

This charrette report is a description of the process of preparing and conducting the Damariscotta Heart & Soul Planning Charrette and its recommendations, in the form of an Illustrative Plan and strategies to implement the Plan.

Damariscotta chose to conduct a design charrette to engage the community in preparing an illustrated vision, and a set of strategies to implement that vision to promote growth that reflects the community's values, and to address sprawl along the Route 1B Corridor.

A charrette is an intensive, participatory, design workshop that consists of a series of meetings, presentations, and interactive sessions in which a community shapes the vision for its future.

While the entire Town provided an important context for the effort, the focus of the charrette was Damariscotta's Downtown, the Route 1B corridor, and Piper Commons, a private landholding being considered for development. A number of issues were raised in the course of the charrette that are not addressed in this report, but which can be addressed by the Town in the future. These include:

- Potential for future development in the Biscay Road area.
- Problems with traffic, safety, and the use of Bristol Road as the principal thoroughfare to the Pemaquid Peninsula.
- Role of the health care industry and Miles Memorial Hospital in Damariscotta as a service center community in Lincoln County and the Midcoast.

Section A INTRODUCTION of this report begins with this description of "How to Use the Charrette Report". It is followed by a brief introduction to the report, including a summary of the process and an outline of its recommendations.

Section B PROCESS describes the process of preparing and conducting the charrette. Throughout this report, the community's core values are described and used to analyze the Illustrative Plan and implementing strategies. These community values were developed by the Damariscotta Planning Advisory Committee (DPAC) as part of its Heart & Soul Planning process. Community values are illustrated with "icons" that are described in this section. The icons are then used throughout the report to indicate where designs or recommendations reflect the different community values. What the values are, how they were developed, and how they are reflected in the Illustrative Plan and implementing strategies are more fully described in Section B, Section D, Section F, and the Appendix of this report.

Section C ANALYSIS presents basic information about Damariscotta – its context in the Lincoln County and Midcoast region, its history, more information about the focus areas of the charrette, current zoning, demographics, previous planning studies, environmental context, vehicular connections and pedestrian mobility, and a brief retail market assessment.

Section D ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN more fully discusses the Illustrative Plan that was part of the outcome of the Damariscotta charrette. The Illustrative Plan takes the long view and suggest possible directions, for the next 40-70 years, based on the Town's last 30 years of development trends¹ and input from the charrette.

Section E REGULATION explains form based codes, mentioned in a number of places throughout this report as a means of amending the Town's land use regulations. A form based code is a

¹This simple, straight line projection is based on approximately 14.1 new residential units and 12,700 square feet of new commercial development per year, calculated from development trends in Damariscotta over the past 30 years.

regulatory tool that places primary emphasis on the physical form of the built environment with the goal of producing a specific type of "place". This regulatory mechanism is not the only option the Town has to implement the Illustrative Plan; however, the charrette team recommends this approach as the most effective way to implement the details of the Illustrative Plan.

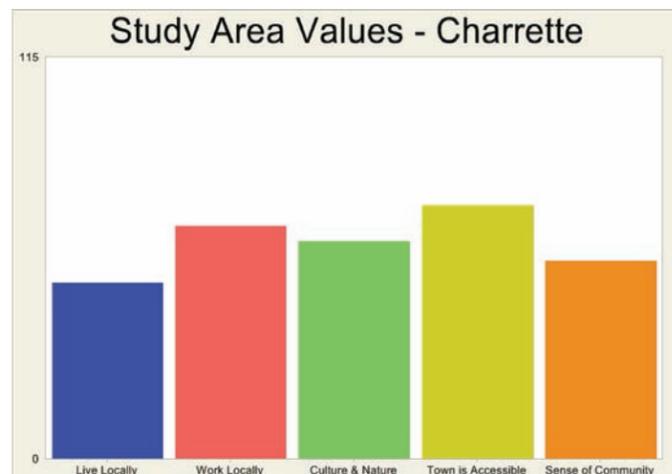
Section F IMPLEMENTATION includes the recommendations of this report, from short to long term as well as area-wide. It also summarizes DPAC's 2010 Work Plan, potential funding mechanisms, and comprehensive plan recommendations.

Section X APPENDIX contains background and more detailed information, including a vision statement, DPAC's 2010 Work Plan, the process used to measure how well the Illustrative Plan responds to community values, public comments offered in the charrette, and a Level 1 retail study.

