

TOWN OF COLUMBIA FALLS, MAINE

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2019



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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SUBMITTAL FORM

**Municipal Planning Assistance Program
Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry**

I. Municipality: Columbia Falls
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Place where comprehensive plan will be available for public inspection:

8 Point Street
Address: Columbia Falls, ME 04623
207-483-4067
Hours: Monday - Thursday 8 am to 4 pm

II. Certification

I (we) certify that this comprehensive plan was prepared with the intent of complying with the Growth Management Act (30-A 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.

A paper or electronic copy of the plan has been sent to the following regional planning organization for review and comment: Washington County Council Of Government

Required Signatures:



Chief Elected Official



Chairperson, Comprehensive Planning Committee

Nelson (Tony) Santiago
Printed/Typed Name

Grace L Falzarano
Printed/Typed Name

Date: March 18, 2018

Date: March 18, 2019

Please be sure that your submission includes:

- The completed and signed Comprehensive Plan Submittal Form
- One paper copy of entire Comprehensive Plan, complete with all maps
- One digital copy of entire Comprehensive Plan, complete with all maps.

[The digital copy, preferably in the form of a single Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) or Microsoft Word (doc/.docx) file, may be submitted via CD, web link or email attachment.]

Please contact us if a digital copy of the Plan cannot be provided.

To be accepted for review, the submitted comprehensive plan must include:

- A vision statement
- A summary of public participation demonstrating compliance with 30-A MRSA §4324
- A regional coordination program
- A future land use plan with associated map(s)
- An implementation section

Please submit materials to:

**Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry
Municipal Planning Assistance Program
18 Elkins Lane
22 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0022**

Email:

phil.carey@maine.gov

or

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A. VISION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Comprehensive planning demonstrates the importance of land use standards for Columbia Falls. Preserving and protecting the character of Columbia Falls is vital to the continued stability of the local economy and to the happiness and wellbeing of the townspeople. Consistent with the provisions of the Growth Management Legislation, Columbia Falls' Comprehensive Plan has attempted to recognize the value of land use standards, to incorporate the desires of the community, and to preserve and protect the integrity of Columbia Falls. All of this is done so as to continue to make Columbia Falls a great place to live, work and vacation.

The Town of Columbia Falls adopted its last Comprehensive Plan in 2002. The data used to create the existing Comprehensive Plan is out of date and thus the analyses and projected needs for housing, employment, education and public services do not reflect current conditions and needs. This Comprehensive Plan Update incorporates recent census data, better digital mapping information, and updated community facts, figures, and trends. Support to prepare the plan was provided by local funds, with assistance from the Maine Department of Transportation and the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry. Public input was formally solicited through several means.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Community members were consulted throughout the Comprehensive Plan Update process through a variety of means. The Comprehensive Plan Update Committee itself was composed of a broad cross section of individuals, including Select Board Members, residents, and representatives from civic organizations. The activities and draft documents of the Comprehensive Plan Committee were posted on the web site of the Washington County Council of Governments who provided consulting support to the town in the preparation of the Update. Comprehensive Plan Committee meetings were open to the public, and committee members personally invited community members to attend.

A questionnaire regarding town facilities and services mailed to all resident and non-resident property owners and voters in January of 2017, and responses were submitted both on paper and via Survey Monkey. The results of the 2017 survey are summarized in Chapter M Public Opinion Survey Results, and full results are available at the Town Office. (Appendix A)

The Comprehensive Plan Committee hosted a visioning meeting on September 20, 2017 that was attended by 23 residents. The meeting was advertised via posters located at public bulletin boards, direct invitations, and a public notice in the Machias Valley News. An incentive (locally-donated prize drawing and a 50/50 raffle) was offered to encourage participation in the visioning meeting.

Members of the Comprehensive Planning Committee provided a full summary of the survey results at the start of the visioning meeting, answered questions of the attendees, and noted that survey input will be considered during policy development for each section of the Comprehensive Plan.

All participants were then given an index card and asked to write three words or short phrases (places, adjectives, people) that describe Columbia Falls and that, if they were not present, Columbia Falls would not be Columbia Falls. These words were entered into the Wordle.net web site to produce a Word Cloud that visually represents the most prominent personality of Columbia Falls.

Participants were asked what they would like Columbia Falls' future community character to be in five different categories: economic development, natural and cultural resources conservation, transportation systems, land use patterns, and the community's role in the region.



Community Visioning Wordle Results: *What Makes Columbia Falls So Special!*

COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

Economy

- Year-round businesses to support families
- Small shops in a quaint village center
- A big industry brought in from outside of town
- No marijuana dispensaries!
- Good Internet to support telecommuters
- Taxes that are manageable for small businesses – need incentives to inspire new businesses that balance tax revenue needs and capacity for business growth
- Workforce development
 - Focus on what Columbia Falls intrinsically has to offer - river, history, beauty, wildlife (eagles!)
- An interesting community life to help keep people living here
- Attract traffic from Acadia
- Reasons for people to come into the downtown and not just drive through
 - Lodging for travelers, hunters, and Balsam Valley Amphitheater attendees
 - Natural beauty retained

- Old homes kept up
- Promote Wreaths Across America, Ruggles House, and amphitheater
- Develop historic walking tour

Natural/Cultural Resources

- Historic façade restoration programs could be explored, and historic walking tours that educate visitors and youth about the community's stories
- A cemetery history and maintenance tour would be enlightening for the community
- Information about community assets like trails needs to be more accessible (a website?)
- Cemeteries are historic and must be mowed regularly for visitors
 - Not all are public, and people don't understand why things aren't being maintained or who is responsible
 - Ruggles and Great Hill cemeteries are maintained by the Columbia Falls Cemetery Association
- Good Internet connection is critical for locals and visitors.
- Parking for downtown businesses could be an issue, but some coordination could happen, perhaps with Wreaths Across America
- A community theater!
- Continue supporting Union Hall
- The old fire station lot has a park and a boat launch, but it needs to be made more attractive and visible to the public - funding is needed for the park planning committee to improve this lot, maybe as a scenic turnout (*explore Bold Coast Scenic Byway and Bikeway connections*)
- Downeast Salmon Federation, Wreaths Across America, and Union Hall together are excellent assets that help support a good strong community
- More great volunteers who get things done are needed!

Transportation

- Beauty is critical for the town to maintain if they want to attract residents, businesses, and visitors
 - Grass along the roadways needs to be mowed every 2 years – deep ditches that make mowing hard should be fixed
 - Roadside litter needs to be picked up regularly
- Sand on the shoulders isn't cleaned up well after winter making pushing a stroller or jogging difficult
- Tibbetstown Road is scary for pedestrians
- The community would like to attract bicyclists but is concerned about their safety
- There are good nature trails, many on Downeast Salmon Federation property (need accessible information)
- Barriers to transportation need to be removed to attract new families – people need access to other basic needs like employment, daycare, and housing

Role in the Region

- Consolidation and conservation of resources is good!
 - Columbia salt sand shed discussions are in process
- Future consolidations need to prove that they actually lower taxes, not just promise it – the community should be very informed before they enter into any regional partnerships

- The community wants to feel more in control of their town and often feel like they are told what to do
- The community needs to continue to participate in education planning/development
 - Education is very expensive - further consolidation of schools may cause people to move closer to school and out of town

Land Use

- Focus should be put into the farming industry - farmland should be preserved and reclaimed
- New development should occur on existing sites and should be compatible with existing community character
- US Route 1 is good for development – but no dollar stores!
- Lodging and dining places are critical to sustaining Balsam Valley Amphitheater and the Wreaths Across America Museum
 - Other types of entertainment would be nice
- Smaller development is desired – especially something unique, creative, and that gives back to the community
- Businesses with 20-50 employees that pull from local communities are supported
- Skilled people and entrepreneurs are needed - connections could be made with trade schools and skilled professionals

VISION STATEMENT FOR COLUMBIA FALLS

A required element in any local Comprehensive Plan is a Vision Statement that summarizes the community's desired future community character in terms of economic development, natural and cultural resource conservation, transportation systems, land use patterns and its role in the region. The Comprehensive Plan Committee used public input from the public meeting, as summarized above, to create a collective Vision Statement for the Town of Columbia Falls.

Columbia Falls Yesterday

The Town of Columbia Falls settled around the Pleasant River and incorporated as “Columbia” in 1796. On March 25, 1863, Columbia divided and the Town of Columbia Falls was officially incorporated separately. At that time, there were five mills: a carding mill, grist mill, fulling mill and two lumber mills. Also along the busy waterway was a ship yard, brick yard and a canning company. Along with dirt road and waterways for travel and distribution the town also had a railroad station and was part of an extensive Maine railroad system. At the Columbia Falls station train cars were loaded with pulpwood, fish, canned goods and other products from the mills. There was also a passenger and postal car. With booming commerce and populations, the town also had a grammar school and high school.

Columbia Falls Today

The Town of Columbia Falls is now home to three 501(c)3 non-profit organizations. The Ruggles House Museum is a curated Adamesque style Federal period architecture built in 1818-1820 and once owned by a wealthy lumber Barron Judge Thomas Ruggles and his family. Wreaths Across America organization headquarters and museum are based in Columbia Falls. Their mission is to Remember, Honor, Teach and coordinate Christmas wreath laying ceremonies for fallen U.S. veterans while honoring living veterans of all wars.

The Downeast Salmon Federation's mission is to conserve wild Atlantic salmon and their habitats.

Columbia Falls also has a number of businesses operating within the town limits: auto services, gas station, seasonal restaurant, blueberries, campground, commercial fisheries services, concert space and many cottage businesses.

Columbia Falls is part of the Downeast Sunrise Trail, which is a multi-use gravel rail-trail system that stretches from Ellsworth to Perry. ATVs, bicyclists, horseback riders, runners, and walkers use the trail. The village area features five buildings that are listed on the National Register of Historic Buildings including one that is owned and renovated by the town, Union Hall. We have a small park where we honor our Veterans and light the evergreen tree with Christmas lights during the holiday season.

Columbia Falls Tomorrow

The Town of Columbia Falls is not unlike other small rural communities as we face the future. With fewer jobs available, an aging population, and relative isolation and poverty in Washington County we realize that we must take an innovative approach to building a relevant future for our community that is modern and quaint, inviting to tourists but preserves our sense of history and community.

The goals for our town include networking with neighboring communities to promote all of Downeast Maine to a larger audience. We will create a website specific to Columbia Falls to help create interest in the community, existing businesses and non-profits, and events. This would best market our assets to online audiences interested in visiting our community as tourists, working in our community as telecommuters, or entrepreneurs looking to invest in new businesses.

We hope to modernize town utilities, which include broadband throughout the town and cell coverage.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of a Comprehensive Plan is to provide a community with the information and a process to make choices about its future. The Town of Columbia Falls has involved its resident and non-resident community members in the development of this plan. It has also made use of extensive resources available through the US Census, several agencies of state government, the Washington County Council of Governments and geographic information system (GIS) mapping. The document will serve Columbia Falls for a 10-year time horizon and, as a living document, will be revised and updated as new information and understanding develops.

The following summaries are excerpted from each section of the full document. Please refer to Chapter N Policies and Implementation Strategies for greater detail about the choices Columbia Falls is making about its future growth and development.

Public Opinion Survey

In May of 2017 Columbia Falls residents completed a survey to give their views on important aspects of the town's future. The participation rate was average for surveys of this type and included written input.

Respondents to the survey generally expressed support for the town. Supporting a variety of types of new small and medium business development in Columbia Falls was favored, provided that new development was environmentally friendly and did not detract from the small-town atmosphere and quality of life. Desirable locations for development included the town center, Tibbettstown Road,

Centerville Road, and US Route 1. The village areas were not typically favored for further development outside what already exists for business and homes.

Respondents seem united in the use of regional emergency services such as ambulance and fire. Results show that other services could be consolidated, as well, to keep town costs down; including town office, recreation, transportation, road maintenance, business services, and salt sand shed.

Respondents were generally satisfied with municipal and community services. Written comments indicated that there is a need to have something in our community for young people along with a method to encourage young people to become involved in the community.

Responses and comments regarding housing in the survey suggested that older abandoned and dilapidated homes should be removed or renovated before focusing on construction of new homes.

Desired types of economic activity included most commonly mentioned gas station, retail, dining and lodging, community gathering places, recreation for youth, and nature based businesses. Also mentioned were energy development, gift/antiques, forestry/agriculture, and technology. The written comments speak to a desire for smaller to medium sized scale, environmentally friendly operations in keeping with the quiet rural nature of Columbia Falls.

Several questions were asked about local roads and transportation. Respondents are generally satisfied with road conditions although there is some concern about repairs of pot holes and excessive shoulders. There were some concerns with the safety of roads and trails for walking/running/biking due to the existing conditions.

Survey respondents generally expressed satisfaction with the existing conditions of the community. Major areas of discontent exist around the use of tax dollars to repair and maintain community structures and lands, the lack of a school, and drug use. Respondents expressed a strong desire to retain the small- town, rural village atmosphere of Columbia Falls and protect the water quality and wildlife habitat while also pursuing reasonable, appropriate, and managed growth.

GIS Mapping

GIS mapping tools and the information they provide to municipalities is evolving much faster than the 10-12-year time horizon of a local Comprehensive Plan. Even for small rural municipalities who cannot afford the staff, equipment, or software to run to GIS mapping products, there are several available alternatives. The Online Planners and Parcel Maps provided by the WCCOG/UMM-GIS partnership provide access to up-to-date spatial information and its background attribute data. Training on how to use it, depict it on alternative base map projections, see and analyze the data behind it, print it, share it, and add to it with local information, is provided in several learning styles and levels of expertise. Several Maine state departments also provide a variety of web-based mapping tools. This chapter provides examples of these tools. However, the individual chapters of this Comprehensive Plan provide many more examples of what they provide and how to use them in ways that both are specific to Columbia Falls while simultaneously providing the inventory on which this Comprehensive Plan is being updated.

Historic and Archeological Resources

Columbia Falls has five buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Buildings, and five areas identified (May 2017) by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission as having archaeological significance. Maine Historic Preservation Commission recommends further survey of areas along the Pleasant and Eastern Little River banks. Due to the large number of significant historic structures, the

town could consider the establishment of a historic district from 136 Main Street to 204 Main Street, including and encompassing Church Hill Circle as well as a portion of Point Street. The town should continue to support interested property owners who pursue voluntary listing of properties on the National Register of Historic Places.

Population

The population of Columbia Falls increased significantly during the 1970s and 1980s. This growth slowed considerably by 2000 and population has been declining since then. Our population is aging. The number of school age children has fallen in the last few years along with school enrollment of Columbia Falls' residents who must attend schools in neighboring municipalities. As with Washington County, our town has seen a decrease in the average household size. More retirees and single parent households are found. The town should continue to make available demographic information to residents and should remain mindful of the needs of our changing population.

Natural Resources

The Maine Natural Areas Program has identified two rare or exemplary natural communities in Columbia Falls, the Maritime Huckleberry Bog Natural Community and the Salt-hay Saltmarsh Natural Community. Columbia Falls contains the northeastern portion of the Pleasant Bay Focus Area of Statewide Ecological Significance. The Maine Geological Survey has identified several aquifers with a flow of at least 10 gallons per minute in Columbia Falls.

In 2016, 46 parcels (7,311 acres) were enrolled in the Tree Growth Tax Program. Forest management operations between 1991-2014 are primarily selection or shelter wood harvests with a few clear-cut operations. About 1,100 acres changed land use in the early to mid-2000s. Most agricultural land in Columbia Falls produces wild blueberries, with some cranberry production.

Natural resources in Columbia Falls are diverse and abundant. Columbia Falls surrounds the middle reaches of the Pleasant River watershed and contains an upper arm of the Pleasant Bay Focus Area of Statewide Ecological Significance. Columbia Falls contains the upper watersheds of the Indian River and Marst Brook, as well as most of the upper watershed of Little River that drains into the Pleasant River. There are large wetland complexes associated with all of these watersheds, each supporting various rare species and natural communities. Upland areas in Columbia Falls are a matrix of forestlands and heaths with several large wild blueberry areas. Development is concentrated in the southern portion of town, along US Route 1 and on several roads leading both toward the adjoining town of Addison and, to the north parallel with the western border of the town of Columbia. Some rare species co-exist with human use of the land including upland sandpipers in the blueberry fields, bald eagles along the coast and a large Maritime Huckleberry Bog in the interior.



Economy and Employment

Employment within Columbia Falls has increased in the last 15 years from 58 jobs within the town in 2002 to 118 jobs in 2015. Local employers are predominantly in the natural resources– based industries as well as several establishments that are routed in the tourism and services sector. The town of Columbia Falls is part of the Jonesport Economic Summary area that includes 14 municipalities. Total Consumer and total taxable retail sales to consumers in the Jonesport ESA over

the 2011-2016 time-horizon show a modest upward trend. Tourism is expected to play a much larger role in the future. Heritage/Historical, Nature and Cultural based tourism is growing in popularity. The top three sectors of employment for Columbia Falls are ‘Management, business, science and arts occupations’; ‘Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations; and ‘sales and office occupations’.

Columbia Falls’ median household income increased considerably, 120% between 1990 to 2016 or 57% between 2000 and 2016, staying higher than the median household income for Washington County and, by 2016, approaching the median household income for the State. In 2016 over 11 percent of Columbia Falls families were listed as having incomes below the poverty level. This is lower than for the entire county and while 0% of these families have children under 5 years of age, the margin of error in the American Community Survey data is +/- 36.7 thus seriously challenging the reliability of these 5-year estimates.

Housing

Approximately one third of households in Columbia Falls are unable to afford the Median Home Price in the Machias LMA Housing Market. Between one-third and two-thirds of the renter households in Columbia Falls are unable to afford the average 2-Bedroom rent in the Machias LMA Housing Market; sample sizes are too small and margins of error too high to be more accurate.

The State of Maine defines affordable housing as not costing more than 30% of household income. The data reviewed suggest that the cost of housing in Columbia Falls is only affordable for about a two-thirds of the population of Columbia Falls who own their homes and only one- third of the population in rental housing. The majority of people live in owner occupied single- family housing. The existing zoning ordinance does not impose significant costs on the cost of building homes. The percentage of homes owned by those in the workforce is likely to decline further while the percentage of homes owned by retirees - both those from away and natives - will increase.

The age of the housing stock in Columbia Falls is comparable to Washington County with 27% built before 1939. Two-thirds of the housing stock in Columbia Falls was built before 1980. Building permit data indicate a slow addition of stick-built and mobile homes, some commercial activity, and fairly robust housing renovation/addition, though it was stronger in 2012-2014 than in 2016. Mobile homes and trailers account for approximately 23 percent of the housing units in Columbia Falls, double the proportion found in Washington County.

Public Facilities and Recreation

The Town of Columbia Falls maintains a variety of public facilities and services, which includes a volunteer fire district shared with Columbia, a Historic community hall, and a public boat landing. The town regularly contributes to capital reserve accounts as a way to plan for and manage the cost of replacement of municipal equipment and facilities. Municipal facilities are in good condition sufficient for the current and anticipated needs of the population. The Town does not supply any services that affect growth. Availability of fire and police protection does not impact the town’s growth.

The cost of municipal services provided by the town is not affected by the location of homes in the town. There is no municipal water supply or sewage disposal service, nor are there likely to be in the foreseeable future. The town provides snow removal on all public roads. The school bus traverses almost every paved road in the Town. The length of the route, and therefore the cost, might change slightly if the location of students were to change.

The recreational needs of the town are satisfied through facilities available in the surrounding area. Hunting, fishing, boating, hiking, bird watching and biking require no facilities except water and land, which Columbia Falls has in abundance.

Budgetary information is presented in Chapter K. Fiscal Capacity. All projected investment in public facilities can be accommodated within designated Growth areas as outlined in Chapter M. Land Use.

Transportation

Residents of Columbia Falls must travel to adjoining communities for most work and shopping opportunities, so we are affected by the condition of many arterial roads in Washington County. Transportation linkages in town consist primarily of US Route 1 to the major regional centers and the roads that intersect with US Route 1/Tibbetstown Road, at the “four corners” to reach Northern Columbia Falls and South to Addison on the coast. Our town relies on its road network as its primary transportation network. Therefore, local roads need to provide safe, reliable access to work, school, stores, and residences. Overall, our roadways are in good condition. Given limited funding and the significant expense, our town has done a noteworthy job of maintaining its roads. Continued proper and affordable maintenance of the road network in Columbia Falls is in the best interests of all residents. All new roads, subject to subdivision review, must be constructed to specific standards. MDOT has jurisdiction over most main roads and bridges within Columbia Falls, so the town will continue to communicate and cooperate with the department. Our town also will continue to participate in regional transportation planning efforts.

Land Use

Policies and Implementation Strategies

As required by Chapter 208, Comprehensive Plan Review Criteria Rule, this chapter provides a separate section that prioritizes how implementation strategies will be carried out and identifies the responsible party and anticipated timeline for each strategy in the plan. Policies from 2002 were reviewed and their status and importance to the community was evaluated. Some policies were carried forward in the new plan, some were revised, some were eliminated, and some new policies were added that better reflect today’s needs.

Regional Coordination

Columbia Falls currently cooperates with adjoining towns and multiple towns in the region and should continue to do so whenever possible. Columbia Falls has and will continue to develop compatible regional coordination policies with nearby communities; such as they have done with the ambulance and fire department in the past, to the greatest extent possible. Columbia Falls should investigate additional opportunities to develop and expand regional planning, coordination, and funding partnerships.

Regional transportation infrastructure within Columbia Falls is limited to the US Route 1 corridor, a significant pass through for freight and commuters. The overwhelming majority of residents work outside of Columbia Falls. Elderly and low-income households must travel/move to larger centers in Washington County to find affordable housing developments.

Columbia Falls contains the northeasterly part of one Focus Area of Statewide Ecological Significance, known as Pleasant Bay. The Pleasant Bay Focus Area encompasses the entire coastline, islands, and tidal estuaries of the greater Narraguagus-Pleasant Bay region, as well as the adjacent

Harrington Heath.

The Town of Columbia Falls, in partnership with the Town of Columbia, created the Epping Fire District. We are also a part of a four-town mutual aid service that includes Addison and Harrington. Ambulance/Emergency Medical Services are provided by a multi-town supported Pleasant River Ambulance Service, which provides mutual aid coverage from Steuben to Machias. Columbia Falls obtains police protection from the State Police and Washington County Sheriff's Department.

Solid waste management services are privately handled. Columbia Falls is part of a multiple municipal shared disposal facility at Pleasant River Solid Waste Disposal District, located in Columbia Falls. Recycling options across the region are severely limited as of summer 2018. Columbia Falls contracts with an animal control officer on an on-call, stipend basis and utilizes the Small Animal Clinic in Ellsworth. Columbia Falls is part of RSU/SAD 37, which includes Addison, Columbia, Cherryfield, and Milbridge.

None of the adjacent organized municipalities have adopted town wide zoning.

Map Disclaimer: Maps generated via online GIS Planners Maps are based on currently available data compiled by the State as well as by municipalities and are only as accurate as current data collected and submitted. Any errors or omissions may be reported to WCCOG; municipalities are encouraged to submit updated Shoreland and Tax maps for inclusion in future versions of the Planners Maps.

Census Data Disclaimer:

The majority of current census data contained within this chapter is compiled from the American Community Survey (ACS) 2011-2015 5-year estimate. The ACS 5-year estimates data for rural communities is based on a very small sample, and therefore is subject to often-substantial sampling variability. The degree of uncertainty for an estimate arising from sampling variability is represented through the use of a margin of error, whenever possible. The value shown here is the 90 percent margin of error. The margin of error can be interpreted roughly as providing a 90 percent probability that the interval defined by the estimate minus the margin of error and the estimate plus the margin of error (the lower and upper confidence bounds) contains the true value.

The Comprehensive Planning Committee and Washington County Council of Governments recognize that existing Census data is often quite inaccurate in its reflection of the community of Columbia Falls. Whenever possible, local planning study data is used in place of Census data. However, in most cases, the most recent data available is the ACS 2011-2015 5-year estimate. Therefore, this data is quoted as current and utilized to make assumptions about local trends, but the understanding exists that a generous margin of error should be allowed for in the ACS 5-year estimate data.

B. PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY AND COMMUNITY INPUT

A total of 335 surveys were mailed to all voters and taxpayers in May of 2017. Surveys were mailed back to the Comprehensive Plan Committee or respondents could complete the survey online, or drop them off at the Town Office. A total of 24 surveys were completed on-line and an additional 23 surveys were returned through the mail or in person, for a total of 47 surveys, 7.13% response rate.

There were many responses to the two open-ended questions at the end of the survey as well as other written comments throughout the survey. The original survey and all of these written responses are reproduced in Appendix A of this document. Summaries of the written comments are noted with the charted data here and throughout the document as the issues they address are raised. The raw data is available at the Town Office and graphical summaries of the responses are provided here.

SURVEY RESULTS

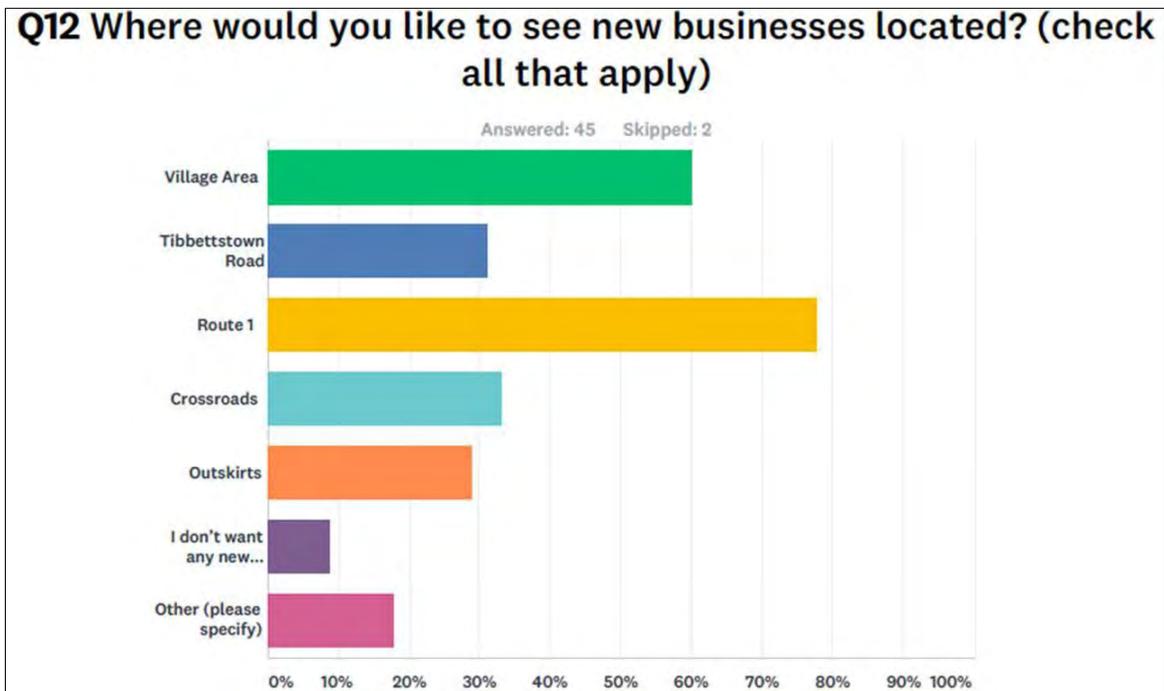
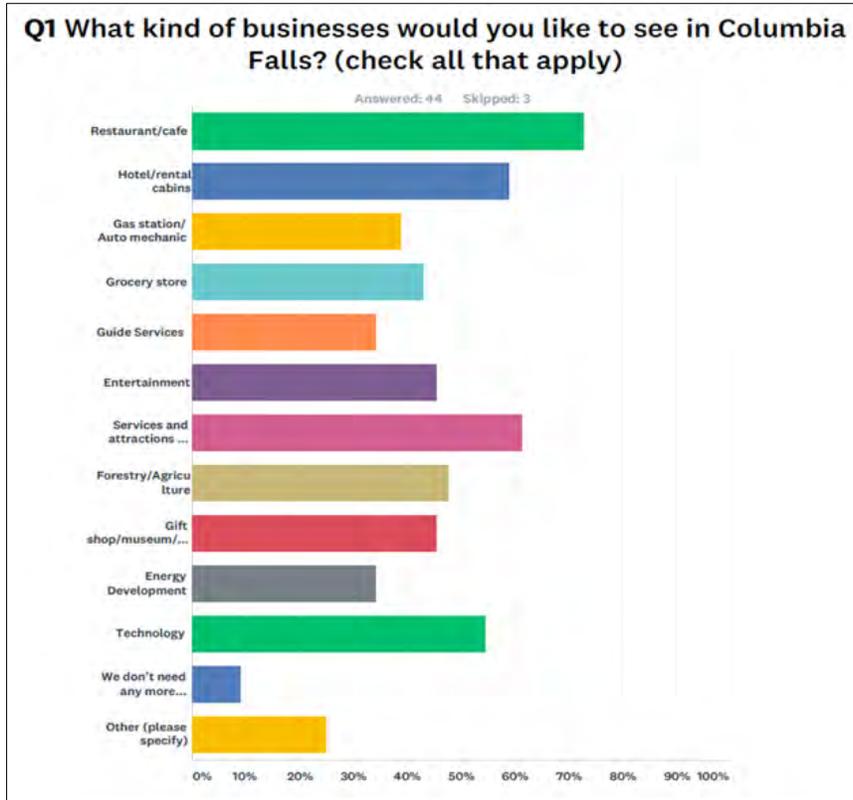
General

In the survey introduction we asked the survey respondents: “Imagine that it is the year 2030 in Columbia Falls... What kind of community would you like for your children and grandchildren to inherit?” All questions were focused on growth, development, and preservation of the community. The cross section of the survey respondents live in Columbia Falls year-round, all except one submission. While we did not collect gender or age of the survey respondents, we did find that many find the community appealing and wish for few improvements.

Town Growth and Development

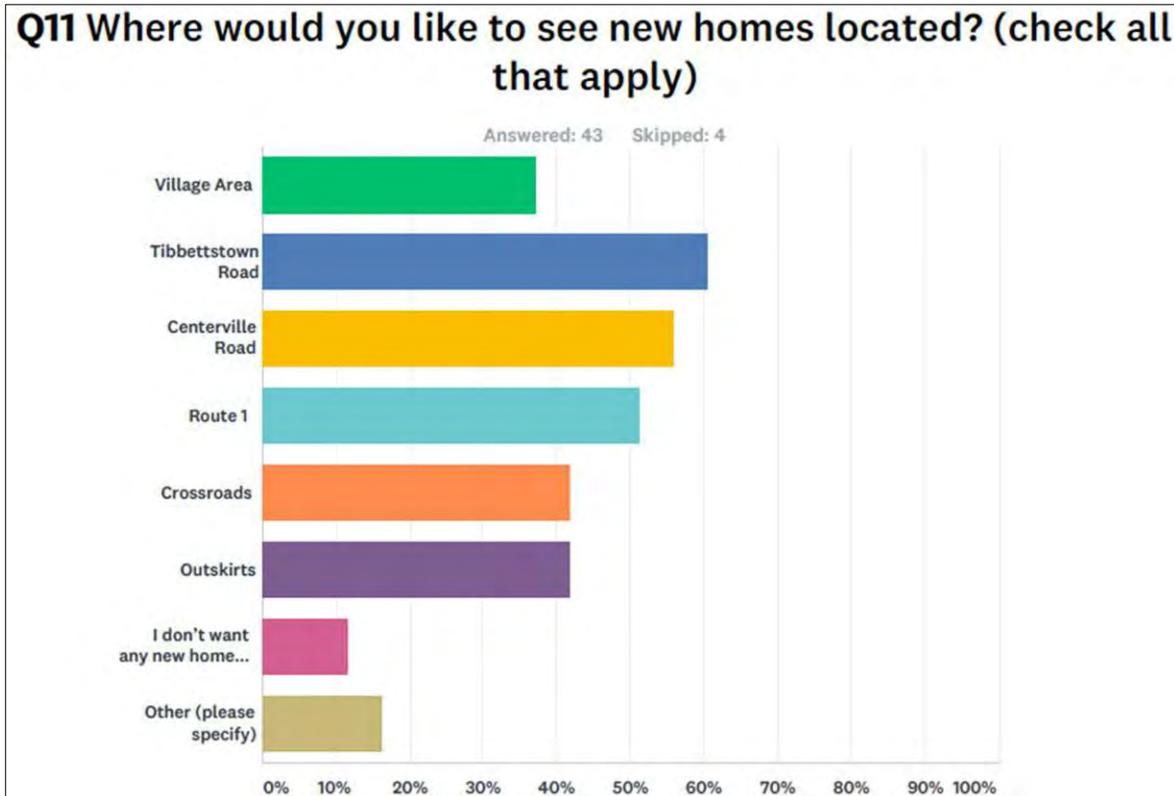
Questions on growth and development in the survey focused on the types of growth and development that respondents would like to see occur, and on strategies towns can implement to ensure that development is safe and that it maintains the economic value of properties and the quality of life for all people. Questions were focused on the long-term preservation of community resources, such as water quality and wildlife habitat, parks, trails, and historic properties. Growth and Development questions explored desired methods of administration of public services, such as recreation, emergency services, and salt and sand shed. Written comments provided on the surveys are reproduced in Appendix A.

Respondents supported encouraging growth of new commercial, retail, and industrial development. Written comments included preference for development that preserves the small-town ambiance and is not harmful to the environment. Some respondents prefer the town create more ordinances to protect the village area and environment. The survey revealed that businesses should be small to medium sized and be located mostly on US Route 1, in the village area, and Crossroads.



Comments throughout the survey support general cleanup of the exterior appearance of homes and dooryards, continued improvements on historic structures, and making public spaces safer for community residents. Comments also indicated the community should restrict funding to public projects.

Survey respondents generally favor the development of Tibbettstown Road, Centerville Road, and US Route 1 for new homes.



Protection of Natural, Historic, and Cultural Resources

Responses indicate that more people feel the community does a good job preserving scenic and historic or cultural sites. Few commented on the resource burden of preserving historic sites but the majority are in favor of preservation and hope more community improvements will take place.

Access to Lakes and Forest Resources

Just over 88% of respondents feel that wildlife has adequate resources to breed, feed, and nest and commented that there should be increased protection to ensure water quality and wildlife habitat and a comprehensive zoning plan.

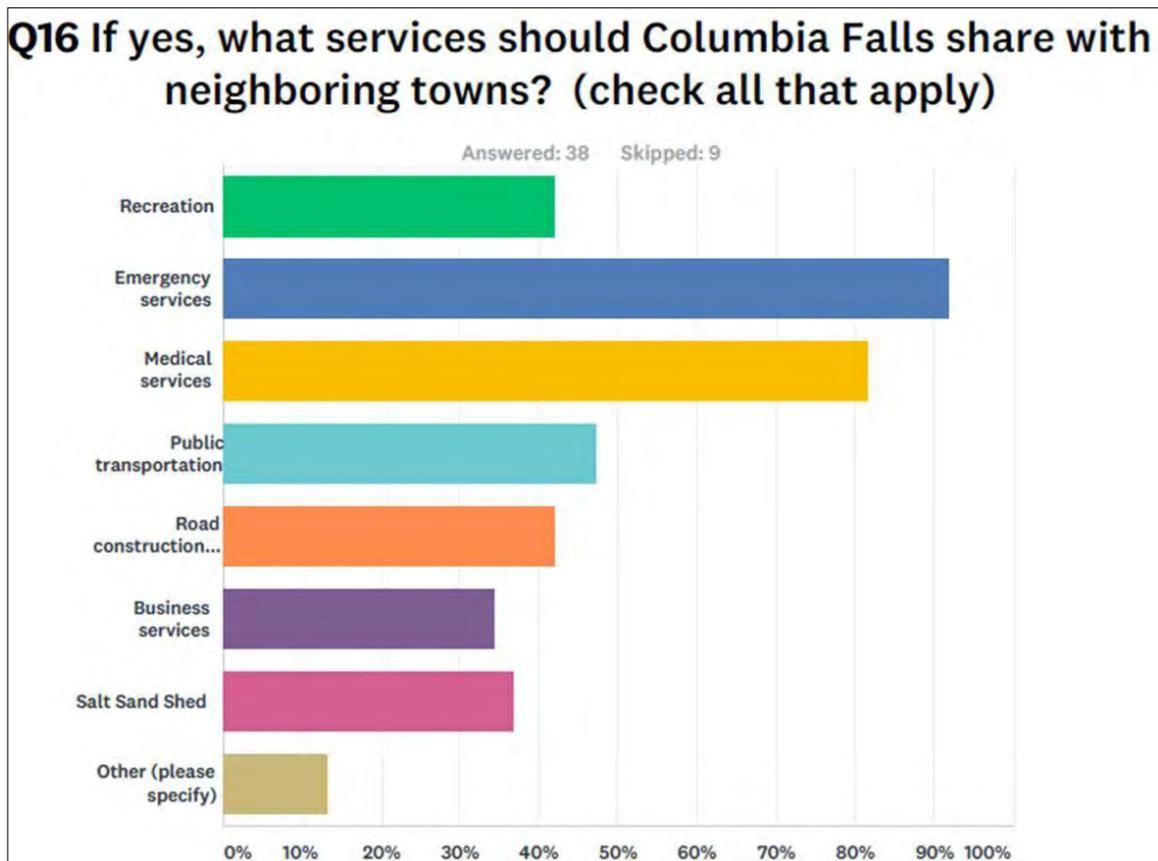
Many enjoy the access to the Downeast Sunrise Trails but some feel that walking on the town roads is dangerous since there is little shoulder to walk on. Written comments suggest that people feel lakes and streams are accessible and some lament the use of the natural areas by those who abuse drugs and alcohol. There were also a few comments on how better advertising would improve access to the community’s natural resources.

Transportation and Maintenance of Roads and Trails

While many feel the trail and roads are well cared for, maintenance and improvements are needed as indicated through the comments. Potholes in need of repair, a desire to have a wider, more solid, shoulder for running, biking, walking, and ATVs, the need for sidewalks and street lights in the village to ensure further safety of residents on foot. Some comments also suggest the community should decrease the number of trails available and reduce maintenance costs.

Regional Services

Columbia Falls already utilizes regional ambulance, fire, and police services. Respondents agree that emergency and medical services should be shared with neighboring towns. Less than half of the respondents felt Columbia Falls should share Salt Sand Shed, road construction, and business services with neighboring communities. A comment was made that the Town Office should be combined with neighboring towns while another suggested we stay in our current offices at Wreaths Across America.



Written Comments

All responses to the two open-ended questions are included in Appendix A. These questions are: What three things do you love most about your community? **AND** What three things would you most like to change about your community?

Summarized responses to the open-ended question of What three things do you love most about your community include: quiet, friendly, locals, hometown scenery, location, history, beauty, peaceful, rural, wildlife, proximity to ocean, farms, hunting, fishing, productivity of berry farms, lack of development, recreation trail, architecture, and volunteers.

Summarized responses to the open-ended question of What three things would you most like to change about your community include: Increase population, more employment, have a school, clean up homes, more locals in town government, youth's attitudes, youth carelessness, drug use, maintain cemeteries, leave well enough alone, more business, high taxes, town signs, more community projects, celebrations, cable access, more small shops, public spaces, farmers' market, clubs for kids, attitudes, get a good community building, salt sand shed, zoning, and noise ordinance.

SUMMARY

In May of 2017 Columbia Falls residents completed a survey to give their views on important aspects of the town's future. The participation rate was average for surveys of this type and included written input.

Respondents to the survey generally expressed support for the Town. Supporting a variety of types of new small and medium business development in Columbia Falls was favored, provided that new development was environmentally friendly and did not detract from the small-town atmosphere and quality of life. Desirable locations for development included the town center, Tibbettstown Road, Centerville Road, and US Route 1. The village areas were not typically favored for further development outside what already exists for business and homes.

Respondents seem united in the use of regional emergency services such as ambulance and fire. Results show that other services could be consolidated, as well, to keep town costs down; including town office, recreation, transportation, road maintenance, business services, and salt sand shed.

Respondents were generally satisfied with municipal and community services. Written comments indicated that there is a need to have something in our community for young people along with a method to encourage young people to become involved in the community.

Responses and comments regarding housing in the survey suggested that older abandoned and dilapidated homes should be removed or renovated before focusing on construction of new homes.

Desired types of economic activity included most commonly mentioned gas station, retail, dining and lodging, community gathering places, recreation for youth, and nature-based businesses. Also mentioned were energy development, gift/antiques, forestry/agriculture, and technology. Written comments speak to a desire for smaller to medium sized scale, environmentally friendly operations in keeping with the quiet rural nature of Columbia Falls.

Several questions were asked about local roads and transportation. Respondents are generally satisfied with road conditions although there is some concern about repairs of potholes and excessive shoulders. There were some concerns with the safety of roads and trails for walking/running/biking due to the conditions.

Survey respondents generally expressed satisfaction with the existing conditions of the community. Major areas of discontent exist around the use of tax dollars to repair and maintain community structures and lands, the lack of school, and drug use. Respondents expressed a strong desire to retain the small-town, rural village atmosphere of Columbia Falls and protect the water quality and wildlife habitat while also pursuing reasonable, appropriate, and managed growth.

Full survey responses are listed in Appendix A of this document.

C. GIS MAPPING

GIS, or Geographical Information System, is a computer mapping system designed to capture, store, manipulate, analyze, manage, and present all types of spatial or geographical data. A geographic information system (GIS) lets us visualize, question, analyze, and interpret data to understand relationships, patterns, and trends. GIS applications allow users to create interactive queries (user-created searches), analyze spatial information, edit data in maps, and present the results of all these operations on one or more maps. This enables people to more easily see, analyze, and understand patterns and relationships.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

GIS mapping tools and the information they provide to municipalities is evolving much faster than the 10-12-year time horizon of a local Comprehensive Plan. Even for small rural municipalities who cannot afford the staff, equipment, or software to run GIS mapping products, there are several available alternatives. The Online Planners and Parcel Maps provided by the WCCOG/UMM-GIS partnership provide access to up-to-date spatial information and its background attribute data. Training on how to use it, depict it on alternative base map projections, see and analyze the data behind it, print it, share it, and add to it with local information, is provided in several learning styles and levels of expertise. Several Maine state departments also provide a variety of web-based mapping tools. This chapter provides examples of these tools. However, the individual chapters of this Comprehensive Plan provide many more examples of what they provide and how to use them in ways that both are specific to Columbia Falls while simultaneously providing the inventory on which this Comprehensive Plan is being updated.

Status of GIS Mapping Capability

There are no municipalities in Washington County with the resources or staff to maintain an in-house GIS mapping system. To address this reality of both economy and capacity the Washington County Council of Governments (WCCOG), in partnership with the University of Machias GIS Service Center and Laboratory, has developed online GIS mapping capacity for all Washington County towns. This online service is maintained and updated as GIS data changes and thus provides towns' access to their parcel maps and the spatial information available in their town. The Planners maps serve the needs of municipal and regional Comprehensive Plan maps as well as parcel-specific information for development review.

Information about these maps and how to use them are available on the WCCOG website via the following links:

- Online GIS Mapping – Frequently Asked Questions
<http://www.wccog.net/online-gis-mapping-faqs.htm>
- Public Parcel Viewer <http://gro-wa.org/public-parcel-viewer.htm>
- Planners Maps <http://gro-wa.org/planners-maps.htm>
- GIS Maps Instruction Guides (Paper) <http://gro-wa.org/gis-map-instruction-guides.htm>
- Online GIS Mapping Instructional Videos
<http://www.wccog.net/online-gis-mapping-instructional-videos.htm>
- Paper vs. Digital Maps <http://gro-wa.org/paper-vs-digital-maps.htm>
- Status of Comprehensive Plans with the Growth Management Law
<http://gro-wa.org/helping-washington-county-plan-its-future.htm>

In addition to customized online mapping tools provided by the WCCOG/UMM-GIS

partnership, several state agencies maintain a variety of online web-viewer mapping tools. Some digital information, such as Maine Department of Transportation construction scheduling, is only available using these online tools.

Another state agency, the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, only provides information about critical habitat at the time of the Comprehensive Plan dataset. While the WCCOG has advocated on multiple occasion that this information be made available in digital format so that it can be incorporated into the online Planners maps we have not been successful to date. Therefore, Planning Boards and Comprehensive Plan Committees are directed to this information using screen shots of the large poster format maps (also provided in PDF format) within various chapters of the Comprehensive Plans.

Encouraging Towns to Use Online GIS services

This Chapter and the recommended policy that encourages towns to maintain, update and provide their parcel mapping data to the UMM-GIS Services Center is rooted in the dynamic nature of spatial information and the speed with which our culture, economy, and infrastructure is changing. Encouraging towns to develop their expertise in using online GIS information is based on the following several factors:

1. Spatial information can change significantly over the customary timeline (10-12 years) of a Comprehensive Plan. Thus, the practice of creating static point-in-time Comprehensive Plan maps may inform current policy development but can provide only general depictions at “greater than 20,000 feet” and is of virtually no utility for parcel-specific development review over time.
2. Visual imagery of the variety of GIS mapping products can support policy development throughout the Comprehensive Plan.
3. Online resources provide economical access to the spatial information available to the town of Columbia Falls for this Comprehensive Plan as well as for on-going development review.
4. Instructions (in several learning modes) are provided for Planning Boards and Code Enforcement Officers in the same location where maps are posted, to enable use of online GIS mapping tools by municipal personnel that can experience regular turnover in duties.

Student Training and Workforce Development

The WCCOG partnership with the GIS Service Center at the University of Maine at Machias (UMM) has operated for over a decade. Dr. Tora Johnson and her students in the GIS Program are working on GIS Degree, as well as Certificate and Associates in Science programs. Their course work has, and continues to, directly support many municipal and regional projects in Washington County. It provides students with immediate real-world application of their skills to help them find employment upon graduation. It also provides extraordinary mapping and analysis services to Washington County communities at little or no cost. The courses contributing to this include:

- *GIS I and GIS II foundational courses*
- *Community Applications in GIS*
- *Municipal Applications in GIS*
- *Remote Sensing and Image Analysis*
- *Advanced Projects in GIS*
- *Web-Based Maps, Applications & Services, and*
- *GIS Internships and Work Study credits.*

When municipalities contract with WCCOG to prepare their Comprehensive Plans, they are benefiting from the WCCOG/UMM-GIS Center partnership. Municipalities also commonly contract directly with the GIS Service Center for parcel mapping, parcel map updates, and emergency management planning maps, among many other projects.

(Former) Comprehensive Plan Map Set

The maps commonly included in a Comprehensive Plan are listed below.

- Location of Columbia Falls in Washington County
- Public Facilities (including Recreation)
 - The entire municipality, sometimes with an expanded version for a community center, combined with Transportation in some of the most rural municipalities
- Topography, Steep Slopes and Floodplains
- Waterways and Wetlands
- Soils Classifications
 - Depicts soils suitability classifications for septic systems, roads, and low-density development; also depicts prime agricultural soils and soils of statewide significance to agriculture.
- Marine Resources (where applicable)
 - Place Names, Public Access and Marine Resources in some communities
- Land Cover
- Critical Habitat
- Transportation
- Current Land Use
 - Current Zoning also depicted where available
- Proposed Land Use (also called Future Land Use)
 - The entire municipality and often an expanded version for the village or city center

A great deal of the information depicted on these maps is available through statewide servers from the Maine Office of GIS. For a variety of reasons these statewide servers do not or cannot provide some of this information. For instance, locally derived information can be missing such as cemeteries and commonly used names for points of access or orientation. Residents of the Towns of Beals and Machiasport, both exemplary Downeast fishing communities, refer to several beaches, bays, points of land, and small islands as points of reference, often navigational, when discussing planning issues. A map created for each town in 2004 and 2009 respectively names those points of access and reference.

It is also common when reviewing spatial information for Comprehensive Plan Committees to find errors in the location of public facilities either because the spatial layer is out of date (e.g. the town office moved) or simply inaccurate (e.g. the Post Office is on the North side of the road and not the South). In these cases, WCCOG works with the individual community to correct the inaccuracies and/or create new spatial layers on a town-by-town basis.

As noted above, some statewide data, such as the Beginning with Habitat information that describes Critical Habitats, is not posted online on statewide servers. Instead it is provided in digital format to the UMM-GIS Service Center and to WCCOG. When conducting Comprehensive Planning this information is provided to the municipality in a series of large poster sized paper maps. The series of maps include three primary maps and three supplementary maps as follows:

- Map 1 - Water and Riparian Habitat

- Map 2 – High Value Plant and Animal Habitat
- Map 3 – Undeveloped Habitat Blocks and Connectors among Conserved Land
- Supplementary Map 7 – Wetlands Characterization
- Supplementary Map 8 – USFWS³ Priority Trust Species

Regional Map – Building a Regional Landscape

These poster-sized maps can be useful to the Planning Board and the Code Enforcement Officer when reviewing development permit applications. The WCCOG recommends that they be posted on the wall of the town office within easy access to the Planning Board and CEO.

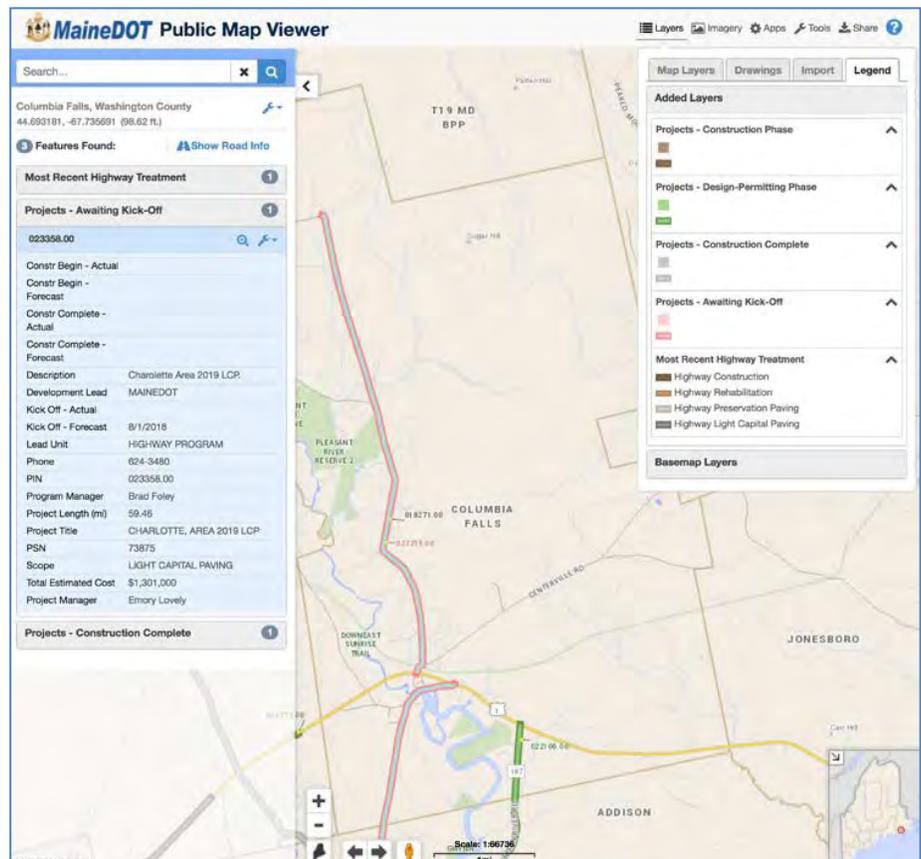
Planning Board and Code Enforcement Officer Training with Online Maps

As referenced in footnote 1 above, there are several training resources available that are geared to different learning styles. The written instruction guides (<http://gro-wa.org/gis-map-instruction-guides.htm>) cater to those who like to have a printed (or on-screen PDF) document to study and refer to when they work. Alternatively, the instructional videos (<http://www.wccog.net/online-gis-mapping-instructional-videos.htm>) are provided in short (3-6 minute) formats. Any user is able to determine their level of competence from beginner to intermediate to advanced. Obviously, the videos also allow any user to refresh their memory if they do not use the tools over several months and have forgotten the finer details.

Finally, there is a survey that is open at all times to provide feedback so that the WCCOG/UMM-GIS partnership can improve the online interface and experience based on user feedback.

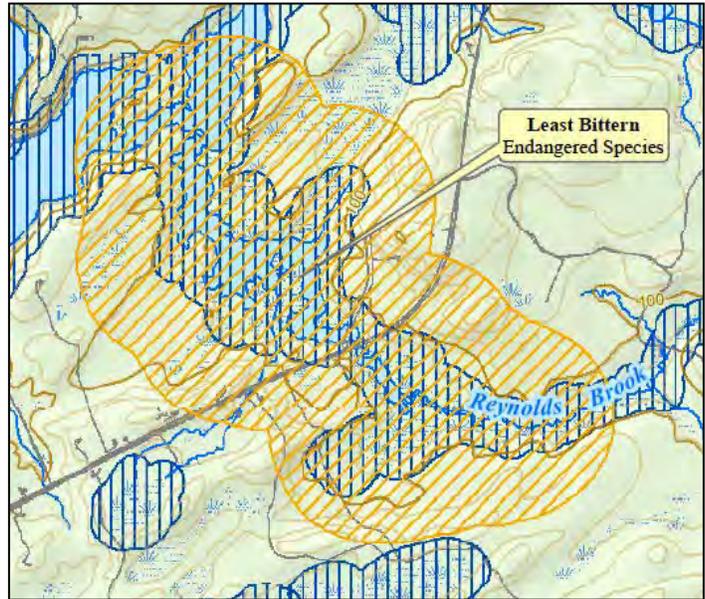
Shifting from Paper to Online Maps in Comprehensive Plans

The result of the shift from paper to online maps is to completely abandon creation of town wide maps centered around the themes of Comprehensive Plan chapters. Readers are instead provided with screen shots of the various and detailed output of the variety of mapping tools. Thus, in the Transportation chapter the text provides information about how to access the MDOT web viewer and the screen shot at right describes the location of planned construction, and depicts the detail behind the map (the attribute table) so that the timing of future construction is available to the town (example from Columbia Falls).

