



STATE OF MAINE  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY  
LAND USE PLANNING COMMISSION  
22 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-022

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# Memorandum

**To:** LUPC Commissioners  
**CC:** Benjamin Godsoe, Acting Executive Director  
**From:** Stacy Benjamin, Acting Planning Manager  
**Date:** August 6, 2025  
**Re:** Status report and overview of Land Use Guidance Map update for Highland Plantation

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This memorandum provides background information, a status report, and the next steps in updating Highland Plantation's Land Use Guidance Map (zoning map).

## Background

At the time of the Commission's inception, Highland Plantation was part of the Commission's jurisdiction (i.e., service area). After a local process to develop a comprehensive plan and land use ordinance, Highland Plantation assumed local land use authority from the Commission in July 2016. Since 2016, the community has struggled to fill local board vacancies and retain and pay for local code enforcement services. At the annual Plantation meeting on April 26, 2025, residents in attendance voted 11-6 to repeal the comprehensive plan and land use ordinance. Plantation officials subsequently submitted a petition to return to the LUPC service area.

At the May 14, 2025, Commission meeting, the Commission directed staff to initiate a rulemaking process to repeal and replace Chapter 17, Reestablishment of Commission Jurisdiction, as part of the process to reestablish jurisdiction in Highland Plantation. Adoption of the proposed rule is being considered under a separate agenda item. One component of the proposed rule is to adopt the 2016 LUPC Land Use Guidance Map to provide interim permitting guidance until a community-based update process is undertaken.

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## **Process to Update the Land Use Guidance Map**

At the May Commission meeting, staff proposed the following process to update the zoning map for the Plantation:

- Outreach to residents and property owners through a letter from LUPC and a community meeting to review existing resources and development patterns to help designate appropriate zones.
- A land use survey by LUPC staff, with the help of Highland Plantation municipal officials, to document any changes since the last LUPC zoning map was in place.
- A community meeting to review and comment on a draft of the zoning map.
- A formal written comment period during which anyone can submit comments on the draft zoning map. While not required, the Commission could also decide to hold a formal public hearing.
- A staff-initiated zoning petition to present the updated zoning map to the Commission for adoption.

## **Progress to Date**

After the May meeting, a letter was mailed to all identified property owners in Highland Plantation. In addition to information about the rulemaking process to reestablish LUPC jurisdiction, the letter includes information about the upcoming effort to update the zoning map and encourages owners to participate in the update process.

The land use inventory is underway. Staff met with a Plantation Assessor in June and obtained copies of development permits issued by the Plantation since 2016. Staff also updated the resource inventory with available data and completed a windshield survey of development in the Plantation. This information is being compiled into a report that will be shared with Plantation officials and landowners at a community meeting and online via a project webpage that is under development. The information in the report will help identify potential changes to the zoning needed to respond to current resource information, conditions, or preferences of the community.

Staff are working with Plantation officials to identify a date and location for the initial community meeting. A postcard with notice of the meeting will be mailed to property owners with a link to the project webpage. After the initial community meeting, staff will prepare a draft land use guidance map based on the land use inventory and feedback from the residents and property owners. A second community meeting will then be scheduled to get community feedback on the draft map. This second meeting was not included in the proposal presented in May. Landowners and others will have an opportunity to informally comment on the draft map outside of the community meeting as well.

## Work Plan and Timeline

Action	Timing	Notes/Details
Land use inventory	Completed in July	Included a permit review, review of available resource data, and a windshield survey
Land use inventory report	August	Staff will compile information to identify and highlight any changes since 2016 to share with Plantation officials and property owners
Project webpage development and publication	August	A project webpage with information about the process, meeting notices, and other ways to engage will be developed and published
1 <sup>st</sup> Community meeting to review existing resources and development patterns to help designate appropriate zones	September	Staff have communicated with local officials and are working on identifying a date and a venue
Draft updated map	Early October	Draft based on land use inventory and feedback from the 1 <sup>st</sup> community meeting
2 <sup>nd</sup> Community meeting to review and comment on the draft map	Mid-late October	An informal opportunity for the community to provide feedback on the draft map
Staff-initiated zoning petition to adopt updated land use guidance map	November or December Commission meeting	The process would follow <a href="#">Chapter 4</a> requirements and Commission practices for staff-initiated rezonings