, EGAD is now known as the Environmental and *Geographic* Analysis Database, as data in EGAD now includes a broad range of environmental data including physical, chemical, biological and spatial data. Information can be found at the following website: <http://www.maine.gov/dep/maps-data/egad/index.html>

Dams

There are two (2) dams located in Easton with a third located on the Fort Fairfield/Easton townline. The municipally owned dam is located on Easton Pond on the Center Road behind the Town Office. Josephine Dam is owned by McCain Foods and located at Josephine Lake on the Station Road. The third dam, located in Fort Fairfield at Christina Reservoir is also owned by McCain Foods. The Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) inspects dams throughout the state which are classified in three categories: high hazard, significant hazard, and low hazard. High hazard potential means that mis-operation or failure could “probably cause loss of life.” The other dams are “significant hazard dams,” meaning a failure could cause property or environmental damage.

Of the nine (9) identified high hazard dams located in Aroostook County, two are located either in or very close to Easton, Christina (Dam #135) and Josephine (#134) dams. According to MEMA, both Christina and Josephine Dams have been inspected and are considered to be in excellent condition. Also, according to MEMA, the present owners should review the status of each of the dams and request that the classification be lessened for each as residential properties are not located near either structure. That is not to say that a failure could lead to loss of life should vehicles be driving on roads located downstream at the time of the failure. Dam owners and the Easton Fire Department have developed emergency protocols in the event of a dam failure.

As of the date of the writing of this section, the dam owned by the Town has not been inspected by MEMA. Town officials are, however, working to maintain the dam and to keep the spillway free from obstructions.

HAZARD MITIGATION Policies & Strategies

State Goal

Discourage development in natural hazard areas. Municipalities shall prevent inappropriate development in these areas including floodplains and high erosion areas.

Local Goal

Reduce losses to public and private property caused by inappropriate development through effective planning, preparedness, response and regulation.

POLICY

Continue to participate in the hazard mitigation planning process at the County level and implement local strategies to enhance preparedness, response and reduce risks to persons and property.

Strategies

- a. Designate a local person as Hazard Mitigation Coordinator (Officer) with on-going responsibility and create an annual stipend as compensation and to reflect the level of importance of their responsibilities:
 1. Annual update of local sections of County Hazard Mitigation Plan
 2. Keep plan active by implementing specific tasks in the plan.
 3. Maintain on-going communication with Emergency Management Agency (EMA) and with local Police, Fire, Ambulance, Border Patrol and other government services.
 4. Coordinate the annual flood preparedness meetings, training and public education with AKEMA and other agencies.
 5. Address tasks related to long term recovery planning formula.
- b. Seek grant funding through Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), Hazard Mitigation Program, Maine Office of Community Development- CDBG Program, Maine Department of Transportation –Rural Roads Initiative and other sources to undertake the projects identified in the Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- c. Maintain and build reserve funds as match for Pre-disaster Mitigation Grant funds for large capital projects and apply for these funds.
- d. Continue to fund upgrades to town roads targeted in Hazard Mitigation Plan. Keep scope of work manageable.
- e. Continue to invest in drainage improvements on all roads to mitigate damage caused by runoff and erosion.
- f. Invest in concrete barriers that can be used to deflect flood waters and close-off and control access points during emergencies.
- g. Coordinate traffic control with the US Border Patrol, Customs and the Maine State Police to restrict outside traffic during disaster events.

- h. Annually inspect the Easton Pond Dam and remove debris that may be blocking the spillway.
- i. Work with Emera to complete tree trimming in all areas to help protect power and telephone lines.

POLICY

Ensure that new development and improvement to existing properties does not create or contribute to the risk of property damage, personal injury or loss of life.

Strategies

- a. Continue to enforce, without exception, the construction standards outlined in the Floodplain Management section and local road standards for subdivision roads and roads proposed for public acceptance.
- b. Revise the local zoning ordinances to keep floodplain and shoreland zoning provisions current with State and Federal standards.
- c. Use the building permit review process outlined in the Land Use Plan to educate all floodplain property owners on methods of flood proofing their buildings.
- d. Amend the Subdivision Ordinances to include storm water runoff standards.
- e. Continue to seek funds for property acquisition and residential/business relocation in floodplain areas.
- f. Communicate with Maine DEP on storm water management issues and cooperate on enforcement.

Natural Resources That Supports Hazard Mitigation Policies & Strategies

Easton recognizes that it has many natural resources that help reduce the intensity of flooding and protect water quality. The protection of these natural features, specifically wetlands, floodplains and riparian areas is the least expensive way to mitigate the effects of runoff, erosion and flooding. Standards are already in place in local ordinances that address protection of the resources.

POLICY

Ensure the protection of wetlands, floodplains and riparian areas from activities that reduce their capacity to control flooding and erosion.

Strategies

- a. Strictly enforce floodplain management and shoreland zoning standards that pertain to filling, earth moving and clearing activities.

POLICY

Protect the capacity of roadside drainage and storm drainage systems to handle runoff.

Strategies

- a. Continue to work with the Highway department to improve drainage along roads. Follow the 10 year plan for road improvements.
- b. Annually identify erosion and runoff problems associated with agriculture and request that landowners contact the USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service and the Central Aroostook Soil and Water Conservation District for assistance.
- c. Continue to enforce the standards found in the Subdivision Ordinance that pertain to sedimentation and erosion control.

An All-Hazards Approach to Preparedness, Response, Recovery and Education Policies And Strategies

Town officials acknowledge that there are other serious natural and man-made hazards that require planning, preparation and public education to ensure the safety of its citizens. Most of these are identified in the County Hazard Mitigation Plan and include severe winter storms with high wind and ice and severe summer storms with high wind and flash flooding. Associated long duration power outages are of particular concern.

POLICY

Build community capacity to withstand long duration power outages to protect public services, shelter areas and private residences.

Strategies

- a. Develop a priority list of facilities that require back-up power and seek Federal and State grant funding for the purchase of generators.
- b. Design and implement a community survey that determines the capacity of local households to cope with power outages and report results to County and local emergency response.
- c. Publicly post emergency preparedness information that directs citizens to County, State and Federal emergency management websites and other educational resources.
- d. Encourage local fuel companies to have auxiliary power that enables them to supply gasoline, diesel and propane during outages.
- e. Develop a municipal fuel depot with generator set-up to enhance preparedness.
- f. Create/initiate a tornado notification protocol with the National Weather Service, Caribou and local emergency responders for advance warning.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Easton's Vision

Easton will constantly strive to be

- ❖ a dynamic community that is economically, culturally, and socially inviting;
- ❖ a community that promotes and aggressively pursues innovative business and economic development;
- ❖ a community that welcomes, supports, and responds to a diversity of new people and new ideas;
- ❖ a community that recognizes children as our future and shares collective responsibility for the nurturing and education of each generation;
- ❖ a community where family ties are strong, self respect and respect for others is instilled, where trust and courtesy is a way of life, and where the pace of life is consistent with these ideals; and
- ❖ a community that celebrates the values and lessons of a multi-cultural heritage that serves as its strength and as its foundation in a progressive, modern world

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Introduction

The Easton Historical Society, Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC), and the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry provided Easton with a set of data on its historic and archeological resources used in this inventory and analysis.

Town History

Provided by the Kevin Marquis and the Easton Historical Society, 2014

Easton, formerly known as Letter C and then as Fremont Plantation is located to the west of Presque Isle. In 1851 the first known residence in the Easton wilderness was built by Henry Wilson, who had taught school in Presque Isle. Solomon Bolster arrived in 1854, he joined Henry Wilson and Augustus Rackliffe, it's the sole residents. In 1855-1856, Noah Barker partitioned the township into 142 lots of 160 acres in size, thereby determining its layout. The state opened it for settlement, and on July 26, 1856 it was organized as the Fremont Plantation. A schoolhouse was built in 1858 and the first of several lumber mills was constructed in another year. By 1860 the population was 320. Growth of the population slowed during the Civil War, and the town of Easton was incorporated 1865. Economic growth was slow, evidenced by an 1862 record that taxes should be paid in grain or shingles. The first store was opened in 1863. A starch factory was built in 1877, and a steam shingle mill in 1879. Easton became "one of the greatest potato producing towns in the County. The 1880s saw the appearance of the Methodists and the Free Will Baptists--also the Odd Fellows.¹ By 1880 the population was 835; by 1890, 978.

Lying on both the eastern line of Aroostook County and Maine, Easton so derives its name. It was incorporated in 1865. Previous to that date, it was called Fremont Plantation in honor of Major General John Charles Fremont, the pathfinder and explorer. He was the standard bearer of the young Republican Party of the nation in 1856, when the plantation assumed his name.

Easton was originally a Massachusetts township, but about 1854, like all the other towns in Maine still remaining in the hands of Massachusetts, it was purchased by the State of Maine. In 1855-56 it was lotted by Noah Barker into 160 acre lots, and was opened by the state for settlement. The earliest settler of whom there is any authentic account is Henry Wilson who first came to Presque Isle and taught school there in a log house about 1847. There was at this time a logging road from Presque Isle across the present town in Easton to the St. John River, a road passable only for teams in the winter season.

The early settlers paid for their land by grubbing out and building the road from Fort Fairfield to Blaine, which in 1856 had been run out but was only a spotted line in the woods. It was not passable for wagons until 1859. By 1865, Easton boasted a population of approximately 400 and by Proclamation by the Maine Legislature was officially incorporated as the Town of Easton on February 24, 1865. The town valuation in 1865 was \$39,495 and the first town meeting raised

\$968.53 to support schools, roads and necessary town charges. Taxes could be paid in grain or cedar shingles, both being acceptable as currency in Aroostook County at the time.

In 1858, the first school house was constructed. In 1895, Easton's potential for rail freight was realized when the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad constructed a spur, opening the community to railroad traffic. In the 1960s Frederick Vahlsing constructed the first modern potato processing plant, located along the shoreline of the Prestile Stream and later constructed a \$30 million sugar beet refinery.

In the 1860 census, when Easton was still Letter C Range 1, sixty-nine families lived in area and the only occupation was farmer. These farmers would have had improved acres for crop production and pastureland and significantly more unimproved acreage in woodlots which they depended on for both construction and fuel wood. The Rackliff brothers, as did other farmers in the area, accomplished a lot in terms of clearing land for production purposes in a little over ten years. In 1870, 100 farmers recorded their agricultural production for the census records and the average amount of improved land was a little over 36 acres.

In 1858, voters appeared at a plantation meeting where they voted to establish a school at Easton Center and to forbid liquor licenses in the town. In 1863, the assessors, William Wharff, James Tozier and Nathan Jewell along with the plantation clerk, John Kelly, sent the state a list of voters in Fremont Planation with 74 names on it. According to state law the assessors had to create the list of eligible voters by August 11th and then on the second Monday in September gather them together to vote on the governor, senators and representatives to the state legislature as well as the president and vice president when applicable. The assessors would preside over the elections, take people's votes and present them to the clerk who would then record them. These voters lists show that the settlers of Fremont Plantation were active participants in government at all levels as well as that they had organized themselves at the local level in order to participate and carry out the necessary requirements to preside over the affairs of the plantation. The first municipal building was constructed in 1957 and in 1973, residents voted to adopt a Town Manager form of government. The first Town Manger was Alphonse Dixon who assumed those duties in 1974.

Today, agriculture and wood products remain the life blood of Easton. McCain Foods, Inc. and Huber Engineered Woods, LLC., all agricultural or resource based industries, make up about 70 percent of the tax base today.

Education has always been important to the residents of Easton and schools have contributed to the town's identity as early as the 1870s. Until the mid-nineteenth century, surrounding communities like River de Chute, Pine Tree and Easton Center supported small one and two room school houses that taught students from first to eighth grades. When these students graduated from eighth grade, they had the opportunity to attend high school, which was established in 1877, in the town of Easton.