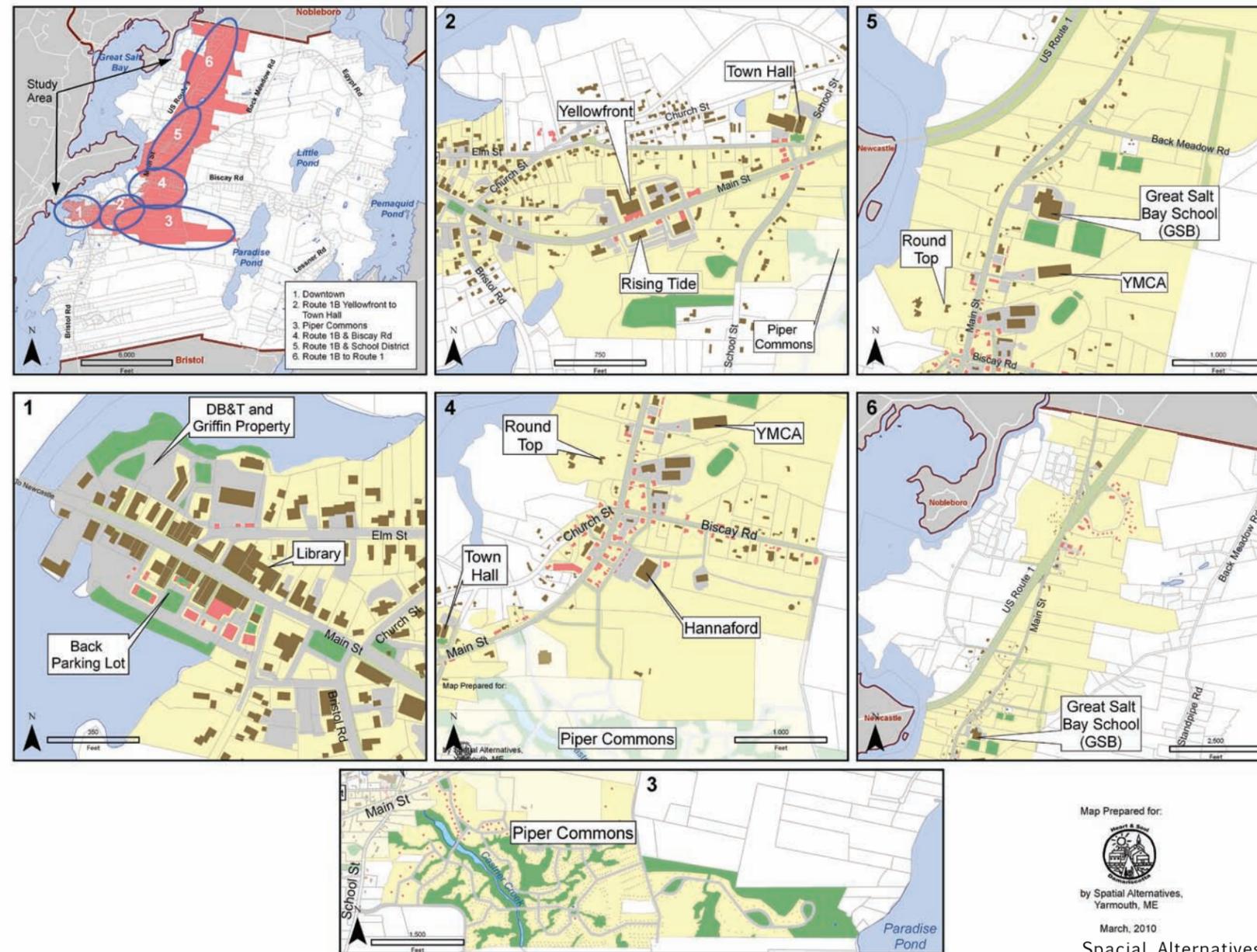
A number of local names for places in Damariscotta are used in this report. We have identified most of them on the maps located on the next page.

Though this charrette report is extensive and includes many recommendations, the community's work on the Illustrative Plan and implementation strategies is not done. While the principles and elements of the Illustrative Plan are clearly in-line with community values, and work to implement some of them has already begun, other elements will require further discussion, refinement, and modification to reflect a broader community consensus about steps Damariscotta should take in the future.

The charrette team applauds the community's past and current planning efforts and encourage you to continue to "BE A PART OF DAMARISCOTTA'S HISTORY" and "PLAN YOUR FUTURE"!



This chart suggests that residential and commercial growth that is likely to occur under the Town's current regulations and development trends will build out in approximately 35 to 50 years, while residential and commercial growth anticipated in the Illustrative Plan will take approximately 40-70 years.



Damariscotta Local Places Map

Damariscotta is a historic village located along the shore of the Damariscotta River. Though it developed as a shipbuilding center, the community now thrives on tourism as well as providing daily goods and services for the region. Despite a population of only 2,000, Damariscotta is the retail and service center for inland and peninsula communities due to its location along Route 1. Damariscotta also has a robust offering of cultural organizations and activities, superb schools, as well as incredible natural amenities, including four lakes and the River.

New development has sprawled beyond the compact Downtown, along Business Route 1B because of the Town's regulations and economic center in the region, to name a few reasons. The pace of development has been slow enough that these changes occurred incrementally. In 2005, Damariscotta faced the prospect of a big box store locating in the community. This galvanized residents on both sides of the issue and resulted in a record turnout (approximately 90% of registered voters) for a special election that resulted in approval of a retail store size-cap (35,000 sq. ft. maximum). This experience, however, revealed both how ill-equipped the community was to manage ever-increasing development pressures and the need to engage a cross-section of the community in future planning and development. In response, the Town hired a part-time planner and formed the Damariscotta Planning Advisory Committee (DPAC) so it could be pro-active in the face of development pressures by tapping into existing networks, building new connections and engaging all citizens in a process that is meaningful and produces specific policies and plans.

DPAC began working with Friends of Midcoast Maine (FMM) to engage citizens in planning for the future. Its efforts included a successful application for a two-year planning grant from the Orton Family Foundation (Orton), to engage in a "Heart & Soul Community Planning" process.

DPAC Mission:
 To lead a community-driven process to make the Damariscotta region a better place to live, work, play, do business and visit for people of all ages by advancing policies and practices that foster sustainable land use and prosperity.