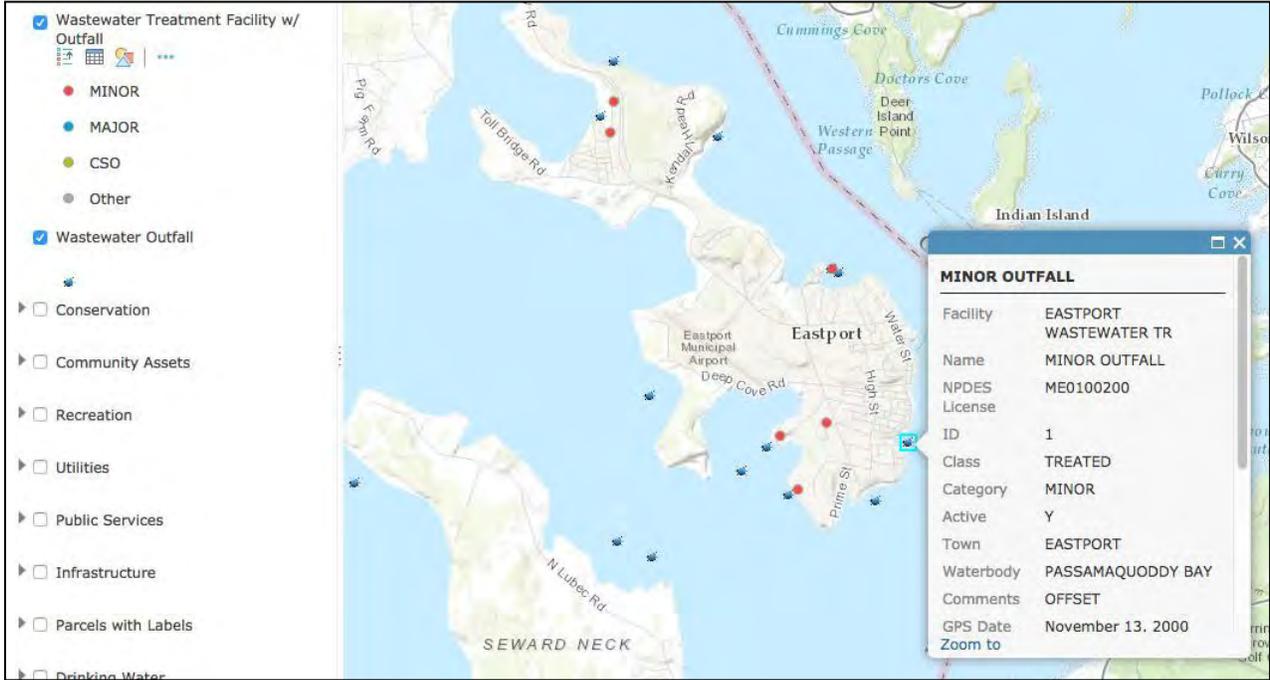


As noted above, the WCCOG would prefer that the Beginning With Habitat data were available through the Maine Office of GIS servers so that it could be available to the online Planners maps (<http://gro-wa.org/planners-maps.htm>). However, abandoning the creation of a single town wide map that depicts the spatial subject matter of each chapter does have a few benefits when depicting Critical Habitat information. First, a single town wide map of critical habitat, often depicted on an 8.5 by 11-inch piece of paper, is relatively useless when determining the location of the Critical Habitats. Second, by inserting a screen capture of zoomed-in areas of Critical Habitat, taken from the large poster (also PDF) format maps, into the discussion in the Natural Resources Chapter it is possible to:

- See the Critical Habitat in particular areas relative to other known points of interest and provide assistance with interpreting the map legends.
- Remind the Comprehensive Plan Committee, Planning Board and Code Enforcement Officer to actually pull out those large format maps, put them on the wall where they can be seen and use them for development review.
- Consider their actions in the context of regionally significant natural resources such as those described in Statewide Focus Areas of Ecological Significance.



As with the MaineDOT map viewer, this approach to Comprehensive Plan maps uses the chapter text to explain a little more about the true value of GIS mapping. GIS maps are not just pretty snapshots in time. It is the data behind almost any GIS map that provides the vast majority of its value. For instance, when depicting an inventory of point source discharge influences on water quality the screen shot of the online Planners tool can show the location of the discharge, the information box that provides details about it, and the additional map contents that can be turned on or off in any particular area (Eastport example provided below).



The Maine Drinking Water Program also provides a web viewer for municipalities to see mapped spatial information and data about public water supplies. A screen capture of their service is provided in the Natural Resources chapter. This service requires creation of a user name and password, which can inhibit its use by some less experienced users.

D. HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The purpose of this section is to:

1. Outline the history of Columbia Falls.
2. Identify and profile the historic, archaeological, cultural and recreation resources of Columbia Falls in terms of their type and significance.
3. Assess current and future threats to the existence and integrity of those resources.
4. Assess the effectiveness of existing measures to protect those resources.

KEY FINDINGS

Columbia Falls has five buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Buildings, and five areas identified (May 2017) by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission as having archaeological significance. Maine Historic Preservation Commission recommends further survey of areas along the Pleasant and Eastern Little River banks. Due to the large number of significant historic structures, the town could consider the establishment of a Historic District from 136 Main Street to 204 Main Street including and encompassing Church Hill Circle as well as up to 114 Point Street. The town should continue to support interested property owners who pursue voluntary listing of properties on the National Register of Historic Places.

BRIEF HISTORY OF COLUMBIA FALLS

The Town of Columbia Falls was originally known as Plantation 13. The earliest settlers came up the Pleasant River from Township 6 (Addison) and took land under squatters' rights. These settlers are believed to come from parts of Southern Maine, near Falmouth and Scarborough. The first census of 1790 records 43 families with a total of 223 people living in Plantation 13. In 1796, Plantation 12 (Columbia) and Plantation 13 were incorporated as the Town of Columbia, an arrangement that lasted only 67 years. On March 25, 1863, Columbia Falls was officially incorporated, with an area of about 15,000 acres, a population of 550, and a valuation of \$117,707.

This history is adapted from Richard Bedard's *1910 Census and Historical Sketch of Columbia Falls, Maine*, which is based on the original 1910 census. Another historical resource that provides a more comprehensive look is *A History of Columbia and Columbia Falls*, written in honor of the American Bicentennial in 1976, by Nancy Greene and Clarence Drisko. Gloria Allen Hayward compiled a more recent historical resource on Columbia Falls for the Town's 150th Celebration in 2013. Much of the history of commerce in Columbia Falls has been summarized in Chapter G. Economy and Employment of this document.

INDUSTRY AND CHARACTER

Historically, the river, forest and land provided livelihoods for inhabitants of Columbia Falls. They fished, built boats, felled and sawed trees, harvested wild blueberries and grew beans. The town supported several enterprises including a brick kiln, bean factory, a blueberry factory and at one time, five mills on the Pleasant River: a Carding Mill, Fulling Mill, Grist Mill, Lumber Mill and Planing Mill.

Since the early 1900s, the number of businesses and jobs available in the town has declined.

There are no longer any mills on the Pleasant River, our bean and blueberry factories are gone, as well as all other small businesses in the center of town. The last classes were held in the Elementary school in 2009 and the Grange has been long disbanded. In defiance of all these changes, the church continues to hold regular services.

HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Historic and archaeological resources include prehistoric archaeological sites (mainly Native American), archaeological sites from the historical period, and historic buildings and places.

Pre-historic Archaeological Sites

Pre-historical archaeological sites include all sites that contain artifacts from before the first written records. The Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) has sited that there are none known in Columbia Falls.

Historic Archaeological Sites

Historic archaeological sites are those that include significant archaeological artifacts from the time period after written records began. According to MHPC, historic archaeological sites “may include cellar holes from houses, foundations for farm buildings, mills, wharves and boat yards, as well as shipwrecks.”

The MHPC maintains an inventory of important sites in Columbia Falls, including buildings or sites on the National Registry of Historic Places (NRHP). The inventory does not include any pre-historic archaeological or historic archaeological sites in Columbia Falls, but recommends further survey, inventory and analysis along the banks of the Pleasant River and the lower section of the Eastern Little River. MHPC recommends that any future fieldwork should focus on identifying potentially significant resources associated with Columbia Falls’ agricultural, residential, and industrial heritage, particularly those of the earliest Native American and Euro-American settlement in the 18th and 19th centuries. As of May 1994, MHPC reported no professional surveys of this area.

Archaeological sites in Columbia Falls, documented by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission					
Site Name	Site Number	Site Type	Periods of Significance	National Register Status	Town
Ruggles House	ME 100-001	Domestic	1818 to present	Determined	Columbia Falls
Hanscom Farm cellar #1	ME 100-002	Domestic	Nineteenth Century	Undetermined	Columbia Falls
Hanscom Farm cellar #2	ME 100-002	Domestic	Nineteenth Century	Undetermined	Columbia Falls
Hanscom Farm cellar #3	ME 100-002	Domestic	Nineteenth Century	Undetermined	Columbia Falls
Lawrence-Woodside Cemetery	ME 100-005	Cemetery	1851-1891	Undetermined	Columbia Falls

Cemeteries

Columbia Falls has over eight public and private cemeteries, and the community considers them a valued cultural resource providing insight into their history.

Public Cemeteries

1. Ruggles Cemetery – located at 74 Main Street on the left at the top of the hill coming from the West.
2. Great Hill Cemetery –located at 79 Main Street on the right at the top of the hill coming from the West.
3. Town Cemetery –located just down the hill across from Great Hill Cemetery at 100 Main Street.
4. Greenwood Cemetery –located at the intersection of Tibbettstown Road and Montegail Pond Road with a physical address of 1051 Tibbettstown Road.
5. Skunk Ridge Cemetery –located off the East Skunk Ridge Road possibly known to some as the Corn Hill Cemetery.

Private Cemeteries

1. A private cemetery is located about 400 yards in from the Centerville Road at 72 Highlands Road.
2. Fairview (or the Herbert Young Cemetery) is a private cemetery set up by the Young family located down a road that goes in by 1229 Tibbettstown Road.
3. A small private cemetery located East on US Route 1 contains one stone for an infant – William H., son of Patrick Flaherty, died January 21, 1820, age 4 months.

There are several smaller private cemeteries located throughout the town, including Pauper Cemetery, the location of which is not known to this group.

HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND PLACES

The Maine Historic Preservation Commission maintains an inventory of important sites including buildings or sites on the National Registry of Historic Places (NRHP). MHPC lists five buildings listed on the NRHP, and recommends a comprehensive survey of above ground historic resources to identify other properties that may be eligible for nomination to the NRHP.

Captain John Bucknam House - 1789
Center Chimney Georgian Colonial



Samuel Bucknam House - 1820
Federal Style Center Chimney Cape



Ruggles House - 1818
Federal



Columbia House 1820-1834
Long House/Federal Front



Union Hall – 1840
Greek Revival



In addition to these five listed buildings, the Sunrise County Economic Council identified two additional buildings – the Hamlin Hall and Wilson Keene House as eligible for listing on the NRHP. Additional research and surveys may reveal additional historic and architecturally significant resources.

Historic Patterns of Development

Historic patterns provide important information about the development of communities and community life. Moreover, historic downtowns with concentrations of historic homes and businesses contribute to the feel of a community and its sense of place. The historical pattern of development is clearly evident in the village center of Columbia Falls, and contributes positively to community identity.

PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

According to the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, “the standard of what makes an archaeological site worthy of preservation should normally be eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register program accommodates sites of national, state and local significance, and it can include local values. Due to physical damage to a site and/or recent site age, some sites are not significant.”

The primary mechanisms for historical preservation in Columbia Falls are public and/or private investment in historic properties and streetscape enhancement, and municipal support of privately led historic preservation efforts. The Town’s Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance does not specifically call for the survey and protection of historic or archaeological resources. Private options exist for individual property preservation.

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

Responses indicate that more people feel the community does a good job preserving scenic and historic or cultural sites. Few commented on the resource burden of preserving historic sites, but the majority is in favor of preservation and hopes more community improvements will take place. The survey is reproduced in full in Appendix A.

Comments throughout the survey support general cleanup of the exterior appearance of homes and yards, and continued improvements on historic structures. Responses and comments regarding housing in the survey suggested that older abandoned and dilapidated homes should be removed or renovated before focusing on construction of new homes.

Respondents supported encouraging growth of new commercial, retail, and industrial development. Written comments included preference for development that preserves the small-town ambiance and is not harmful to the environment. The survey revealed that businesses should be small to medium sized and be located mostly on US Route 1 and at the Crossroads. The village areas were not typically favored for further development outside what already exists. Some respondents prefer the town create more ordinances to protect the village area.

Respondents expressed a strong desire to retain the small-town, rural village atmosphere of Columbia Falls while also pursuing reasonable, appropriate, and managed growth. Desired types of economic activity included most commonly mentioned gas station, retail, dining and lodging, community gathering places, recreation for youth, and nature-based businesses. Also mentioned were energy development, gift/antiques, forestry/agriculture, and technology. The written comments speak to a desire for smaller to medium sized scale, environmentally friendly operations in keeping with the quiet rural nature of Columbia Falls.

POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

A complete list of the policy recommendation from the previous Comprehensive Plan is included in *Appendix B: Policies and Implementation Strategies - Columbia Falls 2002 Comprehensive Plan*. A full copy of the previous plan is on file in the Town Hall.

Current policies and implementation strategies relative to Historic and Archaeological Resources in Columbia Falls are presented in Chapter N. Policies and Implementation Strategies. They include revisions to the 2002 policies, along with additional policies and strategies that reflect changes in conditions on the ground, local priorities and State and Federal policy changes since the 2002 Comprehensive Plan was adopted.

E. POPULATION

The purpose of this section is to:

1. Describe the population and household characteristics of Columbia Falls and compare them with similar changes and patterns occurring in the region & state.
2. Determine how population trends will influence the future demand for housing, land, and community facilities.
3. Predict for the next 10 years the size and characteristics of the population of Columbia Falls and compare with similar projections for the region & state.

A fundamental element in the Comprehensive Plan for Columbia Falls is the town's population and how that population is changing over time. The ultimate goal of a comprehensive plan is to provide for a proper relationship between the town's future population and its environment. Accordingly, most phases of the plan are either dependent upon, or strongly influenced by, the size and composition of the town's future population.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The population of Columbia Falls grew significantly from 1970 to 1980, at lower rate between 1980 and 2000, and has declined in the last 18 years. Maine Office of Policy and Management projections forecast a population decline of 7.8% between 2015 and 2034 to 497 individuals

Median age increased by 10.1 years between 2000 and 2016 due to an increase in the elderly population who are remaining in Columbia Falls and a significant decline in the number of young families and individuals under 21 years of age

Household size in Columbia Falls has decreased as empty nesters, retirees, and single-parent households occupy more of the town's housing stock.

The number of school age children and school enrollment declined in Columbia Falls over the last two years. The Elementary School closed in 2010 and all students must attend school in neighboring towns. Thus, school enrollments are likely to remain the same or continue to decline over the next ten years.

POPULATION AND GROWTH RATES

The overall trend in Columbia Falls is one of decline between 1910 and 1970, significant growth between 1970 and 2000 and a decline in growth in the last 15 years. In the last 25 years Washington County has steadily lost population while Maine has grown though in far less robust fashion in the last 10 years.

Population Forecasts

According to the Maine Office of Policy and Management projections the population of Columbia Falls is predicted to continue to decline to 528 individuals by 2019, to 514 individuals by 2024, to 497 individuals by 2029, and to 479 by 2034, representing a projected decline of 7.4% from 2015 to 2034. Whether this decline takes place or not depends on regional economic activity and whether the town sees any significant shifts from seasonal to year-round residency.

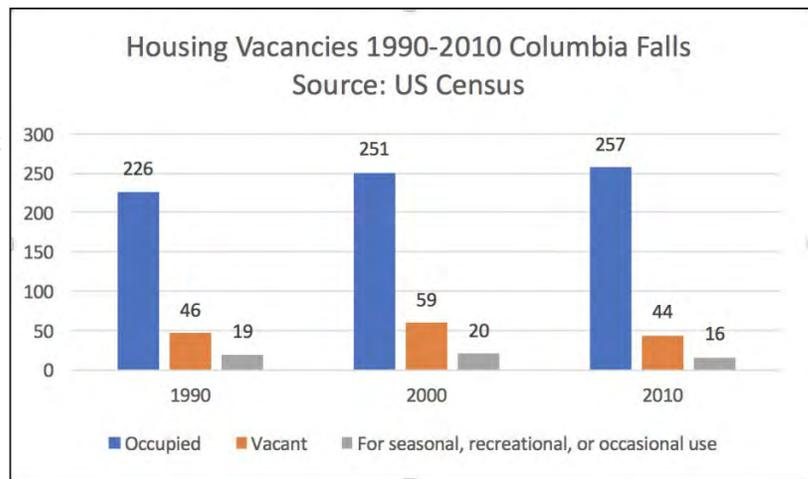
The following table shows the year-round population and percent growth rate by decade in Columbia Falls, Washington County and Maine since 1900.

Population and Percentage Change by Decade						
	Columbia Falls		Washington County		Maine	
Year	Number	% Change	Number	% Change	Number	% Change
2015	537	-4.1%	31,625	-3.7%	1,329,453	0.1%
2010	560	-6.5%	32,856	-3.2%	1,328,361	4.2%
2000	599	8.5%	33,941	-3.87%	1,274,923	3.83%
1990	552	6.8%	35,308	0.99%	1,227,928	9.18%
1980	517	40.9%	34,963	17.09%	1,124,660	13.37%
1970	367	-17.0%	29,859	-9.27%	992,048	2.35%
1960	442	-19.6%	32,908	-6.48%	969,265	6.07%
1950	550	-0.8%	35,187	-6.83%	913,774	7.85%
1940	596	-2.2%	37,767	-0.16%	847,226	6.25%
1930	583	-11.4%	37,826	-9.31%	797,423	3.83%
1920	658	-0.8%	41,709	-2.79%	768,014	3.45%
1910	663	16.5%	42,905	-5.14%	742,371	6.90%
1900	569	NA	45,232	-	694,466	-

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Seasonal Population

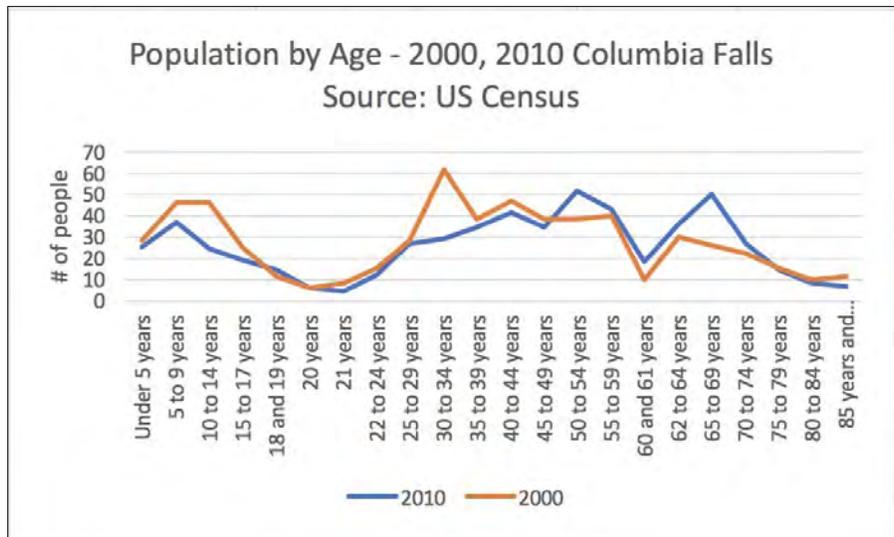
There are no state or federal statistics on seasonal population for Columbia Falls. As a scenic community with a historic village, seasonal development has a moderate impact on our community. Based on a total of 44 seasonally vacant housing units reported in the 2010 Census (up from 46 in 1990 and down from 59 in 2000), and estimating average household size for non-residents at 2.7, approximately 119 additional persons may stay in Columbia Falls seasonally.



The American Community Survey tracks seasonally vacant housing however the margins of error are as high as 60% (in 2015) so they are not analyzed here. Given recent reductions in growth of the resident population it is anticipated that seasonal people who choose to stay year-round may account for future increases in population. More information on household composition and on the housing stock is presented in the housing section of this plan.

Age Distribution

This chart depicts the differences in age categories in Columbia Falls between 2000 and 2016. Median age increased by 10.1 years between 2000 and 2016 due to an increase in the elderly population who are remaining in Columbia Falls and a significant decline in the number of young families and individuals under 21 years of age.



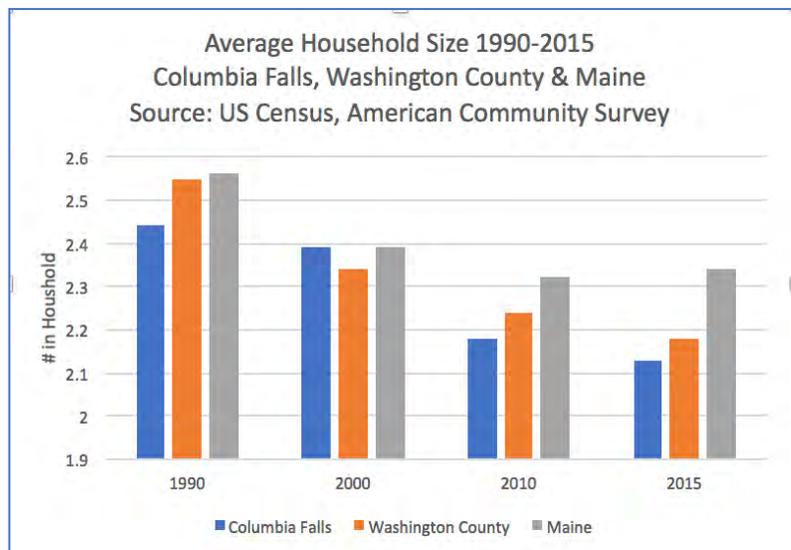
The increase in median age is a well-established trend between 2000 and 2010. The increase in median age appears to continue between after 2010 even with the large margins of error in the American Community Survey.

Year	Median Age	Margin of Error
2000	38.1	n/a
2010	46.0	n/a
2011	51.4	+/- 3.1
2012	51.7	+/- 3.2
2013	51.5	+/- 4.9
2014	50.4	+/- 6.3
2015	51.5	+/- 7.2
2016	48.2	+/- 6.0

Source: American Community Survey 2011-2015

Mirroring the trend in Washington County and the state, household size in Columbia Falls has decreased as empty nesters and retirees occupy more of the town’s housing stock. As with the median age the margins of error in the American Community Survey (2015 data at right) in the small individual towns like Columbia Falls is high (+/- 0.23). For instance, if 0.23 is subtracted from the 2015 estimate of average household size then it decreases to 1.9, a continuance of the downward trend in household size (from 2.18 in the 2010 decennial census).

Not surprisingly, the numbers of households in Columbia Falls, the County and the State have increased since 1990 reflecting the presence of more single person, single parent, and retiree households.



Number of Households				
	1990	2000	2010	2016
Columbia Falls	223	251	257	246 +/-36
Washington County	13,418	14,118	14,302	14,065 +/- 285
State	465,312	518,2000	557,219	551,109 +/-1,988
Source: 1990 and 2000 Census; 2006-2010 and 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates				

School enrollment declined in Columbia Falls over the last two years. Data for resident enrollment is not available on the Department of Education website prior to 2015/16. School enrollment of individuals aged 3 and up has declined since 2000 as the population of families and younger residents has declined. Note however the large margin of error in the 2016 American Community Survey figures. No State statistics predict future enrollment figures. The Elementary School closed in 2010 and all students must attend school in neighboring towns. School enrollments are likely to remain the same or decline over the next ten years. Educational attainment has steadily increased in the last 25 years for both High School and Bachelor's Degree.

Public School Enrollment of Columbia Falls Residents			
School Year	Elementary	Secondary	Total
April, 2017	35	17	52
April, 2016	48	14	62
Source: Maine Department of Education: http://www.maine.gov/doe/data/student/enrollment.html			

Education			
School Enrollment (aged 3 and up)	2000	2010	2016
Columbia Falls	124	91 +/-37	96 +/-43
Washington County	8,044	6,84 +/-261	6,390 +/- 145
Source: 1990 and 2000 Census 2006-2010 and 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates			

Educational Attainment	Columbia Falls 2000	Columbia Falls 2010	Columbia Falls 2016	Washington County 2016	Maine 2016
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
High School Graduate or higher	83.5	88.5 +/-6.2	85.7 +/-5.5	88	91.9
Bachelor's degree or higher	14.6	18.9 +/- 5.9	26.6 +/-7.2	20.1	29.3
Source: 2000 Census, 2006-2010 and 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates					

POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

A complete list of the policy recommendation from the previous Comprehensive Plan is included in Appendix F: 2002 Policies and Implementation Strategies. A full copy of the previous plan is on file in the Town Office.

Current policies and implementation strategies relative to Population in Columbia Falls are presented in Chapter N Policies and Implementation Strategies. They include revisions to the 2002 policies, along with additional policies and strategies that reflect changes in conditions on the ground, local priorities and State and Federal policy changes since the 2002 Comprehensive Plan was adopted.

F. NATURAL RESOURCES

The Purpose of this section is to:

1. Describe the natural resources in Columbia Falls.
2. Predict whether the viability of important natural resources will be threatened by the impacts of future growth and development.
3. Assess the effectiveness of existing measures to protect and preserve important natural resources.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The Maine Natural Areas Program has identified two rare or exemplary natural communities in Columbia Falls, the Maritime Huckleberry Bog Natural Community and the Salt-Hay Saltmarsh Natural Community. Columbia Falls contains the northeastern portion of the Pleasant Bay Focus Area of Statewide Ecological Significance. The Maine Geological Survey has identified several aquifers with a flow of at least 10 gallons per minute in Columbia Falls.

In 2016, 46 parcels (7,311 acres) were enrolled in the Tree Growth Tax Program. Forest management operations between 1991-2014 are primarily selection or shelter wood harvests with a few clear-cut operations. About 1,100 acres changed land use in the early to mid-2000s. Most agricultural land in Columbia Falls produces wild blueberries, with some cranberry production.

Natural resources in Columbia Falls are diverse and abundant. Columbia Falls surrounds the middle reaches of the Pleasant River watershed and contains an upper arm of the Pleasant Bay Focus Area of Statewide Ecological Significance. Columbia Falls contains the upper watersheds of the Indian River and Marst Brook, as well as most of the upper watershed of Little River that drains into the Pleasant River. There are large wetland complexes associated with all of these watersheds, each supporting various rare species and natural communities. Upland areas in Columbia Falls are a matrix of forestlands and heaths with several large wild blueberry areas. Development is concentrated in the Southern portion of town, along US Route 1 and on several roads leading both toward the adjoining Town of Addison and, to the North parallel with the Western border of the Town of Columbia. Some rare species co-exist with human use of the land including upland sandpipers in the blueberry fields, bald eagles along the coast and a large Maritime Huckleberry Bog in the interior.

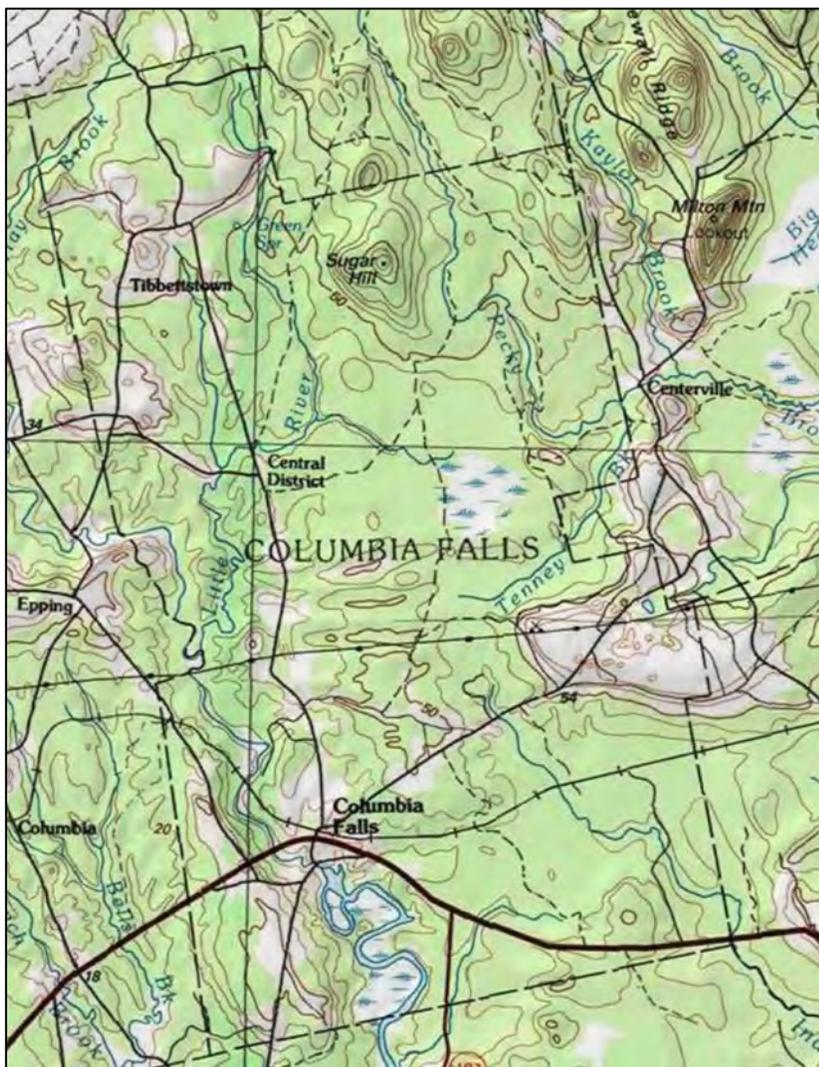
LOCATION AND TOPOGRAPHY

Columbia Falls is located in the Southwestern Washington County, Maine, 72 miles East of Bangor, 45 miles East of Ellsworth, 19 miles South of Machias, and 60 miles South of Calais. It is a rural town bordered by the Towns of Columbia on the West, Addison on the South, Jonesboro on the East, and the Unorganized Territories of Centerville and Township 19 to the East and North. The topography is relatively flat with elevations ranging from sea level to 400 feet in the hills of the Northern part of town adjoining the Unorganized Territories of Centerville and Township 19.

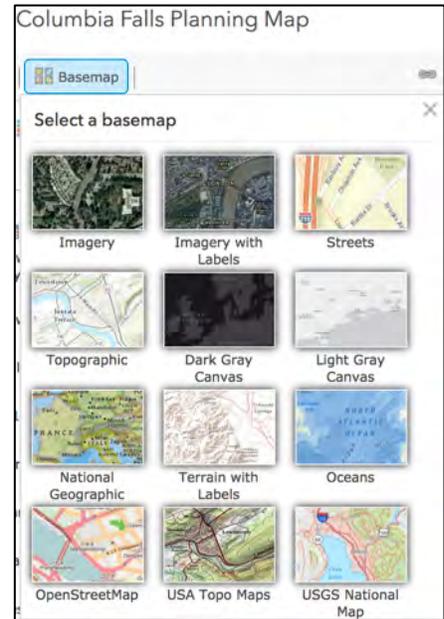


The Falls that give the town its name create the head of tide for the Pleasant River and provide an outstanding scenic resource in the center of the downtown/village area. There are both saltwater and freshwater wetlands as well as extensive woodlands and blueberry barrens.

The land area of Columbia Falls is approximately 24.6 square miles (~15,750 acres). General contour elevations are easily viewed with the Columbia Falls Planners Map linked here (<http://gro-wa.org/planners-maps.htm>). (Choose the USA Topo Map for a base map, as illustrated below). Please see Chapter C. GIS Mapping for instructions on using this tool.



Columbia Falls portrayed with the Topographic Basemap



Basemap Options

GEOLOGY

Columbia Falls is located in a region of massive granite intrusion glaciated in the Wisconsin age. The glacier caused unsorted, poorly drained soil (till) deposits over the entire region. Till soils formed bogs and ponds, altering the drainage pattern. Till was more thickly deposited on the Northwest sides of ridges; on the Southeast sides, boulders were "plucked" and transported further South. Thick till deposits are found in bedrock "valleys" and depressions. The weight of ice (sometimes a mile thick) caused the land sink in relation to the level of the sea. Marine sediments (silts and clays) deposited in valleys and sheltered locations. The release of pressure due to melting allowed the land to rise.

LAND SUITABILITY FOR DEVELOPMENT

Soils

“Soil survey” is a general term for systematic examination of soils in the field and laboratory. It involves describing, classifying, and mapping soil types, and then interpreting their suitability for various uses such as residential, commercial, agricultural and recreational. The Soil Survey Office of the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) located in Machias has analyzed the characteristics, behavior, distinctive properties and appropriate uses of each different soil type.

This data can be found on soils maps of each community in Washington County. While there are paper copies of these maps, they are far more easily viewed using the online Planners maps referenced above and located here (<http://gro-wa.org/planners-maps.htm>). Screen captures of the soils in Columbia Falls are included below interpreted for Low Density Development, Farmland Classification (more detail described for this below in the section on Farmland) and for Drainage. See Chapter B. GIS Mapping for information and instruction on how to view the attribute tables that provide detailed information on soils names, areas and classifications.



Soils Best Suited to Low-Density Development and Farmland

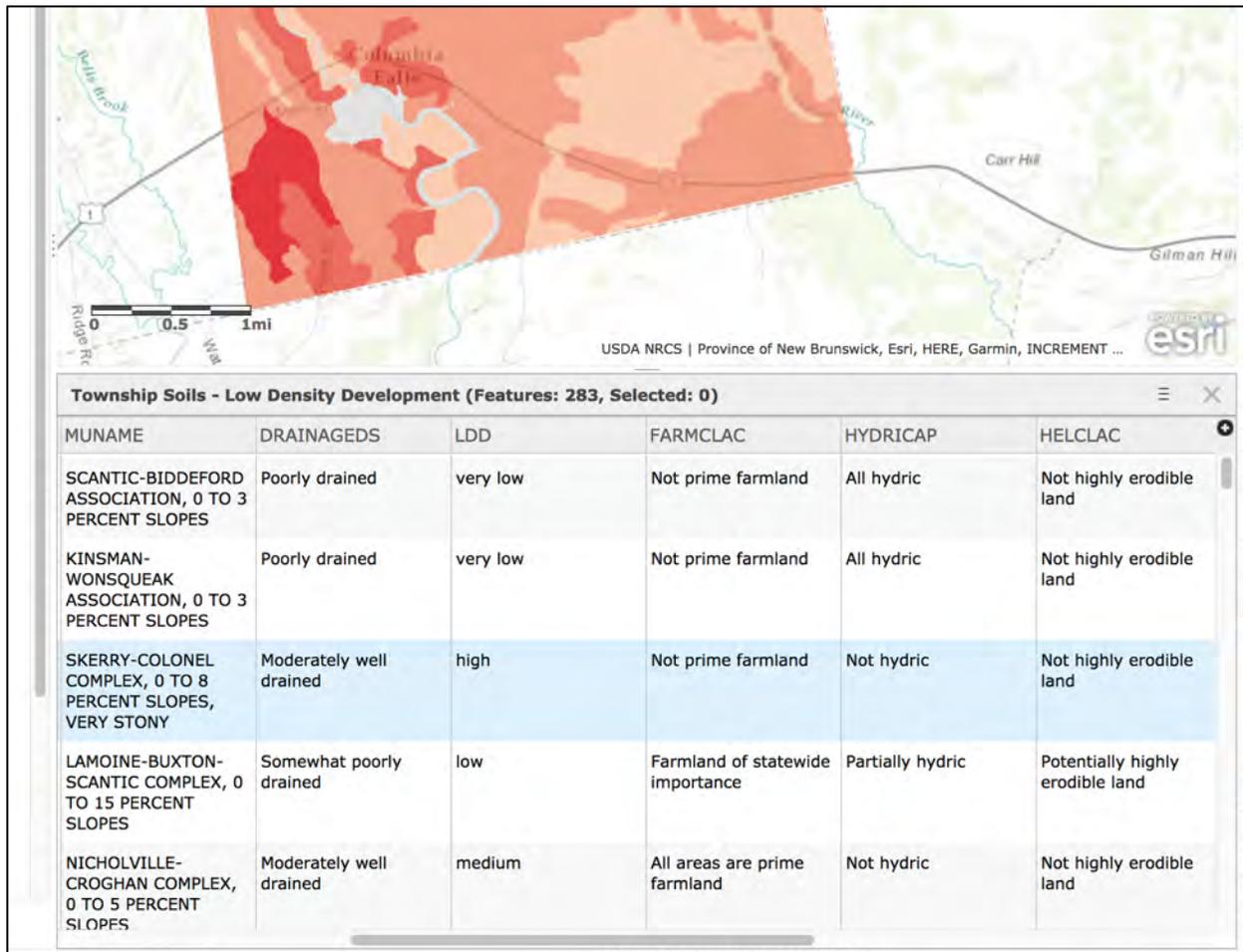
Soils Drainage Capacity

Few areas of Columbia Falls have large tracts of land ideal for residential development. The Natural Resources Conservation Service of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has produced a handbook of Soil Survey Data for Growth Management in Washington County. This publication¹ includes many tables that interpret the suitability of different soils for agricultural production, woodland productivity, erodibility and low-density development.

¹ USDA-NRSC Orono, ME–Soil Survey Data for Growth Management in Washington County, ME, 1997

This last interpretation – rating of soil potential for low-density urban development – references the potential of each soil to an individual soil within the county that has the fewest limitations to development (depth to water table, bedrock etc.). This reference soil is given a value of 100 points. Costs that are incurred to overcome limitations to development are developed for all other soils. These costs, as well as costs associated with environmental constraints and long-term maintenance, are converted to index points that are subtracted from the reference soil. The result is a comparative evaluation of development costs for the soils in the County. The overall range is large with values between 0 and 100. These numerical ratings are separated into Soil Potential Rating Classes of very low to very high. Thus, a soil with a Very High rating has very good potential for development.

Chapter C GIS Mapping describes the steps one can take to view the attribute tables associated with any of the layers of information in the online GIS maps. A screen capture of the attribute table describing the Soil Potential Rating Classes for Low Density Development is provided below for illustration. Using this tool, it is possible to select, for instance, the Columbia Falls parcel layer and the Township Soils layer and therefore to zoom to a view of a parcel-specific soil suitability evaluation.



Attributes behind Columbia Falls Soils Layer (From (<http://gro-wa.org/planners-maps.htm>).

These maps and attribute data are useful to the town to predict the sequence of development; develop future land use plans and update zoning; indicate areas where streets or other infrastructure may be prohibitively costly; and identify where environmentally sensitive land should be protected. Individuals can learn of problems or development costs associated with a piece of land and the advantage of one piece of land over another prior to purchase. The information will help answer whether the site can support a septic system, if the basement will always be wet, if there is a high potential for erosion, and the bearing capacity of the soil.

Soil survey maps do not eliminate the need for on-site sampling, testing, and the study of other relevant conditions (for example, pockets of different soils having completely different qualities may be present), but they are an important first step that should precede development decisions.

Highly Erodible Soils

The removal of surface vegetation from large areas of land can cause erosion, which is a major contributor of pollution to surface waters. Highly erodible soils have a potential to erode faster than normal. Soil composition affects its susceptibility to erosion but the combined effects of slope length and steepness are the greatest contributing factors when identifying highly erodible soils.

Most development and intensive land use can and should take place on areas with slopes of less than 15 percent (representing an average drop of 15 feet or less in 100 feet horizontal distance). On slopes greater than 15 percent, the costs of roads, foundations and septic, sewer and other utility systems rise rapidly.

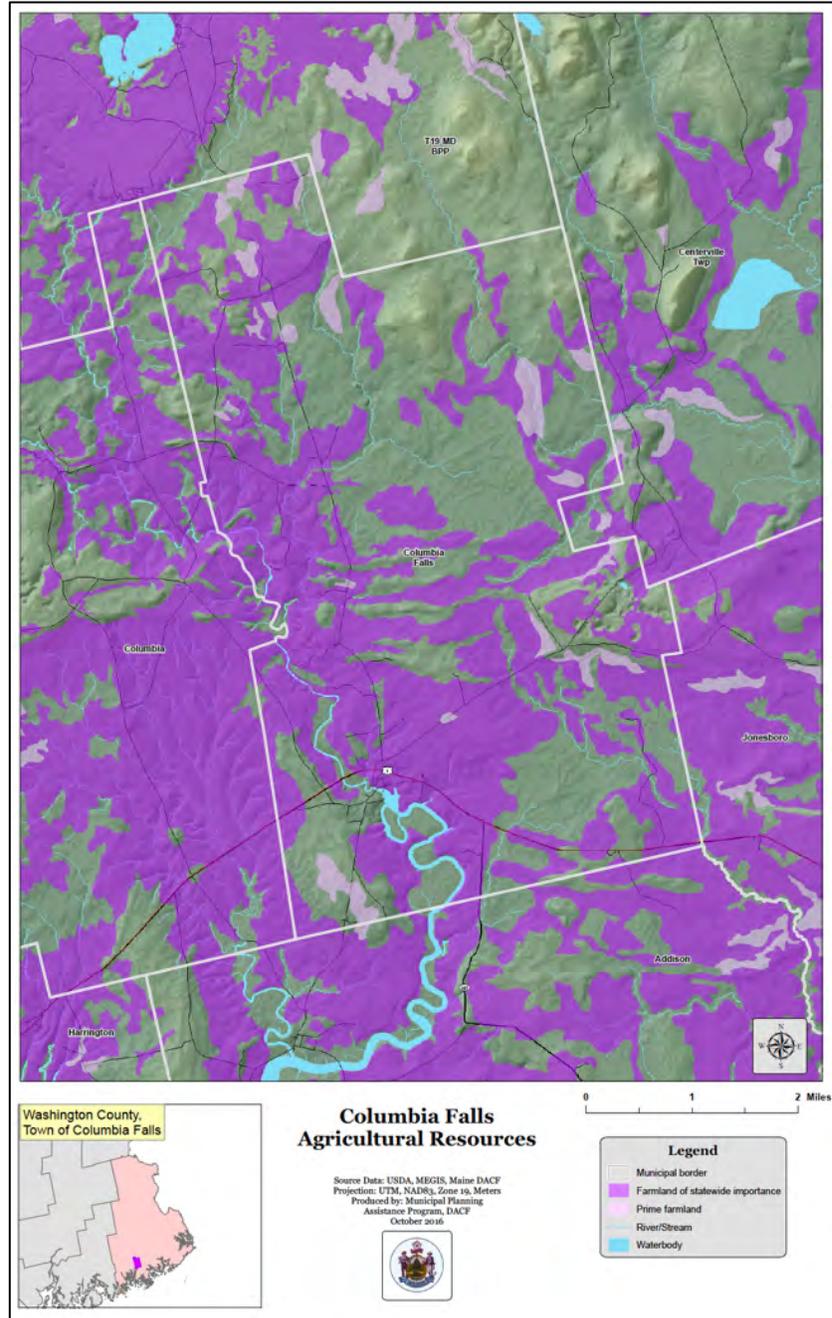
While most soils in Columbia Falls are not generally suitable for many agricultural uses, some are well suited for blueberry production and this activity continues to provide significant employment in town. There are approximately 1,027.25 acres under cultivation for blueberries in town, few of which are irrigated. Other farming activities within Columbia Falls include herbs, organic vegetables, cranberries, and home gardens.

FARM AND FOREST LAND

The Municipal Planning Assistance Program provided a map of areas with soils deemed by the USDA as prime farmland and farmland of statewide importance. This map is reproduced here and the digital soils information is also available in the online GIS maps described above for soil suitability for low-density development. Note that the definitions of such soils are as follows:

Prime farmland

Defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is available for these uses. It could be cultivated land, pastureland, forestland, or other land, but it is not urban or built-up land or water areas. The soil qualities, growing season, and moisture supply are those needed for the soil to economically produce sustained high yields of crops when proper management, including water management, and acceptable farming methods are applied. In general, prime farmland has an adequate and dependable supply of moisture from precipitation or irrigation, a favorable temperature and growing season, acceptable acidity or alkalinity, an acceptable salt and sodium content, and few or no rocks. It is permeable to water and air. It is not excessively erodible or saturated with water for long periods, and it either is not frequently flooded during the growing season or is protected from flooding. Slope ranges mainly from 0 to 6 percent.²



Farmland of statewide importance

Defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture is land that has the capacity to produce food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops in much the same way as prime farmland if land management and land improvements are implemented such as drainage, grading, or rock and boulder removal.

² Soil Survey of Washington County Area, Maine, 2003. USDA-NRCS Page 361. https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_MANUSCRIPTS/maine/washingtonME2008/Washington_southern.pdf

Woodland Management

Maine's forests and forest industry still play a vital role in the state's economy, especially in Northern and Eastern Maine. Forested areas provide abundant and diverse wildlife habitat for both game and non-game species and contribute to many recreational and aesthetic experiences. About 60 percent of Columbia Falls is forested with a maritime spruce-fir forest that also includes patches dominated by fir, heart-leaved paper birch and, mountain ash and extensive areas of forested wetlands. The Municipal Valuation Return for the Columbia Falls indicates that in 2016 there were 46 parcels of property containing 7,311 acres enrolled in the Tree Growth Tax Program (http://maine.gov/revenue/propertytax/statistical_summary/2015/2015index.html) and some degree of management must be practiced on these parcels.

Soils rated with woodland productivity of medium or above are considered prime forestland soils. These soils are rated only for productivity and exclude management problems such as erosion hazard, equipment limitations or seedling mortality. In Columbia Falls, forestlands range from medium to high and very high woodland productivity ratings according to the Washington County Area Soil Survey and Subpart C – Ordination System, National Forestry Manual.

Timber harvesting conducted in Columbia Falls is recorded from annual landowner reports. It is conducted primarily on a selection harvest basis, with some shelterwood harvests as well. There were few clear-cut harvests in the last 25 years and about 1,100 acres changed land use in the early to mid-2000s (see table below).

Summary of Timber Harvest Information for Columbia Falls 1991-2014						
YEAR	Selection harvest, acres	Shelterwood harvest, acres	Clear-cut harvest, acres	Total Harvest, acres	Change of land use, acres	Number of active Notifications
1991	430	140	0	570	0	6
1992	112	0	14	126	14	6
1993-1995	88	0	0	88	0	5
1996	447	0	0	447	0	4
1997-1998	1,121	0	15	1,136	0	6
1999	13	0	0	13	5	8
2000	85	0	0	85	0	8
2001	40	45	12	97	7	5
2002	18	0	0	18	125	4
2003	20	18	0	38	620	4
2004	45	40	0	85	0	5
2005	156	60	0	216	49	7
2006	35	42	62	139	106	8
2007	287	0	42	329	190	13
2008	106	60	0	166	20	16
2009	31	205	0	236	23	17
2010	10	0	0	10	3	13
2011	36.5	140	0	176.5	2	11

Summary of Timber Harvest Information for Columbia Falls 1991-2014						
YEAR	Selection harvest, acres	Shelterwood harvest, acres	Clear-cut harvest, acres	Total Harvest, acres	Change of land use, acres	Number of active Notifications
2012	80	220.4	0	300.4	0	9
2013	255	63	0	318	0	6
2014	25	21	0	46	0	6
Total	3,440.5	1,054.4	145	4,639.9	1,164	167
Average	164	50	7	221	55	8

Source: Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry – Maine Forest Service from Confidential Year End Landowner Reports; Note To protect confidential landowner information, data is reported only where there are three or more landowner reports of harvesting in the year.

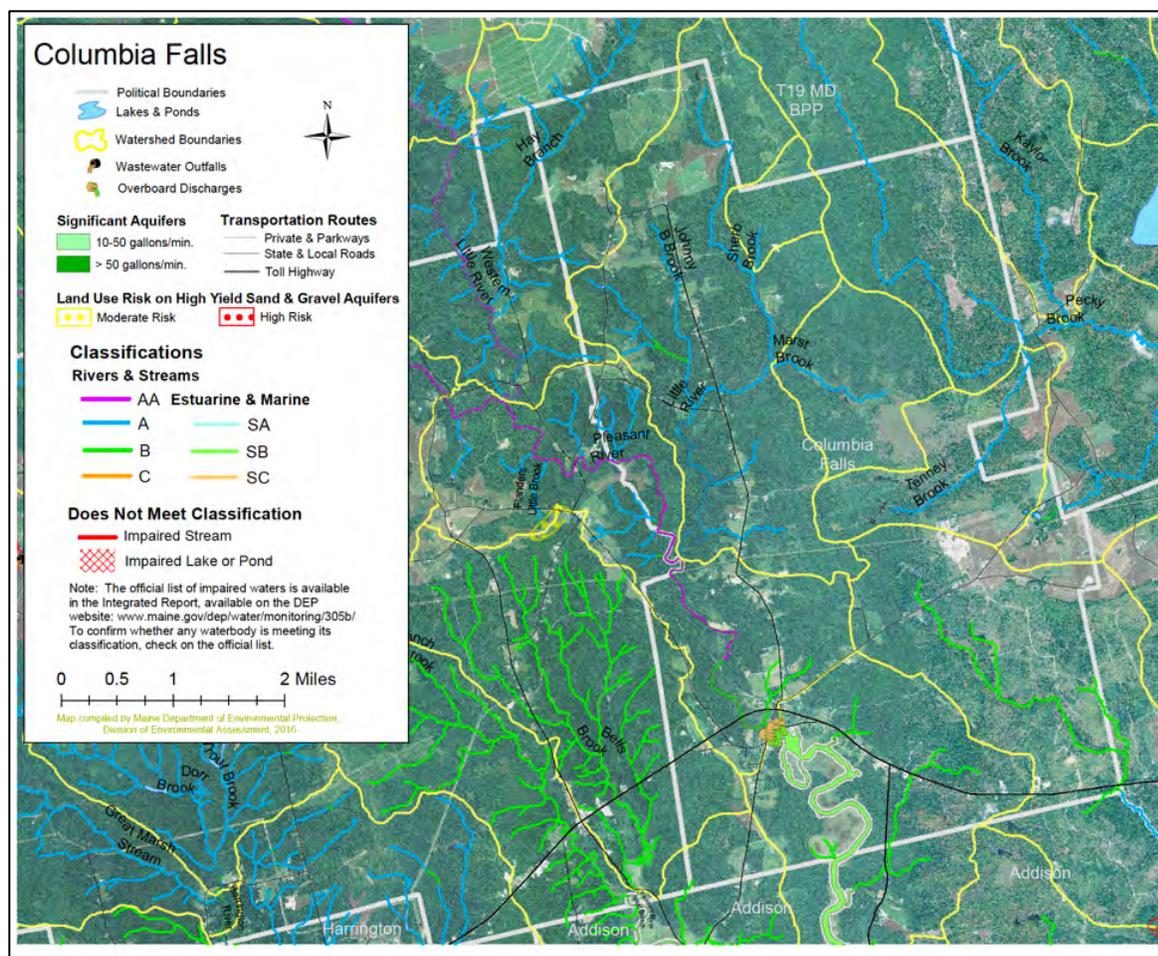
WATER RESOURCES

Water resources of Columbia Falls are vital to the community for recreational fishing, flood control, tourism, and recreation. The Pleasant River Estuary reaches the head of tide at the falls that give the village and the town its name. Anadromous fish species, including Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo Salar*), Rainbow Smelt (*Osmerus Mordax*), and Alewives (*Alosa Pseudoharengus*) return to the rivers to spawn. Indeed, the headquarters of the Downeast Salmon Federation is located in the village of Columbia Falls and plays host to an annual smelt fry every April. The tidal and freshwater wetlands in Columbia Falls serve as storm water recharge areas and wildlife habitat. This section provides an overview of the town's water resources, the quality of those resources, and a review of existing or potential threats.

Watersheds

A watershed is the land area from which runoff from precipitation drains into a body of water. The boundaries of watersheds, also known as drainage divides, are shown for Columbia Falls on the map below provided in the Comprehensive Plan data package by the Maine DEP. The portion of the watershed with the greatest potential to affect a body of water is its direct watershed, or that part which does not first drain through upstream areas. Development activities, such as house and road construction and timber harvesting, disturb the land that drains to a lake by streams and groundwater; thus, these activities can pollute the watershed.

Note that all of the features depicted on the map above are also available as layers that can be added to the online Planners Maps for Columbia Falls (<http://gro-wa.org/planners-maps.htm>), allowing the Planning Board and/or Code Enforcement Officer access to this information on a parcel-by-parcel basis.



Water Resources in Columbia Falls

Shorelands and Floodplains

Shorelands are environmentally important areas because of their relationship to water quality, their value as wildlife habitat and travel, and their function as floodplains. Development and the removal of vegetation in shoreland areas can increase runoff and sedimentation leading to an increase in the amount of nutrients and other pollutants that reach surface water. This can lead to algal blooms and closure of shell fishing areas. Steep slopes with highly erodible soils are particularly susceptible to erosion. The Columbia Falls Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, amended March 25, 2013 is available to view at the Town office.

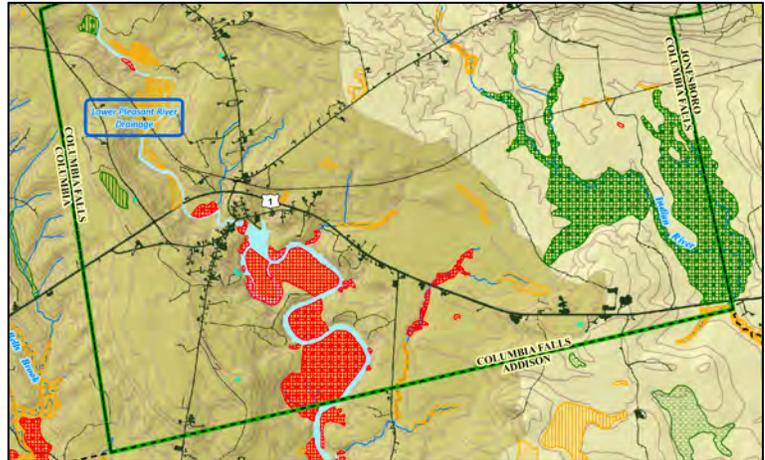
Floodplains serve to accommodate high levels and large volumes of water and to dissipate the force of flow. A floodplain absorbs and stores a large amount of water, later becoming a source of aquifer recharge. Floodplains also serve as wildlife habitats and open space and outdoor recreation without interfering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

Columbia Falls does not participate in the Federal Flood Insurance Program (FFIP), as there are little to no FEMA designated floodplains within the town. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) issued new preliminary Federal Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) in 2016 that

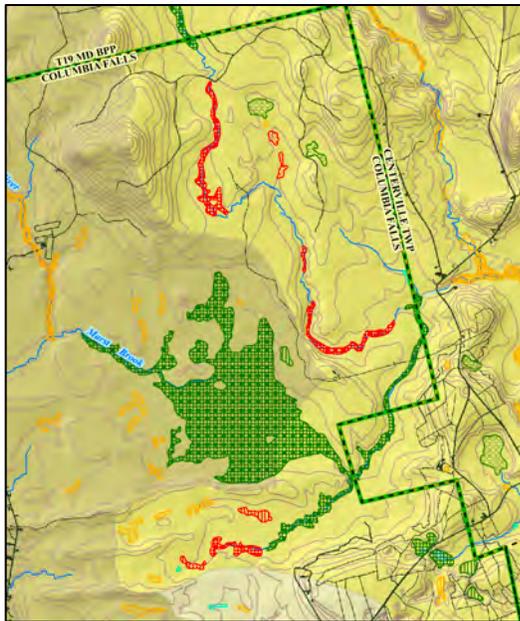
identify the 100-year floodplains. A 100-year flood is a flood that has 1 chance in 100 of being equaled or exceeded in any 1-year period. Local flood plain areas fall into two major categories: areas prone to flooding and velocity zones or areas susceptible to damage from wind-driven water during coastal storms. The final Flood Insurance Study and Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) took effect in July of 2017.

Wetlands

The term "wetlands" is defined under both State and Federal laws as "those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soils." Wetlands include freshwater swamps, bogs, marshes, heaths, swales, and meadows.



Detail of BWH Wetland Characterizations

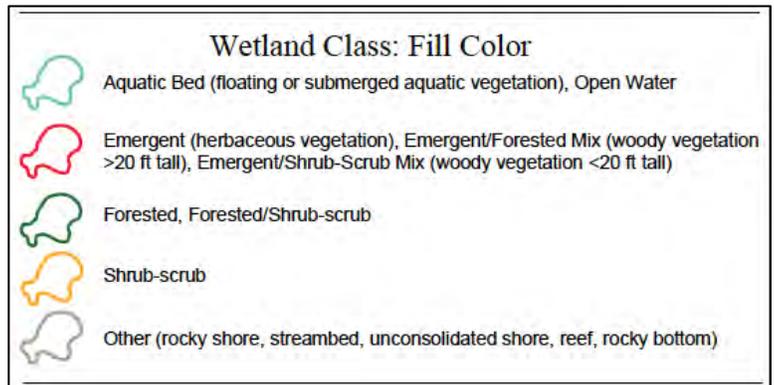


Detail of BWH Wetland Characterizations

Wetlands are important to the public health, safety and welfare because they act as a filter for pollutants, absorb excess water, serve as aquifer discharge areas, and provide critical habitats for a wide range of fish and wildlife. They are fragile natural resources. Even building on the edge of a wetland can have significant environmental consequences. Some wetlands have important recreational and educational value providing opportunities for fishing, boating, hunting, and environmental education.