By 1901 there were 11 school buildings in Easton and its surrounding communities, which included a new school built in the Ladner school district. In 1904 a new free high school was built in town, which later became the elementary school. In 1905 a new school was built in the Mahaney district, followed by a new school in the Pine Tree district in 1907. In 1916, the eight-

grade system replaced the nine-grade system in the schools in the surrounding rural communities. This change meant that these schools taught up to eighth grade instead of ninth grade. If a student wanted to continue into ninth grade, he or she would have to go to the high school. The town school committee noted, in the town report for 1916, that “[this change] brings our common school system up to date. It saves a year of valuable time to students, enables them to go to High School a year earlier, and encourages more pupils to go to High School and to College, or to other institutions of high learning.ii” This change affected the Easton Center School, the Curtis School, the Dilling School, the Fuller School, the Getchell School, the Ladner School, the Mahany School, the McManus School and the Pine Tree School which were all rural or common schools. By 1920, Easton had a total of 420 children attending approximately twelve different schools in Easton and its surrounding rural communities.

Easton today is vibrant community offering small town living among scenic views in Aroostook. With its many miles of streams and snowmobile trails, it offers year round recreation for its citizens.

Historic Buildings, Prehistoric Archaeological and Historic Archaeological Sites

Two types of archaeological sites need consideration during Growth Management Planning: prehistoric archaeological sites (Native American, before European arrival) and historic archaeological sites (mostly European-American, after written historic records about 1600 A.D.). Prehistoric sites include campsites or village locations, rock quarries and workshops (from making stone tools), and petroglyphs or rock carvings. Prehistoric archaeological site sensitivity maps are based on the current understanding of Native American settlement patterns (known site locations and professionally surveyed areas) within the portion of the state where the municipality is located. Most commonly, prehistoric archaeological sites are located within 50 m of canoe-navigable water, on relatively well-drained, level landforms. Some of the most ancient sites (>10,000 years old) are located on sandy soils within 200 m of small (not canoe- navigable) streams.

Historic archaeological sites may include cellar holes from houses, foundations for farm buildings, mills, wharves and boat yards, and near-shore shipwrecks. Historic archaeological sites can be predicted most often by a review of historic records, maps and deeds. Settlement often focused on transportation corridors, first rivers, then roads as they were built. Archaeological sites from the first wave of European settlement in any town are likely to be significant (National Register eligible).

Historic Buildings

According to the Maine Historic Preservation Commission (2013) Based on preliminary architectural survey data, the following property may be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places:

- Circle K Dairy Farm, 94 Gray Road

A comprehensive survey of Easton's historic above-ground resources needs to be conducted in order to identify other properties that may be eligible for nomination to the National Register.

Prehistoric Archaeological Sites

According to the Maine Historic Preservation Commission (2013) there are no sites are known within Easton and no professional archaeological surveys have been completed. However MHPC recommends area along the Chute River, Monson Pond shoreline, and Prestile Stream need archaeological survey in advance of any ground disturbing activity.

Historic Archaeological Sites

According to the Maine Historic Preservation Commission (2013) there is one historical archeological site located in Easton. The Easton boundary line farm located on the Easton/New Brunswick border was surveyed by staff and research indicates early twentieth century context (1900-1940) with potential nineteenth century components

No other professional surveys for historic archaeological sites have been conducted to date in Easton. Future archaeological survey should focus on the identification of potentially significant resources associated with the town's agricultural, residential, and industrial heritage, particularly those associated with the earliest Euro-American settlement of the town in the 18th and 19th centuries.

There are no known Native American archeological sites located in Easton.

Threats to Historic and Prehistoric Resources

The threats to these resources are primarily centered on the harsh northern Maine climate, lack of financial resources and a lack of broad public awareness and appreciation for the value of historic/prehistoric resources. For the most part, historic buildings are wood frame structures that require constant maintenance. While the town provides some funding for the Historical Society, maintenance is generally the responsibility of the owner.

Prehistoric resources are threatened by all land use activity in sensitive areas especially when excavation is involved. Permitting for many activities does not require a review or determination of the presence or absence of these archeological resources. Public awareness of these resources is limited. Some sensitive areas are subject to severe stream bank erosion that may be exposing or degrading prehistoric sites.

HISTORICAL, CULTURAL & ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Policies & Strategies

State Goal

Preserve the State's Historic and Archeological Resources and to further identify these resources and ensure that their value is recognized and protected.

Local Goal

Improve local awareness and understanding of these resources and their value. Identify, recognize and protect new resources that have merit.

POLICY

Improve awareness and understanding of the significance of Easton's historic, cultural and archeological resources. (HCA)

Strategies

- a. During Easton Days, present information concerning the importance of HCA sites.
- b. Expand the use of HCA sites, where appropriate, as staging areas for social/educational events that build support for local historic resources.
- c. Enhance the Municipal website to include a link to information that exhibit the community's historic, cultural and archeological resources.
- d. Improve and update the public signage and literature that directs people to the HCA resources of Easton.
- e. Develop documentation, interpretation and displays that communicate the importance of Churches, farming and logging in local history.

POLICY

Improve the protection of known and potentially valuable HCA resources of the community.

Strategies

- a. Amend Shoreland Zoning Ordinance to include standards that help identify and protect HCA resources.
- b. When developing the building permit application, include identification of potential HCA resources.
- c. Sponsor a forum to extract local knowledge on the location of farmsteads, settlements, foundations and artifacts that depict local HCA resources.
- d. Incorporate the use of social media like Facebook to help identify and locate HCA resources.
- e. Seek funding to develop and implement an historic preservation master plan that includes a comprehensive list of potential sites.

POLICY

Have all eligible sites listed in the National Register of Historic Places and locally recognize and display these sites.

Strategies

- a. Encourage and support the local historical society's effort to produce a comprehensive list and evaluation of potential sites.
- b. Establish a dialogue with owners on the potential historic value of their property.
- c. Request the participation of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission in the nomination of potential sites for listing.

POLICY

Recognize and support the identification, interpretation and display of HCA resources as a means to enhance the local economy and quality of life.

- a. Continue to support local, regional and international festivals and events that include culturally based activities and international cooperation.
- b. Encourage and support the development of new activities and events utilizing the Easton Pond recreation area as a staging area.

LAND USE AND PROPOSED LAND USE PLAN

Easton's Vision

Easton will constantly strive to be

- ❖ a dynamic community that is economically, culturally, and socially inviting;
- ❖ a community that promotes and aggressively pursues innovative business and economic development;
- ❖ a community that welcomes, supports, and responds to a diversity of new people and new ideas;
- ❖ a community that recognizes children as our future and shares collective responsibility for the nurturing and education of each generation;
- ❖ a community where family ties are strong, self respect and respect for others is instilled, where trust and courtesy is a way of life, and where the pace of life is consistent with these ideals; and
- ❖ a community that celebrates the values and lessons of a multi-cultural heritage that serves as its strength and as its foundation in a progressive, modern world

LAND USE

Inventory and Analysis

The land use section is one of the most important components of the comprehensive plan as it identifies the location and amount of land available and suitable for particular purposes can be determined by reviewing past and present land uses. The planning program inventoried agricultural and forest lands, soil types and characteristics, natural resources, transportation networks, housing needs, demographics, local and regional economy, and public facilities and services. These inventories are then analyzed and reflected in a Land Use Plan. Implementation of the land use plan is accomplished through the development of a set of land use regulations.

Since the comprehensive plan is a long-range guide for the growth and development of Easton, it cannot be too specific or rigid. It has to be flexible and adapt to unforeseen changes and demands. An overall framework is provided to make intelligent and informed land use decisions within which adjustments can be made to any inevitable changes.

Easton, to some extent, is a bedroom community for its Service Center, Presque Isle. However the town also has a vibrant agricultural community, a growing Amish influence, and two major industrial complexes. The town is known for its educational system, recreation program, low taxes and the services that it provides. Easton's land area is approximately 24,915 acres or 38.93 square miles. The town is relatively flat and could be considered gently rolling terrain but there are areas that have steep slopes. Mars Hill borders it to the south, Presque Isle and Westfield to the west, New Brunswick to the east, and Fort Fairfield to the north. Easton is seeing some subdivision growth that has been spurred by the forethought of Town Officials who are focusing on potential residential land as it become available.

What does Easton Look Like Today?

Land ownership patterns are characterized by large farm parcels that range from 100 to over 500 acres. Approximately 70% of the land area is controlled by a few property owners and any change in their status can lead to development pressure or a change in land uses. Town officials maintain a positive relationship with the large land owners

One of the more recent changes in Easton's landscape has been an increase in the number of smaller farms that utilize the fallow and hayland that was once abundant and available within the community. These smaller farms, typically associated with the Amish, have somewhat changed the setting of the community as more livestock and organic type farming is occurring. In the past, much of this land was either underutilized or not utilized at all.

While Easton has seen relatively little development pressure, it could be considered a bedroom community to Presque Isle and with its significantly lower tax rates and well known school department and recreational programs, it is an attractive community for those wishing to locate to the region. Easton has retained its rural character and has a very distinct and compact village area located along the Center and Station Roads.

An inventory of land uses was completed by the University of Maine at Presque Isle (UMPI) in 2011. UMPI students inventoried all of the land uses in town and developed a GIS database and map that provides acreages for a number of land uses located in Easton. The map is located at the end of this section and the following lists the land uses in Easton:

Easton Land Use, 2011

Land Use	Acreage	Percent of Total Acreage
Cropland	4,988	15.59
Badlands * (undeveloped)	516	1.61
Developed-Residential	936	2.92
Developed- Industrial	472	1.47
Fallow 1	1,861	5.82
Fallow 2	943	2.95
Forest	12,276	38.36
Pasture	576	1.80
Hayland	7,630	23.84
Water	261	0.82
Wetland	1,544	4.82
Total	32,003	100.00

Source: University of Maine at Presque Isle, 2011

*Badlands refers to the small open lands that are almost always next to croplands but not used as cropland due to several reasons. They may be used for dumping waste such as rocks. They may be wet or steep. Or they are the corners of farms used for turning around tractors or used as paths.

Forestland comprised the largest land use in Easton with over 38 percent of the land area being considered forested. Hayland and cropland were the next two largest land uses.

Residential Properties

Residential properties are spread through the community and according to UMPI's database there are 238 lots with some form of residential development. Development for the most part has occurred in a piecemeal fashion along existing transportation corridors. There have been three recent subdivisions approved by the Planning Board and development is beginning to occur there. The Moose Meadow subdivision is located on Duncan Drive and the recently acquired portion contains seven (7) lots while the Perry Drive subdivision has 14 lots of which two (2) are vacant. These subdivisions are proving to be somewhat popular as they provide an affordable land purchasing option for those wishing to locate in town. Town officials are open to expanding these subdivisions as land is sold within them and as land surrounding them becomes available.

There are also three (3) mobile home parks which are fully occupied. Two of these parks are located on the Center Road and the other is on the West Ridge Road. At the time of the writing of this plan, the owners do not intend to expand.

Because the town does not have a building permit system, it is difficult to obtain exact numbers of new residential development. However, according to the US Census and a report completed by a Planning Board member, there were 32 new housing units constructed in Easton since 2000. Most of the residential development has occurred on former agricultural lands as this tends to be the least expensive to develop and contains the best soil suitable for on-site wastewater disposal. It should also be noted that as development occurs in the more rural areas, the Town is still obligated to provide basic services to these areas. Sending school buses and plowing roads can become expensive in an area where there is sparse population. There appears to be adequate land available in Easton to accommodate new residential development. The limiting factor in many cases is the landowner's willingness to sell the property for development.