Believing in a collaborative and participatory design effort, DPAC worked with the Town to hire consultants. In the summer of 2009, B. Dennis Town Design was selected to help the Town develop a road map for future development. Spatial Alternatives and Placeways, LLC were also hired to determine how well alternative design scenarios reflect the Town's core values.

Through a process called a "charrette", the consultants worked with the public to craft an Illustrative Plan and other supporting documents described in this charrette report to show how future growth and change can happen in a way that reflects the Town's core values.

Map Prepared for:

 by Spatial Alternatives,
 Yarmouth, ME
 March, 2010
 Spatial Alternatives

Damariscotta Planning Milestones

2005-2006 Retail size cap passed

2007 Damariscotta Planning Advisory Committee created

April 2008 Townwide Pedestrian and Bicycle meeting held

April 2008 Town awarded state grant to study shore and harbor

July 2008 Damariscotta selected as Heart & Soul Community Planning town

Oct 2008 Heart & Soul Community Planning project launched at the PumpkinFest and Regatta

Dec 2008-May 2009 Neighbor to Neighbor Chats, Community Conversations

May-Aug 2009 Visioning activities and continuing conversations

Sept 2009 Pre-charrette workshop

Oct 2009 Damariscotta Heart & Soul Planning Charrette

April 2010-Sept 2012 Review and update Comprehensive Plan, codes, and budget priorities

The Heart & Soul Planning Process began in 2008, combining the efforts of the Town, DPAC, FMM, and Orton. A number of events were held during the first year of the grant including neighbor to neighbor interviews, pot luck dinners, community workshops, surveys, and other types of interactive events.

In September 2009, a pre-charrette workshop was held at the Darrows Barn at Round Top Farm (Round Top) to begin thinking about the study areas - in particular the Downtown, Route 1B, and Piper Commons², a large site under consideration for private development. The workshop began to extract ideas and also prioritize core community values in order to understand what matters most to residents of the community. This event, attended by more than 60 people, also provided yet another opportunity for the community to identify key topics for discussion, voice concerns, and learn more about the upcoming charrette.

The four-day charrette was held in October, 2009. Consultants with expertise in a variety of disciplines related to traditional town planning - architects, transportation and civil engineers, retail consultants, designers, landscape architects, planners, illustrators, and geographical information system (GIS) professionals - arrived in Damariscotta. A studio was set up at Round Top to serve as home base for the consultants and public meetings. More than 200 people from Damariscotta and the surrounding area attended charrette events, providing valuable ideas and steering the planning work.

The charrette began with a kick-off event and hands-on design workshop, which was attended by more than 100 people. Participants discussed issues in small groups, marked up maps, and shared hopes and concerns.

Over the next three days, the consultants developed design scenarios for the area that incorporated residents' values and visions for the future.

² This property has also been called Piper Village and Damariscotta Commons.

As the consultants worked, residents participated in focus meetings to provide ideas on key issues and core values. The consultants incorporated ideas generated during these meetings into the evolving design.

At the end of each day, a public pin-up session took place. Charrette team members presented in-progress designs, which were critiqued by citizens who asked questions and made recommendations. Designers worked into the evening and through the following day to incorporate the community's ideas and prepare for the next day's sessions.

Meanwhile, Spatial Alternatives and Placeways, developed 3-D visualizations and measures of community values using CommunityViz® (CViz), a GIS-based software, which allowed people to evaluate the impact of design alternatives.

The closing presentation was held on the final night of the charrette. More than 100 people packed into the Great Salt Bay School cafeteria to see the outcome of everyone's hard work. The charrette team presented designs and participants rated the illustrative plans for each study area using keypad polling.

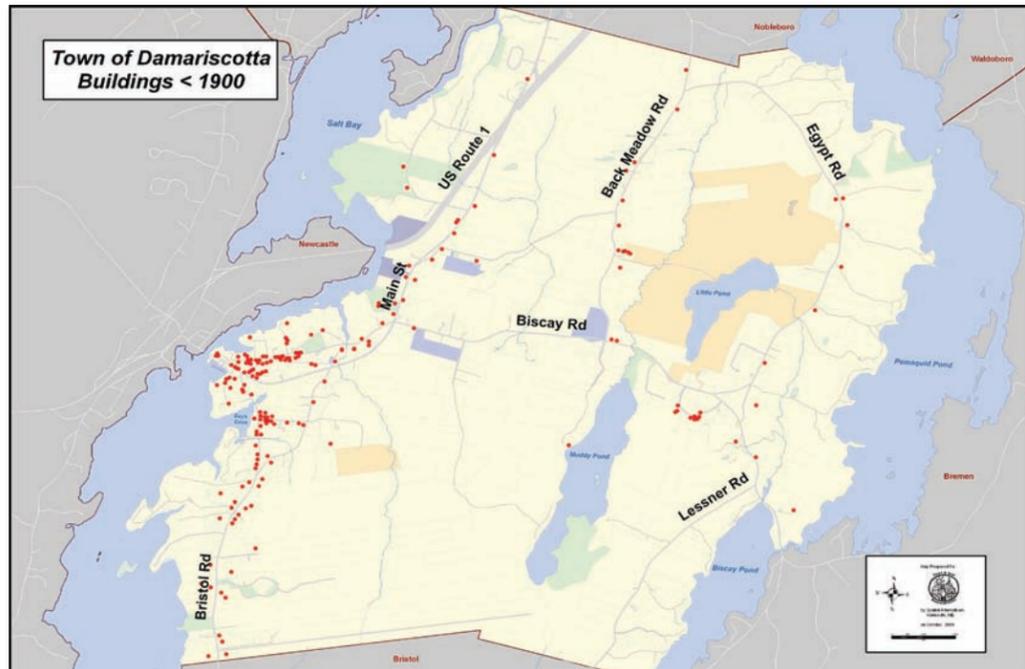
The Heart & Soul process and the charrette have begun to strengthen public engagement and investment in the future of the Town, increase trust among diverse segments of the population, address land use issues, improve economic development opportunities consistent with community values, and serve as a model for development practices in small town Maine. Moving forward, the Town will continue to engage new voices in developing a shared community vision.