Supplementary Map 7 – Wetlands Characterization, provided to the town in 2016 by the Beginning with Habitat (BWH) program (and available at the Town Office), depicts wetlands as shown on the National

Wetlands Inventory maps. These wetlands were identified by aerial photo interpretation and confirmed by soil mapping and other wetland inventories. There are tidal wetlands below the Falls and large forested freshwater wetland complexes in the Southeast corner of the town, associated with the Pleasant Bay Focus Area of Statewide Ecological Significance, and in the area surrounding



Map Key of Wetland Types from Beginning With Habitat (BWH) maps.

the upper watershed of Marst Brook, supporting the Maritime Huckleberry Bog natural community, described in the Critical Habitat section below. Field verification of wetland location and boundaries should be undertaken prior to development.

Screen captures of these wetland complexes from portions of *Map 7 – Wetland Characterization*, are provided here along with a portion of the legend describing them. See *Supplementary Map 7 – Wetlands Characterization* for more detail.

Lakes, Ponds, Rivers and Streams

The Town of Columbia Falls has no ponds or lakes. There is however a wonderful diversity of rivers and streams. None are classified by Maine DEP as threatened with pollution levels above State and Federal acceptable levels, or as eutrophic, which results in a system that lacks sufficient oxygen needed to support fish stocks and other aquatic life (see map provided by Maine DEP on page E-8 above). The variety of water bodies in Columbia Falls are listed in the following table along with the terrestrial and aquatic habitats they provide.

Water body	Characteristics	Provides habitat for	
		Terrestrial species:	Aquatic species:
<i>Pleasant River</i>	Tidal; head-of-tide at falls in Village; associated salt marsh wetlands; freshwater	wood duck, black duck, both teal, ring-necked duck, and mergansers; common loon; american bittern; birds of prey; many songbirds; moose, deer, bear, beaver, otter, and mink	salmonids; smelt, river herring; brook floater; brook trout
<i>Little River</i>	Headwater/tributary stream to Pleasant River	black ducks, wood ducks, many species of songbirds; moose, bear, deer,	brook trout;
<i>Marst Brook</i>	Tributary of Little River; headwaters	woodcock, black duck, wood duck, both teal, especially warblers and sparrows; beaver, otter, mink, moose, deer; maritime huckleberry bog	brook trout
<i>Indian River</i>	Headwaters to river flowing through Jonesboro and Addison	wood ducks, black ducks, ring-necked ducks, Least and american bitterns; fisher, otter, and mink.	

Sand and Gravel Aquifers

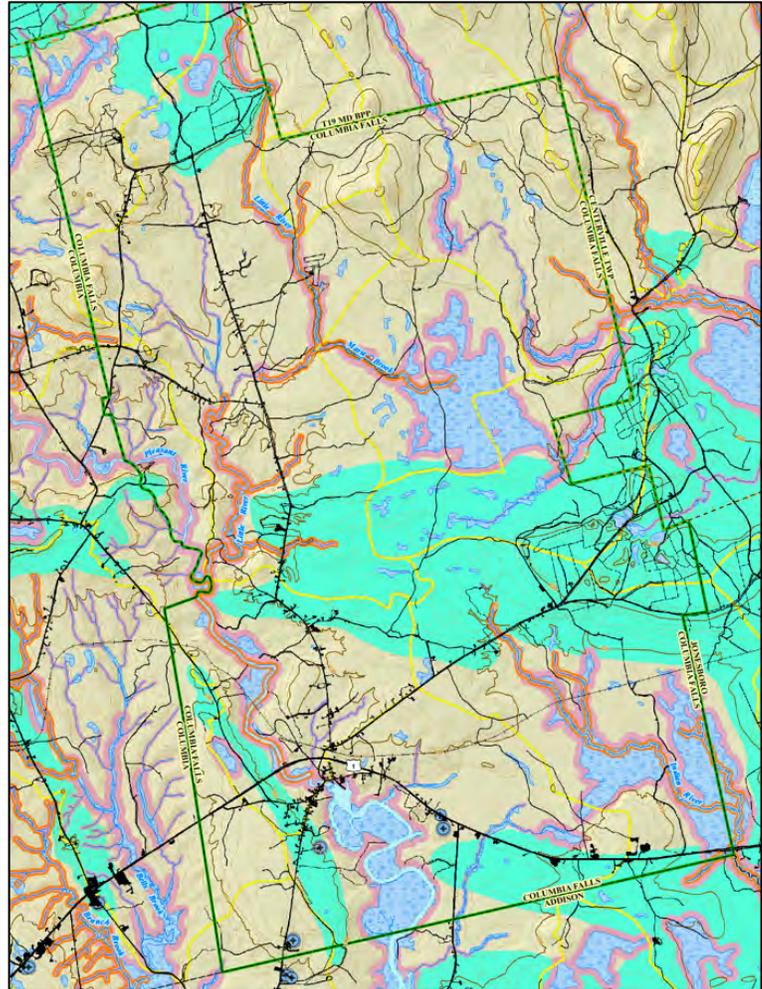
Aquifers are of two types: bedrock or sand and gravel aquifers. A bedrock aquifer is adequate for small yields. A sand and gravel aquifer is a deposit of coarse-grained surface materials that, in all probability, can supply large volumes of groundwater. Boundaries are based on the best-known information and encompass areas that tend to be the principal groundwater recharge sites. Recharge to these specific aquifers, however, is likely to occur over a more extensive area than the aquifer itself.

The Maine Geological Survey has identified several aquifers with a flow of at least 10 gallons per minute in Columbia Falls. These are visible on both the online GIS Planners Maps and on Map 1 (Water Resources and Riparian Habitats) of the Beginning with Habitat poster map series. A screen capture is provided at left; the aquifers are depicted in bright blue-green shading.

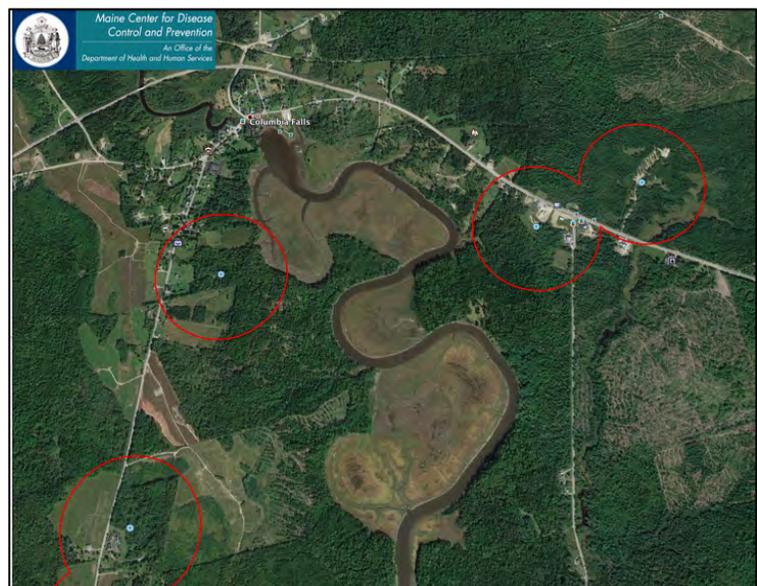
The Maine Geological Survey has identified three public water systems in Columbia Falls. Three of the wells located in Columbia Falls (those in bold type print) included in the following table are currently active. The location of public drinking water supply wells is provided in the online Planners Map for Eastport – choose “Drinking Water from the Contents list). The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention provides a Google maps-based viewer that depicts these wells along with their source water protection areas.

Columbia Falls’ source water protection areas (red circles) around the three active wells are shown below right, and can be used to identify surface sites that are unfavorable for storage or disposal of wastes or toxic hazardous materials. The source water protection area in the upper left corner of the image is described, on the Maine CDC Google Maps viewer, as a seven-foot spring operated by the Allen Water Company. This Public Water Supply was not listed among those identified in the Comprehensive Plan data package provided by the Municipal Planning Assistance Program in 2016.

It is important to protect groundwater from pollution and depletion. Once groundwater is contaminated, it is difficult to impossible to clean. Contamination can eventually spread from groundwater to surface water and vice versa. Most aquifer and surface water contamination comes from non-point sources like faulty septic systems, road salt leaching into the ground, leaking above ground or underground storage tanks, auto salvage yards, and landfills.



Aquifers (shown as bright blue-green)



Sourcewater Protection Areas

Public Water Supplies				
Water System Name	Public Water Supply Type	Source Name	Source Type	Location
Cottonwood Camping	Non-Community	DR WELL - 400' Bedrock	Groundwater	Columbia Falls
Elmers Country Store	Non-Community	DR WELL – 200'	Groundwater	Columbia Falls
Pleasant View manor	Community	DR WELL - 400' (Well #1)	Groundwater	Columbia Falls

Source: Maine Department of Human Services, Bureau of Health, Division of Health Engineering, Drinking Water Program; October 6, 2017

The areas of land in Columbia Falls that serve as aquifer protection areas are depicted in pink outline on the map to the right. Columbia Falls may want to consider adopting some of these areas into their future Land Use Ordinance to protect the most important aquifers in town.

Fisheries

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IFW) rated pond and streams in Columbia Falls regarding their value as fisheries habitat. Each water body is rated as to its fisheries management type, whether cold water or warm water. Coldwater management supports salmonid species such as salmon and trout. Warm water management supports black bass, chain pickerel, and perch. Columbia Falls does not contain any warm water fisheries habitat.

The town prohibits cutting within 75 feet of high value brooks to protect against sedimentation and removal of shade cover for maintenance of important trout habitat. If a brook crossing needs to occur, structures should be installed 1.2 times the bank full width with appropriate best management practices. Preferred choices for replacement crossing structures include (in order of priority) bridges, three-sided box culvert, open bottom arch culvert, or 4-sided box culvert. Corrugated metal culverts should be a last resort.



Aquifer Protection Areas

THREATS TO WATER QUALITY

Both point and non-point discharges threaten water quality in the ocean, pond, streams, and wetlands. Contamination can come from several sources, including:

- Failing or substandard subsurface sewage disposal systems
- Runoff of pesticides, herbicides and/or fertilizer from blueberry fields
- Runoff from salting the roads
- Timber harvesting operations

Point source pollution discharges directly from a specific site such as a municipal sewage treatment plant or an industrial outfall pipe. No known point sources of pollution exist in Columbia Falls; there are no large dumpsites or industrial or commercial sources of pollution within the town. Contamination could be carried across Town boundaries by streams or via underground aquifers.

According to Maine DEP there are eight overboard discharge permits (OBDs) in Columbia Falls; all discharge to the Pleasant River. Seven of these OBDs are licensed with recent site evaluations determining there is no alternative. The OBD license on the eighth site expired in 2015 and the landowner has indicated that the system will be removed in 2017. All OBD systems are required to have site evaluations every ten years or at time of property transfer. When a subsurface alternative is identified at time of transfer, the OBD system must be removed.

Failed subsurface sewage disposal systems are potential pollution sources and should be monitored. Septic systems must be pumped periodically to reduce the opportunity for system failure; a cycle of three to five years is recommended.

Non-point source pollution poses the greatest threat to water quality in Columbia Falls. The most significant contributing source comes from erosion and sedimentation as well as excessive runoff of nutrients, particularly phosphorus. In excessive quantities phosphorus acts as a fertilizer and causes algae to flourish or “bloom”. Additional contributing factors include animal wastes, fertilizers, pesticides, roadside erosion, dirt roads, road salt, leaking underground storage tanks, and hazardous substances. No significant affects to water quality are known to occur in Columbia Falls from non-point pollution.

Other threats include erosion from improper forestry practices or failure of contractors to employ erosion control measures when the earth is disturbed. Growing development in the town, particularly on the coast, threatens water resources when homeowners do not properly maintain septic systems.

CRITICAL NATURAL RESOURCES

Columbia Falls is home to a diverse array of terrestrial and avian wildlife. Inland, forested areas provide habitat for an array of common terrestrial mammals including deer, bobcats, beaver and otters. Conservation of wildlife habitat is important for traditional activities such as hunting and fishing. Development can result in the loss of habitats and diversity; habitat fragmentation and loss of open space; and the loss of travel corridor.

Maine Natural Areas Program

The Natural Areas Program of the Maine Department of Conservation is responsible for documenting areas that support rare, threatened, or endangered plant species and rare or exemplary natural communities.

Rare and Exemplary Botanical Features

Rare and exemplary botanical features include the habitat of rare, threatened, or endangered plant species and unique or exemplary natural communities. The Maine Natural Areas Program documented two rare or exemplary natural communities in Columbia Falls.

One is the Maritime Huckleberry Bog Natural Community, a peatland characterized by low heath shrubs such as dwarf huckleberry and/or crowberry always within 15 miles of the shore. Characteristic plants are listed in the screen capture below and a section of Primary Map 2 (High Value Plant & Animal Habitats) provided to the Town by the Beginning with Habitat program.

The second is the Salt-Hay Saltmarsh Natural Community. The Salt-Hay Saltmarsh consist of expanses of saltmeadow cordgrass, smooth cordgrass and/or black-grass with virtually no shrubs. They are typically associated with beach-dune systems (back barrier marshes) or, as is the case in Columbia Falls, the outer reaches of estuaries (finger marshes). The high marsh is only flooded by above average tides thus providing important resilience to coastal flooding in the developed upland. A screen capture of the characteristic plants found there is provided at right and another is provided below depicting the location where it is found in Columbia Falls; both screen captures are taken from the information provided to the town from the Maine Natural Areas Program and Map 2 (High Value Plant & Animal Habitats), the poster-sized map in the Beginning with Habitat map series.

Characteristic Plants
These plants are frequently found in this community type. Those with an asterisk are often diagnostic of this community.

Sapling/shrub
 Black spruce

Dwarf Shrub
 Black crowberry*
 Dwarf huckleberry*
 Labrador tea*
 Leatherleaf*
 Pale laurel
 Sheep laurel*
 Small cranberry

Herb
 Bog goldenrod
 Deer-hair sedge*
 Pitcher plant
 Round-leaved sundew

Bryoid
 Cladonia lichen*
 Reindeer lichen*
 Sphagnum fuscum*

Associated Rare Plants
 Northern comandra

Associated Rare Animals
 Crowberry blue



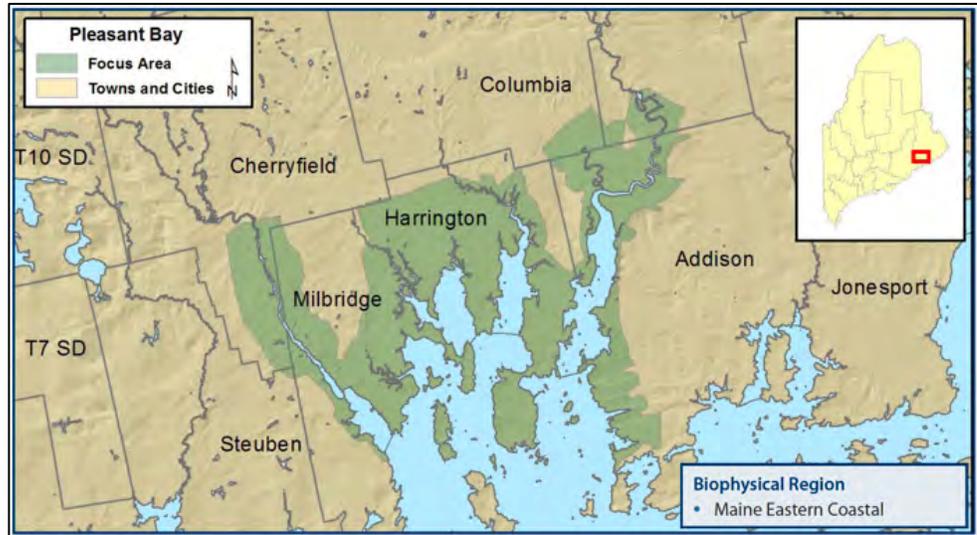
Detail – Rare or Exemplary Botanical Features of Columbia Falls

Wildlife Habitats

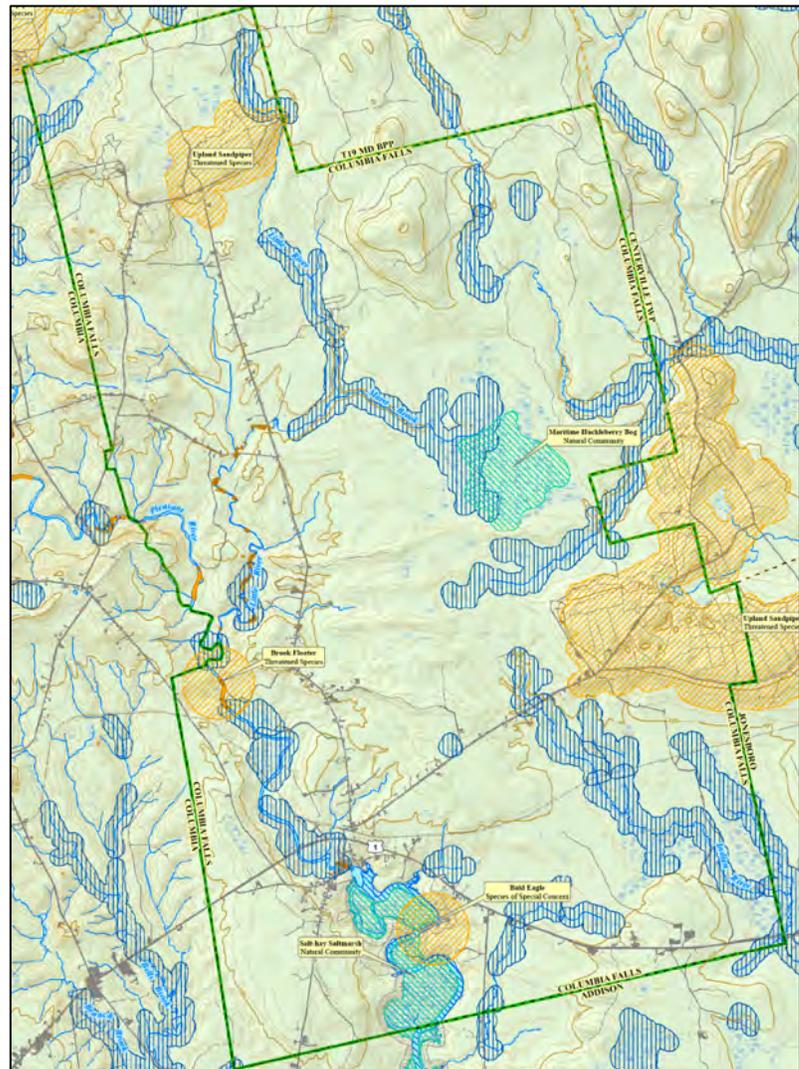
Conserving an array of habitats and their associated wildlife species will help in maintaining biological diversity and ensuring that wildlife and human populations remain healthy. To feed and reproduce, wildlife relies on a variety of food, cover, water, and space.

Development can result in the deterioration of habitats and diversity through habitat fragmentation and loss of open space and essential travel corridors. Columbia Falls contains the Northeastern part of one **Focus Area of Statewide Ecological Significance**, known as the Pleasant Bay.

The Pleasant Bay Focus Area encompasses the entire coastline, islands, and tidal estuaries of the greater Narraguagus-Pleasant Bay region, as well as the adjacent Harrington Heath. Both the Narraguagus and the Pleasant Rivers support numerous anadromous fish species, including wild Atlantic Salmon. The extensive mudflats lining the river mouths and adjacent coves and coastal areas are staging areas for major concentrations of shorebirds during autumn migration, important habitat for wading birds and waterfowl and home to several rare species.



Pleasant Bay is a Focus Area of Statewide Ecological Significance



Significant Wildlife Habitat (from BWH maps)

Of 30 Downeast salt marshes surveyed for diurnal bird use by MDIFW in 1999, the Pleasant River salt marsh had by far the highest species richness, with 29 species detected including the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), an extensive area supporting tidal waterfowl and wading bird habitat, and shorebird areas that are important for feeding and resting during bird migration. The screen capture depicting the Salt-Hay Saltmarsh coincides with the portion of the Pleasant Bay Focus Area of Statewide Ecological Significance within Columbia Falls.

Essential Wildlife Habitats

Essential Wildlife Habitats are defined under the Maine Endangered Species Act as "currently or historically providing physical or biological features essential to the conservation of an Endangered or Threatened Species in Maine and may require special management considerations". The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) identify these sites. In summary, any project within the Essential Habitat that requires a state or municipal permit, or uses public funding, requires IF&W review. The Essential Habitat includes land within ¼ mile of the identified site. This consultation rarely stops development, but projects may be modified to protect the eagles. The screen shot at right and its respective legend on the following page depict the High Value Plant and Wildlife Habitats provided on Map 2 of the Beginning with Habitat map set provided to Columbia Falls by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

This map set is in poster format and available at the Town Office. While the digital data on the map cannot be posted to the online Planners Maps, the following analysis uses data and zoomed-in screen shots of specific features.

Significant Wildlife Habitat

Significant Wildlife Habitat, defined by Maine’s Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA), is intended to prevent further degradation of natural resources of state significance. Significant Wildlife Habitats in Columbia Falls are illustrated on Map 2 - High Value Plant and Animal Habitat from Columbia Falls beginning with habitat map set and

Significant Wildlife Habitats

- Candidate Deer Wintering Area
Forested area possibly used by deer for shelter during periods of deep snow and cold temperatures. Assessing the current value of a deer wintering area requires on-site investigation and verification by IF&W staff. Locations depicted should be considered as approximate only.
- Inland Waterfowl / Wading Bird
Freshwater breeding, migration/staging, and wintering habitats for inland waterfowl or breeding, feeding, loafing, migration, or roosting habitats for inland wading birds.
- Seabird Nesting Island
An island, ledge, or portion thereof in tidal waters with documented, nesting seabirds or suitable nesting habitat for endangered seabirds.
- Shorebird Areas
Coastal staging areas that provide feeding habitat like tidal mud flats or roosting habitat like gravel bars or sand spits for migrating shorebirds.
- Tidal Waterfowl / Wading Bird
Breeding, migrating/staging, or wintering areas for coastal waterfowl or breeding, feeding, loafing, migrating, or roosting areas for coastal wading birds. Tidal Waterfowl/Wading Bird habitats include aquatic beds, eelgrass, emergent wetlands, mudflats, seaweed communities, and reefs.
- Significant Vernal Pools
A pool depression used for breeding by amphibians and other indicator species and that portion of the critical terrestrial habitat within 250 ft of the spring or fall high water mark. A vernal pool must have the following characteristics: natural origin, nonpermanent hydroperiod, lack permanently flowing inlet or outlet, and lack predatory fish.

Maine's Natural Resources Protection Act
Maine's Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA, 1988) is administered by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP; <http://www.maine.gov/dep/blwg/docstand/nrpapage.htm>) and is intended to prevent further degradation and loss of natural resources in the state, including the above Significant Wildlife Habitats that have been mapped by MDIFW. MDEP has regulatory authority over most Significant Wildlife Habitat types. The regional MDEP office should be consulted when considering a project in these areas.

Atlantic Salmon Spawning/Rearing Habitat

- Atlantic Salmon Rearing Habitat
- Atlantic Salmon Spawning Habitat
- Atlantic Salmon Limited Spawning Habitat

Mapped by Atlantic Salmon Commission (ASC) and US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) from field surveys on selected Penobscot and Kennebec River tributaries and the Dennys, Ducktrap, East Machias, Machias, Pleasant, Narraguagus, and Sheepscot Rivers.

Map Key for Significant Wildlife Habitats (BWH)

Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Wildlife

- Known rare, threatened, or endangered species occurrence and/or the associated habitats based on species sightings.
Consult with an MDIFW regional biologist to determine the relative importance and conservation needs of the specific location and supporting habitat. For more information regarding individual species visit our website, http://www.maine.gov/inf/wildlife/species/endangered_species/state_list.htm, for species specific fact sheets.

The Federal Endangered Species Act requires actions authorized, funded, or carried out by federal agencies be reviewed by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. If your project occurs near an occurrence of the Atlantic Salmon, Roseate Tern, Piping Plover, Canada Lynx, New England Cottontail, Fishin's Lousewort, or Small-whorled Pagonia contact the Maine Field Office, USFWS, 1168 Main St., Old Town, ME 04468.

Rare or Exemplary Plants and Natural Communities

- Rare Plant Locations
Known rare, threatened, or endangered plant occurrences are based on field observations. Consult with a Maine Natural Areas Program (MNAP) Ecologist to determine conservation needs of particular species. For more information regarding rare plants, the complete list of tracked species and fact sheets for those species can be found at: <http://www.maine.gov/doc/nr/mnap/features/plantlist.htm>
- Rare or Exemplary Natural Community Locations
The MNAP has classified and distinguished 99 different natural community types that collectively cover the state's landscape. These include such habitats as floodplain forests, coastal bogs, alpine summits, and many others. Each type is assigned a rarity rank of 1 (rare) through 5 (common). Mapped rare natural communities or ecosystems, or exemplary examples of common natural communities or ecosystems, are based on field surveys and aerial photo interpretation. Consult with an MNAP Ecologist to determine conservation needs of particular communities or ecosystems.

Essential Wildlife Habitats

- Roseate Tern Nesting Area or Piping Plover-Least Tern Nesting, Feeding, & Brood-Rearing Area

Maine's Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife (MDIFW, www.state.me.us/infw) maps areas currently or historically providing habitat essential to the conservation of endangered or threatened species as directed by the Maine Endangered Species Act (12 MRSA, Chapter 925, Subchapter 3, Sections 12804 and 12806) and regulations (MDIFW Rules, Chapter 8.05). Identification of Essential Habitat areas is based on species observations and confirmed habitat use. If a project occurs partly or wholly within an Essential Habitat, it must be evaluated by MDIFW before state and/or municipal permits can be approved or project activities can take place.

Map Key for Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Wildlife (from BWH maps)

include deer wintering areas, shorebird areas, tidal waterfowl/wading bird habitat and inland waterfowl/wading bird habitat. The shorebird areas, tidal waterfowl/wading bird habitat are found along the tidal portion of the Pleasant River estuary until it reaches the head of tide at the falls; the inland waterfowl/wading bird habitat is found along the entirety of the Indian River with in Columbia Falls and nearly all of the Little River, Marst Brook and the non-tidal portion of the Pleasant River above the Falls.

Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Wildlife

In addition to Essential and Significant Habitat, MDIFW tracks the status, life history, conservation needs, and occurrences for species that are endangered, threatened or otherwise rare. According to MDIFW, Columbia Falls has four areas of “known rare, threatened, or endangered species occurrence and/or the associated habitats based on species sightings”. These include the Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), a species of Special Concern; two areas supporting the Upland Sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*), a threatened species; and the Brook Floater (*Alasmidonta varicosa*), another threatened species. Areas of Significant Wildlife Habitat and of Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Habitat are visible in the screen capture on the preceding page and on the High Value Plant and Wildlife Habitats provided on Map 2 of the beginning with habitat map set provided to the town by the beginning with habitat program.

Atlantic Salmon

In December 1999, the State of Maine banned angling for Atlantic salmon statewide. In November 2000, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the US Fish and Wildlife Service officially declared as endangered the Atlantic salmon populations in eight Maine Rivers (Dennys, East Machias, Machias, Pleasant, Narraguagus, Ducktrap and Sheepscot Rivers and Cove Brook).

It is unlawful to angle, take, or possess any Atlantic Salmon from all Maine waters (including coastal waters). Regarding the above-mentioned rivers, any salmon incidentally caught must be released immediately, alive and uninjured. Atlantic Salmon must not be removed from the waters. Fishing for Landlocked Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo Salar*) also known as Sebago Salmon and Quananiche, is permitted throughout Maine under general fishing regulations.

The Planning Board must consult with the State before permitting any building activity near these sites. Land within ¼ mile of a bald eagle nest site is important habitat for bald eagles. Although these areas are no longer protected as Essential Habitat, Bald Eagles nest sites remain protected by the Federal Bald and Golden Eagle Act. The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) regulate some activities around nest sites. Bald Eagles remain listed as a Species of Special Concern in Maine.

In addition to the habitats mapped by IF&W and mentioned above, other notable wildlife habitats in Columbia Falls include large, undeveloped habitat blocks and riparian habitat. Larger undeveloped blocks of forest and wetlands provide habitat for wide-ranging mammals such as bobcat and black bear, as well as for rarely seen forest birds and a myriad of other wildlife species. Riparian areas offer habitat for many plants and animals and can also serve as wildlife travel corridors, as well as playing an important role in protection of water quality, as noted in the plan.

NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION

There are a variety of laws and legal incentives that protect the natural resources in Columbia Falls. Those of greatest significance are summarized below.

Pertinent Federal and State Laws:

- Maine Mandatory Shoreland Zoning - Columbia Falls has chosen, along with scores of rural towns, to have the Maine Forest Service administer and enforce the statewide timber management standards of the Mandatory Shoreland Zoning Act (38 M.R.S.A., Section 438-B) in the shoreland zone in Columbia Falls.
- Subdivision Control Law Title 30-A Section 4401 et seq. defines criteria that planning boards must consider in the review of proposed subdivisions, including factors that relate to environmental concerns.
- Maine Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA) – which regulates activities in, on, over or adjacent to natural resources such as lakes, wetlands, streams, rivers, fragile mountain areas, and sand dune systems. Standards focus on the possible impacts to the resources and to existing uses.
- Maine Storm Water Management – regulates activities creating impervious or disturbed areas (of size and location) because of their potential impacts to water quality. In effect, this law extends storm water standards to smaller than Site Location Law-sized projects. It requires quantity standards for storm water to be met in some areas, and both quantity and quality standards to be met in others.
- Maine Site Location of Development Law – regulates developments that may have a substantial impact on the environment (i.e., large subdivisions and/or structures, 20-acre plus developments, and metallic mineral mining operations). Standards address a range of environmental impacts.
- Maine Minimum Lot Size Law – regulates subsurface waste disposal through requirements for minimum lot size and minimum frontage on a water body. The minimum lot size requirement for a single-family residence is 20,000 square feet; the shoreland frontage requirement is 100 feet. The requirements for multi-family and other uses are based on the amount of sewage generated.
- Maine Endangered Species Act – regulates the designation and protection of endangered species including disallowing municipal action from superseding protection under the Act.
- The Forest Practices Act - regulates the practice of clear cutting by setting regeneration and clear cut size requirements.

Pertinent Local Laws

At the local level, Columbia Falls regulates the minimum shoreland standards, as required by the State Mandatory Shoreland Zoning Act. Surface waters in Columbia Falls are also protected through the Plumbing Code and local Subdivision Regulations.

Pertinent Tax Incentive Programs

A variety of programs provide financial incentives for landowners to keep land undeveloped and managed for long term productivity. They include the following:

- Farm and Open Space Tax Law - (Title 36, MRSA, Section 1101, et seq.) encourages landowners to conserve farmland and open space by taxing the land at a rate based on its current use, rather than potential fair market value.

Eligible parcels in the farmland program must be at least five contiguous acres, utilized for the production of farming, agriculture or horticulture activities and show gross earnings from agricultural production of at least \$2,000 (which may include the value of commodities produced for consumption by the farm household) during one of the last two years or three of the last five years.

The Open Space portion of this program has no minimum lot size requirements and the tract must be preserved or restricted in use to provide a public benefit by conserving scenic resources, enhancing public recreation opportunities, promoting game management or preserving wildlife habitat.

According to Municipal Valuation Return as of April 1, 2016 Columbia Falls had no parcels enrolled in the open space program, nor any parcels enrolled in the farmland program.

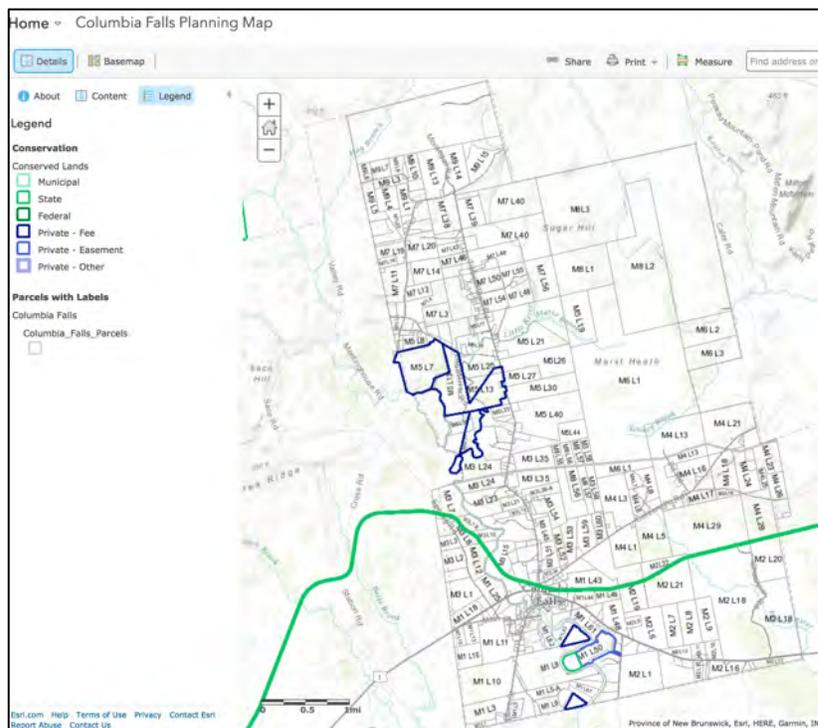
- Tree Growth Tax Law - (Title 36, MRSA, Section 571, et seq.) provides for the valuation of land classified as forestland on the basis of productivity, rather than fair market value. No parcels were withdrawn from the program in 2016.

According to Municipal Valuation Return as of April 1, 2016 Columbia Falls had 46 parcels constituting 7,311 acres in tree growth tax status.

These programs enable farmers and other landowners to use their property for its productive use at a property tax rate that reflects farming and open space rather than residential development land valuations. If the property is removed from the program, a penalty is assessed against the property based on the number of years the property was enrolled in the program and/or a percentage of fair market value upon the date of withdrawal.

- Current Use Valuation of Certain Working Waterfront Land (Title, Section 1131, et seq.) provides for the valuation of land on the basis of its use as working waterfront.

The Working Waterfront tax law requires that all enrolled properties must abut tidal water or be located within the intertidal zone. While there is no minimum lot size requirement for this program, current use taxation under this program applies only to land. It does not apply to structures such as wharves, piers, or lobster pounds. For the purposes of current use taxation on working



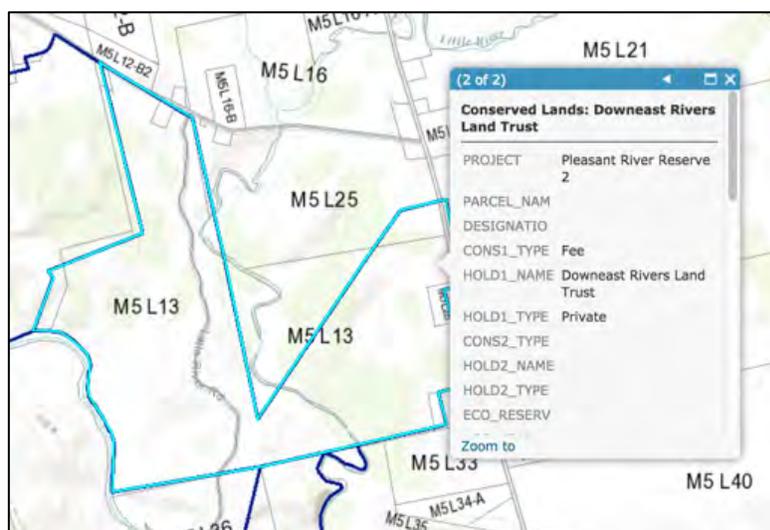
Detail of Parcel Ownership, Planners Maps
 (<http://gro-wa.org/planners-maps.htm>)

waterfront property, “working waterfront” is defined as land providing access to or in support of the conduct of commercial fishing activities. In 2017, Columbia Falls did not have any properties enrolled in this program.

The Maine Farmland Registration Program is designed to protect the farmers' right to farm their land. Upon registration, a farmer, including blueberry farmers, is guaranteed a 50-foot buffer zone between the productive fields and new incompatible development, such as residential development. The Farmland Registration Program also lets new and potential abutter know that a working farm is next door.

STATE AND PUBLIC RESERVED LANDS

There are several parcels of land in conservation, both easement and fee ownership, in Columbia Falls. All except one, owned by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, are held by the two regional land trusts, the Downeast Rivers Land Trust and the Downeast Coastal Conservancy. A screen capture of the entire town is shown below taken from the Columbia Falls Online Planners maps. The single green line is the Downeast Sunrise Trail owned by Maine DOT and managed by the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry.



Detail of Land Ownership, Planners Maps
(<http://gro-wa.org/planners-maps.htm>).

The second screen capture shows how the information tool can be used to identify the ownership and, when provided by the town, the parcel acreage information, along with other attribute information. See GIS Mapping chapter for more information on how to use the Online GIS mapping.

SCENIC RESOURCES

Columbia Falls is a rural and scenic community. Important scenic resources include the Pleasant River and the Falls, wild blueberry land, flora and fauna,

working farms, and working forest. Scenic Resources within Columbia Falls are not protected by any town ordinances.

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

Respondents to the survey showed preference for development that is not harmful to the environment, and some respondents prefer the town create more ordinances to protect the environment. Just over 88% of respondents feel that wildlife has adequate resources to breed, feed, and nest and commented that there should be increased protection to ensure water quality and wildlife habitat and a comprehensive zoning plan.

POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Policies and implementation strategies relative to Natural Resources in Columbia Falls are presented in Chapter N. Policies and Implementation Strategies. They include policies and strategies that reflect changes in conditions on the ground, local priorities and State and Federal policy since the previous Comprehensive Plan was adopted.

A complete list of the policy recommendations from the previous Comprehensive Plan is included in Appendix F 2002 Policies and Implementation Strategies. A full copy of the previous plan is on file in the Town Office.

G. EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMY

The purpose of this section is to:

1. Describe the labor force, economy, and economic changes in Columbia Falls and the region.
2. Identify economic links between the town and region.
3. Project for the next ten years the outlook for the employment, economic vitality, and economic development of Columbia Falls.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Employment within Columbia Falls has increased in the last 15 years from 58 jobs within the town in 2002 to 118 jobs in 2015. Local employers are predominantly in the natural resources-based industries as well as several establishments rooted in the tourism and services sector. The town of Columbia Falls is part of the Jonesport Economic Summary area that includes 14 municipalities. Total Consumer and total taxable retail sales to consumers in the Jonesport ESA between 2011 and 2016 show a modest upward trend.

The top three sectors of employment for Columbia Falls are:

- Management, business, science and arts occupations
- Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations
- Sales and office occupations

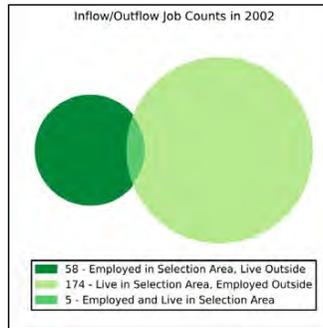
Tourism is expected to play a much larger role in the future. Heritage/Historical, Nature and Cultural based tourism is growing in popularity.

Columbia Falls' median household income increased considerably, 120% between 1990 to 2016 or 57% between 2000 and 2016, staying higher than the median household income for Washington County and, by 2016, approaching the median household income for the State. In 2016 over 11% of Columbia Falls families were listed as having incomes below the poverty level. This is lower than for the entire county and while 0% of these families have children below 5 years of age, the margin of error in the American Community Survey data is +/- 36.7 thus seriously challenging the reliability of these 5-year estimates.

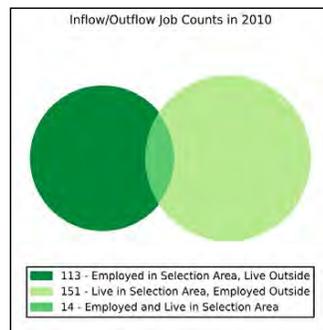
COLUMBIA FALLS BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT TODAY

Median incomes in Columbia Falls are higher than in the rest of the county and poverty rates are lower. Along with the wreath and trap manufacturing there are services to support the paving and building trades as well as commercial fisheries, and a variety of retail and service businesses supported by residents, visitors and second homeowners. The vast majority of employed residents commute to regional service centers for work.

Columbia Falls is a small rural community with an economic base heavily reliant on its natural resources including wreath brush harvest and wreath manufacturing, timber, commercial fisheries and aquaculture, lobster trap manufacturing, blueberry harvesting, construction services, and outdoor recreation and supporting services for residents and visitors. This dependence on natural resources creates highly seasonal employment for many, making individual household incomes rely on work outside the town and/or shifting from land harvest of blueberries, marine harvest of a variety of fisheries, and the tipping and wreath manufacturing of the late fall season. Diversity is also found in retail and services businesses that serve the local community and increasingly target the regional tourism economy.



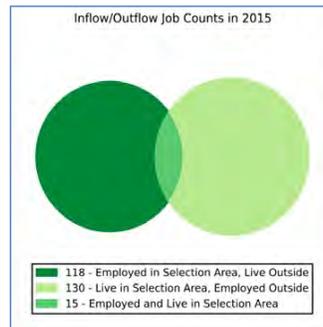
Columbia Falls no longer has an elementary school but several historic residences and civic buildings have been renovated and restored in the last decade. The contributions of volunteers, local institutions, many small business owners and investment by public and private sources is evident in renovated buildings in the village center. In addition to these base factors, a new economy is developing around retirees and individuals who work remotely using the Internet. These individuals are not entirely dependent on local economic conditions for their income. However, their location decisions are based on quality of life factors like affordable real estate, cultural opportunities, low crime and clean natural surroundings, all of which are qualities in which Columbia Falls possesses a competitive advantage.



Local Employers

Columbia Falls is not a significant employment center for Western Washington County. However, employment within Columbia Falls has increased in the last 15 years from 58 jobs within the town in 2002 to 118 jobs in 2015 (see charts at right - Source: On The Map (<http://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>)). Fewer residents are leaving town for work. This may reflect a minor decline in population as well as the availability of more jobs within the town’s boundaries.

Local employers are predominantly in the natural resources-based industries including wreath brush production and associated manufacturing, fisheries restoration, food production and processing, and trap manufacture. In addition, there are several establishments that are routed in the tourism and services sector.



The following table of Local Employers is compiled from data available from the Interactive Employer Locator (<http://www.maine.gov/labor/cwri/employers2.html>) after review, update and additions by the Columbia Falls Comprehensive Plan Committee.

LOCAL EMPLOYERS – TOWN OF COLUMBIA FALLS		
Employer	Industry/Business Description	Full Time Employees
Columbia Falls General	Gifts, Fruits and Vegetables - retail	1-4
Columbia Falls Town Office	Government Offices	1-4
County Concrete & Asphalt	Paving Contractors	20-49
Downeast Salmon Federation	Fish Farm, Education	5-10
Elmer's County Store	Convenience Stores	10-19
Fancy Erin	Physical Therapists	1-4
Freight Traffic Inc	Trucking	1-4
Friendship Trap Co.	Trapping Equipment & Suppliers/Manufacturers	10-19
Gutter Guys	Gutters and Downspouts	1-4
Maine Blueberry Equipment	Farm Equipment - Manufacturers	1-4
Maine Made Christmas	Gift Shop	1-4
Mary's Flags	Flags & Banners Manufacturers	1-4
Passamaquoddy Blueberry Co	Fruits & Vegetables-Wholesale	5-9
Pleasant River Takeout	Restaurant	5-10
Ruggles House Society	Museums	1-4
Saco Falls Realty	Real Estate	1-4
Stan Foss, Jr. Construction	Construction Excavation	1-4
Toppin's Diesel & Marine Svc.	Marine Equipment & Supplies	1-4
Wild Blueberry Land	Gift Shop	5-10
Worcester Barn	Non-classified Establishments	1-4
Worcester Wreath	Warehouses	1-4
Wreaths Across America	Non-Profit Organizations	10-19
Source: http://www.maine.gov/labor/cwri/employers2.html - Interactive Employer Locator, modified and updated by Columbia Falls' Comprehensive Plan Committee		

Retail Trade

Taxable sales data, assembled by the Maine Revenue Services, is only available at the Economic Summary Area (ESA) level, i.e. at time of writing the Report on Maine Town Sales since 2007 is "currently unavailable". The Town of Columbia Falls is part of the Jonesport Economic Summary area that includes 14 municipalities (see list at right). As Columbia Falls is such a small contributor to this large ESA an analysis of trends within this larger ESA is not particularly relevant to economic conditions within the town.

To provide a general picture of Total Retail Sales in the Jonesport ESA relative to the ESAs in all of Eastern Maine the following table indicates a

JONESPORT ESA

Addison
Beals
Beddington
Centerville
Cherryfield
Columbia
Columbia Falls
Deblois
Harrington
Jonesboro
Jonesport
Milbridge
Steuben
Unionville

generally upward, if modest, trend from 2011 to 2016.

Total Retail Sales includes Consumer Retail Sales plus special types of sales and rentals to businesses where the tax is paid directly by the buyer (such as commercial or industrial oil purchase).

Economic Statistical District / Area		Annual Totals					Annualized	Percentage Change		
		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2011-2016	2011-2016	2015-2016
EASTERN ME	BAR HARBOR	\$243,911	\$257,268	\$267,739	\$281,724	\$304,615	\$337,160	6.69%	38.23%	10.68%
	BLUE HILL	\$75,031	\$74,023	\$76,904	\$79,753	\$78,927	\$86,925	2.99%	15.85%	10.13%
	CALAIS	\$105,276	\$105,214	\$108,500	\$109,046	\$109,255	\$118,540	2.40%	12.60%	8.50%
	EASTPORT	\$19,894	\$20,733	\$20,939	\$21,616	\$20,730	\$21,751	1.80%	9.33%	4.92%
	ELLSWORTH	\$413,308	\$415,365	\$431,465	\$446,200	\$471,822	\$505,386	4.10%	22.26%	7.11%
	JONESPORT	\$43,154	\$43,696	\$44,507	\$46,229	\$46,663	\$52,766	4.10%	22.27%	13.08%
	MACHIAS	\$50,347	\$48,726	\$49,233	\$50,358	\$50,808	\$56,182	2.22%	11.59%	10.58%
	EASTERN ME Total	\$950,921	\$964,944	\$1,001,288	\$1,036,926	\$1,082,816	\$1,178,710	4.39%	23.95%	8.86%

Consumer Retail Sales, the total taxable retail sales to consumers, over the same time horizon (2011-2016) also show a modest upward trend.

Economic Statistical District / Area		Annual Totals					Annualized	Percentage Change		
		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2011-2016	2011-2016	2015-2016
EASTERN ME	BAR HARBOR	\$233,707	\$246,698	\$259,964	\$274,236	\$297,281	\$330,720	7.19%	41.51%	11.25%
	BLUE HILL	\$67,661	\$67,314	\$72,662	\$73,026	\$73,088	\$81,044	3.68%	19.78%	10.88%
	CALAIS	\$96,648	\$99,529	\$101,835	\$101,752	\$102,649	\$111,900	2.97%	15.78%	9.01%
	EASTPORT	\$19,035	\$20,123	\$20,417	\$21,051	\$20,354	\$21,392	2.36%	12.39%	5.10%
	ELLSWORTH	\$389,826	\$393,716	\$405,956	\$423,728	\$450,740	\$485,200	4.47%	24.47%	7.65%
	JONESPORT	\$38,054	\$38,973	\$40,831	\$41,759	\$42,128	\$48,129	4.81%	26.48%	14.25%
	MACHIAS	\$47,224	\$45,667	\$46,080	\$47,019	\$47,535	\$52,480	2.14%	11.15%	10.42%
	EASTERN ME Total	\$892,154	\$911,989	\$947,745	\$982,573	\$1,033,775	\$1,130,875	4.66%	26.76%	9.39%

Source: Maine Revenue Services (<http://www.maine.gov/revenue/research/sales/homepage.html>)

Tourism and Seasonal Homes

Tourism has not always played a role in the economy of Columbia Falls but is expected to play a larger role in the future. Heritage/Historical, Nature and Cultural based tourism is growing in popularity and Columbia Falls has the ingredients for success in this market including a historic waterfront village and exceptional scenic beauty.

Retail stores and restaurants have come and gone over the years and are still challenged by seasonal fluctuations.

Columbia Falls also participates in regional efforts to promote tourism. Columbia Falls is on the route of the Bold Coast Scenic Byway and the town continues to collaborate with regional organizations like Downeast & Acadia Regional Tourism and the Washington County Council of Governments to create permanent bicycle tourism routes – the Bold Coast Scenic Bikeway – in Washington County by supporting bike-friendly businesses and communities.

REGIONAL ECONOMY

Traditionally, Washington County has been one of the most depressed counties in New England. Washington County continues as an economically depressed area because of its distance from other sections of the State, and reliance on a seasonal economy (blueberries, wreaths and Christmas trees, fishing and clamming, wood harvesting, etc.). According to the 2016 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy prepared for the Aroostook-Washington Economic Development District (AWEDD) the biggest challenge facing the AWEDD is workforce related, due to the loss of population as depicted in the chart below.

The 18 to 44-year-old age cohort is the workforce lifeblood and is hovering at 30% of the total population; a level below which economists tell us our local/regional economy is no longer sustainable. When the pool of younger workers drops below this 30% threshold, companies struggle to find the workers needed to operate their business; eventually causing them to either close or relocate.



Source: Aroostook-Washington Economic Development District Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2016-2017.

The second issue creating a sense of constraint in Northern and Eastern Maine is our energy cost burden. The region’s citizens and businesses “survive” in a region with twice the national average cost burden for energy. Since energy is the primary input to life and economic performance our region faces a greater barrier than many regions in the US. The cost burden is driven by an 80% use of heating oil, 17.5 cents per Kw for electricity and a low household income as a result of a constrained economy.

The AWEDD regional vision is included in the CEDS document:

Our region is a place of abundant natural resources that is reflected in the beauty of our landscape and the potential for economic and social prosperity it offers. We value the individuality and endurance of our people while recognizing the strong sense of community and place that sustains us. We will create economic growth by focusing on sectors that best leverage these assets and by working to develop policies that promote private sector investment; while at the same time, retaining the quality of life that makes the region special.

A full rewrite of the CEDs document is underway in 2017-18 by the Northern Maine Development Commission. Additional information on the Regional Economy is also provided in Chapter M Regional Coordination.

Commuting to Work

Some Columbia Falls residents commute to jobs located in surrounding communities. With a mean travel time to work of 25.2 minutes Columbia Falls residents are traveling farther than the Washington County average (20.3 minutes) nor have their commuting times increased much in the past decade (mean commuting time to work in 2000 was 23.7 minutes). According to the Census, Columbia Falls' workforce commutes primarily by private vehicle (77.5%). The second largest segment (13.1%) commutes by carpools, roughly the same as the average for the county (13.6%). The third largest segment works at home.

COMMUTING TO WORK: 2010 and 2012-2016 ACS Estimate	Columbia Falls				Washington County			
	2010		2012-2016 Estimate		2010		2012-2016 Estimate	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Workers 16 years and over	221	100	222	100	13,408	100	12,591	100
Drove alone	165	74.7	172	77.5	9,771	72.9	9,247	73.4
In carpools	24	10.9	29	13.1	1,808	13.5	1,714	13.6
Using public transportation	3	1.4	2	0.9	55	0.4	34	0.3
Walked	0	0.0	2	0.9	738	5.5	717	5.7
Other means	1	0.5	8	3.6	163	1.2	160	5.7
Worked at home	28	12.7	9	4.1	873	6.5	719	5.7
Mean travel time (minutes)	28.8	--	25.2	--	19.0	--	20.3	--

Source: US Census 2010; American Community Survey Estimate 2012-2016

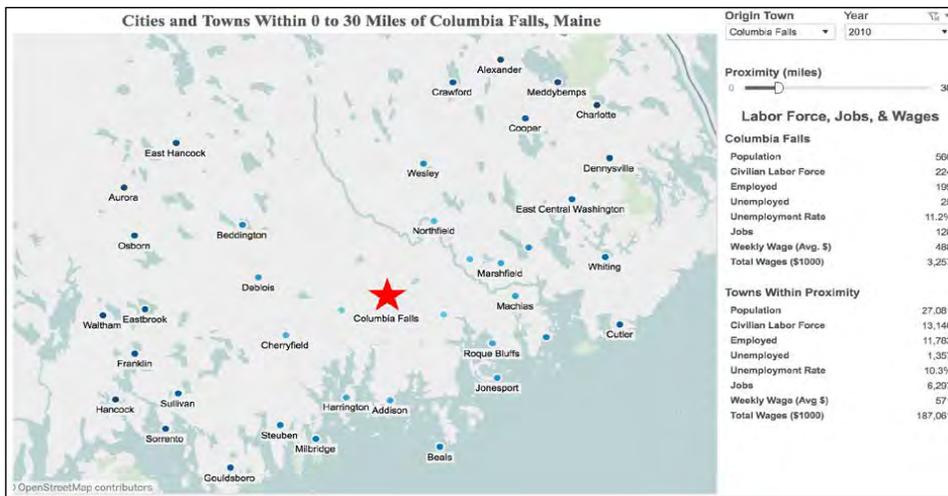
REGIONAL EMPLOYERS (GREATER THAN 50 EMPLOYEES)			
Business	Industry	Location	Approx. range of Employees
Army National Guard Recruiter	Public Administration	Calais	50-99
Bay Ridge Elementary School	Educational Services	Cutler	50-99
C & D Corp	Wholesale Trade/Fruits & Vegetables	Deblois	250-499
Calais Children's Project	Health Care and Social Assistance	Calais	100-249
Calais Day Treatment Center	Health Care and Social Assistance	Calais	100-249
Calais IGA Foodliner	Retail Trade/Grocers	Calais	100-249
Calais Regional Hospital	Health Care and Social Assistance	Calais	250-499
Calais School Dept.	Public School	Calais	50-99
Child & Family Opportunities	Educational Services	Machias	100-249
Dore's Evergreen	Retail Trade	Perry	100-249
Dorr Lobster Co Inc.	Retail Trade/Lobsters	Milbridge	100-249
Down East Community Hospital	Health Care and Social Assistance	Machias	250-499
Down East Corrections Dept.	Public Administration	Machiasport	50-99
Eastern Maine Electric Co-op	Electric Services	Calais	20-49
Hannaford Supermarket	Retail Trade/Grocers	Machias	50-99
Human Services Department	Public Administration	Machias	50-99
Jasper Wyman & Son	Manufacturing/Canning	Cherryfield	50-99
Local Net	Information/Internet Service	Machias	100-249
Machias Savings Bank	Finance and Insurance/Banks	Machias	50-99
Maine Veterans Homes	Health Care and Social Assistance	Machias	50-99
Maine Wild Blueberry Co	Food Processing	Machias	100-249
Marshall's Health Care Facility	Health Care and Social Assistance	Machias	50-99
Regional Medical Center, Lubec	Health Care and Social Assistance	Lubec	100-249
Tradewinds	Retail Trade/Grocers	Calais	100-249
University of Maine at Machias	Educational Services	Machias	100-249
UPS Customer Center	Professional and Technical Services	Baileyville	50-99
US Naval Communication Unit	Public Administration/Technical	Cutler	100-249
Walmart Supercenter	Retail Trade	Calais	100-249
Washington Academy	Educational Services	East Machias	50-99
Woodland Pulp LLC	Manufacturing/Paper	Baileyville	250-499
Worcester Wreath Co	Manufacturing	Harrington	250-499

Source: Interactive Employer Locator (<http://www.maine.gov/labor/cwri/employers2.html>)

LABOR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

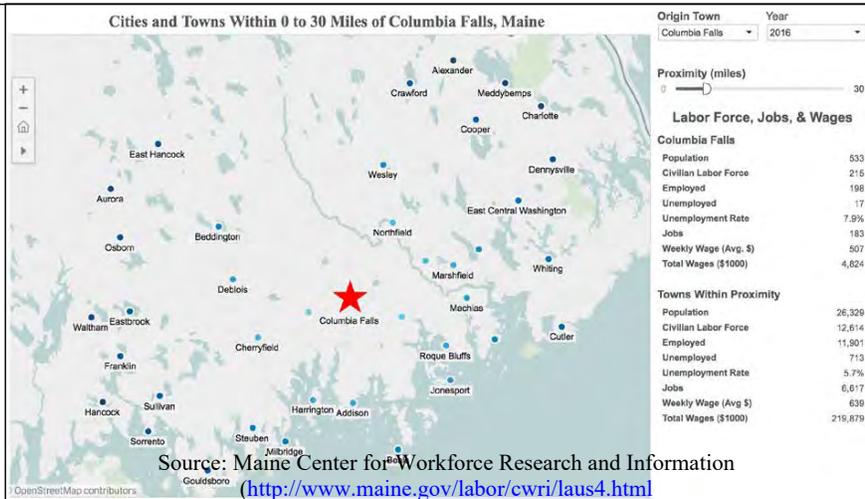
The labor force is defined as all persons who are either employed or are receiving unemployment compensation. The two figures below provide a visual and tabular view of the labor force, including total population, total civilian labor force and the employed and unemployed population and rate, within a 30-mile radius of Columbia Falls for the years 2010 and 2016.