Some residential development is projects over the next 10 years. The Amish are developing property and purchasing active farmland, mainly east of Route 1-A. This population is homesteading the area and oftentimes are bringing fallow or abandoned farmland back into production.

In the western portion of town, Duncan Drive and Perry Drive are projected to see some residential development due to the development of subdivisions. These town owned subdivisions are proving to be popular and town officials are looking for potential additional land. The Town does provide access in the form of roads and provides some regulations as to what could be developed.

Minor additional residential development is projected to occur on the Hersom Road and some of the smaller lots scattered throughout town.

Commercial and Industrial Properties

Easton has two major industries: McCain Foods and JM Huber which are located in a large industrial park along the Station Road, Conant Road, and Richardson Road. This area is served by the Maine Northern Railroad. The area has seen major road upgrades in order to accommodate heavy truck traffic leaving each of the plants. There is also a former large industrial waste pond. The industrial park is surrounded by agricultural land and open space which allows for land spreading of wastes from the food processing plant. Currently, there are no plans to expand either industrial use at the Park. Located directly across from the main entrance of the park is a small convenience store which offers food, fuel, and some everyday items.

According to UMPI, there are 45 lots in Easton that contain some form of industrial or commercial development. There are several smaller scale commercial establishments located throughout the community. Most are located in the village area and include a bank, grocery store, and small retail shops. Recently, a new medical center opened on the Center Road just west of the municipal office next to the bank. Seven new businesses have located in Easton

since 2012. These consist mainly of services related that support McCain and Huber but a couple of small retail establishment have been located in town. Town officials are looking at the creation of a redemption center.

Increasingly, there are some small retail type establishment being located outside of the village area and along Routes 1-A and Center Road as well as on Route 1-A near the Mars Hill Town line. In some cases, there are small farm stands and maple sugaring operations that have been developed, with most of these located off the Ladner Road. While these businesses are welcomed and have not created traffic or safety issues, town officials may want to be watchful that future development of this type does not impact traffic on major corridors.

Public Property

Nearly all of Easton's public property is located in the center of the community near the village area. Properties include the municipal building, fire station, recreation center and park, town garage, elementary school, high school, Post Office, various commercial buildings that the town leases. There is a US Customs and Border Protection port of entry located on the Ladner Road at the Maine/New Brunswick border. There is also a town owned subdivision located on the Station Road.

Land Use Regulations

Easton has adopted one land use ordinance that regulates various land use activities. The Shoreland Zoning Ordinance is a minimum standard ordinances that follow models developed by the State. The town employs a part-time Code Enforcement Officer and maintains an all volunteer Planning Board and Board of Appeals that administers the ordinance. Permits are issued by either the Code Enforcement Officer or the Planning Board but many activities do not require a permit as long as they are conducted in accordance with the land use standards found in each ordinance. The Town maintains copies of the ordinance and official maps at the town office.

Shoreland Zoning Ordinance

Easton's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance applies to all land areas within 250 feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high-water line of any great pond or river, or upland edge of a freshwater wetland, and all land areas within 75 feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high-water line of a stream. The ordinance was adopted in 2008 and follows the current state minimum guidelines. A copy of the Shoreland Zoning map is located at the end of this section.

Three (3) districts have been established in this ordinance including: Resource Protection, Limited Residential, and Stream Protection. The three districts are also officially identified on each of the communities' Official Shoreland Zoning map. The zones are described as follows:

- **Resource Protection:** Areas where development would jeopardize significant natural, scenic, recreational and historic resources, including but not limited to flood plains,

precipitous slopes, wildlife habitat, and other areas critical to the ecology of the region or state.

- **Limited Residential:** Areas suitable for residential and recreational development.
- **Stream Protection:** This district generally includes areas within 100 feet of streams.

Amendments to the State's Shoreland Zoning Guidelines will become available in 2015 and town officials should be watchful for those and amend their ordinance as needed.

Floodplain Hazard Area Regulations

Easton does not have an adopted a Floodplain Management Ordinance. Town officials should consider contacting the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry's (MDACF) Floodplain Management Program for technical assistance relating to floodplain management. MDACF provides assistance to municipalities which includes the development of ordinances and permit applications. These ordinances are designed to ensure that floodplain management measures are appropriately applied in flood hazard areas and in many cases, ordinances follow state minimum guidelines

Townwide Zoning and Regulation

There is no townwide zoning or land use ordinances in place. Town officials have attempted to develop and adopt ordinances in the past but they have not been approved by residents. A recent public opinion poll indicted a nearly even mix between adopting some minimal form of land use regulation and leaving regulations as is. As a result, town officials are considering the development of a smaller, more specific land use ordinance that regulates certain activities.

Officials are considering creating a minimum lot size and setback, regulating mobile homes, automobile graveyards, junk yards, automobile recycling facilities, and kennels. Town officials are also considering the development of a minimal and inexpensive building permit system that helps them better understand the amount and type of development that is occurring within Easton.

Existing Land Use Analysis

Land Use Analysis

Easton has an attractive future. It is known for its rural quality of life and for recreation and leisure-time activities. The town's small village area with developed residential and commercial areas is surrounded by large outlying areas that have retained much of their rural character, despite the current residential development pressures and a large industrial area. The map of current land uses and the information about development pressures allows town officials to effectively maintain existing land uses and prepare and plan for future land uses by prioritizing those areas of the community which are best suited for residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, forestry, and public uses. Easton has also identified other areas as seen of the development constraints map where little or no growth should be encouraged, such as areas

unserved and unserviceable by sewer, prime forest lands, prime agricultural lands, wetlands, areas of endangered natural resources, aquifers, etc.

Only a very small portion of the land area in Easton has been developed. There is still ample land for additional growth. However, it is important to target future growth in specific areas able to accommodate development to preserve existing rural resources within Easton. There has been an increase in the past several years of residential development outside of the traditional village area, and this has put pressure on existing forest and agricultural land. This could eventually lead to added expenses for the town in terms of utilities, public facilities and services, and busing costs.

It appears that most of the future growth in Easton will occur in the rural farming areas and the town presently does not have the regulatory measures in place to help guide growth to appropriate areas. The Town's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance and Floodplain Ordinance provide some form of regulation for a relatively small percentage of the town's land areas. Outside of those zones, growth can occur anywhere. Town officials have taken steps to develop two subdivisions in areas where growth should occur, near the village area schools, and most of the commercial development.

Commercial development pressure has been minimal. For the most part commercial development has occurred along the Center Road, Station Road, and Route 1-A. The Richardson Road is also beginning to see some commercial development. The commercial development that has occurred is supportive of the region's and community's natural resources based industry.

Residents and town officials have an excellent opportunity to plan for the future through the preparation, adoption, and implementation of this Plan. Through preparation of the plan, residents must decide what they want their community to look like in the next 10 to 20 years. There is a strong potential for growth in the rural area with the general movement of people out of the urban areas, especially Presque Isle.

The comprehensive plan cannot provide detailed solutions for all of the community's economic development issues. It does, however, identify many of the basic resources, facts, and local concerns so that the town's leaders, along with the residents, can have better information for future decision-making on some of the town's most pressing land use matters and issues.



0 850 1,700 3,400 5,100 6,800 Feet

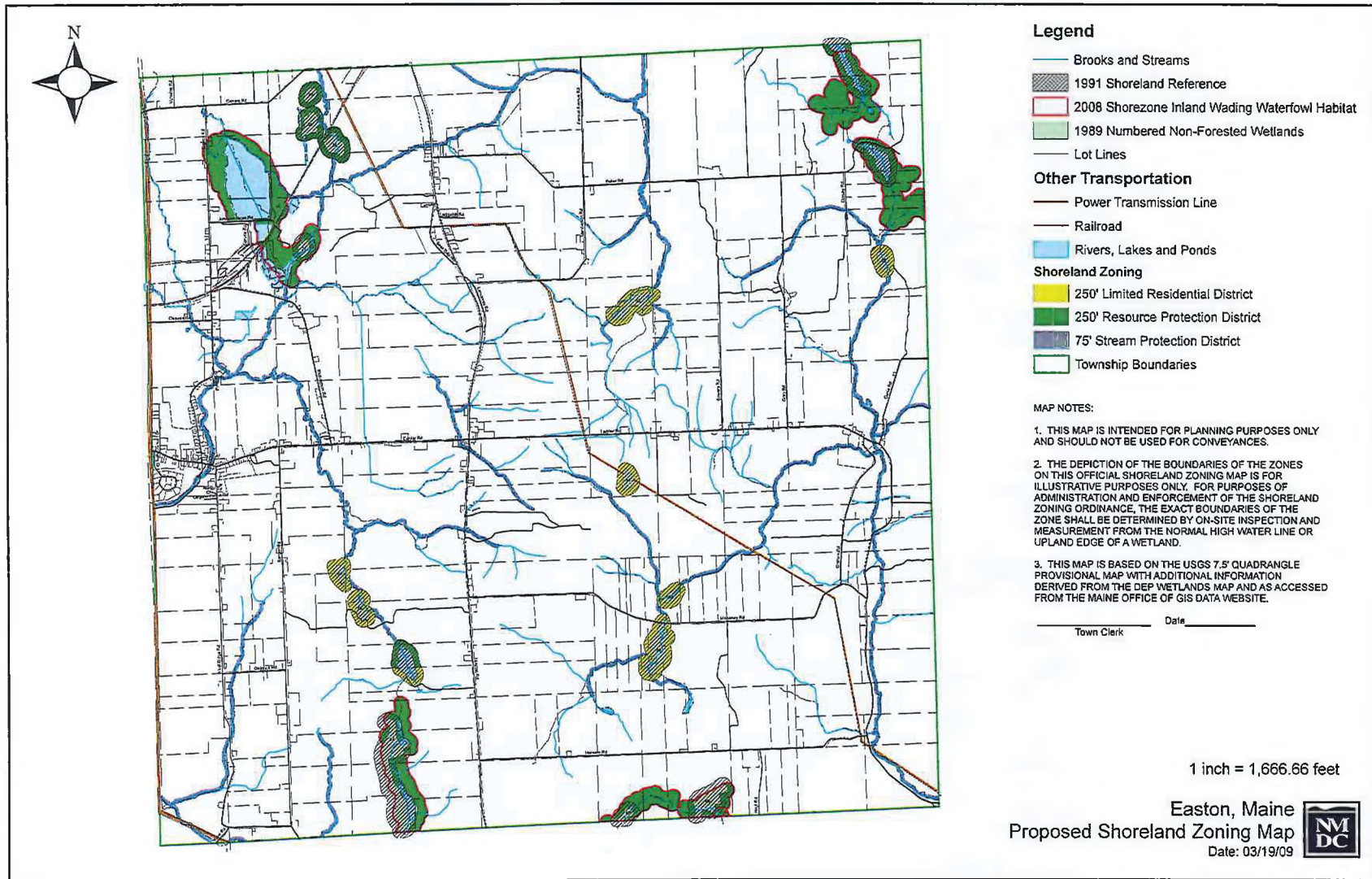
- Legend**
- International Boundaries
 - Township Boundaries
 - Parcel's
- Easton Other Transportation**
- Power Transmission Line
 - Railroad
 - Rivers
 - Lakes and Ponds
 - Brooks and Streams
- Land Use**
- Badland
 - Cropland
 - Developed
 - Fallow1
 - Fallow2
 - Forest
 - Hayfield
 - Pasture
 - Water
 - Wetland

Note: Easton Land Cover 2011 Data was compiled, analyzed and tabulated by University of Maine at Presque Isle Office Lab. Students under the supervision of Professor Christopher Wang.