The purpose of this report is to more fully describe that vision and provide a menu of strategies that the Town can use to turn that vision into reality. A more complete description of the charrette process is provided in Section B of the charrette report.

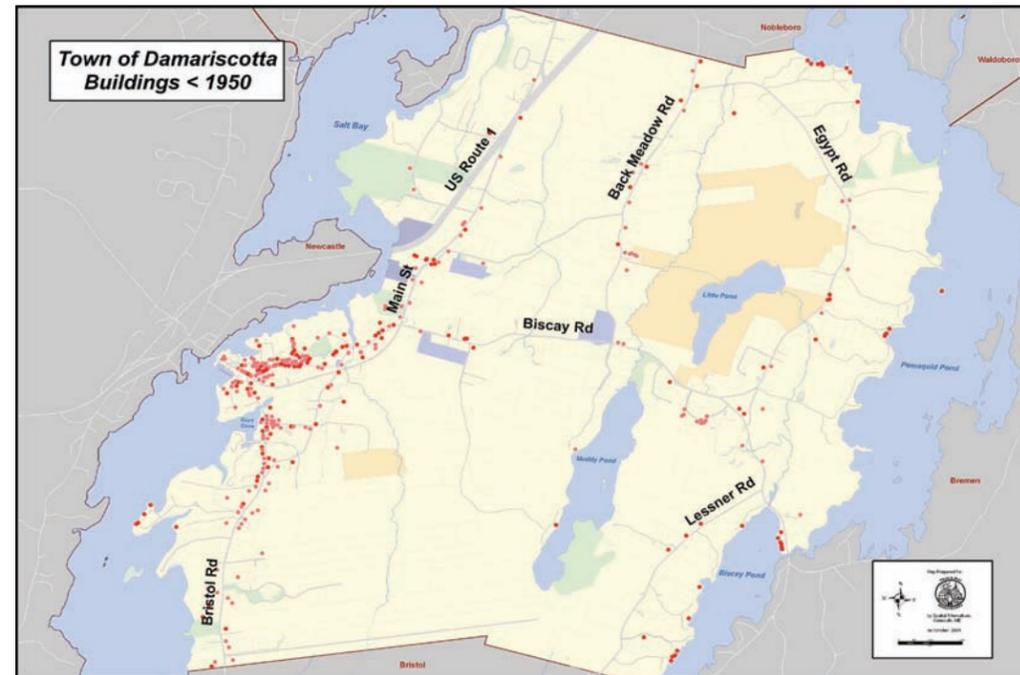
WHAT IF WE DO NOTHING?

To help set the stage for discussion at the charrette, the CViz team developed a series of maps that describe Damariscotta's past and current pattern of growth. Based on recent development patterns and rates, the CViz team then projected growth that is likely to occur if the Town does not change existing regulations.