According to the Maine Department of Labor, distribution of the labor force in Columbia Falls is similar to the County as a whole, except that 7.9% of the town’s residents were unemployed in 2016. In towns within a 30-miles radius, 5.7% were unemployed. The Department of Labor figure for the town, however, is considered by many residents to underestimate the unemployment rate. Underestimated rates can in part be explained by the greater reliance on seasonal, agricultural, marine, and craft-based work in rural areas. The seasonal nature of such work is less likely to be reported. A significant informal economy exists, especially in natural resource-based jobs, in which residents supplement reported incomes with seasonal wages.



Source: Maine Center for Workforce Research and Information (<http://www.maine.gov/labor/cwri/laus4.html>)

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The employed population is described by occupation. Top three sectors of employment for Columbia Falls are: management, business, science and arts occupations; natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations; sales and office occupations.

EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION, 2016						
Employment Occupation: 2016	Columbia Falls			Washington County		
	Number	%	Margin of Error	Number	%	Margin of Error
Employed persons 16 years and over	229	100	55	12,917	1000	250
Management, business, science, and arts	62	27.1	22	3,656	28.3	1280
Service occupations	30	13.1	15	2,651	20.5	178
Sales and office occupations	48	21.0	27	2,409	18.6	204
Natural resources, Construction, Maintenance	55	24.0	24	2,407	18.6	168
Production, transportation, materials moving	34	14.8	18	1,794	13.9	131
Class of worker						
Private wage and salary workers	177	65.8	+/-50	8,497	65.8%	+/-255
Government workers	24	22.9	+/-17	2,359	181.3%	+/-167
Self-employed in own business	28	11.3	+/-14	2,041	15.8%	+/-148
Unpaid family workers	0	0.0	+/-10	20	0.2%	+/-12

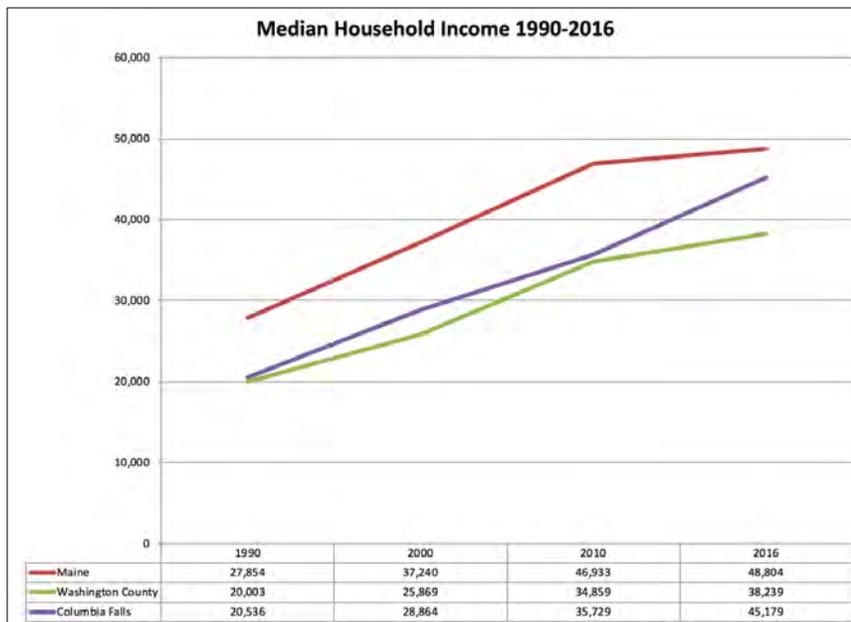
Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimates 2012-2016

The lack of public transportation in rural areas inhibits employment for many residents living on the margin. Residents of service centers like Columbia Falls can drive or carpool to work. However, without a car, some residents are not able to get to work, and when unemployed or

underemployed in a minimum wage job, some cannot maintain a vehicle particularly for severe winter conditions. Another regional labor force issue for business expansion in Washington County is relatively widespread substance abuse. Even if individuals affected by it overcome difficult personal situations and are motivated to work, they may relapse, therefore become no longer employable and have to restart the addiction recovery process.

INCOME

Columbia Falls’ median household income rose considerably, 120% between 1990 and 2016, or 57% between 2000 and 2016. It stayed higher than the median household income for Washington County and, by 2016, approaching the median household income for the State.



Source: US Census Bureau, Decennial Census American Community Survey 5-year estimates

While median household income in Columbia Falls is higher than Washington County as a whole, per capita income is slightly lower, an indication that it is families with children who are living at the lower end of the income scale.

Sources of income in 2016 are derived primarily (61.4%) from wage and salaried positions, income that includes wages, salary, commissions, tips, piece-rate payments and cash bonuses earned before tax deductions were made. Wage and salary employment is a broad measure of economic well-being but does not indicate whether the jobs are of good quality.

HOUSEHOLDS BY INCOME	Columbia Falls			Washington County		
	2016			2016		
	#	%	Margin of Error	#	%	Margin of Error
Households	246	100.0	+/-63	14,065	100.0	+/-285
Less than \$10,000	28	11.4%	+/-32	1,268	9.0%	+/-136
\$10,000 to \$14,999	27	11.0%	+/-25	1,147	8.2%	+/-133
\$15,000 to \$24,999	26	10.6%	+/-46	2,096	14.9%	+/-170
\$25,000 to \$34,999	21	8.5%	+/-40	1,868	13.3%	+/-131
\$35,000 to \$49,999	41	16.7%	+/-31	2,353	16.7%	+/-178
\$50,000 to \$74,999	50	20.3%	+/-40	2,714	19.3%	+/-178
\$75,000 to \$99,999	46	18.7%	+/-27	1,281	9.1%	+/-95
\$100,000 to \$149,999	5	2.0%	+/-19	939	6.7%	+/-101
\$150,000 to \$199,999	2	0.8%	+/-17	209	1.5%	+/-49
\$200,000 or more	0	0.0%	+/-4	190	1.4%	+/-52
Median household income in \$	45,179	-	+/-3,584	39,549	-	+/-1,206
Per capita income in \$	22,499	-	+/-2,513	23,113	-	+/-1,176

Source: American Community Survey 2012-2016 5 Year Estimates

INCOME AND BENEFITS, 2016 (Households often have more than one source of income.)	Columbia Falls			Washington County		
	#	%	Margin of Error	#	%	Margin of Error
Households	246	100	+/-36	14,065	100	+/-285
With earnings	151	61.4	+/-31	9,490	67.5	+/-239
With Social Security Income	124	50.4	+/-26	5,947	42.3	+/-175
With retirement income	42	17.1	+/-13	3,052	21.7	+/-132
With Supplemental Security income	38	15.4	+/-18	1,396	9.9	+/-151
With cash public assistance income	10	4.1	+/-7	1,022	7.3	+/-150
With Food Stamps/SNAP benefits	42	17.1	+/-19	3,347	23.8	+/-196

Source: American Community Survey 2012-2016 5 Year Estimates

The American Community Survey 5-year estimates in 2016 indicate 14% of Columbia Falls residents report self-employment income, below the county average of 15.8%. A higher percentage of residents in Columbia Falls collect social security income (50.4%) than do residents of the county (42.3%), reflecting the large retiree population in Columbia Falls. Over 4% of Columbia Falls residents received public assistance, less than the county average of

7.3%. Public assistance income includes payments made by Federal or State welfare agencies to low-income persons who are 65 years or older, blind, or disabled; receive aid to families with dependent children; or general assistance.

In 2017, the average poverty threshold for a family of four persons was \$25,283 in the contiguous 48 states (U.S. DHHS). In 2016 over 11% of Columbia Falls families were listed as having incomes below the poverty level. This is lower than for the entire county and while 0% of these families have children under 5 years of age, the margin of error in the American Community Survey data is +/- 36.7 thus seriously challenging the reliability of these 5-year estimates.

POVERTY STATUS, 2016 % Below Poverty Level	Columbia Falls		Washington County	
	%	Margin of Error	%	Margin of Error
All People	11.2%	+/-5.3	18.0%	+/-1.0
Persons 18 years and over	11.6%	+/-4.6	17.0%	+/-0.9
Persons 65 years and over	13.9%	+/-10.4	11.0%	+/-1.3
Families	5.3%	+/-6.7	12.4%	+/-1.2
With related children under 18 years	11.3%	+/-17.8	20.0%	+/-2.5
With related children under 5 years	0.0%	+/-36.7	27.8%	+/-6.3
Source: American Community Survey 2012-2016 5 Year Estimate				

POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

A complete list of the policy recommendation from the previous Comprehensive Plan is included in Appendix B: Policies and Implementation Strategies. A full copy of the previous plan is on file in the Town Office.

Current policies and implementation strategies relative to Economy and Employment in Columbia Falls are presented in Chapter N Policies and Implementation Strategies. They include revisions to the 2002 policies, along with additional policies and strategies that reflect changes in conditions on the ground, local priorities and State and Federal policy changes since the 2002 Comprehensive Plan was adopted.

H. HOUSING

Housing represents the major investment of most individuals. Housing, and especially its affordability, is very important to the well-being of residents. The purpose of this section is:

1. Describe the characteristics and changes of the housing stock in Columbia Falls.
2. Identify the relationship between housing characteristics and demand in Columbia Falls and the region.
3. Predict the size, characteristics, and affordability of housing needed to meet the demands of the future population.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The age of the housing stock in Columbia Falls is comparable to Washington County; 27% was built before 1939, and 2/3rd of the housing stock was built before 1980. Building permit data indicates a slow addition of stick-built and mobile homes, some commercial activity, and fairly robust housing renovation/addition. Mobile homes and trailers account for approximately 23% of the housing units in Columbia Falls, double the proportion found in Washington County.

Approximately 2/3rd of the population of Columbia Falls' homeowners can afford the Median Home Price in Machias' LMA Housing Market. Approximately 1/3rd of renters in Columbia Falls can afford the average 2-Bedroom rent in the Machias LMA Housing Market. The percentage of homes owned by those in the workforce is likely to decline; the percentage of homes owned by retirees is likely to increase.

HOUSING UNITS

Number of Units

In 2015, Columbia Falls had a total of 307 housing units. Between 2000 and 2010 the town saw a 2.6% decrease in housing units, at the same time that the number of housing units increased in Washington County by 4.6% and statewide by 9.6%. Since 2010, the number of housing units has likely remained the same in Columbia Falls, whereas it increased throughout the county and statewide. In the nearby service centers of Machias and Milbridge the number of units has also remained about the same. There are high margins of error in the American Community Survey 5 year estimates but it is still indicative of very weak housing markets, minimal construction of new units, and/or demolition of older units. A gradual increase in the number of housing units is anticipated over the next ten years. Of course, changes in land use and the economy will determine the actual growth.

As noted in the Population Chapter, the year-round population in Columbia Falls is declining and average household size is shrinking. Seasonal population is also relative small with essentially no growth. While population is forecast to decline over the next decade, building permits data indicates a slow addition of stick-built and mobile homes, some commercial activity, and fairly robust housing renovation/addition, though it was stronger in 2012-2014 than this past year.

Maine's housing stock reflects the State's history and climate. Nationwide, Maine ranks first in the proportion (25.2%) of the housing stock that was built prior to 1940. The age of the housing stock in Columbia Falls is comparable to Washington County with 27% built before 1939. Two-thirds of the housing stock in Columbia Falls was built before 1980. Many of these units are in substandard condition and in need of repair. Housing sales are currently strong to new residents and non-residents who use the properties for summer recreation. They are classified as seasonal residences but most are capable of year-round occupancy. Investment from newcomers and residents in renovations is improving the habitability and value of many older structures.

TOTAL NUMBER OF HOUSING UNITS	1990	2000	2010	% Change 2000-2010	2015 with ACS margin of error
Machias	1043	1125	1114	-1.0%	1111 +/-65
Columbia Falls	275	309	301	-2.6%	307 +/- 35
Milbridge	776	866	1009	16.5%	948 +/-80
Washington County	19,124	21,919	22,926	4.6%	23,014
Maine	587,041	651,901	714,270	9.6%	724,685
Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2011-2015 5 Year Estimates					

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS BY CONSTRUCTION TYPE	New Home (stick-built)	Mobile Homes	Commercial Industrial	Additions, decks & entryways storage sheds, garages
July 2012 – June 2013	1	1	1	11
July 2013 – June 2014	2		2	14
July 2014 – June 2015	1		2	7
July 2015 – June 2016	1	2	X	8
July 2016 – June 2017	2	3	X	1
Total	7	6	5	41
Source: Columbia Falls Planning Board, 2017				

YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT	Columbia Falls		Washington County		Maine	
	%	Margin of Error	%	Margin of Error	%	Margin of Error
2010 or later	0.0%	+/-6.3	0.7%	+/-0.2	0.8%	+/-0.1
2000-2009	12.4%	+/-6.5	9.9%	+/-10.8	12.4%	+/-0.2
1980 to 1999	20.5%	+/-10.3	31.1%	+/-1.4	27.8%	+/-0.4
1960 to 1979	29.6%	+/-11.7	23.0%	+/-1.3	21.8%	+/-0.3
1940 to 1959	9.8%	+/-7.3	10.0%	+/-0.8	12.0%	+/-0.2
1939 or earlier	27.0%	+/-7.7	25.2%	+/-1.1	25.2%	+/-0.2
Source: U.S. Census; American Community Survey 2011-2015 5 year Estimates						

Many older homes contain unhealthy materials, such as mold, lead paint, and asbestos. From the 1930s until the 1980s many products containing asbestos were used in house construction. It is fire-retardant, and a thermal and acoustic insulator. However, exposure to asbestos can cause fibrotic lung disease and lung cancer, and harms respiratory function. The mold found in older homes can also affect respiration. Lead paint used in homes before 1980 can deteriorate into lead dust and paint chips, and can cause brain damage when inhaled or swallowed, especially in children under six.

UNHEALTHY HOUSING CAN LEAD TO DISEASE	
Housing Issue	Human Health Issue
Mold, Dust, Animal Dander/Hair	Asthma

Paint Dust, Chips (pre-1978 painted surfaces)	Lead Poisoning
Garbage, Housecleaning procedures	Pests (rats, mice, insects)
Leaking Roof or Basement = Mold, Mildew	Respiratory illness
Unvented basement (geology specific)	Radon Gas
Well Drinking Water (untreated)	Bacterial Disease; Arsenic Exposure; Ra Exposure;
Holes (windows, walls, roof) = Pests	Bacterial Infections; Asthma; Rabies; Reaction to Insect Stings
Unvented gas, wood, or oil appliances	Carbon Monoxide Poisoning; Respirator Distress
(Source: Al May, Downeast Public Health Coordinator, Maine CDC, 2014)	

HOUSING UNITS IN STRUCTURE										
	Columbia Falls		Washington County							
	2000	2010	2016	2000		2010		2016		
	#	%	ACS Est.	ACS Est.	#	%	ACS Est.	%	ACS Est.	%
One-unit	218	70.6	228 +/- 40	206 +/- 40	14,397	75.3	18,420 +/- 388	78	18,352 +/- 298	79.9
Multi-unit	24	7.8	32 +/- 28	21 +/- 26	1,473	7.7	1,863 +/- 424	8.8	1,877 +/- 385	7.9
Mobile Ho	67	21.7	48 +/- 23	74 +/- 24	3,254	17.0	2,643 +/- 240	12.7	2818 +/- 209	12.2
Total uni	309	100	308 +/- 4	301 +/- 36	19,124	100	22,926 +/- 187	100	23,075 +/- 176	100
Source: U.S. Census; 2006-2010 and 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates										

Structure Type

The distribution of housing types is an important indicator of affordability, density, and the character of the community. Housing units in structures are presented in Table F-4. In 2016, one-unit structures represented roughly 70 percent of the housing units in Columbia Falls while mobile homes and trailers accounted for approximately 23 percent. This is double the proportion of mobile homes than are found throughout Washington County. Columbia Falls has a lower proportion of multi-unit structures (~6%) than in Washington County (~8%) however the data are based on American Community Survey 5 year Estimates and have large margins of error.

Columbia Falls has a higher share of mobile homes and trailers relative to its entire housing stock than are found in Washington County and their number has remained steady over the last 16 years. Mobile

homes and trailers are located on individual lots, not in mobile home parks. Overall, mobile homes in Columbia Falls are in good condition and the pre-1976 mobile homes located in town must meet the requirements of the International Building Code (IBC) and the State Electric Code.

HOME OCCUPANCY

Tenure

Home ownership is a good indicator of the overall standard of living in an area. One way to trace home ownership change over time is to compare owners and renters as a proportion of total occupied housing. Columbia Falls has a slightly higher rate of owner occupancy (~84%) than throughout the county. The proportions of owner and renter-occupied housing units at the local and county level have remained fairly stable over the past 16 years. Such stability is forecast to continue over the next decade.

HOUSING TENURE	Columbia Falls			Washington County						
	2000	2010	2016	2000		2010		2016		
	#	%	ACS Est.	ACS Est.	#	%	ACS Est.	%	ACS Est.	%
Occupied housing	251	100	237 +/-38	246 +/-36	13,418	100	14,177 +/- 303	100	14,065 +/-285	100
Owner occup housing	202	80.5	193 +/-37	207 +/-33	10,568	78.8	10,797 +/-282	76.1	10,693 +/-252	76
Renter occup housing	49	19.5	44 +/-20	39 +/- 19	2,850	21.2	3,380 +/-259	23.8	3,372 +/-242	24
Source: US Census; 2006-2010 and 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates										

Vacancy

The Census classifies seasonal or recreational homes as vacant because they are not typically occupied year-round. In 2016, 55 (18.3 percent) of all housing units in Columbia Falls were vacant. Roughly half of these vacant units are used for seasonal, recreational or occasional use. The trend in sales to non-resident purchasers is associated with renovations of these dwellings to seasonal and/or for retirement purposes. The rental vacancy rate for Columbia Falls in 2016 was 0.0 percent (+/- 39.5%), compared to 7.8 percent for Washington County. The data suggest an adequate supply of housing for purchase; however, there is insufficient data with very high margins of error to conclude whether there is adequate rental housing available.

HOUSING OCCUPANCY	Columbia Falls			Washington County		
	2000	2010	2016	2000	2010	2016

	#	%	ACS Est. & Margin of Error	ACS Est. & Marg of Error	#	%	#	%	ACS Est. & Marg of Error	%
All Housing Un	310	100	308 +/- 40	301 +/- 36	19,124	100	23,001	100	23,075 +/-176	100
Occupied housing	251	81	237 +/- 38	246 +/- 36	13,418	70.2	14,302	62.2	14,065 +/-285	60.9
Vacant Hous units	59	19	71 +/- 25	55 +/- 20	5,706	29.8	8,699	37.8	9,010 +/-229	39.0

Source: 2000 and 2010 US Census; 2006-2010 and 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

The affordability of housing is of critical importance for any municipality. High costs are burdensome to individuals, to governments, and the economy of the area. Excessively high housing costs force low and moderate-income residents to leave the community, thus reducing labor force size.

Many factors contribute to the challenge of finding affordable housing, including: local and regional employment opportunities, e.g., in-migration to job growth areas; older residents living longer lives at home; more single parent households; and generally smaller household sizes than in previous years. Those Mainers most often affected by a lack of affordable housing include: older citizens facing increasing maintenance and property taxes; young couples unable to afford their own home; single parents trying to provide a decent home; low income workers seeking an affordable place to live within commuting distance; and young adults seeking housing independent of their parents.

The Growth Management Act requires that comprehensive plans show the, “proportional make- up of housing units by affordability to very low income, low income, and moderate income households (municipality and region) - for the most recent year for which information is available (est.)” Gathering this data is not as straightforward as it may seem, as several factors help explain. First, data from the Census on housing values is not defined by the State categories of income levels (very low, low and moderate income), which the State sets for each county.

Second, the Census provides only housing values of specified housing units, not the entire owner occupied housing stock of our town and, as noted elsewhere, the margins of error in the American Community Survey, the only place where this data is now compiled, are very high for small rural towns like Columbia Falls. Third, the value of a house based on tax assessment, does not always accurately reflect market value. Fourth, and more important, at any given time, most homes are not for sale, and so their value does not reflect their availability for purchase. Fifth, municipal assessment records do not differentiate between year-round homes and camps, cottages and vacation homes that are not presently suited for year-round occupancy, and would require major investment to make them year-round housing, if environmental conditions would so permit.

Given these data limitations, we show the percentages of households who pay more than 30 percent of their income on housing, which is a measure of unaffordable housing as defined by the State. We show Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA) affordability index data for the housing market to which Columbia Falls belongs.

Definitions of Affordability

Affordable housing means decent, safe, and sanitary living accommodations that are affordable to very low, low, and moderate-income people. The State of Maine defines an affordable owner-occupied housing unit as one for which monthly housing costs do not exceed 30% of monthly income, and an affordable rental unit as one that has a rent not exceeding 30% of the monthly income (including utilities). The kinds of housing that are affordable at these income levels are often small homes on smaller lots and can also include manufactured housing, multi-family housing, government-assisted housing, and group and foster care facilities. The data below indicate that monthly housing costs for many households in Columbia Falls exceed 30% of monthly income, 34.2% of households paying a mortgage and 28.6% of those paying rent.

Based on MSHA figures, in 2016 the median income needed to afford the Median Home was \$26,703 for the Machias LMA Housing Market. Median income in Columbia Falls in 2016 was \$45,179 (2002-2016 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates). A review of the percentage of households within the cohorts below the median income of \$45,179 (2002-2016 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates) indicates that approximately one third of households in Columbia Falls are unable to afford the Median Home Price in the Machias LMA Housing Market. This is the same percentage as in the entire Machias LMA Housing Market.

MONTHLY HOUSING COSTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME				
Columbia Falls	#	Margin of Error	%	Households paying 30% of income on housing
SELECTED MONTHLY OWNER COSTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME (SMOCAPI)				
Housing units with a mortgage (excluding units where SMOCAPI cannot be computed)	117	+/-28	198	
Less than 20.0 percent	40	+/-18	34.20%	
20.0 to 24.9 percent	20	+/-15	17.10%	
25.0 to 29.9 percent	17	+/-13	14.50%	
30.0 to 34.9 percent	18	+/-14	15.40%	
35.0 percent or more	22	+/-12	18.8%	34.2%
Housing unit without a mortgage (excluding units where SMOCAPI cannot be computed)	95	+/-20	95	
Less than 10.0 percent	37	+/-14	38.9%	
10.0 to 14.9 percent	11	+/-5	11.6%	
15.0 to 19.9%	8	+/-7	8.4%	
20.0 to 24.9 percent	7	+/-6	7.4%	
25.0 to 29.9 percent	3	+/-4	3.2%	
30.0 to 34.9 percent	7	+/-10	7.4%	
35.0 percent or more	22	+/-13	23.2%	30.6%
GROSS RENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME (GRAPI)				
Occupied units paying rent (excluding units where GRAPI cannot be computed)	42	+/-17	42	
Less than 15.0 percent	11	+/-11	26.2%	
15.0 to 19.9 percent	0	+/-9	0%	
20.0 to 24.9 percent	3	+/-4	7.1%	
25.0 to 29.9 percent	16	+/-12	38.1%	
30.0 to 34.9 percent	2	+/-3	4.8%	
35.0 percent or more	10	+/-11	23.8%	28.6%
Source: US Census; American Community Survey 2011-2015 5-Year Estimates				

Homeownership Affordability Index			Median Home Price ¹	Median Income ²	Income Needed to Afford Median Home Price	Home Price Affordable to Median Income
	<u>Year</u>	<u>Index</u>				
Machias, ME LMA Housing Market	2012	1.02	\$106,000	\$31,742	\$31,238	\$107,712
	2013	1.17	\$105,000	\$36,157	\$30,780	\$123,340
	2014	1.59	\$82,000	\$37,457	\$23,539	\$130,488
	2015	1.58	\$88,500	\$39,844	\$25,221	\$139,816
	2016	1.52	\$91,500	\$40,607	\$26,703	\$139,141
Lubec		0.69	\$160,450	\$33,646	\$48,846	\$110,521
Milbridge		0.82	\$139,500	\$33,622	\$41,037	\$114,293
Maine		0.97	\$184,000	\$50,990	\$52,545	\$178,552
Machiasport		1.01	\$145,500	\$42,935	\$42,515	\$146,939
Jonesport		1.42	\$85,000	\$35,087	\$24,725	\$120,623
Machias		1.44	\$79,950	\$36,691	\$25,505	\$115,013
Machias, ME LMA Housing Market		1.52	\$91,500	\$40,607	\$26,703	\$139,141
Addison		1.84	\$93,000	\$48,087	\$26,097	\$171,364
East Machias		1.88	\$80,750	\$44,778	\$23,849	\$151,614
Harrington		2.79	\$50,000	\$41,370	\$14,821	\$139,563
Cherryfield		3.21	\$45,000	\$43,876	\$13,665	\$144,485

Source: Maine State Housing Authority, 2016 Housing Facts for Machias LMA Housing Market

Households Unable to Afford Median Home						
<u>Location</u>	Households Unable to Afford Median Home		Total Households	Median Home Price ¹	Income Needed to Afford Median Home	
	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>			<u>Annual</u>	<u>Hourly</u>
Lubec	68.7%	499	726	\$160,450	\$48,846	\$23.48
Milbridge	56.4%	348	617	\$139,500	\$41,037	\$19.73
Maine	52.5%	296,838	564,989	\$184,000	\$52,545	\$25.26
Machiasport	49.5%	187	377	\$145,500	\$42,515	\$20.44
Machias	36.3%	335	921	\$79,950	\$25,505	\$12.26
Jonesport	34.5%	197	571	\$85,000	\$24,725	\$11.89
Machias, ME LMA Housing Market	32.9%	2,397	7,295	\$91,500	\$26,703	\$12.84
East Machias	25.9%	142	549	\$80,750	\$23,849	\$11.47
Addison	22.4%	116	517	\$93,000	\$26,097	\$12.55
Harrington	18.3%	75	410	\$50,000	\$14,821	\$7.13
Cherryfield	8.2%	46	557	\$45,000	\$13,665	\$6.57

Source: Maine State Housing Authority, 2016 Housing Facts for Machias LMA Housing Market

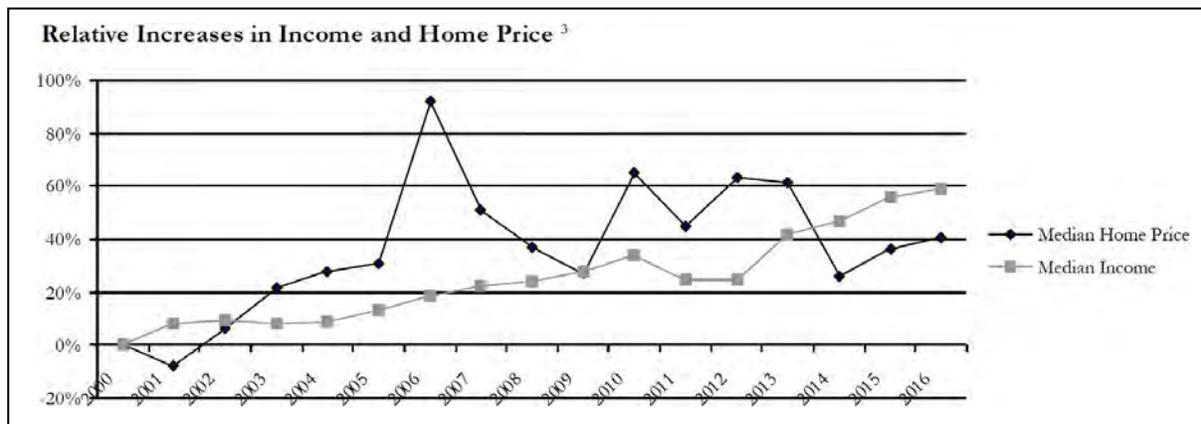
Unattainable Homes as a Percentage of Homes Sold

<u>Location</u>	<u>Percentage of Unattainable Homes</u>	<u>Affordable Homes Sold</u>	<u>Unattainable Homes Sold</u>
Lubec	64.3%	5	9
Milbridge	57.1%	6	8
Maine	52.8%	9,555	10,689
Machiasport	46.7%	8	7
Jonesport	40.0%	9	6
Machias, ME LMA Housing Market	33.3%	132	66
Addison	25.0%	9	3
Harrington	20.0%	12	3
Machias	18.2%	18	4
East Machias	16.7%	15	3
Cherryfield	0.0%	11	0

Source: Maine State Housing Authority, 2016 Housing Facts for Machias LMA Housing Market

Housing Selling Prices

Data from MSHA show that the median house price dropped significantly in the Machias LMA Housing Market in the 2 years following the housing bubble of 2007 and the economic depression of 2008. By 2014 median income increased above the median home price and by 2016 MSHA data indicates that about one third of the homes sold were unattainable for households in the Machias LMA Housing Market.



Source: Maine State Housing Authority, 2016 Housing Facts for Machias LMA Housing Market

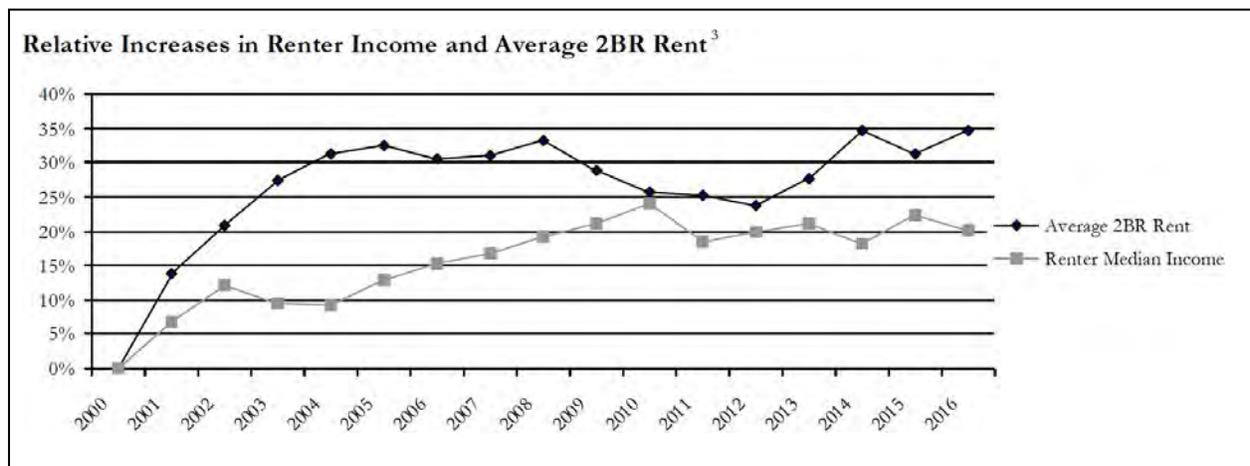
Renter Occupied Housing Affordability

Data from MSHA on renter occupied units describes an unaffordable rental market for those below median income. Only year-round rentals are considered, as seasonal housing rentals are not reported. Rental rates are reported by the tenants and take into account the subsidies many receive in the form of the federal Section 8 housing subsidy to low-income residents. Like the Homeownership Affordability Index, the Rental 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.

Rental Affordability Index		Year	Index	Average 2 BR Rent (with utilities) ⁴	Renter Household Median Income ²	Income Needed to Afford Average 2 BR Rent	2 BR Rent Affordable to Median Income
Machias, ME LMA Housing Market		2012	0.66	\$820	\$21,806	\$32,810	\$545
		2013	0.71	\$826	\$23,444	\$33,056	\$586
		2014	0.74	\$801	\$23,611	\$32,021	\$590
		2015	0.77	\$827	\$25,328	\$33,091	\$633
		2016	0.70	\$911	\$25,379	\$36,456	\$634
Machias, ME LMA Housing Market			0.70	\$911	\$25,379	\$36,456	\$634
Maine			0.85	\$872	\$29,588	\$34,873	\$740

Source: Maine State Housing Authority, 2016 Housing Facts for Machias LMA Housing Market

Furthermore, this lack of affordability in the Machias LMA Housing Market has persisted for the for the past 15 years. The chart below depicts the relative increase in renter income and the average 2 bedroom rent with the Y-axis as an index defined as the ratio of the annual value to the year 2000 value. As above, renter household data is not available for Columbia Falls but is depicted for the entire Machias LMA Housing Market.



Renter Households Unable to Afford Average 2 Bedroom Rent						
Location	Households Unable to Afford Average 2 BR Rent		Total Renter Households	Average 2 BR Rent (with utilities) ⁴	Income Needed to Afford Average 2 BR Rent	
	Percent	Number			Annual	Hourly
Machias, ME LMA Housing Market	65.8%	1,162	1,766	\$911	\$36,456	\$17.53
Maine	57.4%	92,705	161,601	\$872	\$34,873	\$16.77

Source: Maine State Housing Authority, 2016 Housing Facts for Machias LMA Housing Market

The Maine State Housing Authority concludes that nearly two-thirds of the renter households in the Machias LMA Housing Market are unable to afford the average 2-Bedroom rent. In Columbia Falls however, the American Community Survey 2011-2015 5-Year Estimates for “gross rent as a percent of household income” (tabulated in Table F-8 above) indicate that 28.6% of households are paying more than 30% of their monthly income in rent. Given the large margins of error in the ACS the reality is likely somewhere between the MSHA figure of two-thirds and the ACS estimate of 28.6% of households who find their rentals unaffordable.

Affordability and the Growth Management Act

The State of Maine Growth Management Act requires that every municipality "...shall seek to achieve a level of 10% of new residential development, based on a 5-year historical average of residential development in the municipality, meeting the definition of affordable housing." As shown in Table F-2 at the start of this chapter, during the four-year period from 2012 to 2017 thirteen housing units were built. Thus, Columbia Falls would meet the requirement of the Act if the town sought to provide 1.3 low-income units in this period. Within this period, affordable housing, meeting State guidelines, was built in the form of modular/mobile housing, as 6 such units were put in place.

Affordable Housing Remedies

While meeting the letter of the Growth Management Act has not proved difficult for Columbia Falls, there is a desire by residents to maintain and provide for affordable housing, as needed, beyond the State minimums. The State offers traditional recommendations that towns consider to help meet this need. Some of these measures could be adopted by the town though *some (noted in italics) are already in effect* including:

1. *Relaxed zoning ordinances and building code requirements that tend to increase building costs.*
Columbia Falls does not currently have zoning requirements.
2. *Take steps to allow mobile homes and modular homes in more areas.*
At present the town does not limit the location of these types of units and nearly half of all units constructed in the past 5 years were mobile or modular units.
3. Provide town sewer, water and roads to new parts of the town thus "opening up" land for new homes. Columbia Falls is too small of a community to justify the expense of constructing town sewer facilities. Likewise, the housing market is not robust enough to justify opening up new roads to development.

Housing Programs

Columbia Falls has one facility that serves low and moderate income housing needs, Pleasant View Manor located on Pleasant View Circle. It provides income-based rental for those 62 years of age and older. There is a waiting list at Pleasant View Manor. Elderly residents of Columbia Falls also seek income based rental opportunities in nearby towns of Addison, Cherryfield, Harrington, Jonesboro, Jonesport, and Machias. These are summarized below. Note however that Realty Resources Management in Rockport now owns all of the properties listed as owned by Fickett Property Management LLC.

Housing and an Aging Population

As more fully described in the Population Chapter, the town recognizes that it has a large elderly population, many of whom are at less than 60% of median income. Indeed 33.3% of owner-occupied housing units, and 25% of renter occupied units, are composed of people over 65 years of age. People over 65 are more likely than the rest of the population to be retired and on fixed incomes.

A compounding problem for low-income seniors living in some of the oldest housing stock in the nation is the cost of inefficient heating systems and poorly insulated homes.

Property Name and Address	Housing Type				Units	Type of Assistance ¹			Contact Information
	Elderly					Accessible	Income Based Rent	Restricted Unit	
	55 and older	62 and older	With Disabilities	Family/All					
Addison									
River Bend Apts. West Side Road		•	•			•			Propsys (207) 784-0142 or 1-800-539-0142 www.propsysmgmt.com
Cherryfield									
Narraguagus Estates Estates Road		•	•		5-1 br 1-2 br	•			Fickett Property Management, LLC (207) 546-7800 www.fickettproperty.com
Columbia Falls									
Pleasant View Manor Pleasant View Circle		•	•			•			Fickett Property Management, LLC (207) 546-7800 www.fickettproperty.com
Harrington									
Edgelawn Apts. RFD 1		•	•			•			Fickett Property Management (207) 546-7800
Jonesboro									
Jonesboro Heights Rt. 1 Bagley Road		•	•			•			Fickett Property Management, LLC (207) 546-7800 www.fickettproperty.com
Jonesport									
Gaelic Square Apts. 10 Gaelic Housing Way		•	•			•			Fickett Property Management, LLC (207) 546-7800 www.fickettproperty.com
Machias									
Jerrold's Place Apts. 2 Valley View Road				•		•			Hughes Associates (207) 561-4700 www.hughesrs.com
Louise Gardner Apts. 91 Court Street		•	•			•			C. S. Management (207) 498-8332

Source: Maine State Housing Authority, 2014

AGE OF HOUSEHOLDER IN 2010		
	Number	Percent
Owner Occupied housing units	210	100
15 to 24 years	63	1.4
25 to 34 years	22	10.5
35 to 44 years	28	13.3
45 to 54 years	45	21.4
55 to 64 years	42	20.0
65 years and over	70	33.3
Renter Occupied Housing Units		
15 to 24 years	6	12.8
25 to 34 years	5	10.6
35 to 44 years	5	10.6
45 to 54 years	7	14.9
55 to 64 years	12	25.5

Source: 2010 U.S. Census

About 85% of Washington County residents heat with number 2 fuel oil. There is minimal natural gas infrastructure, and not much use of a number of alternative fuels, such as wood pellets, solar, and geothermal heat pumps. More weatherization, retrofits for inefficient boilers, and greener fuels are needed. Some of this is being accomplished through a number of programs.

In addition to facing inefficient heating and weatherization issues many seniors live in houses they have inhabited for years, which are not "senior friendly" in terms of architecture and location. Older houses are often two and three stories with bedrooms and bathrooms located up a flight of stairs. More one-floor single-family houses are needed for the elderly and disabled.

Most single-family houses in Washington County are not single level. The elderly often have poorer leg strength and balance than the general population, and thus, cannot readily climb stairs. Stair lifts help, but for the wheel chair bound, they require a senior to transfer to another wheelchair or walker on the next level, which can cause falls. One-floor living housing options greatly help seniors' mobility and safety, yet relatively few houses in Washington County are single level.

The elderly, as well as people with disabilities, require more accessibility, which is usually not part of housing design. Accessibility features include entranceway ramps, doorways wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs, and specially designed bathrooms and kitchens.

An "in-law" apartment can provide first floor housing and enable a senior to live semi- independently with family, who can provide them with some assistance, and are close-by for medical emergencies. In-law apartments often also have an interior connection to the main house. Columbia Falls should review its zoning ordinance to ensure in-law apartments are allowed throughout the town.

ELDER CARE: AT HOME – LONG TERM FACILITY - EDUCATION

Many elderly are in need of in-home assistance, but live independently. These services extend the length of quality time that a senior can live at home. Advanced elderly often need assistance with everyday tasks, such as eating and dressing, but cannot afford, or do not want to live in assisted living facilities. In addition, they can be frail and prone to falls, and/or have undiagnosed dementia. Many of this age can no longer drive, and need transportation to shopping and medical facilities. Those who do not need 24-hour care, can obtain far less expensive in-home services than through living in an assisted living facility.

For seniors who do require 24-hour care, in-home care costs can be exorbitant. Seniors living at home, but requiring some visiting home care can expect to pay approximately \$22 per hour for a home health aide in Maine, whereas the average cost in the United States is \$19 per hour. (Source: <http://www.payingforseniorcare.com>)

Both the elderly and their families need to better understand age related illnesses and the medical and social services available to seniors. National statistics indicate that 50% of the population over 85 have or will develop dementia. Education is needed in Washington County on the dangers of frail seniors falling, and the many age related illnesses.

Long-term care facilities in Washington County include a range of care levels from shared quarters in facilities with a few apartments and one caretaker to full service nursing homes. The Assisted Living Federation of America defines assisted living as "a senior living option that combines housing, support services and health care, as needed". Assisted living facilities offer full-time food and shelter,

transportation, as well as a variety of care levels (I - IV) to assist elderly, and others in need, with personal care. Washington County has 260 beds available for assisted living. None are located in Columbia Falls.

There are many seniors in need of some level of assisted living. The average cost of a one-bedroom assisted living apartment in the state of Maine is \$54,000, the fourth highest in the nation, and unaffordable to residents of Washington County without some form of subsidy. (Source: <http://assistedlivingtoday.com/p/assisted-living/>)

Medicare does not cover assisted living unless people reach a certain inability to care for themselves and is transitioning from a hospital to a nursing home for rehabilitation. To be eligible for Medicaid coverage for nursing home care, patients must be unable to care for themselves, and meet income and financial asset limitations to qualify as impoverished. Even with Medicaid, assisted living that is not at a nursing home level is not covered. Thus, there are empty beds in nursing homes in Washington County, and many "fall through the cracks". There are also limitations for hospice care, which can only be covered for persons with six months or less left to live.

To improve the current situation nursing home facilities and other long-term health care providers need to negotiate nursing home coverage with the Maine Department of Health and Human Services since it the administrators of the Federal Medicaid program. For complete aging in place, from active independent seniors up to nursing home level, there is no facility in Washington County.

Please see Appendix E Affordable Housing and Elder Care Remedies for more information on the options available to Columbia Falls and the region.

POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

A complete list of the policy recommendation from the previous Comprehensive Plan is included in Appendix B: Policies and Implementation Strategies. A full copy of the previous plan is on file in the Town Office.

Current policies and implementation strategies relative to Housing in Columbia Falls are presented in Chapter N Policies and Implementation Strategies. They include revisions to the 2002 policies, along with additional policies and strategies that reflect changes in conditions on the ground, local priorities and State and Federal policy changes since the 2002 Comprehensive Plan was adopted.

I. PUBLIC FACILITIES, SERVICES, AND RECREATION

The purpose of this section is to:

1. Describe public facilities and systems in terms of their extent, capacity, and use.
2. Assess the adequacy of those systems in handling current demands.
3. Predict whether public facility or service system additions and improvements will be needed to accommodate the demands of the projected population.
4. Estimate the general costs of providing the needed public facility and service system additions and improvements.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The Town of Columbia Falls maintains a variety of public facilities and services, which includes a volunteer fire district shared with Columbia, a Historic Union Hall, and a public boat landing. The town regularly contributes to capital reserve accounts as a way to plan for and manage the cost of replacement of municipal equipment and facilities. Municipal facilities are in good condition sufficient for the current and anticipated needs of the population. The town does not supply any services that affect growth. Availability of fire and police protection does not impact the town's growth.

The cost of municipal services provided by the town is not affected by the location of homes in the town. There is no municipal water supply or sewage disposal service, nor are there likely to be in the foreseeable future. The town provides snow removal on all public roads.

The school bus traverses almost every paved road in the town. The length of the route, and therefore the cost, might change slightly if the location of students were to change.

The recreational needs of the town are satisfied through facilities available in the surrounding area. Hunting, fishing, boating, hiking, bird watching and biking require no facilities except water and land, which Columbia Falls has in abundance.

Budgetary information is presented in Chapter K Fiscal Capacity. All projected investment in public facilities can be accommodated within designated Growth areas as outlined in Chapter L Land Use.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

The Town of Columbia Falls incorporated in 1863, and is run by the Selectmen/Town Meeting form of government. Town officers, boards and other positions are described in the following sections.

Town Meeting

The Town of Columbia Falls holds an annual Town Meeting in the spring of each year, allowing time for the Town Report to be prepared with figures for the Fiscal Year ending on December 31.

Elections

The Town holds elections for Federal, State, and County offices on the first Tuesday of November each year as required by the US Constitution. Other elections are held as required by the State for primaries and for questions such as referenda and bond issues.

TOWN OFFICERS ELECTED AT ANNUAL TOWN MEETING				
Office	Number	Term	Compensation	Funding Source
Selectmen/Road Commissioners	3	3 Years - Staggered	Yes	Town Budget
Town Clerk	1	Appointed	Yes	Town Budget
Treasurer / Tax Collector	1	Appointed	Yes	Town Budget
General Assistance	1	Appointed	No	None
Assessors	1	Selectmen's Duty	No	Town Budget
School Committee	2	3 Years - Staggered	Yes	Schools Budget
Moderator	1	For each Town Meeting	No	None
Planning Board Members	3	3 Years – Staggered	Yes	Town Budget
Planning Board Alternates	2	3 Years – Staggered	Yes	Town Budget
Health Officer	1	Annual	No	None

TOWN OFFICERS APPOINTED BY THE SELECTMEN				
Board / Office	Number	Term	Compensation	Funding Source
Board of Appeals Members	3	3 Years - Staggered	No	
Board of Appeals Alternates	2	3 Years - Staggered	No	
Registrar of Voters	1	Duty of Town Clerk		
Animal Control Officer	1	Annual	Yes	Compensation
911 Addressing Officer	1	Annual	No	
Code Enforcement Officer	1	Annual	Yes	Compensation
Licensed Plumbing Inspector	1	Annual	Yes	Plumbing Fees

BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

Planning Board - The Planning Board reviews applications for building permits, change-in-use permits and subdivision permits. It was created in 1990 and operates under Maine's Home Rule law. The Planning Board develops and maintains the town's Comprehensive Plan.

Board of Appeals - The Board of Appeals reviews applications for variances from actions of the Planning Board and of the Board of Assessors. It was created in 1990 and operates under Maine's Home Rule law.

School Board - The School Board represents the town on the SAD #37 School Board and is responsible for administration of the town's School budget.

Town Counsel - The town contracts a Town Counsel with Gilbert and Greif to advise on legal matters as needed.

Maine Municipal Association - The town is a member of the Maine Municipal Association (MMA). MMA holds workshops and provides assistance to towns on many topics.

Washington County Council of Governments - The town is a member of the Washington County Council of Governments, which provides assistance on planning and development matters.

MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, FACILITIES AND SERVICES		
Building/Facilities	Condition	Notes
Union Hall	B	Current plans include painting, maintenance
Multiple Municipal Shared Fire Station	A	General Maintenance
Sand & Salt Storage	N/A	Grandfathered Sight
Boat Launches – State Owned Access	N/A	
Cemeteries	B	Grounds are well maintained.

A - Relatively new facility, lifetime expected in excess of 20 years (with proper maintenance)

B - Facility is older and has been well cared for, but may need renovations in 10-20 years

C - Older facility that may not be in the best of shape & may need improvements in 5-10 years

D - Old facility that needs replacement or considerable maintenance/renovation in 2-5 years

GENERAL

Town Administration

The Columbia Falls Municipal Office operates out of the former grammar school building now owned by Wreath Across America (WAA). The Town Office presently opens four days a week for the conduct of all town business. The Administrative Assistant/Tax Collector/Town Clerk is present during all open hours.

PUBLIC WORKS

Water Supply

Homes in Columbia Falls are served by private wells for their water needs and by private subsurface waste disposal systems and/or outhouses for their waste management needs. Principle aquifers that supply water to the town are outlined in Chapter F. Natural Resources.

Storm Water

Culverts and ditches service driveways and roads. Water from storms and melting eventually drains into the soil or finds its way to streams and to the ocean.

Solid Waste Management

Solid waste management services are presently privately handled. The town is part of a multiple municipal shared disposal facility.

Currently, townspeople either bring trash to the facility in bags purchased from the town, or they hire one of two private vendors in the area to pick up from their premises. Pleasant River Solid Waste Disposal District has the capability to handle white goods, debris from construction, metal goods, burnable material etc. They also have a moderate recycling capability. Ordinary trash disposal (i.e. bagged goods) and recycling are paid for by tax appropriation. Costs for disposing other categories of waste are charged to the persons disposing of them.

Sand and Salt Storage

The town's sand and salt storage is presently located within a private gravel pit within the town.

PUBLIC UTILITIES

Electricity

Electric distribution is provided by Emera Maine. Under Maine's Utility Deregulation law, home and business owners select a separate provider for their electricity.

Telephone

Conventional– Consolidated Communications provides landline telephone services in most of the town. Consolidated Communications subscribers are served by the 483 exchange.

Cellular (Wireless) –Three companies provide cellular mobile telephone service: U.S. Cellular, Verizon and AT&T Wireless

Internet Access

Internet access is available through several providers. They include Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) via telephone lines, cable television transponder, cellular telephone hot spot and satellite links.

Radio & Television

	Station / Frequency	Location	Affiliation
Radio	WDEA AM / 1370	Ellsworth	
	WQDY FM	Calais	
	WALZ FM	Calais	
	WMED FM / 89.7	Calais	Maine PBS
	WCRQ FM / 102.9	Calais	
	FM 97.7	Ellsworth/Bar Harbor	
	FM 93.7	Milbridge	Maine PBS
	FM 91.1	Machias	University of Maine at Machias

	Station / Channel	Location	Affiliation
Television	WLBZ / 2	Bangor	NBC
	WABI / 5	Bangor	CBS
	WVII / 7	Bangor	ABC
	WMB / 12	Calais	Maine PBS
	WABI/14	Bangor	CW
	WFVX /4	Bangor	FOX

POSTAL SERVICE

The town is serviced by the United States Post Office on Main Street in Columbia Falls. A civil service position under the control of the USPS provides rural delivery, or patrons may rent boxes at the Columbia Falls Post Office. Commencing prior to 2002, mail addresses adopted the new street name and number assigned for 911. The ZIP code is 04623.

RECREATION

Two types of recreation, passive and active, provide the necessary balance within a community. Passive recreation takes place in areas such as nature reserves or natural open space where enjoyment of the outdoors is the main purpose. Active physical recreation takes place in these open areas or in recreational facilities such as the Dean Worcester Memorial Ball Park and the Downeast Sunrise Trail where people participate in sports.

Public Parks and Trails

The Downeast Sunrise Trail runs through Columbia Falls adjacent to US Route 1 from one end to the other. There are many year-round uses of this trail for the residents from ATV riding to walking, running, and cross-country skiing. The Dean Worcester Memorial Ball Park is located on the Centerville Road. During the spring the Little League utilizes the field. One weekend in early August, residents can watch a very competitive and friendly softball tournament between two Micmac Tribe Migrant Blueberry Camps from T19. The Veterans Memorial Park is located near the Salmon Hatchery and has a memorial bench and plaque. There is an eternally-lit evergreen tree standing beside this park that is lit with tiny Christmas tree lights. The former Municipal Facility lot, located in the center of town near the Pleasant River, will be utilized as a future playground and walking trail. This is all in the planning stages as of the creation of this Comprehensive Plan.

Public Boat Launches

All boat launches are State owned; at this time boat launch facilities are adequate.

Other Recreation Facilities

Columbia Falls is on the Bold Coast Scenic Byway and Bold Coast Scenic Bikeway, which both connect the world to the wide and relatively hidden network of fascinating people and beautiful places of Downeast Maine. US Bike Route 1 and the East Coast Greenway also run through the center of Columbia Falls. Columbia Falls has a ball field which all residents have access to use at any time.

Regional Recreational Facilities

Area public schools have gymnasiums and playing fields. Facilities at the University of Maine at Machias include an Olympic size pool as well as workout equipment in the new Lifelong Learning Center. The Harrington Fitness Center and walking track offer workout options for residents.

Access

Two State-owned, hand-carry only boat launches located on the Pleasant River in Columbia Falls, one in the center of town and one on US Route 1.

Public Land

Both Town Boat Landings are owned by the State, and the Downeast Sunrise Trail is state-owned.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Fire Protection and Ambulance Services

In 2012, it was determined that the two-bay fire station building in Columbia Falls was no longer serviceable and beyond economical repair. Several options were considered to replace the building.

Ultimately, in March 2014 the Towns of Columbia and Columbia Falls voted to create the Epping Volunteer Fire District to provide fire protection and other emergency services to the two towns. The two Columbia Falls fire apparatus were relocated to the former Columbia Fire Department building on US Highway 1 in Columbia. Epping became operational on November 1, 2014.

The Epping Volunteer Fire District consists of 16 active members, including a Chief and Assistant Chief. Apparatus are two 1250 gpm Class A pumpers 1,000 and 750 gallons each, one 3,000 gallon tanker, one 1,800 gallon pumper/tanker, one 500 gallon military surplus brush truck and one 2,000 gallon forestry tanker on loan from Maine State Forestry.

The Epping Volunteer Fire District is part of a four-town mutual aid agreement with Columbia Falls and the Towns of Columbia, Addison and Harrington. Harrington and Addison both provide vehicle extrication response. Harrington provides breathing air supply and Addison hosts a vehicle mounted air cascade system for filling air packs on scene. Epping also has a mutual aid agreement with Jonesboro and respond to structure and vehicle fires in Centerville Township and Townships 18, 19, 24 and 25 on a contractual basis with the Washington County Unorganized Territories(UT).

Ambulance Services

Ambulance/Emergency Medical Services are provided by a multi town supported Pleasant River Ambulance Service of which Columbia Falls is a member. 24-hour EMS response is provided to the member towns. Ambulance services from the Towns of Jonesboro, Cherryfield and Milbridge provide mutual aid coverage to Columbia Falls and area towns.

Life Flight of Maine, based in Bangor and Lewiston Maine, provides 24-hour MEDIVAC helicopter services with advanced life support and trauma response. Patients are transported to hospitals in Bangor or elsewhere when medical service beyond the capability of local hospitals is required.

Law Enforcement

The Washington County Sheriff's Department and Maine State Police provide services for road mishaps and on direct call for other emergency or criminal services. Neither agency provides regular patrol services to the town.