1 inch = 1,667 feet

Easton, Maine
Comprehensive Plan
Land Use Map
Date: 01/17/14





Land Use Plan

The land use plan for Easton is one of the most important components of the Plan. Examining past and present land use has been used to determine the location and the amount of land available for particular purposes. Since the Plan and its goals, policies and strategies are a long-range guide for the growth and development of Easton, it cannot be too specific or rigid and has to be flexible and able to adapt to unforeseen changes and demands. The Planning Board inventoried agricultural and forest lands, soil types and characteristics, natural resources, transportation networks, housing needs, demographics, local and regional economy, and public facilities and services. These inventories were then analyzed and put into a land use plan.

Growth Areas:

Growth areas should be designed with the following criteria:

1. Have, or can efficiently obtain, public facilities and services.
2. Have natural characteristics suitable for development.
3. Are large enough to accommodate the expected growth over the next 10 years.
4. Are large enough to accommodate a variety of housing types.
5. Must be limited to a size and configuration that encourages compact rather than sprawling development.

Rural Areas:

As mentioned previously, the majority of Easton's land area is rural, outside of the downtown (growth) area. The principal use of this large land area should be for agriculture, forestry, rural type residence, and associated uses. Land use ordinances developed for rural areas by municipal officials should limit the number of, size of, and type of commercial businesses allowed in these rural areas. Other specific purposes of this area should include conservation of natural resources, reduction of soil erosion, and the encouragement of appropriate recreational land use. Rural areas should be designed to:

1. Include important agricultural and forestlands.
2. Include large areas of contiguous, undeveloped land used by wildlife, for resource protection, and for outdoor recreation.
3. Include important natural resources and scenic open spaces.
4. May have very low densities of development interspersed among fields and woodlands.
5. Should not include areas in which a significant portion of the community's development is planned to occur.
6. Areas that have significant green or open spaces.

The "Growth and Rural" areas for Easton have been designated in past comprehensive plans. The Planning Committee has not changed the growth and rural areas for the town. It should be noted that these areas are fluid and could expand and contract based upon growth pressure and the intent of the zoning ordinance.

1. The **Growth** areas are "generally" defined as: those portions of the Town located in the village areas, along Center Road, Station Road, and West Ridge Road.

Industrial Growth Area

Industrial growth has occurred in Easton and may grow in the future. This area is described as potential future industrial sites because of existing land uses as well as potential growth of present industry and creation of additional commercial and industrial development that services those industries. The Local Economy section identifies the importance and growth potential of the natural resource based industry to the future of the community. Designating this area as an Industrial area is consistent with the vision of Easton as a place with diverse job opportunities and residential areas with convenient access to employment.

This area consists of portions of Station Road, Richardson Road, and the Cleaves Road. There is favorable topography and areas of prime soils. However there are also some floodplains, wetlands that need protection and may limit growth. The transportation system includes frontage on Station Road, Richardson Road, and Cleaves Road as well as the Maine Northern Railway. There is ample land available for additional rail siding and interior access road.

2. The **Rural** area is defined as those areas outside of the "Growth" area.

Regulatory Measures

Easton does not have a strong history of land use regulations. The Town maintains a Shoreland Zoning Ordinance that meets the State's minimum requirements which is updated on a regular basis. Easton's Planning Board, both past and present, have made strong and conscious efforts not to change district boundaries or land uses within the ordinances.

The following are the provisions for a land use regulation development strategies for the implementation program.

1. Draft a land use ordinance and performance standards to include:

- Legal Provisions
- Dimensional Requirements
- Mobile Homes
- Automobile Graveyards and Junk Yards
- Definitions
- Building Permit application

- B. Review and update, if necessary, the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance.

- C. Develop a Floodplain Management ordinance with the assistance of the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry. Update, if necessary, the Floodplain Management maps.
- D. Develop a building permit system either fee based or free. Once established, on an annual basis, Town officials will track new residential development in Easton through that system. Tracking will be completed by the Code Enforcement Officer and will consist of a review of the building permit activity for the immediate past year and an analysis will be provided to the Planning Board. The town's goal is to have a majority of the new development occur within the designated growth area. If the percentage of development in the growth area drops below 65% within any 2 year period, the Planning Board will review any ordinances, regulations, or policies and make recommendations for changes to strengthen these items. Changes will be submitted to the Board of Selectmen for their approval.

FUTURE LAND USE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

State Goal: To encourage orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of each community, while protecting the State's rural character, making efficient use of public services and preventing development sprawl.

Local Goal: Encourage development in a manner that allows the cost effective and efficient use of our system of facilities and services and that helps support job creation and population growth.

Policy

Coordinate the implementation of the Town's future land use strategies with other local and regional planning efforts.

Strategies

- a. Participate in all regional transportation planning initiatives including MaineDOT's Capital Work Plan, Long Range Plan, and NMDC's regional transportation efforts.
- b. Participate in the hazard mitigation planning process at the county level.
- c. Implement local strategies described in the hazard mitigation section to enhance preparedness, response and reduce risks to persons and property.
- d. Work with the Towns of Fort Fairfield and Mars Hill to ensure consistent shoreland zoning standards for the protection of the Prestile Stream watershed.
- e. Continue to support ATV and Snowmobile Club efforts in trail development and Safety education through the Department of Conservation's Recreational Trail Program and the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

Policy

Prioritize support for new development to the designated focus areas through financial investment in needed infrastructure.

- a. Commit up to 75 percent of Easton's capital improvements expenditures into the designated growth area.
- b. Assist land owners in the growth area that have vacant land for residential uses make that land attractive for future residents. This may include the assistance with road construction, sidewalk and access considerations, or other programs.
- c. Apply for CDBG, Industrial Rail Access Program, and other funds for the revitalization of village area buildings and rail lines.
- d. Develop a gateway program in the community making the first impression of Easton a positive impression.
- e. Seek funding for sidewalk and storm drain replacement or reconstruction in the more heavily populated area of the community and residential subdivisions.
- f. Develop a diverse recreation program that appeals to a wide range of audiences.
- g. Enhance buffering, tree planting, and landscaping between commercial, industrial, and residential land uses.
- h. Construct gateways to the Industrial area that directs heavy truck traffic away from the village area and onto the Richardson Road.
- i. Inventory present telecommunications infrastructure in Easton and attempt to determine future needs of potential business and industry.
- j. Provide tax incentives to businesses wishing to locate in the downtown.
- k. Work with the Soil and Water Conservation District to identify plots of land that qualify for organic farms.
- l. Market vacant farmland that qualifies as organic farmland to potential users.
- m. When possible, in accordance with the Capital Investment Plan, initiate public investment in parking and/or road construction and acceptance, in combination with availability of grant funding.
- n. On a continuing basis, provide the Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) with the tools, training and support necessary to enforce the local ordinances and ensure that the CEO maintain current certification in accordance with 30-A M.R.S.A. § 4451.
- o. Evaluate implementation of the Plan every 3-5 years by a checklist of strategies implemented, location and value of public infrastructure investment, reporting of development trends and identification of measures that protected critical natural resources.



0 800 1,600 3,200 4,800 6,400 Feet

Legend

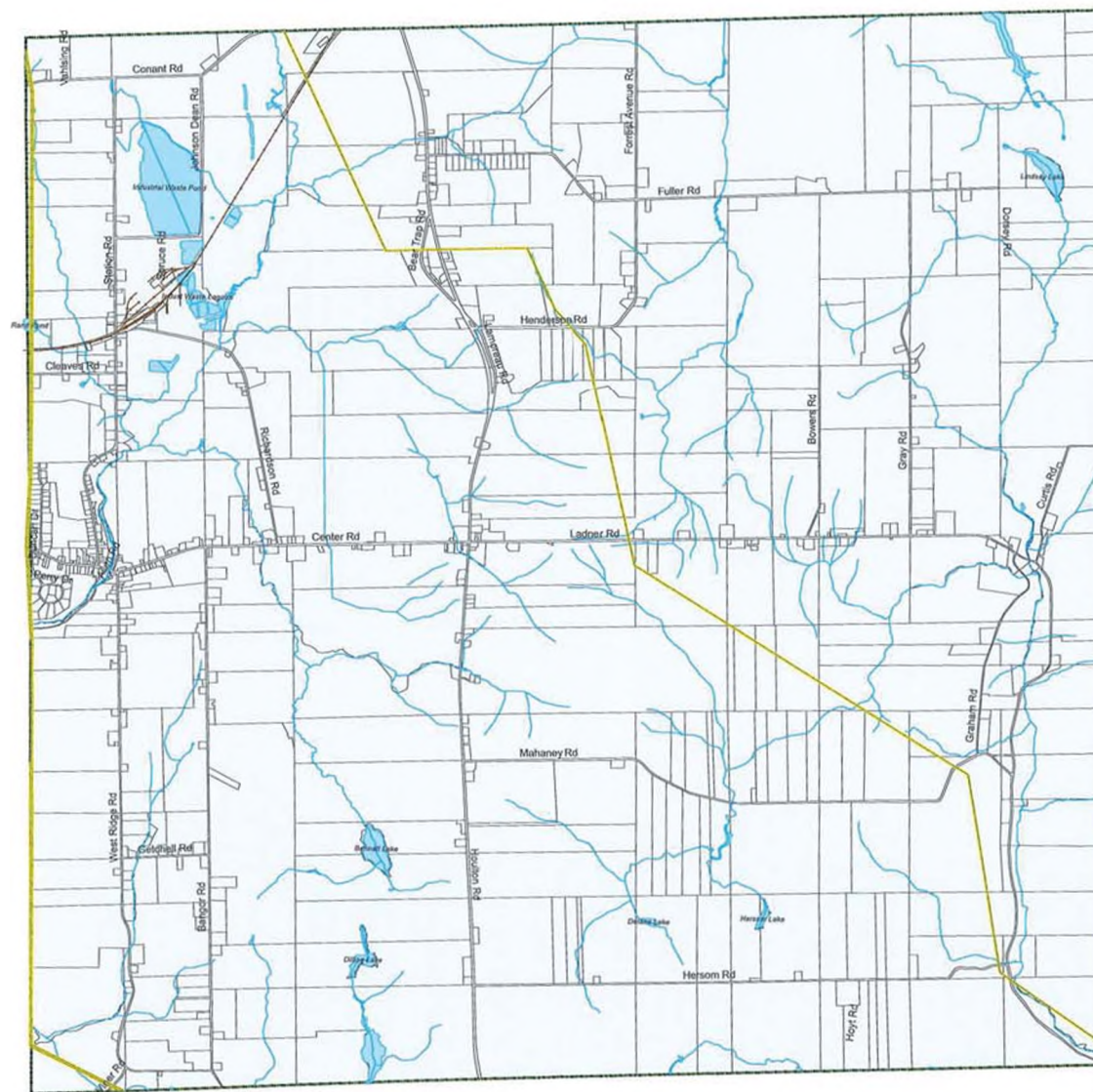
- International Boundaries
- ▭ Township Boundaries
- Roads
- Easton Other Transportation**
 - Power Transmission Line
 - - - Railroad
 - ▭ Rivers
 - ▭ Lakes and Ponds
 - ▭ Brooks and Streams