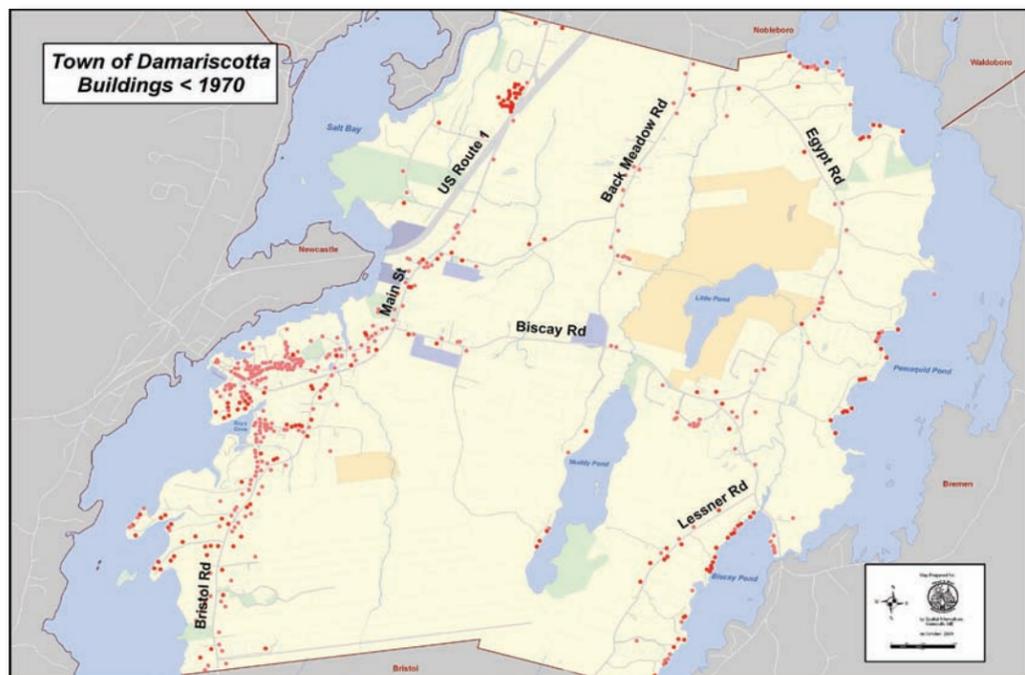
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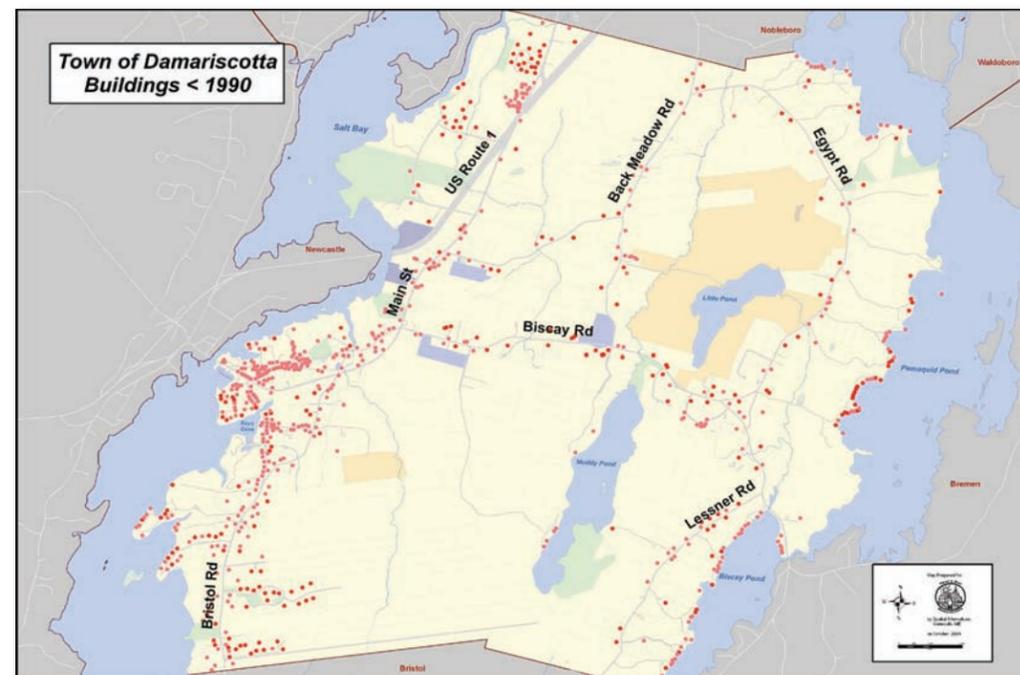
In 1900, most of the development in the community was located in Downtown and along Main Street and Bristol Road. Smaller areas of development were also located on Back Meadow Road, Egypt Road, and Biscay Road.



By 1950, there was additional development, but it largely followed the same patterns that were established by 1900, with the exception that the neighborhoods around Downtown were filling in and development was beginning to be evident along Lesser Road and Biscay Pond.

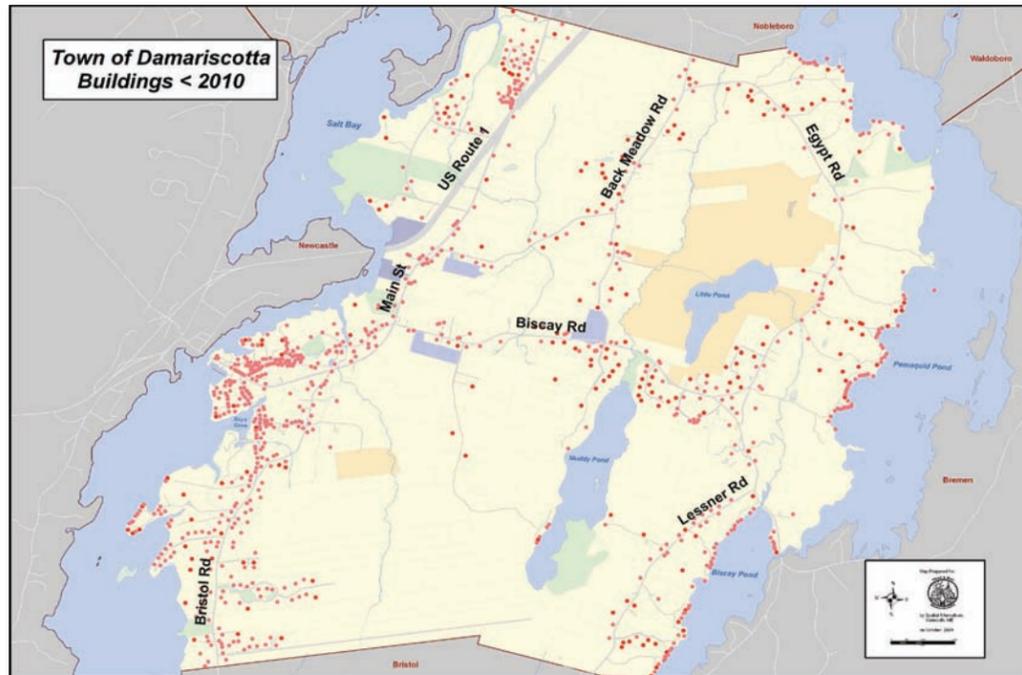


By 1970, these patterns were still evident, though more development was spreading further down Bristol Road, clustered on Route 1 near the northern connection with Main Street, and more buildings were showing up along all of the Town's waterfronts, including increased development along Biscay and Pemaquid Ponds.