Emergency Communications

Emergency dispatch for fire, police and ambulance services are provided by the Regional Communications system, which is funded by the County tax paid by the town. New GPS units installed in fire trucks were funded by auxiliary events. All streets are named and street signs erected. Fire trucks carry 911 forms with all addresses.

Emergency Management

The Washington County Emergency Management Agency offers Washington County communities a central source for emergency preparedness information and training, and works with communities to help deliver vital services in case of a large-scale emergency.

Columbia Falls has a detailed local emergency management plan to assist citizens with immediate or long-range emergency management tactics, including a plan for warming shelters.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Columbia Falls is part of RSU/SAD 37, which includes Addison, Columbia, Columbia Falls, and Milbridge. The Town elects a School Board who are responsible for operation of the schools.

Elementary School - Elementary school-aged children grades K through 6 attend several nearby elementary schools.

Junior High/High School - Junior High/High school-aged children grades 7 through 12 attend the Narraguagus High School in Harrington.

Adult Education - Columbia Falls residents attend classes held at the Narraguagus High School by the Adult Education Department.

School Busing - The town does not own its own school bus. All school buses are owned and operated by RSU/SAD 37 and the School Board is responsible.

Vocational and Technical Schools

Washington County Community College (WCCC) The Calais campus is situated on 400 acres of land overlooking the St. Croix River. Washington County Community College is one of seven institutions in the Maine Community College System. Thirty-six of WCCC's 38 catalog programs are located in Calais, training students for employment in several diverse occupations - from construction and mechanical trades to food service and business studies. Several of these programs articulate into degree programs at other colleges and universities. The College has the capacity for 500 full-time students, while the Continuing Education Division serves an additional 400 part-time students at sites throughout Washington County.

University Of Maine At Machias (UMM) is a 1,000-student branch of the University of Maine System working in close relationship with the Orono campus to offer Bachelor and Associate degrees in a wide range of subjects. Many of its students are “non-traditional” (older persons returning for their degrees), and programs are offered to high school students nearing their college years. Inter-active TV links the University to all the other branches of the system. Also offered are non-credit classes as part of the Sunrise Senior College. ITV is funded by a grant and administered through the University of Maine in Augusta. The University campus also provides a life long learning center including a fitness complex, pool, gym and daycare open to the community.

Hancock County Technical Center offers hands-on, career-oriented education for high school students in a variety of programs. Programs at HCTC are scheduled as half-day, every day, full-year programs that can earn students up to 4.5 credits towards graduation in the career and technical program of their choice.

Eastern Maine Community College in Bangor provides post-secondary technical, career, and transfer education, in over 30 one- and two-year program options, as well as short term and specialized training and retraining courses for business, industry, and community.

Husson University in Bangor offers a variety of Undergraduate, Graduate, and Certificate programs.

PUBLIC HEALTH

The medical needs of Columbia Falls residents are primarily served by five hospitals within a 90-mile radius. These include:

- Down East Community Hospital-Machias
- Maine Coast Memorial Hospital-Ellsworth
- Calais Hospital-Calais
- Saint Joseph's Hospital-Bangor
- Eastern Maine Medical Center-Bangor

Several rural health centers in Washington County serve people on a sliding cost scale. Nearby centers are located in Harrington, Jonesport, Lubec and Milbridge. Doctors and dentists in Harrington, Machias, Milbridge, Jonesport, Lubec, Calais, Eastport and Princeton provide family care, as well as a number of specialties. Other specialists schedule regular clinic hours in Machias. The Down East Community Hospital, located about sixteen miles from the town center, provides twenty-four hour/seven-day emergency services. Emergency ambulance services are available from Pleasant River Ambulance Service.

Maine Coast Memorial Hospital, located in Ellsworth, is a 64-bed fully accredited community hospital healthcare center. They offer extended services at two major clinical centers in Gouldsboro and Southwest Harbor and four rehabilitation centers. The Active Medical Staff consists of 31 practitioners who provide a comprehensive range of medical, surgical, obstetrical, orthopedic, and ophthalmic service to the community. Outreach programs like support groups and on-going health classes are also offered.

Eastern Maine Medical Center, (Website - <http://www.emh.org>) a 411 bed facility and one of only three trauma centers in the State, is located in Bangor, 100 miles to the West. Their 300 physicians provide primary care hospital services as well as specialty and intensive services. Extreme trauma cases are handled in the community through a working relationship between "Life Flight" out of Eastern Maine Medical Center in Bangor, Calais Regional Hospital, and the ambulance service.

Sunrise County Homecare Services has offices in Machias, Lubec and Calais. They provide and coordinate home care services such as visiting nurses, home health aides, physical, occupational and speech therapy, senior companions, homecare telemedicine, medical social work, and homemaker services.

Downeast Hospice (Website - www.calaishospital.org) is an all-volunteer, non-profit program licensed by the state of Maine, serving residents of Washington County. Support services are provided to the terminally ill and their families, as well as to those people who are experiencing grief.

OTHER FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Library - Columbia Falls has a small Library. The Library is available for use by area residents. School libraries are available to students in the area elementary and high schools.

Meeting Places - Two meeting facilities serve the town: the Union Hall and Wreaths Across America gym.

Churches - United Methodist Church located at 16 Church Hill Circle

Cemeteries - Columbia Falls has over eight public and private cemeteries, and the community considers them a valued cultural resource providing insight into their history.

Public Cemeteries

1. Ruggles Cemetery – located at 74 Main Street on the left at the top of the hill coming from the West.
2. Great Hill Cemetery –located at 79 Main Street on the right at the top of the hill coming from the West.
3. Town Cemetery –located just down the hill across from Great Hill Cemetery at 100 Main Street.
4. Greenwood Cemetery –located at the intersection of Tibbettstown Road and Montegail Pond Road with a physical address of 1051 Tibbettstown Road.
5. Skunk Ridge Cemetery –located off the East Skunk Ridge Road possibly known to some as the Corn Hill Cemetery.

Private Cemeteries

1. A private cemetery is located about 400 yards in from the Centerville Road at 72 Highlands Road.
2. Fairview (or the Herbert Young Cemetery) is a private cemetery set up by the Young family located down a road that goes in by 1229 Tibbettstown Road.
3. A small private cemetery located east on US Route 1 contains one stone for an infant – William H., son of Patrick Flaherty, died January 21, 1820, age 4 months.

There are several smaller private cemeteries located throughout the town, including Pauper’s Cemetery, the location of which is not known to this group.

CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY EVENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS

The Ruggles House Museum is located in downtown Columbia Falls. This home was built from 1818 – 1820 for Judge Thomas Ruggles. This particularly lovely example of Adamesque style Federal period architecture is remarkable for its location as well as its survival. After 100 years and three generations of the Ruggles family the house fell into a state of disrepair. It was through the diligence of the Ruggles descendant, Mary Ruggles Chandler that restoration efforts began in the 1920’s and were completed in 1951 at which time the house first opened for tours. The house museum is supported and maintained by the Ruggles House Society, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, through voluntary contributions, and is open June through October. United Methodist Women offer craft fairs and community support.

The Union Hall Committee organizes funds raisers to help with the support of the Union Hall, which include craft fairs and community events like holiday festivities, dances and children’s activities.

Wreaths Across America (WAA) is a national nonprofit organization founded in 2007 to continue and expand the annual wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery begun by Maine businessman Morrill Worcester in 1992. Wreaths Across America’s mission – *Remember, Honor, Teach* – is carried out in part by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies at Arlington, as well as at veterans’ cemeteries and other locations in all 50 States and beyond. Since its founding, the organization has expanded to include more than 1,500 local fundraising groups in all 50 States, representing nearly 1,300 participating locations, along with our nation’s cemetery at Arlington. Every year since 2008, Congress proclaims a Saturday in December as National Wreaths Across America Day.

In 2011, Wreaths Across America opened a 2,000 square-foot museum at its Maine headquarters to showcase the hundreds (now thousands) of items donated to the organization over the years. These include personal photos, awards, uniforms, helmets and other military memorabilia. All donations help to provide insight and tell the greater story of the experiences of U.S. military personnel. Overall, the Museum serves to document Wreaths Across America's history and dedication to remembering those who gave their lives while serving their country, honoring those who serve and teaching the value of freedom to the next generation. It is free and open to the public year round.

Cottonwood Camping and RV Park is a small campground adjacent to the Downeast Sunrise Trail and centrally located in the Downeast area. They offer full hook-up pull through sites, tent sites and some rental units such as teepee and camper rentals. They have a bathhouse with laundry facility. The campground offers direct access to the trail right from the campground.

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

In May of 2017 Columbia Falls residents completed a survey to give their views on important aspects of the town's future. The participation rate was average for surveys of this type and included written input. Full responses are listed in Appendix A.

Respondents seem united in the use of regional emergency services such as ambulance and fire. Result show that other services could be consolidated, as well, to keep town costs down; including town office, recreation, transportation, road maintenance, business services, and salt sand shed.

Respondents were generally satisfied with municipal and community services. Written comments indicated that there is a need to have something in the community for young people, along with a method to encourage young people to become involved in the community.

POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

A complete list of the policy recommendation from the previous Comprehensive Plan is included in Appendix F: 2002 Policies and Implementation Strategies. A full copy of the previous plan is on file in the Town Office.

Current policies and implementation strategies relative to Public Facilities and Recreation in Columbia Falls are presented in Chapter N Policies and Implementation Strategies. They include revisions to the 2002 policies, along with additional policies and strategies that reflect changes in conditions on the ground, local priorities and State and Federal policy changes since the 2002 Comprehensive Plan was adopted.

J. TRANSPORTATION

Communities depend on well-maintained transportation systems. Accessibility to transportation is one of the primary factors in the location of businesses and residents within Columbia Falls. Safe streets, efficient street design, and transportation linkages affect the economic viability of our businesses, the overall safety and convenience of our residents, as well as property values. The goal of this section is to plan for efficient maintenance and improvement of our transportation facilities and services in order to accommodate anticipated development.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Residents must travel to adjoining communities for most work and shopping opportunities. Overall, the roads in Columbia Falls are in good condition. Transportation linkages in town consist primarily of US Route 1 to the major regional centers and the roads that intersect with US Route 1 at the “four corners” to reach northern Columbia Falls and south to Addison on the coast. Average annual traffic counts (2012-2015) have increased all over Columbia Falls.

The 2017-2018-2019 Maine DOT Work Plan entries for Columbia Falls include scour Countermeasures on US Route 1 at the Columbia Falls Bridge over the Pleasant River. Additional projects in the Work Plan for Maine DOT Region 2 includes highway paving and light capital paving on Route 187 beginning at US Route 1 and extending south 8.78 miles to Snare Creek Lane in a continuous segment in Addison, Columbia Falls and Jonesport.

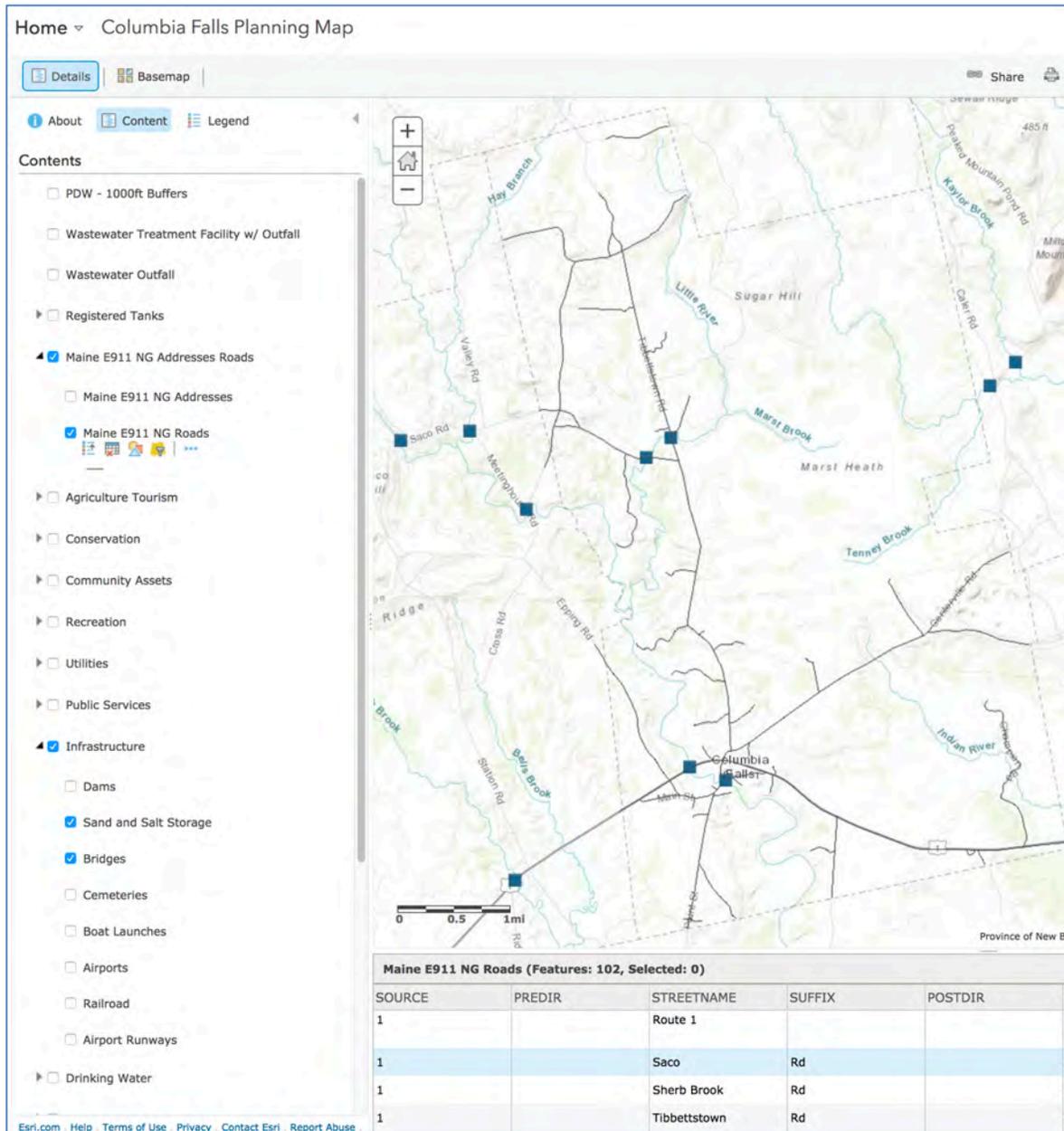
ROAD INVENTORY

The majority of roads in Columbia Falls originated in the early days as pathways or carriage trails. These roads followed the easiest routes and were not concerned with sight distances, sharp corners, the weight load of trucks, or intersection design. Our roads were improved over the years to accommodate increased traffic, higher speeds and larger vehicles. In the last decade, the Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) through its Local Roads Assistance Program has attempted to assist municipalities in improving further these areas to meet state and national safety design standards.

Roads are divided into three classifications by function: arterial, collector, and local.

1. Arterials are roadways that serve long distance, high-speed through-traffic between communities, and are maintained by the state. The most important travel routes in the state, U.S. and state highways, are arterials. Interstate highways may function as arterials.
2. Collectors gather and distribute traffic to and from arterials and generally provide access to abutting properties. Collectors serve places with smaller population densities, are often some distance from main travel routes, and often are maintained in part by the state.
3. Local roads are all roads not in the arterial or collector classification. Local roads are maintained by municipalities, provide access to adjacent land areas and usually carry low volumes of traffic.

There are zero miles of arterial, 5.01 miles of collector and 29.8 miles of local public roads in the town. A screen shot of the e911 roads layer from the online Columbia Falls Planners Map¹ is provided in the screen shot below. Note that the table associated with the e911 map layer is open in the screen shot to illustrate part of the information that is available using the online mapping system. For more information on how to make use of the online mapping services see the GIS Mapping chapter.



¹ To view the Columbia Falls online Planners maps go to <http://gro-wa.org/planners-maps.htm> and scroll down to the Columbia Falls Planners Map link.

MAINTENANCE

Overall, the roadways in Columbia Falls are in good condition with a few locations in need of attention including a section of Tibbettstown Road and the Downeast Sunrise Trail area. The town arranges for the services of their own Road Commissioner and local contractors to periodically assess the condition of roads, culverts and no public works.

The damage that does occur to our roads is largely the result of trucking activity. Harsh weather, which includes rapid changes in weather conditions, is another cause of road deterioration. Roads are most vulnerable to the weight of trucks and other heavy vehicles during the spring thaw, which is also a time of year when many natural resources-based products are transported to market. As road weight limit postings are put in place, the conflict between road maintenance needs and the economic needs of businesses is clear. Most roads were not originally engineered for the weight they now carry. If money were no concern, the best course of action would be to rebuild each of the major service roads. That, however, is not economically feasible. Nevertheless, State Route 9 provides a good example of how effective reconstruction can improve a roadway. Considering the traffic volumes on US Route 1, a similar reconstruction of this roadway is worth pursuing.

MDOT is responsible for all the non-local roads. MDOT's authority includes permitting of driveways and entrances, curb cuts, summer and winter maintenance, and traffic flow and safety decisions such as traffic signals, signs, reconstruction and road widening.

The town contracts by open bid for snow plowing, salting and sanding in yearly contracts on town roads and State-aid roads. The cost is covered from tax appropriations. In addition, Columbia Falls maintains a Road Reserve Account to cover planned for as well as unanticipated expenses associated with transportation infrastructure maintenance and repair. Past funding by annual appropriation has varied between \$20,000 and \$40,000 per year. As noted in the Fiscal Capacity Chapter State revenue sharing declined by 9% between 2012 and 2016 and constituted approximately 21% of the annual transportation budget in 2016.

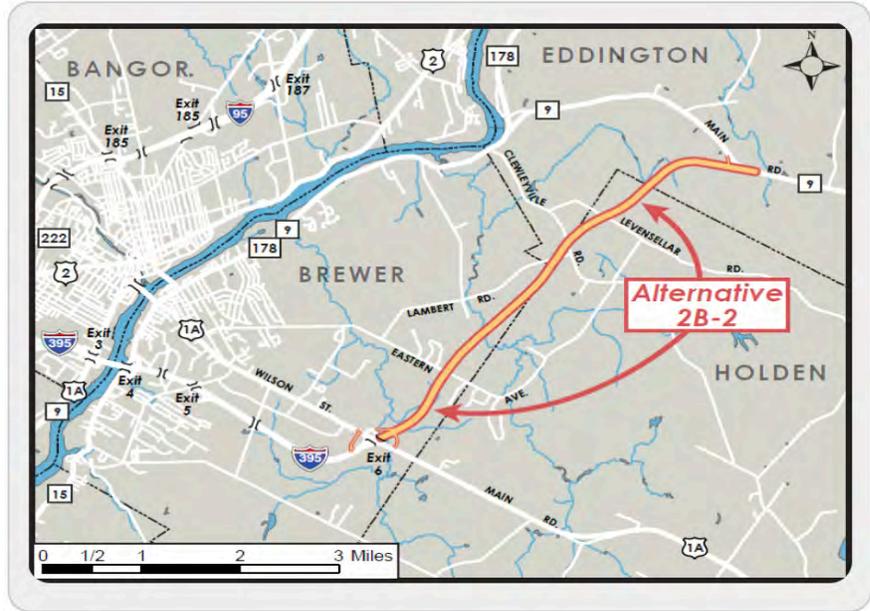
The Maine DOT Local Roads Center provides a "Road Surface Management for Maine Towns" training program, including Road Surface Management System (RSMS) software to identify which road maintenance techniques should be considered for individual roads or streets in a local street network. It is used by many communities to inventory their road network, record road surface condition data, interpret the surface distress information gathered, and "defend" their road maintenance budgets. The system is generic and provides an objective tool that a municipality can "customize" with its own repair techniques and local costs.

TRAFFIC VOLUMES AND PATTERNS

MDOT estimates the average annual daily traffic volume (AADT) of most state and state aid roadways. Traffic counts taken every few years help the state calculate changes in traffic volume so that road improvements can be designed and built accordingly to handle those changes. AADT volumes do not reflect seasonal variations in traffic or daily peak traffic volume. Instead, AADT volumes help us understand the overall growth or decline of traffic on a roadway and the pattern of traffic on our road networks.

Transportation linkages in Columbia Falls consist primarily of US Route 1, which traverses the Southern sector of the town from east to west. The primary commercial intersection known as the four corners is created by the intersection of US Route 1 and Tibbetstown Road, that provides a collector road to the entire Northern part of Columbia Falls, and Point Street, which provides access South to the Town of Addison. US Route 1 connects through Cherryfield to State Route 193 and then to State Route 9, which is often a preferred route to Bangor.

Efforts to expand I-395 to Route 9 could greatly improve commercial access from Columbia Falls to Bangor. Maine DOT held an informational meeting on July 20, 2016 regarding the I-395/Route 9 Connector Project and described the Federal Highway Administration’s decision



approving Alternative 2-B as the build alternative (depicted at right; Source: <http://www.maine.gov/mdot/projects/I395rt9connector/>).

US Route 1 is currently the transportation lifeline of Columbia Falls. Road conditions, the role of Columbia Falls as a local destination, and its appeal to visitors to the region, will all affect travel along that road. Officials from Columbia Falls should continually work with on-going and ad hoc regional transportation committees to advocate for improvements to US Route 1.

The table below provides AADT counts for 1994 (from the 2002 Comprehensive Plan) and from the two most recent years for which data is available. According to Maine DOT three State zones are counted on a three-year cycle, collecting data in one zone per year to cover the entire state within the three-year period. The Coverage Count Program (indicated by a C next to the number in the following table) also consists of the “Special Counts” (indicated by an S next to the number) taken each year to satisfy Departmental needs, local requests, and Federal requirements.

Traffic Volumes				
Roadway	Location Description	AADT in 1994	AADT in 2012	AADT in 2015
US 1	west of IR 554 (Tibbetts Town Rd)	n/a	3800 C	4190 C
US 1	northwest of SR187 (Indian River Rd.)	4100	4090 C	4390 C
SR 187	Indian River Road south of US 1	n/a	1580 C	1790 C
IR 554	Tibbetts Town Rd North of US 1	n/a	980 C	1070 C
IR 595	Tibbetts Town Rd North of Centerville Rd	n/a	620 C	640 C
IR 595	Tibbetts Town Rd North of Saco Road	n/a	110 C	n/a

Source: Maine Department of Transportation 2002; 2016

ACCESS MANAGEMENT

Access Management is the planned location and design of driveways and entrances to public roads to help reduce accidents and prolong the useful life of an arterial. While arterial highways represent only 12% of the state-maintained highway system, they carry 62% of the statewide traffic volume. Maintaining posted speeds on this system means helping people and products move faster, which enhances productivity, and reduces congestion-related delays and environmental degradation. By preserving the capacity of the system we have now, we reduce the need to build costly new highway capacity such as new travel lanes and bypasses, in the future. While it does not meet the definition of a primary Arterial, US Route 1 functions as such in Columbia Falls and provides a critical corridor for visitors, commuters, and freight.

MDOT has established standards, including greater sight distance requirements for the permitting of driveways and entrances, for three categories of roadways: retrograde arterials, mobility arterial corridors, and all other state and state-aid roads. Due to the low volume of traffic on our roadways, our town has no roads in the retrograde or mobility corridor categories of roadways, which come under stricter access management standards.

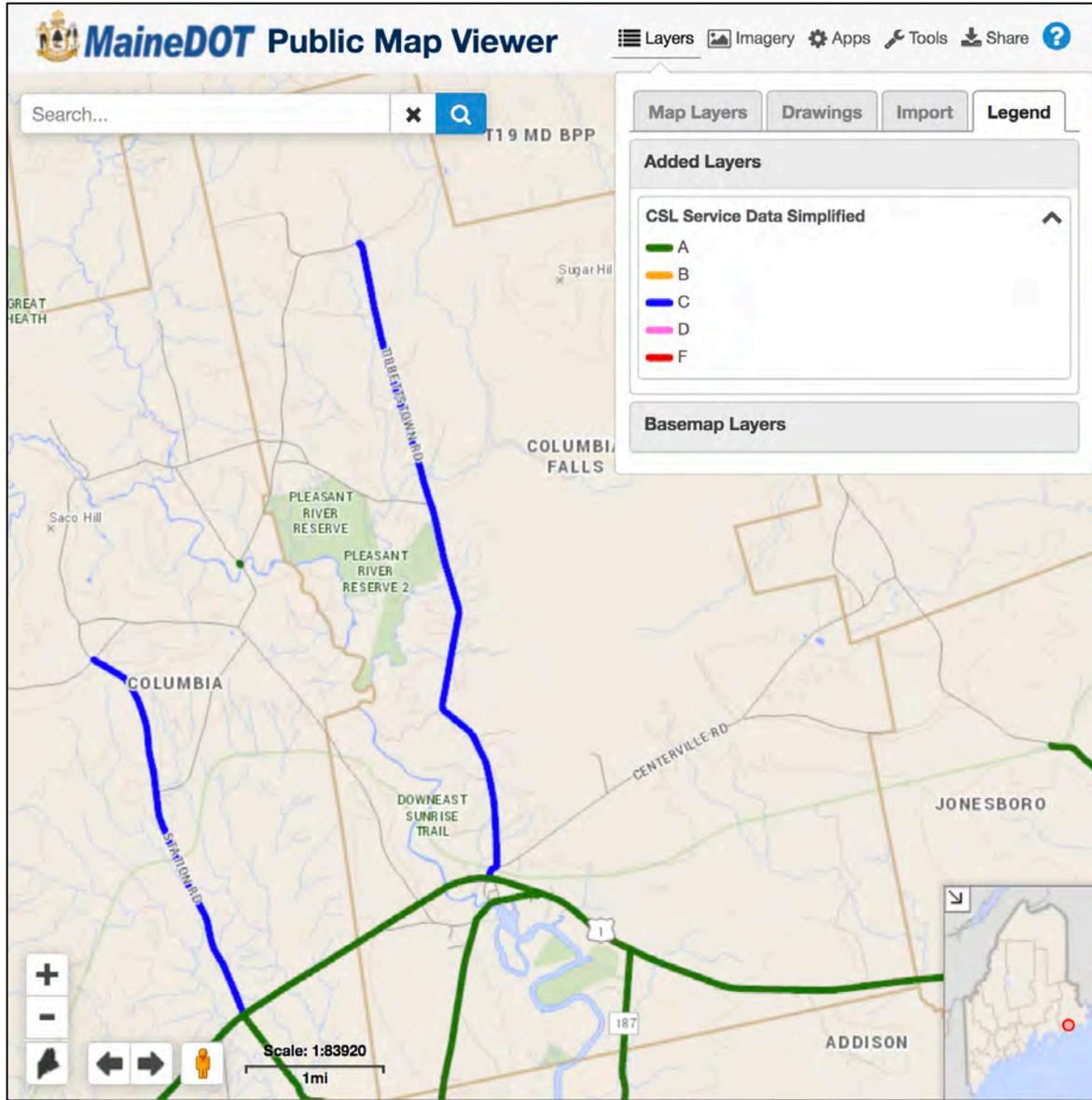
HIGHWAY CORRIDOR PRIORITY AND CUSTOMER SERVICE LEVEL

MaineDOT prioritizes programs and projects according to a two-part methodology that categorizes highway assets according to their Highway Corridor Priority (HCP) and Customer Service Level (CSL). There are 6 Priority levels based on a 2014 inventory of highway assets. These are summarized below.

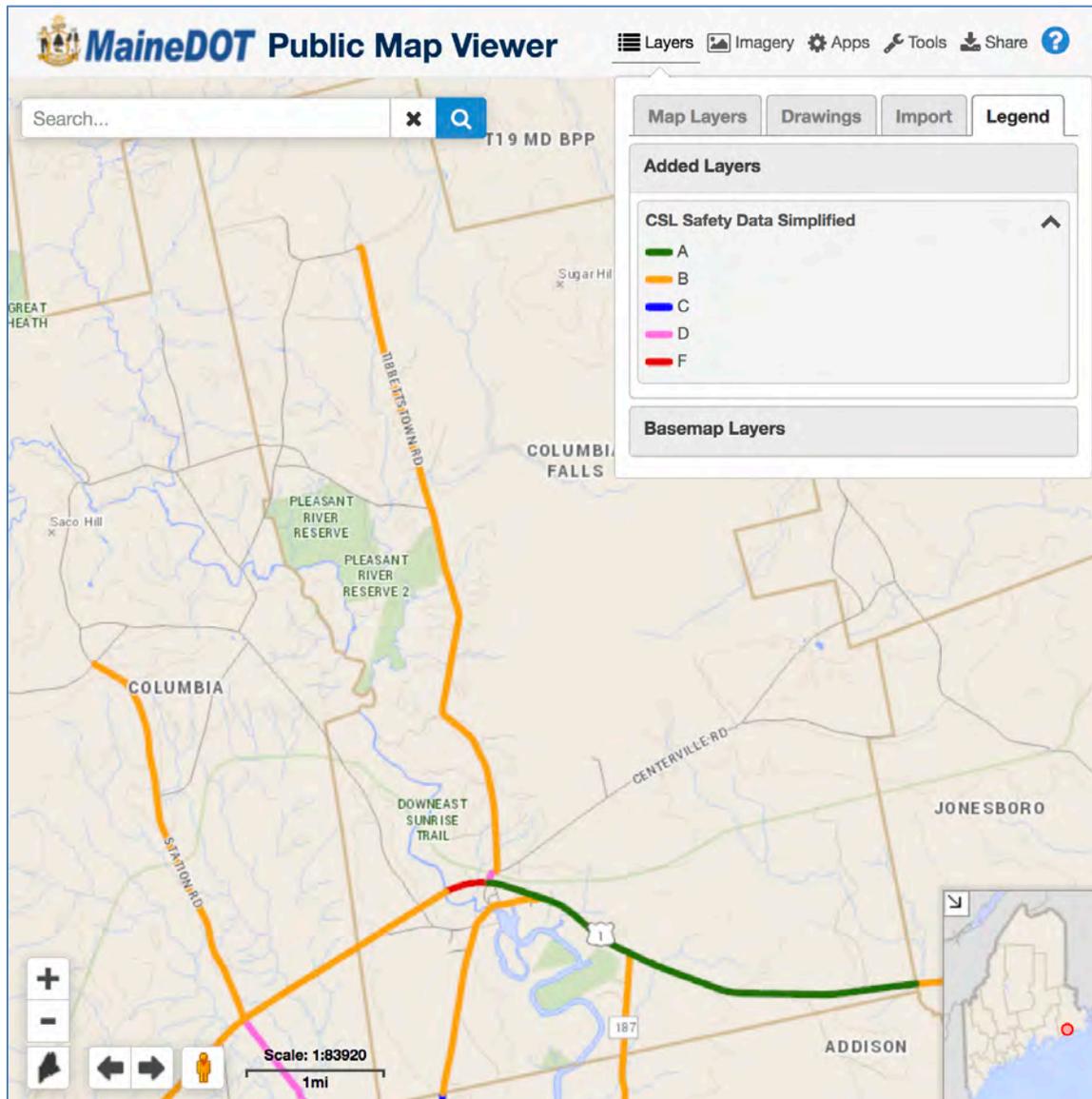
Columbia Falls contains no Priority 1 highways and one Priority 2 highway, US Route 1. The Customer Service Level (CSL) measures the state's highway assets (Priority 1-5) in three areas. The CSL uses customer-focused engineering measures to track highway (1) Safety, (2) Condition and (3) Serviceability, and grades them similar to a report card (A-F). The table below lists the individual measure that make up the overall service level grade.

Safety	Condition	Service
Crash History	Ride Quality	Posted Road
Pavement Rutting	Pavement Condition	Posted Bridge
Paved Roadway Width	Roadway Strength	Congestion
Bridge Reliability	Bridge Condition	

Customer Service Levels (CSLs) are given ratings on the following scales:
Grading System (A=Excellent, B=Good, C=Fair, D=Poor, F=Unacceptable)



A screen capture (from the Maine DOT Map Viewer (<http://www.maine.gov/mdot/about/assets/search/>)) of the Customer Service Levels for the roads in Columbia Falls is provided below. While the roads in Columbia Falls have good *service* ratings a very different picture is generated when the map viewer is used to view the road *condition* data. As a result, the public map viewer generates a bleaker picture when selected for the customer service level in terms of *safety*.



The most recent MaineDOT Work Plan covers the period from 2017-2018-2019.

Work Plan entries for Columbia Falls include, at a total estimated cost of \$350,000:

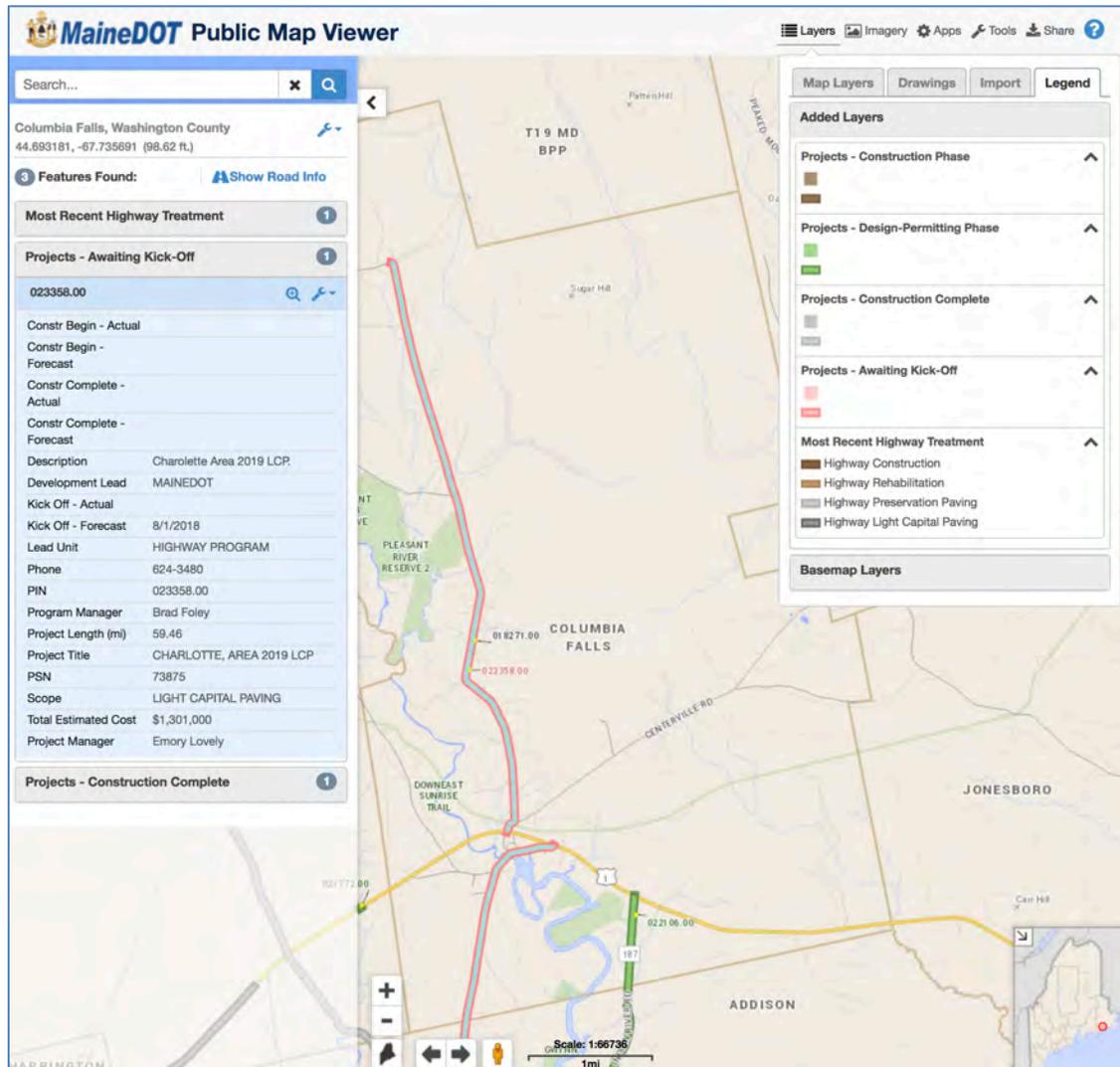
- Scour Countermeasures on US Route 1 at the Columbia Falls Bridge (#5946 over the Pleasant River located 0.70 of a mile East of the Columbia town line.

Additional projects in the Work Plan for MaineDOT Region 2 described variously as “highway preservation paving: light pavement treatment” and “highway safety and spot improvements includes one continuous segment in Addison, Columbia Falls and Jonesport as follows:

- Highway paving and light capital paving on Route 187: beginning at US Route 1 and extending South 8.78 to Snare Creek Lane for a cost of \$826,418.

The Maine DOT map viewer (<http://www.maine.gov/mdot/mapviewer/>) can be used to see multiple levels of detail in the capital work plan depicted on a map of the town. For instance, the

screen shot below has selected Columbia Falls, all projects in their various stages of construction (see legend at right) with detail on the light capital paving on US Route 1 in the box on the left such as costs, scope and forecasted kick-off of construction.



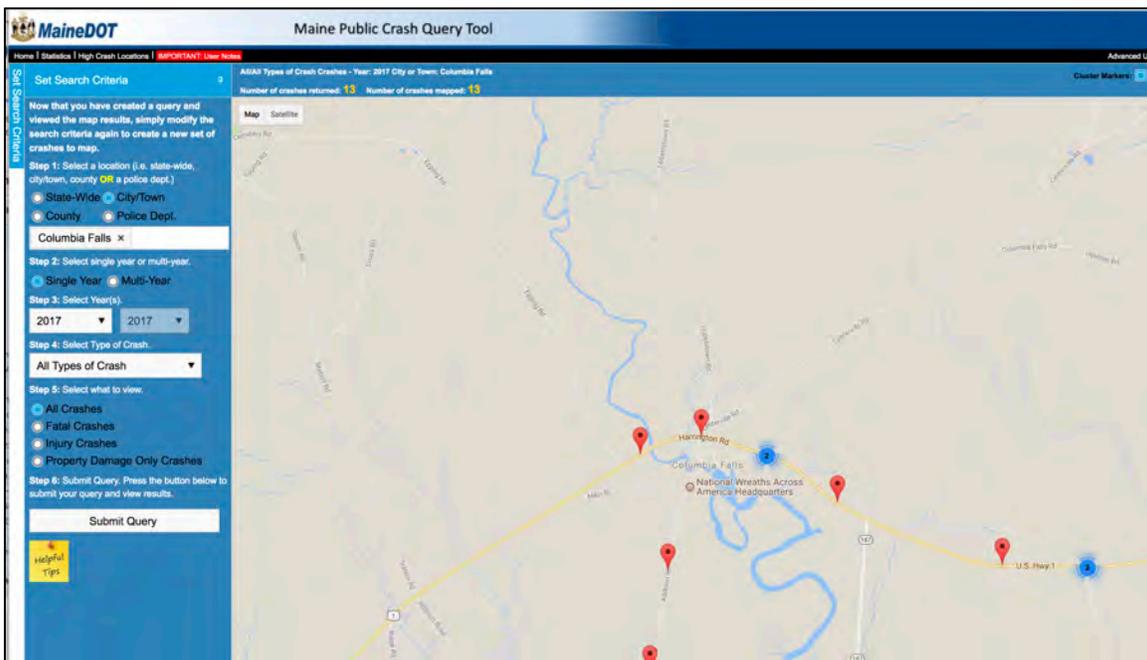
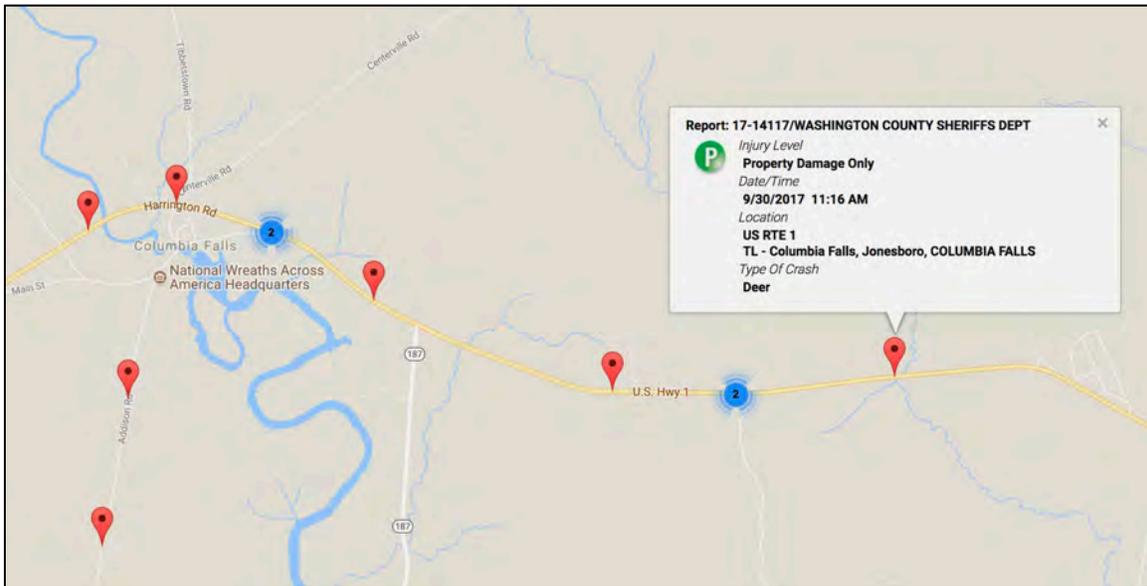
DANGEROUS INTERSECTIONS AND STRETCHES OF ROADS

MDOT also provides a web-based map (<https://mdotapps.maine.gov/MaineCrashPublic/PublicQueryMap>) that allows users to query the number and types of crashes within their community in one year or over several years. A screen capture of all crash types over the period 2012 – 2017 is provided below. Note that the user can click on a cluster of crashes and then click on an individual crash to obtain details about date, injury level, and cause as depicted in the second image on the following page.

The details provided in this database support the conclusions of residents regarding several areas as more dangerous than others. Crashes involving deer are most prevalent on US Route 1 and the Addison Road.

The town sees several locations as presenting potential safety problems:

1. The intersection of US Route 1 and Route 187. This intersection is cause for concern due to speeding along US Route 1, passing on US Route 1 within the intersection, and because of cars not stopping at the stop sign when entering US Route 1 from Route 187.
2. The town would like a blinking light on US Route 1 and Tippetstown Road Intersection to alert drivers approaching from North and South on US Route 1.



TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES

Currently the town has none and foresees no future need.

SHOULDERS

The majority of US Route 1 in Columbia Falls has paved shoulders on both sides of the road, but most of Route 187 and Tibbettstown Road do not have paved shoulders. Paved shoulders make the road safer, allow an area that is more useful for temporary maintenance of vehicles, provide increased opportunities for faster vehicles to pass slow-moving vehicles, offer safer opportunities for pedestrian travel, and allow easier and safer travel for the increased numbers of bicyclists touring the town. The town recommends that Maine DOT install paved shoulders along the roads in Columbia Falls during all road reconstruction projects.

BRIDGES

The town has four bridges, of which the State is responsible for three: one on US Route 1, one on the Addison Road, and one on Tibbettstown Road. The municipally owned bridge is located on Cross Road over Little River. According to Maine DOT the culverts associated with the municipal bridge have deterioration or initial disintegration, the culvert associated with the Tibbettstown Road bridge has moderate to major deterioration, the deck associated with bridge across Main Street toward Addison has advanced deterioration, and the bridge on US Route 1 across the Pleasant River is in good condition. As noted above the town arranges for the services of their own Road Commissioners and local contractors to periodically assess the condition of roads, culverts and bridges. Note that the location and condition of the bridges is provided in the Maine DOT Map Viewer (<http://www.maine.gov/mdot/mapviewer/>) referenced above. When the bridges layer is turned on and the user selects a particular bridge the left-hand dialog box opens and provides information specific to the selected bridge. Likewise, the online Planners Maps (<http://gro-wa.org/planners-maps.htm>) provide the user with the ability to depict bridges within the town along with other services and infrastructure.

PARKING FACILITIES

Present parking needs are met by existing on-street parking along roadways in our village area, the municipal lot, and in private lots. At current rates of growth, it is anticipated that current parking facilities will meet town needs for the next ten-year period.

PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

Presently, there are no sidewalks in Columbia Falls.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Public transit facilities are only available at the regional level. The Downeast Community Partners (DCP) provides transportation to medical appointments for MaineCare recipients (<https://www.downeastcommunitypartners.org/transportation/transportation-assistance.php>). These services are provided to income eligible persons and are typically children in state custody, welfare clients, Medicaid patients with medical appointments, the elderly and disabled, or people needing transportation to Meals for Me. Most of the longer trips are for medical

services: shorter trips are to local doctors, pharmacies, and groceries. Users of this service are mostly families living below poverty level, people with mobility limitations, people with one or no available vehicles, and the elderly. DCP also coordinates a volunteer driver program.

SunRides Community Transit (downeastcommunitypartners.org/transportation/public-bus-schedule) is open to the general public for a fee and is free on a first come first served basis for seniors. Also coordinated by DCP SunRides Community Transit includes a scheduled van and door-to-door on demand transportation from Columbia Falls to Machias, Ellsworth, and Bangor.

West Transportation provides a scheduled bus service for Washington County offers daily service from Calais to Bangor, round trip. Western Washington County communities receive public bus service and social service 52 weeks a year. The Bangor/Calais route operates daily year round. Pick up points are at various locations throughout the county. In Columbia Falls the pick up point is at the Four Corners Hardware Store.

AIRPORTS

There are no airports or public airfields within town. Primary regional airports include:

1. Bangor International Airport, 72 miles distant from the village center, provides national and international commercial passenger and freight services, as well as civil defense operations. 11,441-foot main runway. Car rental services are available.
2. Deblois Flight Strip, off State Route 193, has a 4,500-foot runway but no beacon or fueling services. Last rated by the state in good condition.
3. Eastport Municipal Airport has a 4000-foot runway and provides limited charter and instructional services. Beacon and fueling services. Last rated by the state in good condition.
4. Hancock County - Bar Harbor Airport in Trenton is the nearest airport with regularly scheduled passenger commercial service. In addition to daily commuter service to Boston, Massachusetts, charter service is offered. Car rental services are available. 5,200-foot main runway. Last rated by the state in excellent condition.
5. Machias Valley Airport has a 2909-foot runway and is used by private plane owners and in an emergency, by air ambulance services. Beacon, but no fueling services. Last rated by the state in fair condition.
6. Princeton Municipal Airport has two runways, the larger of which is 3999 feet, and is used primarily by private businesses and recreational fliers. Beacon, but no fueling services. Last rated by the state in fair condition.

RAILROAD FACILITIES AND RAIL SERVICES

Rail service from Bangor East to Calais was discontinued in 1986. A management plan for the Ellsworth-Ayers Junction portion of this line was adopted in 2006 to renovate and preserve the corridor for rail in the event it becomes feasible. In the interim the corridor is being managed as the Downeast Sunrise Trail, a multimodal trail. The East Coast Greenway is a bicycle and walking trail planned to extend from Key West, Florida to Calais, Maine, which may use some rail line right-of-ways. There also are efforts to expand freight rail service in Washington County, particularly in the Calais and Eastport areas with connections to the international rail network through Canada. Passenger rail service in the State has been given a boost recently with the reinstatement of passenger service between Boston and Portland with a recent expansion to Brunswick and plans for extension further up the mid-coast.

PORTS

There are no port facilities in our town. The deep water Port of Eastport is the closest port. It has two piers, three berths, with a low tide depth 40 feet, and over 75,000 square feet of covered storage. The outer berth can accommodate a ship up to 900 feet in length. There is also a recently reconstructed breakwater in Eastport for use by smaller vessels.

POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Policies and implementation strategies relative to Transportation in Columbia Falls are presented in Chapter N Policies and Implementation Strategies. They include policies and strategies that reflect changes in conditions on the ground, local priorities and State and Federal policy since the previous Comprehensive Plan was adopted.

A complete list of the policy recommendations from the previous Comprehensive Plan is included in Appendix F 2002 Policies and Implementation Strategies. A full copy of the previous plan is on file in the Town Office.

L. REGIONAL COORDINATION

Columbia Falls is a rural community situated 68 miles to the Southeast of Bangor, 63 miles to the Southwest of the city of Calais, 15 miles East of the County seat in Machias, and 42 miles East of the City of Ellsworth in Hancock County. Columbia Falls shares a border with the Towns of Addison to the South, Columbia and Harrington to the West, Jonesboro and Centerville Township to the East, and the Unorganized Territory of T19 to the North. Commercial retail activity is limited in Columbia Falls. Retail services and employment are sought primarily from larger regional centers in Machias and Ellsworth.

Comprehensive planning recognizes the importance of regional cooperation. The land uses in one community can impact another community, particularly when that land use is located near municipal boundaries. Harrington and Jonesboro have a locally adopted Comprehensive Plan consistent with State law but which expire in 2018 and 2019; Addison's expired in 2017. Columbia began updating its 2004 Comprehensive Plan in 2016. A Regional Plan for the Washington County Unorganized Territories was adopted in 2016. None of the neighboring organized towns have adopted a town-wide land use or zoning ordinance.

Columbia Falls has included analyses of regional issues in the areas of:

- Transportation
- Economic development
- Energy use and production
- Housing
- Public facilities
- Natural resources management
- Healthy communities
- Adaptation to climate change

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Regional transportation infrastructure within Columbia Falls is limited to the US Route 1 corridor, a significant pass through for freight and commuters. The overwhelming majority of residents work outside of Columbia Falls.

Columbia Falls contains the Northeasterly part of one Focus Area of Statewide Ecological Significance, known as Pleasant Bay. The Pleasant Bay Focus Area encompasses the entire coastline, islands, and tidal estuaries of the greater Narraguagus-Pleasant Bay region, as well as the adjacent Harrington Heath.

Elderly and low-income households must travel/move to larger centers in Washington County to find affordable housing developments.

The Town of Columbia Falls, in partnership with the Town of Columbia, created the Epping Fire District. There is also a four-town mutual aid service that includes Addison and Harrington. Ambulance and Emergency Medical Services are provided by a multi-town supported Pleasant River Ambulance Service, which provides mutual aid coverage to Columbia Falls, Jonesboro, Cherryfield and Milbridge. Columbia Falls obtains police protection from the State Police and County Sheriff's Department.

Solid waste pick-up services are privately handled. Columbia Falls is part of a multiple municipal shared disposal facility at Pleasant River Solid Waste Disposal District, located in Columbia Falls. Recycling options across the region are severely limited as of the summer of 2018.

Columbia Falls contracts with an animal control officer on an on-call, stipend basis and utilizes the Small Animal Clinic in Ellsworth.

Columbia Falls is part of RSU/SAD 37, which includes Addison, Columbia, Cherryfield, and Milbridge. None of the adjacent organized municipalities has adopted town wide zoning.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

Roads

The main transportation artery in Columbia Falls is US Route 1, which traverses the Southern sector of the town from East to West (even though US Route 1 is designated a North-South route) and serves as a pass through for freight and commuters, and which bypasses the historic village center.

The intersection of US Route 1 and Tibbettstown Road provides access South to the Town of Addison, and North to the Northern section of Columbia Falls. Several non-profit organizations and community services (including post office, town office and library) are located in the historic village off of US Route 1. Overall, roadways in Columbia Falls are in good condition.

Although the population of Washington County has decreased modestly from 1990 to 2010, MDOT states that the total number of vehicle miles traveled in our County has increased by over 13%. Most roads are not congested now, but there is a need to protect them from future degradation and the significant taxpayer expense of adding remedial capacity. The town should ensure that access management standards are used to keep the Level of Service (LOS) on US Route 1 from deteriorating.

It is important that Columbia Falls continue to participate in regional transportation planning efforts. Municipalities can cooperate with neighboring communities and regional committees. The two largest communities in Southwestern Washington County –Machias and Milbridge - have particularly significant transportation linkages that are all dependent on a shared labor force, large retail services (in Machias and Ellsworth), regional education and health services, and nearby public commercial waterfront facilities in Milbridge, Addison and Harrington.

Columbia Falls has and will continue to participate in regional Corridor Management Planning initiatives including the Downeast Coastal Corridor, and the Coastal Canadian Corridor (see <http://www.wccog.net/corridor-planning.htm>), and the **Bold Coast** Scenic Byway Corridor as outlined in Chapter J Transportation. These regional corridor-planning initiatives provide the opportunity to encourage residential, commercial and industrial development and promote tourism in locations that support local development goals while retaining efficient transportation mobility. Corridor management plans outline the appropriate locations for sound access management techniques such as frontage roads, shared driveways, intersections, turning lanes and signals.

A US Route 1 Mobility and Safety Analysis prepared by the Washington County Council of Governments in 2007 identifies three primary strategies for separating freight from commuter and tourist traffic including:

- Improved turning access to facilitate separation of commuter and through-traffic
- Additional Scenic pull-offs to facilitate separation of tourist and freight traffic, and
- The addition of passing lanes

Along the approximately 100-mile corridor between Steuben and downtown Calais, the US [Route 1 Mobility and Safety Analysis](#) identified 16 locations where roadway improvements for turning access are needed. This report recommends that MDOT make necessary roadway improvements for turning access at all 16 identified locations. We also identified 11 potential sites for scenic pull-outs to facilitate separation of tourist and freight traffic; and 26 potential locations for passing lanes. This report recommends development of four additional scenic pull-outs; and at least four passing lanes in each direction. Two options for turning lanes are identified in the town of Columbia Falls (see maps at <http://www.wccog.net/transportation-planning.htm>) and five options for passing lanes along US Route 1 between Columbia Falls and Machias.

Trails

Regionally connected trails include both ATV and snowmobile trails. Volunteers in Columbia Falls help to maintain these trails.

The Down East Sunrise Trail (DEST) is an 87-mile regional trail, inaugurated in sections starting in 2009 for multiple users including bicyclists, walkers, ATV riders, snowmobilers and cross-country skiers. Following the former Calais Branch railway corridor, it forms an East-West corridor across Washington County to which numerous other snowmobile and ATV trails can connect. The DEST is also part of the East Coast Greenway, a bicycle route connecting Key West, Florida to Calais and then into New Brunswick, Canada. Both the Bold Coast Scenic Bikeway and Bold Coast Scenic Byway run through the village center of Columbia Falls.

Efforts are underway to connect regional trails statewide and promote Maine as a premier outdoor recreation destination. The Down East Sunrise Trail and Bold Coast Scenic Bikeway, which directly connect with Columbia Falls, are both considered regional trails of importance in these statewide outdoor recreation connections.

Public Transportation

Columbia Falls has limited public transportation options. West's Bus Service offers daily round trip service from Calais to Bangor with nearby stops in Columbia and Milbridge. The Downeast Community Partners (DCP) provides scheduled van and door-to-door on demand transportation for clients referred to them by the State of Maine Department of Human Services - income-eligible clients, children in state custody, welfare clients, Medicaid patients with medical appointments, the elderly and disabled, or people needing transportation to Meals for Me. Less than six percent of the current ridership is unsubsidized fare-paying customers. The average worker cannot use Sun Rides as a commuter service, because:

- a) General-public riders are taken on a space-available basis only, so even a ride scheduled well in advance will be bumped if the transit vehicle is at capacity with contracted clients;
- b) Unsubsidized fares are too high for low-wage workers to use the service on a daily basis; and
- c) Demand-response systems serve some rural communities just one day a week, with fluctuating departure and arrival times.

Workforce Transportation

The sporadic nature of demand-response service eliminates public transit as an option for rural workers with inflexible hours, shift workers, and those with on-call or overtime work responsibilities.