1 inch = 1,667 feet

Easton, Maine
Comprehensive Plan
Base Map

Date: 01/17/14





Legend

- International Boundaries
- Township Boundaries
- Parcels

Easton Other Transportation

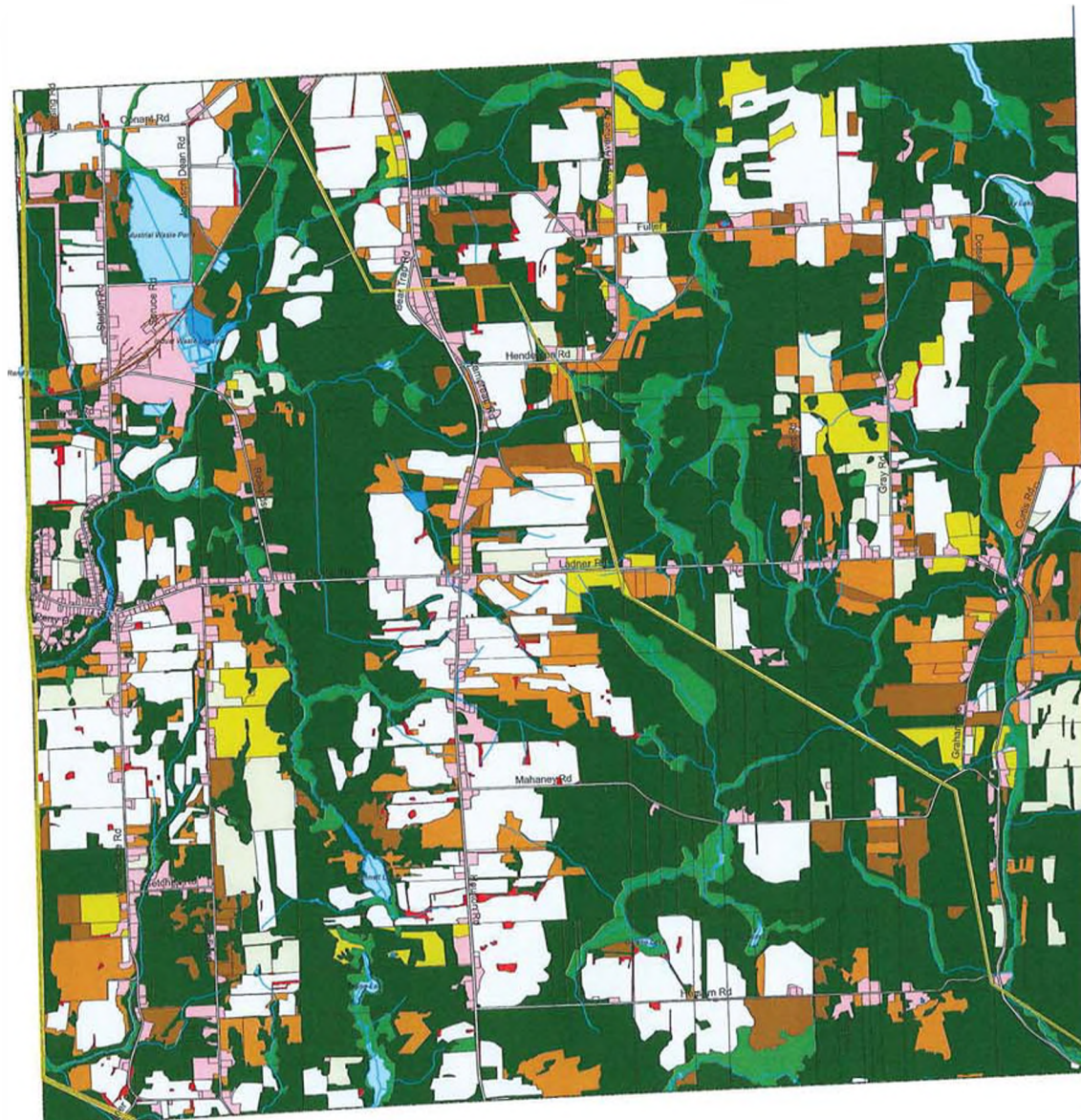
- Power Transmission Line
- Railroad
- Rivers
- Lakes and Ponds
- Brooks and Streams

1 inch = 1,667 feet

Easton, Maine
Comprehensive Plan
Parcels Base Map

Date: 01/17/14





0 850 1,700 3,400 5,100 6,800 Feet

Legend

- International Boundaries
- Township Boundaries
- Parcels

Easton Other Transportation

- Power Transmission Line
- Railroad
- Rivers
- Lakes and Ponds
- Brooks and Streams

Land Use

- Badland
- Cropland
- Developed
- Fallow1
- Fallow2
- Forest
- Hayfield
- Pasture
- Water
- Wetland

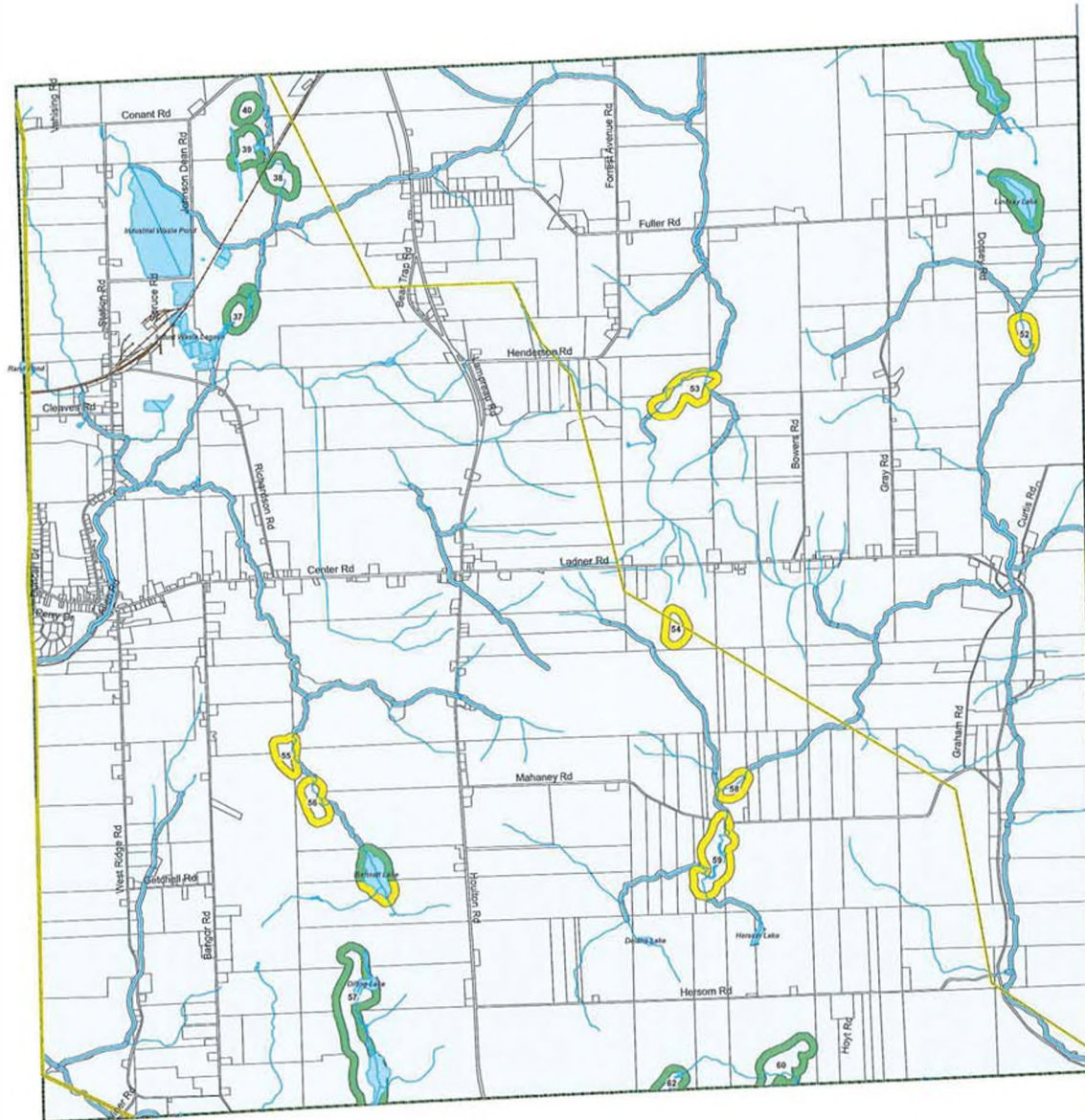
Easton Land Cover 2011 Data was compiled, analyzed and tabulated by University of Maine at Presque Isle GIS Tech Lab Students under the supervision of Professor Chunzong Wang

1 inch = 1,667 feet

Easton, Maine
Comprehensive Plan
Land Use Map

Date: 01/17/14





0 850 1,700 3,400 5,100 6,800 Feet

Legend

- International Boundaries
- Township Boundaries
- Parcels
- Easton Other Transportation**
 - Power Transmission Line
 - Railroad
- Rivers
- Lakes and Ponds
- 1989 Numbered Non-Forested Wetlands
- Easton Shoreland Zoning**
 - Limited Residential
 - Resource Protection
 - Stream Protection District
 - Brooks and Streams

MAP NOTES

1. THIS MAP IS INTENDED FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY AND SHOULD NOT BE USED FOR CONVEYANCES.
2. THE 1989 NUMBERED NON-FORESTED WETLANDS ARE THE OFFICIAL SHORELAND ZONING MAPS FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY. FOR PURPOSES OF ADJUDICATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF THE SHORELAND ZONING ORDINANCE, THE SPACE BOUNDARIES OF THE ZONE SHALL BE DETERMINED BY ON-SITE INSPECTION AND MEASUREMENT FROM THE NORMAL HIGH WATER LINE OR UPLAND EDGE OF A WETLAND.
3. THIS MAP IS BASED ON THE USGS 7.5 QUADRANGLE PROVISIONAL MAP WITH ADDITIONAL INFORMATION DERIVED FROM THE DEP FIELD MAP AND AS ACCESSED FROM THE MAINE OFFICE OF GIS DATA WEBSITE.

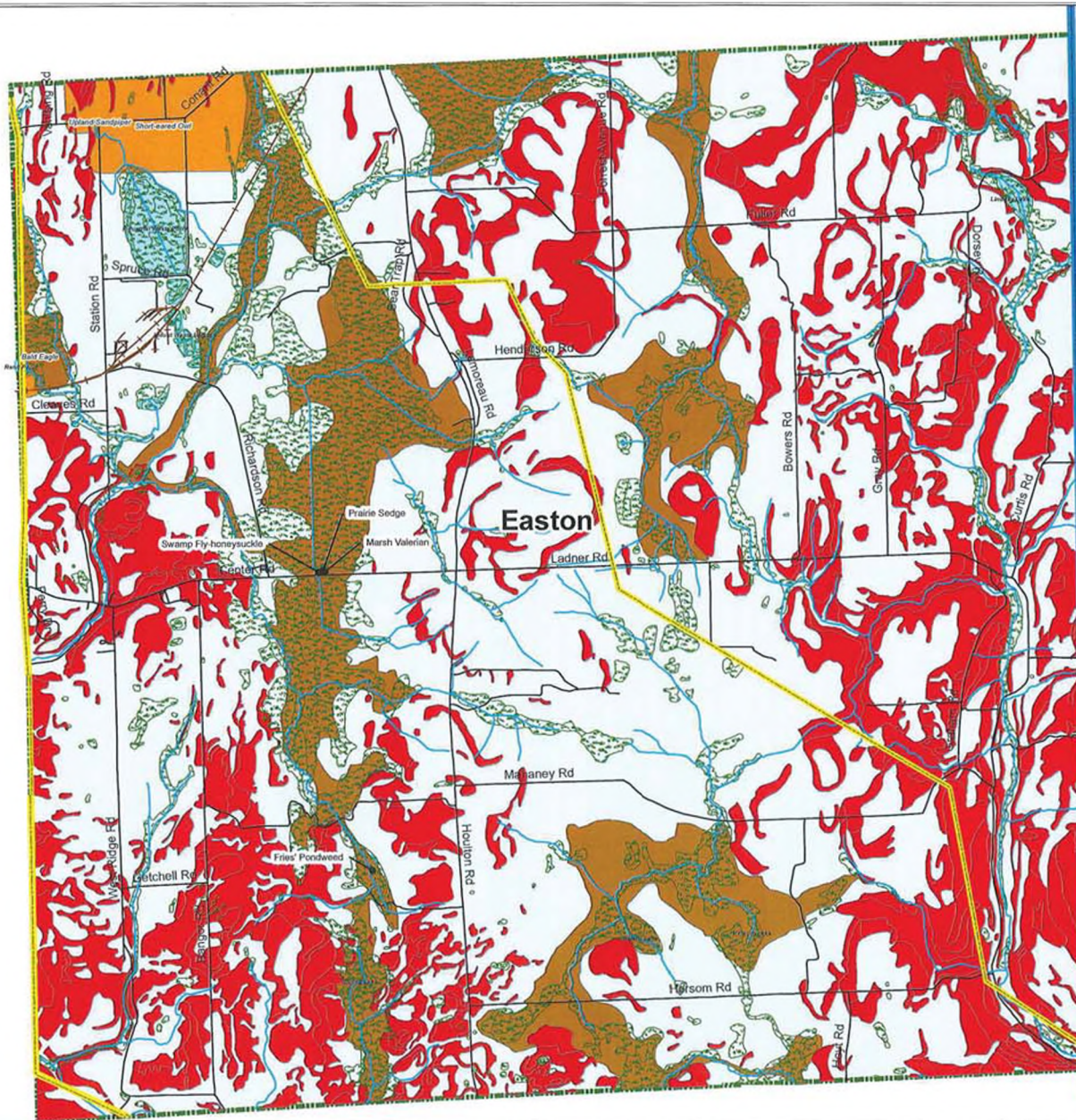
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1 inch = 1,667 feet