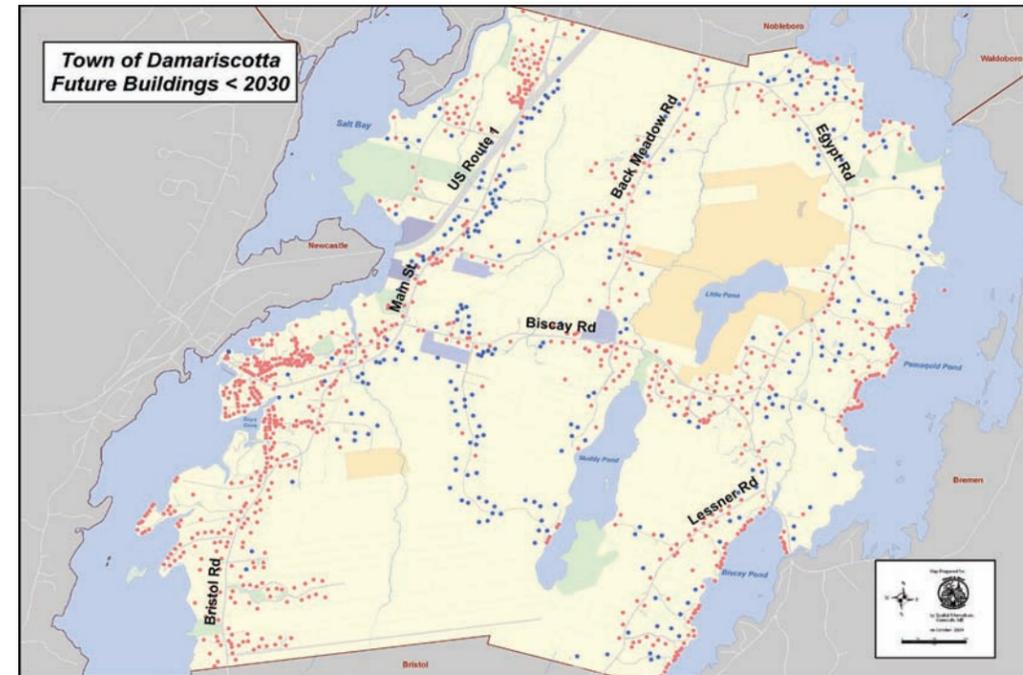


By 1990, there was increasing development along the Town's major roads, including Biscay, Lesser, and Egypt Roads. New dead-end roads are beginning to appear off Bristol Road.

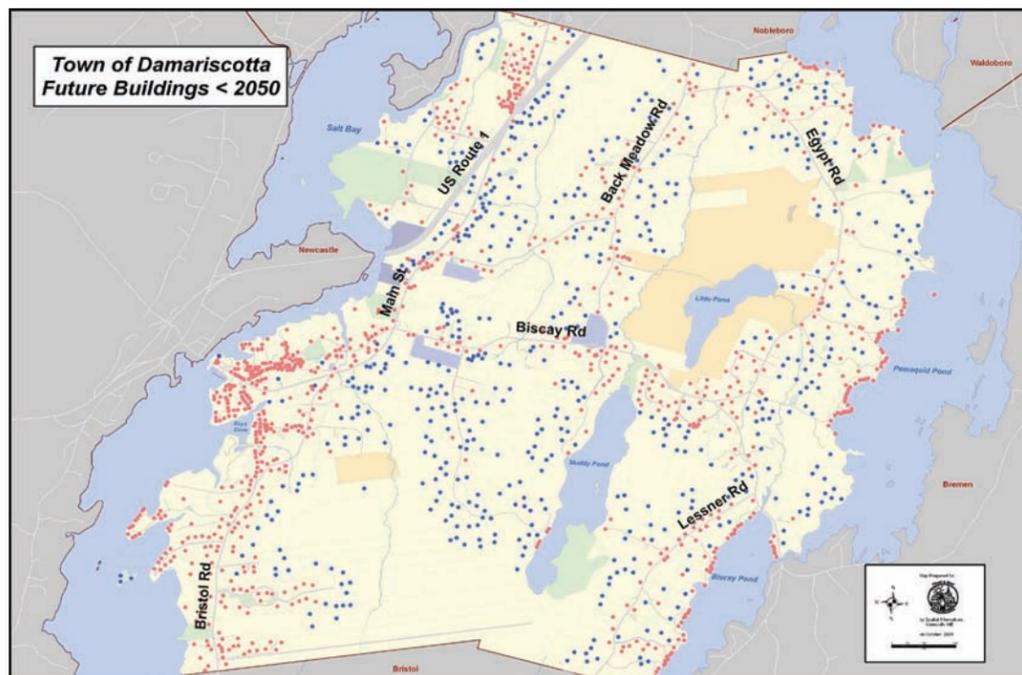
WHAT IF WE DO NOTHING?