West's Transportation is an incorporated firm that has adopted a public-private partnership model. Ridership on West's Transportation routes is a mix of general public and contracted agency clients. It

receives federal transit funding to operate a daily fixed-route schedule of public service between Calais and Bangor and back via US Route 1 and US Route 1A, and it also markets its services to social service agencies.

Fixed-route transit service is a much more predictable and reliable transportation mode for rural workers, and many workers would be willing to spend an hour or more of commute time each morning and evening in return for predictable and reliable daily transportation. However, West's current fixed routes and schedules are too limited to accommodate the average 8-to-5 workers, let alone those on shift work or non-standard schedules.

As currently configured, neither DCP's Sun Rides service nor West Transportation's fixed-route service adequately meet the needs of the rural workforce in Washington County.

Transit Improvements

Innovative strategies and practices could greatly enhance the current level of service for all transit operations in Washington County, particularly in their capacity to serve working-age adults. The current emphasis on agency-contracted clients can be attributed to a chronically inadequate Federal transit funding formula, offset by fairly generous contract reimbursement incentives that help to ensure the availability of rides for social service agency clients.

At present, the "public" best served by the rural public transportation system is a very narrow subset of the total population. This is true all over the United States, not just in Washington County. However, other transit agencies have found ways of increasing their efficiency and ridership that might work in Washington County – if the agencies delivering transit services are willing to undergo changes to their current operations in return for potential increases in ridership and efficiency. Several alternative service ideas from other places are summarized below. They all have some potential to expand access to public transportation and workforce development in Washington County.

- "Fixed-schedule" service – combines the convenience of demand-response service with a published daily schedule, making it more predictable and reliable for general public riders.
- Immediate-response "Dial-A-Ride" service (works best as a community-based system in relatively compact population centers, with a strong local volunteer base if volunteer drivers are used).
- Establish transit stops at formal and informal "Park and Ride" lots.
- Ride-sharing and vanpooling programs, often using GIS to match drivers to riders; some vanpool programs are "self-organized" by a group of employees living in the same general area
- Innovative use of transit scheduling software.
- Child-oriented transit service: hire a transit attendant to escort young children on rides to daycare/school/appointments, thus allowing the parent(s) to work.
- Dues-paying, 24-7 non-profit ride service with incentives for pre-scheduling, flexible scheduling, and shared rides; successfully operating in Portland and surrounding communities (eg. <http://www.gomaine.org/>).
- Provide easy-load bike racks on ALL vehicles in the public transit fleet.

Airports

There are no municipal airports in Columbia Falls. Primary regional airports include:

1. Deblois Flight Strip, off State Route 193, has a 4,000-foot runway but no beacon or fueling services. Last rated by the State in poor condition.
2. Machias Valley Airport has a 2909-foot runway and is used by private plane owners and in an emergency, by air ambulance services. Beacon, but no fueling services. Last rated by the State in good condition.
3. Hancock County - Bar Harbor Airport in Trenton is the nearest airport with regularly scheduled passenger commercial service. In addition to daily commuter service to Boston, Massachusetts, charter service is offered. Car rental services are available. 5,200-foot main runway.
4. Bangor International Airport provides national and international commercial passenger and freight services, as well as civil defense operations. 11,441-foot main runway. Car rental services are available.

Railroad Facilities and Rail Services

Abandoned rail lines across Washington County are generally in poor condition as passenger service stopped nearly fifty years ago and freight service stopped in the mid-1980s. The 87-mile Downeast Sunrise Trail is now located on the exempt Calais Branch rail line from Ellsworth to Ayers Junction. Although rail was removed to construct the trail, the Management Plan for the Calais Branch specifies that if rail becomes a feasible use of the corridor, then the Downeast Sunrise Trail will no longer be the primary use of the corridor.

Efforts to expand freight rail service in Washington County are not over, particularly in the Calais and Eastport areas, which have connections to the (formerly) Pan AM railroad lines that cross into Canada and back into Maine to reach the Western part of the State.

Ports

There are no port facilities in Columbia Falls. Boating facilities at the Milbridge Town Marina, located at the mouth of Narraguagus Bay, include a pier and boat ramp. Recreational and commercial fishermen frequently use the Town Marina, and facilities are in good condition, however, its usefulness as a commercial port is minimal.

The deep0-water Port of Eastport at Estes Head, 71 miles west of Columbia Falls, is of critical importance to current and future economic activity in the region. Eastport has the greatest natural depth of water of any port on the East coast of the United States and as the Easternmost port in the United States, is significantly closer to Europe. With 100 feet of water on approach channels, 64 feet of water at the pier at low tide and more than sufficient space to turn the largest ships afloat, Eastport is uniquely positioned and naturally endowed to accommodate any size vessel existing or planned.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Columbia Falls is tied into the regional economy of Washington County (and to some extent, Hancock County). Columbia Falls residents obtain goods and services from service center communities like Milbridge, Machias, and, Ellsworth. Residents also rely on these centers for employment. Thus, their well-being is tied to fluctuations in the entire region's economy.

As noted in Chapter G Employment and Economy, the overwhelming majority of jobs in Columbia Falls (from 2002-2015) employing both those who live in Columbia Falls and those who come into town to work have increased from 58 in 2002 to 118 in 2015. Although more people are employed outside of the town, fewer residents are leaving town for work, down from 174 in 2002 to 130 in 2015. The largest employers are in the building and fishing industries, and at Wreaths Across America.

Brownfields Assessment and Redevelopment

A regional driver of economic renewal comes from the Washington County Brownfields Assessment program that has operated since 2009 with a regional advisory committee and USEPA Brownfields Assessment funds through the Washington County Council of Governments (<http://www.wccogbrownfields.com>). Brownfields are defined as real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.

Since 2009 the Washington County Brownfields Program has conducted site assessments on over 30 properties throughout Washington County. Redevelopment/reuse is complete on 20 of those sites and several more are under active redevelopment. There is a pending inventory of at least another 50 sites. By definition Brownfields assessment is needed on properties with a commercial/industrial history, which are often in the very best locations for redevelopment; they are located in downtown centers, near existing infrastructure, at the junction of arterial highways, in historic structures and on municipal waterfronts. Redevelopment of abandoned residential, commercial and industrial properties fosters a sense of vibrancy, promotes diversity and expands the experience of community. Infill erases signs of emptiness and decay, and allows existing natural areas to continue providing forest products, wildlife habitat, land for sports and recreation, and a continued sense of a rural landscape.

Community Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

To better represent natural economies. Washington and Aroostook Counties are combined as one Economic Development District, called the Aroostook Washington Economic Development District (AWEDD). The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) that is required for all EDDs was completed in July of 2013. A new CEDS is being developed for adoption in the spring of 2018. The previous five-year CEDS can be downloaded on the GROWashington-Aroostook web site here: <http://gro-wa.org/region-wide-resources>.

The AWEDD has potential to leverage its natural resource base and environment, its hardworking people, its proximity to Canada and Europe, and its inherent economic resiliency; and its regional leaders are committed to reversing the economic and social decline of the past three decades.

The biggest challenge facing the AWEDD is workforce related, due to the loss of population. Aroostook and Washington counties have been trending downward in population, median age, median household income and percentage of total population in the workforce for the past four decades. All of these issues are directly related to the continuing out-migration of young working-age people (20-44-year-olds) from the region that results in:

- 1) Loss of business due to recruitment issues.
- 2) Less entrepreneurship.
- 3) Loss of services (healthcare and schools, most directly).

Immediate actions need to be taken to retain our young people and lure others to the region; and it must be an initiative that includes and engages all aspects of our communities— business, educational and governmental.

Mobilize Maine, an asset-based strategic planning process, offers an effective process for accomplishing positive change by engaging local and regional business leaders to establish measurable goals that are linked to assets (natural, business and human resources), job creation and business expansion from within the region. Business, municipal and non-profit leaders have the capacity to lead economic change if it is based on regional assets that are in our control. Using the Mobilize Maine process, the 2013 CEDS for the AWEDD has identified economic sectors that offer the best opportunity and business activities in those sectors that will improve wages and create new jobs to achieve the goals of the strategy. AWEDD's priority industry sectors are:

- Alternative Energy
- Manufacturing
- Diversified Agriculture
- Forest Resources
- Tourism
- Marine Resources

A selection of Opportunities and Challenges that drive the CEDS regional vision are:

Opportunities:

- Active international border with Canada that offers significant economic opportunity for business expansion and cross-cultural engagement.
- Expanded shipping opportunities at the Port of Eastport.
- Available tillable cropland, much of it suitable for organic use.
- Expanding and diversifying value-added wood products.
- Utilization of renewable and alternative energy resources - wind, tidal, biomass and compressed natural gas.
- Expanding value-added processing of crop and marine resources.
- Expanded utilization of higher education resources.
- Light manufacturing at former Cutler Naval Station.

Challenges:

- Lowering energy costs for business and industry.
- Broadband availability/access to high speed internet.
- Mitigating distance to market through more effective/efficient transportation.
- Limitations on ability to support more businesses/service providers.
- Lack of business acumen and entrepreneurial training and assistance.

REGIONAL ENERGY ISSUES – USE AND PRODUCTION

Energy use and production issues are intimately related to the economic health of the region. The Findings and Recommendations of the Down East Maine Renewable Energy Working Group¹ (January, 2014) summarized a 6-month exploration of renewable energy issues.

The Renewable Energy Working Group assumed that expanded investment and deployment of renewable energy, if found to be cleaner and more affordable than existing fuels and systems,

¹ Calame, Jon and Woodworth, Asher. January, 2014. Down East Maine Renewable Energy Working Group: Findings and Recommendations Report. Available at: <http://www.gro-wa.org/down-east-maine-renewable-energy-report>

would benefit Maine residents, who currently rely on fossil fuels for heat and electricity to a much greater extent than the average American or the average New Englander. The report examined investments, challenges, and opportunities – real and anticipated – in relation to renewable power, its sources, networks, mechanical systems, costs and workforce requirements.

The topics arising most consistently, urgently, and persuasively throughout all these investigations concerned the linked challenges of front-end transition costs, market distortion, and fair policy frameworks. In particular, these issues were recurrent in relation to expanded deployment of renewable energy in Down East Maine:

1. Status quo is full of liabilities, full of opportunities: existing conditions in Down East Maine’s energy sector are problematic due to high reliance on non-renewable fuels (which creates a statewide path dependency), prevalence of fuel poverty, home energy affordability gaps, excess winter morbidity, investment efficiency gaps, and market failures; at the same time, renewable assets are unusually high on a per capita basis, with new employment potential dovetailing with ailing traditional industries.
2. Lack of equitable, consistent, and predictable regulation: when there is a perception of imbalance or caprice, investors can lose confidence and startups cannot attract the affordable capital they need.
3. New incentives for new energy markets: feed-in tariffs are viewed as an important tool with which to approach price-parity between incumbents and newcomers in the renewable energy marketplace, providing the funding and stability that support comprehensive development strategies.
4. Reliable and affordable access to capital for installation, transition & retrofit: front-end industry investments in alternative energy technologies bring unit prices “multiples above market” in relation to incumbent energy sources, sending a discouraging message about investment in renewables.
5. Uniform metrics for impacts & pricing: without apples-to-apples yardsticks for the full cost, success, impact of alternative energy, foggy decision-making precludes long-term policies and investments.
6. Prohibitive transaction costs: insufficient information about options coupled with a lack of time and energy to investigate them; absence of trustworthy (neutral) technical guidance
7. Low workforce capacity: even if investment were high, Down East Maine currently lacks the technical workforce (and capacity-building potential) to support large-scale energy transition to renewables.

Associated with production of renewable energy is the issue of affordable heat for low-income households. As of 2011, Maine’s overall energy consumption was 26th in the country (at approximately 311m BTU per capita annually), but the cost of that energy ranked much higher – at 10th in country (approximately \$5,508 per capita annually, amounting to 14% of Mainers’ personal income on average and a statewide expenditure of \$7.32b for the year).²

Since Maine residents have household incomes generally well below the national average, these figures spell out a painful picture: those with less to spend actually spend more per unit of energy.

² US EIA Maine state profile based on 2011 data.

Maine's reliance on heating oil contributes to energy insecurity, exposes consumers to price volatility, wastes resources on long-distance fuel transport and constitutes a large annual net export of wealth out of the state and, in large part, out of the country.

REGIONAL HOUSING ISSUES

Housing challenges in Washington County are related to the age of the housing stock as well as the age and income of the population. It is more cost effective and preferred by elders to stay in their homes. However, older housing (71% is pre-1979) is often in disrepair; many houses are large with inefficient thermal heating and insulation. Rental housing is not affordable for low-income persons, especially young families who pay a disproportionate percentage of their income for rent. And there are quality issues for all income levels that are also related to the age of the housing stock.

There is a "Catch-22" in relation to subsidized housing. There are an insufficient number of vouchers in relation to need and those that are available can expire due to a common inability to find adequate housing that meets the standard for a voucher given the short (30 day) timeframe allowed to find the rental. In addition, landlords are deciding not to accept vouchers because of the requirements to upgrade the housing (also related to age of housing stock). If housing is found, there is often a mismatch between its location and that of the tenants' place of employment. Low-income persons do not often have a reliable vehicle for a long commute.

Homelessness is known on an anecdotal basis but existing measures do not adequately document those who "couch-surf", double up with families in homes built for single-family occupancy, or live in sub-standard structures (such as seasonal camps and mobile campers) Finally, and also related to the age of the housing stock, many homes are unhealthy due to lead paint and mold.

Housing is primarily an issue measured and planned for on a town-by-town basis. However, the needs of certain populations, like seniors and those who may need an institutional setting, are often served at the regional scale. The needs of and programs for elderly housing are discussed at length in Chapter H Housing. Funding for housing assistance, whether for new construction or rehabilitation, is also provided at a regional scale. For a detailed list of options that could be applied to Columbia Falls, visit the sustainable housing page of the GroWashington Aroostook website at: <http://gro-wa.org/sustainable-housing.htm>.

As an example, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Housing Assistance programs are primarily channeled through regional Community Action Program agencies like the Downeast Community Partners (DCP). The CDBG program requires applicants for housing assistance funds to demonstrate that they have the capacity to administer the program either through municipal staff that are certified/qualified as general/rehab administrator or through a completed procurement process. To reach this threshold, small towns must often work together as a region or seek assistance from agencies like DCP.

REGIONAL NATURAL RESOURCE ISSUES

Columbia Falls encompasses the main stem of the tidal and freshwater reaches of the Pleasant River. Columbia Falls also contains the Pleasant River watershed and large wetland complexes at the head of several small brooks. There are small portions of the Northern edge of the Pleasant Bay Focus Area of Statewide Ecological Significance. Large wetland complexes associated with all of these watersheds

support many rare species and natural communities. Upland areas in Columbia Falls are a matrix of forestlands and heaths with several large blueberry-producing areas. There are many brooks, streams and wetlands associated with these lakes, as well as a wide diversity of aquatic and terrestrial species mostly described in the Natural Resources Chapter.

Natural resources in Columbia Falls and neighboring towns are protected through a variety of Federal, State and municipal regulations and through public and private land conservation efforts. Existing regulatory and non-regulatory protection are largely sufficient to protect critical natural resources in Columbia Falls. Columbia Falls regulates the minimum shoreland standards, as required by the State Mandatory Shoreland Zoning Act. Surface waters in Columbia Falls are also protected through the Plumbing Code and local Subdivision Regulations.

Columbia Falls is home to a diverse array of terrestrial and avian wildlife. The Maine Natural Areas Program documented two rare or exemplary natural communities in Columbia Falls, including the Salt-Hay Saltmarsh and Maritime Huckleberry Bog Natural Communities. Columbia Falls contains the Northeasterly part of one Focus Area of Statewide Ecological Significance, known as Pleasant Bay. Both the Narraguagus and the Pleasant Rivers support numerous anadromous fish species, including wild Atlantic Salmon. The extensive mudflats lining the river mouths and adjacent coves and coastal areas are staging areas for major concentrations of shorebirds during autumn migration, important habitat for wading birds and waterfowl and home to several rare species. Of 30 Downeast salt marshes surveyed for diurnal bird use by MDIFW in 1999, the Pleasant River salt marsh had by far the highest species richness, with 29 species detected. Columbia Falls has four areas of “known rare, threatened, or endangered species occurrence and/or the associated habitats based on species sightings,” including the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), two areas supporting the Upland Sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*), and the Brook Floater (*Alasmidonta varicosa*).

These special habitat areas and species are depicted on maps provided by the Beginning with Habitat program and are fully described in the publications provided in PDF format in their data package provided to the town.

REGIONAL PUBLIC FACILITIES ISSUES

- The Town of Columbia Falls, in partnership with the Town of Columbia, created the Epping Volunteer Fire District, and are a part of a four-town mutual aid service that includes Addison and Harrington.
- Ambulance/Emergency Medical Services are provided by a multi-town supported Pleasant River Ambulance Service, which provides mutual aid coverage to Columbia Falls, Jonesboro, Cherryfield and Milbridge. Columbia Falls obtains police protection from the State Police and County Sheriff’s Department.
- Solid waste pickup services are privately handled. Columbia Falls is part of a multiple municipal shared disposal facility at Pleasant River Solid Waste Disposal District, located in Columbia Falls. Recycling options across the region are severely limited as of the summer of 2018.
- Columbia Falls contracts with an animal control officer on an on-call, stipend basis and utilizes

the Small Animal Clinic in Ellsworth.

- Columbia Falls has no highway department but provides both winter and summer road maintenance by contracting for these services.
- The town has no public water or sewer system.
- Outdoor recreation opportunities available to the public in Columbia Falls include snowmobiling and ATV riding, hunting and fishing, paddling, bicycling, and nature viewing. Regional recreation facilities accessible to residents throughout the region include the Downeast Sunrise Trail and Pleasant River.
- A range of outpatient health-care services is available to Columbia Falls and nearby communities through Eastport Health Care, Inc. with a location in Machias. Services include medical, dental and behavioral healthcare. Columbia Falls residents and those in surrounding communities also travel to Machias, Ellsworth and Bangor to access other health care and medical services.
- Columbia Falls does not have an animal control facility, however, they contract with an animal control officer on an on-call, stipend basis and use the Small Animal Clinic in Ellsworth.
- Columbia Falls' students attend their choice of several nearby elementary schools and Narraguagus High School in Harrington.

REGIONAL EMERGENCY PLANNING

Washington County Emergency Management operates under the Maine & Federal Emergency Management Agencies—MEMA & FEMA—and is also under the authority of the county commissioners. Emergency Management offers Washington County communities a central source for emergency preparedness information and training. Emergency Management works with each community's local emergency management director to help deliver vital services in case of a large-scale emergency. Although Columbia Falls has some basic emergency information available to the public, they rely on the County EMA to assist citizens with immediate or long-range emergency management tactics.

REGIONAL LAND USE ISSUES

Comprehensive planning recognizes the importance of regional cooperation. The land uses in one community can impact another community, particularly when that land use is located near the municipal boundaries. As indicated in the natural resources section of the plan, the town should attempt to develop compatible resource protection standards with nearby communities.

Columbia Falls shares a border with the Towns of Addison to the South, Columbia and Harrington to the West, Jonesboro and Centerville Township to the East, and the Unorganized Territory of T19 to the North. Proposed land use districts are consistent with the existing pattern of development in neighboring communities as well as the communities' Future Land Use Plans.

Columbia Falls should continue to regularly coordinate with neighboring communities on a variety of

issues, including land use, through participation in the Washington County Council of Governments, Downeast Community Partners and other regional groups.

REGIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUES

A coordinated effort between Washington, Aroostook, and Hancock Counties is underway to develop and implement solutions to reduce the incidence of preventable chronic disease throughout the region. These efforts are spearheaded by Healthy Acadia and Healthy Aroostook. A primary focus is to increase access to and availability of both local food and opportunities for exercise.

Desired outcomes are summarized as follows:

- Reduction in the incidence of preventable chronic disease throughout the region.
- Increased access/availability to local food.
- Improved access to recreational assets providing opportunities for healthy exercise.

Additional public health goals for the Healthy Maine Partnership serving the region, include:

- Reduce, prevent and manage substance abuse; increase awareness of its impacts and provide healthy alternatives.
- Improving access to the full continuum of affordable health care services.

Initiatives to achieve these solutions currently underway in Washington County include several focus areas: access to physical activity, access to transportation, access to healthy foods and a wide range of outreach programs provided by Healthy Acadia.

Active Communities

Regular physical activity is an essential part of improving health and well-being. People who are moderately or vigorously active lower their risk of high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke, Type 2 diabetes, colon and breast cancer, and osteoporosis. Regular physical activity can also significantly improve mental health. Exercise can sharpen thinking, learning and judgment skills, reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression, and help us sleep better.

Fewer than half of all Americans get the physical activity they need to provide health benefits and 25% of adults are not active at all in their leisure time. In Maine only 23.7% of youth get the recommended level of exercise (60 minutes per day) and only 56% of Maine adults get the recommended levels of physical activity (30 minutes, five times per week).

Physical activity does not have to be strenuous and highly time-consuming to be beneficial. As an example, for adults, walking 30 minutes five times a week can benefit health and wellbeing. For youth, participating in school sports, engaging in after school activities can provide the recommended exercise to promote health and wellbeing.

Transportation for Health

Access to Transportation is a significant challenge in rural communities. Lack of transportation can be an obstacle to reaching needed health and social service appointments as well as employment and other services. Significantly more detail on this issue is provided above in the section on **Regional Transportation Issues - Public Transportation.**

Local Food Systems

Washington County is described by USDA as a “[food desert](#)”, a term that comes from the Food Access Research Atlas of the USDA (<http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas>). In a food desert “those with low incomes have limited access to supermarkets, supercenters, grocery stores, **or other sources of healthy and affordable food**” (Emphasis added). However, the two Census Tracts (9551, 9559) in Washington County where these criteria are met include only our large depopulated areas and account for only 18% of our population.

Countywide there are indeed many low-income households, also many with inadequate transportation that limits access to fresh food. However, 82% of the population resides in the census tracts NOT deemed a “food desert” and 56% of low-income households reside in the service centers where the existing supermarkets, supercenters and grocery stores are located.

Furthermore, the USDA Food Access Research Atlas does not fully reflect data on “other sources of healthy and affordable food” in Washington County. And Washington County has a great deal of great food. The **Washington County Local Foods Map** posted at <http://www.gro-wa.org/wcfood> depicts over 80 farms, several active farmers markets and buying clubs, producers and retailers of local specialty food, and abundant seafood. There is an active local food movement in Washington County that is growing within the county and reaching out to the rest of the state to support a regional (Maine and New England) food system.

In the face of this potential plenty we do indeed have significant **food security** issues mostly as a result of the high rates of poverty. Food pantries report that demand outstrips supply, yet also report difficulty in distributing fresh vegetables. Many do not have the experience or knowledge of preparing whole, fresh foods for consumption. In response pantry organizers provide classes on whole food cooking. The 11” by 17” poster of Food Pantry and Community Meal Sites shown at right can be downloaded from the GROWashington Aroostook web site here: <http://www.gro-wa.org/washington-county-food-pantries>.

In addition to increased health, building the local foods infrastructure has powerful economic implications. Not only do local dollars stay in the economy, new dollars arrive and bring jobs and business opportunities, providing the resources needed for equal access for all.

Healthy Maine Partnership Programming

The programs of Healthy Acadia that reach out to youth and adults span the public health spectrum. They are provided at a regional scale as well as to individual municipalities and schools; they include:

Healthy Maine Partnership Programming - The programs of Healthy Acadia that reach out to youth and adults span the public health spectrum. They are provided at a regional scale as well as to individual municipalities and schools; they include:

- Tobacco Cessation and Substance Abuse Prevention - tobacco-free and tobacco cessation programs work to reduce exposure of children to second hand smoke, raise awareness of prevention assistance programs, provide tobacco-free policy for public events, and increase the number of retailers adhering to Maine NoButs! Program that limits tobacco sales to minors. Likewise, businesses and law enforcement collaborate on strategies to reduce

underage drinking; schools, parents and businesses support open discussion of risks associated with under-age or binge drinking.

- Farm and Food programs – Farm to School including curriculum outreach, vermiculture, recipe and menu planning for school cafeterias; FoodCorps service leadership; support to the Food Pantry network; greenhouse materials & construction at discounted prices; support in the formation of a regional food council and healthy eating initiatives.
- Nutrition programs – We Can! (Ways to Enhance Children’s Activity & Nutrition) public education; SNAP-Ed (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) providing nutrition and cooking classes for residents receiving SNAP benefits; 5-2-1-0 Let’s Go to encourage kids and families to eat five servings of fruit and vegetables, two hours or less of recreational screen time, one hour or more of physical activity and zero sugary drinks.
- Living Well programs – worksite wellness, Keep Me Well health assessment tool, Screen Washington County to increase awareness and actual screening for colon cancer; free Breathe Easy signs to reduce exposure to second hand smoke; Tobacco Free Pledge resources; Healthy Homes information on lead exposure, testing and education on symptoms of high lead blood levels; information on trails in the region.
- Youth programs – Washington County: One Voice youth coalition, Jobs for Maine Graduates profiles; Downeast Teen Leadership Camp for students entering grades 7, 8, and 9.
- School and Community programs – Coordinated School Health Program, an eight-part program to improve kids health and capacity to learn; Transportation Infrastructure and access to Quality Health Care including collaborating with regional partners to improve transit options and publication of a Transportation Services Guide; Annual October Turkey-A-Thon to raise funds for the Food Pantries.

REGIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUES

Climate change - change in the long-term broad patterns of weather - is happening in Maine. It is well documented³ by more frequent and stronger storm events, higher tides, hotter summers, greater precipitation, shifting ranges of plant and animal species, expanded ranges of southern pests and disease, rising sea levels and acidification of the waters of the Gulf of Maine.

The short and long-term impacts associated with climate change are significant and far-reaching.

- Storm severity and frequency has and will continue to cause flooding, erosion and property damage.
- Sea levels will rise at an accelerated rate and threaten coastal infrastructure including roads, rail, working waterfronts, water and sewage treatment plants and many downtown centers.
- The temperature and salinity of the Gulf of Maine is reducing the productivity of the entire aquatic food chain with significant declines in zooplankton and stresses on shellfish.

³ *Maine’s Climate Future* An Initial Assessment; February, 2009. University of Maine; [People and Nature Adapting to a Changing Climate - Charting Maine’s Course, February, 2010](#) – a Summary of the Report Presented by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection to the Joint Standing Committee on Natural Resources of the 124th Legislature

- Pest species like Lyme disease-bearing ticks are reaching further north as winters become milder.
- Agricultural production is threatened with both drought and extreme precipitation as well as new pests and pathogens with expanded ranges and survival.
- The forest products industry might benefit from higher growth rates for some species. However a longer mud season and shorter periods of hard freeze will reduce harvest opportunity and large shifts in species composition (from insect, disease, or dieback) could ripple across the forest products industry.
- The public health impacts are also a concern, particularly for the elderly or infirm, as extreme temperatures increase risk of heat stroke and, during coastal flooding, isolation from services or emergency response.
- Natural systems also face loss of wetlands, and wildlife are exposed to exotic species and temperature-related stress.

Some changes may bring more tourism to Maine; increase forest productivity (and carbon sequestration), and increased variety and security in food production.

Climate Vulnerability Assessment

Climate vulnerability assessment (CVA) is a collection of tools and analyses used to understand how we are vulnerable or resilient in terms of impacts on people, infrastructure, public health, natural systems, and the economy. It asks what systems, species, populations, entities, facilities and infrastructure are most vulnerable to expected climatic changes, often depending on factors such as exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity. Geographic information systems (GIS) mapping tools are a powerful means of:

- a. visualizing our vulnerability
- b. recognizing the gaps in our understanding of our vulnerability, and
- c. focusing our efforts on gathering necessary information and preparing for risk and change

In the fall of 2013, the Washington County Council of Governments, working in cooperation with the University of Maine at Machias GIS Service Center presented a series of town- and bay-specific climate vulnerability assessments (CVAs) that anticipate a variety of storm impact scenarios. The GIS Service Center adapted the Sea, Lake and Overland Surges from Hurricanes (SLOSH) model, a computerized numerical model developed by the National Weather Service (NWS)⁴ to estimate storm surge heights resulting from historical, hypothetical, or predicted hurricanes by taking into account atmospheric pressure, size, forward speed, and track data. The SLOSH model is applied to a specific locale's shoreline, incorporating the unique bay and river configurations, water depths, bridges, roads, levees and other physical features.

The bay-specific CVAs were based on SLOSH model output of a hypothetical but entirely plausible hurricane that makes landfall in Penobscot Bay.

⁴ According to the NWS, the surge height predictions from the SLOSH model are accurate to within +/-20% for storms that follow the track and force patterns within the model. National Weather Service Sea, Lake, and Overland Surges from Hurricanes (SLOSH) Model. 2013. <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/surge/slosh.php>

These CVAs included Columbia Falls and can be downloaded here: <http://gro-wa.org/washington-county-climate-change-response>. The coastal CVAs are made possible by the recent (2012) acquisition of LiDAR (light detection and ranging) elevation data. The flights and analysis that provide this very high-resolution elevation data are very expensive. As a result, they are only available along the immediate coast of Washington County.

Adaptation to Climate Change Impacts

There is a range of adaptation responses that landowners, businesses, and municipalities can take to limit exposure to our vulnerabilities. These include:

For storm adaptation:

- Evacuation and shelter planning including in real time
- Establish communications protocol between UMM-GIS Service Center Director and County EMA Director to Ensure real time scenario development in event of actual predicted hurricane in the Gulf of Maine
- Pre-position equipment to areas that may be cut off during a storm
- Map house bound and elderly residents; add to Climate Vulnerability Assessment

For roads, bridges and transportation:

- Inventory transportation infrastructure
- Participate and update culvert mapping inventory of Washington County Council of Governments
- Keep sand & salt piles above flood levels
- Improve stormwater capacity
- Improve culverts, flow under causeways
- Evaluate substructure of roadways most vulnerable to inundation and upgrade where necessary

For municipal officials:

- Limit building in flood prone areas using on-line mapping tools provided by Washington County Council of Governments (<http://www.gro-wa.org/planners-maps>)
- Adopt construction codes for coastal properties
- Maintain wetlands and floodplains to absorb flood waters

For Public Health:

- Plan for heat emergencies
- Distribute education about pest borne illnesses especially Lyme disease
- Translate health advisories into Spanish and Passamaquoddy
- Assist elders and low income households with air conditioning/cooling

For any and all concerned:

- Train all personnel on use of on-line scenario mapping tool
- Always document impacts from severe storms ([Damage and Injury Assessment AKA “Form 7”](#) & photos) to ensure County EMA officials can assemble documentation of regional storm impacts to reach Federal Disaster Declaration thresholds

POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

A complete list of the policy recommendation from the previous Comprehensive Plan is included in Appendix F: 2002 Policies and Implementation Strategies. A full copy of the previous plan is on file in the Town Office.

Current policies and implementation strategies relative to Regional Coordination in Columbia Falls are presented in Chapter N Policies and Implementation Strategies. They include revisions to the 2002 policies, along with additional policies and strategies that reflect changes in conditions on the ground, local priorities and State and Federal policy changes since the 2002 Comprehensive Plan was adopted.

M. LAND USE

PURPOSE

It is the purpose of this section to:

1. Identify and understand the uses of land throughout Columbia Falls in terms of the amounts and location of land generally devoted to various land use classifications.
2. Identify and understand changes in Columbia Falls' land use patterns and how they might reflect future land use patterns.
3. Identify land areas suitable and unsuitable as the primary locations for the growth and development predicted for the next ten years.

Columbia Falls is a rural community of 24.6 square miles - approximately 15,750 acres - and approximately 537 full-time residents. Columbia Falls shares the East Branch of the Pleasant River with the Town of Columbia. Columbia Falls also contains many streams and wetlands, and extensive forestland. Just less than 200 acres of the municipal area is open (fresh) water.

Columbia Falls consists of mostly small, rolling hills, many of which are cleared for blueberry production. Elevations range from sea level to close to 410 feet on Sugar Hill where the land tends to be steeper than in other parts of town. The Northeastern sections of town are generally flatter than in other areas. The steepest slopes in town are between 8-15% and are found in scattered locations along the river and on the West side of Sugar Hill. Slopes of less than 8% are more common in other sections of the town.

Much of the land in Columbia Falls consists of relatively inhospitable soils; however, the town has undergone increased residential growth over the past twenty years, primarily along major roadways. The growth, for the most part, has been spread out rather than concentrated in the traditional village area of town.

The town has made efforts to place some control on unrestricted development through compliance with the State mandated subdivision laws and the revision of its Shore Land Zoning Ordinance in 1991 and modified again by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in 1995. Certain segments of the Pleasant River and additional fresh water wetlands were added to the resource protection district. Some additional changes in local land use regulations will be necessary to address concerns raised in this comprehensive plan and any new State requirements.

PAST DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Columbia Falls' location on the Pleasant River influenced its history and development. This settlement pattern is typical of the New England coastal communities that were settled when the seas were the highways. Residential development also occurred along the rural roads that connected Columbia Falls with nearby villages.

Columbia Falls was sparsely settled with a concentration of development in the village area. The village was strategically located at the head of tide and where US Route 1 and the railroad come together. As with most towns, growth occurred where it made the most economic sense; in this case, the river and US Route 1 were the primary focus. Since the town was originally

economically oriented toward the sea, growth continued along the roads originating at the coast and the pathways which connected the various communities. It is along the same roadways today that development is still occurring, but now in a more random and dispersed way than when communications and travel were more difficult.

A shift in settlement patterns unrelated to the land occurred with the advent of the automobile. Major transportation routes gradually shifted from the seas to the roadways. Improvements made along US Route 1 in the 1960s further strengthened its role as "Main Street" for coastal Maine. US Route 1 was built to bypass Columbia Falls village, and more recent developments, both residential and commercial, have occurred along this Route. With advancement in machinery came the ability to "move the earth" to an extent that hand labor had not considered. Construction was no longer limited to land characteristics. Considerations such as access to drive-by traffic became the prime concern for commercial development.

Since its settlement a mix of residential and light commercial uses has characterized Columbia Falls village. Like many New England village centers, it has included general stores, gas stations, post offices, churches, schools, small hotels, and restaurants.

EXISTING LAND USE PATTERN

With the exception of the village center, Columbia Falls is comprised of primarily rural residential development. The few commercial enterprises are scattered throughout the town.

Columbia Falls' village center houses a Library, Town Office, Post Office, United Methodist Church, Ruggles House Museum, Wreaths Across America Museum, and the Down East Salmon Federation. Historic homes are prominent features of the village, including three structures listed in the National Register of Historic Places and five houses with potential for eligibility on the National Register of Historic Places.

Residential development occurs on the Western portion Tibbettstown Road. Although house frontages are relatively small, lot sizes are quite large. Construction businesses, blueberry fields, farmland, forestland, and cranberry bogs can be found in the outlying area.

The Epping Road area is mainly forested with some farmland and scattered dwellings.

The Centerville area includes natural resource-based industries, houses, recreational infrastructures and some forestland and blueberry fields.

DEVELOPMENT PRESSURE

Many communities in Washington County are feeling the opposite sensation of development pressure – the continued decline of population (especially youth), employment opportunities, availability of services, and housing quality. Our school enrollment has declined; homes are generally on the market for extended periods of time; consolidating services are being discussed.

The community supports limited commercial redevelopment of existing developed areas and supports new and redeveloped residential construction. The community desires a climate of local employment, an active but small retail center, and the return of young families. Columbia

Falls hopes to focus new commercial and residential development and redevelopment of unoccupied structures in the town center.

Columbia Falls' town center has a well-developed infrastructure, and therefore is the most sensible area for new or expanded residential and commercial development. The town center features streets and sidewalks, public water, as well as electricity, cable and telephone. The town center is where most jobs in Columbia Falls are located, where the Town Office, museums, Post Office, Downeast Salmon Federation, and Public Library are located.

Currently, development in Columbia Falls is unregulated and remains open to potentially incompatible development proposals, especially on smaller lots and adjacent to historic structures such as exist in the town center. There have been few subdivision reviews in Columbia Falls; many large land tracts remain intact today.

Development normally occurs first in those areas that are the easiest to build upon, i.e. the more accessible (flatter) the better. Similarly, bedrock and soils create limiting factors for development since only certain types of each are conducive to good septic drainage and, separately, the ability to withstand construction loads. Glacial Till, the dominant surficial deposits in Columbia Falls, generally provides only a thin covering for the bedrock below but is generally suitable for agricultural use, septic disposal and sanitary landfill. Marine deposits, composed of silt and clay, are also common, are usually found in low-lying, flat areas, and have poor drainage and low-bearing capacity. There are several ridges traversing the Tibbettstown Road that have good to moderate soils.

Overall the soils throughout Columbia Falls are not particularly good for low-density residential development. The conditions are generally worse closer to the river. Sections of land Southeast of the village have areas of soils rated as "medium" suitability; otherwise there is very little good soil in the Southern part of town. There is also a large block of soils considered good in the Northeast corner of town, the Pineo Ridge Delta, which consists of extensive sand and gravel deposits. In addition, there are several low-lying ridges perpendicular to the Tibbettstown Road, which are glacial ice contact features that are also very well drained. In some respects, poor soils encourage sprawl, since larger tracts of land are required to meet septic demands.

Growth and development are anticipated to increase along US Route 1 and in other areas that have poor soils or topography. In order to reduce any negative effects on regional water quality, traffic volumes, and open space, the town should adopt a land use ordinance to guide development to the parts of town that will best absorb it. Since most growth pressure in Columbia Falls is related to US Route 1, there will be greater demand for developable road frontage along US Route 1.

ANTICIPATED FUTURE DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

As noted in Chapter E Population, Columbia Falls' population peaked around the turn of the 20th century. With the decline of logging and shipbuilding, Columbia Falls' population declined from a high of 663 in 1910 to a low of 367 in 1970, rebounded to 599 in 2000, and again declined to around 537 individuals in 2015. According to a forecast from the Office of Policy, Management, Economics, and Demographics, Columbia Falls' population will decline to 497 people by the year 2034.

In 2010, Columbia Falls had a total of 301 housing units, a 1% decline from 2000. The housing stock increased by approximately 2.6% to 307 units during the American Community Survey 2011-2015 5-year estimates. The average household size declined from 2.31 in 2010 to approximately 2.1 in 2015. In Columbia Falls, these trends reflect an increasing elderly population, households with fewer children, and older children moving out of the house and away from the region.

In 2016, vacant housing (55 units) comprised 18.3 percent of all housing units in Columbia Falls. Roughly half of these vacant units are used for seasonal, recreational or occasional use. Single-family seasonal housing development is likely to continue as environmental recreation opportunities in the region expand and increase Columbia Falls reputation as a quiet getaway, and if the rate of aging demographics continues.

The rehabilitation of existing homes within the town center, close to local services, is a desirable type of development. Redevelopment of abandoned residential and commercial properties fosters a sense of vibrancy, promotes diversity, and expands the experience of community. Infill erases signs of emptiness and decay and allows existing natural areas to continue providing forest products, wildlife habitat, land for sports and recreation, and a continued sense of a rural landscape.

Land uses within Columbia Falls are not anticipated to change substantially in the coming years, and the town will continue to be a low-density residential, agricultural, and fisheries community.

Respondents to the September 2017 community survey strongly supported the encouragement of new commercial and industrial development and affordable housing that preserves the small-town ambiance and is not harmful to the environment. Responses and comments suggested that older abandoned and dilapidated structures should be removed or renovated before focusing on new construction.

Desired types of economic activity noted by survey respondents includes gas station, retail, dining and lodging, community gathering places, recreation for youth, and nature-based businesses. Also mentioned were energy development, gift/antiques, forestry/agriculture, and technology. The written comments speak to a desire for smaller to medium sized scale, environmentally friendly operations in keeping with the quiet rural nature of Columbia Falls.

PRESENT LAND USE REGULATIONS

Apart from the State required minimums, the Town of Columbia Falls has a limited set of regulatory measures to affect the nature and pattern of development. Building permits are required for shore land development. Several existing land use regulations that municipal boards and officials must follow are listed below. Regulations change over time and it is the responsibility of municipal officers to keep up with these changes.

MDOT Access Management (17-229 Maine Administrative Rules Chapter 299, Part A and B) - The Act specifically directs the MDOT and authorized municipalities to promulgate rules to assure safety and proper drainage on all State and State Aid Highways with a focus on

maintaining posted speeds on arterial highways outside urban compact areas. The law also requires that the rules include standards for avoidance, minimization, and mitigation of safety hazards along the portions of rural arterials where the 1999 statewide average for driveway related crash rates is exceeded. Those rural arterials are referred to in the rules as "Retrograde Arterials". There are no such retrograde arterials in all of Washington County.

Maine State Plumbing Code - The community adheres to the Maine State Plumbing Code, which requires that the installation of plumbing and septic systems be in accordance with the Maine State Law and the Subsurface Wastewater Disposal Rules and Regulations.

Shore Land Zoning Ordinance (Maine *Land Use Laws*, 1992) – Shore land areas include those areas within 250 feet of the normal high-water line of any great pond, river or saltwater body, within 250 feet of the upland edge of a coastal or freshwater wetland, or within 75 feet of the high-water line of a stream.

The purposes of these controls are:

- To further the maintenance of safe and healthful conditions
- To prevent and control water pollution
- To protect fish spawning grounds, aquatic life, bird and other wildlife habitat
- To protect archaeological and historic resources
- To protect commercial fishing and maritime industries
- To protect freshwater and coastal wetlands
- To control building sites, placement of structures and land uses
- To conserve shore covers, and visual as well as actual points of access to inland and coastal waters
- To conserve natural beauty and open space
- To anticipate and respond to the impacts of development in shore land areas

Columbia Falls' Shore Land Zoning Ordinance was originally adopted in 1974 and was last updated March 25, 2013. The map accompanying the ordinance was modified in 1995 by the DEP to add resource protection districts along certain segments of the Pleasant River, additional fresh water wetlands and stream protection for certain additional streams in Columbia Falls. The Ordinance contains the following districts:

1. Resource Protection District (RP)
2. Limited Residential District (LR)
3. Limited Commercial
4. General Development (GD)
5. Commercial Fisheries/Maritime Activities
6. Stream Protection District (SP)

Floodplains - The town does not have a floodplain management ordinance that meets State and Federal requirements. The Town's Planning Board is not currently considering a model flood management ordinance provided by the State, as very little land in Columbia Falls is within a floodplain.

Building Permits - Columbia Falls' building permit ordinance was enacted in 1974. The Columbia Falls Land Use Guidebook prepared in 1980 sketched out in layman's terms the

process of applying for building permits in town. The procedures for obtaining a shore land use and subdivision permit was also outlined. The Guidebook contained the rationale for the permit requirements and standards used in reviewing permit applications.

Subdivision Review - The subdivision review process in Columbia Falls is based primarily on the State guidelines and standards. A more detailed subdivision review ordinance was proposed for town meeting consideration in 1988, but the measure failed to pass.

AREAS UNSUITABLE FOR DEVELOPMENT

There are areas within Columbia Falls that require special consideration based on the potential environmental impact of land use activities. In these areas' stricter regulation or, in some circumstances, prohibition may be called for to avoid problems for both people and Columbia Falls' natural resources. These areas include the following:

- Floodplains – These are flood prone areas where flooding is frequent and can be severe. Use needs to be limited to activities unharmed by flooding, such as agriculture, forest and some types of recreation.
- Water Resources/Wetlands - These are areas that fall under the Shore Land Zoning Laws. Development in these areas is severely restricted and requires review and approval by the pertinent State Agencies.
- Wildlife Habitat/Conservation - These are areas that fall under the provisions of the applicable mandated legislation. Development in these areas is severely restricted and requires review and approval by the pertinent State Agencies.
- Unsuitable Soils - These are areas with limited development potential because of poor soils. Larger lot sizes would be required in order to meet the requirements of the Maine State Plumbing Laws.
- Slopes - These are areas that have a slope greater than 15% that preclude extensive development because of problems with erosion, runoff, and construction limitations such as allowable road grades, suitability for septic sewage disposal, and stability of foundation. Also, the Maine Plumbing Code does not permit septic systems on a slope greater than 25%.

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The remainder of this Chapter outlines the Future Land Use Plan for the Town of Columbia Falls. The Future Land Use Plan is intended 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.

Respondents to the 2017 Community Survey in Columbia Falls encourage growth of new commercial, retail, and industrial development. A variety of types of new small to medium businesses are favored, providing that new development is environmentally friendly and does not detract from the small-town atmosphere and quality of life. Preferred development areas are Town Center, Tibbettstown Road, Centerville Road and US Route 1. The village center is not typically favored for further development outside what already exists for business and homes. It is strongly recommended that the town create a Land Use Ordinance to protect the historic architecture and use of the village area, protect its rural character, and to protect important

natural and scenic areas.

In preparing the Future Land Use Plan, the Comprehensive Planning Committee considered all State mandated legislation for restrictions on additional development in areas prone to flooding, subject to shore land zoning laws, containing significant (as defined) wildlife habitat, and areas with unsuitable soils or severe (greater than 25%) slopes.

The proposed land use districts identify general areas of appropriate location and size to accommodate predicted growth and development, and protect natural resources while responsibly managing the fiscal resources. The proposed land use districts do not attempt to identify precise land areas needed to accommodate growth and development. In addition, the Proposed Land Use Plan does not assess the individual landowner's desire to sell their land for development, to develop it, or to leave it undeveloped.

In addition to these natural constraints, the Comprehensive Plan Committee considered the following elements in determining the configuration of proposed growth areas and rural areas outlined in the Future Land Use Plan and on the Future Land Use Map:

- The need to encourage growth and development
- Historic development patterns and land uses
- Recent development patterns and existing land use regulations
- Compatibility of present and future neighboring land uses
- Residents' desire to maintain the town's rural character and historic resources
- Natural features and resources including soils, water bodies, and wetlands
- Geographic location and role of Columbia Falls in the regional economy
- Existing infrastructure including water, electrical power, road system
- Road transportation and the availability of 3-phase power
- The importance of affordable housing
- Requirements of the Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act

MAINE'S GROWTH MANAGEMENT LEGISLATION

Maine's growth management legislation requires that municipalities designate two types of land use districts in their Comprehensive Plan: growth areas and rural areas. State requirements for the designation of land use areas are described below, along with descriptions of each proposed land use district in Columbia Falls.

The Growth Management Act requires that any municipal growth-related capital investments¹

¹ "Municipal growth-related capital investment" are defined as "investment by the municipality in the following projects, even if privately-owned, using municipal, county, state, federal, or other public funds, in the form of a purchase, lease, grant, loan, loan guarantee, credit, tax credit, or other financial assistance:

- (1) Construction of new transportation infrastructure or capacity;
- (2) Construction or acquisition of newly constructed multifamily rental or affordable housing;
- (3) Development of industrial or business parks;
- (4) Construction or extension of sewer, water, or other utility lines;
- (5) Construction of public, quasi-public, or private service infrastructure, facilities, and community buildings; or
- (6) Construction or expansion of municipal office buildings, municipal educational facilities, and other quasi-public facilities and other civic buildings that serve public clients and customers.

that may occur over the planning period be accommodated within the proposed growth areas; and the town commits to directing at least 75% of such investments to these areas of town.

In addition to Growth Areas and Rural Areas, communities may also designate three additional types of land use areas. They are Critical Rural Areas, Critical Waterfront Areas, and Transitional Areas.

A Critical Rural Area is defined as “a rural area that is specifically identified and designated by a community's comprehensive plan as deserving maximum protection from development to preserve natural resources and related economic activities that may include, but are not limited to:

- significant farmland
- forest land or mineral resources
- high-value wildlife or fisheries habitat
- scenic areas
- public water supplies
- scarce or especially vulnerable natural resources

... and open lands functionally necessary to support a vibrant rural economy.”

Critical Waterfront Areas are defined as “shorefront area[s] characterized by functionally water-dependent uses, as defined in MRSA 38 §436-A(6), and specifically identified and designated by a community's comprehensive plan as deserving maximum protection from incompatible development.”

Transitional Areas are defined as areas “suitable for a share of projected residential, commercial, or industrial development but that are neither intended to accept the amount or density of development appropriate for a growth area nor intended to provide the level of protection for rural resources afforded in a rural area or critical rural area.”

PROPOSED LAND USE DISTRICTS

Growth management legislation requires the designation of growth and rural areas in comprehensive plans. The designation of growth areas is intended to direct development to areas most suitable for growth and away from areas where growth would have a negative impact on rural resources. **The law allows municipalities to request an exemption from the designation of a growth area in two instances.** Title 30-A §4326 3-A A. (4) indicates that:

- A municipality or multi-municipal region is not required to identify growth areas for residential, commercial or industrial growth if it demonstrates that the municipality or multi-municipal region has experienced minimal.
- Or no residential, commercial or industrial development over the past decade and this condition is expected to continue over the 10-year planning period

Municipal growth-related capital investment does not include investment in the following: mobile equipment, the operation or maintenance of a municipal facility or program; maintenance of existing transportation infrastructure without significantly expanding capacity; or municipal revenue sharing.” Chapter 208 Review Rule, Maine State Planning Office (2011) available online at <http://www.maine.gov/spo/landuse/compplans/index.htm>.

The town believes that it qualifies for an exemption to the designation of a commercial or industrial growth area under this provision of the law. As the analysis in the population, housing and economy chapters conclude, the amount of residential, commercial or industrial growth over the past decade has been minimal to none and is expected to continue to be minimal.

The town therefore proposes several districts to reflect existing conditions and enable limited development to continue in a pattern similar to the past, including provisions for commercial fishing, agriculture, and home-based businesses.

The proposed districts are described below and illustrated on the Proposed Land Use Map at the end of this section. **In all proposed districts existing development will be “grandfathered”.**

Community survey respondents have expressed a desire to retain the small town, historic feeling of the community. Recommendations for future land use in the growth areas include lot sizes equal to or greater than the State minimum for on-site well and septic, and encouragement of home-occupations that promote Maine-made products and a strong local quality of life. It is further recommended that future land use exclude the handling, marketing or distribution of hazardous materials and industrial uses that are not compatible with residential living and protection of important natural resources.

The US Route 1 corridor has been defined as the logical area for encouraging further commercial growth. It is expected that this will remain the major state traffic artery for the immediate future. Development of perpendicular access roads along US Route 1 are encouraged to accommodate future commercial growth and to limit the number of driveways opening directly on US Route 1, particularly in the event of proposed commercial subdivisions. “Safe Access” should be a site review consideration for commercial growth on single lots which front on US Route 1, in order to minimize traffic hazards related to merging traffic. Setbacks, buffer zones, and landscaping are also encouraged in order to maintain the visual integrity of the corridor. These considerations are intended to encourage orderly growth without mandating prohibitive costs for entrepreneurs.

Any future land use ordinances established for Columbia Falls will specify the types and sizes of uses allowed and will be guided by existing conditions. The ordinance will also include coordinated access to ensure US Route 1 retains its function as a North-South arterial corridor, and other standards in keeping with the existing pattern.

Transitional Areas proposed in Columbia Falls today reflect existing conditions and portray the most efficient and successful areas for commercial, residential, civic, and industrial development. Transitional areas are described below and illustrated on the Future Land Use Map.

TRANSITIONAL AREAS

Mixed-Residential District

The purpose of this district is to minimize the potential for sprawl and retain the unique character of Columbia Falls while allow for a mix of uses. Institutional, recreational, single and multi-unit residential, accessory dwellings, single-family conversions, and mobile homes and mobile home parks will be allowed. Allowed uses will include activities with little or no external impact, warehousing, wholesale, and service and information businesses. Site Plan Review criteria for

commercial and industrial development will be developed. All new subdivisions will be required to adopt clustering provisions with dedicated open space.

A mixture of land use and development activity currently exists in this area, including residential, home based business occupations, business, commercial, retail, limited industrial, and public service. This district includes areas that could serve as high-density residential and commercial uses. No municipal water or sewer is available.

Any future land use ordinance will specify the types and sizes of commercial and high-density residential uses allowed. Allowed uses will be consistent with current and existing development. Performance standards will be developed within the land use ordinance to include access requirements, parking, landscaping, signage, as well as design criteria to ensure attractive development.

To protect the character and rural appearance and minimize development sprawl, the minimum residential lot size is one acre (43,560 square feet) with a minimum road frontage of 100 linear feet for residential, commercial use is 250 linear feet, single family clusters is 350 linear feet with all other uses as 150 linear feet per town ordinance adopted at Town Meeting March 1999 and updated at Town Meeting March 2018.

All new subdivisions will be required to adopt clustering provisions with dedicated open space.

Historic District

The proposed Historic District will be from 136 Main Street to 204 Main Street, including and encompassing Church Hill Circle as well as up to 114 Point Street.

The purpose of the Historic District is to allow reasonable growth to occur in the village center of Columbia Falls while preserving the historic character of the area. Mixed uses that have historically characterized the downtown village area should be continued and encouraged, with general design guidelines established to preserve the integrity of this historic area through compatible uses, scale of development, and architecture. Small lot sizes exist today, and the same pattern will be continued - the recommended minimum lot size is one acre.

Existing commercial/retail areas in the village center will continue to support mixed residential/light commercial/retail growth but will focus on rehabilitation and reuse of existing structures and previously developed sites. New development within the Historic District should blend as much as possible with the existing location and historic architectural character of the town. Typical allowed uses would include single and multi-unit residential and small-scale business and commercial activities compatible with the character of the village.

Design Guidelines will be developed to ensure that renovations and new construction are compatible with the existing character of the Historic District. Locations and setbacks of new buildings should reflect the setbacks of existing structures. The architecture of new buildings should be compatible in terms of bulk, height, proportions, and materials to existing structures in the Historic District. This will ensure that the historic character of Columbia Falls will not be damaged by future development. Good Neighbor Performance Standards will be established to maintain compatibility amongst mixed commercial and residential uses, including traffic, noise, lighting, outdoor storage, and odor potentially created by the proposed uses. Activities not compatible

with the historic and residential aspects of the Historic District will be prohibited, such as mobile home parks, towers, and handling of hazardous materials.

RURAL AREAS

Rural Areas include those areas in Columbia Falls where new development will be limited to support Columbia Falls' important natural resources including its forested land, wetlands, shore lands, scenic areas, and critical habitat. In these areas the town will use regulatory and non-regulatory means to place appropriate limits on incompatible development and uses.

According to the Department of Conservation, Agriculture, and Forestry, land areas designated as rural must be consistent with the following:

- To the greatest extent practicable, rural areas must include working farms, wood lots, properties enrolled in current-use tax programs related to forestry, farming or open space, areas of prime agricultural soils, critical natural resources, and important natural resources.
- The Future Land Use Plan must identify proposed mechanisms, both regulatory and non-regulatory, to ensure that the level and type of development in rural areas is compatible with the defined rural character and does not encourage strip development along roads.
- Rural areas shall not include land areas where the community actively encourages new residential, institutional, or commercial development.
- Rural areas must be compatible with designations in adjacent communities or provide buffers or transitions to avoid land use conflicts with neighboring communities.
- To protect and preserve the rural character of Columbia Falls while permitting low-density development, rural areas are established outside of the existing and proposed development areas and proposed growth areas. Rural areas are intended to safeguard Columbia Falls forest resource from development, to conserve natural resources and open space land, and to encourage agriculture, forestry, and certain types of recreational uses.
- The Rural Areas consists of those areas in Columbia Falls where new residential and home-based business development will be regulated to limit its impact on Columbia Falls important natural resources including agricultural land, forested land, wetlands and scenic areas.

Rural areas proposed in Columbia Falls consist of two districts: Rural Residential and Resource Protection. The land use districts proposed in the rural areas are described below and shown on the Future Land Use Map at the end of this section.