Easton, Maine
Comprehensive Plan
Shoreland Zoning Map

Date: 01/17/14





- Legend**
- International Boundaries
 - Easton Other Transportation**
 - Power Transmission Line
 - Railroad
 - Brooks and Streams
 - Roads
 - National Wetlands Inventory
 - Sleep Slope Soils
 - Rivers
 - Flood Plains
 - Rare and Endangered Plants
 - Rare and Endangered Bird Species
 - Lakes and Ponds
 - Township Boundaries

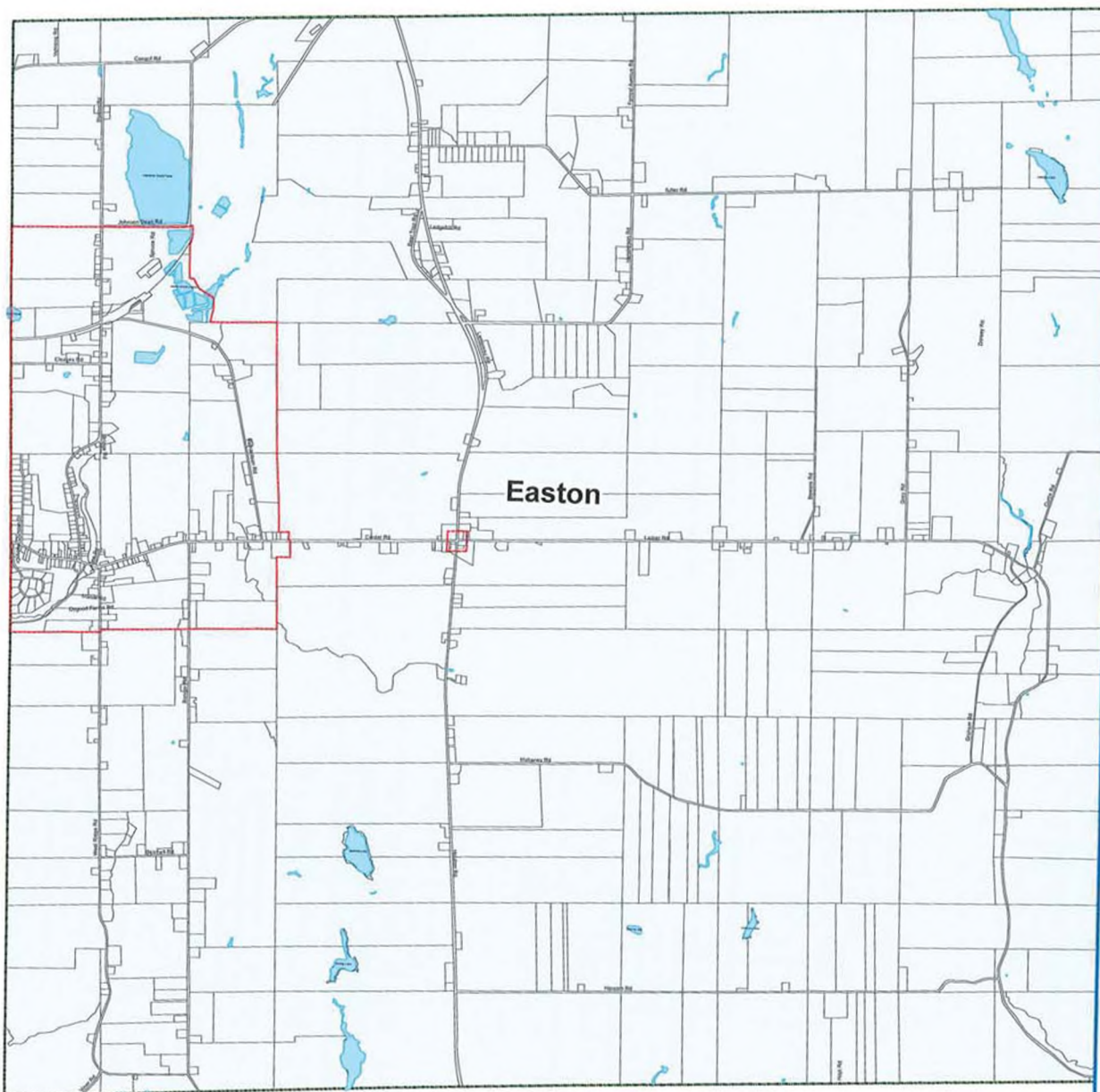
0 875 1,750 3,500 5,250 7,000 Feet

1 inch = 3,500 feet

Easton, Maine
Comprehensive Plan
Development Constraints Map

Date: 02/06/14





- Legend**
- International Boundaries
 - EastonGrowthArea2014
 - Lakes and Ponds
 - Parcels
 - Township Boundaries

0 750 1,500 3,000 4,500 6,000 Feet

1 inch = 1,500 feet

Easton, Maine
Comprehensive Plan
Growth Area Map

Date: 10/14/14



FISCAL CAPACITY AND CAPITAL WORK PLAN

Easton's Vision

Easton will constantly strive to be

- ❖ a dynamic community that is economically, culturally, and socially inviting;
- ❖ a community that promotes and aggressively pursues innovative business and economic development;
- ❖ a community that welcomes, supports, and responds to a diversity of new people and new ideas;
- ❖ a community that recognizes children as our future and shares collective responsibility for the nurturing and education of each generation;
- ❖ a community where family ties are strong, self respect and respect for others is instilled, where trust and courtesy is a way of life, and where the pace of life is consistent with these ideals; and
- ❖ a community that celebrates the values and lessons of a multi-cultural heritage that serves as its strength and as its foundation in a progressive, modern world

FISCAL CAPACITY Inventory & Analysis

Fiscally, Easton has managed well considering the large declines in state revenue sharing and state aid to education since 2009. Today the amount of local tax revenues that are allocated to non-municipal uses such as County tax, debt service and education is 30% higher than in 1994. This, along with rising operation and maintenance costs, huge reduction in education subsidies, and the trend in residential development being spread out along rural roads has created substantial fiscal challenges for the Town. It is well documented that the cost of delivering services like road maintenance, police, fire and emergency protection, and school busing all increase substantially as development spreads further away from the community center. Town officials are using the development of this Comprehensive Plan to encourage development where services can be provided in a cost effective manner and attempts to alleviate the impact of declines in revenue sharing. This approach helps protect and maintain the Town's fiscal capacity and is explained further in the future land use section of the plan.

Revenue Trends

Trends in community revenues and expenditures for the past five year period (2009-2013) are described in the table below. Easton primarily has six revenue sources including state revenue sharing, local administrative, Business Equipment Tax Exemption (BETE) reimbursements, state local road assistance, and excise taxes. Overall revenues have remained relatively stable over the past five years with a total increase of 4.5%.

Property taxes make up over half of the revenues generated by the Town of Easton. In the last five years, this revenue source has declined by approximately 3 percent. BETE reimbursement makes up the next highest percent (averages about 15%) but has increased by 77% since 2009. State Local Road Assistance has also increased substantially and funds are used for road projects in Town. Annual funding to municipalities fluctuates with the up's and down's of the annual Highway Budget, rather than being a fixed amount. If Highway Fund revenues are up, then the total allocation will increase and vice versa. This program continues to be focused on municipal aid toward highway and bridge capital improvements.

The largest decrease in revenues has come from State Revenue Sharing with a 67% decrease, followed by State Education revenues at a 47% reduction. According to the Maine Office of the State Treasurer, revenue sharing is expected to remain relatively stable or decline slightly over the next several years. This revenue source is subject to change as tax and sales fluctuate.

Expenditure Trends

During the five years examined, expenditures have increased by approximately 23 percent. Overall, eleven categories were examined separately for trends. Outside Request expenditures include a combination of over 37 organizations or areas where funds are requested and expended and showed the greatest increase at 873%. These expenditures include such things as Central Aroostook Humane Society, NMDC, Assessing, and the Maine Municipal Association. The total increase is somewhat misleading as, beginning in 2013, solid waste disposal was included in this

category, an expenditure of approximately \$100,000. The next highest increase was Other expenses which includes such things as insurances, debt service, and many others. The average annual percent change for the five year period indicates the trend in each expenditure category.

Factoring in the changes made in the expenditure categories, the greatest decline in expenditures were in Capital outlays and public safety. These declines were due mainly to the tightening of the budget.

Municipal Finances, 2009-2013

	2009		2010		2011		2012		2013		% Change
		%		%		%		%		%	2009-13
		Tot. Rev.		Tot. Rev.		Tot. Rev.		Tot. Rev.		Tot. Rev.	
REVENUES											
Property Taxes	2,783,758	57.83	2,568,526	50.43	2,463,257	52.23	2,463,257	52.32	2,700,750	53.69	-2.98
Homestead Exemption	26,437	0.55	11,766	0.23	15,864	0.34	15,864	0.34	15,924	0.32	35.34
Excise Tax	192,791	4.00	199,419	3.92	203,457	4.31	203,457	4.32	215,026	4.27	7.83
State Education Revenues	781,696	16.24	981,220	19.26	871,917	18.49	871,917	18.52	413,618	8.22	-47.09
State Revenue Sharing	137,886	2.86	127,035	2.49	104,169	2.21	104,169	2.21	45,441	0.90	-67.04
State Local Road Assistance	41,714	0.87	42,228	0.83	42,229	0.90	42,229	0.90	65,042	1.29	55.92
BETE Reimbursement	502,539	10.44	840,342	16.50	676,175	14.34	676,175	14.36	889,226	17.68	76.95
MSRS Contributions	253,912	5.27	255,240	5.01	278,938	5.91	279,938	5.95	278,938	5.55	9.86
Abatements	-1,236	-0.03	-2,557	-0.05	-2,190	-0.05	-2,190	-0.05	-2,031	-0.04	64.32
Other Revenues	94,440	1.96	70,260	1.38	62,747	1.33	52,866	1.12	408,056	8.11	332.08
Total Revenues	4,813,937	100	5,093,479	100	4,716,563	100	4,707,682	100	5,029,990	100	4.49
EXPENDITURES											
General Government	160,151	3.72	174,398	3.67	174,138	3.64	196,640	4.09	179,817	3.40	12.28
Public Safety	85,866	1.99	83,260	1.75	96,638	2.02	94,907	1.98	76,533	1.45	-10.87
Highways	185,393	4.31	204,232	4.30	217,350	4.54	215,800	4.49	253,428	4.80	36.70
Recreation	62,894	1.46	72,923	1.53	75,023	1.57	75,023	1.56	82,368	1.56	30.96
Safety and sanitation	92,595	2.15	94,910	2.00	100,876	2.11	100,876	2.10		0.00	-100.00
Education	2,786,624	64.71	3,133,387	65.95	3,069,053	64.15	3,069,053	63.89	3,469,700	65.65	24.51
MSRS Pension	253,912	5.90	255,240	5.37	278,938	5.83	278,938	5.81	278,938	5.28	9.86
County Tax	157,434	3.66	160,941	3.39	240,673	5.03	240,673	5.01	258,217	4.89	64.02
Outside Requests	19,043	0.44	19,115	0.40	14,543	0.30	14,543	0.30	185,315	3.51	873.14
Capital Outlays	399,510	9.28	436,348	9.18	403,153	8.43	403,153	8.39	256,006	4.84	-35.92
Others	102,622	2.38	116,612	2.45	114,014	2.38	114,014	2.37	244,897	4.63	138.64
Total Expenditures	4,306,044	100	4,751,366	100	4,784,399	100	4,803,620	100	5,285,219	100	22.74
Rev-Exp	507,893		342,113		-67,836		-95,938		-255,229		