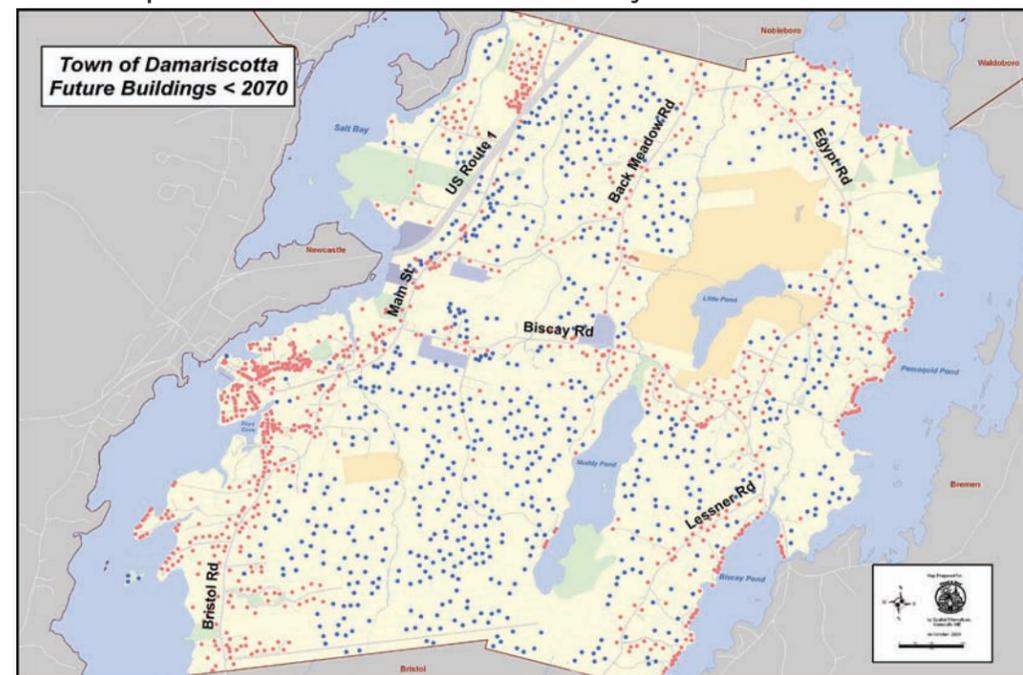
By 2010, new development was extending further north and south off Biscay Road closer to Paradise and Little Ponds. Some interior roads were connected; some were not.



By 2030, if recent patterns of development continue, Damariscotta is likely to see development spreading out along Heater, Standpipe, and Back Meadow Roads, and expanding east and north toward the shore off Egypt Road. More development is also anticipated between Lessner Road and Biscay Pond.



By 2050, if recent patterns of development continue, Damariscotta's is likely to see an even more dispersed pattern of development throughout the Town, with only the area around Little Pond, which is owned by the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District, and the area around Cranmeadow Brook, undeveloped.



By 2070, the same low density, dispersed pattern of development has only intensified. The only large undeveloped area left is that owned by the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District around Little Pond.

It is clear that without some changes in existing regulations and development patterns, Damariscotta in future years will be very different than today. The rural character of Damariscotta will be lost. Open spaces will be developed into cookie cutter lots. Environmental quality will be degraded. And people will be solely dependent upon their automobiles to find common goods and services. By considering and adopting the changes proposed in this report, the Town will preserve open spaces and rural character while it promotes development that enhances the Town, adds to the vitality of Downtown, and encourages walking to obtain goods and services. The values of living and working locally will be better met. The environmental quality of the Town will be better protected and nature and culture will continue to be in close proximity to each other.

There are four basic ways to implement the recommendations of the Illustrative Plan created through the charrette:

- New and/or revised regulations,
- Government planning and investment in physical improvements,
- Volunteer efforts to engage the community, oversee implementation, and undertake special projects, and
- Work with landowners/developers to ensure support for Damariscotta’s vision.

Below is a summary of the major recommendations of the charrette report. A complete description of these recommendations is provided in Section F.

This summary is organized by Damariscotta’s core community values, as represented by the following icons, though many recommendations respond to more than one value.



We Live Locally



We Work Locally



Where Culture and Nature Meet



We are an Involved Community



The Town is Accessible



There is a Sense of Community



We Live Locally

1. LOT SIZES & FRONTAGE REQUIREMENTS – Reduce minimum lot sizes and frontage requirement to encourage compact, walkable development.
2. HOUSING OPTIONS – Encourage a mix of housing types to encourage workforce housing and mixed income/intergenerational buildings and neighborhoods.
3. ENCOURAGE TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOODS IN PIPER COMMONS
 - a. With narrow, interconnected, public streets, sidewalks, shade trees, shallow building setbacks, mixed uses, and orientation of buildings with their narrow ends parallel to the street.
 - b. Protect streams, wetlands, and Paradise Pond from compact nodes of development.
 - c. Provide civic and other gathering places and privacy for future residents.
 - d. Provide multiple entry points to the neighborhood from existing roads.
 - e. Encourage commercial and mixed uses near Route 1B and decrease intensity of use toward the interior and Paradise Pond.
4. LAND USE REGULATIONS – Consider a form based code³ for Downtown, Route 1B, and Piper Commons. Adjust zoning code accordingly.