Rural Residential District

The purpose of this district is to maintain the rural character of Columbia Falls to protect agricultural and forestry uses, to provide open spaces, and to provide for residential development with larger lot sizes. Commercial agricultural and commercial forestry operations will be permitted, as well as limited business use. Home based businesses and agricultural uses will be supported and encouraged in this district.

Any future land use ordinance will specify the sizes of residential lots and density of residential uses allowed and will be guided by existing conditions. The required minimum lot size is one acre throughout the town. Road frontage requirements are outlined in the Building Permit

Application procedures as approved at the March 2018 Town Meeting.

Cluster Development requirements should be included in any future land use ordinance to encourage the preservation of rural land areas. Development regulations should encourage residential development to occur on existing or newly constructed roads following existing road patterns. Developers are responsible for proper road construction and maintenance. All subdivision development proposals within the Rural Residential District should be required to submit a cluster plan, as well as a conventional subdivision plan, for the Planning Board's consideration.

ESTABLISHMENT OF A LAND USE ORDINANCE

It is recommended that a general town-wide zoning ordinance be developed that will:

1. Zone different areas of the community for Rural Residential, Mixed-Use growth, and as a Historic District in order to protect the community's rural character and important natural and historic resources.
2. Set up site plan review procedures for commercial and high-density residential development.
3. Incorporate cluster development guidelines for subdivisions in Rural Residential areas.

Maine experienced an in-migration of "Back to the Landers" during the 1970s, a new wave of residential growth during the 1980s. Columbia Falls, like many rural communities along the Eastern Maine coast, did not experience the period of rapid growth, however, still felt its effect. Rapid rises in land values, changes in state valuation, and escalating property taxes have impacted Columbia Falls and other coastal towns. Property values have increased out of proportion to the wage levels of the working families. Housing that is affordable, yet decent, safe and sanitary has become a pressing problem throughout Maine, particularly along the coast, and Columbia Falls is no exception.

Columbia Falls is well positioned at this time to benefit from the experiences of other coastal Maine communities that did experience rapid development during the 1970's and 1980's. By taking stock of its natural resources and implementing local land use ordinances to protect themselves from incompatible development, the town can take steps to preserve its character. Change is inevitable and is also desirable. Concerns at this time focus primarily on the need for living-wage jobs and affordable housing for young families. Encouraging residential, commercial and industrial growth within the town, while at the same time caring for the rich resources of the community, is the underlying intent of Columbia Falls' Future Land Use Plan.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF LAND USE ORDINANCES AND BUILDING CODES

Land use planning is the overall plan for the physical layout, or land use, of communities and is an essential component of a community's long-term quality of life. It encompasses both the built and natural environment by shaping where development occurs and identifying areas for open space or preservation. Land use planning includes comprehensive planning, zoning regulations or Land Use Ordinances, and building codes. Columbia Falls' Shoreland Zoning Ordinance is based on State minimum requirements for development around water bodies and wetlands.

Land use planning authority – including comprehensive planning, zoning, and adoption of building codes – is delegated to local communities by State laws and vary slightly by State. In general, municipalities (cities and towns) along with counties are given local land use planning authority and undertake planning along their respective jurisdictional boundaries.

Land Use Ordinances promote, protect, and facilitate the public health and safety, conserve natural resources, and encourage the orderly growth and development of the community. Regulation of development in the community insures the best usage of available areas and avoids the juxtaposition of incompatible elements. They minimize land use conflicts and encourage clustering of similar development within various sectors of the community according to highest and best use considerations of: topography, soil type, and current usage. Land Use Ordinances provide information for judicious planning for infrastructure extension and/or improvement, the delivery of municipal services, and preservation of the natural beauty and character of the community. Land Use Ordinances are meant to implement the vision of future land use in a community, as stated in the municipality's comprehensive plan.

The purposes of Land Use Ordinances are to regulate land use, prevent land-use conflict, and allow growth to occur in a rational manner. More specifically, ordinances aim to:

- Use land for its most suitable purpose
- Protect or maintain property values
- Promote public health and safety
- Protect the environment
- Manage traffic
- Manage density
- Encourage housing for a variety of lifestyles and economic levels
- Manage aesthetics
- Provide for more orderly development
- Help attract business and industry

Similarly, Building Codes are intended to protect the health, safety, and welfare of both current and future property owners by insuring that structures are built to at least the minimal standards necessary to maintain the long-term safety and value of that structure.

Adoption of building codes began in ancient times to protect cities from health and sanitation problems, and the practice has been developing ever since. In the USA the main codes are the International Commercial or Residential Code (ICC/IRC), electrical codes, plumbing, and mechanical codes. Columbia Falls already utilizes state minimum plumbing codes.

Ordinances need specific standards and clear definitions. They must also meet the minimum requirements of state law and be consistent with the recommendations of the comprehensive plan. The comprehensive plan provides the legal basis for enacting the ordinances, and their consistency with the plans, goals, and policies will be a major consideration in the event that the ordinances are subject to a legal challenge. Therefore, any future land use ordinance or building codes will create a user-friendly application and permitting process with clear and consistent guidelines for obtaining approval. **Any future land use ordinance must be developed through a public hearing process and voted into effect by the community.**

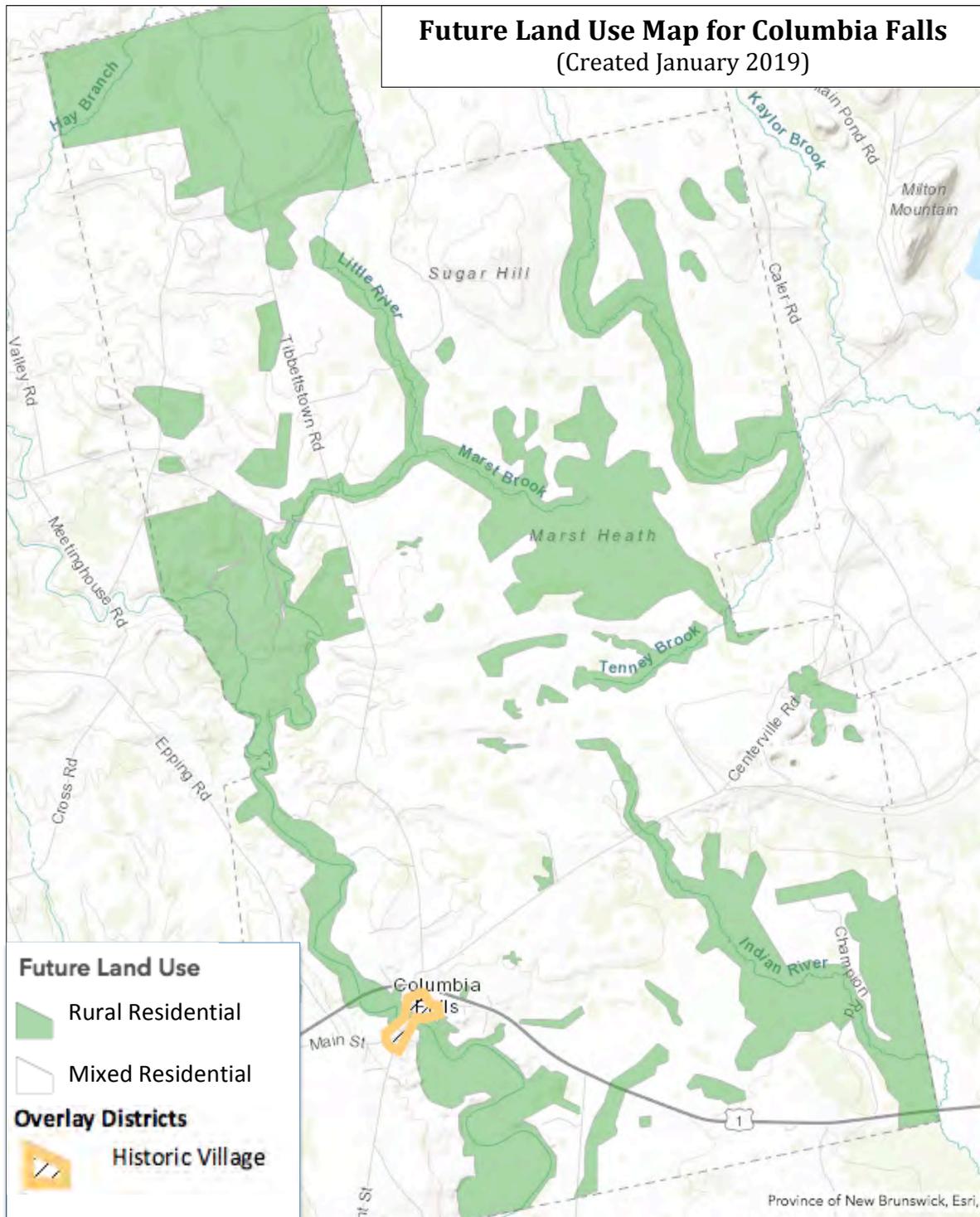
LAND USE ORDINANCE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

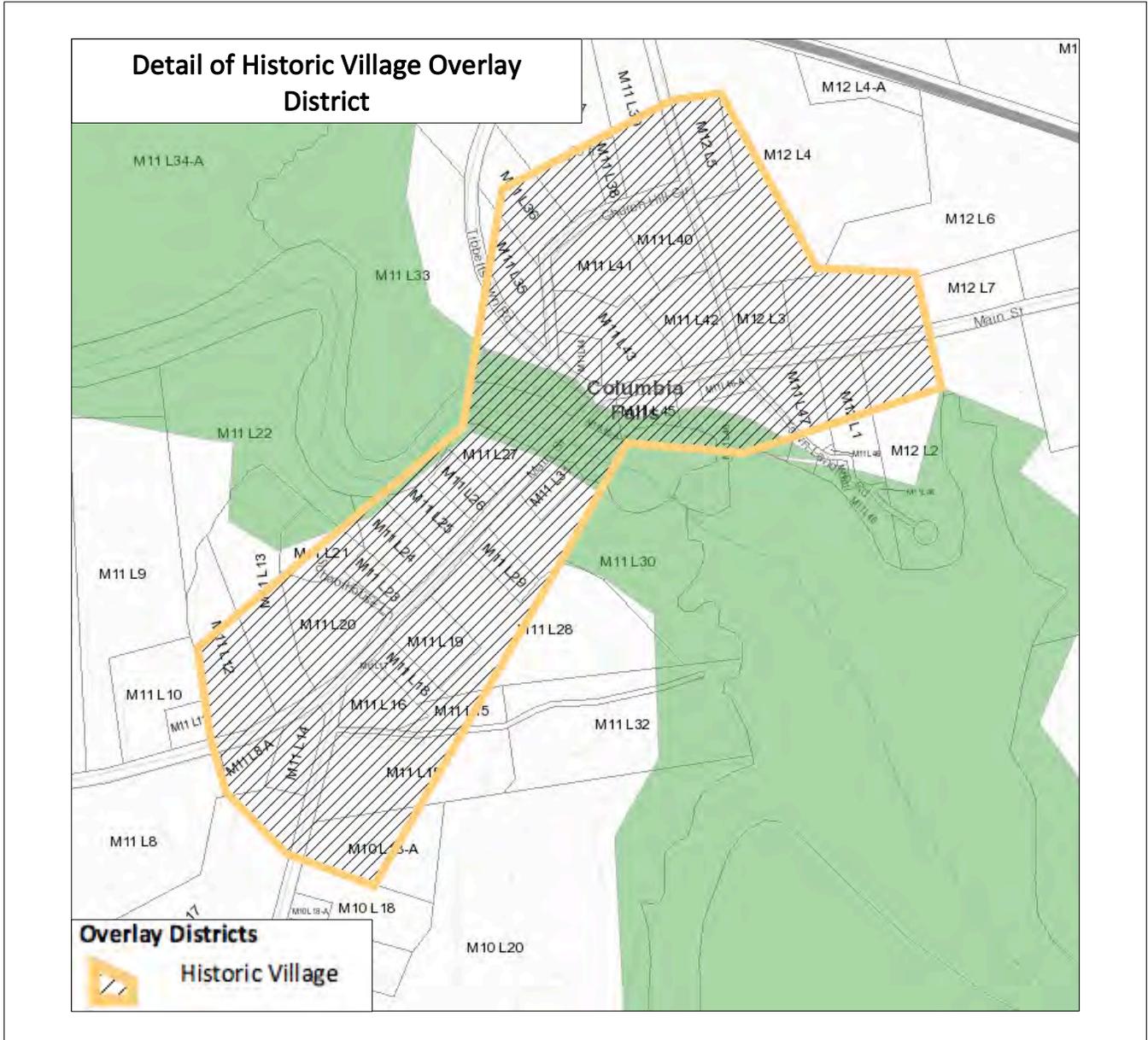
Public Issue or Concern	Performance Standards to Consider
Access Requirements	In keeping with state access management regulations (17-229 Maine Administrative Rules Chapter 299, Part A and B, and as subsequently amended), minimize the creation of strip development within the community, and minimize the creation of road hazards.
Agriculture	Minimize soil erosion to avoid sedimentation, non-point source pollution, and phosphorus and nitrogen levels of water bodies.
Buffer Provisions	Minimize the negative impacts of inconsistent development and protect water resources, wetlands, and wells
Conversion	Regulate the conversion of existing structures into multi-family dwellings, to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of citizens.
Home Occupation	Home occupations may be established to minimize their impact on existing neighborhoods.
Industrial Performance Standards	Ensure appropriate industrial development within designated areas of the community.
Manufactured housing	Ensure the safety, health and welfare of mobile home occupants and mobile home owners regardless of the date manufactured.
Mobile Home Park	Regulate the placement and design of mobile home parks within the designated growth areas in the town.
Off Street Loading	Minimize traffic congestion associated with commercial development.
Oil and Chemical Storage	Regulate the location and containment of combustible material that can migrate to surface and ground waters.
Parking Requirements	Establish and regulate the number of parking spaces to be provided for different types of development.
Pesticide Application	Protect the public from dangers associated with pesticides
Refuse Disposal	Regulate the disposal of solid and liquid wastes in relation to resources that can transport them or be contaminated by them; to protect public health.
Road Construction	In conjunction with the State Department of Transportation, regarding road construction in new developments.
Sedimentation and Erosion	Minimize the volume of surface water runoff during and after development.
Signs	Regulate the placement of signs, sign size, and sign type.
Soils	Ensure development is located on appropriate soils.
Storage Materials	Encourage the orderly storage of material in residential areas to promote and preserve the character of the neighborhoods.
Topsoil and Vegetation Removal	Prevent soil erosion and destruction of topsoil during construction.

POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Policies and implementation strategies relative to Land Use in Columbia Falls are presented in Chapter N Policies and Implementation Strategies. They include policies and strategies that reflect changes in conditions on the ground, local priorities and State and Federal policy since the previous Comprehensive Plan was adopted.

A complete list of the policy recommendations from the previous Comprehensive Plan is included in Appendix F 2002 Policies and Implementation Strategies. A full copy of the previous plan is on file in the Town Hall.





N. POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

As required by Chapter 208, Comprehensive Plan Review Criteria Rule, this chapter provides a separate section that prioritizes how implementation strategies will be carried out and identifies the responsible parties and anticipated timeline for each strategy in the plan.

HISTORIC AND ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES			
Goal: Preserve the community's historic and archeological resources from development that could threaten those resources.			
Policy	Implementation Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe
Preserve known archaeological and historic sites.	Promote awareness of historic structures and artifacts, including the consideration of listing on the National Register of Historic Places.	Select Board, Planning Board	On-going
Preserve known archaeological and historic sites.	For known historic archeological sites and areas sensitive to prehistoric archeology, through local land use ordinances, require subdivision or non-residential developers to take appropriate measures to protect those resources, including but not limited to, modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, and/or extent of excavation.	Select Board, Planning Board	On-going
Preserve known archaeological and historic sites. Preserve known archaeological and historic sites.	Continue preservation of Union Hall on National Register of Historic Places.	Union Hall Committee	On-Going
Preserve known archaeological and historic sites.	Preserve and update Historical Site information, such as on shipbuilding; update Columbia Falls Walking Tour brochure.	Union Hall Committee	On-going
Preserve known archaeological and historic sites.	Adopt a land use policy requiring the Planning Board to incorporate maps and information provided by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission into their review process.	Select Board, Planning Board	Short Term, within 1 year

POPULATION			
Goal: Utilize complete and current information about population when making administrative and policy decisions for the Town.			
Policy	Implementation Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe
Actively monitor census data regarding the size, characteristics and distribution of its population.	Seek assistance in the collection and maintenance of census data from the Washington County Council of Governments, the designated census information center for Washington County. Data gathered will include population estimates, census data and other information concerning the number and characteristics of the town's population including shifts of existing seasonal housing and residents to year-round status.	Town Clerk, Select Board, Planning Board	As needed

FISCAL CAPACITY			
Goal: Plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.			
Policy	Implementation Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe
Finance existing and future facilities and services in a cost effective manner.	Explore opportunities to work with neighboring communities to plan for and finance shared or adjacent capital investments to increase cost savings and efficiencies.	Select Board	On-going
Explore grants available to assist in the funding of capital investments within the community.	Work within Comprehensive Plan parameters.	Select Board	On-going

NATURAL RESOURCES			
Goal: Protect and preserve the natural resources on which Columbia Falls' economy and quality of life depend.			
Policy	Implementation Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe
Protect surface, ground, and drinking water supplies, and protect water quality in general.	Promote the use of Best Management Practices for Stormwater Management and for Erosion and Sedimentation Control through education of the Planning Board and Code Enforcement Officer and by providing information to the public.	Select Board, Planning Board, Code Enforcement Officer	On-going

NATURAL RESOURCES			
Goal: Protect and preserve the natural resources on which Columbia Falls' economy and quality of life depend.			
Policy	Implementation Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe
Protect surface, ground, and drinking water supplies, and protect water quality in general.	Adopt local land use ordinances to incorporate stormwater runoff performance standards consistent with: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Maine Stormwater Management Law and Maine Stormwater regulations (Title 38 M.R.S.A. §420-D and 06-096 CMR 500 and 502). Maine Department of Environmental Protection's allocations for allowable levels of phosphorus in lake/pond watersheds. Maine Pollution Discharge Elimination System Stormwater Program 	Select Board, Planning Board	Completed
Protect surface, ground, and drinking water supplies, and protect water quality in general.	Work with neighboring communities and existing watershed protection groups to address watershed-planning issues, including landowner education and land protection.	Select Board, Planning Board	On-going
Protect water resources in growth areas while promoting more intensive development in those areas.	Adopt water quality protection practices and standards for construction and maintenance of public and private roads and public properties; require their implementation by contractors, owners, community officials and employees.	Select Board, Planning Board, Code Enforcement Officer	On-going
Minimize pollution discharges through the upgrade of existing sewer systems and wastewater treatment facilities.	Encourage landowners to protect water quality. Provide contact information at the Town Office for water quality best management practices from the Natural Resource Conservation Service, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Soil and Water Conservation District, Maine Forest Service, Small Woodlot Association of Maine, etc.	Planning Board, Town Clerk	On-going
Ensure that river water quality is sufficient to provide for the protection and propagation of fish, and wildlife and provide for recreation in and on the rivers.	Encourage replacement of malfunctioning septic systems. Educate the public about the importance of maintaining and replacing on-site systems.	Code Enforcement Officer	On-going
Ensure that river water quality is sufficient to	Provide educational materials at appropriate locations regarding aquatic	Town Clerk	On-going

NATURAL RESOURCES			
Goal: Protect and preserve the natural resources on which Columbia Falls' economy and quality of life depend.			
Policy	Implementation Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe
provide for the protection and propagation of fish, and wildlife and provide for recreation in and on the rivers.	invasive species.		
Ensure that development is located on land that is capable of supporting onsite water and septic systems.	Require a soil evaluation test prior to the issuance of a building permit in accordance with state regulations to require that developers demonstrate that soils are adequate for the intended purpose, that their projects will not be located on wetlands, on slopes of 20 percent or greater, or on floodplains.	Select Board, Code Enforcement Officer, Planning Board	On-going
Conserve critical natural resources in the community.	Make use of the most recent data on rare plants, animals, and natural communities and important wildlife habitats to designate critical natural resources as Critical Resource Areas in the Future Land Use Plan.	Select Board, Planning Board	Immediate
Conserve critical natural resources in the community.	Adopt a land use ordinance requiring consideration of pertinent Beginning With Habitat maps and information regarding critical natural resources during land use reviews.	Select Board, Planning Board	On-going
Conserve critical natural resources in the community.	Through local land use ordinances, require subdivision or non-residential property developers to look for and identify critical natural resources that may be on site, and to take appropriate measures to protect those resources, including but not limited to, modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, and/or extent of excavation.	Select Board, Planning Board	On-going
Conserve critical natural resources in the community.	Provide information about current use tax programs and applicable land use regulations to landowners living in or near critical or important natural resources in order to encourage landowners to protect and preserve wildlife habitat, and utilize conservation programs to preserve undeveloped land.	Town Clerk, Select Board	On-going

NATURAL RESOURCES			
Goal: Protect and preserve the natural resources on which Columbia Falls' economy and quality of life depend.			
Policy	Implementation Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe
Safeguard lands identified as prime farmland or capable of supporting commercial forestry.	Promote use of best management practices for timber harvesting and agricultural production	State Forestry	On-going
Safeguard lands identified as prime farmland or capable of supporting commercial forestry.	Develop land use ordinances to require commercial or subdivision developments in critical rural areas to maintain areas with prime farmland soils as open space to the greatest extent practicable.	Select Board, Planning Board	Long Term, within 5 years
Safeguard lands identified as prime farmland or capable of supporting commercial forestry.	Consult with district foresters or Soil and Water Conservation District Staff when developing any related land use ordinances.	Select Board, Planning Board	As needed
Support long-term sustainable agriculture and forestry on productive farm or forest land within Columbia Falls	Permit land use activities that support productive agriculture and forestry operations, such as roadside stands, greenhouses, firewood operations, sawmills, log buying yards, and pick-your-own operations.	Select Board, Planning Board	On-going
Safeguard lands identified as prime farmland or capable of supporting commercial forestry.	Encourage owners of productive farm or forestland to enroll in current use taxation programs such as Tree Growth or Agricultural exemptions.	Town Clerk, Select Board	On-going
Ensure that traditional use of lands and access to water are protected as development pressures increase.	Identify areas in need of access improvements. Support development of important access areas.	Select Board, Planning Board,	On-going
Educate residents and visitors about important habitat and water quality values.	Provide information about aquatic invasive species, shore land development best management practices, and other watershed issues.	Town Clerk	On-going
Utilize financial incentive programs	Support landowners in their efforts to participate in farm, open space and tree growth programs.	Town Clerk, Select Board, Assessor	On-going

ECONOMICS AND EMPLOYMENT			
Goal: Promote an economic climate that increases job opportunities and overall economic well-being; provide the necessary education to insure Columbia Falls has a skilled population ready to enter the work force; enhance and support existing businesses in Columbia Falls and promote new business that is compatible with existing rural community values and patterns of development.			
Policy	Implementation Strategy	Responsible Parties	Timeframe
Promote expansion and diversification of the economic base of the community.	Develop land use ordinance policies to help attract, enhance and support existing and future development while minimizing negative impacts of non-compatible uses.	Select Board, Planning Board,	On-going
Promote expansion and diversification of the economic base of the community.	Take a direct and active part with any and all persons or companies that come forward or show any interest in expanding or establishing operations in Columbia Falls.	Select Board, Planning Board	On-going
Promote expansion and diversification of the economic base of the community.	Advertise and promote Columbia Falls as a good and welcoming place to establish, build, and operate businesses including natural resources industries such as value-added forest products.	Town Clerk, Select Board, Union Hall Committee	On-going
Promote expansion and diversification of the economic base of the community.	Work with Economic Development groups to expand high speed internet and cellular access within Columbia Falls	Select Board	On-going
Promote expansion and diversification of the economic base of the community.	Provide information on sources of business assistance. Use outside resources and link with other municipalities and entities to help promote regional job and economic development.	Town Clerk, Select Board	On-going
Promote expansion and diversification of the economic base of the community.	Attend meetings with School Board and local/regional businesses to identify work force needs and the educational foundation to support them.	Select Board	On-going
Support the type of economic development activity the community desires and that reflects the community's role in the region, including needed public improvements.	Create an identity for Columbia Falls to raise civic pride and give tourists and others passing through a clear sense that "this is Columbia Falls". Investigate Route 1 and Main Street improvements that will convey this identity.	Select Board, Planning Board, Union Hall Committee	Long term, within 2 years

ECONOMICS AND EMPLOYMENT			
Goal: Promote an economic climate that increases job opportunities and overall economic well-being; provide the necessary education to insure Columbia Falls has a skilled population ready to enter the work force; enhance and support existing businesses in Columbia Falls and promote new business that is compatible with existing rural community values and patterns of development.			
Policy	Implementation Strategy	Responsible Parties	Timeframe
Support the type of economic development activity the community desires and that reflects the community's role in the region, including needed public improvements.	Develop local land use ordinances to reflect the desired scale, design, intensity, and location of future economic development.	Select Board, Planning Board	On-going
Support the type of economic development activity the community desires and that reflects the community's role in the region, including needed public improvements.	Encourage diversity of industrial development while protecting the community by imposing controls on those uses which by virtue of noise, glare, fumes, dust, traffic, etc., could create unsafe or unhealthy conditions.	Select Board, Planning Board	On-going
Beautify the village center or downtown area	Create a Town Park on the waterfront in partnership with available grants and programs	Select Board, private groups	Short term, within 2 years
Assist those who are eligible for assistance and help them to receive it.	Provide current information about sources of public assistance, unemployment assistance, job training, and aid to the elderly and/or handicapped.	Town Clerk	On-going
Allow and encourage existing land resource-based industries to thrive in their current locations.	Provide large rural areas for agricultural and forestry uses.	Select Board, Planning Board	On-going

HOUSING			
Goal: Encourage and promote affordable, decent housing opportunities for Columbia Falls residents.			
Policy	Implementation Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe
Encourage and promote adequate workforce housing to support the community and regions economic development.	Provide information for programs and grants that can assist in rehabilitation of existing, substandard housing stock.	Select Board, Town Clerk	On-going

HOUSING			
Goal: Encourage and promote affordable, decent housing opportunities for Columbia Falls residents.			
Policy	Implementation Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe
Encourage and promote adequate workforce housing to support the community and regions economic development.	Develop growth area land use regulations to increase density, decrease lot size, setbacks and road widths, or provide incentives such as density bonuses, to encourage the development of affordable/workforce housing.	Select Board, Planning Board	On-going
Ensure that local codes and ordinances are enforced for the public health, safety and welfare.	Ensure that the CEO works to address reported violations of local ordinances and State laws and regulations that affect health, safety or community conditions such as the automobile graveyard provisions, removal of unsafe or deteriorated buildings, replacement of driveway culverts, etc.	Code Enforcement Officer, Select Board, Planning Board	On-going
Ensure that local codes and ordinances are enforced for the public health, safety and welfare.	Encourage senior citizen housing opportunities and provide residential areas that allow single and multi-family dwellings, as well as manufactured housing.	Select Board, Planning Board	On-going

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES			
Goal: Plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate current and anticipated growth and economic development. Maintain and improve access to recreational opportunities.			
Policy	Implementation Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe
Provide public facilities and services in a manner that promotes and supports needed growth and development in identified growth areas.	Continue steps to assure all Town facilities comply with Americans With Disabilities Act and make information available to help private parties conform to the Act.	Code Enforcement Officer, Select Board	On-going
Provide public facilities and services in a manner that promotes and supports needed growth and development in identified growth areas.	Encourage diversity of industrial development while protecting the community by imposing controls on those uses which by virtue of noise, glare, fumes, dust, traffic, etc., could create unsafe or unhealthy conditions.	Select Board, Planning Board	On-going
Provide public facilities and services in a manner that promotes and supports needed growth and development in identified	Continue to explore better options for recycling and solid waste management.	Select Board	On-going, as needed

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES			
Goal: Plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate current and anticipated growth and economic development. Maintain and improve access to recreational opportunities.			
Policy	Implementation Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe
growth areas.			
Provide public facilities and services in a manner that promotes and supports needed growth and development in identified growth areas.	Support and encourage social, cultural, and recreational activities in Columbia Falls.	Select Board	On-going
Ensure local services are visible and understood by Columbia Falls Citizens.	Provide information about all Municipal and locally provided services at the Town Office.	Town Clerk	On-going
Support the preservation of open space, development of recreational opportunities, and preservation/creation of public access to surface water.	Develop a land use ordinance including provisions that require any major new residential developments reviewed by the planning board to provide options for recreational, water access, and open space areas.	Select Board, Planning Board	On-going

TRANSPORTATION			
Goal: Plan for efficient maintenance and improvement of our transportation facilities and services in order to accommodate anticipated development.			
Policies	Implementation Strategy	Responsibility	Timeline
Prioritize community and regional needs associated with safe, efficient, and optimal use of transportation systems.	Maintain a prioritized improvement, maintenance, and repair plan for the community's transportation network.	Select Board	On-going

TRANSPORTATION			
Goal: Plan for efficient maintenance and improvement of our transportation facilities and services in order to accommodate anticipated development.			
Policies	Implementation Strategy	Responsibility	Timeline
Safely and efficiently preserve or improve the transportation system.	Develop local land use ordinances to address or avoid conflicts with Policy objectives of the Sensible Transportation Policy Act (23 M.R.S.A. §73); State access management regulations pursuant to 23 M.R.S.A. §704; and c. State traffic permitting regulations for large developments pursuant to 23 M.R.S.A. §704- A.	Select Board, Planning Board	On-going
Safely and efficiently preserve or improve the transportation system.	Develop land use ordinance standards for subdivisions and for public and private roads as appropriate to foster transportation-efficient growth patterns and provide for future street and transit connections.	Select Board, Planning Board	On-going
Maximize the efficiency of the state or state-aid highway network.	Consult with local State Representatives.	Select Board, Planning Board	On-going

REGIONAL COORDINATION			
Goal: Contribute to the regional connection and health of Washington County by cooperating on the delivery of regional services and endeavoring to achieve economies of scale where feasible.			
Policy	Implementation Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe
Cooperate on the delivery of regional services and endeavor to achieve economies of scale where feasible.	Cooperate on the delivery of regional services and endeavor to achieve economies of scale where feasible.	Select Board	On-going
Cooperate on the delivery of regional services and endeavor to achieve economies of scale where feasible.	Seek out cooperative means of reducing regional administrative costs for the school district and delivery of public services.	Select Board, School Board	On-going

REGIONAL COORDINATION			
Goal: Contribute to the regional connection and health of Washington County by cooperating on the delivery of regional services and endeavoring to achieve economies of scale where feasible.			
Policy	Implementation Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe
Participate in regional organizations that provide technical assistance and information about business support and regional economic development opportunities.	Maintain membership in the Washington County Council of Governments and participation in the Sunrise County Economic Council.	Select Board	On-going
Coordinate Columbia Falls' land use strategies with other local and regional land use planning efforts.	Meet with neighboring communities to coordinate land use designations and regulatory and non-regulatory strategies	Select Board, Planning Board	On-going
Cooperate with neighboring communities and regional/local advocacy groups to protect important natural resources.	Participate in local and regional efforts to monitor, protect and, where warranted, improve water quality.	Select Board	On-going
Cooperate with neighboring communities and regional/local advocacy groups to protect important natural resources.	Initiate and/or participate in inter-local and/or regional planning, management, and/or regulatory efforts around shared critical and important natural resources	Select Board	On-going
Cooperate with neighboring communities and regional/local advocacy groups to protect important natural resources.	Pursue public/private partnerships to protect critical and important natural resources such as through purchase of land or easements from willing sellers.	Select Board	On-going
Cooperate with neighboring communities and regional/local advocacy groups to protect important natural resources.	Include agriculture, commercial forestry operations, and land conservation that supports them in regional economic development plans.	Select Board, Planning Board	On-going
Coordinate with regional development corporations and surrounding towns as necessary to support desired economic development.	Participate in any regional economic development planning efforts.	Select Board	On-going
Coordinate with regional development corporations and surrounding towns as necessary to support desired economic development.	Support and participate in regional affordable and workforce housing efforts.	Select Board	On-going
Encourage and support the efforts of the regional housing coalitions	Create or continue to support a community	Select Board	On-going

REGIONAL COORDINATION			
Goal: Contribute to the regional connection and health of Washington County by cooperating on the delivery of regional services and endeavoring to achieve economies of scale where feasible.			
Policy	Implementation Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe
in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.	affordable/workforce housing committee and/or regional affordable housing coalition.		
Encourage and support the efforts of the regional housing coalitions in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.	Support the efforts of regional housing coalitions in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.	Select Board	On-going
Cooperate in the development of regional transportation policy.	Continue to support the regional transportation goals of the Sunrise County Economic Council, and Washington County Council of Governments.	Select Board	On-going
Cooperate in the development of regional transportation policy.	Participate on any Regional Transportation Advisory Committee.	Select Board	On-going
Cooperate in the development of regional transportation policy.	Advocate in regional and state meetings for any reconstruction of US Route 1 in Columbia falls.	Select Board, Planning Board	On-going
Cooperate in the development of regional transportation policy.	Coordinate land use strategies with other local and regional land use planning efforts and to coordinate land use designations and regulatory and non-regulatory strategies.	Select Board, Planning Board	On-going
Cooperate in the development of regional transportation policy.	Periodically (at least every five years) evaluate implementation of the plan in accordance with Section 2.7.	Select Board, Planning Board	On-going

LAND USE			
Goal: Preserve and protect the character of Columbia Falls that is vital to the continued stability of the local economy; Continue to be a great place to live, work and vacation.			
Policy	Implementation Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe
Support the locations, types, scales, and intensities of land uses the community desires as stated in its vision.	Using the descriptions provided in the Future Land Use Plan narrative, maintain, enact or amend local ordinances as appropriate to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clearly define the desired scale, intensity, and location of future development; 2. Establish or maintain fair and efficient permitting procedures, and explore streamlining permitting procedures in growth areas; and 3. Clearly define protective measures for critical natural resources and, where applicable, important natural resources. 4. Clearly define protective measures for any proposed critical rural areas and/or critical waterfront areas, if proposed. 	Select Board, Planning Board	On-going
Support the locations, types, scales, and intensities of land uses the community desires as stated in its vision.	Track new development in the community by type and location.	Select Board, Planning Board	On-going
Support the level of financial commitment necessary to provide needed infrastructure in growth areas.	Include in the Capital Investment Plan anticipated municipal capital investments needed to support proposed land uses.	Select Board	On-going
Protect critical rural and critical waterfront areas from the impacts of development.		Select Board, Planning Board	On-going
Establish fair and efficient permitting processes, especially in growth areas.	Ensure ordinances contain proper legal language and definitions.	Select Board, Planning Board	On-going

LAND USE			
Goal: Preserve and protect the character of Columbia Falls that is vital to the continued stability of the local economy; Continue to be a great place to live, work and vacation.			
Policy	Implementation Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe
Establish fair and efficient permitting processes, especially in growth areas.	Develop, maintain, and modernize a comprehensive system of fees, which may include development impact fees.	Select Board, Planning Board	On-going
Establish fair and efficient permitting processes, especially in growth areas.	Provide the CEO with the tools, training, and support necessary to enforce land use regulations, and ensure that the CEO is certified in accordance with 30-A MRSA §4451	Select Board, Planning Board	On-going
Allow and encourage existing land resource based industries to thrive in their current locations.	Provide large rural areas for agricultural and forestry uses.	Select Board, Planning Board	On-going
Educate residents about the requirements of local and state regulations.	Provide a list of all local ordinances at the municipal office.	Select Board, Planning Board, Town Clerk	On-going

APPENDICIES

COLUMBIA FALLS, MAINE

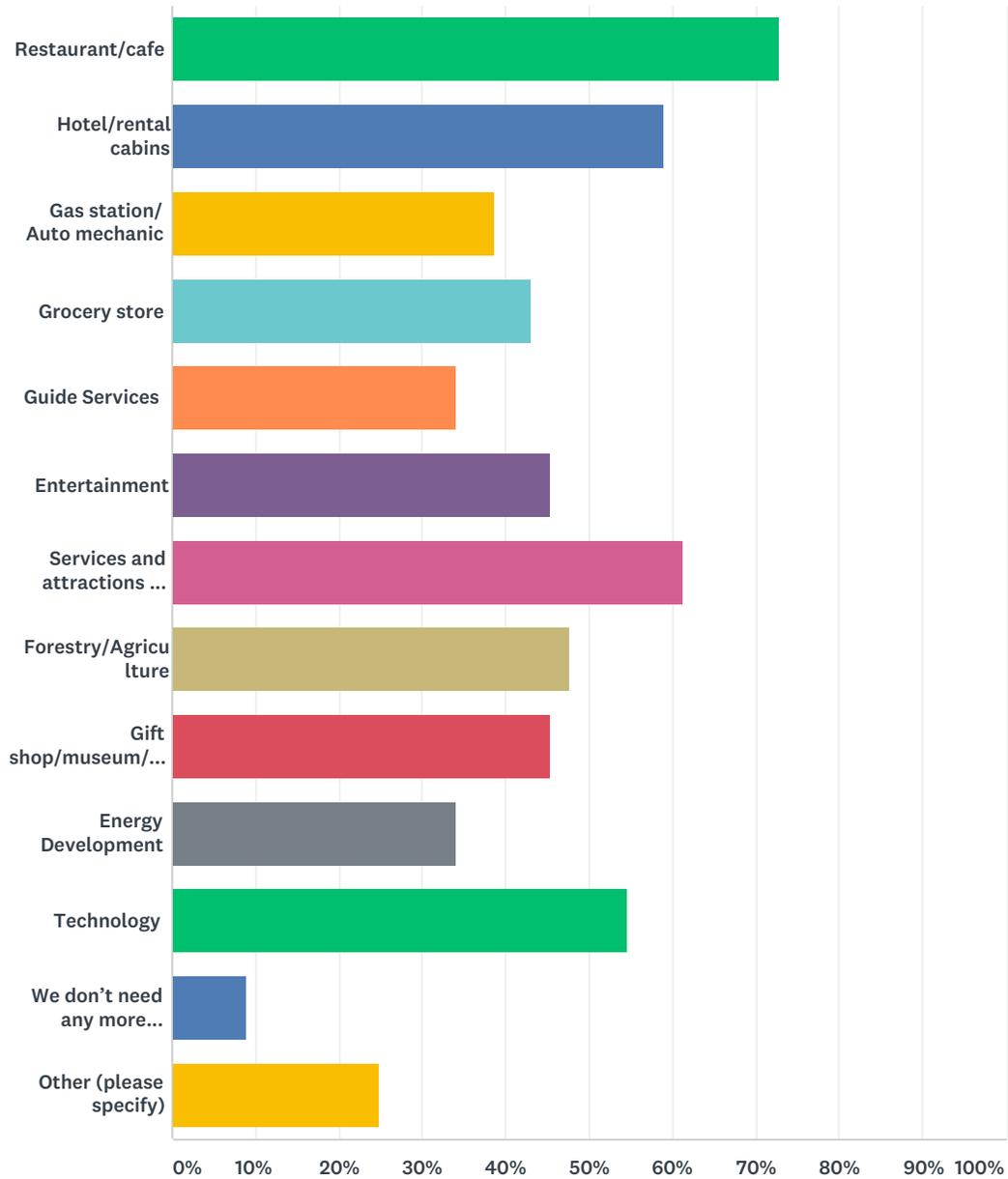
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2019



APPENDIX A. PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

Q1 What kind of businesses would you like to see in Columbia Falls? (check all that apply)

Answered: 44 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Restaurant/cafe	72.73%	32
Hotel/rental cabins	59.09%	26
Gas station/ Auto mechanic	38.64%	17
Grocery store	43.18%	19
Guide Services	34.09%	15

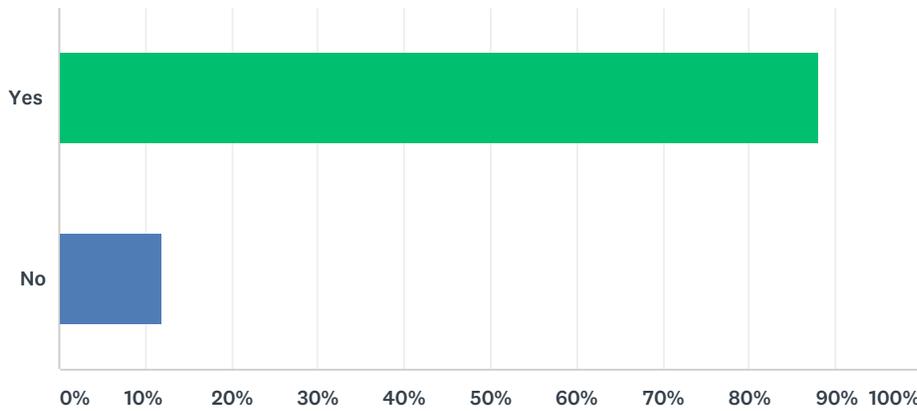
Columbia Falls Comprehensive Plan update

Entertainment	45.45%	20
Services and attractions for travelers along Route 1	61.36%	27
Forestry/Agriculture	47.73%	21
Gift shop/museum/gallery	45.45%	20
Energy Development	34.09%	15
Technology	54.55%	24
We don't need any more businesses	9.09%	4
Other (please specify)	25.00%	11
Total Respondents: 44		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	school	7/30/2017 7:55 AM
2	recreation for young people	7/30/2017 7:52 AM
3	We need to specifically care for the land along route one. Hopefully a gift shop/museum/gallery will happen at the pottery shop. We need to care for and support the areas which are already here. Abs, elmers, hanafords, union halls, the ground and lands at the smelt shacks.	7/30/2017 7:50 AM
4	car wash	7/19/2017 5:16 PM
5	are these magically going to appear?	7/19/2017 5:14 PM
6	bowling	7/19/2017 5:06 PM
7	manufacturing, assisted living, retirement communities	7/19/2017 4:46 PM
8	right now we can't get cable on centerville road, skunk ridge to worcher have it. skunk ridge to rt 1, nothing. can't get, why? this is 2017?	7/19/2017 4:33 PM
9	consider the number of services currently available -->then zone for additional services as needed with the town as a whole.	6/21/2017 11:32 AM
10	Energy development as wind power and tidal power	6/13/2017 10:43 AM
11	All of the above but just wanting them does not make them happen.	5/25/2017 9:31 AM

Q2 Do wild animals (including fish) have adequate resources to breed, feed, and nest?

Answered: 42 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	88.10%	37
No	11.90%	5
TOTAL		42

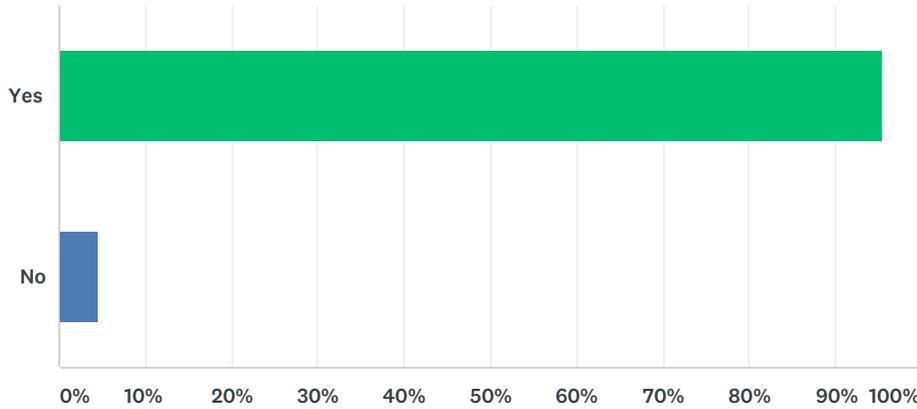
Q3 Do you have ideas for improvements for wildlife habitat?

Answered: 14 Skipped: 33

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	I am concerned for them but not my area of expertise	7/30/2017 7:50 AM
2	remove concrete dam at the falls	7/19/2017 5:38 PM
3	trails need to go	7/19/2017 5:32 PM
4	trail needs to go	7/19/2017 5:31 PM
5	leave things alone	7/19/2017 5:14 PM
6	do you need more coyotes? for improvements: call attention to the eagles	7/19/2017 5:06 PM
7	not sure	7/19/2017 5:02 PM
8	The Pleasant River should be heavily stocked to bring in traveling anglers.	7/19/2017 4:44 PM
9	a comprehensive zoning plan will consider this question. [Wild Animals have adequate resources...] out there in the woods, maybe. But in the vicinity of any town/village it gets iffy. Give the Salmon people more money!	6/21/2017 11:32 AM
10	No.	5/23/2017 11:00 AM
11	I think we can always do more to protect the environment and wildlife habitat, but I don't know enough about it to make a suggestion.	5/21/2017 3:18 PM
12	No	5/16/2017 7:11 PM
13	Increased protection for riparian areas to protect water quality and wildlife habitat.	5/16/2017 10:50 AM
14	no	5/15/2017 1:03 PM

Q4 Do people have good access to lakes and forests for hunting, fishing, and recreation?

Answered: 43 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	95.35%	41
No	4.65%	2
TOTAL		43

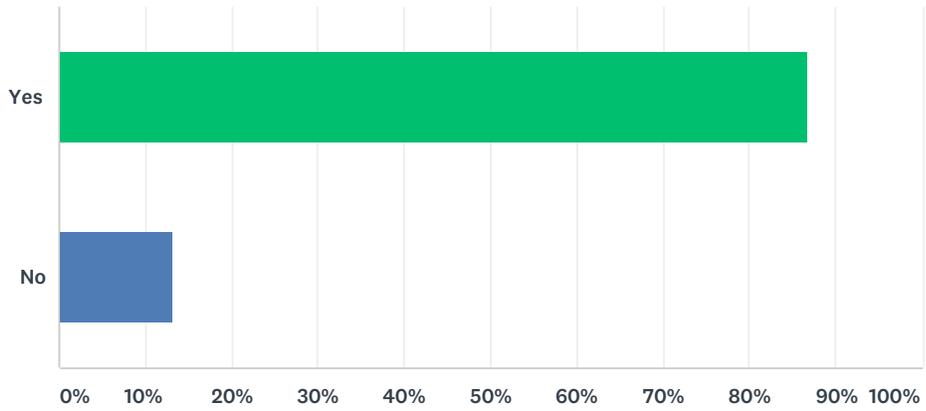
Q5 Do you have ideas for improvements to access for people?

Answered: 11 Skipped: 36

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	they are not cared for and the drug + alcohol use makes it frightening to use	7/30/2017 7:50 AM
2	improve boat landing	7/19/2017 5:38 PM
3	advertising	7/19/2017 5:06 PM
4	n/a	6/21/2017 11:32 AM
5	I would like ATVs/snowmobiles, etc. to be able to use all the town roads to get to the Downeast Sunrise Trail.	5/29/2017 10:25 AM
6	No.	5/23/2017 11:00 AM
7	Perhaps we could use better signage and advertisements.	5/21/2017 3:18 PM
8	No	5/16/2017 7:11 PM
9	There seems to be adequate access right now, but as land changes hands and more gets posted, there should be more permanently conserved land that guarantees public access.	5/16/2017 10:50 AM
10	no	5/15/2017 1:03 PM
11	More educational opportunities for community members to learn about historical methods of fish, game, and recreation.	5/15/2017 12:58 PM

Q6 Does the Community protect important cultural sites or traditions?

Answered: 38 Skipped: 9



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	86.84%	33
No	13.16%	5
TOTAL		38

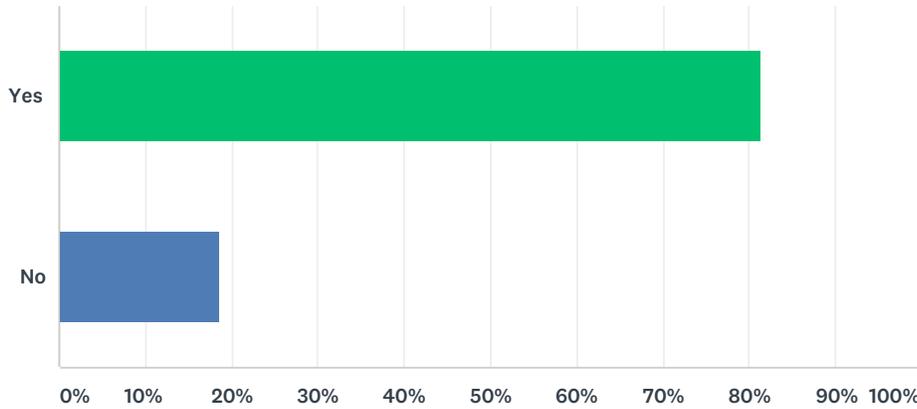
Q7 Do you have ideas for improvements for historic and cultural resource preservation?

Answered: 20 Skipped: 27

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	wasted money on town hall	7/30/2017 7:55 AM
2	unknown	7/30/2017 7:52 AM
3	the younger generations need to be exposed and learn about them	7/30/2017 7:50 AM
4	zone in historic district. get rid junk cars and trash	7/19/2017 5:38 PM
5	unknown	7/19/2017 5:26 PM
6	unknown	7/19/2017 5:24 PM
7	substantial tax + town commitment to preserve historic district	7/19/2017 5:23 PM
8	when it suits certain people from away	7/19/2017 5:14 PM
9	*unknown	7/19/2017 5:06 PM
10	no more properties taken off the tax roles	7/19/2017 4:44 PM
11	*unknown	7/19/2017 4:41 PM
12	*Traditions: cemeteries	7/19/2017 4:36 PM
13	The museum/ruggles house is in good hands today. That must be ensured through adequate zoning.	6/21/2017 11:32 AM
14	We spend too many tax dollars on restoration. I personally feel like an "adult play house" has been created in town.	5/25/2017 9:31 AM
15	No.	5/23/2017 11:00 AM
16	No	5/16/2017 7:11 PM
17	Ensure that Maine Historic Preservation is consulted for major new projects.	5/16/2017 10:50 AM
18	We should create a Historic District with signage by town ordinance	5/16/2017 10:31 AM
19	no	5/15/2017 1:03 PM
20	A more distinct historic district, perhaps a community wide facade project that is grant funded. Also more available documentation on the town's culture and history or maybe a distinct yearly celebration based on heritage.	5/15/2017 12:58 PM

Q8 Do you feel safe walking, running, biking, or driving (ATV's or vehicles) on roads and trail?

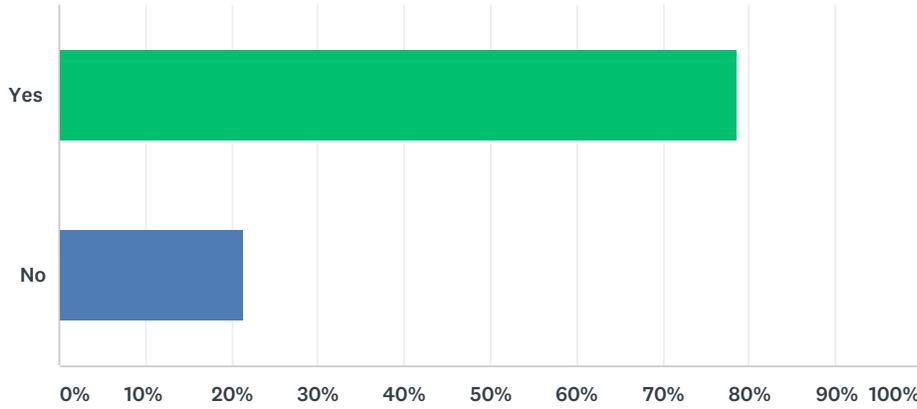
Answered: 43 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	81.40%	35
No	18.60%	8
TOTAL		43

Q9 Are the roads and trail well cared for in Columbia Falls?