Source: Town of Easton 2014

Education Funding

In Maine, educational funding comes from three sources. Approximately five percent is from federal funds with the remainder comes about equally from state and local sources. The state share is largely from sales and income taxes, the local share is derived almost entirely from property taxes. Easton is different than all other municipalities in that their state share of educational funds had declined drastically over the last three years. The following table shows State Education Revenues on a monthly basis for the past 5 years. Beginning in 2011, there was a decline of over 67% in monthly revenue due to changes in the valuation and the way that Maine disburses education funding. In essence, Easton is penalized for being successful and having several large manufactures, with a high valuation, located within the community.

State Revenue- 5 Year Comparison

	Per Month Revenue	Percent Change	Percent Change 2010-2014
Jul-10	\$55,607		
Jul-11	\$60,071	8.03	
Jul-12	\$19,388	-67.72	
Jul-13	\$10,530	-45.69	
Jul-14	\$5,264	-50.01	-90.53

Source: Town of Easton, 2014

The next table shows the annual income from both State and Federal sources (minus local tax funds). Any difference between income and expenses is made up entirely from Easton's taxpayers and, according to town officials, taxpayers pay approximately 85 percent of the overall school budget.

Annual income and Expenses-Education

	Income	Expenses	Difference
FY 2011/12	\$1,536,964	\$3,392,716	-\$1,855,752
FY 2012/13	\$1,175,899	\$3,323,335	-\$2,147,436
FY 2013/14	\$864,600	\$3,494,428	-\$2,629,828
FY 2014/15*	\$464,706	\$1,576,965	-\$1,112,259

*-based on a 7 month timeframe

Source: Town of Easton, 2014

The final table shows the monthly income and expense for the Easton School Department.

Monthly Income and Expenses

	Monthly Income	Monthly Expenses	Difference
FY 2011/12	\$128,080	\$282,728	-\$154,648
FY 2012/13	\$97,991	\$276,944	-\$178,953
FY 2013/14	\$72,050	\$291,202	-\$219,152
FY 2014/15*	\$66,386	\$295,611	-\$229,225

*Based on a 7 month timeframe

Source: Town of Easton, 2014

Reserve Accounts

Easton utilizes several options for the funding of capital improvements and purchases necessary to maintain and upgrade facilities and services. Capital items funded over the past decade or more include fire equipment, highway equipment and building renovations, road improvements and equipment, apartment upkeep, and scholarships. As such Easton maintains a number of reserve accounts that are designed to provide funding when capital investments are needed. The following are accounts are maintained by the Town of Easton:

Name	Purpose
Hayden Family Trust	Scholarship fund for High School Students
Winston Larsen Scholarship CD	Scholarship fund for High School Students
Bragdon Scholarship CD	Scholarship fund for High School Students
Malcom Scholarship CD	Scholarship fund for High School Students
Beautification CD	Beautification projects around Easton
Sidney Bradley Scholarship CD	Scholarship fund for High School Students
J McManus Scholarship CD	Scholarship fund for High School Students
Savings Bank Equipment Reserve	Road Projects
Katahadin Equipment Reserve Account	Road Projects
ICS Account	Operating costs for local business
UDAG Account	Business attraction activities
Industrial Park CD	For the development of an industrial park
Grange Account	Apartment maintenance at the Grange Apartments
Cemetery Account	Annual maintenance at the three cemeteries
Field Day Account	Funds for advertising and sponsoring Easton Field Day
Union Church Savings	For the upkeep of the Union Church.
CDBG CD	Help pay for a town revaluation.

Source: Town of Easton, 2014

In addition, most municipal departments with a budget surplus at the end of the year will transfer funds to their respective reserve accounts for equipment. These effective methods have enabled

the Town maintain fiscal capacity while funding needed improvements with a manageable impact on annual tax obligation and local taxpayers.

The Town is also committed to using various grant and loan sources to help fund capital investments, residential assistance, and business assistance. Easton has utilized the Small Community Grant Program to help eligible homeowners replace faulty septic systems that are impacting water resources, have worked with local and state economic development agencies to assist business wishing to locate in town obtain grants or low income loans, and have worked with state and federal agencies on road and bridge projects.

Town officials are also considering using Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Federal Emergency Management Agency and Maine Emergency Management Agency funds for a wide variety of projects. CDBG programs can be used for ongoing community betterment activities including park enhancement riverfront enhancement and community enterprise projects. The town also has utilized Maine Department of Conservation funds to purchase a snowmobile trail groomer, and have applied to the National Tennis Association to upgrade the town's tennis courts. Town officials are also looking at other funding sources for recreation projects such as the rebuilding of the basketball courts. These are a few of the many examples of outside funding sources for capital improvements used by Easton.

Revaluation

Easton underwent a tax base revaluation process in 1992. The table below shows the comparison between the State's full valuation and the Town's valuation for taxation purposes. The town mil rate or the amount of tax levy per \$1000 of valuation is also given for each year.

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
State Valuation	144,700,000	155,800,000	236,650,000	245,500,000	240,650,000	250,800,000
Local Valuation	56,171,500	57,392,336	57,545,511	58,031,558		
Mil rate	14.65	14.65	14.65	15.00	16.00	17.72

Source: Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary and Town of Easton, 2014

Town officials are concerned that they have not reviewed growth in property valuation as a result of development activity in the community. Development activity and the associated valuation increase should be divided equally between the Town's residential, commercial, and industrial development. This new development creates the tax base for revenue growth that allows the town to maintain facilities and services. Unfortunately, under the present economic conditions much of this revenue has been absorbed by the lack of growth in Maine Revenue Sharing and the actual rising costs in the operation and maintenance of municipal departments. Tax base growth is a critical component of Easton's fiscal capacity and overall economic sustainability.

Analyses

Easton has fiscal strength in its net valuation growth but is not capturing that growth by keeping up with its real estate valuation. Presently the town is at 61% of the State's valuation. While oftentimes perceived as painful, keeping up with valuations will enable the town to fund future capital investments through a combination of grants and reserve funds from tax revenues. One measure of how aggressively the town is taxing property owners is based on what percentage that the town's valuation is to the State calculated full valuation of the town. Eighty percent of full valuation is the minimum that Maine Revenue Services likes to see for municipal valuations. The town's average net valuation from 2009-2013 was 62% of the State's full valuation. Resident's perception may be different, but Easton should be valuing property at a level closer to the State's full valuation.

Municipal department operating expenditures have increased but not substantially over the last five years. In many respects this is a huge accomplishment considering that real operating cost increases since 2005 have been in the order of 20-30%. However, this fiscal conservatism can also come with a price in terms of maintenance and services reductions. Maintenance reductions will always catch up with the operator and usually become a greater expense than if completed on an ongoing basis. Any proposed reduction in services may find Easton at a crossroads between saving funds in the near term but putting at risk the community's quality of life and desirability as a place to live. These are attributes which took the community decades to build. Town officials, and residents, need to be vigilant of the risks and be aggressive in pursuing opportunities to create jobs, build population and generate new revenues.

Capital Investment Plan

Typically a capital investment plan identifies the public facilities/services necessary to accommodate projected growth. Since population growth is projected for Easton, the investment plan focuses on facilities and services needed to **1.** direct new development to specific areas of the community, **2.** attract businesses or create jobs, **3.** support changing needs and **4.** maintain existing facilities/infrastructure.

The projects identified are given priority ratings as follows: High being within 1-3 years; Necessary being within 3-5 years; Desirable being within the 10 year plan; Deferrable being potentially beyond 10 years. The capital investment plan forms the basis for developing a capital improvements plan (CIP). The CIP is more detailed plan that provides current cost estimates, a project timeline and grants/loans that are being applied for as funding. The CIP is updated annually and is used in the annual budget committee process. The Board of Selectmen should start prioritizing planned investments in 2014 or early 2015.

Project	Potential Funding	Priority	Estimated Cost
Highway Department			
Wheeler/Plow Truck	Reserve Accounts	Necessary	\$180,000
Backhoe	Reserve Accounts	High	\$100,000
Front End Loader	Reserve Accounts	High	\$200,000
Road Paving (2 miles per year)	Reserve, URIP	Annual for 15 years	\$1,500,000
McCain and Huber Directional Signage	Reserve, MaineDOT	High	\$10,000
Windbreaks along roads	Project Canopy grants	Necessary	\$15,000
Addition to Sand/Salt Storage	Reserve Accounts/ grants	Necessary	\$30,000
Fire Department			
Tanker	Reserve, grants	Necessary	\$140,000
Pumper	Reserve, grants	Desirable	\$150,000
Fire Station	Reserve, grants c	Necessary	\$200,000
Life saving equipment	Grants	Necessary	\$50,000
Administration			
Town Office Roof	Reserve	Desirable	\$35,000
Town Office Heat	Reserve	Desirable	\$30,000
Generator	Reserve	Desirable	\$5,000
Union Church Upgrade	Grants	Necessary	\$75,000
Grange Apartment Updates/maintenance	Reserve	Desirable	?
Other Town building Maintenance			
Dam Maintenance	Reserve/grants	Necessary	\$35,000

Library	Grants	Desirable	\$50,000
Recreation			
Tennis Court Renovation	Grants	High	\$100,000
Basketball Court Renovation	Grants	High	\$50,000
Snowmobile Trail Groomer	Grants	Desirable	\$100,000
Odd Fellows Hall maintenance/upkeep	Reserve	Necessary	\$30,000

FISCAL CAPACITY & CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN

Goals, Policies, and Strategies

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

Local Goal: Maintain and improve our fiscal capacity in a manner that allows us to make cost effective and efficient investments in the facilities and services required to support job creation and population growth.

Policy

Maintain a reasonable property tax obligation.

Strategies:

- a. Complete a full revaluation of all properties in Easton.
- b. Continue to assess new construction according to the revaluation base year.
- c. Research opportunities to discontinue ownership or maintenance of existing rural roads with limited use based on traffic counts. Propose modest property tax reductions for owners affected by road abandonment.
- d. Over the long term, manage for a local net assessed valuation of 80% or above compared to the State's full valuation.
- e. Advocate for required fiscal impact analysis of all State incentive programs that result in revenue losses to municipalities.
- f. Continue to make annual contributions to a reserve fund for a town wide revaluation.
- g. Initiate public communication on efforts and methods used by municipal departments to control operating expenditures.
- h. Complete a comprehensive review of existing fee structures for all departments, review periodically and adjust fees as necessary.
- i. Review fee formulas for service agreements with neighboring communities and adjust as necessary to cover administrative and capital costs.
- j. Participate in regional initiatives in solid waste, transportation, and joint purchasing and tax assessment/revaluation services that improve efficiency and control operating costs.
- k. See specific strategies under public facilities/services.