We Work Locally

1. MARKETING – Encourage merchants to coordinate marketing activities.
2. ONGOING IMPROVEMENTS – Make small changes at key locations Downtown to improve design and address parking and circulation.

³ A form based code is a land development regulatory tool that places primary emphasis on the physical form of the built environment with the goal of producing a specific type of “place”. See Section F of this charrette report for a more complete description of form based codes and how they are might work in Damariscotta.

3. PARKING – Develop a strategy for parking and development, including improvements to the Back Parking Lot south of Main Street and the Damariscotta Bank & Trust/Griffin property.
4. NEW BLOCKS & STREETS – Extend and connect side streets Downtown to create blocks that provide opportunities for new structures and on-street parking. Keep new buildings close to the street in most areas of Town.
5. SIDEWALK ENHANCEMENT – Maintain or create a pattern of sidewalks, shade trees, shallow building setbacks from the street, and mixed uses.
6. WORKING WATERFRONT – Locate and encourage water dependent uses close to the shore.
7. TEMPORARY RETAIL – Allow temporary stores during festivals and special events.
8. GREEN BY WATER – Expand access to waterfronts and provide resting spots and gathering places.
9. MIXED USE CENTERS – Create nodes of development on Route 1B, focused on different purposes.
10. DEFINE STREETS – Infill large parking lots and undeveloped properties with small buildings to create a continuous street front within nodes of development.
11. STREETS IN PARKING LOTS – Create new roads to break up parking fields, provide on-street parking, and guide pedestrians.
12. HOUSE-LIKE RETAIL – Encourage some new buildings with a residential appearance to vary the commercial character of Route 1B.
13. VIEW TO COUNTRYSIDE – Provide open spaces between nodes of development to offer green breaks between developed areas and to provide places for people to gather or rest.
14. GREEN JOBS – Encourage green industries/jobs in part of Piper Commons.



Where Culture & Nature Meet

1. CONSERVATION – Adopt a guiding philosophy of preservation, stewardship, and connection.
2. CONNECT TO NATURE – Respect environmental resources and encourage access to them.
3. VIEW NATURE – Preserve scenic views of the River, ponds, streams, and key properties.
4. WORKING LANDSCAPE – Continue and expand working waterfronts and landscapes.
5. LEARN ABOUT THE LAND – Create a campus for environmental and agricultural education.
6. VARIETY OF GREEN AREAS – Create community playgrounds, playing fields, and gardens close to neighborhoods.



We Are An Involved Community

1. COMMUNITY CENTRAL – Coordinate volunteers to pursue community initiatives and encourage intergenerational opportunities.
2. LOCAL TALENT – Involve different community groups where they have expertise and/or interest.
3. HEART & SOUL – Continue to encourage everyone to be involved.



Town is Accessible

1. PEDESTRIAN FIRST / PARK ONCE – Adopt a guiding philosophy of pedestrian first/park once and plan for vehicles, bikes, and pedestrians.
2. PARKING TO SUPPORT BUSINESS – Create a parking management plan and strategy and investigate locations for potential parking structures.
3. CORRAL TRUCKS – Work with nearby communities to manage through-truck traffic and post the southern entrance to Route 1B as “no through trucks”.

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4. **REGIONAL/LOCAL DELIVERIES** – Designate loading zones and coordinate deliveries.
 5. **REMOTE PARKING & SHUTTLE** – Create a shuttle bus system to circulate among remote parking areas and key locations in Damariscotta and nearby communities. Manage employee parking.
 6. **WAYFINDING** – Create a map and add signage to aid in wayfinding.
 7. **WALK EVERYWHERE** – Link Downtown and other parts of community via sidewalks and trails.
 8. **BIKE EVERYWHERE** – Post on-street bike routes, mark shared use lanes (sharrows), provide bike parking, create a bicycle boulevard, and shared use paths, trails, and lanes.
 9. **TOWN GREENS** – Modify intersections and use community greens to calm traffic at key intersections and create community gathering spaces and focal points.
 10. **SKINNY STREETS** – Narrow Route 1B and other high speed streets with sidewalks, landscaping, and on street parking. In some places, provide a center turning lane or landscaped median to calm traffic.
 11. **HIDE THE CARS** – Require parking lots to be located to the side or rear of buildings. Break up large parking fields with new roads that create blocks for smaller buildings and on-street parking.
4. **WELCOME TO DAMARISCOTTA!** – Provide a tasteful gateway/welcome sign.
 5. **PEOPLE GOTTA GO** – Provide public rest rooms in Downtown.
 6. **NEW COMMONS** – Create a commons at the entrance to Piper Commons off Route 1B.
 7. **KIDS AND NATURE** – Link the Great Salt Bay School and YMCA with walking paths and nature trails. Create community gardens and a skating rink.



PHOTO BY JANE LAFLEUR



There is a Sense of Community

1. **WATERFRONT FESTIVALS** – Redevelop the Back Parking Lot south of Main Street to allow greater public gathering opportunities.
2. **GO TO THE WATER** – Explore opportunities for rain gardens, increased plantings, and reduced pavement. Add pedestrian amenities. Provide a boardwalk.
3. **PARKING TO PARK** – Create a park-like atmosphere near the Damariscotta Bank & Trust/Griffin property.