Answered: 42 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	78.57%	33
No	21.43%	9
TOTAL		42

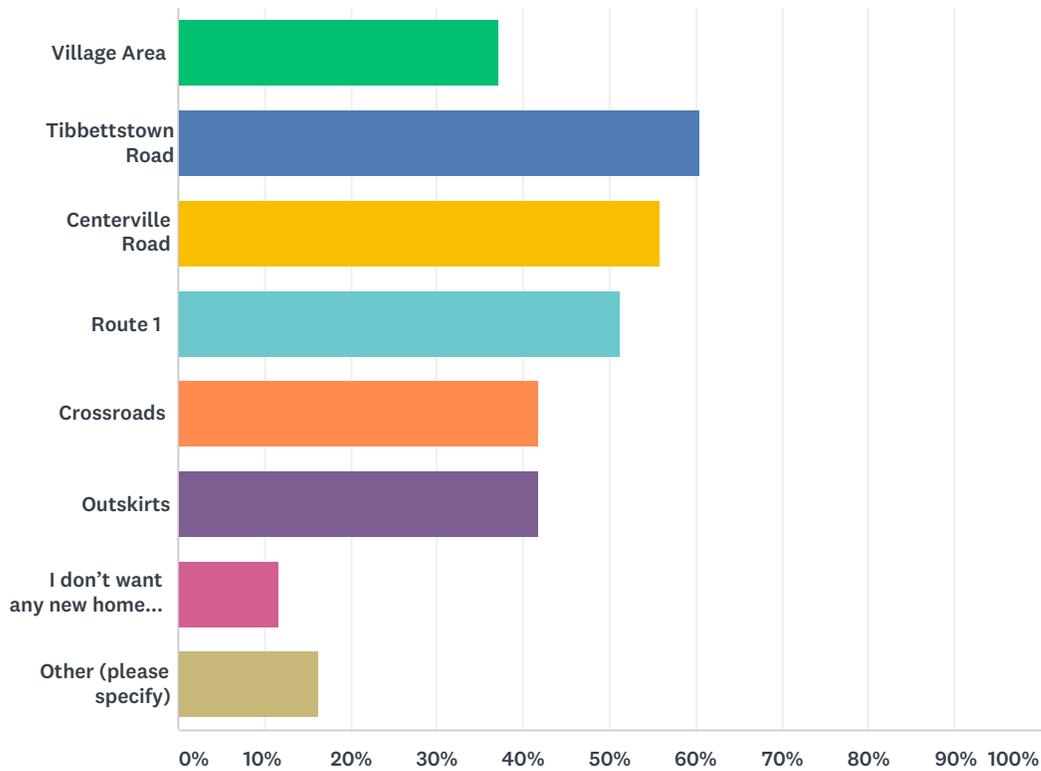
Q10 Do you have ideas for improvements for transportation safety or maintenance?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 29

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	the pot holes and road ----	7/30/2017 7:52 AM
2	I think there should be more emphasis on building a sense of community. Can the younger residents (maybe) do creative/artistic/scientific projects for their town through the schools.	7/30/2017 7:50 AM
3	unknown	7/19/2017 5:38 PM
4	trails need to go trails need to go	7/19/2017 5:32 PM
5	trail needs to go trail needs to go	7/19/2017 5:31 PM
6	unknown	7/19/2017 5:28 PM
7	reckless atvs on main roads, tibbettstown + tracks not safe for walking	7/19/2017 5:23 PM
8	sidewalks	7/19/2017 5:06 PM
9	*unknown	7/19/2017 4:36 PM
10	*original answer: unknown	7/19/2017 4:33 PM
11	[roads] it appears so at present [trails] yes	6/21/2017 11:32 AM
12	The road near the Sunrise Trail is in bad shape and you have to go into the other lane to avoid driving in the holes.	5/29/2017 10:25 AM
13	No.	5/23/2017 11:00 AM
14	Create more walking trails	5/22/2017 1:27 PM
15	I would suggest having at least one side of Tibbettstown Road widen enough for folks to walk, run, or ride a bike.	5/16/2017 7:11 PM
16	Sidewalks for intown area would improve safety	5/16/2017 10:31 AM
17	I would like to see the shoulder of the roads a little larger to folks to walk, run, bike and drive ATVs on.	5/15/2017 1:03 PM
18	I would like improvement to the roads shoulders and sidewalks and streetlights in the village	5/15/2017 12:58 PM

Q11 Where would you like to see new homes located? (check all that apply)

Answered: 43 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Village Area	37.21% 16
Tibbettstown Road	60.47% 26
Centerville Road	55.81% 24
Route 1	51.16% 22
Crossroads	41.86% 18
Outskirts	41.86% 18
I don't want any new homes in Columbia Falls	11.63% 5
Other (please specify)	16.28% 7
Total Respondents: 43	

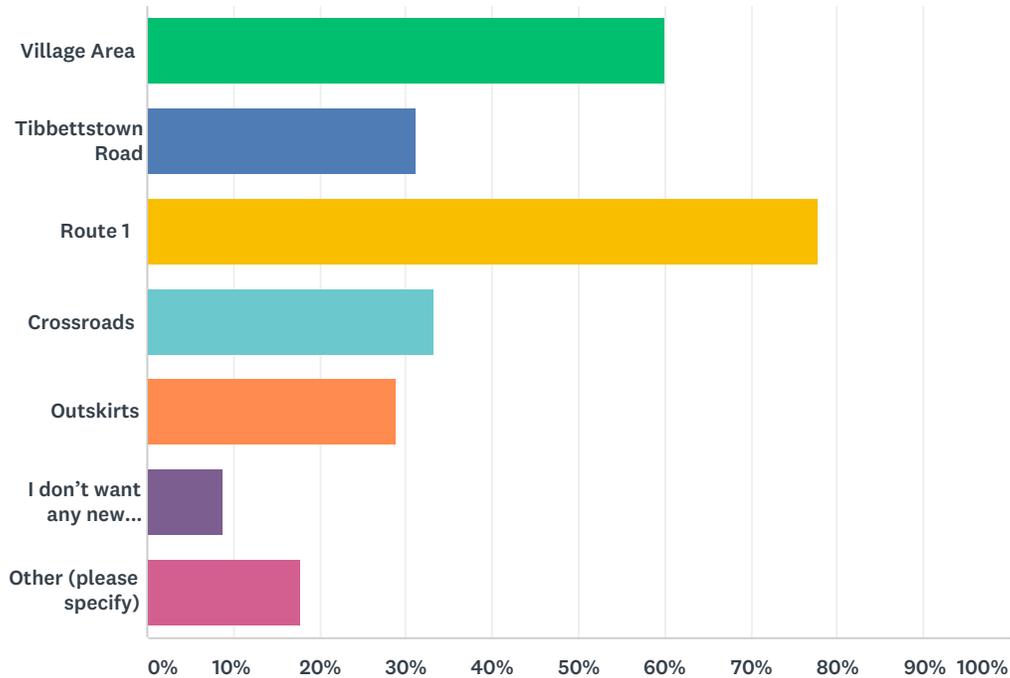
#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	town 'planning' please	7/19/2017 5:23 PM
2	enough empty homes already downtown	7/19/2017 5:14 PM
3	where the owner wants it	7/19/2017 4:46 PM

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4	[tibbettstown and centerville road] new housing zone, [I don't want any new homes in Columbia Falls] village. But they will come. Do we welcome trailers anywhere? or do we finally acknowledge the wisdom of zoning for eventual growth?	6/21/2017 11:32 AM
5	Again, we can want whatever but it does not mean it will happen.	5/25/2017 9:31 AM
6	Preferably near already developed areas.	5/16/2017 10:50 AM
7	#13 should allow for multiple answer, check all four please.	5/15/2017 5:51 PM

Q12 Where would you like to see new businesses located? (check all that apply)

Answered: 45 Skipped: 2

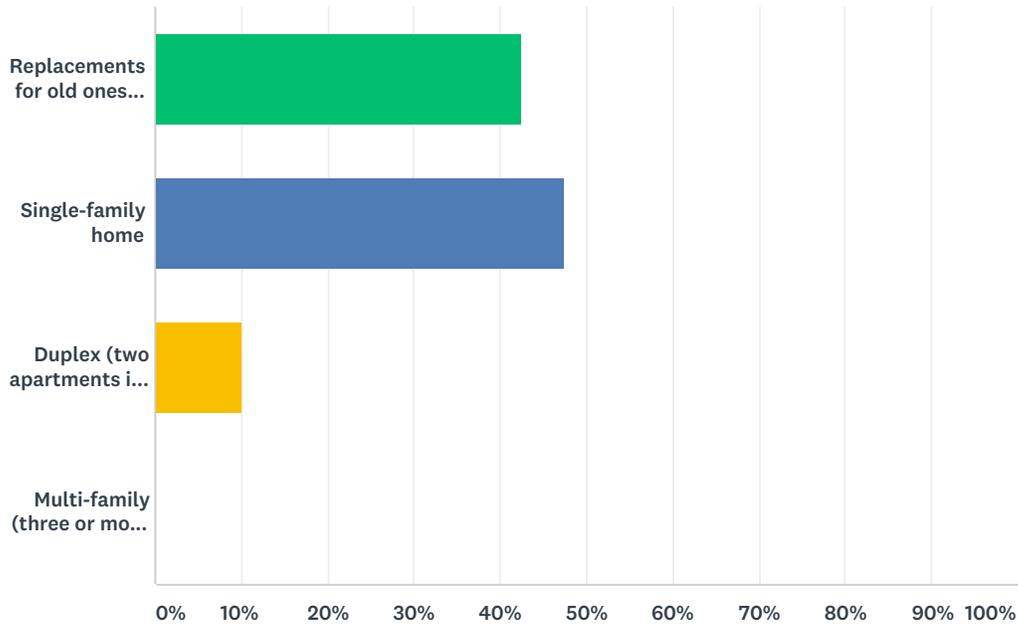


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Village Area	60.00% 27
Tibbettstown Road	31.11% 14
Route 1	77.78% 35
Crossroads	33.33% 15
Outskirts	28.89% 13
I don't want any new businesses in Columbia Falls	8.89% 4
Other (please specify)	17.78% 8
Total Respondents: 45	

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	centerville road	7/30/2017 7:57 AM
2	clean up junk on both entrances to town especially on the east end. both should be condemned	7/30/2017 7:55 AM
3	not going to happen, we have nothing to offer	7/19/2017 5:14 PM
4	centerville road	7/19/2017 5:09 PM
5	centerville road	6/21/2017 11:41 AM
6	[route 1 and crossroads] business zone	6/21/2017 11:32 AM
7	Anywhere in town but again....just because one wants it does not make it happen.	5/25/2017 9:31 AM
8	#14 should be multiple answer, check all three please.	5/15/2017 5:51 PM

Q13 New homes should be:

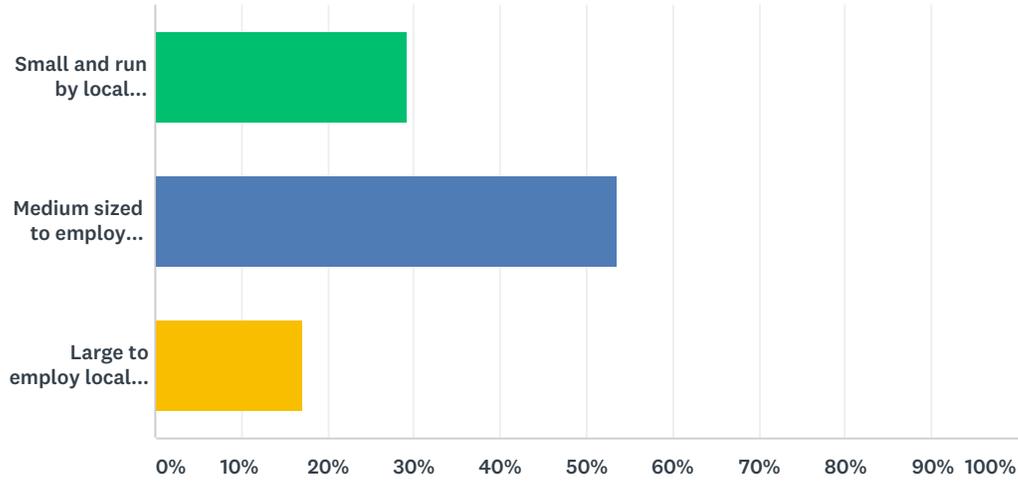
Answered: 40 Skipped: 7



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Replacements for old ones that need serious repair	42.50%	17
Single-family home	47.50%	19
Duplex (two apartments in one building)	10.00%	4
Multi-family (three or more apartments in one building)	0.00%	0
TOTAL		40

Q14 New businesses should be:

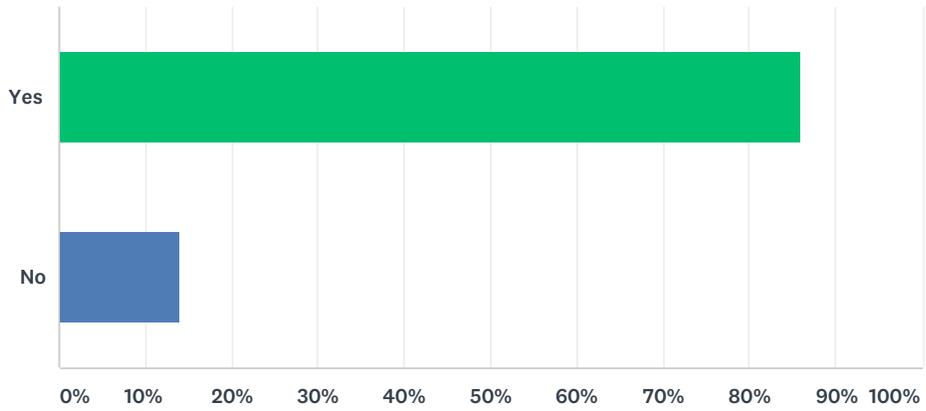
Answered: 41 Skipped: 6



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Small and run by local families	29.27%	12
Medium sized to employ several local people	53.66%	22
Large to employ local people and people from nearby towns	17.07%	7
TOTAL		41

Q15 Should Columbia Falls share more services with neighboring towns?

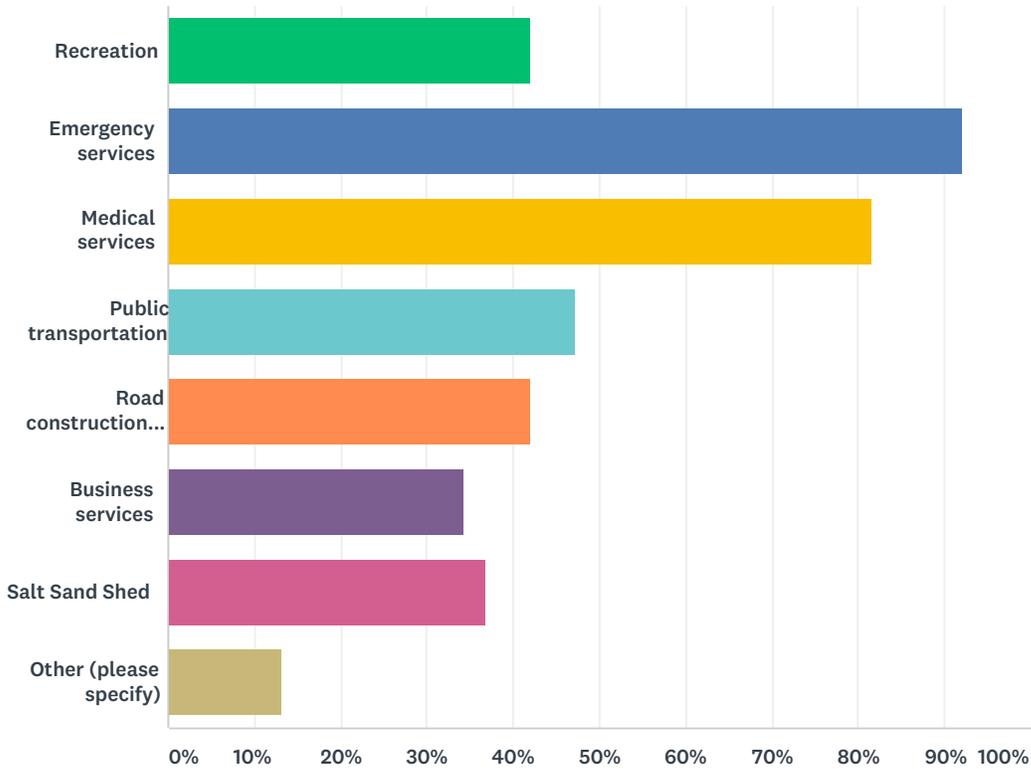
Answered: 43 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	86.05%	37
No	13.95%	6
TOTAL		43

Q16 If yes, what services should Columbia Falls share with neighboring towns? (check all that apply)

Answered: 38 Skipped: 9



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Recreation	42.11% 16
Emergency services	92.11% 35
Medical services	81.58% 31
Public transportation	47.37% 18
Road construction and repair	42.11% 16
Business services	34.21% 13
Salt Sand Shed	36.84% 14
Other (please specify)	13.16% 5
Total Respondents: 38	

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	if we share them they should share the cost to maintain	7/30/2017 7:50 AM
2	WAA America gym is handy + welcoming - Town Hall - not so much its a Clubhouse for downtowners	7/19/2017 5:14 PM
3	this would keep cost down	7/19/2017 4:33 PM
4	[nothing listed]	6/21/2017 11:33 AM

Q17 What 3 things do you love MOST about your community?

Answered: 31 Skipped: 16

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	small town quiet friendly	7/30/2017 7:57 AM
2	local residents hometown feel scenery	7/30/2017 7:55 AM
3	the relationships and attempt at caring for our village this is a village with great history (which should be more obvious) that it is located on/near the water	7/30/2017 7:50 AM
4	beauty neighbors peaceful	7/19/2017 5:38 PM
5	leave well enough alone	7/19/2017 5:32 PM
6	leave well enough alone	7/19/2017 5:31 PM
7	quiet peaceful	7/19/2017 5:28 PM
8	rural	7/19/2017 5:26 PM
9	comparative quiet (original homes downtown) wildlife rural - well developed the town - less (unfortunate unkept and unattended homes) proximity to ocean + downeast	7/19/2017 5:23 PM
10	quiet safe beauty	7/19/2017 5:16 PM
11	the people + neighbors	7/19/2017 5:14 PM
12	small town quiet friendly	7/19/2017 5:09 PM
13	nice people!	7/19/2017 5:06 PM
14	small town feel friendly people history	7/19/2017 5:02 PM
15	1. that we get new selectman every year at least.	7/19/2017 4:59 PM
16	1. Quietness 2. picturesque village 3. wildlife and farms	7/19/2017 4:41 PM
17	1. the river. 2. the history. 3. the people.	7/19/2017 4:36 PM
18	1. Not like living in city rural - quiet 2. concert venue	7/19/2017 4:33 PM
19	1. people 2. hunting 3. fishing	6/21/2017 11:41 AM
20	1. Small	6/21/2017 11:38 AM
21	1. The historic center village on the river (1. old houses, 2. old shops (these are almost gone), 3. old municipal buildings) 2. The relatively high quality of air, forest, river surrounding us. 3. The productivity of the berry farms -- their national importance.	6/21/2017 11:32 AM
22	Lack of development Mix of open and wooded areas Good people	6/13/2017 10:43 AM
23	Very little at the moment. I do appreciate being able to live in a small community where you know everyone. But nothing in particular about OUR community at this time.	5/25/2017 9:31 AM
24	The local community. Peaceful atmosphere. Living in a nice rural area.	5/23/2017 11:00 AM
25	Helpful Involvement Historic	5/22/2017 1:27 PM
26	1. Small and quaint atmosphere 2. The recreational trail as it's a nice place to walk 3. The river traveling through	5/16/2017 7:11 PM
27	1) Its architecture in old village section 2) Its quiet and safe 3) 15 miles to hospital	5/16/2017 10:31 AM
28	1. Quiet and peaceful 2. Light traffic 3. Friendly people	5/16/2017 8:52 AM
29	1. Neighbors helping neighbors 2. pet friendly 3. low taxes	5/15/2017 3:22 PM
30	Small Community Homes are spread out - doesn't feel crowded Peaceful most of the time	5/15/2017 1:03 PM

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31 We are a small community with a rich history. We have taken time to already preserve historic homes in the village. So many people willing to volunteer to help improve our community.

5/15/2017 12:58 PM

Q18 What 3 things would you most like to CHANGE about your community?

Answered: 33 Skipped: 14

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	needs to be larger pop. more employment	7/30/2017 7:57 AM
2	have a school clean up trashy houses more locals in town government	7/30/2017 7:55 AM
3	youth's attitude, their careless use of our facilities drug use	7/30/2017 7:50 AM
4	keep what we have in village area, but clean up unsultry areas maintain cemeteries as they are in a sad state and the cemetery association should come under the select persons.	7/19/2017 5:38 PM
5	leave well enough alone	7/19/2017 5:32 PM
6	leave well enough alone	7/19/2017 5:31 PM
7	more business to share the tax load	7/19/2017 5:28 PM
8	high taxes	7/19/2017 5:26 PM
9	1. Not one domination of "wreaths across America" please. enough to make me move out of town. 2. Regret- schools are (gone) it effects the town's growth + development as "community" 3. get rid of "town signs" it is a travesty, tragic and tacky and a turn off to all.	7/19/2017 5:23 PM
10	lower taxes withdraw from sad37 pay for student edu. have once a year block party	7/19/2017 5:16 PM
11	would love a school back!	7/19/2017 5:14 PM
12	needs to be a larger pop. more employment	7/19/2017 5:09 PM
13	more cooperation for community projects - parades, dances + fairs	7/19/2017 5:06 PM
14	lower taxes	7/19/2017 5:02 PM
15	1. All public road frontage w/cable access 2. bring the school back 3. blight taxes for trashy properties	7/19/2017 4:44 PM
16	1. more small shops in town 2. more participation by all people in events 3. enhanced public areas	7/19/2017 4:41 PM
17	RIDICULOUS WASTE OF TOWN TIME + RESOURCES!	7/19/2017 4:38 PM
18	1. the residents to better work together. 2. more families move in. 3. a long term plan to take care of our cemeteries. *the only place that gives out the walking tour map is the ruggles house. maybe the town office also?	7/19/2017 4:36 PM
19	1. car wash, dunkin donuts, more stores, 2. farmer's market 3. boys & girls club for kids, they have nothing to do, more things for kids to do.	7/19/2017 4:33 PM
20	1. more business 2. any thing that would attract young people to stay 3. attitudes of some people!	6/21/2017 11:41 AM
21	1. Taxes to go down 2. get a good community building 3. a new sand and salt shed stop spending on old building	6/21/2017 11:38 AM
22	1. I would like to protect the special qualities we have, almost by accident, through zoning. 2. i would like to protect our immediate environment: river, forest, barrents 3. SIGNAGE - sorry- its just not cool to have a plastic sign advertising wreaths with "columbia falls" in small print.	6/21/2017 11:32 AM
23	Potential for over development Potential for unregulated development	6/13/2017 10:43 AM
24	Not sure if there is a noise ordinance for animals. My neighbors have had many animals over the years, from dogs that bark almost constantly all day/night to roosters that crow almost constantly all day/night. It is not very enjoyable to sit outside and have that kind of constant noise. If I wanted constant noise I would live in a city.	5/29/2017 10:25 AM

Columbia Falls Comprehensive Plan update

25	1. LOWER TAXES 2. Less money spent on frivolous wants instead (ie flags, Town Hall, a proposed park) and more spent on needs such as roads. 3. One district wide school so that our MSAD 37 budget could be decreased.	5/25/2017 9:31 AM
26	It might be nice if there were more recreational opportunities. Or more local businesses in the area. Or there could be more local things available which might attract tourists.	5/23/2017 11:00 AM
27	More modern amenities Resources for the children to have, including activities Taxes	5/22/2017 1:27 PM
28	While keeping mind that changing people is probably not possible I would like to see the following: 1. Unity 2. Unkind words stopped at the source and not repeated. 3. A safe place in Town for folks to congregate to express themselves.	5/16/2017 7:11 PM
29	1) bring back or build a school for elementary children 2) more citizens taking interest in the town	5/16/2017 10:31 AM
30	1. Offer more services (places to dine, entertainment). 2. Retail store. 3. Enforcement of existing codes regarding junk cars and cluttered yards. Offer incentives for people to clean up their property from being a "Downeast eyesore".It doesn't help much to have a comprehensive plan for the town without some beautification efforts.	5/16/2017 8:52 AM
31	1. safety on the sunrise trail 2. more citizen input into governing 3. more local events	5/15/2017 3:22 PM
32	More respectful attitude towards one another Economy - lack thereof More Positive Social Activities that include the majority of the population	5/15/2017 1:03 PM
33	We need more businesses. We need a school in the community to help lower taxes and offer more jobs. We need to work with the town of Columbia a bit more to save on costs to the taxpayers	5/15/2017 12:58 PM

APPENDIX B. STATE POLICIES

The State policies that are found in the Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act (30-A MRSA §4311 et seq.) are reproduced in this Appendix. The Act requires that a municipality will specify what approaches they will take to address them.

The Town of Columbia Falls has tailored these policies to the specific circumstances of Columbia Falls as they are raised in each of the major substantive areas (chapters) of this Comprehensive Plan. The Town's policies can be found in *Chapter N, Plan Policies and Implementation Strategies*, in the body of the Capital Improvement Plan in *Chapter K; Fiscal Capacity*, and in the Land Use Plan that is mapped and described in *Chapter L; Land Use*.

A. STATE POLICIES

1. 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.
2. To plan for, finance, and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.
3. To promote an economic climate that increases job opportunities and overall economic wellbeing.
4. To encourage and promote affordable, decent housing opportunities for all Maine citizens.
5. To protect the quality and manage the quantity of the State's water resources, including lakes, aquifers, great ponds, estuaries, rivers, and coastal areas.
6. To protect the State's other critical natural resources, including without limitation, wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, sand dunes, shore lands, scenic vistas, and unique natural areas.
7. To protect the State's marine resources industry, ports, and harbors from incompatible development, and to promote access to the shore for commercial fishermen and the public.
8. To safeguard the State's agricultural and forest resources from development that threatens those resources.
9. To preserve the State's historic and archeological resources.
10. To promote and protect the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities for all Maine citizens, including access to surface waters.

B. STATE COASTAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES

1. To promote the maintenance, development, and revitalization of the State's ports and harbors for fishing, transportation, and recreation.

2. To manage the marine environment and its related resources to preserve and improve the ecological integrity and diversity of marine communities and habitats, to expand our understanding of the productivity of the Gulf of Maine and coastal waters, and to enhance the economic value of the State's renewable marine resources.
3. To support shoreline development that gives preference to water-dependent uses over other uses, that promotes public access to the shoreline, and that considers the cumulative effects of development on coastal resources.
4. To discourage growth and new development in coastal areas where, because of coastal storms, flooding, landslides, or sea-level rise, it is hazardous to human health and safety.
5. To encourage and support cooperative state and municipal management of coastal resources.
6. To protect and manage critical habitats and natural areas of state and national significance, and to maintain the scenic beauty and character of the coast, even in areas where development occurs;
7. To expand the opportunities for outdoor recreation, and to encourage appropriate coastal tourist activities and development.
8. To restore and maintain the quality of our fresh, marine, and estuarine waters to allow for the broadest possible diversity of public and private uses.
9. To restore and maintain coastal air quality to protect the health of citizens and visitors, and to protect enjoyment of the natural beauty and maritime character of the Maine coast.

APPENDIX C. EVALUATION MEASURES

This appendix establishes evaluation measures that describe how the Town will periodically (at least every five years) evaluate the following:

- A. The degree to which future land use plan strategies have been implemented.
- B. Percent of municipal growth-related capital investments in growth areas.
- C. Location and amount of new development in relation to the community’s designated growth areas, rural areas, mixed-use areas, and critical resource areas.
- D. Amount of critical resource areas protected through acquisition, easements, or other measures.

Implementation of Future Land Use Plan

Chapter M Land Use of the 2019 Comprehensive Plan establishes a municipal policy directing the Selectmen and Planning Board to “Review and revise existing land use regulations, consistent with the goals and guidelines of this Comprehensive Plan.”

In addition, the Comprehensive Plan directs the Planning Board and Selectmen to “track new development in town by type and location and periodically (at least every five years) evaluate implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and attendant land ordinances to ensure that community goals are being met.”

To ensure that these objectives are met, it is recommended that the Selectmen hold, within six months of adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, a joint meeting with the Planning Board, the Code Enforcement Officer, and staff from the Washington County Council of Governments to develop a specific time table for implementation of the land use policies and implementation strategies established in *Chapter N* of the Comprehensive Plan.

Growth Related Capital Investment

Chapter K Fiscal Capacity establishes a municipal policy of “financing public facilities and services in a cost-effective manner” and an implementation strategy directing to the Selectmen to “direct a minimum of 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments into designated growth areas in the Future Land Use Plan.”

To ensure that these objectives are met, in years when the Town makes growth-related capital investment(s) the Selectmen should indicate in their annual report the percent of each growth related capital investment made in designated growth areas.

Location and Amount of New Development

The Land Use Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan directs the Planning Board and Selectmen to “track new development in town by type and location” and “periodically (at least every five years) evaluate implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and attendant land ordinances to ensure that community goals are being met.” To ensure that this objective is met, the Selectmen should direct the Chair of the Planning Board to submit with his/her annual report a table indicating the type and location of new development for which permits have been issued in the previous year.

Protection of Critical Resources

The location(s) of critical natural resources are indicated in *Chapter F Natural Resources*. Many of these resources are already protected to a large degree by shoreland zoning and/or through conservation. To monitor the amount of critical resource areas protected through acquisition, easements, or other measures, the Town Assessor should maintain a record of parcels enrolled in Tree Growth, Farmland or Open Space protection programs. In addition the Town Assessor should maintain a record of those parcels protected by conservation easement or managed by land trusts, the Town or federal and state agencies for conservation purposes. These records will provide a parcel level map of protected critical resources.

APPENDIX D. MAINE'S GROWTH MANAGEMENT LEGISLATION

Maine's growth management legislation requires that municipalities designate two types of land use districts in their Comprehensive Plan: *growth areas* and *rural areas*. State requirements for the designation of land use areas are described below, along with descriptions of each proposed land use district in Columbia Falls.

The Growth Management Act requires that any municipal growth-related capital investments (*"Investment by the municipality in the following projects, even if privately-owned, using municipal, county, state, federal, or other public funds, in the form of a purchase, lease, grant, loan, loan guarantee, credit, tax credit, or other financial assistance."* See Chapter 208 Review Rule) that may occur over the planning period be accommodated within the proposed growth areas; and the Town commits to directing at least 75% of such investments to these areas of town.

In addition to Growth Areas and Rural Areas, communities may also designate three additional types of land use areas. These include Critical Rural Areas, Critical Waterfront Areas, and Transitional Areas.

"Critical rural areas" are defined as "a rural area that is specifically identified and designated by a community's comprehensive plan as deserving maximum protection from development to preserve natural resources and related economic activities that may include, but are not limited to, significant farmland, forest land or mineral resources; high-value wildlife or fisheries habitat; scenic areas; public water supplies; scarce or especially vulnerable natural resources; and open lands functionally necessary to support a vibrant rural economy."

"Critical waterfront areas" are defined as "shorefront area[s] characterized by functionally water-dependent uses, as defined in MRSA 38 §436-A(6), and specifically identified and designated by a community's comprehensive plan as deserving maximum protection from incompatible development."

"Transitional areas" are defined as areas "suitable for a share of projected residential, commercial, or industrial development but that [are] neither intended to accept the amount or density of development appropriate for a growth area nor intended to provide the level of protection for rural resources afforded in a rural area or critical rural area."

GROWTH AREAS - Defined and in Columbia Falls

In any municipality, the purpose of the Land Use Plan and map is to identify appropriate locations to accommodate anticipated growth and future development. The Proposed Land Use Plan is drawn in "broad brush" and does not identify specific parcels. Only detailed site-specific analysis can determine land suitable for development and at what densities. In addition, the comprehensive plan has not assessed the individual landowner's desires to sell their land for development, to develop it or to leave it undeveloped.

Growth Areas are intended to direct development to areas most suitable for such growth and are therefore located close to municipal services to minimize the cost to the municipality for their delivery and maintenance. According to the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry (DACF), land areas designated for growth must be consistent with the following provisions:

1. The Future Land Use Plan must designate as growth area those lands into which the community intends to direct a minimum of 75% of its dollars for municipal growth-related capital investments made during the planning period.
2. Built-out or developed areas that may not have capacity for further growth but require maintenance, replacement, or additional capital investment to support existing or infill development must also be designated as growth areas.
3. Growth areas must be limited to land areas that are physically suitable for development or redevelopment. Growth areas may include incidental land areas that are physically unsuitable for development or redevelopment, including critical natural resources, however, the plan addresses how these areas will be protected to the greatest extent practicable or, at a minimum, as prescribed by law.
4. To the greatest extent practicable growth areas should be located adjacent to existing densely-populated area.
5. Growth areas, to the greatest extent practicable, must be limited to an amount of land area and a configuration to encourage compact, efficient development patterns (including mixed uses) and discourage development sprawl and strip development.
6. Growth areas along arterials and mobility corridors must be configured to avoid strip development and promote nodes or clusters of development.

RURAL AREAS - Defined and in Columbia Falls

Rural Areas include those areas in Columbia Falls where new development will be limited to support Columbia Falls' important natural resources including its forested land, wetlands, shorelands, scenic areas, and critical habitat. In these areas the Town will use regulatory and non-regulatory means to place appropriate limits on incompatible development and uses.

According to the DACF, land areas designated as rural must be consistent with the following:

- To the greatest extent practicable, rural areas must include working farms, wood lots, properties enrolled in current-use tax programs related to forestry, farming or open space, areas of prime agricultural soils, critical natural resources, and important natural resources.
- The Future Land Use Plan must identify proposed mechanisms, both regulatory and non-regulatory, to ensure that the level and type of development in rural areas is compatible with the defined rural character and does not encourage strip development along roads.
- Rural areas shall not include land areas where the community actively encourages new residential, institutional, or commercial development.

GROWashington-Aroostook is a regional planning process focused on job creation, modern infrastructure, and healthy, affordable communities in Aroostook and Washington counties. Supported by a Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant from a unique partnership between 3 federal agencies (Housing and Urban Development - HUD, Department of Transportation - DOT, Environmental Protection Agency - EPA).

The sustainable housing component of GROWashington-Aroostook includes work-plan tasks with the desired outcome of addressing housing needs within the region, especially those related to increasing availability of affordable housing for low and moderately low income households; and to increase the median household income and stem population loss.

The Sustainable Housing Work Team's efforts to address housing challenges in Washington County are focused on:

- Documenting the gap between housing needs in Washington County and the funds available to address them - only 2% of the documented housing needs can be addressed with available funds.
- Describing the existing programs to address housing issues and evaluating those that have the greatest leverage to address problems given a dire lack of funds.
- Developing policy and best practices recommendations to address the catastrophic gap between need and public funds with emphasis on public-private partnerships.

Over the course of three public meetings the Sustainable Housing Work Team assembled a summary of existing programs that address housing issues in Washington County. This summary document organizes existing, proposed and best practices in terms of their value and reach. The programs are grouped according to whether they are Housing and Coordination Programs, Repair/Retrofit Programs, and Programs for Low Income Residents and the combined high cost of housing and transportation (and home heating).

Program	Value and Reach
<i>Housing and Coordination Programs</i>	
Healthy Homes Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brings all repair programs together Coordinated, comprehensive, and holistic approach to preventing disease and injuries resulting from housing-related hazards and deficiencies. Key focus areas are lead poisoning prevention (lead dust, chips, and soil); asthma prevention (moisture, dust and dust mites, insect and/or animal droppings, mold); indoor air quality (carbon monoxide poisoning); and well water systems (arsenic, lead, copper, uranium, radon)
Mighty Women - Social Capital team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring development of homeless shelter • Attempting to measure homeless population
Next Step's Shelter	Nationally the cause of homelessness for 63% of women is domestic violence; Next Step partners with Washington Hancock Community Agency to provide transitional housing to enable a long term housing solution
Homeless Prevention & Rapid Re-Housing	Prevented homelessness through case management and stabilizing client(s) with housing & financial assistance over a 6-month period. Money is not currently available.
Home to Stay (Maine State Housing Authority)	Targeted to individuals and families that meet certain homeless eligibility status. An initiative to transform the current shelter system to a rapid response system that provides housing stability services to persons who are experiencing homelessness. Housing relocation and stabilization services will assist individuals or families to move as quickly as possible into permanent housing and achieve stability by supporting and promoting their participation in housing placement, increasing income, providing credit and budget counseling and resource coordination. Next Step Domestic Violence Project currently applying to participate.
Rental Assistance (MSHA)	Section 8 Vouchers/Moderate Rehab Program provides subsidy to reduce monthly housing costs up to 30% of household income. Funding is limited and applicants are placed on a waiting list. The Section 8 Rental Voucher Program increases affordable housing choices for very low-income households by allowing families to choose privately owned rental housing. The public housing authority (PHA) pays the landlord the difference between 30 percent of household income and the PHA-determined payment standard-about 80 to 100 percent of the fair market rent (FMR). The rent must be reasonable. The household may choose a unit with a higher rent than the FMR and pay the landlord the difference or choose a lower cost unit and keep the difference.

<p>Habitat for Humanity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designates a residence for rehabilitation based on criteria about the family; • Property owner puts in ‘sweat’ time on the rehabilitation process in exchange for the donated work by volunteers <p>Work on limited number of properties</p>
<p>At Home Downeast - Aging in Place (WHCA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available to all income levels; • Age eligibility criterion; • Member based, volunteer supported • Program looks different in every community but has similar guiding principles • Part of health care system by providing medicines (or ensuring they are taken), nurse visits, ensuring appointments are kept, some transportation; referral service • Addresses isolation as it is strongly supported by volunteers and the community • Aging in Place is recommended nationally in Housing America’s Future: New Directions for National Policy, Bipartisan Policy Center, Economic Policy Program – Housing Commission, Feb 2013 (post to www.gro-wa.org) • Includes home safety assessments – carpets, stairs, handrails, but not yet water or air. • Staff: Program Manager, Office Assistant, Steering Committee (community volunteers, typically 65-70 years old), younger volunteers (manual work, assist with technology) • Membership is by fee with sliding scale; often paid for by the adult children of members. Funding also from donations and grants
<p><i>Repair/Retrofit Programs</i></p>	
<p>Tank and Pipe Replacement</p>	<p>Replaces oil tanks that are leaking, rusty, or un-stable at no cost to the homeowner.</p> <p>Requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client must have a current LIHEAP fuel application. • Client must own and live in the home. Single family, owner occupied homes or mobile homes only
<p>Neighbors Helping Neighbors (Maine Sea Coast Mission)</p>	<p>Home Repair. Volunteer groups in summer (250 volunteers with 14 mission groups in 2012) join with the local community action program and others that provide weatherization and other home repairs to complete major projects. Projects range from painting and basic carpentry to major repairs such as a roof replacement.</p>

<p>Home Repair Network Funding source: CDBG Housing development and repair; decreasing \$\$</p>	<p>May be used for a variety of home rehab needs, such as heating and electrical repairs, lead paint mitigation, roof and structural repairs, repair or replacement of substandard or failed septic systems, and other health and safety improvements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client must be at or below 80% median income based on the funding source. • Home must be an existing and habitable structure. • Client must own and live in the home. • Single-family homes only. • Single-wide or double-wide trailers must be built after 1978 located on owned or leased land. In the case of lease land, the lease must be provided for assistance. • Property cannot have restrictions or encumbrances that would restrict the marketable nature of the owner's interest. • All tax liens must be cleared before a loan or grant can be approved. <p>Property owner must be unable to provide/obtain financing for improvements.</p>
<p>Lead Hazard Control</p>	<p>Provides up to \$16,000 to eligible homeowners and up to \$10,000 per unit to eligible landlords of lower-income tenants for lead safety improvements. Making homes lead safe may involve paint removal or stabilization, and window and door replacement.</p> <p>Requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligible clients or 2/3 of tenants must be at or below 80% median income and the home must be built before 1978. • Owner occupied homes must have a child under the age of six living in the home. <p>Rental units two+ bedrooms; tenant must be income eligible or the unit must be vacant.</p>
<p>Weatherization (funding now at pre-2008 levels)</p>	<p>Provides assessment of air leakage, the heating system, moisture problems, and health and safety issues. Weatherization improvements may include insulation, air sealing, moisture controls, and health and safety measures.</p> <p>Requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client must have a current LIHEAP fuel application and live in the home. • Priority is given to households with senior citizens (over 60), children under two years of age or a person with a disability that makes them hypothermia- vulnerable. <p>Priority is also given to households with the highest fuel consumption.</p>
<p>YouthWorks</p>	<p>House painting +</p>
<p>Private donations</p>	
<p>Voluntourism</p>	

<i>Programs for Low Income Residents Associated with Combined high cost of Housing and Transportation (and home heating)</i>	
Helping Hands Garage http://www.whcacap.org/vehiclepurchase/	Helps income-eligible people and others obtain vehicles. Program purchases used, often high mileage vehicles; find and repairs any problems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers can contact us to request a type of vehicle they are looking for and we work to obtain it for them from our sources • Minimal markup on vehicles; Reasonable interest rate loans; Easy payment terms Affordable courses on: Budgeting, Insurance, Vehicle Maintenance, and Child Safety Seat Use
Family Futures Downeast	Teaches living skills
Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)	Helps pay home heating costs based on % of federal poverty levels; guidelines change each year so clients need to reapply each year. LIHEAP pays a portion of home heating costs, but not all. When LIHEAP benefits run out Energy Crisis Intervention Program (ECIP) funds may be available for emergencies. To qualify: household must be below 1/8 tank of oil or about to be disconnected. Can provide up to \$400 of emergency heating assistance in life threatening situations only once/year and current, approved LIHEAP clients.
Central Heating Improvement Program (CHIP)	Repair or replace dangerous, malfunctioning, or inoperable heating appliances or systems that pose a threat to the health and safety. Households with no heat are the highest priority. <i>Requirements:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client must have a current LIHEAP fuel application on file and live in the home. • Proof of home ownership required, i.e. a copy of the deed or a copy of property taxes. A licensed heating technician must inspect the heating system at the owner's expense and a letter of condemnation or a written description of necessary repairs must be submitted to WHCA.
The Heating and Warmth (THAW) fund	Funds raised from the community (tax-deductible contributions) assist people who may be just outside the LIHEAP program eligibility requirements or who have exhausted all other options to heat their homes; no income eligibility requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · For (LIHEAP) ineligible purposes, such as furnace repairs, utility bills and service reconections. · A typical THAW fund recipient gets a 100-gallon emergency delivery of heating fuel. · \$500 will help a family through an emergency heating crisis.
Fuel Assistance (ME Sea Coast Mission)	Emergency fuel assistance. Links homeowners to the housing repair ministry for weatherization of their houses and trailers to reduce future fuel costs.

Senior Companions (ME SeaCoast Mission and UMaine Coop Extension)	Serves older adults, adults with disabilities or terminal illnesses, offers respite for caregivers. Assists adult clients in basic, essential ways: companionship/friendship, simple chores, providing transportation, and adding richness to their lives; also coordinates with Food Pantries.
Eastern Area Agency on Aging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency meals for free and sells meals at \$4/meal; • Provide several hundred Amish heaters to low income families; • Homeowners have fears that if they improve their house then their taxes will go up; • Many won't apply for benefits because they fear loss of their homes; EAAA spends a lot of time debunking these misperceptions <p>Clients are looking for a safe, affordable handy person to do manual labor (raking, shoveling)</p>

(Developing data analysis, program review and policy recommendations can be downloaded from the GROWashington-Aroostook website (<http://gro-wa.org/sustainable-housing.htm#UiZY27x4l0k>) and are incorporated into the discussion above and ensuing housing policies.)

PROGRAMS FOR AN AGING POPULATION

(following section taken from A Regional Plan for Sustainable Housing in Washington County, East, J. and T. Hill, 2014)

At Home Downeast (WHCA)

Aging in Place is a national non-profit program, implemented in 60 locations around the United States. In Washington and Hancock Counties, it is offered through the Washington Hancock Community Agency. It has been implemented in Hancock County, but not yet in Washington County. It is a member based, volunteer supported program, offering a number of in-home services for seniors, to help enable them to live in their homes longer. It is modeled on the village concept, in that people living in their own homes in close proximity to each other, band together to form a self-directed community organization to meet the needs of seniors.

The program addresses senior isolation, by bringing services to seniors, and has a strong base of community and volunteer support. This program is tailored to each community, but has similar guiding principles.

The program is funded by membership fees, often paid by adult children of elderly in the program. Donations and grants also fund the program.

Eligibility Requirements: The program has an age requirement, but is available to all income levels, with membership by fee on a sliding scale.

Services offered by this program include:

- Household and yard chores, with the manual work often done by volunteers.
- Assistance with technology.
- Some transportation.
- Assurance that appointments are kept.
- Nurse visits every few days.
- Home safety assessments, relative to carpets, stairs, and handrails.

Sources:

1. WHCA website: <http://www.whcacap.org/at-home-downeast/hancock/about.php>;
2. GROWashington/Aroostook Sustainable Housing Work Team minutes:
<http://growa.org/sustainable-housing-agendas-and-minutes>

Eastern Area Agency on Aging

The Maine Association of Area Agencies on Aging includes a set of non-profit programs operating in different areas of Maine, funded in part, by Maine Department of Health and Human Services, and in part by donations. The Eastern Area Agency on Aging (EAAA) is the program servicing Washington County, as well as Hancock, Penobscot, and Piscataquis Counties. In operation since 1974, EAAA has a professional staff offering programs that provide general volunteer assistance to seniors including:

- emergency meals for free and meals for sale at \$4/meal;
- several other kinds of nutrition services;
- several hundred Amish heaters to low income families;
- safe, affordable handy people to do manual labor (raking, shoveling);
- information assistance and free legal services for the elderly; and
- support and education to individuals caring for family members, especially regarding dementia.

EAAA also partners with other organizations to provide additional services, including:

- Senior Care Coordination
- Step by Step Fall Prevention Program
- Legal Services for the Elderly
- EZ FIX, a minor home repair program for seniors

In addition to emergency meals, EAAA offers the “Nutrition Program” (formerly known as “Meals for Me”), which serves hot lunches to persons 60 and over at 45 Community Cafes (some at senior living facilities) in the Counties it serves. EAAA’s “Meals on Wheels” program, also delivers hot lunches to homebound seniors who are unable to cook a meal themselves.

Sources:

1. EAAA website: <http://www.eaaa.org>
2. Volunteer Maine website: <http://volunteer.truist.com/me/org/219249.html>
3. GROWashington/Aroostook minutes
4. Dir. of “Nutrition Program” in Machias.

Senior Companions (Maine Sea Coast Mission and U. Maine Coop. Extension)

This program serves frail older adults, adults with disabilities, those with terminal illnesses, and caregivers in need of respite. Active individuals, aged 60 and older, are provided with a stipend to assist seniors in need. They provide homebound adults with companionship, and assist with simple chores and transportation. This program also coordinates with food pantries, where volunteers provide meals for persons in need.

The following goals have been defined for this program:

- To provide cost effective alternatives to institutionalization by encouraging the independence of Maine’s older adult population.
- To promote a high quality of life for Senior Companions and their clients.
- To provide a formal structure within which Senior Companions come together to attain a common understanding of the services they provide.
- To recognize and reward the efforts of Senior Companion volunteers.
- To help Maine people to improve their lives through an educational process that uses research-based knowledge focused on community issues and needs.

Sources:

1. Senior Companions website:
http://www.seacoastmission.org/senior_companions.html
2. GROWashington/Aroostook Sustainable Housing Work Team minutes:
<http://growa.org/sustainable-housing-agendas-and-minutes>

Catholic Charities Housing Services a.k.a. Homemaker Services

This Catholic Charities program, also known as Homemaker Services, is a state-wide program that connects support services to those in need. It enables seniors and people with disabilities, to stay longer in their homes, especially those on limited incomes. Services are professionally supervised, and are provided by a team of para-professionals, who help with a variety of tasks.

Services include:

- Emergency help and food
- Counseling
- Child care
- Housekeeping
- Grocery shopping
- Laundry
- Transportation
- Incidental help with personal hygiene and dressing

This program services individuals, families, and children in need, regardless of faith or ability to pay.

Sources:

1. Website for Maine Aging and Disability Services:
<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/oads/aging/long-term/homemaker.shtml>
2. GROWashington/Aroostook Sustainable Housing Work Team minutes:
<http://growa.org/sustainable-housing-agendas-and-minutes>

Support and Services at Home (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services)

This federal program is aimed at supporting elderly people who want to stay in their homes, rather than moving to nursing homes or other long-term care facilities. It has been implemented successfully in Vermont, which can serve as a model for implementation in other areas.

Medicaid (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services)

Medicaid is a federal entitlement program that provides medical services to eligible low income persons. In Maine, Medicaid is known as “Maine Care”. The Maine Department of Health and

Human Services administers this federal health insurance program at the state level. This program relates to housing by subsidizing “cost of care” for people living in a medical facility, who meet the eligibility requirements. Medical facilities include: nursing homes, residential care facilities, cost reimbursed boarding homes, or adult family care homes. Some people who are eligible to live in a nursing home may get services in their own home instead.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Unless clients’ income is set aside for a living-at-home spouse, they must use most of their income to pay for care.
- Income caps: countable income of \$958 per month for one elderly or disabled person, or \$1,293 for two, as of 2013.
- To receive benefits while living in a nursing home, there are minimum thresholds for medical and dementia conditions.

Services Include:

- Adult Day Health,
- Care Coordination Services,
- Environmental Modifications,
- Financial Management Services,
- Homemaker Services,
- Home Health Services,
- Personal Support Services,
- Personal Emergency Response System Services
- Transportation Services
- Respite Services
- Skills Training

For residents living in a nursing home, another benefit package provides additional services, including: cost of the room, food, routine supplies and equipment, and nursing care. For residents living in other residential care facilities, a benefits package includes a number of medical services, plus hospice.

Sources:

1. Federal website:<http://www.medicaid.gov>
2. Maine website: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mainecare.shtml>

Medicare (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services)

Medicare is health insurance for people 65 or older, and people under age 65 with certain disabilities. This program helps to pay for medical services, hospitalization, hospice, prescription drugs, and home health care. Thus, for elderly, it can either help pay for nursing home residency, or for medical services at home. There are several parts to Medicare plans. Part A affects living in long-term care facilities. Most people 65 or older are automatically eligible for Part A, with no monthly payment.

Eligibility requirements for Part A include:

- Nursing home stay must be for an illness diagnosed during a hospital stay or for the main cause of a hospital stay.

- Hospice facility benefits are only available for terminally ill persons with less than six months to live.

Medicare Advantage Plans, Part C, are an alternative to traditional Medicare, in that they are public/private partnerships approved by Medicare, but run by private companies. (Sources: <https://www.medicare.gov/>; <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/>)

APPENDIX F 2002 POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Appendix F outlines the Policies and Implementation strategies from the 2002 Comprehensive Plan, including who was identified as the responsible party to coordinate and oversee each one, and anticipated timeline for each strategy to have been completed.

Economy				
Policies	Implementation Strategies	Responsibility	Timeline	Comments for Update
Support existing industrial and commercial activities	Review needs and uses, and match the needs with existing funding sources and programs	Selectmen	Short Term	Research incentive programs in other towns in Maine, look for models that are appropriate for incentivizing businesses to locate or expand in Columbia Falls.
Encourage commercial and industrial development.	Designate areas where commercial and industrial growth is encouraged. Economic development efforts should address attraction of environmentally conscious industrial and commercial activities to designated areas. Economic development will be planned so as to discourage strip development, reduce traffic congestion, increase traffic safety, and minimize conflicts between existing residential land uses and development of commercial and industrial land uses.	Planning Board	Short Term	This policy continues to align with local priorities and state level goals. It should be continued.
Allow for the development of home occupations.	Include home occupation performance standards in the future land use ordinance. Home occupations should be compatible with residential use and should not infringe upon the neighborhood or the environment.	Planning Board	Short Term	This policy continues to align with local priorities and state level goals. It should be continued.
Participate in regional and state business development activities and programs.	Be knowledgeable of existing state programs and apply for grants, if warranted.	Selectmen	Short Term	This policy continues to align with local priorities and state level goals. It should be continued.

Housing				
Policies	Implementation Strategies	Responsibility	Timeline	Comments for Update
Encourage the development of affordable housing that is decent, safe, and sanitary.	Encourage affordable housing opportunities in the town by allowing a mixture of appropriate housing types. Housing options will include: accessory dwellings which are self-contained living units, either attached or detached from the primary residential units on a single lot; single-family conversions in the growth area and in the rural area after review; and mobile home parks in the growth area. The town's land use ordinance will include provisions to allow density bonuses and cluster. These incentives will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis with the Planning Board.	Planning Board	Short Term	This policy continues to align with local priorities and state level goals. It should be continued.
Ensure that housing remains affordable.	Continue to support local and regional housing rehabilitation and affordable housing initiatives, including the Community Development Block Grant Program {CDBG} housing rehabilitation grant program. Support Washington-Hancock Community Agency {WHCA}, Rural Development (RD), and Maine State Housing Authority {MSHA} programs. Coordinate the town's efforts with these programs and request annual up-dates on their respective program criteria and availability.	Selectmen	Immediate	This policy continues to align with local priorities and state level goals. It should be continued.

Transportation				
Policies	Implementation Strategies	Responsibility	Timeline	Comments for Update
Develop access management performance standards for activities that will generate significant local traffic along US Route 1.	The Land Use section of this plan and the future land use ordinance of the Town of Columbia Falls will include access management performance standards for large uses.	Planning Board	Short Term	This policy continues to align with local priorities and state level goals. It should be continued.
Recognize the importance of US Route 1 as a road moving traffic through Columbia Falls.	Work with the Maine Department of Transportation (MOOT} through the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) Region 2 to ensure adequate maintenance, upgrading, and safe traffic flow.	Selectmen	Short Term	This policy continues to align with local priorities and state level goals. It should be continued.
Ensure that new roads are built to town standards.	Include road performance standards into the Subdivision Ordinance. Develop and adopt a road acceptance ordinance.	Planning Board	Immediate	This policy was completed.

Public Facilities and Services				
Policies	Implementation Strategies	Responsibility	Timeline	Comments for Update
Support the water company	Monitor the needs and explore funding possibilities to help support the water company.	Selectmen	Immediate	The water company is privately owned and maintained, serves ½ of the towns people, and has never requested Town support.
Ensure long term use and viability of the transfer station	Continue to monitor the capacity of the transfer station and determine the optimal number of users to reduce costs	Selectmen	Short Term	This policy was completed.
Ensure the safety of the residents and their properties	Undertake a study to identify water sources where dry fire hydrants or access points for fire trucks could be located.	Fire Department	Immediate	This policy continues to align with local priorities and state level goals. It should be continued.
Support and encourage ongoing training for town officials	Utilize WCRPC, MMA, SPO, and DEP resources and available training.	Selectmen	Immediate	This policy continues to align with local priorities and state level goals. It should be continued.
Ensure that town government functions are compatible with the intent of the Columbia Falls Comprehensive plan.	Adopt a town policy pertaining to the annual acknowledgment, in writing, by all appointed officials that they have read and understand the Comprehensive Plan policies pertaining to their function(s). Five years after the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, the Town of Columbia Falls will review the policy plans. Continue planning efforts based on input from the residents, municipal departments.	Selectmen	Short Term	This policy continues to align with local priorities and state level goals. It should be continued.

Recreation, Scenic Resources, Open Space				
Policies	Implementation Strategies	Responsibility	Timeline	Comments for Update
Manage and develop the newly acquired 91-acre parcel of land for recreation.	Apply for CDBG funds to prepare a plan for the development and management of the 91-acre parcel of land.	Selectmen	Immediate	The Town had acquired this land for cemetery expansion, but sold it upon discovering too much ledge.

Land and Water Resources				
Policies	Implementation Strategies	Responsibility	Timeline	Comments for Update
Protect and manage wildlife habitats and ecosystems.	Proposed development, reviewed by the Planning Board, shall include information regarding any on-site significant wildlife habitats, as defined in the Natural Resources section of the plan, as part of their application.	Planning Board	Immediate	The Planning Board reviews habitats with prospective developers. The Town has been provided with the new Beginning with Habitat maps and they are available to the Planning Board.
Protect sand and gravel aquifers.	Location of activities which handles hazardous materials, as defined by Maine State Law and Federal regulations, shall be regulated on all significant sand and gravel aquifers, as mapped by MDEP.	Planning Board, CEO	Immediate	This is monitored at the State level. The Town should consider local standards for protecting significant aquifers.
Encourage protection of forest and water resources.	Use some of the State's Best Management Practices available as guidelines for establishing town wide performance standards for storm water management; erosion and sedimentation control, agriculture, and forestry in the future land use ordinance	Planning Board, CEO	Immediate	This policy continues to align with local priorities and state-level goals. It should be continued.
Ensure that environmental resources of all types are taken into account during development review process.	Development review process should include consideration of environmental criteria and resources so that environmental impacts are minimized or avoided and unique resources are preserved or maintained to the maximum extent possible.	Planning Board, CEO	Immediate	This policy continues to align with local priorities and state level goals. It should be continued.
Ensure high quality of ground and surface water.	Apply for MOEP Small Community Grants for the survey and replacement of failing septic systems that are a public nuisance. Enforce existing Shoreland Zoning Regulations.	Planning Board, CEO	Immediate	This policy continues to align with local priorities and state level goals. It should be continued.

Historic and Archeological Resources				
Policies	Implementation Strategies	Responsibility	Timeline	Comments for Update
Initiate and support an effort to establish a Historical Society.	Seek potential members. Set up an organizational meeting. If sufficient interest exists, the founding members will write a charter for the establishment of a nonprofit Historical Society. The Historical Society will work in conjunction with the Planning Board.	Selectmen	Immediate	The Pleasant River Historical Society has operated since at least 1928, and is compiled of all communities along the Pleasant River. Columbia Falls supports them and will continue to do so.
Preserve the town's historic character.	Encourage that all privately owned historic resources be registered and maintained to the maximum extent feasible through landowner or nonprofit efforts or public acquisition. Work with MHPC to determine the best way to preserve the Village's historic resources and develop a historic district, if warranted. Coordinate with MHPC to survey the banks of the Pleasant, Eastern, and Little Rivers.	Planning Board	Short Term	This policy continues to align with local priorities and state level goals. It should be continued.

Land Use				
Policies	Implementation Strategies	Responsibility	Timeline	Comments for Update
Encourage compatible growth and development	Develop a town-wide land use ordinance including subdivision regulations. Study the need for impact fees provisions in the future land use ordinance. Develop a floodplain management ordinance. Develop Site Plan Review criteria for commercial and industrial development	Planning Board	Immediate	The Town has used State standards since around 2000, this seems to be working well. There are no Mapped floodplains in Columbia Falls.
Preserve the town	Promote open space incentives such as cluster development and density bonus.	Planning Board	Short Term	This policy no longer aligns with local priorities and state level goals. It should be NOT be continued.
Review existing land use ordinances to ensure consistency with the intent of comprehensive plan.	Annually review existing land use ordinances and regulations.	Planning Board, CEO	Long Term	This policy continues to align with local priorities and state-level goals. It should be continued.