Policy

Continue to manage the town's long-term debt below 5% of the State's full valuation for the community.

Strategies:

- a. Continue to raise funds for certain capital improvements through annual contributions to reserve accounts. (vehicle and some equipment replacement, building systems, grants leverage, etc.).
- b. Maintain reserve fund balances for all Departments by developing a reasonable minimum base level for each.
- c. Implement an integrated funding approach to capital improvements that create jobs or expand services, utilizing grants, loans and tax revenues.

- d. Continue to borrow as necessary to protect infrastructure/facilities that meet the present needs of the community
- e. Use tax rate and user fee increases to fund quality of life and job creation capital improvements based on strong public communication and justification.

Policy

Study local options for alternative revenues and annually review and adjust all department fee schedules.

Strategies:

- a. Evaluate opportunities to establish new fees for services presently provided and new services requested.
- b. Study the use of impact fees in accordance with the SPO guide "Financing Infrastructure Improvements through Impact Fees" and implement as necessary.

Policy

Direct substantial capital investment to areas designated in the future land use plan and capital improvements plan.

Strategies:

- a. Develop a private investment incentives program based on tax rate, fees, services and grant/loan access for development in designated "growth" areas.
- b. Amend development standards and permit fee structures in all ordinances to categorize development based on the future land use plans; desirability of location and cost efficiency in the delivery of public facilities/services criteria.

REGIONAL COORDINATION

Easton's Vision

Easton will constantly strive to be

- ❖ a dynamic community that is economically, culturally, and socially inviting;
- ❖ a community that promotes and aggressively pursues innovative business and economic development;
- ❖ a community that welcomes, supports, and responds to a diversity of new people and new ideas;
- ❖ a community that recognizes children as our future and shares collective responsibility for the nurturing and education of each generation;
- ❖ a community where family ties are strong, self respect and respect for others is instilled, where trust and courtesy is a way of life, and where the pace of life is consistent with these ideals; and
- ❖ a community that celebrates the values and lessons of a multi-cultural heritage that serves as its strength and as its foundation in a progressive, modern world

REGIONAL COORDINATION PROGRAM

Summary

Easton partners with neighboring communities in several ways that help reduce costs and improve services through the cooperative management of shared facilities. The primary areas of cooperation include transportation, solid waste disposal/recycling, fire protection, ambulance service, septic waste disposal, recreation and public works related joint purchasing. Neighboring communities are also discussing cooperation in tax assessment and revaluation services. Details of how this is accomplished are described in the inventory and analysis sections related to transportation, public facilities and services, local economy, recreation and future land use.

Easton is a long-standing member community of the Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC) with representation on the NMDC executive board. This representation gives the Town a voice in the types of economic development programs NMDC offers. The Town also participates in county and state directed regional coordination efforts in such areas as transportation, housing, tourism and hazard mitigation. There is also considerable opportunity to cooperate in the protection of shared natural resources, primarily water related, by working toward consistency with zoning standards. The strategies describe under regional coordination efforts detail the actions needed for Easton to continue and to improve upon its coordination with surrounding towns.

Conflicts with other Town's Policies/Strategies

The planning process identified inconsistencies among neighboring towns related to shoreland zoning but not specifically to policies and strategies found in existing comprehensive plans. With the exception of Mars Hill and Presque Isle, all neighboring towns have plans that need to be updated. The current adoption dates and update schedule, where available, is listed below. Easton proposes to provide these towns with a copy of its updated Comprehensive Plan. Specific policies and strategies in Easton's plan include areas of cooperation with neighboring towns. They may use this information to consider ways to improve consistency with their policies and strategies.

Fort Fairfield – Comprehensive Plan – adopted 2006; currently needs updating

Mars Hill – Comprehensive Plan – adopted 2014

Westfield – Comprehensive Plan- adopted 1996; currently needs updating

Presque Isle – Comprehensive Plan – updated July 2008

A local review of the two most current Comprehensive Plan including their goals, policies and strategies for the transportation and public facilities/services sections did not identify any conflicts.

Summary of Regional Coordination Efforts

Regional Water and Natural Resource Strategies:

- a. Work with the Central Aroostook Soil and Water Conservation District to conduct educational meetings on the resource value of riparian habitats.

- b. Work with the Fort Fairfield and Mars Hill Planning Boards to ensure consistent standards for the protection of the Prestile Stream watershed.
- c. Cooperate with other local, regional and State entities in the conservation of natural resources of shared interest such as the Prestile Stream.

Regional Transportation Strategies:

- a. Seek funding from the MaineDOT to construct paved shoulders on the entire length of Route 1-A.
- b. Work with the Amish community on ways to reduce the amount of animal waste left alongside the roads.
- c. Add additional “Share the Road” signage at strategic locations near Amish farms, community centers, and businesses.
- d. Continue to fund the Aroostook Regional Transportation bus for the elderly and LMI populations.
- e. Continue to support ATV and Snowmobile Club efforts in trail development and safety education through the Recreational Trail Program and SCORP.
- f. Work with the MaineDOT to upgrade the rail line to Easton and work with the rail provider to improve service to Easton’s businesses and industry.
- g. Participate in all regional transportation planning initiatives including MaineDOT’s Capital Work Plan, Aroostook County Emergency Management Planning efforts, and NMDC’s regional transportation efforts.
- h. Work with Cyr Bus lines to develop a stop in Easton.
- i. Devote substantial economic development effort to the agricultural and forest product and other industries that require rail.
- j. Use Northern Maine Regional Airport as part of on-going economic development/business attraction efforts by making Easton more accessible to prospective companies.
- k. Coordinate and fund, with the Northern Maine Regional Airport major stakeholders, an on-going public relations/awareness initiative on the benefits and importance of the facility.
- a. Continue to monitor and comment on the Aroostook County Transportation Study Segment 7 project which connects the Conant Road to Presque Isle.

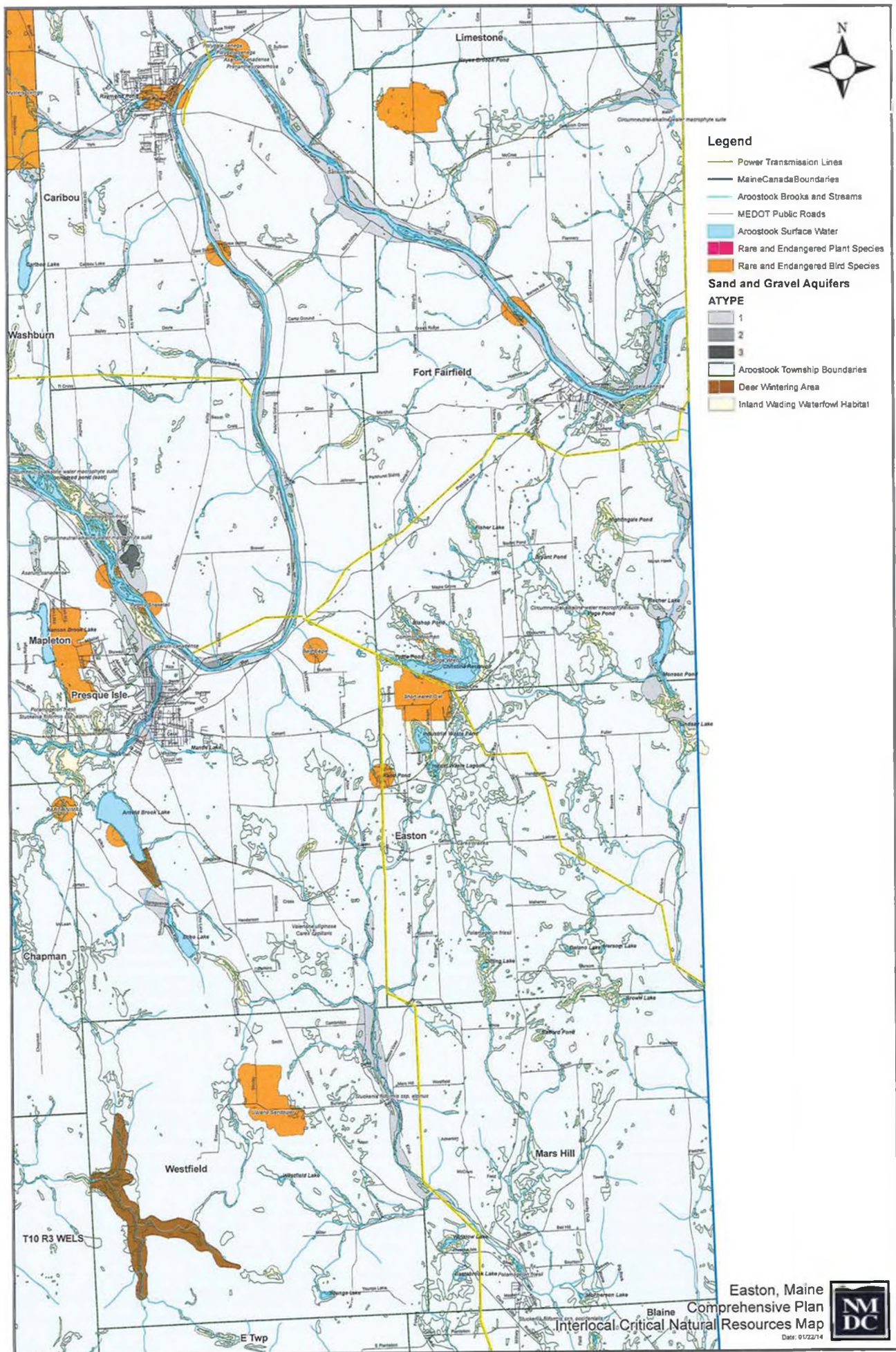
Regional Public Facility/Services Strategies:

- a. Participate in a regional firefighter training and recruitment program with automatic/mutual aid departments and seek funding under FEMA-Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) and other sources.
- b. Continue to seek grants and provide local funds for non-profits and new service businesses.

- c. Work with the Central Aroostook Chamber of Commerce to promote the need for new services.

Regional Recreation Strategies:

- a. Continue to contact landowners at least once annually for appreciation and recognition.
- b. Study feasibility of the development of ATV and snowmobile trailer parking and trail access at appropriate locations.
- c. Raise funds through grants, club fundraisers and private donations for the development of shelters that serve all trail systems.
- d. Continue to participate in the new Maine ATV interconnecting trail system (MATS) and support its growth.
- e. Through the local clubs, implement an annual landowner awareness program to educate existing and perspective trail landowners on tax incentives and insurance benefits available to them.
- f. Seek the input and support of the MaineDOT and the Nordic Heritage Center to construct paved shoulders along roads that have high bike and pedestrian usage.
- g. Work with interested groups, landowners and the Central Aroostook Soil and Water Conservation District to map all known access points to the Prestile Stream, Rivere du Chute, and other water bodies. These should include both public (secure) and private (unsecure) locations.



Legend

- International Boundaries
- Township Boundaries
- utilitiessewer
- utilitieswater
- SewerLines
- WaterLines
- Railroad
- ME DOT Public Roads
- Brooks and Streams
- ✈ Airports
- Bridges
- Rivers, Lakes and Ponds

1 inch = 4,000 feet



Town of
Easton, Maine
Comprehensive Plan
Interlocal Resources Map
Date: 10/11/13

